

**Davor Kovačić, Kriminal u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj [Crime in the Independent State of Croatia], (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2017)**

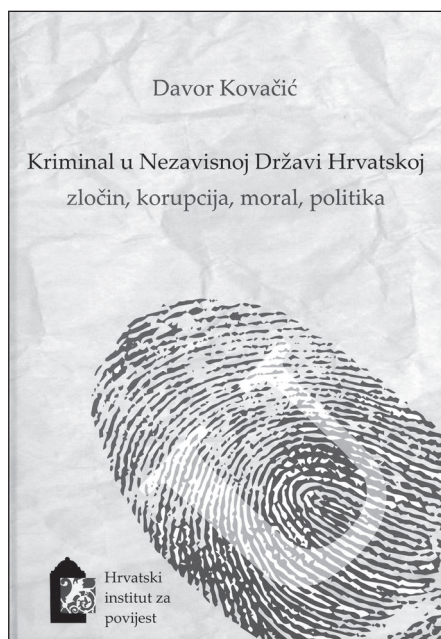
**Summary**

The emergence of the police and its functions is related to historical and social development. The basis for determining the function of the police throughout history is determining the scope of the term „public order and peace“ which encompasses: the protection of public law and order, repression against those who disrupt it, prevention of its disruption, creation and maintaining of conditions for stabilization of law and order.

The government of the Independent State of Croatia (better known under its Croatian acronym NDH), organized and modelled a repressive apparatus for crime suppression. By establishing the Central State Office for Suppression of Criminality it was desired to create a firm basis for defence of public safety from danger threatening the country, society, and also the individual from those who endanger life, health, freedom, honour, and property of citizens. According to statistical data published by the police authorities of NDH, the crime figure in NDH was satisfactory, especially talking into account severe circumstances. Difficult economic circumstances were a convenient environment for commission of criminal offenses. Thefts, frauds, robberies, and murders for personal gain were often motivated by fear for own existence. Severe criminal offenses more often occurred in more economically developed areas, especially in larger city centres, and there were fewer occurrences in rural areas.

For all the time in the NDH measures were taken against smugglers and illegal procurement of food. But such measures were not effective. In addition to corruption in the high circles nepotism was particularly prominent in NDH.

In addition to regular courts, there were also war courts, and court-martials as non-regular courts in the territory of the NDH. The Minister of Justice and Religious Affairs was in charge of the entire highest central administration and supervision of the penitentiaries and correctional institutions in the NDH, while a special department was formed within the Ministry of Justice and Religious Affairs that was in charge of



the activities of the penitentiaries and correctional facilities and technical issues associated with sentence serving. At the moment when the NDH was formed, there were four men's penitentiaries: in Lepoglava, Hrvatska Mitrovica, Stara Gradiška and Zenica, and there was one women's penitentiary in Zagreb. There were four correctional institutions for children and younger juveniles: the Correctional Institution for Children and Younger Juveniles in Pahinsko near Ivanec, men's institutions in Glina and Gospić, and the Correctional Institution for Children and Younger Juvenile Girls in Požega.

Immediately after the establishment of the NDH, a systematic and rational concentration of convicts was undertaken with the goal of minimizing the state's expenditures. Efforts were also made to endow the penalty of depriving persons of their liberty, in addition to repression and prevention, also with a correctional significance, so that the criminal, after having served his sentence, could return from the penitentiary into the society as a rectified man and become its useful member.

Zagreb was the political-administrative centre of the NDH during its four years of existence. Immediately following the establishment of the new state security measures were introduced to bring order to the city and increase the sense of security of its inhabitants. Due to wartime conditions the Zagreb police introduced decrees concerning curfews and blackouts which were enforced by sanctions against transgressors. At first, transgressors were fined, later they were incarcerated and taken away to do forced labour. Due to an influx of population and the growth in the amount of urban traffic the police attempted to bring order to this aspect of urban life also.

Such efforts by the authorities cannot be treated as government violence, or police terror, particularly not as aggression directed toward opponents of the regime. The government of the NDH carried out terror against its own citizens on the basis of racial origins, but also against those who dared to question the laws, regulations and policies of the Ustaša regime.