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# THE INFLUENCE OF NIKOLAI LOSSKY'S INTUITIVISM ON CTIBOR BEZDĚK'S ETHICOTHERAPY

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## **Abstract**

The paper describes the work of the Czech physician Ctibor Bezděk and his relation to the Russian philosopher Nikolai Lossky. The study examines Bezděk's ethical theories (i.e. 'ethicotherapy') which he tried to incorporate into Medicine and focuses particularly on the role of intuition in Bezděk's approach to Medicine, comparing it with the concepts of intuition and of substantial agents elaborated by Lossky. Lossky's theories about disease and healing influenced several physicians and psychiatrists, and his work also received support from T.G. Masaryk. Although he has been included among the pioneers of psychotherapy, Bezděk still remains unknown in the Czech Republic. The present study aims to introduce Ctibor Bezděk and his contributions to a wider audience.

*Keywords:* Nikolai Lossky, intuition, ethicotherapy, Russian, philosophy

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## **1. Introduction**

Ctibor Bezděk (1872-1956) was a Czech physician who was strongly influenced by Russian culture and philosophy, at first because he married a Russian medical doctor Varvara D. Rudněvova (1870-1945), who observed Leo Tolstoy's moral theories, and later thanks to becoming friends with the prominent Russian religious philosopher Nikolai Lossky (1870-1965). The interaction between Nikolai Lossky and Ctibor Bezděk is connected to the tragic events of the Bolshevik Revolution, when many Russian intellectuals were forced to abandon their country and spend the rest of their life abroad. This was also the case of Lossky, who spent twenty-three years in Czechoslovakia and influenced Bezděk during this period.

Ctibor Bezděk was a multifaceted person, who devoted himself to medical education and social care. A pioneer of mental hygiene, eubiotics and vegetarianism, who also worked in the Abstinent movement. He is considered the founder of ethicotherapy, which he described in his most important work

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*Záhada nemoci a smrti: Etikoterapie (The Mystery of Illness and Death: Ethicotherapy*, Brno 1931) [1]. This book was noticed by President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and his daughter Alice, who invited Bezděk and his wife to Lány in July 1931. In 1937, a collection of memoirs written by different doctors was published about Masaryk. The contributors included Bezděk, who described his meeting with Masaryk and his daughter Alice in Lány, where they asked him about ethicotherapy [2].

The book *Záhada nemoci a smrti: Etikoterapie* contains many references not only to Lossky, but also to the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalysis intrigued Bezděk because he disagreed with a purely materialistic approach to medical treatment. In the 1920s, Freud's first followers began to be active in Czechoslovakia, including Nikolaj Osipov, who wanted to apply Lossky's philosophy to the treatment of mental illnesses.

In *Ethicotherapy*, Bezděk also refers to Freud's interpretation of the unconscious, but remains convinced that not only nervous and mental illnesses originate in the unconscious part of the human being, but all illnesses. At the same time, however, he acknowledged that Freud had shown the direction medicine should follow [3]. We can say that Bezděk promoted psychosomatic medicine, because in searching for the cause of the disease he focused on both the physical and mental parts of an individual and he pursued a new model for bio-psychosocial medicine. In Karel Sládek's opinion, Bezděk can be considered the founder of both psychosomatic and social medicine [4]. As Anna Havelková and Alena Slezáčková show, there is no clear definition of psychosomatics [5]. Stanislav Komárek points out that "psychosomatics should not mean a reversal of the causalist understanding in the sense of 'mentally primary, physically derived', but precisely the psychophysical unity of man" [6]. This is why the term 'psychosomatic' is avoided in relation to Bezděk, since he views the cause of illnesses as originating in the spiritual part of a person.

Bezděk was aware that intuitive knowledge plays an important role in a holistic view of man. This is why he referred so much to Nikolai Lossky, who elaborated the concept of intuition into great depth. Bezděk emphasized intuition as an important tool for diagnosis and treatment, and Lossky's philosophy helped him to explain the meaning of the concept of intuition as used in both Philosophy and Psychology.

In the second phase of Bezděk's life, the positivist-materialist view of Medicine was becoming prevalent and after 1948, the idealistic Bezděk was for a long time tabooed. As Miroslav Paulíček pointed out in his article 'Vladimír Borecký, pozorný poutník světem komiky', the first significant article about Bezděk was written by Vladimír Borecký and published in the *Psychotherapeutic Notebooks* with the title 'Počátky české psychoterapie (Jan Šimsa, Ctibor Bezděk, Vilém Forster)' ('The Beginnings of Czech Psychotherapy. Jan Šimsa, Ctibor Bezděk, Vilém Forster') [7]. The review was published by the Cabinet of Psychotherapy of the Faculty of General Medicine at the Charles University in Prague.

In general, we find few references to the relationship between Bezděk and Lossky. In Czech, there is a short chapter in Sládek's book *Nikolaj Losskij: obhájce mystické intuice (Nikolaj Losskij: Defender of Mystical Intuition)* while in Russian there is only a brief mention of Bezděk in Lossky's *Vospominania (Memoirs)* [8].

Bezděk himself has not been the main subject of any philosophical studies and is not even mentioned in the book *Filosofie medicíny v českých zemích (Czech Philosophy of Medicine)* focused on the philosophy of Czech medicine, which is also an exception in the Czech context [9]. In the Philosophy of the twentieth century, we do not find Czech philosophers for whom Medicine was the central topic of reflection. There was no philosophy of Medicine on the Czech philosophical scene, but only doctors who philosophized and philosophers who dealt with Medicine in addition to other topics [9, p. 41-42]. Bezděk and Lossky can be included in these two respective categories. Ctibor Bezděk was a doctor and a humanist who also included philosophical ideas in his theories and referred mainly to the philosopher Vladimir Hoppe and the already mentioned Lossky. Bezděk's perhaps most philosophical work is the book *O podstatě zla a o boji se zlem (On the Nature of Evil and on the Struggle Against Evil)*, dedicated to Lossky. It was ready for publication in 1939, but appeared only in 2015 with the title *Dobro a zlo. Úvahy zakladatele etikoterapie o podstatě zla a o boji se zlem (Good and Evil. Thoughts of the Founder of Ethicotherapy on the Nature of Evil and the Struggle against Evil)*. It is unclear why the book *O podstatě zla a o boji se zlem* remained in the form of a manuscript until 2015. In the editorial note of Olga Bezděková - the wife of the grandson of Ctibor Bezděk - it is written that Petr Palarčík proposed the title of the book *Dobro a zlo* and that the subtitle *Úvahy zakladatele etikoterapie o podstatě zla a o boji se zlem* was inserted by Olga Bezděková [10].

Conversely, Lossky was not interested in Medicine *per se*, but his personalism and intuitivism attracted both Bezděk and the Russian psychiatrist Osipov, who was one of the first representatives of Freud's psychotherapy in the then Czechoslovakia. Russian personalism was a theoretical movement based on Leibniz's monadological model of the world. The German philosopher Gustav Teichmüller introduced personalism in Russia during his years at the University of Dorpat (currently the University of Tartu). His follower Alexey A. Kozlov influenced Lossky in Saint Petersburg [11]. In Galina S. Ryzhkova's view, "personalism is usually defined as a philosophical movement based on the living essence of personality as a principium of being" [12].

Although Bezděk is almost unknown to the general public in the Czech Republic, we can find exceptions of doctors who have followed Bezděk's ethicotherapy in their practice. Today, the main representative of ethicotherapy in the Czech Republic is the doctor Vladimír Vogelanz. Also the head of the Spiritual Care of the University Hospital in Motol and physician Eva Kalvínská used principles of Bezděk's ethicotherapy. However, Kalvínská's method of ethicotherapy provoked a discussion. Eva Opatrná criticized Kalvínská's ethicotherapy in two articles in 'Časopis Lékařů Českých' [13]. Kalvínská then

responded with the article *Od etikoterapie k moderní psychoterapii (From Ethicotherapy to Modern Psychotherapy)* [14], and Opatrná reacted again in *K diskuzi o etikoterapii (On the Debate about Ethicotherapy)* [15]. Although we do not find any detailed studies focused mainly on Bezděk, ethicotherapy has nowadays become controversial and is discussed as an unethical approach in the Czech Republic.

The aim of the present article is not to evaluate Bezděk's ethicotherapy, but rather to bring attention to his approach to Medicine in relation to Philosophy, especially to the intuitive and personalistic philosophy of Lossky. This article shows that Bezděk's theories are philosophical and inspiring, but that they cannot be considered scientific since they are too subjective and rooted in superstition rather than in Science, which is not based on intuitive knowledge. However, even though Medicine is primarily based on Science, today's scientists consider it to be a mixture of Science, technology and art [16]. Bezděk openly claims that "Medicine is not only a science, but also an art that falls mainly into the emotional realm" [3, p. 222].

Although laws of Nature condition human beings, they also have an unpredictable will. Moreover, scientific knowledge of the human brain is still very limited. That is why it is important to observe also the 'irrational' aspects in the work of a medical doctor appreciated by the first Czechoslovak president. Since both Bezděk and Lossky placed great emphasis on intuition as a tool of knowledge, it is important to contextualize both thinkers in the history of the European intuitivism.

## 2. The European context of intuitivism and vitalism

Intuitivism is a philosophical attitude that considers intuition to be the main source of knowledge that goes beyond the possibilities of rational and empirical knowledge. However, the meaning of the term 'intuitivism' is more often expressed in Western philosophy by the term 'intuitionism'. In general, the meanings of the words 'intuitivism' and 'intuitionism' are similar but in Russian there are two notions used for different fields: 'интуитивизм' ('intuitivism') for Philosophy and 'интуиционизм' ('intuitionism') for Mathematics and Logic [17]. Therefore, the term 'intuitivism' is used in writings concerning Russian philosophers such as Lossky and is preferred in this article as well.

Czech historian of Philosophy and epistemologist Lubomír Valenta divided four basic forms of intuitivism (*intuicionismus*): metaphysical, rational, ethical and mathematical.

- Valenta claims that metaphysical intuitivism understands intuition as immediate and absolute knowledge. Among the main representatives we find Plotin and H. Bergson.
- Rational intuitivism identifies intuition with rational evidence; the truth is given immediately, without doubts, as it was described by R. Descartes, whose criterion of truth is clear and distinct. Other representatives of this form are E. Husserl and M. Scheler.

- Ethical intuitivism has been formed since the eighteenth century as a reaction to utilitarianism, and rejected the view that ethical judgments are inductively derived from empiricism. According to ethical intuitivism, we have the ability to clearly distinguish right and reasonable behaviour from wrong and unreasonable behaviour. The main representatives of this view are H. Sidgwick and G.E. Moore.
- Mathematical (logical) intuitivism denotes one type of philosophy of mathematics. Mathematics is not just a summary of formulas, but a spiritual activity. Thought constructions do not go beyond what is immediately evident to reason (for example, integers). Some followers of this intuitivism have espoused the philosophy of Husserl or Bergson [18].

In relation to previous division, N. Lossky can be included among metaphysical intuitivists. As Frédéric Tremblay pointed out in his article 'Nikolai Lossky and Henry Bergson', Lossky was one of the earliest and most important proponents and critics of Bergson's philosophy in Russia [19].

Bergson and Driesch are also considered "the most famous vitalists of the early twentieth century" [20]. Although we can find work on Bergson and Driesch, broader studies of vitalism in Medicine, Philosophy and the Life sciences in the twentieth century have been ignored, especially in connection with the theme of emergence in the philosophy of mind [21].

The term vitalism, which is concerned with the idea of a 'life force', is not actually used until the end of the eighteenth century and its meaning has changed and evolved over time. General idea of vitalism in the West is attributed to Aristotle and his proclamation of the tripartite soul, or *anima* in all living things. Hippocratic and Galenic medical traditions also contain elements of vitalist perspective, especially in the stoically inspired concept of *pneuma* (or breath). Vitalism also includes residues of belief in phenomena such as abiogenesis or spontaneous generation. In the seventeenth century the vitalistic perspective faced strong criticism, but vitalism still persisted in many forms. We can find it for example in the Montpellier school of the late eighteenth century and in the Romantic medical thought of a thinker like Blumenbach. The rise of mechanistic views during the Scientific Revolution (perhaps best embodied by Descartes) and the materialism of the biochemical laboratory in the nineteenth century continued to diminish the influence of vitalism [22]. Vitalism can be also considered a counterpart of mechanism.

Vitalism continues to appear in the life sciences, and Bergson had an influence on both Lossky and Bezděk. As Tremblay points out, "Lossky discusses the vitalisms of his time and includes considerations on Bergson's philosophy of life as developed in *L'évolution créatrice*" [19, p. 5].

Questions of body (*soma*) and soul (*psyche*) were central also in Bezděk's medicine and we can find references to Bergson in his writings [3, p. 42].

### 3. Bezděk and Lossky

Ctibor Bezděk was born in Podivín (Břeclav) in 1872 and studied medicine at the University of Vienna from 1892 to 1898. At the end of his studies, he met and later married a Russian physician, Varvara D. Rudněvova, who influenced his spirituality. Bezděk's medical experience can be outlined as follows: From 1898 to 1903, he served as a frigate surgeon in the Austro-Hungarian Navy; from 1903 to 1908, he was a district doctor in Ždánice (South Moravia); from 1908 to 1914 spa doctor in the spa town of Bad Hall; during the First World War he served in an infirmary in Pula and in military infirmaries in Steinklamm (near Vienna) and Deutschbrod (Havlíčkův Brod); from 1919 to 1930, he was the town's doctor in Ružomberok (Slovakia); from 1930 to 1952, he was a practitioner in Prague; and from 1952 to 1956, he was also a practitioner in Říčany (near Prague). He died in 1956 [23].

Bezděk was very active in the anti-alcohol movement and in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis. Considered a pioneer of mental hygiene, eubiotics and vegetarianism, he was also one of the first physicians in Czechoslovakia to study thanatology. In 1936-1941, he was a publisher of the journal *Duchovní a náboženská kultura* (*Spiritual and Religious Culture*) [1, p. 16]. He was also the chairman of the Czech Abstinent Association and the Society for Mystical Studies. In addition, he engaged in humanitarian activities and during his stay in Slovakia he and his wife gradually raised forty-two homeless children together with his own two daughters. His works include short autobiographical stories (*Drobné příběhy* 1909, *Dojmy od moře. Zápisky námořního lékaře* 1912), travelogues (*Do Maroka. Zápisky námořního lékaře* 1923), and didactic prose for children (*Děti a jejich milí přátelé* 1927, published in 2005). The children's book was written at a time when Bezděk became a vegetarian under the influence of his wife, who professed Tolstoy's philosophy. Through the book, Bezděk wanted to teach children to love animals. He then wrote a book on vegetarianism for adults as well (*Vegetarism pro a proti* 1928).

In 1953, the secret police force (StB) confiscated Bezděk's writings and correspondence. The family spent a great deal of time searching for Bezděk's lost writings in the archives of the Ministry of the Interior, but without success. In 2001, during the repairs of the roof of Bezděk's house in Senohraby, copies of his memoirs, which he stopped writing in the First World War, were found. His memoirs were published in 2011 under the title *Jak rád jsem žil: Paměti MUDr. Ctibora Bezděka* (*How I Like to Live: Memoirs of MUDr. Ctibor Bezděk*) [1]. In his letters, Bezděk describes his experience with the police, who interrogated him several times to find connections between his work and political activity. However, they only managed to find religious writings that were of no interest to them. It was religion that had the strongest influence on Bezděk's medical activity [1, p. 873-874].

Under the influence of L.N. Tolstoy, R. Steiner, N. Lossky and V. Hoppe, Bezděk deviated from the somatic orientation of Medicine and created a treatment system that he called 'ethicotherapy' [23]. Bezděk borrowed the term 'ethicotherapy' from Julius Hanausek [3, p. 116]. In 1931, Bezděk's most important work was published under the title *Záhada nemoci a smrti: Etikoterapie (The Mystery of Illness and Death: Ethicotherapy, Brno 1931)*. Until 1948 there were four editions available, one of them in German translation under the title *Das Rätsel von Krankheit und Tod. Ethikoterapie (1935)*. Other editions were published in 1932, 1947 and 1995. In the estate, Bezděk left the second volume of *Ethicotherapy*, published in 2000 with the title *Záhada nemoci a uzdravení. Etikoterapie II (The Mystery of Illness and Healing. Ethicotherapy II)* [23].

Ethicotherapy contains many quotations without references to specific works of individual thinkers. This changed in the book focused on the topic of evil *Dobro a zlo. Úvahy zakladatele etikoterapie o podstatě zla a o boji se zlem (Good and Evil. Thoughts of the Founder of Ethicotherapy on the Nature of Evil and the Struggle Against Evil)*. Unlike *Ethicotherapy*, *Good and Evil* contains a list of references from which Bezděk drew his reflections. Olga Bezděková compiled a bibliography. However, she did not manage to find all the cited works. She assumed that Bezděk sometimes quoted from manuscripts or originals and translated quotations and titles of works into Czech [10, p. 204-205].

*Dobro a zlo* begins with a dedication to N. Lossky, written on August 3, 1939: "I remember you used to talk a lot about evil. I told you that more than evil, we need to pay attention to the good. In the meantime, I have mastered your basic idea of the nature of evil, and I have seen the need to spread that idea by all means [...] so that people may realize the perversity of their lives and begin to live a new life." [24]

Nikolai Onufriyevich Lossky was born in Krāslava (a region in Latvia) in 1870. He entered St. Petersburg University in the Physics and Mathematics department in 1891 and later became a lecturer at the same university from 1916 until 1921. Lossky spent the period between 1922 and 1945 in Czechoslovakia. He lived in Prague until 1942, and later moved to Bratislava, where he worked as a professor of Philosophy at the University of Bratislava until 1945. After teaching in Czechoslovakia, Lossky became a professor at the Russian Theological Academy in New York. He died near Paris in 1965 at the age of 94 [24, p. 446-449].

In the *Encyclopedia of Russian Philosophy*, N.N. Startchenko - the author of the entry 'Nikolai Onufrievič Losskij', characterized Lossky's philosophy as a synthesis of all basic philosophical traditions, i.e. religious-philosophical (Christian), classical (based on Leibniz) and non-classical (intuitivism) [24, p. 446].

Leibniz strongly influenced the Russian personalists and Lossky openly claims that his philosophy "presents the character of personalism" [25]. But in his *History of Russian Philosophy*, Lossky did not include himself in the chapter

dedicated to the ‘Russian Personalists’, but rather among the ‘intuitivists’, and compared his philosophy both to that of Leibniz and Bergson [25, p. 251-255].

In ‘Nikolai Lossky and Henri Bergson’, Tremblay wrote that “Lossky was one of the first Russian philosophers to be acquainted with Bergson’s work. His contribution to the popularization of Bergson’s philosophy in Russia is significant.” [19, p. 4] But Lossky also differs from both the aforementioned philosophers: his substantial agents are not ‘windowless’ like Leibniz’s monads, and, unlike Bergson’s conception of real being as irrational, for Lossky being is rational like in Plato.

In Tremblay’s view, “the fundamental difference between Lossky’s personalism and Leibniz’s monadology is that Lossky denies the separateness of the agents, i.e. denies Leibniz’s idea that monads ‘have neither windows nor doors’. As bearers of creative powers, substantial agents are distinct and independent, but as bearers of basic abstractly ideal forms, they are identical and form one being.” [25, p. 255]

#### **4. The interaction between Lossky and Bezděk**

Lossky and Bezděk are very similar in the importance they place on faith, a holistic view of the world and intuitive knowledge, which were also important for Russian religious philosophers and the followers of Vladimir Solovyov’s philosophy. Bezděk was strongly influenced by Russian religious thought also because his Russian wife was devoted to Tolstoy. They were both appreciated by the first president of the former Czechoslovakia T.G. Masaryk, who was very important for the Russian intelligentsia having been forced to leave Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution [26]. Lossky, too, had to emigrate on Lenin’s “steamboat of the intelligentsia” [27]. In Marc Raeff’s view, Lossky “had less impact on Russia Abroad and on Western thought before the Second World War” because of his isolation in Prague, where he focused on “epistemology and philosophical anthropology from a strictly personalist perspective” [27, p. 104-105]. During his stay in the former Czechoslovakia, Lossky befriended Bezděk, but there is not much information about their relationship and, in general, Bezděk is unknown to the Czech academic community.

Both Lossky and Bezděk were close to Platonic idealism, which was allowed to be developed during the First Republic of Czechoslovakia period. But after 1948, Bezděk was not supported in the communism-oriented Czechoslovakia and had to hide his idealistic ideas in a world dominated by positivism and materialism. Likewise, after the fall of communism, Bezděk remained unknown in the country and his ethicotherapy never became recognized as an official method of treatment and sparked controversy. Nowadays it is promoted mainly by the already mentioned medical doctor Vladimír Vogelntanz, who has moved away from the officially recognized methods of treatment.



Although ethicotherapy is not recognized by 'official' medicine, Jiří Heřt - a member of the Czech sceptical nonprofit organisation Sisyfos - does not consider it as a form of alternative medicine. The Czech Sceptic's Club Sisyfos was founded in 1995 and is concerned with the defence and popularization of scientific knowledge. In 2010, Heřt wrote a book entitled *Alternativní medicína a léčitelství. Kritický pohled (Alternative Medicine and Healing. A Critical Look)* and there is no mention of Bezděk or ethicotherapy [28]. On the other hand, Hanausek, who wrote the preface to the first edition of *Ethicotherapy*, described Bezděk as a general practitioner and psycho-ethico-therapist. Ctibor Bezděk was a physician-philosopher, who strived to incorporate his theories in medical treatment and viewed intuitive knowledge as an important tool for making diagnoses.

Bezděk was convinced that a good medical doctor has to use his intuition to find the right diagnosis. The concept of intuition was a central theme of Lossky's epistemology and Bezděk referred to Lossky's interpretation of intuition in his *Ethicotherapy* as well [3, p. 26]. In the book *Sensory, Intellectual, and Mystical Intuition* (1938), Lossky identifies three kinds of intuition based on the type of object [29]. Initially, Lossky used the name 'mystical empiricism' for his intuitivist epistemology, but later called it 'intuitivism'. As he explains in the preface to *Obosnovanie intuitivizma (The Foundations of Intuitivism, 1906)*, mysticism refers to a mystery that is far from our reality. Lossky, on the other hand, focused on a reality that we can know [30]. In *History of Russian Philosophy* (1951), Lossky self-reflected in the chapter dedicated to the intuitivists and defined his theory thusly: "He (Lossky) designates by that word the doctrine that the cognized object, even if it forms part of the external world, enters the knowing subject's consciousness directly, so to speak in person, and is therefore apprehended as it exists independently of the act of knowing. Such contemplation of other entities as they are in themselves is possible because the world is an organic whole, and the knowing subject, the individual human self, is a supertemporal and superspatial being, intimately connected with the whole world." [25, p. 252]

The subject is viewed as relating the other entities through the so-called epistemological coordination, which is still not knowledge. Epistemological coordination allows connection, but knowledge also requires that the subject direct a series of intentional mental acts - of awareness, attention, differentiation, etc. - upon other entities of the world.

The multiplicity of the content of external objects in their wholeness is connected with the human self only subconsciously. We cognize only those aspects of the object which are of interest to us. This means that our knowledge is always fragmentary and is acquired differently by different people. Lossky distinguished intellectual intuition from sensory intuition and mystical intuition, and in relation to these modes of intuition he admitted three kinds of beings: ideal being, real being and metalogical being. Intellectual intuition (speculation) is connected only to ideal being. Lossky interprets ideal being in the Platonic sense as something that does not have any spatial or temporal character and, in

turn, he calls all things which have a spatial and temporal form real beings, which can arise and have a systematic character only if based on ideal being. This is why Lossky called his theory 'ideal-realism'. The object of mystical intuition is metalogical being or the Absolute, which transcends the laws of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle, such as God, and is accessible neither to sensory (sense-perception) nor to intellectual intuition.

Bezděk did not write about three types of intuition, and defined Lossky's intuition as "an act of immediate seeing and knowledge of another's being" [3, p. 26]. Therefore, he considered intuition as an important tool in diagnosis - a doctor has to understand a person who needs help. His view of Medicine is then distinct from the evidence-based approach and finds its roots in intuition [3, p. 26].

Medicine is considered to be part of natural science and it is a discipline which deals only with natural events and uses scientific methods. Traditional medicine makes no room for supernatural events. On the contrary, Bezděk believed that patients should not only be examined at the material level, but that it is equally important to explore the internal state of their mental life and their soul [3, p. 26]. This is problematic because, as it follows, a medical doctor has to recognize the existence of a spiritual principle that cannot be explored by physical instruments. In Bezděk's view, the existence of a spiritual principle is observable only through its effects [3, p. 27]. But it is very important to know absolute moral law, and the possibility to know an absolute principle is connected to the sort of intuitive knowledge proclaimed by idealists like Lossky and other Russian religious philosophers. According to Bezděk, there are three conditions for determining a correct diagnosis:

- A physician has to be convinced that moral and mental disorders can affect the patient's physical condition.
- A physician has to be convinced that a spiritual principle exists alongside the matter of the body.
- A physician has to know the absolute moral law.

Bezděk knew that his thought was incomprehensible to most modern physicians whose education is based on a materialistic medicine and, at the same time, he was aware of the potential danger of abuse during the act of penetration into a person's subconscious: "only a morally advanced person who does not selfishly abuse everything he finds in the depths of strangers' souls may enter the human souls in such a way" [3, p. 27]. In Bezděk opinion, knowledge of the absolute moral law will enable the doctor to examine the content of the person's inner being - whether it is good or whether it is a disordered soul [3, p. 27].

Bezděk's ideas about the importance of a medical doctor's personality were not mere theories because his nature was described as well balanced. Bezděk's charismatic personality was described by philosopher, psychologist, and culturologist Vladimír Borecký in the *Psychotherapeutic Notebooks*. Borecký wrote that "Bezděk's balance between internal moral attitudes and morality, which he theoretically proclaims in his ethicotherapy and institutionalizes in his Ethical Counselling Centre, is remarkable" [31].

Therefore, it is understandable that the personality of Bezděk and his belief in absolute principles did not escape the attention of the platonic-oriented Masaryk. David Short pointed out that there is a similarity between Plato and Masaryk: “[...] in their different ways Plato and Masaryk were both authors of a republic; Plato founded his Academy and then taught there for the rest of his life and Masaryk also taught at a number of academic institutions; and Plato’s aim in founding the Academy was to train a new type of politician, the philosopher-ruler, the virtues of whom are spelled out in *The Republic*, while in Masaryk Czechoslovakia had a ruler who was, and is, widely acclaimed as a philosopher” [32].

Masaryk was certainly influenced by Plato; not only did he write his doctoral dissertation on Plato, but he was also convinced that a country should be ruled by philosophers, and referred to Plato when he expressed the belief that politics and morality could not be separated [33]. Platonic idealism connected Masaryk to the Russian religious philosophers, where Lossky belongs.

Bezděk also refers to Plato in his writings. For example, Bezděk referred to Plato’s *Republic* in relation to medicine, pointing out that Plato views illness in connection with vices and emphasises the necessity to cultivate virtue to achieve and maintain health: “When Plato talks about medicine in the *Republic*, he finds that the cause of illness can be injuries, four seasons of weather, inactivity, dissolute way of life, so he mainly asks the rich to cultivate virtue, suggesting that this is the easiest way to avoid diseases that they are largely the result of inaction and extravagance” [3, p. 46].

If we focus on the first of the three above-mentioned conditions for making a correct diagnosis, namely that the doctor has to be convinced that moral and mental disorders can affect the patient’s physical condition, we can see some similarity between Bezděk and what today is called psychosomatic medicine.

## **5. Lossky and Bezděk in the context of psychosomatic medicine and Psychiatry**

Bezděk adopted Lossky’s ideas about the effects of the soul-mind on the body. Today, the relationship between mind and body in Medicine is expressed by the term ‘psychosomatics’, although the meaning of this word is not uniform [5]. In ancient times, however, the same emphasis was placed on mental and physical illness. In the seventeenth century, Descartes’ dualism contributed to the strict separation of the body from the mind-soul, and contemporary Western medicine focuses solely on physical symptoms. Psychological factors became central only with the development of the psychoanalytic movement in the twentieth century. As we have mentioned, Bezděk was interested in Freud’s psychoanalysis, but considered it incomplete. In his view, Freud’s psychoanalysis is the first approach to the human soul in Medicine, but it is a mechanical approach and not a real and conscious interaction between souls. He

also criticized the one-sidedness of psychoanalysis, because Freud focused only on sexuality as the sole cause of all neurological disorders [3, p. 28].

At the beginning of the development of Czech psychoanalysis, there was an important Russian psychiatrist who was active in Prague and admired Lossky's philosophy - Nikolaj Jefgrafovič Osipov (1877-1934), one of the central figures in the development of psychoanalysis in Russia. Psychoanalysis in Russia began in 1909-1910 when Osipov returned to Moscow from Switzerland after a period of medical training and psychoanalytic study under the direction of Carl G. Jung [34]. Osipov emigrated to Prague in 1921. Having brought all of Lossky's writings to Prague, Osipov wanted to incorporate Lossky's philosophical system into his psychiatric practice [8, p. 233]. Osipov intended to apply Lossky's personalism in Psychiatry, but died before he could do so.

Lossky describes personalism in relation to his theory of substantial agents, which are timeless. The main difference between an agent and personality is that a person has a capacity to recognize absolute values and act to achieve them on the basis of its own moral behaviour. The moment of the agent's action takes place in space-time. A substantial agent is a potential person. Lossky writes that his philosophical teachings bear characteristics of personalism, because his theory of individual entities is similar to that of Leibniz's monads. He describes substantial agents as carrying out purposive psychophysical processes, which are actual or potential personalities: "an agent becomes an actual personality when he is sufficiently developed to apprehend absolute values, especially moral values, and recognizes the duty of realizing them in his conduct" [25, p. 255]. As Sládek stressed: "Lossky was convinced that not only nature, but also the human body is made of *substantial agents*; when it comes to humans, they are subject to the *substantial self*. Lossky works on the premise that disease is caused by a substantive agent that disrupts normal organ function. Not only had the particular *substantial agent* created the given organ, it is also responsible for it. *The substantial agent* - which normally contributes towards the holistic development - sets off its own way following its own egoism and by doing so, the attention of the whole body is drawn to the particular organ disrupting this harmony - thereby causing the disease. If the substantial self is weakened by sin, the disease develops." [35]

In Lossky's view, the substantial self guides all cells in the human body, and every cell is a living being. Intuition and participation of the substantial self allow us to feel pain. If a body is healthy, all the cells are submitted to it and the substantial self receives information about disorder inside the body.

If disease occurs, Bezděk proposes an impulse treatment (*popudové léčení*), which acts directly on the substantial self [3, p. 139-140]. Medicine in the thirties sought to cause this turnover by material means, such as medication, dietary changes, prolonged sleep, etc. According to Bezděk, however, it is possible to act on the self through the psyche, either by way of psychotherapy or by suggestion. The mental and nervous state of the patient has a great influence

on the course of treatment. Therefore, according to Bezděk, it is important that it includes the following:

1. self-education, i.e. cognizance of one's own nature;
2. realize the meaning of one's own life;
3. cultivate one's patience;
4. autosuggestion [3, p. 141-142].

Revisiting the three conditions for making a correct diagnosis, Bezděk also mentions that "a doctor has to be convinced that a spiritual principle exists alongside the matter of the body", and that he or she "has to know the absolute moral principle" [3, p. 27]. This is connected to Bezděk's philosophical view described in the book *Dobro a zlo (Good and Evil)* dedicated to Lossky, who was his main source of inspiration.

In his philosophical book *Dobro a zlo*, Bezděk clearly expressed his stance on materialism and rationalism, which saw the principle of everything in matter or *ratio*, reciprocally [10, p. 68]. In Bezděk's view, the main problem of modern science is that it relies too much on those two principles. Moreover, scientific knowledge is changeable and dynamic, and for this reason there is no space for absolute truth, which can only be achieved through intuitive knowledge [10, p. 146]. Overestimating the importance of reason leads to the exaggerated self-confidence on which pride is based.

That is why Bezděk also indicates the importance of intuitive knowledge, which opens the way to a transcendent world inaccessible to reason (*ratio*). We can say that Bezděk's noetics is a continuation of Platonism, which is similar to the view held by Masaryk [36]. But Bezděk's platonism, like Masaryk's and that of Russian religious philosophers like Lossky, differed significantly from Plato's. Bezděk and Lossky believed in the existence and possibility of knowing absolute ideas, but they did not want to separate the soul from the body, which Plato understood only as the prison of the soul. Bezděk and Lossky were idealists who wanted to apply their idealism in this world.

## **6. Conclusions**

As we could see, Bezděk and Lossky were two significant figures from the time of Masaryk's First Republic, which is why it is important to know them and their activities in the former Czechoslovakia. In a sense, they are complementary to the philosophy that Masaryk sought to apply in the newly formed Czechoslovakia. Masaryk believed in the possibility of realizing the absolute truth, which, in his words, "always wins" [33, p. 195]. Lossky and Bezděk also believed in the same truth available only to intuitive knowledge, and tried to implement it in the world, in one way or another - as a university professor, Lossky theoretically explained the possibility of knowing it, while Bezděk applied it through his activity as a physician. Bezděk's philosophical thinking is a tool that allows him to give meaning to his medical work, but also allows him to be aware of the knowledge that is the basis for him to know himself and other people. Without self-knowledge, it would be impossible to

know others, and for Bezděk the ‘others’ were mainly his patients. That is why he was so interested in the psychology of the unconscious and why he tried to incorporate it into Medicine.

There is no doubt about Bezděk’s contributions and the good he did for people, which was also the reason why our first president noticed him and expressed his admiration for his work. However, in the following years, a materialistic worldview took over in Czechoslovakia and Bezděk was ignored, as was the case with Lossky in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution. But the relevance of their work, which became an important part of the history of the Czech nation, has not vanished.

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