

How the “Richta Team” Was Born: The Scientific and Technological Revolution and Political Decision-making in Czechoslovak Reform Communism

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SUMMARY

The following article is a case study on the relationship between expertise and political decision-making in the “Eastern Bloc.” It focuses on the attempt to reform state socialism, which took place in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. This effort was linked to the extensive involvement of experts in the policy-making of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz). Using the example of the research on the “Scientific and Technological Revolution” (STR), headed by philosopher Radovan Richta, this article examines the close ties between high politics and knowledge production in state socialism. This article analyzes the STR project from the perspective of the intellectual history of Reform Communism and situates the STR theory in a broader context of post-Stalinist political thought. In its second part this study examines how the STR research team was established. This institutional history shows that the STR project was not only the result of intellectual and political aspirations of reform-oriented intellectuals, but also emerged as a consequence of the attempt of the Party leadership to revitalize its central ideology apparatus. The efforts to update the official ideology, in order to react to the demise of Stalinism and to promote new economic policies, resulted in the establishment of an intellectually innovative and internationally acclaimed research project, which provided a theoretical background for far-reaching reform policies of the Prague Spring era.

KEYWORDS: state socialism, Czechoslovakia, Prague Spring, 1968, Scientific and Technological Revolution, Radovan Richta

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Almost everywhere, political decision-making is currently an important topic of research on economic and political thought after 1945. Works on the intellectual history of the Cold War have extensively analyzed what is generally called “Cold War social science,” which examined human decision-making from various perspectives. Whether these have entailed highly theoretical research on strategic rationality, as, for example, in game theory, or questions linked to predicting economic and social processes, social scientists have sought to determine how to achieve a state in which individuals or institutions would be able to make rational decisions in an increasingly complex and interlinked world. The interest of scholars and strategists in decision-making and rationality has been expressed not merely as a theoretical exercise but also as political activity. The modern state created a high demand for expert knowledge that would make it possible to have greater control over different political, social, and economic phenomena and it thus sought to create the prerequisites for more efficient government. Historians have so far explored these questions in the context of the contemporary history of the United States and Western Europe. We consequently have works about the history of game theory, rational choice theory, and American military research.¹ Far more modest in volume is the literature exploring similar topics on the other side of the “Iron Curtain.”² The relationship between expert knowledge and government in state socialism thus continues to be a wide-open topic.

The following article is a case study on the relationship between expertise and political decision-making in the “Eastern Bloc.” We have focused on the attempt to reform state socialism, which took place in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. The efforts to create a “new socialism,” which began in the first half of the 1960s and reached its peak in the Prague Spring of 1968, were linked to the extensive involvement of experts in the policy-making of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz). Just as in liberal capitalism, so too in state socialism was the topic of decision-making important and no less controversial. State socialism sought to establish its legitimacy on a vision of a new socialist democracy, in which the working class would hold political power, but at the same time create a political system based on a hierarchical,

¹ SONJA M. AMADAE: *Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism*, Chicago 2003; EADEM: *Prisoners of Reason: Game Theory and Neoliberal Political Economy*, New York 2016; HUNTER HEYCK: *Age of System: Understanding the Development of Modern Social Science*, Baltimore 2015; PAUL ERICKSON, JUDY L. KLEIN, LORRAINE DASTON, REBECCA LEMOV, THOMAS STURM, MICHAEL D. GORDIN: *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality*, Chicago 2013.

² PETER C. CALDWELL: *Dictatorship, State Planning, and Social Theory in the German Democratic Republic*, New York 2003; SLAVA GEROVITCH: *From Newspeak to Cyber-speak: History of Soviet Cybernetics*, Cambridge/MA 2002; BENJAMIN PETERS: *How Not to Network a Nation: The Uneasy History of the Soviet Internet*, Cambridge/MA 2016; EGLÉ RINDZEVICIŪTĖ: *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World*, Ithaca/NY 2016.

centralized and bureaucratic apparatus. From the perspective of the study of political decision-making in state socialism, the contradiction between the promise of power in the hands of the people and the reality of the dictatorship of the Party apparatus was the fundamental starting point for a critique of the existing power hierarchies.

Although in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s no debate focused exclusively on political decision-making took place, the questions of who was supposed to have decision-making power in socialist society and how political decision-making should be organized were among the basic dilemmas of Reform Communism. In this article we focus on the important problem of reformist theory and political practice, which was the relationship between knowledge production on the one hand and political power on the other, in other words, the question of the extent to which experts influenced political decision-making.³ In the years of what became known as the Czechoslovak reform period, the link between politics and expertise was most visibly represented by four expert teams, each of which was concerned with a different area, namely, economic reform, the reform of the political system, the social stratification of Czechoslovak society, and the social impact of the "scientific and technological revolution" (STR).⁴

³ For more on this point, see MARTIN FRANČ: *Pod dohledem vědců? Snahy ČSAV o expertizaci politického a hospodářského rozhodování v druhé polovině šedesátých let 20. století* [Under the Supervision of Scientists? The Efforts of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences to Promote Expertise in the Field of Economic Decision Making in the Second Half of the 1960s], in: IVANA LORENCOVÁ, MICHAL NOVOTNÝ (eds.): *Věda a technika v Československu v 60. letech 20. století*, Praha 2011, pp. 19–24.

⁴ The team led by the economist Ota Šik rehabilitated the "market" as an economics concept in Czechoslovakia and attempted to introduce into the economy some market mechanisms that in the future would cancel out the need for a vast control apparatus; they gave priority to experts and created an entirely new role for trade unions, workers and managers. Zdeněk Mlynář (1930–1997), a political scientist, led a team that planned the transformation of the socialist dictatorship into a system that was a specially modified pluralist democracy, in which two political parties would compete for power on the basis of socialism. A team of sociologists led by Pavel Machonin (1927–2008) used empirical evidence to question the scheme of the socialist class structure from which the principle of the "leading role of the Party" had been derived. For the development of the four teams, see JIŘÍ HOPPE, MARKÉTA ŠKODOVÁ, JIŘÍ SUK, FRANCESCO CACCAMO: "O nový československý model socialismu": Čtyři interdisciplinární vědecké týmy při ČSAV a UK v 60. letech ["Concerning the New Czechoslovak Model of Socialism": Four Interdisciplinary Research Teams at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and Charles University in the 1960s], Praha 2015. For fundamental works on the intellectual background of reform communism in Czechoslovakia, see H. GORDON SKILLING: *Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution*, Princeton 1976; VLADIMÍR V. KUSIN: *The Intellectual Origins of the Prague Spring: The Development of Reformist Ideas in the Czechoslovakia 1956–1967*, Cambridge 1971; PETER HRUBY: *Fools and Heroes: The Changing Role of Communist Intellectuals in Czechoslovakia*, Oxford 1980.

We focus on the last of the above-mentioned expert teams, which was led by the philosopher Radovan Richta. The “Richta team” investigated the influence that scientific progress and technological changes had exerted on the life of society, and, at the same time, sought to formulate a political program that would lead to the building of socialist post-industrialism.⁵ We shall try to demonstrate how the work of the “Richta team” contributed to the political program of the Prague Spring and how the interaction between the Party leadership and academia enabled the establishment and intellectual as well as political prominence of the STR research project.

Using the example of the STR research in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s, this article examines the close ties between high politics and knowledge production in state socialism. In the first part of this article we will analyze the STR project from the perspective of the intellectual history of Reform Communism. In the context of the history of Czechoslovak post-Stalinism, Richta’s research was part of a much broader trend, the aim of which was to rethink Marxism and create a new ideology of socialism that would help to find answers to questions that had arisen as part of the critique of Stalinism. We will also situate the STR theory within the broader context of post-Stalinist political thought.

In the following part we will examine how the STR research team was established. This institutional history, which happened simultaneously with the changes in Marxist theory described in the first part, will show that the STR project was not only the result of intellectual and political aspirations of reform-oriented intellectuals, but also emerged as consequence of the attempt of the Party leadership to revitalize its central ideology apparatus. The effort to update the official ideology, in order to react to the demise of Stalinism and to promote new economic policies, resulted in the establishment of an intellectually innovative and internationally acclaimed research project, which provided a theoretical background for far-reaching reform policies of the Prague Spring era. Our aim here is to discuss the emergence of the “Richta team” in the broader context of the political history of Czechoslovak Reform Communism.

⁵ Radovan Richta (1924–1983) was interned in a concentration camp during the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia for his work in the Předvoj (Vanguard) resistance group. From the end of the war, in 1945, to 1950, he attended Charles University, Prague, receiving his doctorate in 1953. From 1945 onwards, he was a functionary in Party organizations. From 1948 to 1954, he was an editor at *Tvorba*, the communist arts and politics weekly, and on the editorial board of *Rudé právo*, the central Communist Party daily. He was later the head of the Department of Social Sciences at the Ministry of Education and a member of the Party committee to found a Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. In 1954, as the head of the department of dialectical materialism, he moved to the Institute of Philosophy at the Academy. Beginning in April 1965, Richta conducted research on the “social and human aspects of the scientific and technological revolution.”

In its two interrelated parts this article seeks to show that Richta's intellectually stimulating contribution to Marxist humanism was closely interconnected with economic reform policies and with the Party leadership's efforts to build—with the involvement of various bureaucratic bodies in the Party apparatus and academia—a new, reform-friendly official ideological framework.⁶ This article shows that the burst of reformist intellectual creativity in Czechoslovak academia was closely interwoven with rather pragmatic needs of the central ideological apparatus of the CPCz. Our text shows that the intellectual transformation in academia and the change of official CPCz policy in the field of ideology happened simultaneously and in close mutual communication. As a consequence of these two processes the STR research team headed by Radovan Richta was born.

From de-Stalinization to Post-industrial Society: The Scientific and Technological Revolution in the Context of Postwar Political and Social Thought

The beginnings of the involvement of experts in the building of a “new socialism” have to be sought in the second half of the 1950s, when the Party elite, in connection with developments in the Soviet Union, adopted the program of “scientizing” government by means of greater emphasis on the application of scientifically acquired knowledge in political practice. This shift was linked with de-Stalinization, which set itself against the Stalinist theory of “intensifying the class struggle” and political practice that linked the building of socialism with mass political violence. The conclusion of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), which took place in October 1961, was of fundamental importance for Czechoslovakia.

⁶ This article presents the outcomes of our two long-term research projects—Vítězslav Sommer's research on intellectual history of the STR in the context of technocratic thought and policies in Czechoslovakia between 1956 and 1989, and Jiří Hoppe's analysis of institutional and political history of the STR project in the 1960s. We aim, for the first time, to interconnect these two research perspectives in one coherent account of the emergence of Radovan Richta's STR project and the so-called “Richta's team” in the first half of the 1960s. For our earlier publications, see, for example, JIŘÍ HOPPE: Radovan Richta a mezioborový tým pro výzkum společenských a lidských souvislostí vědeckotechnické revoluce: proč a jak vznikla Civilizace na rozcestí [Radovan Richta and the Interdisciplinary Team for the Research on Social and Human Contexts of the Scientific and Technological Revolution: Why and How the Civilisation at the Crossroads Was Written], in: IDEM/ŠKODOVÁ/SUK/CACCAMO (as in footnote 4), pp. 44–76; VÍTEZSLAV SOMMER: “Are we still behaving as revolutionaries?” Radovan Richta, Theory of Revolution and Dilemmas of Reform Communism in Czechoslovakia, in: *Studies in East European Thought* 69 (2017), 1, pp. 93–110; IDEM: Scientists of the World, Unite!: Radovan Richta's Theory of Scientific and Technological Revolution, in: ELANA ARONOVA, SIMONE TURCHETTI (eds.): *Science Studies during the Cold War and Beyond: Paradigms Defected*, New York 2016, pp. 177–204.

The new program of the CPSU, represented by Nikita Khrushchev, emphasized the importance that science and new technologies had for the further development of socialism. The aim was to “catch up with and overtake” the developed capitalist countries in all economic indices, including the standard of living of the population, and to almost finish the building of communism by 1980. The Czechoslovak President and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPCz, Antonín Novotný (1904–1975), paraphrasing Khrushchev at a session of the Central Committee in November 1961, declared with great pomp: “We too have said that the current generation here will live in communism.”⁷ According to Novotný, Czechoslovak GDP by 1980 would grow fourfold and this leap would take place by means of technological and scientific innovations.

The idea of governing by expertise did not, however, originate only in the optimistic post-Stalinist visions rooted in the Soviet “New Course” and the techno-optimism of the period. Calls for scientists and other experts to become more involved in political decision-making were also a reaction to the serious problems of socialism, especially in the economy. In the same period, as Khrushchev and Novotný were talking about overtaking the capitalist countries and about the approaching communist future, the unrealistic third five-year plan in Czechoslovakia for 1961 to 1965 began to collapse. This had a disastrous impact on a large number of enterprises. There followed a two-percent drop in GDP, the first since 1945, at the very moment when, for example, West Germany was experiencing its “economic miracle.”

Fears of the social and economic consequences of the depression, especially a possible decline in the standard of living of the population, forced the CPCz leadership to search for ways out of the economic crisis. In 1964 the project for economic reform was born, which became the driving force of all other reform efforts, including the STR project. The economists, led by an economist, senior Party functionary, and the best-known proponent of Czechoslovak reform economics Ota Šik (1919–2004), began to think about a “new system” of managing the economy, and gradually came up with a solution that it would be fair to call “market socialism.”⁸ The importance of economic questions for the launching of the reform activities was pointed out by

⁷ Usnesení a dokumenty ÚV KSČ od celostátní konference KSČ 1960 do XII. sjezdu KSČ [Resolutions and Documents of the Central Committee of the CPCz from the National Conference of the CPCz in 1960 to the 12th Congress of the CPCz], vol. 2, Praha 1962, p. 43.

⁸ ZDISLAV ŠULC: *Stručné dějiny ekonomických reforem v Československu (České republice) 1945–1995* [Short History of Economic Reforms in Czechoslovakia (Czech Republic) 1945–1989], Brno 1998; MARTIN MYANT: *The Czechoslovak Economy, 1948–1988: The Battle for Economic Reform*, Cambridge 1989; JIŘÍ SUK: *Veřejné záchodky ze zlata: Konflikt mezi komunistickým utopismem a ekonomickou racionalitou v předprnovém Československu* [Public Toilets Made of Gold: The Conflict Between Communist Utopianism and Economic Rationality in Czechoslovakia before August 1968], Praha 2016.

the leading reform economist Otakar Turek (1927–2018): “Thus in a double sense the economic situation itself accelerated the transition to a new system of management. On the one hand it set the requirement to work out a reform of the method of management as an urgent social requirement (a ‘dictate of society’ [*společenská objednávka*]); on the other hand—and this is particularly important—it accelerated the process of bringing about a change in people’s thinking, the shaping of their opinions about the causes of economic difficulties.”⁹ The activities of Richta and his collaborators were thus significantly influenced by the idea that successful economic reform, as prepared by Šik’s research team, was absolutely crucial for the introduction of other reform proposals, the post-industrial vision of the STR among them.

As we have seen, part of the reform agenda was the conviction that politicians and economists must make greater use of science and the latest technologies. The aim of this endeavor was to mobilize the relatively extensive Czechoslovak “scientific and research base,” which, in 1967, consisted of 147,000 people.¹⁰ The role of social scientists as experts analyzing the social and political contexts and consequences of technological or economic change seemed to be of the utmost importance for this modernization project. When, in May 1969, an inventory was taken of the research activities in the social sciences, members of the Party apparatus ascertained that, since 1966, a total of 161 expert teams had been created and were working on 65 research projects.¹¹

The research team led by Richta had the task of analyzing how it would be possible to use the Czechoslovak research infrastructure for the purposes of reform politics and what impact the scientizing of government would have on society, from changes in the occupational structure to the fundamental transformation of human life in the post-industrial future. The chief aim of the “Richta team” was to register the economic, technological, and social changes that were either planned or already under way and, on the basis of them, to indicate the road to the socialism of the future.

⁹ OTAKAR TUREK: O plánu, trhu a hospodářské politice [On Plan, Market, and Economic Policy], in: *Ekonomická revue* 2 (1967), 10, pp. 440–441, here p. 441.

¹⁰ LENKA KALINOVÁ: Sociální reforma a sociální realita v Československu v šedesátých letech [Social Reform and Social Reality in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s], Praha 1998, p. 44. In 1967, Czechoslovakia had 14,305,000 inhabitants. See: *Statistická ročenka Československé socialistické republiky 1968* [Czechoslovak Statistical Yearbook 1968], Praha 1968, p. 23.

¹¹ Přehled o stavu výzkumných úkolů v oblasti společenských věd od roku 1966 z 30. května 1969 [Overview of Research Tasks in Social Sciences since 1966, 30 May 1969], in: *Archiv Ústavu pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR (AÚSD)* [Archive of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences], *Sbírka Komise vlády ČSFR pro analýzu událostí let 1967–1970* [The Committee of the Government of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic for the Analysis of the Events of 1967–1970], signatura (sg.) [signature] SIII/112, příloha (př.) [supplement] IV/a, pp. 1–12. The authors of the document point out that the information may be incomplete.

Before we describe the emergence of the STR research team, it is necessary to outline the intellectual background of Richa's project and its main theoretical contributions. The Czechoslovak theory of the STR originated in several sources straddling the philosophy of science, political philosophy, and the contemporary sociology of industrial societies. A Marxist philosopher, Richa was most inspired at a theoretical level by Marx's *Grundrisse*, a work that is also concerned with the relationship between the development of the forces of production and the current state of scientific knowledge.¹² Another important source was the works of the British molecular biologist, crystallographer and Marxist historian of science, John Desmond Bernal (1901–1971), which examine the social role of scientific knowledge and emphasize the importance of science in historical development.¹³ Richa's conviction that science and technology are distinctive factors in political and social change came out of this intellectual tradition. Richa and his colleagues kept abreast of contemporary Western sociology and political science, investigating the operation and development potential of developed industrial societies. Czechoslovak scholars carefully read the works of Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas, Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell, and Walt W. Rostow, and sought to come up with a concept that would respond to this direction of research from the positions of the social sciences investigating socialist society.¹⁴

Another important source of inspiration was literature from the fields of cybernetics, organization studies, systems theory, social psychology, and also the theory of architecture and urbanism. Richa and his colleagues aimed to comprehensively chart out modern societies and current thinking about their future course from transformations of labor to the shape of the physical environment in which each individual's life would take place. Czechoslovak STR research must, however, be considered together with local revisionist Marxism and reform-communist political thinking. Richa was following on from the Soviet Party program presented at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU and his project was closely linked with the intellectual de-Stalinization that was manifested in Czechoslovakia particularly by the development of Marxist humanism.¹⁵ In the broader context of the Czechoslovak social sciences it is reasonable to link Richa's research also with the contemporary futurological literature that tried, in connection to Khrushchev's historical optimism, to offer an

¹² For the Czech edition, see KARL MARX: Rukopisy "Grundrisse": Ekonomické rukopisy z let 1857–1859, transl. by MOJMÍR HRBEK and RUTH HRBKOVÁ, Praha 1971–1977. Richa wrote the preface to this Czech translation, entitled "Marxova cesta revoluční kritiky" [Marx's Trajectory of Revolutionary Critique], *ibidem*, pp. 7–25.

¹³ See JOHN D. BERNAL: *The Social Function of Science*, London 1939, and *IDEM: Science in History*, London 1954.

¹⁴ Of Czech writing on theories of industrial societies, see JINDŘICH FILIPEK: *Industriální společnost v sociologické diskuzi* [Industrial Society in Sociological Discussion], Praha 1967.

¹⁵ JAN MERVART: *Czechoslovak Marxist Humanism and the Revolution*, in: *Studies in East European Thought* 69 (2017), 1, pp. 111–126.

account of how life would appear in the near future in a socialist and, later, a communist system.¹⁶

Reform intellectuals came out in support of the humanist legacy of Marxism and at the same time in support of a return to its allegedly scientific essence. Whereas the humanist perspective saw the emancipation of human beings as the main task of the new socialism, the emphasis on scientific quality was mainly a criticism of the political and intellectual practice of Stalinism, which, in the view of the reformers, had failed to acknowledge the importance of the facts and, instead of real theoretical thinking and scientific knowledge of the world, had built a rigid system of incontestable dogmas. Richta and other reform intellectuals belonged to the generation of communist activists who had actively participated in the antifascist resistance during the Second World War and in the building of Stalinism after 1948. The attempt to create a new conception of socialism was partly self-criticism of their earlier political and intellectual involvement and at the same time it was also its continuation. As elite representatives of the Party intelligentsia, they endeavored to find a new perspective for the political project that, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, had reluctantly tried to come to terms with the legacy of the political violence of Stalinism, confronted economic problems, and identified socialism with the government of the state and Party bureaucracy.

Investigating the STR was originally Richta's personal research interest. In 1963 it resulted in the publication of two important little books, *Člověk a technika v revoluci našich dnů* (Man and Technology in the Revolution of our Days) and *Komunismus a proměny lidského života (K povaze humanismu naší doby)* (Communism and the Transformations of Human Life: On the Nature of the Humanism of Our Time).¹⁷ These works presented his conception of the scientific and technological revolution, which the work of the "Richta team" later followed on from. The basis of Richta's theory was the conception of science as a "direct productive force," which would gradually play a key role in the creation of economic and social reality. Putting scientific knowledge into practice would lead to the extensive automation of production, completely changing the form of human labor and thus human life. The transition to automated production would provide human beings with more free time and also present them with new challenges, particularly in the fields of education and the self-development of each individual. According to

¹⁶ See GUSTAV BAREŠ: *Zrození atomového věku: Obavy a naděje* [Birth of the Nuclear Age: Fears and Hopes], Praha 1958; ARNOŠT KOLMAN: *Výhledy do budoucna* [Prospects in the Future], Praha 1962; RADOSLAV SELUCKÝ: *Každému chléb, každému růže* [Bread and Roses for All], Praha 1963.

¹⁷ RADOVAN RICHTA: *Člověk a technika v revoluci našich dnů* [Man and Technology in the Revolution of Our Days], Praha 1963; IDEM: *Komunismus a proměny lidského života: K povaze humanismu naší doby* [Communism and the Transformations of Human Life: On the Nature of the Humanism of Our Time], Praha 1963.

Richta, overcoming manual labor and classic industrial production would ultimately lead not only to the establishment of a socialist post-industrial society, but also to a different human subjectivity. The new form of productive forces would require more educated and autonomously acting individuals—the worker on the assembly line, the symbol of traditional industrialism, would be substituted for by the scientist or coordinator of automated operations.

The most important consequence of their researching the STR was the book *Civilizace na rozcestí* (Civilization at the Crossroads, 1966).¹⁸ Although it was officially a group effort, the book was mainly written by Richta and it further develops the ideas that he presented in his two books from three years before. *Civilizace* was published in three editions (1966, 1967, and 1969) with a total of 70,000 copies. It was extraordinarily well received at home and, after it was published in English, German, French, Italian, and other languages, outside the country too. The basic idea of the book is based on the conviction that contemporary industrial civilization was the turning point that would bring about change not only in the relations of production, that is, in the elimination of class contradictions and the achievement of mutual cooperation amongst people and their development in society, but also structural change in production, that is, the position of the human individual in the production process. In the “modern basis of civilization,” according to Richta, there exists an “inner nodal line of growth,” that is, a kind of extreme limit beyond which the basic bonds and proportions in the position of a human being change. *Civilizace* observes the “laws” of contemporary industrial civilization, and undertakes to reveal these limits, which, according to Richta, were at that time already apparent. In analytical contrast, the book compares the existing results of the industrial revolution with the anticipated impact that the STR will have on society and individuals. From these effects, Richta deduces the need for far-reaching innovations, for which “developed” socialism opened up an “infinite number of possibilities,” and which would relate mainly to the economy.¹⁹

Richta bases his analysis of civilizational change on the claim that it is chiefly the forces of production that are changing, that is, materials, machines, and infrastructure, together with human abilities and knowledge of how to produce. The industrial revolution was characterized mainly by the systematic innovation of means of production. The essence of the STR consists in the movement that runs counter to the industrial revolution and results in the continuous universal transformation of the forces of production and the structures connected with them. Since science has become the main force of production, production itself reaches the level of the technological application

¹⁸ RADOVAN RICHTA et al.: *Civilizace na rozcestí: společenské a lidské souvislosti vědeckotechnické revoluce* [Civilization at the Crossroads: Social and Human Implications of the Scientific and Technological Revolution], Praha 1969. In this article, we work with the expanded and definitive edition of *Civilization*, which was published in 1969.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 11–12.

of science. What stands between human beings and nature is no longer only tools; it is the whole production process.

Richta calls this the "automatic principle," which eliminates human beings from immediate production and moves them to the role of operators and programmers, and, later, design engineers and researchers.²⁰ The result would be the non-stop, fully automated factory. According to Richta, only automation would put technology on a level that would enable the universal development of human powers, aiming for a classless society and therefore fully corresponding to the requirements of life in communism. The STR was a social revolution, an organic part of the communist revolution, one of its phases and forms.²¹ The real interest of workers in the growth of productivity of all work in society on the basis of a well-planned system of economic stimuli was to be the driving force. Such a system, Richta notes, "was not, however, fully realized in the socialist countries." In a fundamental turn to the scientific and technological revolution, "the new system of planned management was to have the key position." Richta therefore basically tied the early days of the STR in Czechoslovakia to the success of economic reform.²²

As should be clear from the foregoing discussion, Richta also anticipated far-reaching changes in the structure of work qualifications, education, free time, the quality of life, and also the political system. The STR, for him, merged "with the greatest cultural revolution in history so far," that is, the revolution in the minds of the citizens, in which socialism (and, in the future, communism) would overtake capitalism, if the "technological orientation, the structure of interests, rational society-wide organization of production and consumption, incentives to energetic activity, and so forth" were single-mindedly directed toward that possibility.²³ In this sense, it was necessary also to modify Party control and to coordinate it with the demands of the STR. Richta recommends introducing comprehensive scientific control (social engineering) and systematically building a "socio-scientific base," particularly a theory of labor, anthropology, the theory of growth and human development, management studies, general technology, and the theory of civilization and culture.²⁴ Richta concluded that all of society should share in the creation of social prospects with the broad-based participation of scientists, technicians, and other experts in various fields, aimed at the conscious modelling of the future. Collective and eloquently communicated prospects would make science, technology, and education highly attractive, but would also greatly increase both the attractiveness of communism and the authority of the Party as the guiding force of development.²⁵

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 20.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 38.

²² Ibidem, pp. 61–63.

²³ Ibidem, p. 91.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 149.

²⁵ Ibidem, pp. 156–159.

The STR theory indicated far-reaching consequences for political decision-making. Richta emphasized that the new form of production and human existence stemming from it would necessarily require a different conception of governance. The demanding transition to a technologically advanced post-industrial society required that scientists and scholars would themselves take part in political decision-making and generally in the management of this social transformation, for they, unlike people who were bureaucrats by vocation or manual laborers, had the qualifications to understand the changes currently under way and also to control them effectively. The STR theory therefore emphasized even more the need for expertise in governance in the sense of the wide application of scientific knowledge in political practice. From this notion stems the inevitable tendency of development to strengthen the political influence of the social stratum of educated specialists.

The new form of human labor was also supposed to exert an important influence on the operation of political decision-making. Since human labor was meant to be of an increasingly intellectual nature, the means of making political decisions had necessarily to reflect this change. Political decision-making was meant to be a scientific activity, a sophisticated analysis of social or economic reality. Thanks to the higher level of education and also to more leisure, the citizen of the socialist post-industrial society was supposed to be a more socially involved actor with greater political participation and political responsibility. Richta assumed that in the future each individual would be more involved in political life and also that the role of expertise and external assessment by scholars in political decision-making would be emphasized.

The notion of a new conception of politics had potentially far-reaching consequences for the distribution of power in state socialism. If political decision-making was to be scientific, the educational background of the members of the state and Party apparatus had necessarily to be fundamentally transformed. How would the Party officials at that time come to terms with the transition to the new model of politics? And how demanding would this great transformation be for the working class, which was meant to be the leading social stratum in socialism, but, according to Richta, was, because of automation, condemned to inevitable decline? Although the STR theory was raising these controversial questions, it enjoyed the considerable favor of the Party leadership and by the mid-1960s became an intellectual basis of the reform policies. The relationship between the Party leadership and the Richta project, that is, the politically institutional background of the emergence of *Civilizace* and its importance for Party policy, will be considered in the following part of this article. We shall try to demonstrate that the boom in STR research stemmed not only from the creative transformation of Marxist political and economic thought in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but also from the Party leadership's need to find a new ideological framework that would enable it to surmount the deep crisis of the political doctrine of the CPCz.

The "Richta Team": Organization and the Political Role of Experts

The previous part of this article outlined the intellectual history of the STR. These theoretical exercises also played a significant role in the political history of reform communism. The content of Richta's works suggests that his theory was closely connected with the crisis of Marxism-Leninism after 1956, when the erstwhile comprehensive and authoritative aggregate of definitions and rules was gradually losing validity.²⁶ It was approximately at the same time that Richta started to outline his STR theory when this ideological fluctuation caused uncertainty about how to determine the Party line. It led to frequent changes when declaring political aims, economic policies, and organizational measures. The "leading role of the Party" was narrowed down to banning, censoring, and ordering, and perhaps every Czechoslovak citizen could then see with his or her own eyes the discrepancies between Party policy in theory and in practice.²⁷ The crisis of ideology constituted a challenge for Marxist theorists and propagandists, but at the same time disrupted the social legitimacy of the regime.

The instability of ideology led to attempts to fill the vacuum with something new. As we have seen, Soviet political thought had gone the furthest in this sense. At the latest by 1961, it had begun to work with a new vision of the future, which had a direct impact on Czechoslovakia too. The socialist vision of development, however, did not correspond to economic reality. Almost immediately after President Novotný, together with the CPCz leadership, announced his support for the results of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, that is, for the promise of a speedy and substantial improvement in the standard of living, the third five-year plan fell apart. Novotný, at an April 1962 session of the Central Committee of the CPCz, bitterly noted, on behalf of the Politburo, that the "current state of the national economy is characterized by the no longer bearable tension between the resources and the needs of society" and that it would "be necessary to reduce the tempo of the development of our national economy."²⁸

The Czechoslovak leadership therefore adjusted the annual plans for 1962 and 1963, and decided that a seven-year plan would be announced for the years 1964 to 1970. Several months before the 12th Congress of the CPCz it was, then, mainly a matter of "balancing out the national economy, creating a firm economic basis, and developing socialist society upon that." Considerations about an accelerated elaboration of their own CPCz program, similar to what the Soviet Communists had, were for the moment put on the back burn-

²⁶ KAREL KAPLAN: *Kronika komunistického Československa. Kořeny reformy 1956–1968: Společnost a moc* [The Chronicle of Communist Czechoslovakia. The Origins of Reform 1956–1968: Society and Power], Brno 2008, pp. 602–603.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 604, 608.

²⁸ *Usnesení a dokumenty ÚV KSČ* (as in footnote 7), pp. 226, 231.

er.²⁹ The institutional and political history of the STR research was thus firmly interconnected with the Party leadership's attempt to rebuild the central ideology apparatus in order to find a way out of this crisis of ideology. In the early 1960s, it was necessary to invent a new ideological framework in order to rationalize the introduction of economic reform policies.

Discussion before the approaching 12th Congress of the CPCz was stimulated by the Central Committee of the Party with an August 1962 paper entitled "The Prospects of the Further Development of Our Socialist Society." This document assigned the key role in the growth of the economy and the further increase in the standard of living to technological innovations supported by the results of science and technology. A huge growth in new scientific and technological knowledge was meant to be provided by a substantial expansion of the research base. By 1970 a great number of workplaces were meant to be created in science and research as well as a network of scientific institutions.³⁰ Among the topics that the document explicitly tells scientists and other scholars to devote themselves to soon were the "social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution." This is perhaps the first time that the topic was mentioned in a Party document.³¹

The 12th Congress of the CPCz, at which some of the conclusions of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU were originally to be "elaborated," took place in December 1962. Shortly before the congress, there occurred the spectacular, popularly mocked, and highly symbolic dynamiting of the gigantic Stalin monument in Prague in November 1962—at that point the most visible Czechoslovak response to Khrushchev's second phase of "de-Stalinization." The congress program was substantially influenced by the unfavorable state of the Czechoslovak economy. The President of Czechoslovakia and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPCz, Novotný, recommended that the congress "concentrate mainly on the general development of the national economy, problems of organization, and the managerial relationships in the management of the State and the economy, consider and generalize the results of the discussion amongst workers with the aim of eliminating everything that has proved to be unsuitable, wrong, or bad in the life of our country."³²

The congress concluded by defining an eleven-point "general line" for the economy up to 1970, marked by efforts to surmount the recession, an emphasis on the universal application of the latest discoveries and inventions of science and technology in production and in the improvement of political decision-making.³³ The discussions and resolutions of the 12th Congress did not yet come up with specific measures for how to ideologically influence the

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 254.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 372.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 394.

³² XII. sjezd Komunistické strany Československa [12th Congress of the CPCz], Praha 1963, pp. 28–29.

³³ Ibidem, pp. 32–35.

general population in a new way in the coming transition from socialism to communism in Czechoslovakia. In addition to the economic "general line," the Congress resolutions state that "scientific and technological progress" was of decisive importance for the development of the economy and society. The congress also declared its intention to improve both the equipment of scientific institutions and the specialist qualifications of their employees.³⁴

In April 1963, the presidium of the Central Committee of the CPCz adopted a resolution stating that problems in the area of ideology required the creation of a special ideology commission with extraordinary powers. Members of the Central Committee were supposed to play an active role in the solution of all key social questions and in the preparation, debating, and implementation of Party resolutions, rigorously in keeping with the principles of "collective leadership." The suitable means to establish the new conception of political decision-making seemed to be "the establishment of authoritative specialized commissions of the Central Committee, composed both of its members and of other political workers and leading specialists, which will comprehensively search for and elaborate solutions to the fundamental problems of development in the individual spheres of the life of our socialist society."³⁵ These commissions resulted from efforts to come up with a stopgap management that would take into account the points of view of society and the State as a whole, surmount various particularistic interests (for example, of individual ministries or localities), and also find a substitute for the often criticized "administratively bureaucratic methods" of governance.³⁶ On the basis of the directives of the Central Committee and its presidium, the ideology commission took responsibility for the organization and supervision of the whole "field of ideology" in Czechoslovakia.

The CPCz leadership expected that the establishment of specialized commissions would lead to substantially more efficient governance at all levels. The commissions were meant to provide the state and Party bodies with a binding conceptual program and, on the whole, update and monitor the political line of "building a developed socialist society." Another aim was to attract to the commission more experts from outside the Party apparatus, who would be a positive influence on the operation of these new political institutions. At the same time, behind the establishment of specialist commissions there may have been the idea that the participation of experts would ultimately "dilute" the overall responsibility of the Party leadership somewhat. The Central Committee and its presidium, however, retained direct supervision over the newly

³⁴ Ibidem, pp. 644–646.

³⁵ Usnesení a dokumenty Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa: Od listopadu 1962 do konce roku 1963 [Resolutions and Documents of the Central Committee of the CPCz: From November 1962 to the End of 1963], Praha 1964, p. 467.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 467–468.

established commissions, including the final approval of their briefs and decisions.³⁷

The ideology commission, reorganized in September 1963 (with 39 members), was led in turn by the Central Committee secretaries, Vladimír Koucký (1920–1979) and Jiří Hendrych (1913–1979). It was where sessions were held, on the one hand, with Central Committee members or candidates and, on the other, with important representatives of the social-science institutes of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ČSAV) and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAV), universities, and other institutions, for example, the historians Jaroslav Kládiva (1919–1987) and Josef Macek (1922–1991), the biochemist and chairman of the ČSAV František Šorm (1913–1980), the director of the Institute of Philosophy at the ČSAV, Vladimír Ruml (1923–1993), and, later, the microbiologist and Vice-Chairman of the ČSAV, Ivan Málek (1909–1994).³⁸

Evidence that the Party leadership paid considerable attention to the sphere of ideology is provided by the next plenum of the Central Committee of the CPCz. The session, held in December 1963 under the slogan “On Current Questions of the Ideological Work of the Party,” emphasized that, in connection with the announced transition from socialism to communism, the importance of “ideological work” had increased; its most important mission was the upbringing and education of the “new communist man and woman.” According to the Party leadership, this activity was “not proceeding satisfactorily” and did “not meet the high demands of the current development of our society.”³⁹ The Party headquarters called for a greater deployment of the whole Party, of every communist, because “ideological work is a direct part of all Party activity.” Again one heard the argument that the “decisive role in the development of the material technological base of our society belongs to science and technology.”⁴⁰

According to the resolution, the whole Party was to strive to ensure that “the socially important questions of science and technology penetrate the consciousness of our workers” and was also to help put the findings of science into practice. Especially mass media, social organizations, and bodies of state power were to take part in these tasks, to ensure “that every worker, farmer, or technician would know the next tasks and auspicious intentions of our Party and participate in making them a reality.”⁴¹ The intelligentsia was to be the vehicle of the STR. Consequently, the resolution promised to support

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 471.

³⁸ Národní archiv (NA) [National Archives], fond (f.) [collection] 10/5, Ideologická komise ÚV KSČ 1958–1968 (inventár) [Archival Inventory of the Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the CPCz 1958–1968], pp. VIII–X.

³⁹ Usnesení a dokumenty Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa (as in footnote 35), p. 521.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, pp. 522, 529.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 530.

higher education.⁴² A particularly important role was to be played in the near future by the social sciences.⁴³

The resolution entitled "On Current Questions of the Ideological Work of the Party" was the impulse for the debates of the ideology commission in April 1964. The debates were based on a speech by Koucký, the secretary for ideology, entitled "Some Problems on the Ideological Front." Koucký stated that in the arts unions, amongst journalists, and at social-science institutions "the verbal expressions of consent regarding the conclusions of the December plenum of the Central Committee were not followed up by a real attempt to implement them."⁴⁴ Consequently, he recommended "closing the caucus ranks," "putting an end to passivity," "not leaving even a single wrong expression unanswered," and, lastly, "communicating a militant tone by the internal Party route to all our people." The discussion was also joined by the poet Ivan Skála (1922–1997), the first secretary of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, who, like others, criticized the social sciences, "where most of the shortcomings are coming to the surface," and science institutions that "are hardly active enough."⁴⁵

The Party leadership expressed its unease mainly about the fact that the social-science disciplines and institutions had not been sufficiently willing to meet the requirements and carry out the tasks assigned by the Party bodies. The central apparatus of the CPCz reacted to that by creating specific and immediate directives. The ideology commission of the Central Committee, in May 1964, discussed as one of its main tasks a document cumbersomely entitled "The Implementation of the Adopted Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPCz on the Report on the Current Situation in Philosophy, of March 1959, and the Main Tasks of Czechoslovak Philosophy at the Present Time."⁴⁶ The resolution claimed that, despite its preliminary successes, philosophy was not sufficiently performing its social role and that "the principled development of Marxist philosophy" was necessary "to increase the social and, in particular, the Party responsibility of scholars working in philosophy for the results of their work." The secretariat of the Central

⁴² Ibidem, p. 531.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 546.

⁴⁴ Zápis 6. schůze ideologické komise ÚV KSČ konané dne 13. dubna 1964 v 9 hodin v klubu ÚV KSČ ve Slovanském domě [Record from the 6th Meeting of the Ideology Commission of the Central Committee of the CPCz from 13 April 1964], in: NA, f. 10/5, svazek (sv.) [volume] 2, archivní jednotka (a. j.) [archival unit] 12, bod (b.) [point] 2, p. 1.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 72–73.

⁴⁶ Plnění usnesení politického byra ÚV KSČ přijatého ke zprávě o současné situaci ve filosofii z března 1959 a hlavních úkolů naší filosofie v současné době [The implementation of the adopted resolution of the politburo of the Central Committee of the CPCz on the Report on the current situation in philosophy, of March 1959, and the main tasks of Czechoslovak philosophy at the present time], in: NA, fond 10/5, sv. 3, a. j. 13, b. 2.

Committee of the CPCz ordered the chairman of the ČSAV, Šorm, to hurry up and elaborate a new conception of the Institute of Philosophy at the Academy, which would become the key research institution for the whole “philosophy front.”⁴⁷ Among the key tasks expressly and authoritatively mentioned in the document are the “elaboration of the prerequisites and consequences of the scientific and technological and cultural revolution.”⁴⁸

As should be clear from our discussion so far, although the Party leadership and other Party institutions devoted themselves to ideology quite intensively and continuously from 1961 to 1964, their resolutions and entreaties for the “creative development of Marxism-Leninism” still did not have the desired impact on the social scientists and even less so on the public. That is why the presidium of the Central Committee of the CPCz decided to increase its powers even more and to add emphasis to the previous directives by means of a resolution entitled “The Principles for the Further Intensification of the Control of the Social Sciences,” from 22 December 1964.

The document states that the social sciences as a whole “have so far not provided answers to a number of urgent questions of the current and future development of our society.” That was now supposed to change, because, according to the presidium of the Central Committee, the fulfillment of the resolutions of the 12th Congress and the preparation of the 13th Congress of the CPCz required that all social scientists achieve the “optimal lead in creative theoretical work to make the social sciences an increasingly effective Party instrument for the scientific management of social development.” One way to achieve these results was to strengthen and intensify the control of the social sciences through bodies of the CPCz and the ČSAV.⁴⁹ The Party apparatus gained the right to control the social sciences directly, to assess their results and to assign new tasks, all in connection with the preparation of the 13th Congress of the CPCz, which was supposed to mark “a new stage in the development of society.”

The way in which the Party headquarters set the research program left no doubt that the ČSAV had to follow this order no matter what.⁵⁰ In connection with the planned imminent transition of Czechoslovakia from socialism to communism, the resolution assigned five binding key tasks in the social sciences. They were “comprehensive scientific research” on economic development, the “bringing of towns and villages closer together,” the international political and economic position of Czechoslovakia, the current state and development tendencies of the class and social structure of the country, and, fifth, research on the “cultural revolution, the growing importance of science,

⁴⁷ Ibidem, př. I, pp. 1–2.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, př. III, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Usnesení a dokumenty Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa 1964 [Resolutions and Documents of the Central Committee of the CPCz 1964], Praha 1965, pp. 394–397.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 400.

education, and ideological work with regard to the needs of our society's development," which was a frank appeal for Richta's interdisciplinary team to begin work.⁵¹

From the time the resolution of the ideology commission of the CPCz Central Committee was passed, that is, from May 1964 onwards, the Institute of Philosophy at the ČSAV and the Philosophy Research Board, which governed and ran the institute, began intensively to prepare a directive, the "separate main task of the state plan," which included the topic of the "scientific and technological revolution and its social implications." Beginning in 1962 at the latest, however, the members of the Philosophy Research Board tried to revive the topic and assign it. It is also likely that Bernal's term and concept, the STR, had been introduced to the board by Arnošt Kolman (1892–1979), the director of the Institute of Philosophy from 1959 to 1962, who had regularly used the term even before the 22nd Congress of the CPSU.⁵²

At the end of 1964, selected scholars, mostly members of the Philosophy Research Board, completed the formulation of the directive for the Institutes of Philosophy at the ČSAV and the SAV, into which they incorporated the Party leadership's demands and also the results of the discussions within the institutes and both academies in general. Entitled "The Role of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy in the Period of Socialism and the Building of Communism," the directive was divided into eight projects, elaborated by specialized teams, which engaged the whole institute in the work through all its departments. The research on the STR was part of the project entitled "The Laws of Socialism and the Transition to Communism."⁵³

Also in late 1964, Richta again became involved in the work of the Institute of Philosophy at the ČSAV. He had returned to Prague after an almost uninterrupted stay of six years in the state sanatorium in Dobříš (a town about

⁵¹ Ibidem, pp. 398–399.

⁵² The term was used in the preface, dated 7 October 1961, of KOLMAN, *Výhledy do budoucna* (as in footnote 16), p. 9. See IDEM: *Zaslepená generace: Paměti starého bolševika* [Blinded Generation: Memoirs of an Old Bolshevik], Brno 2005, pp. 328–335. See also JINDŘICH SROVNAL (ed.): *Kam kráčí lidstvo? Royaumontská konference o kritériích a ideálech pokroku* [Where is Humankind Heading? Royaumont Conference on Criteria and Ideals of Progress], Praha 1962, pp. 50–51 (Arnošt Kolman's speech on 19 May 1961).

⁵³ *Zpráva o nejdůležitějších výsledcích práce a hodnocení v oborech Vědeckého kolegia filosofie za rok 1964 z 28.2.1965* [Report about the Most Important Outcomes of Disciplines under the Philosophy Research Board Supervision and Their 1964 Evaluation, 28 February 1965], in: *Archiv Akademie věd ČR (A AV ČR)* [Archive of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic], f. VKFS [Philosophy and Sociology Research Board], karton (k.) [box] 3, inventární číslo (i.č.) [inventory number] 15, sg. 105, p. 2; *Stručná zpráva vědeckého kolegia filosofie a sociologie ČSAV o nejdůležitějších výsledcích práce v oboru za rok 1965* [Short Report of the Philosophy and Sociology Research Board about the Most Important Outcomes of the Discipline in 1965], ibidem, p. 1.

45 km southwest of Prague), because, in consequence of his having been incarcerated during the war, he suffered from severe pulmonary tuberculosis, which came back with a vengeance in 1958.⁵⁴ While being treated at the sanatorium, Richta filled his time with reading and with writing the two books published in 1963. Since *Komunismus a proměny lidského života* was approved for publication by the Philosophy Research Board in October 1963, it is clear that the board members were aware of Richta's exceptional knowledge of the recent research on the social and economic consequences of technological change. Though he was not personally involved in the setting of the directive for the Philosophy Institute, it is reasonable to assume that Richta had been at least generally informed about it by colleagues who used to visit him at the sanatorium.⁵⁵ Richta personally knew many people in the Party apparatus and on the commission of the CPCz Central Committee. He was close to the chairman of the ideology commission, Koucký, and indeed may even have been his friend. He had known him from the war years while in the Communist resistance group "Předvoj" (Vanguard)⁵⁶ and probably was also friends with Hendrych.⁵⁷ In 1963 and 1965, Koucký and Hendrych alternated in chairing the ideology commission. It is reasonable to assume the same about the chairman of the ČSAV, Šorm, and its vice-chairman, Málek, whose book, *Boj nového se starým* (The struggle of the new with the old), had been reviewed by Richta in 1955.⁵⁸ All these figures clearly had an important influence on him being appointed to lead the research on the "social and human contexts of the scientific and technological revolution."

Richta, in January 1965, quickly wrote up a document entitled "The Role of the Philosophy Research Board in Preparing the 13th Congress: The Implications of the Scientific and Technological Revolution," which was immediately incorporated into the new conception of the Institute of Philosophy of the ČSAV.⁵⁹ This conception was approved by a series of resolutions made by the relevant bodies in January and February 1965: the secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPCz, the ideology commission, and a resolution of the

⁵⁴ Životopis Radovana Richty z roku 1968 [Curriculum Vitae of Radovan Richta from 1968], in: A AV ČR, f. VKFS, k. 1, i. č. 5, sg. 022, p. 1.

⁵⁵ For more on this, see ZDENĚK MLYNÁŘ: *Mráz přichází z Kremlu*, Köln 1988. English version: *Nightfrost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism*, New York 1980. First Czech edition was published in 1978.

⁵⁶ See ALENA WAGNEROVÁ, VLADIMÍR JANOVIC: *Neohlížež se, zkameníš* [Don't Look Back, Or You'll Turn into Stone], Praha 1968, pp. 124–130.

⁵⁷ MLYNÁŘ, *Mráz přichází z Kremlu* (as in footnote 55), p. 94.

⁵⁸ For more on this point, see MARTIN FRANČ: *Ivan Málek a vědní politika 1952–1989 aneb Jediný opravdový komunist?* [Ivan Málek and Research Policies 1952–1989, Or The Only Real Communist?], Praha 2011, p. 67.

⁵⁹ Zápis z I. řádného zasedání VKF ze dne 21. ledna 1965 [Record from the 1st Regular Meeting of the Philosophy Research Board, 21 January 1965], in: A AV ČR, f. VKFS, k. 5, i. č. 26, sg. 1104, *Zápisy zasedání kolegia 1965* [Records from the Meetings of the Philosophy Research Board, 1965], p. 11.

98th session of the presidium of the Central Committee. And, finally, the session of the presidium of the ČSAV, of 17 February 1965, ordered the new conception to be implemented.⁶⁰

Richta began the work, which was later given the title "Civilization at the Crossroads," on 1 April 1965, stating, "this is also probably the most extensive participation so far of Czechoslovak philosophers, on the basis of direct impulses from Party bodies, in the preparation of the theoretical foundations of the Party policies."⁶¹ Just how important the Party leadership considered Richta's efforts is evident from the fact that Šorm was personally responsible to the CPCz Central Committee for the project entitled "The Social Consequences of the Scientific and Technological Revolution," its carrying out was monitored by a special commission of the Central Committee, and it was also overseen by Jindřich Srovnal (1924–2005), chairman of the scientific board of the ČSAV.⁶² This was also reflected by the number of people chosen to be members of the new team: at first seventeen, then, by the end of 1965, 29, and, from 1968 to 1969, 61 scholars. In 1970, it was assumed that as many as 95 scholars from the Czech part of Czechoslovakia and 15 from Slovakia would be on the team.⁶³

Soon after the completion of the first manuscript version, in November 1965, Richta's *Civilizace* was well received both at the ČSAV and at CPCz headquarters. In spring 1966, the top Party bodies described the achieved results as "successful, creative, and practically beneficial" Marxist efforts.⁶⁴ Richta's conclusions were widely used in the planning of the 13th Congress of the CPCz in 1966 and in its resolutions.⁶⁵ The elaborated conception became part of the debates in the Party press and expert periodicals and the term "scientific and technological revolution" was mentioned in nearly every edition of *Rudé právo*, the central Party daily, during the Prague Spring of 1968. Two television series were produced: *Šest naléhavých disputací* (Six urgent

⁶⁰ Zázpis z II. řádného zasedání VKF dne 25. února 1965 [Record from the 2nd Regular Meeting of the Philosophy Research Board, 25 February 1965], *ibidem*, p. 1.

⁶¹ Hodnocení přípravy XIII. sjezdu—vědeckotechnická revoluce (dr. Richta), 14.06.1967 [The Evaluation of the 13th Congress Preparation—Scientific and Technological Revolution (Dr. Richta), 14 June 1967], in: A AV ČR, f. VKFS, k. 11, i.č. 84, sg. 2512, p. 1.

⁶² Zázpis z jednání VKFS dne 24. června 1965 [Record from the Meeting of the Philosophy and Sociology Research Board, 24 June 1965], in: A AV ČR, f. VKFS, k. 5, i. č. 26, sg. 1104, pp. 4–5.

⁶³ Zázpis z jednání VKFS dne 24. března 1970, příložený materiál "Výzkum vědeckotechnické revoluce ..." [Record from the Meeting of the Philosophy and Sociology Research Board, 24 March 1970, Attached Material "Research on the Scientific and Technological Revolution ..."], in: A AV ČR, f. VKFS, k. 7, i. č. 31, sg. 1109, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Hodnocení přípravy XIII. sjezdu—vědeckotechnická revoluce (dr. Richta) (as in footnote 61), pp. 1–2.

⁶⁵ XIII. sjezd Komunistické strany Československa [13th Congress of the CPCz], Praha 1967, pp. 599–600, 605–606, 711–713.

disputations), in a debate format, and a seven-part didactic series named after the book *Civilizace na rozcestí*.

For his work, Richta received the Klement Gottwald State Prize and then the ČSAV prize as well. In March 1968, he became the director of the Institute of Philosophy at the ČSAV. In *Rudé právo* in July 1968, the “Richta team” published the manifesto “Before a Decision: Concerning the New Czechoslovak Model of Socialism.”⁶⁶ The manifesto demonstrates the shift in Richta’s and his associates’ thinking toward quicker, more radical changes, mainly with regard to how power was exercised in practice. In these respects, “Before a Decision” is comparable to the famous “Two Thousand Words” manifesto by the novelist and leading Prague Spring intellectual Ludvík Vaculík (1926–2015). The similarity of the two texts was even pointed out by Leonid Brezhnev at talks with the Czechoslovak delegation to the summit meeting in Čierna nad Tisou, east Slovakia, in late July and early August 1968.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The political and organizational background of the STR research in the 1960s shows that it was not only an important trend in Marxist theoretical thinking, but also a political project to create a new vision for the development of Czechoslovak socialism. The “Richta” team was established at a special moment in history when a symbiosis had taken place as a result of intellectual stirrings in the social sciences and the political needs of the Party leadership in both ideology and political program. Consequently, a team of experts was assembled, whose work influenced key policy documents of the Party in the second half of the 1960s, most importantly the directives adopted at the 13th Congress of the CPCz in 1966 and the “Action Program of the CPCz,” co-authored by Richta in 1968, an official Party document that determined the main contours of reform policy. The STR research thus strikingly shaped the political discourse of the Prague Spring and Richta became a leading Czechoslovak “public intellectual” of 1968.

⁶⁶ Před rozhodnutím: O nový československý model socialismu [Before a Decision: Concerning the New Czechoslovak Model of Socialism], in: *Rudé právo* from 1968-07-10, 1968-07-11, and 1968-07-12. See also JIŘÍ HOPPE (ed.): *Pražské jaro v médiích: Výběr z dobové publicistiky. Prameny k dějinám československé krize v letech 1967–1970* [The Prague Spring in the Media: Selection from Journalism. Sources for the History of the Czechoslovak Crisis 1967–1970]. Vol. 11: document no. 55, Praha—Brno 2004, pp. 234–242.

⁶⁷ For more on this, see JITKA VONDROVÁ, JAROMÍR NAVRATIL (eds.): *Mezinárodní souvislosti československé krize 1967–1970: Prameny k dějinám československé krize v letech 1967–1970* [International Contexts of the Czechoslovak Crisis 1967–1970. Sources for the History of the Czechoslovak Crisis 1967–1970]. Vol. 4,2: July–August 1968, document no. 121.1, Praha—Brno 1996, p. 58.

The fate of the STR theory and of the "Richta team" after the Soviet-led military intervention in Czechoslovakia in late August 1968 illustrates the actual dependence of experts and their milieu on Party policy. After this event, Richta suspended the team's work and helped to translate Marx's *Grundrisse* into Czech, also writing a long introduction to it. He opened a new chapter in his research, when, in autumn 1969, he and his colleagues became the "first social-science team" to come out in support of the new CPCz leadership, which aimed to "consolidate" the situation in the country by suppressing reform.⁶⁸ In a total of four articles written together with the sociologist Jindřich Filipec (1926–2013) and others for *Rudé právo*, *Tvorba*, and *Nová mysl* (the main ideological periodical of the Party), Richta published official "self-criticism," admitting his "mistakes" in the "Before a Decision" manifesto and quoting at length from the speeches of Brezhnev and the new Czechoslovak leader Gustáv Husák (1913–1991) at the Moscow meeting of Communist and Worker's parties in June 1969.

He also expressed his appreciation for the "atmosphere of political and economic consolidation, which our current leadership is seeking to achieve."⁶⁹ This pragmatic adaptation to the changes in the CPCz leadership enabled Richta to remain the director of the Institute of Philosophy at the ČSAV. In the course of the ideological campaign against revisionism and the related purges of staff, the Institute of Philosophy was merged with the former Institute of Sociology of the Academy to become the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology. During this institutional transformation, Richta transformed his team into the Scientific and Technological Revolution Section of the Institute (the other two being Philosophy and Sociology) and, until his premature death in 1983, he continued to do research on the STR under the new conditions.

The transfer of the project into the new political context, which was strikingly more authoritarian and was based on the rejection of reform, had a fundamental influence on the content, form, and political effect of the STR theory. Richta reformulated the concept to suit the needs of the regime of "consolidation" in a work written together with Filipec in 1972.⁷⁰ The conception of

⁶⁸ MARKÉTA DEVATÁ: *Marxismus jako projekt nové společnosti: Dvě studie ke společenským vědám (1945–1969)* [Marxism as a Project of a New Society: Two Studies to Social Sciences (1945–1969)], Praha 2014, p. 57, footnote 158.

⁶⁹ JINDŘICH FILIPEC, ANTONÍN HODEK, RADOVAN RICHTA, TIBOR VAŠKO: *Citlivý bod vědeckotechnické revoluce* [The Sensitive Area of the Scientific and Technological Revolution], in: *Rudé právo* from 1969-09-19; JINDŘICH FILIPEC, RADOVAN RICHTA: *Socialismus a paradoxy současné civilizace* [Socialism and Paradoxes of Contemporary Civilisation], in: *Nová mysl* 23 (1969), 9, pp. 1038–1061; IDEM: *Dvě varianty antikomunismu* [Two Variants of Anticommunism], in: *Rudé právo* from 1969-10-07; IDEM: *Svoboda, řízení a efektivnost vědy* [Liberty, Steering and Efficiency of Science], in: *Tvorba* 28 (1969), 13, pp. 3, 7.

⁷⁰ RADOVAN RICHTA, JINDŘICH FILIPEC: *Vědeckotechnická revoluce a socialismus* [Scientific and Technological Revolution and Socialism], Praha 1972.

research on the STR no longer included the requirement of broad-based political participation and took a far more confrontational position on so-called “bourgeois theories.” On the whole, it is fair to say that the theory lost its reformist and visionary potential and offered only a highly formal interpretation of the inevitable road to communism by means of scientific and technological progress. The main function of the “consolidated” theory was to provide legitimacy to the system of power prevailing in late socialism.

The political function of the expert milieu from which emerged the STR concept was also different now. Whereas in the 1960s one could talk about a symbiosis of expert efforts and Party policy, which led to the fact that figures like Richta and their research teams acquired hitherto unprecedented formal and informal political influence, after 1968 experts had to fully respect the “leading role” of the Party. They were in the position of purveyors of politically usable knowledge, especially in the field of economic policy-making. Expertise, science, and modern technology would continue to play a fundamental role in the development of socialism.

The government of experts and educated elites, which had carefully been promoted by the STR theory in the 1960s, was replaced by Party control of expertise and the “technocratization” of Party rule. Richta’s fate aptly illustrates this development. Whereas before 1968 he was an influential intellectual and a true co-creator of the reformist political program, in the 1970s he held a high post in the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences but his actual political influence—partly because of his problematic past as a Sixty-eight—was limited to his being the director of an important academic institution without any real influence on Party policy-making.

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