

Jacek Moskalewicz

Abstract of interview

Virginia Berridge 13/10/21

Jacek Moskalewicz was trained as a social psychologist, although he was taught in sociology also by Zygmunt Bauman, who spent most of his life in the UK. His Masters degree focussed on the role of small groups and he moved into the field of industrial work sociology, trying to apply his research to real life in Polish factories. His first employment was in the team of Professor Adam Sarapata at the Institute of Organisation of the Machine Industry. He was involved in a study of automation and industrial workers with participation also from the US and the Soviet Union. The interview schedule on solving conflicts included mention of 'strikes', a word not used in relation to Poland. Shortly after when strikes broke out because of food shortages, the researchers were accused of encouraging them and his employment at the Institute became impossible.

He then became a member of staff in the Department of Studies on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence at the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology, thinking this might be a temporary interest. Ignacy Wald was a significant figure at the Institute. Thanks to his influence, a memorandum was signed with NIAAA which enabled travel to the US and meetings with American scientists.

He became involved in the International Study of Alcohol Control Experiences (ISACE), sponsored by WHO Euro and its regional adviser Jens Hannibal. He met many international figures through this study, which was led by Klaus Makela. This was also a very interesting time for drug studies as youth movements started to produce their own drugs, made from the Polish poppy. Monar, led by Marek Kotanski, was the first non government organisation established to prevent and treat drug addiction.

Poland was also one of the few countries in Europe which conducted population surveys on alcohol consumption. Jacek Moskalewicz was involved in alcohol issues during the period of Solidarity. During strikes in 1980, alcohol prohibition was adopted by strike committees. The authorities responded by decreasing the production of alcohol and consumption declined by 25 % in one year, followed by an even greater decline in alcohol harm. In talks between Solidarity and the authorities in the Gdansk region, he was a member both of the government expert group and of that of Solidarity. This was a fascinating period when both the symbolic and the practical meanings of alcohol were displayed. Later after 1989, when the market took over, then illicit supply started to grow.

ICAA (International Council of Alcohol and Addictions) Institutes were held in Poland from the late 1970's, the first since the inter war years. Out of these developed a separate Epidemiology section which had separate meetings beginning in 1982 in Finland and was called after Kjetil Bruun. Kjetil Bruun was an important person in his life and visited Poland just before he died in 1985.

Drug use also changed from being a hidden problem to a public one in the 1980's and HIV/AIDS also began to spread. NGOs had good relationships with foreign NGOs and needle exchange was supported by the Polish military government.

JM worked for WHO-Euro around this time in charge of preventing a programme of HIV drug abuse and infections in central and Eastern Europe, invited by Cees Goos. Collaboration also started with the European Union, including the ' Take Off' programme dealing with drugs prevention. He has since participated in many European collaborative initiatives including work on drug users in European prisons and the ALICE RAP initiative.