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Education, Science, and Research under the Technocratic and Ideological Prism: A View through the Lens of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's Conceptual Documents during the Two "Normalisation" Decades**

IZVLEČEK

IZOBRAŽEVANJE, ZNANOST IN RAZISKOVANJE SKOZI TEHNOKRATSKO IN IDEOLOŠKO PRIZMO: POGLED SKOZI LEČO KONCEPTUALNIH DOKUMENTOV CENTRALNEGA KOMITEJA KOMUNISTIČNE PARTIJE ČEŠKOSLOVAŠKE V DVEH »NORMALIZACIJSKIH« DESETLETJIH

Študija na podlagi internih gradiv ključnih komisij Centralnega komiteja (CK) KPČ preučuje, kako je Komunistična partija Češkoslovaške (KPČ) konceptualizirala izobraževanje, znanost in raziskovanje v dveh desetletjih t. i. obdobja »normalizacije«. Na podlagi arhivskih virov komisij, ki so se ukvarjale z znanostjo, tehnologijo, ideologijo in gospodarskimi zadevami, raziskava razkriva zapleteno dinamiko, v kateri so se, čeprav večinoma neuspešno, tehnokratski in ideološki pogledi stalno prepletali. Dokumenti iz zgodnjih sedemdesetih let 20. stoletja so sicer poudarjali prizadevanja za razširitev sekundarnega in

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terciarnega izobraževanja in opredelili sistemske neučinkovitosti, vendar je bilo zanje značilno tudi togo upoštevanje politične zvestobe in izbirnih meril za izobraževanje na razredni osnovi. Kljub tehnokratskim priporočilom za modernizacijo gospodarstva in delovne sile z izboljšanjem strokovnega izobraževanja so se dokumenti vedno znova vračali k ideološkim okvirom, zlasti k poudarjanju vloge delavskega razreda in vodstva KPČ.

Študija dokazuje, da so se v dokumentih KPK v celotnem obdobju izmenjavale pragmatične ugotovitve (kot so nizka učinkovitost raziskovalnih rezultatov, pomanjkanje usposobljenega osebja v znanosti ali neusklajenost med potrebami izobraževanja in potrebami trga dela) in nejasne ali napihnjene napovedi (na primer nerealen cilj doseganja 60-odstotnega deleža srednješolsko izobraženih do leta 1985). Vztrajni pozivi k modernizaciji so bili v nasprotju z zastarelimi strukturnimi preferencami režima, zlasti nenehnim dajanjem prednosti težki industriji pred sektorji, ki temeljijo na znanju. Konec osemdesetih let 20. stoletja je perestrojka spodbudila odkritejšo kritiko preteklih neuspešnih politik. Dokument »Izčrpna napoved«, ki ga je pripravila Češkoslovaška akademija znanosti, je pomenil odmik od predhodnih okvirov in je poudaril nujnost sistemske reforme, akademske svobode in prožnejših izobraževalnih poti. Kljub temu so komisije KPČ še vedno omejevali ideološki ostanki in sistemska inercija. Študija tudi osvetli, kako je prepletanje tehnokratskih ciljev in ideološke ortodoksije oviralo Češkoslovaško pri prizadevanjih, da bi zmanjšala razvojni zaostanek za Zahodom ali ga vsaj ne bi povečala.

Ključne besede: Komunistična partija, Češkoslovaška, izobraževanje, normalizacija, znanost, 1968–1989

ABSTRACT

The study explores how the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC) conceptualised education, science, and research during the two decades of the so-called "normalisation" period, drawing from internal records of the key Commissions of the CPC Central Committee (CC). Using archival sources from Commissions dealing with science, technology, ideology, and economic affairs, the research reveals a complex dynamic in which technocratic and ideological perspectives were repeatedly merged, though mostly unsuccessfully. While documents from the early 1970s acknowledged the expansion of secondary and tertiary education and identified inefficiencies in the system, they were also characterised by the rigid adherence to class-based selection criteria of education and political loyalty. Despite technocratic recommendations to modernise the economy and workforce through enhanced technical education, documents consistently fell back on the ideological frameworks, particularly emphasising the role of the working class and the CPC's leadership.

The study proves that throughout the period, the CPC's documents alternated between pragmatic observations (such as the low research output efficiency, shortage of qualified personnel in science, or misalignment between the needs of education and the labour market) and vague or inflated projections (like the unrealistic target to achieve 60 % secondary education by 1985). Persistent calls for modernisation clashed with outdated structural preferences,

especially the regime's continued prioritisation of heavy industry over knowledge-driven sectors. By the late 1980s, however, the onset of perestroika forced a more open critique of the previous policy failures. A significant shift appeared in the "Comprehensive Forecast" document, prepared at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, which stressed the need for systemic reform, academic freedom, and more flexible educational pathways. Even so, the CPC Commissions remained constrained by ideological remnants and systemic inertia. Finally, the study highlights how blending the technocratic goals with ideological orthodoxy hindered Czechoslovakia's ability to close the developmental gap with the West or at least reduce the expansion of that gap.

Keywords: Communist Party, Czechoslovakia, education, normalisation, science, 1968–1989

Introduction

The issues of science, research, and education were long-standing neuralgic points for the communist regime in Czechoslovakia (since 1960, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, CSSR). The regime was acutely aware of the close connection between these areas, the modernisation of the economy, and the overall development of society. After moving beyond the initial "super-industrialisation" phase, which was primarily based on the extensive growth during the 1950s, the ruling regime sought ways to make the Czechoslovak economy more efficient and modern. This motivation underpinned all four major attempts at economic reform: the so-called Rozsypal reform of the late 1950s,[1] the so-called Šik reform in the latter half of the 1960s,[2] the reform at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s,[3] and, finally, the reform which started in 1989 but remained unfinished.[4] In the second half of the 1960s, however, the attempt at reforming the economy developed into a broader liberalisation of society, which was brought to an end by the intervention of Warsaw Pact armies in August 1968. The subsequent

1 Drahomír Jančík and Eduard Kubů, "Der erste Versuch einer Reform der zentralen Planwirtschaft in der Tschechoslowakei," in Christoph Boyer, ed., *Sozialistische Wirtschaftsreformen. Tschechoslowakei und DDR im Vergleich* (Vittorio Klostermann, 2006).

2 Jančík and Kubů, "Zwischen Planbefehl und Markt: Der Diskurs der zweiten tschechoslowakischen Wirtschaftsreform," in Ibidem.

3 Drahomír Jančík, "Bludný kruh 'zdokonalování plánovitého řízení' československé ekonomiky (1978–1985)," in Jiří Petráš and Libor Svoboda, eds., *Znormalizováno: Československo v letech 1978–1985* (Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2020).

4 Michal Pullmann, *Konec experimentu: přestavba a pád komunismu v Československu* (Scriptorium, 2011). Michal Pullmann, "The Decline and Fall of the Communist Regimes in Central and (South) Eastern Europe," in Miroslav Bárta and Martin Kovář, eds., *Civilisations: Collapse and Regeneration. Addressing the Nature of Change and Transformation in History* (Academia, 2019). Drahomír Jančík, "Krizovost československého ekonomického systému ve druhé polovině 80. let a její sociálně-politické důsledky," in Jiří Petráš and Libor Svoboda, eds., Československo v letech 1986–1989 (Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2024).

period of "normalisation" was characterised by an increasing lag of the Czechoslovak economy behind the developed countries.[5] The ruling regime was painfully aware of this issue but unable to resolve it.

The topic of education during the "normalisation" period has been reflected in numerous publications over the past decades. The crucial works include those by František Morkes and Michal Šimáně,[6] and especially several studies by Natalie Simonová.[7] The latter author convincingly demonstrates the increased level of social mobility during the communist dictatorship compared to the time before 1948 (albeit at the cost of deliberately denying education to specific groups of the population, viewed through the lens of the hereditary class struggle). Publications on the history of science and research[8] reveal the unclear and often contradictory approach of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC, in Czech: *Komunistická strana Československa*) to the topic, which did not lead – and could not have led – to effective solutions. As Antonín Kostlán (who has conducted substantial research on this topic) notes:

> Permanent reorganisation – this is a feature that characterised the communist regime in the USSR and in our country [i.e. Czechoslovakia – J.S.], both in the economic sphere and in education, science, and public administration; it brought about general chaos in conditions and did not allow the establishment of a routine, which would soon reveal that the fault did not lie in the poorly set parameters of the institutions but in the very essence of the regime itself.[9]

The present study analyses the Party's attitudes to education, science, and research during the 1970s and 1980s. It deliberately does not focus on official public presentations or internal government documents (including those of the Ministry of Education). Under the communist regime, the government did not, in fact, make any decisions; instead, it was the parallel structure of bodies within the CPC that

5 Not only did the Czechoslovak economy's lag behind Western Europe keep increasing in 1969–1989, but the gap was widening even faster than in 1949–1989. It demonstrates the data of the Maddison Project Database (in 1990 International Geary–Khamis dollar /IGK$/, therefore it reflects the purchasing power parity!). In 1949, the gross domestic product per capita was 3,259 IGK$ in Czechoslovakia, compared to 4,721 IGK$ in Western Europe (1 : 1,45). The disproportion increased to 1 : 1,66 (6,354 IGK$ vs. 10,556 IGK$) in 1969 and even to 1 : 1,91 (8,768 IGK$ vs. 16,751 IGK$) in 1989. – Angus Maddison, Maddison Database 2010, accessed on 14 December 2024, https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/historicaldevelopment/maddison/releases/maddison-database-2010.

6 František Morkes, *Kapitoly o školství, o ministerstvu a jeho představitelích: (období let 1848–2001)* (Pedagogické muzeum J. A. Komenského, 2002). Michal Šimáně, "Socialist Egalitarianism in Everyday Life of Secondary Technical Schools in Czechoslovakia during the Normalization Period (1969–89)," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 56, No. 1 (2023).

7 Petr Matějů, Blanka Řeháková, and Natalie Simonová, "Kulturní a sociálně ekonomické zdroje nerovností v šancích na dosažení vysokoškolského vzdělání v České republice v letech 1948–1999," *Sociológia* 36, No. 1 (2004). Natalie Simonová, "Vzdělanostní reprodukce v České republice od roku 1916 do současnosti: mobilitní pohled," in Petr Mareš and Ondřej Hofírek, eds., *Sociální reprodukce a integrace: ideály a meze* (IIPS FSS MU 2007). Natalie Simonová, "Educational Inequalities and Educational Mobility under Socialism in the Czech Republic," *The Sociological Review* 56, No. 3 (2008).

8 Mainly František Janouch, "Československá věda po osmašedesátém," *Akademický bulletin Akademie věd České republiky*, No. 7–8 (2008). Antonín Kostlán, ed., *Věda v Československu v období normalizace (1970–1975): sborník z konference* (Výzkumné centrum pro dějiny vědy, 2002). Antonín Kostlán, "KSČ a věda: Hlavní koncepty vědní politiky v Československu 1945–1989," in Český a slovenský komunismus (1921–2011) (Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR – Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2012).

9 Kostlán, "KSČ a věda," 244.

had the authority. Therefore, this study focuses on the conceptual documents that were reflected or determined in the meetings of several Commissions of the Central Committee (CC, in Czech: *Ústřední výbor*) of the CPC from 1969 to 1989. They were internal Party documents not intended to be presented to the public. Therefore, they can be considered a more or less correct reflection of the Party's discussions/policies on the topic. The study draws from primary archival sources, specifically the records of the CC CPC's Commission for Scientific and Technological Development,[10] the Ideological Commission of the CC CPC,[11] the CC CPC's Commission for Science and Technology,[12] and the Economic Commission of the CC CPC.[13]

It is problematic that the preserved materials are quite fragmentary. Most notably, the records of the crucial Education Commission of the CC CPC have not been preserved at all. Therefore, the presented analysis is inevitably partial, as it relies on a limited number of sources that are, however, unique in their origin and content. Based on these sources, the study examines the records of the relevant Commissions' meetings, focusing particularly on four extensive conceptual documents (three from the early 1970s and one from the late 1980s) which have been preserved in the Communist Party's archival fonds.[14] In some cases, these documents are compared with the reality of complex statistical data, which is available in limited quantities.

Based on the methodological tools of economic and social history, the study answers the following questions: 1. to what extent were the conceptual documents vague or, conversely, detailed; 2. did a technocratic or an ideological perspective prevail there; 3. to what extent were these documents in line with the reality of the "normalisation"-era Czechoslovakia; and 4. what changes are reflected in the hard data, and do these changes at least roughly correspond to the envisioned goals? By answering these questions, the study contributes a new perspective to the historical understanding of the development of science, research, and education in the "normalisation"-era Czechoslovakia, viewed through the lens of the supreme bodies of the ruling state Party.

The Attitudes towards Science, Research, and Education during the Early "Normalisation" Period

The first document that several CC CPC Commissions commented on in the early 1970s was the Report on the Current State, Development, and Prospects of Czechoslovak Education[15] from the early 1970s. It was a several-hundred-page brochure containing

10 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD.
11 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: IC.
12 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CST.
13 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: EC.
14 The documents are either a work of many authors or the authors are not mentioned at all.
15 In Czech: Zpráva o současném stavu, vývoji a perspektivách československého školství, alternatively – in other commissions – also Zpráva o vývoji, současném stavu a dalších úkolech československého školství (Report on Development, Current State, and Further Goals of Czechoslovak Education). CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 2, fasc. 5/1, 29 March 1973.

abundant quantitative data evaluating the development since the "seizure of power by the working class" in 1948, although some of it corresponded more to comparisons with 1938. According to the authors, the number of children in kindergartens had tripled during the period under consideration. The number of elementary school pupils increased from 1,380,850 to 1,968,448 (an increase of approximately 42.6 %), while the average number of children per class dropped significantly (from 33.6 to 25.5). The number of secondary school students doubled, while in vocational education, it even tripled (compared to 1952). In the 1970/1971 academic year, 102,015 students attended universities, whereas in 1938, there were only about 19,000. Opportunities for part-time study expanded significantly, with around 75,000 people attending secondary schools and approximately 25,000 attending universities when the Report was prepared.[16]

The reported figures roughly correspond to the data provided by the official statistical sources.[17] On the one hand, they need to be taken with a certain degree of caution. For example, the quality of education may have been questionable in some cases, particularly for the so-called "studying cadres" – meaning those who received education not necessarily due to their abilities but as individuals favoured by the communist regime. This likely applied more often to those studying while employed than to "classic" students and pupils. On the other hand, these figures clearly indicate that secondary and especially higher education became accessible to a significantly larger number of people. Similarly, reducing the number of pupils per class logically implies at least a substantial potential for improving the quality of the educational process. This was undoubtedly a positive social development, although in a totalitarian regime with all its structural flaws and violent nature. Similarly, apart from the detrimental politicisation of education, the Communist Education Law of 1948 also introduced a few positive measures, e.g. the unified structure of the educational system or after-school care.[18]

In much of its remaining content, the Development Report comes across as largely ambivalent. In many respects, it is factual and attempts a serious analysis, especially in predicting future developments. For instance, it accurately pointed out that the scientific and technological revolution would lead to a restructuring of the entire range of occupations, increasing the demand for both polytechnic and general cultural higher education. In the short term, the Czechoslovak economy would need more people with vocational education, while in the long run, it would require especially those with secondary and higher (tertiary) education.[19] Some of the educational process problems were also identified quite objectively, such as the fact that "*a significant part of the population, particularly girls, enters* [professional] *life without elementary vocational preparation*".[20]

16 Ibid., 3.

17 According to the *Historical Statistical Yearbook of the CSSR*, the number of children placed in kindergartens increased by approximately 261 % between 1936 and 1970 (although only by about 84 % compared to 1948). The number of elementary school students grew by approximately 42 % between 1945 and 1970, while in 1970, secondary schools of all types had 143 % more students than in 1948. The number of university students (including those studying while employed) increased from 27,068 in 1936 to 131,099 in 1970. *Historická statistická ročenka ČSSR* (SNTL – Alfa, 1985), 388–93.

18 Morkes, *Kapitoly o školství*, 55, 56.

19 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 2, fasc. 5/1, 29 March 1973, 16, 17.

20 Ibid., 20.

The inefficiency of higher education and its ties to previous educational levels were also evaluated relatively objectively. According to the Development Report, approximately half of grammar school graduates did not move on to university but instead had to spend additional years training for practical work. Generally, the motivation to pursue higher education was relatively modest. However, the fundamental cause for this – the absence of significant economic incentives in the form of a markedly higher living standard – was left unaddressed. On the contrary, the Report stated that the higher education system, "*in addition to ideological shortcomings*" (meaning insufficient ideological indoctrination), suffered from inefficiency (i.e., excessively long study periods), lack of connection to the practical needs, etc.[21]

Alongside these factual parts, most of the Development Report's content was highly influenced by ideology. Primarily, as expected from an official document from the early 1970s, it strongly condemned the development of the so-called "Prague Spring" (i.e., the liberalisation during the second half of the 1960s) and blamed it for all sorts of shortcomings. The task of the social sciences, "*especially after the experiences of the crisis period*", was to improve the student selection, refine graduate profiles, and, above all, "*increase demands on their political level and organisational skills*".[22] Some passages are essentially empty platitudes without any real content, formulated in typical "normalisation"-era "newspeak", almost bordering on "gibberish". For instance, the Report states that the task of tertiary education is "*to strengthen the connection between universities and higher education with progressive social practices while considering the prospective societal needs*".[23]

At the same time, the Development Report clearly confirms the fundamental premise of the communist regime's educational policy, i.e. the class perspective: the working class, "*in alliance with the peasantry*", is the leading social class, and the education system must reflect this. Thus, "*the correct application of the class principle is to ensure that the children of workers and peasants […] have equal opportunities in accessing all schools, providing them with education corresponding to the social importance and political mission of these classes*." The selection of pupils and students must "*be based on a comprehensive assessment of applicants, in which their moral and political profile is evaluated alongside their academic performance*".[24] The goal was "*to systematically deepen the democratising aspects of higher education and their material support.*"[25]

21 Ibid., 27.

22 Ibid., 47, 48.

23 Ibid., 45.

24 Ibid., 13, 14. In reality, the social groups of "workers and peasants" were favoured by the educational policy, just as they were in other aspects of life. The communist regime saw this as a "democratisation" of education. On the contrary, the attempts to diminish this class-struggle view during the late "Prague Spring" were seen as a revival of "social and class discrimination". Šimáně, "Socialist Egalitarianism," 137. Simultaneously, a vital change occurred in the ways this preference of "cadre" students was being achieved. In the 1950s, the instructions regarding who should be admitted to secondary grammar schools (or even to universities) were given directly by the CPC authorities, while in the 1970s and 1980s, the schools and universities made these decisions themselves, while the "*state and CPC authorities only supervised whether the schools, in particular cases, figured out whom not to admit*" – Petr Vopěnka, "Klady a zápory izolované vědy," in Antonín Kostlán, ed., *Věda v Československu v období normalizace (1970–1975)* (Výzkumné centrum pro dějiny vědy, 2002), 27.

25 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 2, fasc. 5/1, 29 March 1973, 83.

The quantitative goals to be achieved by 1985 were completely unrealistic: 20 % of the population was supposed to have a grammar school education, 20 % a specialised (vocational) secondary education, and 10 % a vocational secondary education with a graduation exam, which, along with part-time studies (for adult labour force), was meant to ensure complete secondary education for 60 % of the population.[26] As the subsequent developments showed, reality fell far short of these expectations: in 1980, only 22.4 % (!) of the population aged over fifteen had completed secondary or higher education. For comparison, in 1970, this share amounted to 16.6 %.[27] Thus, while the development was positive, it was significantly slower than planned.

The qualitative goals of the Development Report are more challenging to evaluate. On the one hand, they are driven by ideology (e.g., "*intensifying the ideological and political education of youth*"), while on the other hand, some of them are quite rational, such as addressing social handicaps in access to education so that "*the composition of students essentially corresponds to the social structure of society*." Nevertheless, even in this case, the rational goal was based on the class perspective, as it was necessary "*to consistently apply a class-political, democratic approach in caring for the children of workers and peasants*."[28] Similarly, proposals that students in social science disciplines should undergo mandatory internships in "*state, Party, and public organisations*"[29] can be seen as an effort at political indoctrination apart from gaining necessary practical experience.

As already mentioned, the Development Report was reflected upon by several CC CPC Commissions. Most accepted it virtually without any comments and certainly without objections. The only body documented to have given a more detailed response was the Commission for Scientific and Technological Development, which evaluated the Report generally positively but demanded further elaboration on some points due to their complexity and difficulty. It also emphasised the persistent lack of interest among youth in technical education and viewed this as a challenge that would need to be addressed intensively over the coming years.[30]

An ambitious education reform was prepared for 1976 that followed the abovementioned documents, along with some others. However, the results were dubious. On the one hand, in theory, education was supposed to be based on a stable and open educational system. On the other hand, the curriculum was too informational, emphasising factual knowledge rather than skills and information evaluation. Given much less time for practical application, the level of actual knowledge decreased.[31]

A pair of interconnected documents from the early 1970s focused on scientific and technological development. The first was the Proposal and Focus of the CC

26 Ibid., 81.

27 *Historická statistická ročenka*, 63.

28 Incidentally, this was task No. 2 on a longer list of changes that allegedly needed to be introduced into the educational system. The first one was – fittingly – "the intensification of the ideological political education of youth". CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: IC, box 1, fasc. 1/2, 9 November 1971, 49.

29 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: IC, box 1, fasc. 3/2, 30 May 1973, 49.

30 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 2, fasc. 5/1, 29 March 1973, 1–4.

31 Morkes, *Kapitoly o školství*, 84, 85.

CPC Plenary on Scientific and Technological Development.[32] Compared to the previously analysed Development Report, this document was written in a much more factual manner. However, even in this case, the authors could not avoid the unavoidable "ideological anchoring" manifested in empty but grandiose ideological phrases.[33] However, these were mostly confined to the introductory pages, while the core of the Proposal consisted of a relatively pragmatic analysis of the problems and, in some cases, included solution proposals. The previous development was assessed critically: "*Despite the successes achieved, scientific and technological development has not made a significant impact when confronted with the needs of the national economy.* […] *The economy as a whole developed technically with insufficient intensity compared to many industrialised countries*".[34] The number of research and development personnel was to reach approximately 150,000 people, representing about 2 % of the total workforce.[35] A crucial problem that the Proposal addressed was the level of qualification and education, specifically the increase of these levels "*throughout the construction of the national economy*".[36] Pragmatically, the "*importance of talent identification*" as well as proposals for "*theorising the studies*" and a "*new requirement for the profile of university graduates*" were emphasised.[37] However, it has to be underlined that this "*theorisation of studies*" was at least partly at odds with the demand for the broadest possible application of graduates in production, which was consistently emphasised.

Naturally, the factual nature of the examined document had its limits, though. For instance, the realistic statement of the problem that a quarter of the workforce in science and research (and almost a half in industrial research!) "*did not meet the necessary qualification requirements*" was followed by a practically empty solution (since it was not stated in any concrete terms) to "*develop a concept of state personnel (cadre) policy in research*".[38] Elsewhere, the human factor was mentioned, both in quantitative (ageing population) and qualitative terms ("*genetic quality*" of the population, uneven population reproduction). This was followed by recommendations to focus on issues such as "*problems of socialist eugenics*".[39]

32 In Czech: Návrh a zaměření přípravy pléna ÚV KSČ o vědeckotechnickém rozvoji. CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 1, fasc. 3/1, 14 June 1972.

33 To illustrate, let us provide at least a part of one of the paragraphs: "*In the field of science and technology and their application, one of the greatest and most dramatic battles of the class struggle in the world is being fought today.* […] *Each of the opposing global social systems approaches revolutionary changes in science and technology based on different social conditions, with various goals, criteria, and motivations – the result being two distinct, opposing concepts and perspectives of scientific and technological development; whereas until recently, the socialist system could be content with adopting and applying the given scientific and technological progress, it is gradually becoming vital for it to forge an independent path of scientific and technological development corresponding to the needs of the socialist system.*" Ibid., 4.

34 Ibid., 10.

35 Ibid., 13. It should be noted that the figure likely includes workers employed at some party schools or "research" institutions. For some of them, the scientific contributions of their work can be doubted with justified scepticism. However, the sources do not specify how many of them were affected, nor do they provide their overall numbers.

36 Ibid., 4.

37 Ibid., 45, 46.

38 Ibid., 48, 49. The figures presented in the document are in stark contrast (i.e., completely unrealistically inflated) with Antonín Kostlán's research, according to which only approximately 10 % of employees in applied research during the 1960s had a university education, and only about 1 % were scientists. – Kostlan, "KSČ a věda," 248.

39 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 1, fasc. 3/1, 14 June 1972, 44, 45. The qualitative aspects were not specified more concretely. However, it can plausibly be assumed that the supposed "*genetic quality*" and "*uneven population*

The second document from the early 1970s with an almost identical focus was the Background on Selected Problems of Science and Technology Development in the CSSR.[40] It exhibited a similar ambivalence as the previously analysed text. On the one hand, it contained frequent ideologically motivated phrases, which were almost or entirely empty[41] or also influenced the formulation of goals based on ideological and class perspectives, such as:

> The basic principle for hiring new research workers in the research and development should be the comprehensive assessment of the qualifications for research work, political and work attitudes, and the moral and character profile of the individual. From such a broadly conceived requirement for the personality of a scientific worker, the criteria for their social and professional evaluation must also be derived. In addition to the scientific work results and the usefulness of their achievements for socialist society, the main criterion is the individual's personal relationship to society, how they understand their social mission, and what is their relationship to the ideas and goals of socialist construction. For higher and managerial positions in science, not only a well-defined socialist moral and political profile but also practical experience in political work must be expected. Therefore, scientific workers should closely cooperate with the bodies of the Party regarding all issues related to the development of the research base, its conception, and its management.[42]

On the other hand, the Background gives a rational and ideologically neutral reflection on the modest performance of Czechoslovak science and research. For example, for every crown spent on research, the national income grew by approximately two crowns, while in advanced countries, this coefficient was approximately one and a half to two times higher. A chronic problem of Czechoslovak industrial production was also identified correctly and surprisingly openly: "*A serious cause of the insufficient effectiveness of the Czechoslovak research and development base is the extraordinarily extensive range of production in the CSSR* [underlined in the original document – J.S.]".[43]

development" referred to the Roma community. Theoretically, it could also refer to the different population developments in Slovakia and the Bohemian Lands or other phenomena (e.g., differing birth rates and access to education between the rural and urban populations or between manual and non-manual professions, i.e. in the contemporary context, different social classes). However, these differences had sharply decreased by the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, these possibilities seem highly unlikely. On the contrary, the association with the Roma community fits perfectly within the contemporary context of how the regime perceived the Roma. In connection with that, the formulation of "socialist eugenics" during the early 1970s is scandalous, shocking, and chilling. It was evidently aimed at the Roma minority. Although it is impossible to confirm with absolute certainty what exactly was meant, the horrifying issue of the forced sterilisation of Roma women (practised in communist Czechoslovakia) suggests itself. For more information about this topic, see, for example, *Coercive and Cruel: Sterilisation and its Consequences for Romani Women in the Czech Republic (1966–2016)* (European Roma Rights Centre, 2016).

40 In Czech: Podklad k vybraným problémům rozvoje vědy a techniky v ČSSR. CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 2, fasc. 6/1, 28 June 1973.

41 For example: "*It is necessary, particularly for our economic science and research, to concentrate on the creative elaboration of the concrete manifestations and forms of the operation of the economic laws of socialism for the next 15–20 years.*" – Ibid., 49.

42 Ibid., 120.

43 Ibid., 92. This was a long-term problem, inherited to a certain (lesser) extent from the First Republic era and subsequently significantly amplified during the years of the "construction frenzy" of the first five-year plan (1949–1953), when the communist regime embraced a megalomaniacal and unachievable vision of Czechoslovakia as an "engineering power" or "forge" – "the steel heart of the Soviet Bloc". This resulted in extensive development, particularly of heavy engineering and related heavy industries in general, as well as an overemphasised expansion of mineral extraction. The consequences included not only ecological damage but also a significant distortion of the

This was clearly unsustainable for a medium-sized country in the long term, as it was impossible to match the pace and scope of top research of large countries across such a broad spectrum. The result was an inevitable technological lag, which accelerated significantly.[44] The analysed CC CPC report contained very alarming figures: while the country's contribution to global science and research was estimated at around 1 %, its share in the overall spectrum of world industrial production (i.e., in the variety of manufactured products) amounted to approximately 15–20 %, and in engineering, even to an absurdly high figure of approximately 70 %![45]

The Attitudes to Science, Research, and Education in the Final Years of the "Normalisation" Period

During approximately twenty years of "normalisation" in Czechoslovakia, the country's position among developed nations evidently worsened, and the gap with Western countries deepened significantly. This was clearly reflected in the documents of the CC CPC Commissions during the "perestroika" period (from around 1987) and, in some cases, even earlier. However, some of the documents (especially the pre-1987 ones) exhibited a similar argumentative dichotomy as seen a decade before. For example, in 1983, the Economic Commission of the CC CPC unequivocally stated the necessity of modernisation, increased efficiency of economic processes, and acceleration of technological development. On the other hand, it declared that *"heavy and General engineering and the electrical industry must play a decisive role in increasing the technical level of the entire national economy, in accordance with the line defined by the Party for these sectors in the implementation of the general line of socialist construction"*.[46] Thus, the preference for heavy industry persisted with all its negative consequences, only some of which are mentioned above. The authors of the document clearly strived to find anything positive. The Commission noted that the number of qualified workers had increased since the 1970s. Therefore, the "*conditions for tackling demanding tasks have been met. The point is to use this potential more purposefully and effectively and place significantly higher demands on it*".[47] As we have already seen, the increase in the education level was substantially lower than anticipated. In this regard, the statement about

structure of the Czechoslovak economy (as well as the social structure of the population, manifested by a substantial increase in employees in the secondary sector and, conversely, an unnaturally rapid weakening of the primary and tertiary sectors). For further details, see e.g. Jančík and Kubů, "Zwischen Planbefehl und Markt." Jančík and Kubů, "Der erste Versuch."

44 Drahomír Jančík, "Od jedné ekonomické reformy v Československu na práh reformy druhé aneb Od krize ke krizi," in Jiří Petráš and Libor Svoboda, ed., Československo v letech 1954-1962 (Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2015), 238.

45 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CSTD, box 2, fasc. 6/1, 28 June 1973, 92.

46 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: EC, box 5, fasc. 22/1, 3 May 1983, 9, 23. The *General line of socialist construction* was a programme document from May 1949. It established the principle of a radical transformation of the Czechoslovak society according to the Soviet model. It included, among other things, the [forced] "collectivisation" of agriculture, hyperindustrialisation, and militarisation of the society – all from the viewpoint of hereditary class struggle.

47 Ibid.

"*meeting the conditions for tackling demanding tasks*" appears to be pure euphemism or rather obvious self-deception.

In the Background Material for the Preparation of the XVIII Congress of the CPC from the autumn of 1985, the educated strata of society were examined from a distinctly ideological and class perspective.[48] The document highly praised the "*internal integration*" of social consciousness "*on the positions of the ideology of the working class, the deepening dialectical connection of its basic forms, the further strengthening of the connection between the ideological consciousness of classes and the scientific worldview, and the practical politics of the Communist Party.*" However, the criticism of the intelligentsia was scathing:

> The intelligentsia as a whole is not as susceptible to empiricism as workers. For its consciousness, higher information levels and the effort to 'competently' assess matters are typically predominant. This information, as research shows, more often relies on 'unofficial' sources, mostly from foreign bourgeois propaganda. Consequently, this stratum is prone to accept, or at least evaluate positively, various ideas of liberalism, abstract humanism, and 'pure' expertise, often combined with admiration of the West, etc. A significant part of the intelligentsia also exhibits a considerable degree of tolerance towards bearers of other ideological orientations, especially religions.[49]

Such an approach, of course, could not lead to solving the problems that Czechoslovak science experienced because of backwardness.

As in many other areas, a fundamental change in the approach to science and education came only with the adoption of the "perestroika" principles in the late 1980s. It is generally known that Czechoslovakia was among the opponents of changes for a relatively long time. The communist leadership only committed to radical reforms when it became evident that the Soviets were planning truly groundbreaking changes and, moreover, that it would not be possible to conceal information about them from the public or significantly censor it. Above all, the proposal of the Soviet Enterprise Law presented to the CC CPC in the last weeks of 1986 and Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Prague and his public speech there in the spring of 1987 were significant.[50] They prompted Gustáv Husák to make another of his drastic turns, and he transformed almost overnight from a cautious opponent of Gorbachev's reforms into an "enthusiastic" supporter of perestroika.[51]

Just as the Report on the Current State, Development, and Prospects of Czechoslovak Education was symptomatic of the early "normalisation" period, the "Comprehensive Forecast of Scientific, Technological, Economic, and Social Development until 2010"[52] was crucial for its end. Unlike the earlier documents, this one was not authored by the

48 In Czech: Podkladový materiál k problematice vyššího uplatnění vědecko-technického pokroku v čs. národním hospodářství. Ibid.

49 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: IC, box 4, fasc. 16, 25 October 1985, 17.

50 David S. Mason, "Glasnost, Perestroika and Eastern Europe," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944–)* 64, No. 3 (Summer, 1988): 434. Pullmann, *Konec experimentu*.

51 Václav Průcha et al., *Hospodářské a sociální dějiny Československa 1918–1992, 2. díl* (Doplněk, 2009), 701, 702.

52 In Czech: Souhrnná prognóza vědeckotechnického, ekonomického a sociálního rozvoje do roku 2010. CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CST, box 1, fasc. 1/inf. 1, 7 November 1988.

Party organs but by the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. It presented content and a tone entirely different from anything that preceded it, both in a general sense and in terms of the specific issues of science and education.[53] The previously ideological, class--blinded approach to problem-solving also received substantial criticism: "*Part of the blame for the insufficient analysis of new phenomena lies with the purely deductive branch of the axiomatic presentation of Marxist philosophy and, in part, with economics, for which new realities of global development, unless they could serve as illustrations of the stabilised system of doctrines, were dismissed as minor blemishes on an otherwise crystal-clear view of straightforward paths to progress and revolution.*"[54]

The "Comprehensive Forecast" primarily utilised a series of figures to unequivocally demonstrate "*the extensive nature of our growth and its unsustainability*." The global trend was clear:

> In the most developed countries, the economy of raw materials has already detached from the industrial economy; within the industrial economy, production has become independent of the number of jobs. […] The fundamental growth of wealth is therefore not primarily given by material resources but increasingly lies in the 'brain matter' and thus in investments of an immaterial nature, serving research, development, organisation, publicity, etc. […] The management of the most progressive global companies is focused on humans not as carriers of diligent hands, but as 'owners' of brains.[55]

In its crucial passages, the "Comprehensive Forecast" emphasised that "*the realisation of new goals will therefore require not a mere improvement, but a radical reform of the entire educational system*" [underlined in the original document – J.S.]. Contemporary education in the CSSR was assessed as inflexible and inefficient. In developed countries, already half of the relevant age cohorts had a university education. Czechoslovakia was nowhere near this – the goal was to increase the proportion of university students in the cohorts from the current 10.8 % to 30 %. The deadline for achieving this was not specified, although the entire document targeted the year 2010.[56]

However, the reforms were not intended to target only the quantitative indicators but also the qualitative aspects. To implement extensive changes, new, modern teachers were necessary, but that was not all: "*The prerequisite here is a profound democratisation of the educational system,*[57] *a return to the proven professional evaluation methods, rehabilitation of academic freedoms, etc.*" The significance of lifelong learning was also expected to increase considerably. This was also related to another aspect: ensuring the retraining of workers from the declining sectors. It was essential to diversify the structure of their qualifications, ensure language education, etc. According to the

53 That can be partly explained by its origins (it was written at the Academy of Sciences) because, as mentioned later, the ideological approach persisted in the CPC commissions (although it was much less intensive than in the 1970s).

54 Souhrnná prognóza vědeckotechnického, ekonomického a sociálního rozvoje do roku 2010. CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CST, box 1, fasc. 1/inf. 1, 7 November 1988, 2, 3.

55 Ibid., 6, 7, 15, 16.

56 Ibid., 8, 108–110.

57 Ibid., 108–110. The "democratisation of the education system," based on the document's overall tone, no longer seems to imply favouring children with working-class backgrounds as before but rather a complete opening up to students with given aptitudes.

document's authors, these activities could also be carried out as a side activity by the existing components of the educational system.[58]

Some passages of the "Comprehensive Forecast" seem more reminiscent of the markedly liberal early 1990s than the late "normalisation" period of the 1980s:

> In this context, we will also need to consider whether regular secondary and university education could be introduced as a completely paid service for those applicants who, for various reasons, could not be admitted to the regular forms of study." (sic!) "These services could also represent a significant source of financial resources for the respective active segments of the educational system.[59]

The abovementioned (essentially liberal) considerations must, however, be framed by the fact that this was a working document and a proposal that would very likely have undergone numerous changes and adjustments to reflect the diction of the late communist regime had the latter not collapsed in 1989. On the other hand, these were not the only considerations of the sort. On the contrary, the "Comprehensive Forecast" addressed the issue very comprehensively, adding a dimension of social mobility to the topic of education: "*The old concept of industrial rationality is at odds with the new conditions of the reproduction process primarily because it does not allow for the appreciation of the renewable source of growth – the qualification and developmental potential of the workforce. One of the basic prerequisites for overcoming this concept is the new social mobility of broad strata of the population.*" Closely related to this was the impending change in the understanding of equality and social security: the old "*egalitarian concept* […] *initially fulfilled a mobilising role for a while. However, today, in the time of reconstruction* [i.e. "perestroika" – J.S.]*, it has exhausted its potential. It also exerts a demobilising influence and is part of retarding mechanisms*".[60]

The Forecast authors identified two potential paths for social advancement: 1. a mass (coercive) approach, i.e., a targeted preference for certain groups, or 2. an individual performance-based approach, i.e., based on qualifications and professional development. The issue was that while the second option was suitable for qualified and, even more so, highly qualified individuals, the first option represented the only perspective available to the (still prevalent) unqualified strata. The resulting contradiction was evident: "*If the path of individual advancement based on the principle of performance is permanently abolished and society succumbs to short-term interests, then it is impossible to associate the ideal of equality with the expectation of any future improvements in living conditions. Such a state, however, in the situation of an urgent need for the intellectualisation of production (and consumption), threatens with retarding influences.*" At the same time, however, the authors realised that fully opening up the possibility of social differentiation would lead to the emergence of new social polarisation. Therefore, a compromise was needed: "*It is about fulfilling the ideals of justice in connection with the individuals' economic and social contributions*".[61]

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 8, 12, 13.
61 Ibid., 12, 13.

The CC CPC's Commission for Science and Technology evidently discussed the "Comprehensive Forecast" intensively and took a relatively clear stance on this matter. They appreciated it as "*an open, stimulating document, representing an analytical basis on the state and long-term forecast of the development of the Czechoslovak economy and overall societal life …* [which] *serves as a basis for the preparation of planning documents.*" The Forecast was to be further developed to establish "*variant approaches, goals, and implementation paths for accelerating the scientific, technological, economic, and social development of our society*". The Commission also demanded the development of multiple variants "*indicating a realistic* [!] *transition of the economy to an intensive path of development*".[62]

The fact that the "Comprehensive Forecast" remained a topic of discussion is also evidenced by the May 1988 meeting of the *Economic Commission of the CC CPC*, which extensively dealt with education issues. Some achievements were positively evaluated, such as establishing the preschool education system, the mandatory ten-year education system, and teacher preparation. On the other hand, these achievements were "*largely undermined by qualitative problems and the low efficiency in the use of allocated resources*".[63] Further improvements to the education system were expected. In elementary schools, the priority was to eliminate the overburdening of pupils and intensify support for talented youth. In secondary schools, the aim was to ensure "*complete secondary education for all children who have the prerequisites and interest.*" In higher education, the goal was set for around 22 % – 25 % of eighteen-year-olds to be admitted to study by the year 2000.[64]

At the same time, it is evident that the old problems and ideological paradigms still (partially) prevailed. This was manifested in repeated empty phrases such as: "*The 1991–2005 period will be a time of significant changes in the current developmental tendencies and directions, which will gain new content appropriate to the achieved level of socialist production relations and productive forces. It will be a period in which a decisive shift towards the intensification and modernisation of the Czechoslovak economy must be achieved.*"[65] Let us note that a "*decisive shift towards intensification*" had, in one form or another, been the goal of practically all resolutions since at least the 1960s. Empty proclamations such as these could not bring about this shift. Nor, naturally, could they mask the stark contrast with the level of education, science, and research in the West.

We will never know how the central authorities would have implemented the conceptual science and education development documents within the framework of the planned comprehensive reform of the Czechoslovak economy (which was supposed to take place from the late 1980s until at least the mid-1990s). The events of autumn 1989 brought about a change in the political regime, which addressed these issues differently.

62 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: CST, box 1, fasc. 1/inf. 1, November 7, 1988, 1, 2.
63 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: EC, box 8, fasc. 37/1, May 17, 1989, 52.
64 CZ NAP, CC CPC–C: EC, box 8, fasc. 37/2, May 17, 1989, 22.
65 Ibid., 19.

Conclusions

The above analysis demonstrates the ambivalence of the conceptual documents focused on science, research, and education, which were discussed by several CC CPC Commissions. On the one hand, these documents were characterised by a markedly realistic, factual approach in some sections, while on the other hand, they were mired in ideologically laden perspectives, driven by the fundamental principle of the (hereditary) class struggle. If we now address the questions posed at the beginning of the research based on the study conducted, we arrive at the following conclusions:

1. Generally, most conceptual documents can be assessed as somewhat vague, although they did not lack specificity or detail. It is important to note that the vague sections mainly discussed future outlooks and envisioned goals. In contrast, the analyses of past events or the current situation were significantly more detailed and specific.

2. The analysed documents were similarly contradictory regarding the dominance of technocratic versus ideological perspectives. In all cases, the authors evidently attempted to combine both approaches, which was logical, as they had no other choice in the reality of the "normalisation"-era Czechoslovakia. If they wanted to be critical, they could not ignore the "correct" (i.e., expected) anchoring of the documents in the regime's officially declared ideology. This proposed integration, however, was obviously unsuccessful, as the two approaches were, in fact, incompatible. In other words, ideological viewpoints or sometimes even clichés diminished the documents' analytical and factual strength. Similar to the previous point, it is also notable that ideologically driven passages were significantly more prevalent in the parts of the documents addressing future prospects and plans. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that the level of ideological content decreased significantly in the second half of the 1980s with the onset of the "perestroika" period. Additionally, technocratic passages were not always factual. In some instances, they resembled a haphazard collection of technical terms, making it very challenging to ascertain their intended meaning.

3. In all analysed cases of conceptual documents, the most realistic parts were the passages focusing on the current (or past) situation. Although these were influenced by the regime's ideology, they were more or less capable (in the late 1980s and the early 1970s, respectively) of accurately describing the complex problems and unsatisfactory developments in science and education. However, the proposed solutions tended to be rather vague. In other instances, the plans were completely unrealistic, such as the goal that 60 % of the population would have complete secondary education by 1985 (according to the Report on the Development from the early 1970s).[66]

4. In connection with the previous paragraph, it is evident that the reality of development significantly differed from the plans set out by the CC CPC conceptual documents – in all cases, for the worse. This was, after all, typical of communist Czechoslovakia's

66 It is noteworthy that this goal has not been achieved even today: according to the 2021 census, only 53.2 % of the Czech population aged 15 and older had completed secondary or higher education. See *Vzdělanostní struktura obyvatelstva podle výsledků sčítání lidu 2021* (Praha: Český statistický úřad, 2024), 5, accessed on 11 November 2024, https://csu.gov.cz/docs/107508/965f807f-eeb4-afc3-c7fe-7ea958415863/17023224.pdf?version=1.0.

planning system since at least the 1960s: past periods were usually assessed as unsuccessful or failing to meet the envisioned goals. This was followed by calls for intensified efforts and the achievement of qualitative or quantitative changes (in this case, e.g., "*radical reform*" in the Forecast from the late 1980s or the "*decisive shift towards intensification*" mentioned at the meeting of the Economic Commission of the CC CPC in May 1989). The entire cycle would typically be repeated in another five or ten years.

The analysed documents correspond to the conclusions of Antonín Kostlán, who identified five successively dominant concepts in the CPC's approach to science, research, and education that remained influential even after their peak, albeit not dominantly: "*1. science as an expression of progress (roughly until the 1930s); 2. science as a victim of bourgeois liberalism and a subject of necessary reforms (the 1930s – 1948/50); 3. science as a battlefield between the bourgeoisie and the working class (1948 – 1953); 4. Marxist-Leninist science as the only legitimate professional platform (1953 – 1965); 5. science as a productive force (1965 – 1989)*".[67] During the "normalisation" period, the prevailing concept was the latter one, which corresponded well to the vision of a socialist-organised scientific and technological revolution. This concept emphasised technocratic support for science, pushing previous ideological approaches into the background.[68] Conversely, earlier concepts such as science as a battlefield (3) or Marxism-Leninism as the arbiter of scientific legitimacy (4) still retained their strength and influenced, in particular, some of the proposed solutions. The fundamental issue reflected in the documents was the extraordinary inefficiency of the applied research system, often conducted in production plants by workers lacking appropriate qualifications.[69]

In absolute terms (i.e., without comparisons to foreign countries, especially advanced Western nations), the development of "normalised" Czechoslovakia in science, research, and education was positive. The population's educational level was enhanced, the quality of teaching increased (e.g., due to the rising number of qualified teachers), and the conditions for education improved (e.g., the reduction in the average number of students per class, developments in classroom equipment, etc.). Even in Czechoslovakia, some world-class research was undertaken, such as the production of contact lenses (by a team led by Otto Wichterle). The overall progress towards better technical equipment for industrial enterprises and households was undeniable. The problem was that this development was significantly slower compared to advanced countries, hampered by an overgrown bureaucratic system, the ideological lens of the ruling regime, and its overall inefficiency in practically all areas of functioning. Consequently, Czechoslovakia's position in global rankings continued to deteriorate, and the gap between it and Western nations rapidly widened. As the conducted research has shown, these were also issues in the conceptual documents discussed by the CC CPC Commissions in science and education. Under these conditions, any planned "*decisive shifts*" toward qualitative change remained mere illusions.

67 Kostlán, "KSČ a věda," 240.

68 Riika Nisonen-Trnka, "The Prague Spring of Science. Czechoslovak Natural Scientists Reconsidering the Iron Curtain," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, No. 10 (2008): 1758. Nisonen-Trnka's article is quoted in Kostlán, "KSČ a věda," 248, 249.

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IZOBRAŽEVANJE, ZNANOST IN RAZISKOVANJE SKOZI TEHNOKRATSKO IN IDEOLOŠKO PRIZMO: POGLED SKOZI LEČO KONCEPTUALNIH DOKUMENTOV CENTRALNEGA KOMITEJA KOMUNISTIČNE PARTIJE ČEŠKOSLOVAŠKE V DVEH »NORMALIZACIJSKIH« DESETLETJIH

POVZETEK

Študija preučuje razvoj konceptualizacije izobraževanja, znanosti in raziskovanja na Češkoslovaškem v dveh desetletjih »normalizacije« pod Komunistično partijo Češkoslovaške (KPČ) na podlagi podrobnega pregleda internih gradiv, ki so jih med letoma 1969 in 1989 pripravile različne komisije Centralnega komiteja (CK) KPČ. Analiza obsežnih arhivskih zapisov komisij, pristojnih za znanstveno-tehnološki razvoj, ideologijo, ekonomijo, in izobraževanje, razkriva nenehna trenja med tehnokratsko racionalnostjo in ideološko ortodoksnostjo. Zlasti zaradi vse večjega zaostanka za zahodnimi državami so snovalci politike KPČ sicer priznavali, da je treba nujno posodobiti gospodarsko in znanstveno osnovo države, vendar je njihove strategije pogosto spodkopavalo vztrajno sledenje razrednim doktrinam in političnim imperativom.

V dokumentih iz zgodnjih sedemdesetih let 20. stoletja so poudarjena prizadevanja za razširitev sekundarnega in terciarnega izobraževanja, odpravo neučinkovitosti v visokem šolstvu in uskladitev izobraževalnih profilov s potrebami trga dela. Ti pragmatični cilji pa so bili dosledno povezani s smernicami za krepitev socialistične ideologije, v skladu s katerimi so imeli prednost otroci delavcev in kmetov, obvezna zvestoba partijskim načelom pa je bila del ocenjevanja študentov in fakultet. Podobno so koncepti, povezani z znanostjo in raziskavami, priznavali resne pomanjkljivosti, kot sta kronično pomanjkanje ustrezno usposobljene delovne sile in preobremenjena proizvodna baza, vendar so pogosto vključevali prazne ideološke formulacije in nejasne akcijske načrte.

V osemdesetih letih 20. stoletja in zlasti v poznem obdobju perestrojke so se morale komisije KPČ bolj odkrito spoprijeti s sistemskimi pomanjkljivostmi češkoslovaške raziskovalne in izobraževalne infrastrukture. Dokument *»Izčrpna napoved«*, ki ga je pripravila Češkoslovaška akademija znanosti, je pomenil odmik od predhodnih okvirov in se je zavzemal ne le za kvantitativno širitev visokega šolstva, ampak tudi za temeljno demokratizacijo sistema, obnovitev akademskih svoboščin ter prehod na vseživljenjsko učenje in razvoj človeškega kapitala. Kljub temu so bili tudi ti reformistični predlogi še vedno odvisni od birokratskega okolja, ki so ga zaznamovali inercija in ideološki ostanki.

Študija je pokazala, da so bili tehnokratski vpogledi v pomanjkljivosti češkoslovaškega izobraževanja, znanosti in raziskovanja včasih tudi ustrezni, vendar so jih nenehno slabile ideološke dogme in strukturna togost komunističnega sistema. To prepletanje pragmatizma in ideologije je prispevalo k vse večjemu zaostanku za zahodnimi državami, kljub večkratnim pozivom režima k modernizaciji ter krepitvi znanstvenih in izobraževalnih zmogljivosti.