

The Cultural and Science Policy of the Communist Party and the Ideologization of Social Science in Czechoslovakia 1945–1960.

Abstract

This study deals with the cultural and science policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1945–1960 from the perspective of meeting the policy's main aim, i.e. a general acceptance of the communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The period started with formulating a programme of social and political transformation from the "national and democratic revolution" to a "socialist revolution", followed up by the proclamation of "accomplishing the socialist construction". Having reached a power monopoly, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia concentrated on a cultural revolution conceived as "a conversion of culture and people's thinking toward the Marxist-Leninist world-view". The communist cultural and science policy is therefore analysed in the context of the Marxist discourse and through the forms of reshaping the social science predestined to spread the Marxist philosophy. More specifically, my research focused on the development of university and college education policy as a part of the communist cultural and science project. In particular, the constitution of political education and teaching Marxism-Leninism at universities is observed as a key instrument of shaping new socialist intelligentsia. The objective of this study is to present an interpretation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's cultural and science policy following trends that started well before February 1948, rather than seeing the development as clearly discontinuous. My analysis results in referring more often to 1945 as the starting point of a new understanding of the social role of science and culture, by far not only in the communist discourse. These crucial ideological elements which launched the post-war transformation of university education are depicted as well. Furthermore, the study offers an analysis of the main ideological forms used for applying the programme of cultural revolution and shaping the new socialist intelligentsia as declared by the 9th Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Congress, especially with regard to workers' education and ideological campaigns shaping the "Marxist science" at the turn of 1940s and 1950s. Last but not least, the study focuses on the founding generation of Marxists graduating from colleges of political education, their role in establishing the Marxist-Leninist approaches in social science, their integration in research institutes of the Academy of Science and the universities in the first half of the 1950s – as well as their effort to restore the "pure" Marxist thinking during de-Stalinization in the decade's second half.