

BLANKA KUDLÁČOVÁ

Trnava University

ORCID: 0000-0003-4741-8570

EDUCATION AS A POLITICAL TOOL OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN SLOVAKIA*

INTRODUCTION

The orientation of education in Slovakia was both predetermined by new internal political conditions and the foreign policy of Czechoslovakia after the end of World War II. During the Slovak National Uprising, on 7 September 1944, Regulation No. 5/144 was adopted on the nationalisation of education; this was later reaffirmed by the Decree of the Slovak National Council No. 34/1945 in May 1945. Thus, all types of schools, from public nurseries¹ to universities, were nationalised in Slovakia. The principle of nationalisation meant that all schools and educational facilities began to be managed by the state, teachers and other personnel became state employees, and church and private schools were to be gradually abolished. The executive body for the area of education became the Commission of Education and Edification (in Slovak: *Povereníctvo pre školstvo a osvetu*), which was supposed to implement the reform. The second important document that impacted the orientation of education was the Košice Government Program from April 1945. It was a post-war program of the Czechoslovak government, in which the orientation towards the Soviet Union was clearly declared. The 15th chapter, which determined the principles of school policy, dealt with education. A struggle among political entities operating on the Czechoslovak political scene aimed at the adoption of a new education act began. The aim of the act was to anchor the principle of the unified state school and eliminate the influence of Christian Churches² on education. The tone was

* The work is supported by the project of Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic VEGA No. 1/0106/20 *Freedom versus Unfreedom in Education in Slovakia in 1948–1989*.

¹ The name for kindergarten that was used in Slovakia until 1948.

² The Christian Churches and their activities had a strong tradition in the territory of Slovakia. After the Second World War and the Communist Coup in 1948 they became the biggest internal enemy of the state power. According to the census of March 1, 1950, 99.72% of inhabitants reported affiliation to Churches in Slovakia and only 0.28% of inhabitants reported no religion affiliation. The largest and most influential Church was the Catholic Church; the Roman Catholic religion was reported by 76.20% inhabitants and the Greek-Catholic religion was reported by 6.55%, (total 82.75%). The second largest church was the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg

set by representatives of the Communist Party. The main ideologist behind the prepared proposal on the unified school was a communist and a trained teacher, Ondrej Pavlík.³

The communist coup in February 1948 resulted in a monopoly of power for the Communist Party and the application of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism to all areas of life in society. Education was an important tool in its ideological aims. This is also confirmed by Article 16 of the Constitution of 9 May 1948 (Act No. 150/1948): “The entire cultural policy in Czechoslovakia, the development of education and schooling is conducted in accord with the scientific worldview of Marxism-Leninism and in close connection with life and work of people”. Educators at all levels of schools had to adapt to this ideology and the demands of the communist regime. If this was not the case, they had to leave the area of education or they were displaced from large city schools to small village ones.⁴ After February 1948, all important decisions in the field of education were made in the form of unanimously adopted resolutions by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Thus, the Ministry of Education lost its competence to formulate the principles of school policy, it became only the executor of policies adopted by the communist party. This principle is a copy of the decision-making in the socialist state, where the bodies of the communist party were superior to the government bodies.

The first communist school Act No. 95/1948 was passed on 21 April 1948. In §2, schools were supposed to educate “nationally and politically conscious citizens of a people’s democratic state, brave defenders of the homeland and dedicated supporters of the working people and socialism”. The act started a rapid process of organisational and ideological reconstruction of the education system. All schools (except for universities, military, and theological schools) were nationalised and were integrated into a unified school system under the control of the state, the so-called unified school. The plurality of schools was eliminated (non-state schools were to be abolished within two years), a uniform address for teachers was introduced: comrade teacher (in Slovak: *súdržka učiteľka* and *súdruh učiteľ*) and the term socialist school and education began to be used. Communist

Confession (12.88% of inhabitants), (cf. Pešek, J., Barnovský, M., *Štátna moc a cirkvi na Slovensku 1948–1953*. (Bratislava: VEDA, 1997).

³ Ondrej Pavlík (1916–1996) was the most important representative of socialist pedagogy and education in Slovakia. He was an avowed left-winger and a member of the Communist Party. He is the author of the first publications about Soviet education in the Slovak language: *Vývin sovietskeho školstva a pedagogiky* [Development of Soviet education and pedagogy], 1945 and *Vysoké školy v sovietskom zväze* [Universities in the Soviet Union], 1947. His professional career was closely linked to his political career, he held important political positions and worked at several universities (see B. Kudláčová, “Ondrej Pavlík a obrat v pedagogike, školstve a vzdelávaní na Slovensku v 40. rokoch 20. storočia” in *Pedagogické myslenie a školstvo na Slovensku od konca 2. svetovej vojny po obdobie normalizácie*, ed. B. Kudláčová, (Trnava: Typi universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2017); B. Kudláčová, A. Faktorová, “Ondrej Pavlík, tvorca socialistickej pedagogiky a reformátor školstva a vzdelávania po druhej svetovej vojne,” in *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989.*, ed. B. Kudláčová, (Trnava: Typi universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2019).

⁴ 2568 teachers were displaced by September 1950 outside the Bratislava region. They were classified as unreliable and not meeting the newly introduced class, political and ideological criteria (S. Gabzdilová, “Nové úlohy učiteľov na Slovensku v období vrcholiaceho stalinizmu”, *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 21 (2017), no. 1. p. 139). The purges of teachers were carried out at all levels of schools, for more see J. Žatkuliak, *Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948–1989*, in *Zločiny komunizmu na Slovensku 1948–1989*, ed. F. Mikloško, G. Smolíková, and P. Smolík, part I., 2001, pp. 655–691.

propaganda began to work very quickly, as evidenced by articles in the daily press. The *Pravda* daily newspaper, which was the official central press organ of the Communist Party of Slovakia, wrote: “The Act on a unified school caused great enthusiasm among teachers and parents in all schools. Manifestations of joy and ceremonial speeches were held at all schools across the republic”.⁵ This celebratory rhetoric was typical especially in the initial period of socialism.



Negotiating the bill on the unified school at the Ministry of Education in Prague in 1946
(Source: The Fund of the Museum of Education and Pedagogy in Bratislava)

An important milestone in the development of the socialist education was the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which took place in May 1949. Here, the general line of building socialism in Czechoslovakia was set. In the field of education, it was determined that “schools are to educate people faithful and devoted to socialism in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism”.⁶ Václav Kopecký, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party stated in his report that the task of Marxist-Leninist education is supposed “to complete a revolutionary upheaval in people’s minds and to carry out the ideological re-education of the broadest masses in the socialist spirit”.⁷ One year later, the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia defined socialist

⁵ “Vzdelávanie všetkých bez rozdielu.” *Pravda*, 23 April 1948, p. 1.

⁶ *Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu KSČ* [Protocol IX. of the regular Congress of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic], Prague, 25–29 May 1949, pp. 103–104.

⁷ “V duchu smerníc súdruha Gottwalda a IX. Zjazdu KSČ rozvínieme zástavu marxizmu-leninizmu”, *Pravda*, 29 May 1949, p. 1.

education as “education in the spirit of fighting against reactionary influences and manifestations of pseudoscience”.⁸

Following the intentions of the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, a national teachers conference was held in Prague in July 1950. The Deputy General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Gustáv Bareš, stated in his report that the role of schools is “to fight for the soul of the coming young generation of the peoples of Czechoslovakia, to raise this generation as a socialist generation, a generation of new social relations, new culture, new morality...”⁹ The model is to be the Soviet school. This given task was also related to the training of a new generation of teachers. The attitudes and statements of teachers in schools had to be in accordance with the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, they could not question the Communist Party in any way. A good teacher was “ideologically mature, implicitly devoted to the working class, all the problems of education are clear to them, and they constantly acquire the principles of Marxism-Leninism and are guided by them in their work”.¹⁰

At the beginning of November 1949, the Communist Party had already begun implementing the Year of Party Training in all its organisations. It also involved party organisations at schools. The initial year of party education lasted from November 1949 to May 1950. There were additional educational sessions, where the subject was ideological lectures. The content of the education included lectures on the following topics: “Victory of workers and farmers in Russia”, “Life and struggles of the working people in Czechoslovakia under capitalism”, “How our people got to master our homeland”, “On the great work of Lenin and Stalin”, “How we will build socialism in our homeland”.¹¹ Due to the alleged success of this education, the management of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia decided to continue this party education in the following school year. Party education was complemented by summer party training for teachers during the holidays.

In February 1951, a weekly newspaper, *Teacher Magazine* (in Slovak: *Učiteľské noviny*), began to be published in Slovakia. It was published by the Commission for Education and Edification and was intended for teachers in all schools. Its main task was to explain the policy of the Communist Party of Slovakia in the field of education and to win over teachers for its conscious implementation. The most important of the pedagogical journals was *Unified School* (in Slovak: *Jednotná škola*), published from 1945. From its beginnings, it “focused on fighting for and implementing the basic principles of the new school policy, especially the principle of a unified and state school”.¹² From 1952, the magazine *For the Socialist School* (in Slovak: *Za socialistickú školu*) began to be published, which was aimed at teachers of national and secondary schools.

The importance attributed to the system of education by the leadership of the Communist Party was also reflected in the establishment of basic organisations of the

⁸ *Protokol IX. zjazdu Komunistickej strany Slovenska v Bratislave* [Protocol IX. congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia in Bratislava], 24–27 May 1950, p. 224.

⁹ “Poslanie a úlohy učiteľstva pri výchove novej uvedomelej socialistickej generácie”, *Pravda*, 8 July 1950, p. 5.

¹⁰ Slovak National Archives in Bratislava (hence on SNA), fund of the Commission of Education, box 131.

¹¹ “Uznesenie Predsedníctva ÚV KSČ o roku stranického školenia”, *Pravda*, 21 September 1949, p. 1.

¹² *Pedagogická encyklopédia* vol. I. (Bratislava: VEDA, 1984), p. 370.

Communist Party directly at schools of all levels. According to *Teacher Magazine* from April 1952, party organisations are supposed to be “the soul of pedagogical collectives”.¹³ Their task was to “implement the resolutions of the central party bodies and, under specific conditions, supervise the implementation of the party’s ideological program and eliminate any signs of independent thinking in the ranks of teachers”.¹⁴ They had a key position in the field of personnel policy in schools.

The aim of this paper is to approach and clarify the process of ideologisation in education at all levels of schools, i.e. kindergartens, national schools and universities in Slovakia in the period of socialism (1948–1989). Archival sources, period legislation, newspapers as well as existing research in this area were used in the submitted study.¹⁵

THE PROCESS OF IDEOLOGISATION IN KINDERGARTENS

Until 1948, preschool facilities did not attract the attention of the state authorities in Slovakia. In interwar Czechoslovakia, public nurseries could be established by the state, municipalities, Church, legal entities and private individuals. There were not many of them in Slovakia,¹⁶ which was determined by the then understanding of women as wives and mothers, whose primary role is to take care of the family and the household. In accordance with Act No. 95/1948, public nurseries became part of the unified education system, under the name of kindergartens. Preschool education was “the first link in the system of the communist education” and kindergartens were ‘the germ of communism’.¹⁷

The founders of kindergartens may have been only a municipality or a company. The state began to take over the education of children by establishing and financing kindergartens, thus enabling women of working age to work. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia began to create an image of the so-called socialist woman. Women were no longer supposed to fulfil the role of mothers and wives but should become conscious workers and engaged citizens.¹⁸ According to Soňa Gabzdilová,¹⁹ the communist regime understood kindergartens as institutions that, by ensuring the care of children of preschool age, created a basic

¹³ “Závodné organizácie KSS na školách do bojovej aktivity”, *Teacher Magazin*, 17 April 1952, p. 1.

¹⁴ M. Olejník, *Implementácia marxisticko-leninskej ideológie vo sfére vzdelávania na Slovensku v kontexte politického vývoja v rokoch 1948–1953* (Prešov: Universum, 2018), p. 50.

¹⁵ S. Gabzdilová, “Nové úlohy učiteľov”...; *eadem*, *Ako sme študovali v totalite. Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie na Slovensku pod ideologickým diktátom Komunistickej strany Československa (1948–1953)* (Prešov: Universum, 2018); *eadem*, “Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie na Slovensku v kontexte politiky Komunistickej strany Československa v rokoch 1948–1953” in *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989*, ed. B. Kudláčová (Trnava: Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2019); S. Gabzdilová, “Miesto a úlohy materských škôl v systéme komunistickej výchovy (1948–1953)”, *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 25 (2021), no. 1; B. Kudláčová, “Ondrej Pavlík”...; B. Kudláčová, A. Faktorová, “Ondrej Pavlík”...; M. Olejník, *Implementácia*...; M. Glossová, *Nespôsobilý na vysokoškolské štúdium* (Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2021).

¹⁶ As to 1 December 1931, there were 140 public nurseries in Slovakia, in which 7558 children were placed (*Slovenské školstvo v prítomnosti* (Praha: Štátné nakladateľstvo, 1932), p. 7).

¹⁷ SNA, fund of the Commission of Education, box 177, Kindergartens.

¹⁸ D. Nečasová, *Nový socialistický človek. Československo 1948–1956* (Brno: Host, 2018).

¹⁹ S. Gabzdilová, *Ako sme študovali*....

prerequisite for women and mothers to become employed in various sectors of the economy. The number of employed women grew rapidly. At the beginning of the communist regime, a huge increase in the number of kindergartens already could be seen: while in the school year 1945/1946 there were 335 kindergartens, in the school year 1949/1950 there were 1411 with approximately 30,000 children.²⁰ The school administration also placed great emphasis on the “ideological” maturity of teachers. In one of its documents, the Ministry of Education emphasised that the level of “educational work in kindergartens depends on the personality of the teacher, whether they provide children with the foundations of socialist education, or whether their work is limited only to the safety of children. It is therefore necessary to pay increased attention to the education of teachers”²¹

The ideologisation of education in kindergartens was contained in curricular documents published by the Commission of Education and Edification, later by the Ministry of Education. The first document, entitled *Kindergarten Operational Program* (in Slovak: *Pracovný program materskej školy*), was published in 1948. According to it, it is necessary to lay “the foundations of education of nationally conscious citizens of the people’s democratic state and brave citizens of the homeland” already in kindergarten. The key character is the teacher who educates the children to integrate into society and “they awaken in children a love for home and country. [...] They teach them to love state representatives, heroes of work and build competition. They teach them to love and admire those who protect us (the army, the National Security Corps), they remember and honour the memory of the heroes who died in revolutionary battles. Children get to know the representatives of our state, Marshal Stalin and other prominent personalities at occasional celebrations and during regular activities in kindergarten. They know the Czechoslovak flag and also the Soviet flag...”

Another curricular document that regulated education in kindergartens was *Curriculum for Kindergartens* (in Slovak: *Učebné osnovy pre materské školy*) that was published in 1955. In the opening notes, the goals and tasks of the kindergarten are set: “to lead children to love their family and homeland, our people and our heroes, representatives of our state, defenders of our homeland and our greatest friend – the Soviet Union”. Even more noticeable influences of ideology than in the previous curriculum can be found there: “all school and family education in our people’s democratic state must be directed towards a common goal, to educate new people for the socialist society, people who are versatile, brave and capable of building and defending the homeland, so that after completion of this first stage, they could peacefully and calmly continue in building the communist society”. The key person is the teacher, who must “pay attention to socialist ideology and the scientific character of education [...] educate such character traits in children that are necessary for a person of a new social order”.

In 1960, a new Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (Act No. 100/1960) was adopted, which announces the entry a new stage of building socialism, the period of communism, in paragraph 1: “Socialism won in our homeland! We have entered a new

²⁰ SNA, fund of the Commission of Education, box 95, Report on building of preschool education.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

period of our history, and we are determined to move on to new, even higher goals. Completing the building of socialism, we are moving towards building an advanced socialist society and gathering forces for the transition to communism". In 1960, a new school act was passed, too, which responded to the requirements for education in the period of communism. This was also reflected in the new curriculum of preschool education, entitled *Curriculum of educational work for kindergartens* (in Slovak: *Osnovy výchovnej práce pre materské školy*): the role of preschool education is "to lay the foundations of communist morality in children". The teacher should systematically approach the inculcation of communist ideology not only in children, but also in parents of the children, so that the rise of the communist regime takes place as soon as possible: "The key educational factor in a kindergarten is an ideologically mature, aware and educated teacher, who has also a significant influence on parents and the general public".

In 1966, the document *Program of educational work in nurseries and kindergartens* (in Slovak: *Program výchovnej práce v jasliach a materských školách*) was published. Its content was in accordance with the political release in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. There was no mention of communist or socialist education as in the previous documents. The period of release, which is inscribed in political history under the name Prague Spring, is reflected in all areas of the society. However, in August 1968, the Warsaw Pact troops invaded the territory of Czechoslovakia and in all propaganda (even some official documents) the reason given was to protect socialism there. This invasion meant freezing the promising development of "socialism with a human face" under the leadership of the then First Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Alexander Dubček. The political development in Czechoslovakia after August 1968 was determined by the so-called Moscow Protocols, in which the term "normalisation" was used for the first time. Normalisation meant a liquidation of the reform from 1968 and determined the character of the next twenty years.

PROCESS OF IDEOLOGISATION IN NATIONAL/PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The process of ideologisation of national (later primary) and secondary schools evolved under the framework of the same fundamental legislation as in the case of kindergartens. Stalinism (1948–1953) played a crucial part in its development, in which the foundations of a unified system of socialist education were laid. Pursuant to the School Act No. 95/1948, the unified system of education consisted of kindergartens, first-grade schools (national schools for children aged 6 to 11), second-grade schools (secondary schools for children aged 11 to 15) and third-grade schools (youth aged 16 up to 19 years). Third-grade schools included basic vocational schools (apprenticeship schools) and selective vocational schools (vocational schools, secondary schools, and grammar schools). In the case of apprentice schools, they were a new type of school aimed at the training of qualified workers. First and second-grade schools provided compulsory school education, which was extended to nine years. The implementation of the School Act of 1948 resulted in several positive phenomena: quantitative growth in the number of schools and

students, application of the right to education for all without discrimination, and a unified system of education that was free of charge. On the other hand, the act marked “the first step towards the creation of a bureaucratic, centralist totalitarian model of education, which was completely subordinated to the Marxist-Leninist ideology and school policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.”²² National and secondary schools played an important role in the process of ideologisation, as all children and youth attended them compulsorily.²³

Immediately after the events of February 1948, a revision of current textbooks and teaching aids took place in national and secondary schools. Milan Olejník states that “by April 1951, the National Institute for Education prepared 216 textbooks.”²⁴ In May 1951, the revision of textbooks was addressed even by the presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In their extensive resolution published in the journal *Pedagogy* (in Slovak: *Pedagogika*), it is stated that textbooks must mediate the “glorious path of the Soviet Union,” “the dominance of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism”, teach pupils “to love the Communist Party”, “love and loyalty to the great leaders of our era – to J. V. Stalin and K. Gottwald”²⁵ The textbooks must contain space for holidays such as “1 May, 7 November, 9 May, etc., holidays establishing a new socialist era”²⁶ There was a column created in *Teacher Magazine* entitled *Evaluation of textbooks*, where textbooks were evaluated according to their content, methodology and aesthetics, but especially their ideological aspects.²⁷

In 1945, the Russian language started to be taught as a compulsory subject, which was another manifestation of Sovietisation. Starting in the school year 1948/1949, it was taught as a compulsory subject from the 4th year of national schools, and it had a primary position in the teaching of foreign languages. The goal was to strengthen relations with the Soviet Union. The Russian language teachers, for example, organised correspondence between their pupils and pupils from the Soviet Union. These mutual letters were then displayed on bulletin boards in the classrooms.

As mentioned above, celebrations of national holidays, life anniversaries of personalities and politicians, army memorial days and similar events were also part of the

²² M. Krankus, “Školstvo a školský systém na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989” in *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989* ed. B. Kudláčová, (Trnava: Typi universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2019), p. 222.

²³ A detailed probe into the life of primary schools and their teachers during the period of socialism in the Czech lands can be found in two publications by the authors J. Zounek, M. Šimáně, and D. Knotová, *Normální život v nenormální době* (Praha: Walters Kluwer, 2017) and *eidem, Socialistická základní škola pohledem pamětníků* (Praha: Walters Kluwer, 2017). The situation in Slovakia was rather similar, since we lived in a common state, Czechoslovakia.

²⁴ M. Olejník *Implementácia marxisticko-leninskej ideológie vo sfére vzdelávania na Slovensku v kontexte politického vývoja v rokoch 1948–1953* (Prešov: Universum, 2018), p. 46.

²⁵ “Usnesení předsednictva Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa o učebnicích pro národní a střední školy”, *Pedagogika*, 1 (1951), no. 5–6, p. 259.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ The fact that textbooks were an important tool of ideologisation and propaganda in socialist countries is also evident from the publications of the Polish historian Joanna Wojdon: *Textbooks as Propaganda (Poland under Communist Rule, 1944–1989)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018) and *Communist Propaganda at School (The World of the Reading Primers from the Soviet Bloc, 1949–1989)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021) in which she compares primers from the period of socialism in the countries of the former Soviet bloc.

educational process. The schools had the task to clarify the reasons for the celebration of specific events and thereby forge the socialist regime. The most important holidays were 1 May – Labour Day, 9 May – Victory Day and 7 November – the Memorial Day of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia.

The most important element in the process of ideologisation and an extended hand of the communist party were, similarly, as in the case of kindergartens, teachers. According to František Kahuda, they were to be “convincing apostles of socialism”²⁸. Their task was to educate “new people”, the educated, conscious and active builders of socialism. The communist regime paid increased attention to teachers, which meant that “they were monitored, screened, trained, re-educated, guided, not only with regard to their work performance, but also outside of it, often with the use of coercive means”.²⁹ The first wave of persecution against teachers occurred after the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia. It was a campaign against the so-called bourgeois nationalists. It is a paradox that Ladislav Novomeský, the commissioner of education, was the first to be accused of so-called bourgeois nationalism. The accusation consisted in the fact that he neglected the political re-education of teachers, did not agree with the adoption of the principles of Soviet pedagogy by teachers and denied Marxism-Leninism himself.³⁰ In connection to his case, about 600 teachers and school workers were accused, made redundant or transferred to another workplace.³¹ The entire period of Stalinism was accompanied by a number of harsh, ideologically conditioned power interventions that influenced education and deformed its form. The absolute power of the communist party was also demonstrated by their interference in the process of admission when accepting students for teacher training studies. When selecting applicants, their personnel profile was the most important aspect: parents’ membership in the Communist Party, their working-class background (e.g. parents could not have a private business), family members could not be emigrants, the applicant could not attend religious education classes, etc. This detailed personnel profile was part of the application for the study and was discussed by the admissions committee.

In 1953, a new School Act No. 31/1953 was passed. Its adoption was mainly justified by the need to eliminate the shortcomings of the 1948 act, to solve the problem of missing medium-qualified and high-qualified personnel and to build education more consistently according to the Soviet model. According to Ernest Sýkora, the then Minister of Education, approaching the Soviet example is “the only way to speed up the building of the socialist school in our country”.³² In order to speed up the training of future cadres, the act shortened mandatory school attendance to eight years. The change caused an interruption of continuity and traditions in the development of Slovak education and a number of problems in practice, which were criticised even by the communists themselves. The faculties of education

²⁸ F. Kahuda, “Škola a veřejnost”, *Nová škola*, 5 (1949), no. 1–2, p. 53.

²⁹ S. Gabzdilová, “Nové úlohy”...

³⁰ “Odsuzujeme činnost Novomeského”, *Teacher Magazin*, 10 May 1951, p. 6.

³¹ J. Uher, “Kampaň proti tzv. buržoáznemu nacionalizmu” in *Od diktatúry k diktatúre*, ed. M. Barnovský (Bratislava: VEDA, 1995).

³² E. Sýkora, “Projev ministra školství a osvěty Ernesta Sýkory v Národním zhromáždění 24. dubna 1953”, in *Zákon ze dne 24. dubna 1953 o školské soustavě a vzdělávání učitelů* (Praha: SPN, 1953), p. 12.

were abolished (Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries in which teacher training of all levels of schools had a university character) and following the model of the Soviet Union were replaced by colleges of education. The act represents one of the worst examples of Sovietisation in the history of Slovak education. In 1960, a new school act, which was supposed to reflect the requirements for school and education in the stage of the completion of building of socialism, as defined in the constitution of 1960, was adopted. Compulsory school attendance was extended to nine years again. It also stipulated that by 1970, most of the youth should have achieved secondary education. There was also a new proposal to build a network of extra-curricular care for children and youth (pioneers and youth houses, school clubs, interest groups, etc.). In 1966, the faculties of education were re-established. The School Act of 1960 might be considered as a step that, in the process of democratisation, tried to increase the level of education, or at least to repair the damage caused by the act from 1953. However, the discussions on Slovak education that developed in the second half of the 1960s was frozen due to the suppression of democratisation processes after the Soviet invasion and then terminated under the slogan of returning pedagogy and education to its Marxist-Leninist character.³³ The period of so-called normalisation was accompanied by large-scale screenings and purges again. The 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1971 concluded that changes must be made in school education and a new project for the development and orientation of the school system must be prepared. In a short period of time, two conceptual documents were approved by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia: *Development, current state and other tasks of Czechoslovak education* (1973) and *Further development of the Czechoslovak education system* (1976). The school act based on them was passed in 1978 (No. 63/1978). Its most important adjustment was the extension of compulsory school attendance to ten years. The following School Act No. 29/1984 did not bring significant changes, and no one anticipated that it was the last school act passed during the socialist period. In the 1980s, the system experienced a period of “softening” again. It was related both to political changes in the Soviet Union (*perestroika*) and the growing opposition to the regime, which was manifested most prominently in the form of civil and religious dissent. These changes also created space for discussions and criticism of problematic areas in education. However, the end of the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism in Slovakia was finally brought about by the Velvet Revolution in November 1989.

IDEOLOGICAL DICTATES AT UNIVERSITIES

After the end of World War II, there were three universities in Slovakia: Comenius University,³⁴ the Slovak University of Technology (in Slovak: *Slovenská vysoká škola technická*) and the University of Economics (in Slovak: *Vysoká škola obchodná*), all seated in Bratislava. Universities resumed their position from the first Czechoslovak Republic,

³³ M. Krankus, „Školstvo“...

³⁴ In the years 1939–1954, the Comenius University was renamed to the Slovak University.

they were managed by academic senates and rectors, faculties were managed by academic bodies and deans, interference in their activities by the state was minimal. It was the independence of governing bodies and the autonomy of universities that became a problem after 1948. The leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia and the Ministry of Education perceived universities as an unreliable component of society.³⁵ According to Marta Glossová, there were several reasons for this, "universities in Czechoslovakia of the first republic enjoyed a considerable degree of academic freedom. Their students and teachers mostly came from the middle class – from the families of intelligentsia, lawyers, doctors, officials, businessmen, wealthier peasants, etc. The representatives of the new regime, whose support was to be represented by members of the "proletariat", did not want to tolerate universities as "bourgeois institutions" and tried to reshape them according to their ideas on the optimal class organisation of society".³⁶ Regarding the education of intelligentsia at universities, the party chairman Klement Gottwald declared in the main report at the 9th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia the following: universities must "educate people who are loyal and devoted to the matter of the people and the nation. There is no place for reaction at our schools. In addition to deepening professional education, we must educate our new intelligentsia in courses and schools in the spirit of the most progressive world view, in the spirit of dialectical and historical materialism, in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism".³⁷

Although the new act on higher education was issued only in 1950, several changes limiting academic freedom had been already introduced into the activities of higher education institutions after 1948, prior to issuing relevant legal standards. Compared to the speed of political interventions in regional education, these changes took place more slowly. The most striking manifestation of the new governmental power was the presence of party organisations at individual faculties and the creation of the so-called action committees,³⁸ which consisted of both teachers and students. These committees "decided upon the continuance of teachers at the faculties, carried out the first background checks and expelled students from studies".³⁹ The first purges at Slovak universities were carried out by the Central Action Committee of University Students in Bratislava, which managed action committees at individual faculties and university dormitories as early as 1948. Compared to the purges in 1949 and 1950, it was not a big purge, it affected only about 30 students.⁴⁰ However, the consequences of the expulsion were much harsher (court, prison, or forced emigration).

The status of students and their admission to study gradually changed. Their admission to university was conditional on both a successful entrance exam and also by their

³⁵ S. Gabzdilová, "Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie"...

³⁶ M. Glossová, *Nespôsobilý...*, p. 13–14.

³⁷ *Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu KSČ* [Protocol IX. of the regular Congress of the Communist Party of the Czech Republic], Prague, 25–29 May 1949, pp. 103–104.

³⁸ Action committees were created at the request of Klement Gottwald immediately after the February coup. Their task was to take over power at the local level.

³⁹ S. Gabzdilová, "Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie"..., p. 269.

⁴⁰ M. Glossová, *Nespôsobilý...*

cadre profile. The cadre profile took into account membership of their parents in the Communist Party and social origin – children of workers and small farmers were preferred. Children whose parents belonged to the so-called bourgeoisie, so-called *kulaks*⁴¹ or had been expelled from the Communist Party, or practised religious faith, had a negative cadre report, and were unlikely to be admitted to university.



Enrolment of students at the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Bratislava, September 20th, 1950 (inscription on the slogan: Welcome New Comrades – the hope of the working class!) (Source: Archive Press Agency of the Slovak Republic – photo Roller)

Despite constant political interventions, the structure of students at universities was changed only slowly, which the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia described as a very unsatisfactory situation.

Table 1: The class structure of the Slovak university students in 1949/1950

Group of children – characteristics	Percentage share
children of workers	18.02%
children of small and medium-sized farmers	20.21%
children of large farmers	0.97%
children of attendants	7.14%

⁴¹ The term *kulak* was used by the communist propaganda to label wealthy peasants and those who refused to join the Joint Agricultural Cooperatives.

Group of children – characteristics	Percentage share
children of tradesmen and craftsmen	12.14%
children of clerks, state and public employees	31.07%
children of parents practicing free professions	4.23%
children of entrepreneurs	2.29%
children of parents practicing other professions	3.93 %
Total	100.00%

Source: processed according to Glossová, *Nespôsobilý...*, p. 33.

The effort to change this structure was one of the main goals of the Communist Party in the 1950s and it was called “democratisation of higher education”. On one hand, it favoured students with worker or peasant origins (for example, the introduction of admission interviews that emphasised class origin, the introduction of preparatory worker’s courses), on the other hand, it disadvantaged students of so-called “bourgeois” origin (regulation of their number, disadvantaging them during admission interviews, screening them, or excluding them during studies). As part of the democratization process, purges took place in 1949 and 1950, and they were the largest purges. According to a report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, 896 students were expelled out of the total number of 3376 students enrolled at universities.⁴² In 1950, professors became the target of criticism, too: “Apparent or hidden enemies of our socialist matter shall not be tolerated. Such people must be revealed, publicly pillorised at membership meetings, in order to increase the vigilance of all university students [...] There is no place for reactionaries in our schools!”⁴³ At their meetings, the professors had to evaluate “their activity in terms of ideology, pedagogy, science and from the perspective of education and scientific growth. They made specific commitments [...] the study of Marxist literature, improving their Russian, the study of Soviet professional literature and its popularisation, the revision of lectures, syllabi and teaching aids”⁴⁴ The student purges continued, too: in June and September 1950, another 570 students were expelled from universities.⁴⁵

A key tool used by the Communist Party to increase the number of students and to change the class and social structure were the so-called state courses for university training of working class. These preparatory courses were specially organised programs, funded by the state, for workers without secondary education, which had represented a necessary condition for enrolment to university studies until 1948. The first two courses in Slovakia took place in February 1949, the last one in 1953.⁴⁶ The applicants had to be between the

⁴² SNA, fund of the Commission of Education – Presidium, 1949, No. 1098–1101, box 302.

⁴³ E. Sýkora, “Za marx-leninskú výchovu vysokoškolákov”, *Pravda*, 21 May 1950, p. 3.

⁴⁴ SNA, fund of the Commission of Education – commissioner’s board, No. 464–473, box 179.

⁴⁵ M. Glossová, *Nespôsobilý...*, p. 95.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*. Between 1949 and 1953, more than 10 000 workers completed state courses in Czechoslovakia (M. Devátá, et al., *Vědní koncepce KSČ a její institucionalizace po roce 1948* (Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2010), p. 58).

ages of 18 and 30, they also had to be “class-conscious and politically conscious members of the Communist Party of Slovakia, who have been members of the party for at least 2 years (except for those under 20 years of age), who prove themselves to be the best workers in production...”⁴⁷ After completing the one-year course, they had to take the school-leaving exam and could immediately start university. Although the first year (1949) was not very successful, in 1950/1951 the number of applicants increased to 960; however, it was again unsatisfactory compared to the planned 1300 students. The problem with insufficient interest in preparatory courses continued in the following years as well. Although successful graduates of preparatory courses were admitted to universities without admission interviews, the number of those who enrolled at university and graduated was low. In 1957, there were 54 percent of students of worker and peasant origin at Slovak universities, which was a significant increase compared to 1949/50, when it was 38.23 percent.

Changes in higher education were legislatively anchored only by the first Act on Higher Education No. 58/1950 of 18 May 1950. It ordered a change of the original structure and self-administration of universities according to the model of Soviet universities: deans and rectors were no longer democratically elected by the faculty, but appointed by the Minister of Education, which turned them into ministerial officials. The Explanatory Report of the Act on Higher Education identified the following points as extremely important: 1) elimination of university autonomy; 2) a new method of appointing academic officials; and 3) establishment of a new body – the State Committee for Universities. The act meant “a break with the previous system of Central European higher education”.⁴⁸ According to §2 of the Higher Education Act, universities were supposed to “educate professionally and politically highly qualified workers, loyal to the people’s democratic republic and devoted to the idea of socialism”. They were subordinated to the central authority of the Minister of Education, who could intervene in their focus, personnel issues, could appoint associate professors without a habilitation procedure and professors without an appointment procedure. With this personnel policy, the minister achieved that university degrees were not awarded to professional nominees, but to political nominees and political cadres. The above-mentioned Act on Higher Education also anchored changes that had already taken place from 1948 (e.g. selection of applicants for higher education, preparation courses for workers, etc.). Pursuant to §31, property of universities was nationalised. According to Róbert Letz, it caused a break in continuity with the past and created space for ideological indoctrination.⁴⁹ In the magazine *Unified School*, the new higher education act was evaluated as “a revolutionary milestone in the history of our higher education, because it serves to transform the entire system of higher education into an instrument of education to socialism”.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ SNA, fund of the Commission of Education, box 13, A letter by Š. Baššovanský, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia to district secretariats of the Communist Party of Slovakia from 21 June 1949.

⁴⁸ S. Gabzdilová, “Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie”..., p. 270.

⁴⁹ R. Letz, *Slovenské dejiny*, vol. VI: 1945–1992 (Bratislava: LIC, 2021).

⁵⁰ I. Hrušovský, “Nové úlohy vysokých škôl”, *Jednotná škola*, 6 (1950/1951), no. 3, p. 114.

By this Act, the State Committee for Universities was established, which was supposed to govern and administer universities. It was an “advisory, initiative and coordination body of the Minister of Education, Sciences and Arts for the study, organisational, personnel and economic affairs of universities” (§5). According to Gabzdilová, a “supreme body of universities that became a reliable instrument of the communist power” and at the same time, “a key element of the ongoing reform of universities” was created.⁵¹ Its first chairman was Ondrej Pavlík.

A two-lesson a week course in social studies (sciences) was introduced at universities in the academic year 1948/1949. Due to a lack of lecturers, the lectures were held together for the entire grade. The topics of the opening year were “The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science and Our People’s Democracy on the Way to Socialism”.⁵² Since the lectures were attended by first-grade students, students from higher grades could no longer attend them and had to participate in mandatory two-week political training. In 1951, departments of Marxism-Leninism were established at all Slovak and Czech colleges and universities. In the case of universities, three departments were established: Department of Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, Department of Dialectical and Historical Materialism, and Department of Political Economy. In the case of colleges, two departments were established: Department of Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and Department of Political Economy.⁵³ The departments had a university-wide character, they were attached to the rector’s office, and their head reported directly to the rector. Students were obliged to take the courses provided by these departments: History of the International Workers’ Movement and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Political Economy, Scientific Communism and Scientific Atheism. In 1951, military departments were also established at universities and compulsory military training was introduced. It only applied to only boys and took place during their studies. Thus, university-educated men did not have to complete the two-year mandatory military service, but only a shortened, one-year service.

University teachers were considered the most unreliable component of the university environment. They were criticised for remaining in the field of bourgeois science and for unwillingness to adopt Marxist-Leninist ideology. Therefore, during the summer holidays in the academic year 1950/1951, the Higher Education Department of the Commission of Education organised a political-professional training for university teachers. These were three-week courses completed by 130 teachers in two rotations.⁵⁴

Despite the political transformation of higher education and its ideologisation, it must be noted that the number of universities and the number of students increased in the 1950s. While in 1948, there were three universities in Slovakia attended by 8524 students; in 1953, there were 11 universities in Slovakia with 29 faculties attended by 14,315 students.⁵⁵ The total number of students was also increased by applicants admitted to special

⁵¹ S. Gabzdilová, “Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie”..., p. 275.

⁵² *Eadem*, *Ako sme študovali...*

⁵³ *Eadem*, “Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie”...

⁵⁴ SNA, fund of the Commission of Education, box 180, inv. No. 479.

⁵⁵ M. Glossová, *Nespôsobilý...*, p. 279; R. Letz, *Slovenské dejiny*, vol. VI, p. 349.

forms of study (various external forms of study). A fundamental increase in faculties occurred in the academic year 1952/1953, when, in addition to Bratislava and Košice, other Slovak cities became centres of higher education: Nitra (College of Agriculture), Zvolen (College of Forestry and Wood Sciences), and later Žilina (College of Railways) and Prešov (Faculty of Philology at the College of Education in Bratislava, which was transformed into the Faculty of Arts, which became a founding faculty of the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice). The Commission of Education called this fact a great success of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.⁵⁶ In 1963 the number of university students was just below the threshold of 50,000. In 1980, there were 13 universities with 41 faculties in Slovakia, attended by 73,311 students.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

The development of education during the period of socialism in Slovakia shows that it was not a homogeneous era. Several stages can be revealed, in which there is an obvious connection with the overall socio-political and economic development of society. The most important changes took place in the early years after the emergence of socialism, during the period of Stalinism. The key factor in the educational process was the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the aim of education was to educate a new man as a builder of communism. Thus, education became a tool in the hands of the Communist Party. They had a local organisation at each school that monitored compliance with the instructions of the party authorities. Schools of all grades were a closely controlled part of the communist regime, as is typical of all totalitarian regimes. The universities were an ideological incubator of the regime and aimed to educate loyal intelligentsia. It cannot be exactly determined to what extent they succeeded. However, it is evident that universities also served as a platform for Christian dissent, beginning in the 1960s, also during the Prague Spring in 1968 and 1969, when students were an important part of the protesters. University students were also one of the main protagonists of the Velvet Revolution in 1989, when the revolutionary events were sparked by the students on 16 and 17 November.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SOURCES

Archival Sources

Slovak National Archives in Bratislava

Fund of the Commission of Education

Acts and Legislation Directives

⁵⁶ S. Gabzdilová, "Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie"...

⁵⁷ R. Letz, *Slovenské dejiny*, vol. VI, p. 349.

Act No. 95/1948 Coll., *School Act*, 21 April 1948.

Act No. 150/1948 Coll., *Constitutional Law*, 9 May 1948.

Act No. 58/1950 Coll., *Act on Higher Education*, 18 May 1950.

Act No. 100/1960 Coll., *Constitutional Law*, 11 July 1960.

Printed Sources

Osnovy výchovnej práce pre materské školy. Prípís povereníctva školstva a kultúry zo dňa 13. mája 1960, č. 11584/1960 (Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1960).

Pracovný program materskej školy. Výnos Povereníctva školstva a osvetu zo dňa 12. augusta 1948, č. 5462 (Bratislava: Štátne nakladateľstvo, 1948).

Program výchovnej práce v jasliach a materských školách. Výnos Ministerstva zdravotníctva zo dňa 22. apríla 1966 a Ministerstva školstva a kultúry zo dňa 15. júla 1966, č. 27 730/66-I/3 (Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1966).

Protokol IX. rádného sjezdu KSCĽ: v Praze 25.-29. května 1949 (Praha: ÚV KSCĽ, 1949).

Protokol IX. zjazdu Komunistickej strany Slovenska v Bratislave, dňa 24.-27. mája 1950 (Bratislava: Ústredný výbor KSS, 1950).

Učebné osnovy pre materské školy. Výnos Povereníctva školstva zo dňa 7. júla 1955, č. 272/1955-A-III/I (Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1955).

“Usnesení předsednictva Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Československa O učebnicích pro národní a střední školy”, *Pedagogika*, 1 (1951), no. 5–6).

Newspaper Articles

“Odsudzujeme činnosť Novomeského”, *Učiteľské noviny*, 10 May 1951.

“Poslanie a úlohy učiteľstva pri výchove novej uvedomelej socialistickej generácie”, *Pravda*, 8 July 1950.

Sýkora E., „Za marx-leninskú výchovu vysokoškolákov“, *Pravda*, 21 May 1950.

“Uznesenie Predsedníctva ÚV KSCĽ o roku stranického školenia”, *Pravda*, 21 September 1949, p. 1.

“V duchu smerníc súdruha Gottwalda a IX. Zjazdu KSCĽ rozvineme zástavu marxizmu-leninizmu”, *Pravda*, 29 May 1949.

“Vzdelávanie všetkých bez rozdielu”, *Pravda*, 23 April, 1948.

“Závodné organizácie KSS na školách do bojovej aktivity”, *Učiteľské noviny*, 17 April 1952.

STUDIES

Devátá M. et al., *Vědní koncepce KSCĽ a její institucionalizace po roce 1948* (Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 2010).

Gabzdilová S., *Ako sme študovali v totalite. Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie na Slovensku pod ideologickým diktátom Komunistickej strany Československa (1948–1953)* (Prešov: Universum, 2018).

Gabzdilová S., “Miesto a úlohy materských škôl v systéme komunistickej výchovy (1948–1953)”, *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 25 (2021), no. 1.

Gabzdilová S., “Nové úlohy učiteľov na Slovensku v období vrcholiaceho stalinizmu”, *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 21 (2017), no. 1.

Gabzdilová S., “Vysokoškolské vzdelávanie na Slovensku v kontexte politiky Komunistickej strany Československa v rokoch 1948–1953” in *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989*, ed. B. Kudláčová (Trnava: Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2019).

- Glossová M., *Nespôsobilý na vysokoškolské štúdium* (Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2021).
- Hrušovský I., “Nové úlohy vysokých škôl”, *Jednotná škola*, 6 (1950/1951), no. 3.
- Kahuda F., “Škola a verejnosť”, *Nová škola*, 5 (1949), no. 1–2.
- Krankus M., “Školstvo a školský systém na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989” in *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989* ed. B. Kudláčová, (Trnava: Typi universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2019).
- Kudláčová B., Faktorová A. “Ondrej Pavlík, tvorca socialistickej pedagogiky a reformátor školstva a vzdelávania po druhej svetovej vojne, in *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989*, ed. B. Kudláčová, (Trnava: Typi universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2019).
- Kudláčová B., “Ondrej Pavlík a obrat v pedagogike, školstve a vzdelávaní na Slovensku v 40. rokoch 20. Storočia” in *Pedagogické myslenie a školstvo na Slovensku od konca 2. svetovej vojny po obdobie normalizácie*, ed. B. Kudláčová, (Trnava: Typi universitatis Tyrnaviensis, 2017).
- Letz R., *Slovenské dejiny*, vol. VI: 1945–1992 (Bratislava: LIC, 2021).
- Nečasová D., *Nový socialistický človek. Československo 1948–1956* (Brno: Host, 2018).
- Olejník M. *Implementácia marxisticko-leninskej ideológie vo sfére vzdelávania na Slovensku v kontexte politického vývoja v rokoch 1948–1953* (Prešov: Univerzum, 2018).
- Pešek, J., Barnovský, M., *Štátna moc a cirkvi na Slovensku 1948 – 1953*. (Bratislava: VEDA, 1997).
- Slovenské školstvo v prítomnosti* (Praha: Štátne nakladateľstvo, 1932).
- Pedagogická encyklopédia*, vol. I., ed. O. Pavlík (Bratislava: VEDA, 1984).
- Socialistická základní škola pohľadom pamätníkov* (Praha: Walters Kluwer, 2017).
- Sýkora, E., “Projev ministra školství a osvěty Ernesta Sýkory v Národním zhromáždění 24. dubna 1953”, in *Zákon ze dne 24. dubna 1953 o školské soustavě a vzdělávání učitelů* (Praha: SPN, 1953).
- “Školstvo, výchova a vzdelávanie – významný nástroj socializmu”, *Jednotná škola*, 22, no. 8.
- Uher, J., “Kampaň proti tzv. buržoáznemu nacionalizmu” in *Od diktatúry k diktatúre*, ed. M. Barnovský (Bratislava: VEDA, 1995).
- Wojdon J., *Communist Propaganda at School (The World of the Reading Primers from the Soviet Bloc, 1949–1989)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021).
- Wojdon J., *Textbooks as Propaganda (Poland under Communist Rule, 1944–1989)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).
- Zounek J., Šimáně M., and Knotová D., *Normální život v nenormální době* (Praha: Walters Kluwer, 2017).
- Zounek J., Šimáně M., and Knotová D., *Socialistická základní škola pohľadom pamätníkov* (Praha: Walters Kluwer, 2017).
- Žatkuliak J., “Perzekúcie učiteľov v rokoch 1948–1989” in: *Zločiny komunizmu na Slovensku 1948–1989*, eds. F. Mikloško, G. Smolíková, and P. Smolík, part I, 2001.

Education as a Political Tool of the Communist Regime in Slovakia

Schools and education represent one of the most important tools of every totalitarian regime. The aim of the paper is to approach and clarify the process of ideologisation

in education at all levels of schools, i.e. pre-primary education, national schools, and universities in Slovakia during the period of communism (1948–1989). Archival sources, period legislation, newspapers as well as existing research in this area (Gabzdilová 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021; Kudláčová, ed., 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023; Olejník 2018; Glossová 2021, see the Bibliography) were used in this study. The paper proves that education was under the control of the regime, the supervision of the communist party in particular, and it was shaped by its conclusions and resolutions. Thus, education became one of the tools to spread and promote the communist ideology. The analysis also points out the fact that the given period was not homogeneous, rather it had several stages in which some was recorded strong political interference (the period of Stalinism, the so-called normalisation) and in others, political release can be noted (Prague Spring, the 1980s).

KEYWORDS

education, school system, Slovakia, communism, Marxist-Leninist ideology

Edukacja jako narzędzie polityczne reżimu komunistycznego na Słowacji

Szkoła i edukacja stanowią jedno z najważniejszych narzędzi każdego reżimu totalitarnego. Celem artykułu jest przybliżenie i wyjaśnienie procesu ideologizacji w edukacji na wszystkich poziomach szkół, tj. w edukacji przedszkolnej, szkołach narodowych (podstawowych i średnich) oraz na uniwersytetach na Słowacji w okresie komunizmu (1948–1989). W przedstawionym opracowaniu wykorzystano źródła archiwalne, ustawodawstwo z epoki, prasę, a także istniejące badania w tym zakresie (Gabzdilová 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021; Kudláčová, red., 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023; Olejník 2018; Glossová 2021, zob. Bibliografia). W artykule wykazano, że oświata znajdowała się pod kontrolą reżimu, w szczególności partii komunistycznej, i była kształtowana przez jej uchwały. Tym samym szkolnictwo stało się jednym z narzędzi szerzenia i promowania ideologii komunistycznej. W analizie zwrócono także uwagę na fakt, że omawiany okres nie był jednorodny, lecz posiadał kilka etapów, w których w niektórych przypadkach odnotowuje się silną ingerencję polityczną (okres stalinizmu, tzw. normalizacja), a w innych można zaobserwować jej ograniczenie (Praska Wiosna, lata osiemdziesiąte).

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

edukacja, system szkolnictwa, Słowacja, komunizm, ideologia marksistowsko-leninowska

BLANKA KUDLÁČOVÁ – is a professor of education and the head of the Department of Educational Studies at the Faculty of Education of Trnava University in Trnava. Her research and publications are focused on the area of history of education, especially on the 20th century in Slovakia. She is an author and editor of several monographs, in recent years: *Education and "Pädagogik". Central, Southern and South-Eastern Europe* (ed. with Andrej Rajský), Peter Lang 2019; *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989* [Pedagogical Thinking, School System and Education in Slovakia in the Years 1945–1989] (ed.), Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis 2019 and *Two Sides of the Same Coin. Examples of Free and Unfree Education in Slovakia during the Period of Socialism* (ed.), Peter Lang 2023. She is a member of the editorial boards of several domestic and foreign journals ("Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies", "Historia Scholastica", "Kultura i Wychowanie", "Przegląd Pedagogiczny", "Paidagogos", "Paidea", "Historicko-pedagogické forum"). E-mail: blanka.kudlacova@truni.sk

BLANKA KUDLÁČOVÁ – jest profesorem pedagogiki i kierownikiem Katedry Studiów Pedagogicznych na Wydziale Pedagogicznym Uniwersytetu Trnawskiego w Trnawie. Jej badania i publikacje skupiają się na historii edukacji, zwłaszcza XX w., na Słowacji. Jest autorką i redaktorką kilku monografii, w ostatnich latach: *Education and "Pädagogik". Central, Southern and South-Eastern Europe* (red. z Andrejem Rajskim, 2019); *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989* (red., "Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis" 2019) oraz *Two Sides of the Same Coin. Examples of Free and Unfree Education in Slovakia during the Period of Socialism* (red., 2023). Jest członkinią rad redakcyjnych kilku czasopism słowackich i zagranicznych („Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies”, „Historia Scholastica”, „Kultura i Wychowanie”, „Przegląd Pedagogiczny”, „Paidagogos”, „Paidea”, „Historicko-pedagogické forum”).