

PUBLIC SELECTION BASED ON QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW FOR THE AWARDING OF NO. 1 GRANT LASTING 12 MONTHS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN ACCORDANCE WITH ART. 22 OF LAW OF 30.12.2010 NO. 240 AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS, PHILOSOPHY, COMMUNICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BERGAMO (ACADEMIC RECRUITMENT FIELD 14/A1 – POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND 14/B2 – HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND OF NON-EUROPEAN SOCIETIES AND INSTITUTIONS - ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE SPS/01 – POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND SPS/14 – ASIAN HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONS AS PART OF THE PLAN FOR EXTRAORDINARY RESEARCH CALLED ITALY® (TALENTED YOUNG ITALIAN ®ESEARCHERS) - YOUTH IN RESEARCH INITIATIVE FOR THE YEAR 2016 – TYPE D – CUP: F12I1400023000

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RESEARCH PROJECT

The research Project focuses on a historical phenomenon which is not well-known and appreciated in Italy and Europe, dissent in the communist regimes in middle-eastern European countries and in USSR, particularly on Charta 77 movement. Dissent has been considered for a long time just as an anti-totalitarian reaction whose main goal was overcoming the dictatorship and developing liberal-democratic institutions and market economy. This is the reason why it, with few admirable exceptions, was never investigated: it appeared as the late alignment of those countries with the Western-European standards.

If you look at dissent without prejudices, you can find some peculiarities, which are evident in the Russian origins of the phenomenon too. I mention the sociological aspects first: non-violence, the primacy of the cultural dimension over the political one, informal and elastic organization, public forms of fight (if possible), appeal to international treaties in the field of human rights. From a philosophical perspective dissent, because of its peculiar forms of action, emphasizes the Foucauldian dynamic constellation of power, with its linguistic articulations and forms of subjectivation.

Dissent rises in Russia in the 1950s and then spreads to all the communist countries with different fortunes. This is the reason why this research project requires the comparison between the Czech experience and the Russian one, both from a historical and a theoretical perspective. The figure of Aleksandr Solzenycyn is to be considered, as his works influenced the Czech dissidents.

Why to focus on Czech dissent? It presents some peculiar aspects. Political and historical aspects: nowadays Charta 77 appears as the most successful experience of dissent as its leader Václav Havel had the honor and the responsibility to lead the post-communist Czech government. It is interesting to analyze the way Havel managed the transition period: were the principles of judgment and action typical of Charta 77 in the communist regime effective also in ruling a liberal-democratic country? Cultural aspects: In Czechoslovakia dissent reaches a high level of self-awareness and self-criticism as it expresses itself in philosophical language. Remember Jan Patočka, a pupil of Husserl and Heidegger and one of the main representatives of the phenomenological school in Europe: he was one of the first speakers of Charta 77. This philosophical awareness is critical also with the contemporary liberal societies thanks to the so-called “convex mirror” of totalitarianism (this is what Havel says in *The Power of the Powerless*, considered as the Bible of dissent by many) which enables the dissidents to individuate the problems of modern liberal societies better than those who live in them. If this is true, Czech dissidents’ thought has not only a historical interest but also a theoretical one because it is supportive to the comprehension of our present forms of life.

Expected outcomes

- Analysis of the relation between Russian dissent and Czech dissent.
- Analysis of Charta 77 in the light of the sociological aspects above mentioned in order to check the initial hypothesis.
- Reconstruction of the political and cultural debate within Czech dissent 1968 (Prague Spring) through 1989 (fall of the Berlin wall). Focus on the discussion between Havel and Milan Kundera.
- Critical analysis of Patočka’s “super-civilization” in connection with Havel’s “post-totalitarian system” through which the two authors intend to present new conceptual means to think the present crisis of the European form of life.
- Critical reconstruction of Patočka’s “care of the soul”, which is the core of the so-called “political Socratism” (P. Ricoeur) peculiar of Charta 77.
- Analysis and discussion of the perspective of some contemporary interpreters who identify political Socratism as a resource to for the crisis of the public space in contemporary liberal societies.