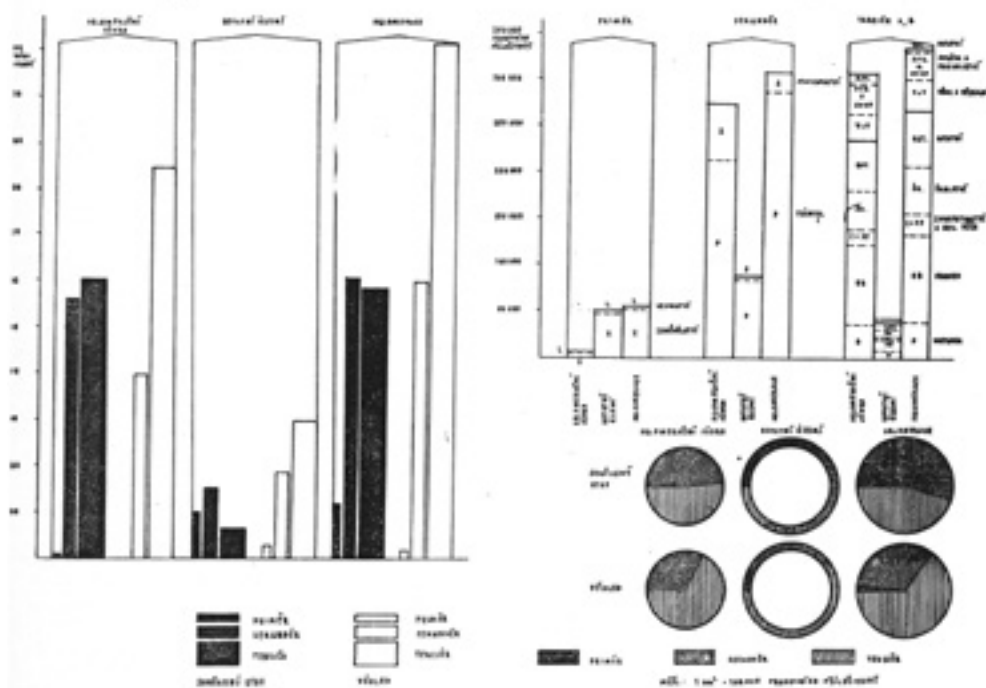


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PREPARATORY ANALYSES FOR THE PRAGUE-CENTRAL BOHEMIAN AGGLOMERATION MASTER PLAN. SHARES OF ECONOMIC SECTORS IN TOWNS WITH MORE THAN 5 000 INHABITANTS. TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES BY ECONOMIC SECTOR, 1967–1968

PŘÍPRAVNÉ ANALÝZY PRO ÚZEMNÍ PLÁN PRAŽSKÉ–STŘEDOČESKÉ AGLOMERACE. PODÍL HOSPODÁŘSKÝCH ODVĚTVÍ VE MĚSTECH NAD 5 000 OBYVATEL. ÚZEMNÍ ROZLOŽENÍ PRACOVNÍCH PŘÍLEŽITOSTÍ PODLE EKONOMICKÝCH SEKTORŮ, 1967–1968

Source Zdroj: Architektura ČSSR, 28, 1969.

# What Will You Be Like, Prague of the Year 2000? The Prague – Central Bohemian Agglomeration Plan in the Context of Political Changes at the Turn of the 1960s and the 1970s

Jaká budeš, Praho roku 2000?

Plán pražské–středočeské aglomerace  
v kontextu politických změn přelomu šedesátých  
a sedmdesátých let 20. století

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Politickou situaci v Československu v první polovině šedesátých let poznamenal rozpor mezi poststalinistickou státní ideologií, která po vzoru Sovětského svazu vytyčila rychlé dosažení stadia komunismu, a reálným propadem výkonnosti socialistické ekonomiky. V souladu s politikou Nikity Chruščova se vedení Komunistické strany Československa rozhodlo hospodářskou krizi řešit prorůstovou strategií založenou na nejnovějších poznatcích vědy a techniky. Myšlenkové základy hospodářských reforem, které později přerostly ve veřejnou kritiku autoritářského systému a vyústily v pražské jaro, budovaly například výzkumné týmy vedené marxistickým ekonomem Otou Šikem nebo filozofem a předním československým teoretikem vědecko-technické revoluce Radovanem Richtou.

Na rozdíl od západních zemí, kde urbanisté působili v prostředí tržní ekonomiky, územní plánování v Československu představovalo disciplínu, která podle platného zákona z roku 1958 plnila úkoly ústředního hospodářského plánování. V dobovém pojetí šlo o nástroj, jímž autoritářský stát reguloval výstavbu a rozvoj technické infrastruktury, centrálně plánoval a řídil rozmisťování dlouhodobých investic nebo usiloval o formování společenského života v území. Zdá se, že v době hledání cest pro modernizaci československého hospodářství, státu a společnosti se územní plánování stalo jedním z prostředků zavádění reforem do praxe.

V roce 1964 byl přijat nový územní plán Prahy, při jehož schvalování vláda přihlédla k doporučení urbanistů a v zájmu hospodářského oživení oblasti učinila první administrativní opatření pro plánovité propojení ekonomiky města a sousedního Středočeského kraje. Ve vládní koncepci rozvoje a výstavby Prahy z roku 1967 se již plně uplatnila nová prorůstová strategie založená na programu restrukturalizace průmyslové výroby a rozvoje sektoru služeb, vědy a vzdělávání. Překážka pro uskutečnění programu v podobě nedostatku lidských zdrojů měla být překonána zajištěním migrace pracujících ze středočeského regionu.

Provedením předběžné studie k územnímu plánu pražské–středočeské aglomerace byla pověřena pracovní skupina složená ze zaměstnanců Útvaru hlavního architekta města

Prahy, Státního ústavu pro územní plánování (Terplan) a dalších institucí. Skupinu vedl urbanista a významný československý teoretik městského plánování Jiří Hruža. Dílčí rozbor byly svěřeny rozsáhlému kolektivu expertů s technickým i sociálněvědním zaměřením. Přípravnou studii tým dokončil v prosinci 1968, to znamená po násilném přerušení obrodného procesu Pražského jara. Pro nedostatek politické vůle bylo její schvalování pozastaveno a ukončeno teprve roku 1971. Od roku 1969 již vznikal územní plán pražské–středočeské aglomerace, opět pod vedením Jiřího Hruže.

Za významnou sílu budoucí dynamiky vývoje osídlení a společenského života v aglomeraci projektanti považovali vědecko-technickou revoluci. Výzkumem společenských souvislostí vědecko-technické revoluce se zabývala expertní skupina marxistického filozofa Radovana Richty, jejíž závěry od poloviny šedesátých let tvořily součást ideologické výbavy KSČ. Další ideové východisko pro vznik projektu představovaly výsledky soudobého sociologického bádání. Poznatky sociologů o stratifikaci československé společnosti přešly do koncepce územního plánu v podobě programu cílené podpory sociální mobility. Autorský tým chápal aglomeraci jako jednotný ekonomický, fyzický i sociální prostor a snažil se o takovou organizaci osídlení, jež by ve všech částech území obyvatelům poskytla stejnou životní úroveň a co největší individuální a sociální volbu.

Po ideové i formální stránce se projekt pražské–středočeské aglomerace řadí mezi díla pozdní moderny. Spřízněnost se systémovým myšlením meziválečných funkcionalistů prozrazuje již vymezení rozlohy středočeské aglomerace na základě rozboru takzvaných funkčních vztahů bez participace obyvatel, nebo užití schématu koncentrického uspořádání monofunkčních zón, charakteristického pro plánování Prahy od dvacátých let 20. století. Autoři projektu navazovali i na odkaz československého meziválečného regionálního plánování. Další poučení čerpali z tvorby zahraničních urbanistů, kteří se od čtyřicátých let 20. století podíleli na plánování západních velkoměst.

Podobně jako západoevropští urbanisté Hružův tým upřednostnil model satelitní struktury aglomerace. Zatímco v Praze

se změny územního plánu týkaly převážně nového využití stavebních ploch, v aglomeračním pásmu, zásobárně pracovních sil pro hlavní město, urbanisté navrhli reorganizaci sídelní soustavy s rozsáhlými společenskými dopady. S ohledem na ochranu krajiny a zemědělské půdy se novou výstavbu rozhodli koncentrovat a přidružit k již existujícímu osídlení. Základní urbanistická koncepce úzce souvisela s návrhem modernizace sítě veřejné dopravy.

Československé územní plánování odvozené od ústředního plánování hospodářského se počátkem sedmdesátých let stalo

nástrojem jiné politiky než té, která zrodila zadání ambiciózního projektu. Znovunastolený autoritářský režim nejpozději v roce 1970 ukončil snahy o hospodářskou a politickou reformu státně socialistického zřízení. Pozornost stranické reprezentace se upřela k novému politickému programu, jehož součástí se staly investice do masové bytové výstavby v hlavním městě. Plán pražské-středočeské aglomerace, dokončený v roce 1971, nikdy neprošel schvalovacím řízením a později se stal podkladem pro dva nové územní plány, které přistupovaly k Praze a Středočeskému kraji jako k odděleným ekonomickým a sociálním prostorům.

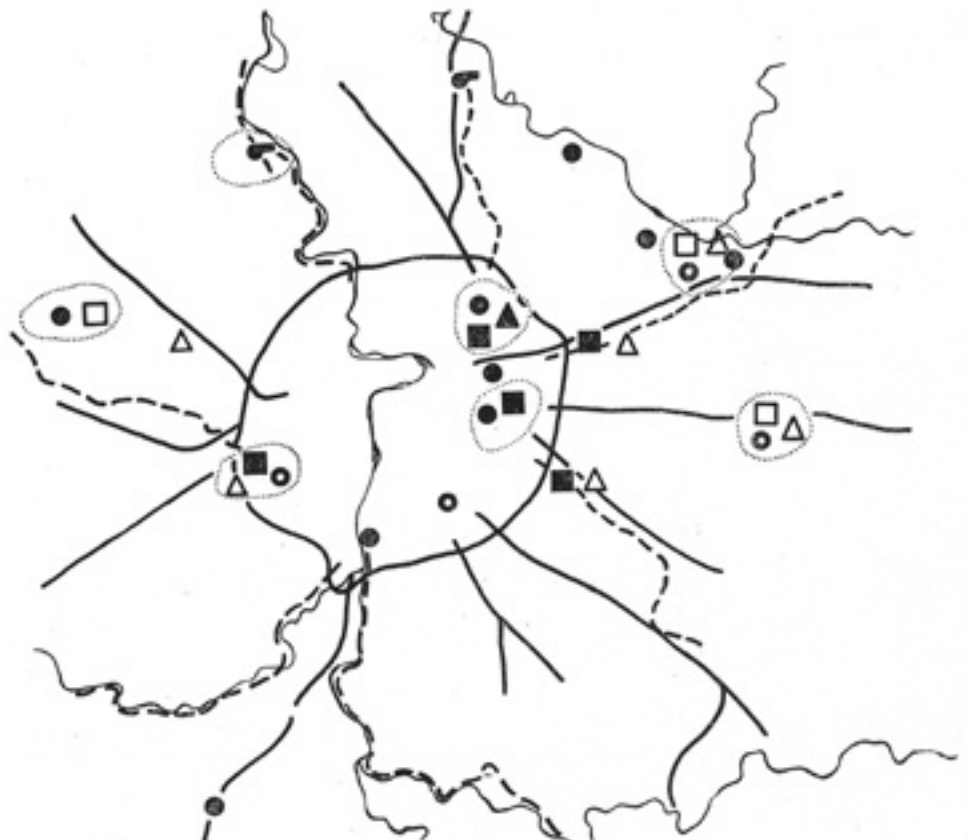
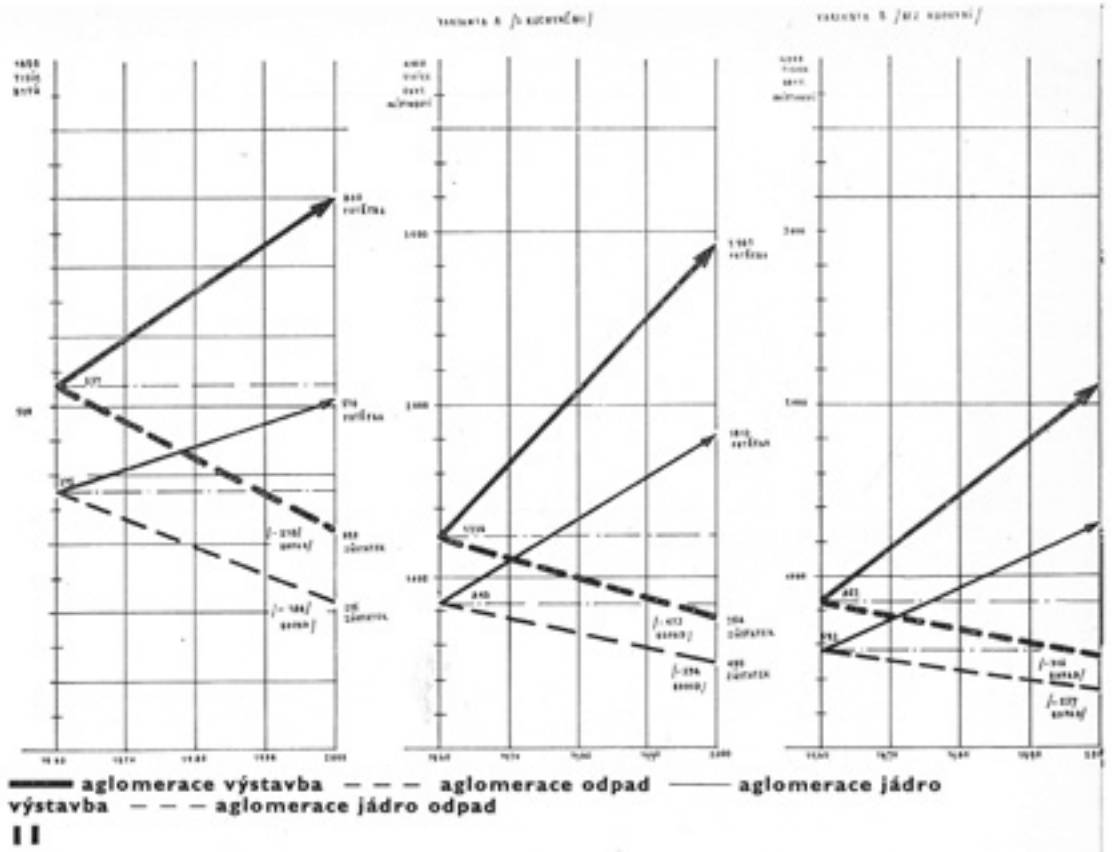
**“Still, the social and economic importance of the agglomeration is such that these considerations can in no way be separated from the overall political atmosphere and economic situation in our country.”<sup>1</sup>**

In 1964, the Czechoslovak government approved a new masterplan for Prague. The relevant resolution instructed the authorities of the capital city of Prague and the Central Bohemian Region to set up a common institution that would examine the economic links between the capital city and its adjacent region in detail and ensure the creation of a master plan for the Central Bohemian region.<sup>2</sup> The same year, the state planning institute (Terplan) began work on the Central Bohemian Regional Plan. In the following years, the coordinated action of the municipal and regional administrations resulted in the ambitious project of the masterplan for the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration.

The social situation in Czechoslovakia in the first half of the 1960s was marked by a profound contradiction between the post-Stalinist state ideology which, following the Soviet Union's example, set out to achieve the stage of communism quickly, and the genuine economic crisis caused by the collapse of the Third Five-Year Plan (1961 – 1965).<sup>3</sup> The immediate economic slump not only undermined the likelihood of the early establishment of an egalitarian state of “universal sufficiency”, but ultimately threatened the legitimacy of the socialist regime. The leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) addressed the disparity between lagging production and the population's growing demands for a higher standard of living by adopting a new pro-growth strategy and initiating reforms of the centrally planned economy. Following the resolutions of the XXII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1961), the economic modernisation programme was to be based on the latest scientific and technological findings; accordingly, the party and government representatives invited experts from a number of scientific disciplines to prepare it. Research teams led by the Marxist economist Ota Šik and the philosopher Radovan Richta, the leading Czechoslovak theorist of the scientific and technical revolution, for example, laid the foundations of the economic reforms that subsequently evolved into the public critique of the authoritarian system that resulted in the Prague Spring (1968).<sup>4</sup>

Unlike in Western countries, where urban planners worked in market economies and had to take into account the various interests of different entities, spatial planning in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s operated without any market pressure, and, according to the valid law, “in accordance with the tasks and objectives of national economic planning”<sup>5</sup> At the time, it served as the instrument by which the authoritarian state regulated the construction and development of the technical infrastructure, centrally planned, managed the distribution of long-term investments and sought to shape social life in the territory. While emphasis on the development of industrial production and the extensive use of human resources had been persistent since the 1950s, it appears that in the search for ways to modernise the Czechoslovak economy, state and society, spatial planning became a means of putting reforms into practice.

The following text explores the connection between spatial planning and the political reforms in Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 1960s. Using the example of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration's spatial plan, it charts the activity of urban planners during the Prague Spring period, along with their disillusionment with the project's failure due to the change of political course. This study maps the ideological aspects of the project, reveals the plan's continuity with older traditions of Czechoslovak regional planning and contemporary Western European urbanism, and points out the limits of applying modernist principles to urban and regional issues.



PREPARATORY ANALYSIS FOR THE PRAGUE-CENTRAL BOHEMIAN AGGLOMERATION MASTER PLAN. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVING SPACE BY THE YEAR 2000. TECHNICAL MANUFACTURING AND SUPPLY ZONE OF THE CITY, 1967-1968

PŘÍPRAVNÁ ANALÝZA PRO ÚZEMNÍ PLÁN PRAŽSKÉ-STŘEDOČESKÉ AGLOMERACE. POŽADAVKY NA OBYTNOU PLOCHU DO ROKU 2000. TECHNICKÁ VÝROBNÍ A ZASOBOVACÍ ZÓNA MĚSTA, 1967-1968

Source Zdroj: Architektura ČSSR, 28, 1969

## **The Political Assignment. “The problem of Prague has already become a prime national problem of great economic and political consequence [...]”.<sup>6</sup>**

In the early days of the state-socialist regime, the development of the capital city was not a political priority. Unlike other European cities, Prague had not been affected by wartime events, while Communist governments focused on the development of traditional industrial centres such as Ostrava, the industrialisation of Slovakia, and the resettlement of the borderlands after the expulsion of the German population. In the post-Stalinist period, however, the situation began to change. In 1958, the government issued principles for the future construction of the capital city,<sup>7</sup> which formed the basis for the completion and approval, after thirteen years of work, a new master plan for Prague (1951 – 1964). Ongoing preparations for the modernisation of the lagging Czechoslovak economy were already reflected in the approval process. The government not only identified Prague as the country’s administrative and cultural centre, but also as one of the most important industrial centres,<sup>8</sup> and took the first steps towards ensuring the planned connection between the economies of the city and the neighbouring region. In doing so, they likely followed recommendations from the authors of the new masterplan, who wanted to prevent further expansion of the metropolis and extended the concept of city development to the neighbouring region. In accordance with an older legacy of Czech regional planning, the group of experts led by architect Jiří Novotný included in its proposal a wide zone beyond the administrative boundaries of Prague, “where the basic interests of the city must be secured for the development of its life and economy”.<sup>9</sup>

The birth of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration masterplan was the result of a 1967 policy directive, namely a government resolution conceptualising the long-term development and building of Prague.<sup>10</sup> As basic steps towards the economic revival of this nationally important settlement area, the government stipulated the restructuring of industrial production and the development of the service sector, science and education (through the construction of new university campuses and science centres). The main obstacle to the implementation of this programme was the unfavourable demographic situation and the associated decline in the workforce. As late as 1969, we learn from *Rudé Právo*, the official daily of the KSČ, that while Western European cities were solving this problem through the immigration of foreign workers, Prague did not have this option.<sup>11</sup> The government resolution of 1967 included the decree that human resources would be obtained by modernising industry, in other words by increasing labour productivity and reducing the number of employees engaged in manufacturing. However, the central planning authority (State Planning Commission) challenged this possibility and recommended an increase in the number of workers commuting from the Central Bohemian region.<sup>12</sup> Due to Czechoslovak, or, more precisely, Prague industry’s long-term orientation towards extensive growth, this option prevailed and was incorporated into the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration master plan.

To carry out a preliminary study of the area’s development through 1985, the so-called “political, economic and technical principles” of the master plan, the Prague and Central Bohemian Regional authorities set up a working group consisting of employees of the Office of the Chief Architect of Prague, the Terplan state planning institute and other institutions. The group was led by architect Jiří Hruža, a prominent Czechoslovak urban planning theorist and deputy to the chief architect of Prague, Jiří Voženílek. The sub-analyses were entrusted to a team of more than fifty architects, engineers, geographers and other specialists.<sup>13</sup> Provision for the preparatory analyses was made by the 1958 Act on Spatial Planning, but, in the case of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration, the expert team seems to have been exceptionally large and included disciplines that had been rehabilitated in the 1960s, particularly sociologists.

A preparatory study with dozens of diagrams, graphs and planning schemes was completed in December 1968: only after the Soviet invasion that violently interrupted the renewal processes of the Prague Spring. Due to a lack of political will, approval was stalled and only completed in 1971.<sup>14</sup> From 1969 onwards, the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration spatial plan was already under construction, again under the leadership of Jiří Hruža. Hruža’s main collaborators included the architects Petr Grebeň, responsible for the theoretical part of the project, Jiří Novotný, the chief designer for the revision of the Prague master plan,<sup>15</sup> and Antonín Mašek, the chief designer of the spatial plan for the Central Bohemian region. Initially, the plan’s concept did not deviate from the original intent, which reflected the influence of economic and social reforms from the period preceding the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces. The change in approach is only evident in the 1971 report that accompanied the completed project.<sup>16</sup>

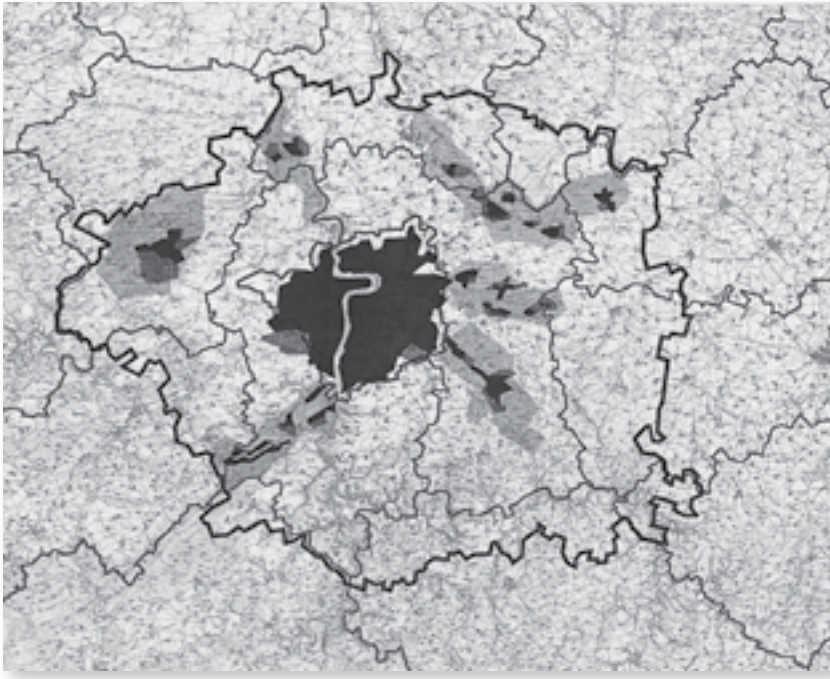
### The Ideological Starting Points. “The prospective development of each of the main functions was examined on the basis of expected future effects [...]”.<sup>17</sup>

An uncritical belief in the possibility of scientific knowledge of the driving forces of future development, which formed a characteristic of late modernist thought in both the East and the West, prompted the authors of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration masterplan to extend the timeframe for the area’s development from the requested fifteen years to the year 2000. This was not an isolated step: by the early 1960s, the Brno department of the Research Institute for Building and Architecture (VÚVA) had been working with a horizon of three decades in its hypotheses concerning the prospective development of settlements throughout the territory of Czechoslovakia.<sup>18</sup> Architect Jiří Hrůza commented on the issue of defining the plan’s time period: “It is understandable that in discussing the study as a whole, the year 2000 in particular caused much misunderstanding and doubt. We are more accustomed to associating this year with science fiction novels and the reflections of futurologists than with concrete urban planning work [...] Certainly, it makes little sense to dwell on the details of the system of amenities and the like, but only with such a period of time can one realistically envisage at least the first real manifestations of the implementation of a particular housing concept, and also, in terms of the overall demographic and socio-professional development of the population, a 30-year increment by no means excessive.”<sup>19</sup>

The planners considered the scientific-technical revolution<sup>20</sup> an important force for the future dynamics of housing and social life in the agglomeration, and the anticipated arrival of this revolution was a pillar of the political reforms of the late 1960s. Research on the “social and human context of the scientific-technical revolution” was carried out by a team of experts led by philosopher Radovan Richta on behalf of the Central Committee of the KSČ. Richta drew principally on the teachings of Marx and his Soviet interpreters; among Western theorists, he was most influenced by John Desmond Bernal, Helmut Schelsky, Raymond Aron among many others.<sup>21</sup> He believed that the conditions of capitalist society were “too narrow” for the full implementation of the scientific-technical revolution, and that the only “ground on which the scientific-technical revolution can develop to its full extent is socialism and communism”.<sup>22</sup> The resulting work, titled *Civilizace na rozcestí* (Civilisation at the Crossroads), portrayed a new stage in the development of socialist society, in which the development of science and technology would trigger a transfer of human forces from the sphere of production to the non-productive sphere, opening up space for the all-round development of the individual in accordance with the demands of life under communism.<sup>23</sup> In addition to its Marxist grounding, the work contained suggestions for adapting the Czechoslovak economy and society in response to current challenges. Richta’s collective foresaw the large-scale structural changes in industry brought about by the process of automation, the growing demand for professional specialisation and the associated need to modernise the education system, along with the expansion of leisure time and new demands for its use. He considered the introduction of a decentralised economic management model a key condition for transitioning to the phase of scientific and technological revolution, i.e., the successful completion of the reform proposed by economist Ota Šik’s group.<sup>24</sup>

According to historian Jiří Hoppe, the conclusions presented in the first version of *Civilisation at the Crossroads* were incorporated into the ideological apparatus of the KSČ and into the general consciousness no later than in 1965.<sup>25</sup> The theses contained in *Civilisation at the Crossroads* are also present in Jiří Hrůza’s written reflections of the same year, inspired by the work of the Marxist sociologist of science John Desmond Bernal, among others.<sup>26</sup> Richta’s theory of modernisation was the basis for the government resolution that initiated the creation of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration master plan,<sup>27</sup> and the working group around Jiří Hrůza continued to work with the research’s conclusions concerning the social context of the scientific and technological revolution. For example, to calculate the future number of employees in the tertiary sector, the group carried out a comparative analysis of the current employment structure in Prague and other large cities in developed countries.<sup>28</sup> Additional data was obtained from statistics and sociological surveys.

In the post-Stalinist era, Czechoslovak sociology went through a brief flowering, which ended with the suppression of the Prague Spring. A 1967 survey of the vertical stratification of society and social mobility is considered the most important sociological research of the 1960s. Like the groups led by Radovan Richta, Ota Šik and political scientist Zdeněk Mlynář, the project, led by sociologist Pavel Machonin, served to gather expert evidence for the reform programme of the KSČ.<sup>29</sup> The survey revealed the subtle, yet obvious, stratification of society caused by differences in the



**PRAGUE-CENTRAL BOHEMIAN  
AGGLOMERATION SPATIAL  
PLAN. TERRITORY OF THE  
AGGLOMERATION, 1970**

ÚZEMNÍ PLÁN  
PRAŽSKÉ-STŘEDOČESKÉ  
AGLOMERACE. ÚZEMÍ  
AGLOMERACE, 1970

Source Zdroj: Archives of The Prague  
Institute of Planning and Development

population's living conditions and social opportunities, thus problematising the idea of achieving social equality as an important part of the ideological doctrine of state socialism.<sup>30</sup>

The findings about the differentiation of Czechoslovak society made their way into the concept of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration's spatial plan in the form of a programme of targeted support for social mobility. Alois Anderle of the Terplan state planning institute dealt with the promotion of social mobility through spatial planning on a theoretical level. Anderle considered a high degree of spatial mobility an important element in the development of any area. He expected spatial mobility, whether in the form of a change of residence or commuting for work and education, to facilitate a change in social status not only for a given individual but also across generations.<sup>31</sup> In the case of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration, the planners sought housing and transport systems that would facilitate "the basic standards of civilisation and living conditions" in all parts of the territory, while providing "the greatest possible individual and social choice".<sup>32</sup> They understood the agglomeration as an integrated organism in which all components form a single economic, physical and social space. At the same time, the interest of the Central Bohemian Region's political representatives in the equal distribution of investment, so that Prague would not continue to benefit from its privileged position, also played a significant role.

The sociological department of the Office of the Chief Architect of Prague was engaged in data collection corresponding to the city's planning needs. In addition to sub-analyses on such topics as the transport use of Prague residents for short-term recreation,<sup>33</sup> it also conducted larger-scale research. In 1968, the department prepared a questionnaire aimed at comparing the living conditions of residents in new housing estates with those in older parts of Prague; this was later followed by a survey in selected localities within the agglomeration.<sup>34</sup> It seems that while the research in Prague was completed, no evaluation of the survey results in the Central Bohemian region was ever completed due to the political ostracism of sociology as a discipline. Further, the published conclusions of the Prague survey are of dubious value,<sup>35</sup> as they appear to have been swayed by the initiation of the construction of large-scale prefabricated housing estates on the periphery of the city and the intended redevelopment of historic urban districts. The questions focused on resident preferences in the areas of housing, services, the environment and recreation. According to the published version, the majority of respondents, regardless of their current residence, agreed that a healthy environment was of greatest importance to them and that greater distance from the city centre or their place of employment was not a factor.<sup>36</sup>

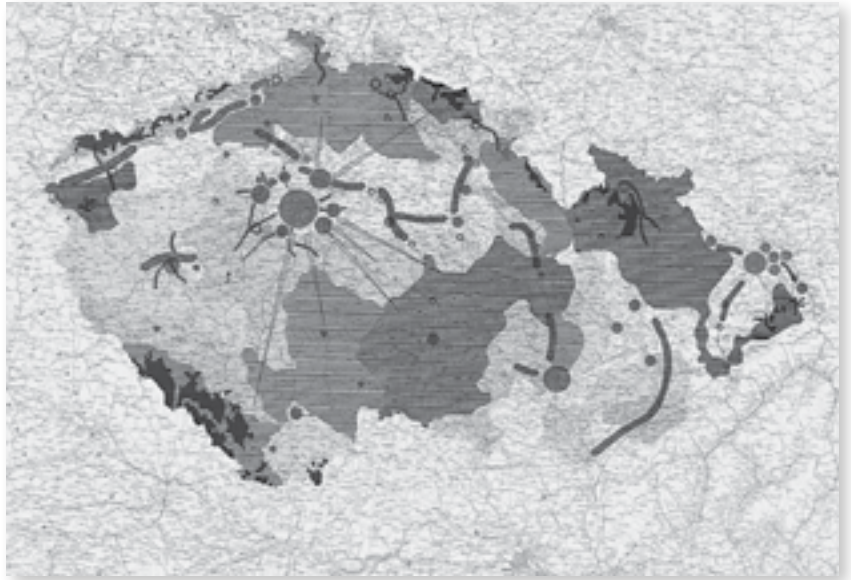
During the Prague Spring, when censorship was suspended and freedom of speech briefly reigned, architect Jiří Hruza could confide that "the actual participation of the population and their



**PRAGUE-CENTRAL BOHEMIAN  
AGGLOMERATION SPATIAL  
PLAN. POPULATION DENSITY OF  
SETTLEMENT CONCENTRATIONS,  
1970**

ÚZEMNÍ PLÁN  
PRAŽSKÉ-STŘEDOČESKÉ  
AGLOMERACE. ZALIDNĚNÍ  
SÍDELNÍCH KONCENTRACÍ, 1970

**Source** Zdroj: Archives of The Prague  
Institute of Planning and Development



understanding of the problems we are dealing with is one of the basic prerequisites for the genuine effectiveness and optimal implementation of the results of our efforts<sup>37</sup> The participation of citizens, either directly or via representative bodies, was taken for granted by urban planners in the West. Czechoslovak architects had attempted to involve the public in the urban planning process as early as the 1940s.<sup>38</sup> However, after the advent of the state socialist regime, there was no free debate concerning plans for urban development, including the issue of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration.

**The Final Plan. “All parts [of the agglomeration will be] seen as equal, although of course differentiated in their functions and intensity of urbanisation.”<sup>39</sup>**

As historian Petr Roubal has already noted, the late modernist mindset permeated both the ideological foundations and the formal shape of the spatial plan for the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration.<sup>40</sup> How Jiří Hruža's team defined the boundaries of the agglomeration already reveals an affinity with the systemic thinking of the interwar functionalists and the limits of a paternalistic approach to spatial planning. Although the leading theoretician of the project, architect Petr Grebeň, stated that “In the urbanism of the last few years [...] the view that inhabitants' relation to their city, as well as people's changing needs and social relations, must be recognised and applied directly – and not only indirectly and simplistically in the form of functions – is gaining ground”,<sup>41</sup> it was by breaking down the so-called functional relations that the designers determined the extent of the region. Using computing technology to process statistical data, they took into account the existing level of commuting to the capital for work and amenities, the recreational habits of Prague residents, and the area's potential for the future construction of housing, manufacturing plants and other facilities.

Functional zoning was a basic practice of urban modernism. Since the 1920s, Prague's planning had been based on the principle of concentric arrangement of mono-functional zones. This scheme was the foundation of the Prague master plan approved in 1964, and Hruža's team extended it to the Central Bohemian region. The capital, the so-called “core of the agglomeration”, was bounded by zones of greenery, farmland, concentrated forms of housing and recreational facilities. In Prague, whose growth the planners perceived as incorrect, the changes primarily concerned the establishment of areas for tertiary-sector workplaces and housing,<sup>42</sup> while in the agglomeration zone, the capital's labour reservoir, the urban planners proposed a reorganisation of the housing system with extensive social implications. Apparently on the basis of written documents from the State Planning Commission, they assumed that intensive migration from other parts of the country





**PRAGUE-CENTRAL BOHEMIAN  
AGGLOMERATION SPATIAL PLAN.  
ENVIRONMENT, 1970**

ÚZEMNÍ PLÁN  
PRAŽSKÉ-STŘEDOČESKÉ  
AGLOMERACE. ŽIVOTNÍ PROSTŘEDÍ,  
1970

**Source** Zdroj: Archives of The Prague  
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and the future urbanisation of the area would increase the population of the Central Bohemian region from less than half a million to twice that by the year 2000.

The urban planners created and assessed a total of twelve variants of new settlement organisation in the form of even distribution, radial systems, or parallel and satellite cities.<sup>43</sup> They drew lessons from the holistic plans of their domestic predecessors and from the post-war projects of Western European urban planners, whose methods they adapted to the needs of socialist society. Jiří Hruža was well acquainted with the ideological works of Czech urbanists,<sup>44</sup> including the study *Paralelní Praha* (Parallel Prague, 1922) by Vladimír Zákrejs, the designs for a linear city to the north of Prague in the Polabí region drawn up by architects Karel Janů, Jiří Štursa and Jiří Voženílek (1931 – 1935), and a plan for the decentralisation of Prague by architect Emanuel Hruška (1943 – 1945). During World War II, Czech urban planners worked for the Planning Commission for the Capital City of Prague and its surroundings, then controlled by the Nazi administration of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The jurisdiction of the planning commission extended to almost the entire Central Bohemian region, where Nazi planners intended to establish new satellite settlements and industrial centres.<sup>45</sup>

The loosening of political control in the post-Stalinist period allowed Czechoslovak urbanists to re-establish broken links with contemporary international developments. The Hruža collective studied the practices of foreign urban planners who had been involved in the planning of Western metropolises since the 1940s.<sup>46</sup> Using the examples of London, Paris, and Stockholm, they examined the strengths and weaknesses of the satellite structure of agglomerations that had centralised social and economic functions in the metropolis to varying degrees. From post-war urban planning theory, Jiří Hruža was interested in the work of Rudolf Hillebrecht, the chief architect of the West German city of Hannover. In his book *Teorie města* (Theory of the City), Hruža draws attention to Hillebrecht's concept of the development of the settlement setting,<sup>47</sup> from which he extracts, among other things, a precept on the necessity of strengthening the development of existing "satellite" towns in the vicinity of a large city. Despite occasional references in the texts, the authors of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration spatial plan do not seem to have been inspired by contemporary urbanism in Eastern Bloc countries.



**PRAGUE-CENTRAL BOHEMIAN  
AGGLOMERATION SPATIAL PLAN.  
DESIGN OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT  
NETWORK, 1970**

ÚZEMNÍ PLÁN  
PRAŽSKÉ-STŘEDOČESKÉ  
AGLOMERACE. NÁVRH SÍTĚ  
VEŘEJNÉ DOPRAVY, 1970

Source Zdroj: Archives of The Prague  
Institute of Planning and Development

Similar to urban planners in the Western Europe, Hrůza's team favoured a satellite model for the structure of the agglomeration. To protect the landscape and farmland, they decided that new construction would be concentrated and associated with existing settlements. The industrial centres of Kladno and Kralupy nad Vltavou, with their own urban infrastructures and catchment areas, were to remain less dependent on Prague. New satellites, which would satisfy the "new demands" of the metropolis<sup>48</sup> but possess an urban character, were situated in two belts along the eastern industrial perimeter of Prague into the Polabí region and between the towns of Úvaly and Český Brod. Wooded areas south of Prague, in the Berounka, Vltava and Sázava river basins, were allocated for purely residential construction and long-term recreation.

The basic urban planning concept was closely related to the layout of the transport system. The planners anticipated increased individual car traffic and investment in the road network, but placed the most emphasis on modernising public transport. Following the decision to construct the Prague metro, they conceived the public transport system as primarily rail-based and proposed reinforcement of the existing rail network with a suburban rapid transit line, so that the journey from the satellite settlements to jobs, new university centres, health centres and other facilities in the core of agglomeration would take a maximum of forty-five minutes.<sup>49</sup> This overall plan for the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration was to be followed by more detailed spatial plans for individual sections of the Central Bohemian Region.

## Epilogue. “The meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia played a decisive role in the resolution of these key tasks [...]”.<sup>50</sup>

Completed in 1971, the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration's spatial plan never went through the approval procedure. Many years later, architect Jiří Hruža recalled the fate of the proposal: “We thought that we would be able to push the project through for discussion or approval. It began to be discussed in 1969–1970. We naively thought it would work [...]. But, in 1970, it foundered”.<sup>51</sup> By 1970 at the latest, the consolidating authoritarian regime put an end to efforts to reform the political system and the centrally planned economy. The structural changes and persecution that affected all segments of Czechoslovak society also had a negative impact on the approval process of the spatial plan for the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration. Architects Jiří Novotný and Jiří Hruža, for example, were classed among the politically “unreliable” who found their social positions made difficult or impossible by the regime. Jiří Hruža was dismissed from his leadership positions but was allowed to stay on in the Office of the Chief Architect of Prague. Jiří Novotný, the head planner of the Prague master plan, was forced to leave outright, as was the chief architect of Prague, Jiří Voženílek.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike the buildings of undesirable architects, the idea of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration spatial plan did not disappear from official documents, or press, during the period known as normalisation. Speaking about the agglomeration in 1972, Blahomír Borovička, the new chief architect of Prague, declared: “We will not build satellites, but we must develop the existing settlement areas outside of the city such that they bring people to the centre via rapid transport”.<sup>53</sup> Historians point out that the governing elites were interested in maintaining the continuity of certain processes begun in the 1960s, including the emphasis on expert knowledge, especially when associated with supporting the technocratic management of society.<sup>54</sup> The state ideology of the 1970s never abandoned the strategy of transitioning to the stage of the scientific-technical revolution.

Nevertheless, the original purpose of the Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration spatial plan, regarding the promotion of social mobility and restructuring the Czechoslovak economy, dropped out of the official debate. Radovan Richta continued to occupy a prominent social position, though he modified his original concept, abandoning its “emancipatory ethos and some humanist accents”.<sup>55</sup> The part of Richta's theory based on the implementation of Šik's economic reforms was significantly complicated. Following the defeat of the Prague Spring, Ota Šik emigrated and Czechoslovakia reverted to a strongly centralised economic management derived from the Soviet model.

The new political elites sought to legitimise the regime with an emphasis on satisfying the individual needs of the population, including the chronic housing shortage. Among other things, a section on economic policy from a resolution from the XIV Congress of the KSČ (1971), where the party reasserted its unity and power, issued an order: “to concentrate the construction of housing and the necessary building capacity, particularly in Prague, the North Bohemian Region and Bratislava”.<sup>56</sup> Based on this centralised decision, the Prague party leadership announced a doubling of investment in the capital's development.<sup>57</sup> The change in political priorities had already impacted the content of the report that accompanied the completed Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration project, and was particularly palpable in its reinforcement of the importance of residential construction. The rejected project of 1969–1971 laid the groundwork for two newly elaborated master plans that were approved in 1976.<sup>58</sup> The agglomeration's spatial plan now covered the entire Central Bohemian region, and its separation from the Prague master plan suggests that the areas were no longer seen as a single social and economic space.

The Prague-Central Bohemian agglomeration project was unique in the domestic environment. Through it, Czechoslovak urban planners had sought to come into step with urban and regional planning in developed countries, but it remained, as architect Jiří Hruža had feared, nothing but an “interesting theoretical exercise”.<sup>59</sup> In the early 1970s, under the control of central economic planning, Czechoslovak spatial planning became an instrument of a different politics than those that gave rise to this ambitious project. For the remainder of the time allotted to the state socialist establishment, that is, until 1989, the economic policy of the Communist Party concentrated on satisfying Prague investment projects within the city's administrative boundaries.<sup>60</sup>

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