

MIROSLAV JIREČEK

Department of History, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Brno (Czech Republic)

ORCID 0000-0002-3201-0524

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1948–1989

INTRODUCTION – HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE ISSUE¹

The Czech lands have undergone a complicated historical development. From the 16th century, they were part of the Habsburg monarchy, known as Austria-Hungary after 1867. In 1918, the end of World War I brought the establishment of an independent Czechoslovak state. In addition to the Czech lands (which in the past had belonged to the Austrian part of the monarchy), Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which had previously belonged to the Hungarian part of the monarchy (the two parts of the monarchy had differing school systems), also belonged to it. During the existence of the First Republic (i.e. Czechoslovakia in 1918–1938), the republic had to develop independence in a number of areas, including education.² The 1930s were associated with increasing danger from Nazi Germany. The result was the surrender of the Czechoslovak borderlands in the autumn of 1938 (the subsequent period 1938–1939 is referred to as the so-called Second Republic), the seizure of the rest of Czecho-Slovakia (as the “Second Republic” was called) by German troops in March 1939, and the proclamation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Slovakia set up its independence as an ally of Germany, while Subcarpathian Ruthenia was taken over by Hungary). Throughout World War II, the Czech lands were occupied by the German army. During this period, there was considerable ideological deformation and suppression of the Czech education system (secondary schools were limited, Czech

¹ The study expands on the author's previous works: M. Jireček, *Vývoj vyučovacího předmětu dějepis v letech 1918–2013* (Brno, 2014); M. Jireček, “Development of the School System of the Czech Lands in 1918–2020. A View of the School Legislation after one Hundred Years of the Republic,” in *Czech-Polish historical and pedagogical journal* 12 (1) (2020), pp. 35–53.

² On Czechoslovak education in this period see e.g.: T. Kasper, D. Kasperová, M. Pánková, eds., „*Národní školství za první Československé republiky* (Praha, 2018).

universities were closed, etc.).³ At the end of the war, according to the agreement between the Allies, the state's territory was liberated mainly by the Red Army from the east (though the Romanian army also participated in the liberation), and by the US Army from the west. After the war, the distortions caused in the Czechoslovak education system during wartime were removed (content, legislation, but also personal ones). In the 1945–1948 period (i.e. the so-called Third Republic), the strengthened position of left-wing parties, especially the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, was noticeable in the restored Czechoslovakia. There was also a fundamental change in the foreign policy orientation of the state towards the Soviet Union. A partial restoration of democracy (sometimes referred to as “managed” democracy) took place at this time, but with obvious limits concerning the number of political parties, etc.⁴ The situation was similar in the Czechoslovak education system, where the pre-war school system was largely restored and the distortions caused during the World War II were corrected. The rise of the Communist Party to power in February 1948 was a major turning point for the entire state and school system.⁵ The aim of this study is to present the Czechoslovak education system during the period of communist rule (1948–1989). Due to the length of the period, this is only an overview of the subject, based mainly on an analysis of the contemporary literature and legislative documents.

CZECHOSLOVAK EDUCATION AFTER FEBRUARY 1948

After February 1948, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia seized all power in the state, and non-free elections were held with a “unified candidate list”. Persecutions and oppression of people unwanted by the regime took place, and many people were convicted and sentenced in fabricated political trials, including receiving the death penalty (the most notorious being the case of Milada Horáková).⁶ In the economic sphere, the communist period was marked by the nationalisation of property⁷ and the collectivisation of agriculture (the forming of so-called unified agricultural cooperatives).⁸ The 1950s were the darkest time in this respect. The entire period of communism in Czechoslovakia, which lasted for more than forty years, was marked by a significant ideologization that did not omit the area of education.⁹

³ On the Protectorate education, see F. Bosák, *Česká škola v době nacistického útlatku. Příspěvek k dějinám českého školství od Mnichova do osvobození. Sborník Pedagogické fakulty v Českých Budějovicích. Vědy společenské – historie* (České Budějovice, 1969); J. Doležal, *Česká kultura za protektorátu. Školství, písemnictví, kinematografie* (Praha, 1996).

⁴ On this period see e.g. J. Kocian, *Poválečný vývoj v Československu 1945–1948* (Praha, 1993).

⁵ See e.g. K. Kaplan, *Nekrvavá revoluce* (Praha, 1993); F. Čapka, and J. Lunerová, *1948: Vítězný únor: cesta k převratu* (Brno, 2012).

⁶ See e.g. I. Bláhová at al., *Oběti komunistické spravedlnosti: právní aspekty politických procesů 50. let 20. století* (Praha, 2013).

⁷ Compare with J. Kuklík, *Znárodně Československo: od znárodnění k privatizaci – státní zásahy do vlastnických a dalších majetkových práv v Československu a jinde v Evropě* (Praha, 2010).

⁸ See e.g. J. Rokoský, and L. Svoboda, eds., *Kolektivizace v Československu* (Praha, 2013).

⁹ Generally to the period of communism in Czechoslovakia, see J. Rychlík, *Československo v období socialismu: 1945–1989* (Praha, 2022). Further, see e.g. eight volumes of *Bolševismus, komunismus a radikální socialismus v Československu* (Praha, 2003–2011) (different authors).

Changes were manifested in both the organisation and content aspects of the Czechoslovak education system. The changes were expressed by the enactment of the Education Act¹⁰ in April 1948 (the principles were confirmed in the new Constitution of 1948 – the so-called Constitution of the 9th of May¹¹). The multiplicity of the Czechoslovak educational school system was eliminated – i.e. before this change several types of schools corresponding to today's second level of primary school (lower secondary education) had existed side by side. The Education Act introduced a uniform school system for all pupils from 6 to 15 years of age – all were to be provided with an equivalent education in content and quality. Only on this basis was internal differentiation supposed to take place, during which differences between children were to be taken into account.¹² Education was to be raised generally to the level of lower secondary school.¹³ The distinction between mental and physical work was to be eliminated. The uniformity of the school system was also expressed by the uniformity of the task assigned to schools. Schools were to provide for the “comprehensive intellectual, emotional, moral and physical development of pupils. They educate the youth in the spirit of progressive national traditions and ideals of humanity, they educate them for independent thinking, purposeful action, active work and friendly cooperation, and awaken in the youth the desire for self-education and progress. They encourage them to take an active participation in the life of the school and in the building work of the Republic. They cultivate a sense of community within the family, the nation, Slavs and humanity. They educate nationally and politically conscious citizens of the people's democratic state, brave defenders of the homeland and devoted supporters of the working people and socialism.”¹⁴

The School Act brought a certain unification of the existing diverse norms (e.g. the differences between Czech and Slovak education that had deepened during World War II).¹⁵ It removed “dead ends in the continuity of the educational pathway blocking access to higher education”.¹⁶ In fact, the introduction of a uniform school had already been discussed in the First Republic (for example, the prominent reform pedagogist Václav Příhoda had advocated for it). The principle of a uniform school system can thus be seen as democratic, “since it weakens the barriers between the education of young peo-

¹⁰ *Zákon ze dne 21. dubna 1948 o základní úpravě jednotného školství (školský zákon)* (Č. 95/1948 Sb., vyhlášen dne 10. května 1948) (Act of 21 April 1948 on the basic regulation of uniform education (Education Act); No. 95/1948 Coll., promulgated on 10 May 1948), *Věstník ministerstva školství, věd a umění* (hereinafter *Věstník MŠVU*) 4 (9) (1948), pp. 184–198; *Vládní nařízení ze dne 26. července 1948, kterým se provádějí ustanovení školského zákona o školách národních a středních* (Č. 196/1948 Sb., vyhlášeného dne 4. srpna 1948) (Government Decree of 26 July 1948 implementing the provisions of the Education Act on national and secondary schools; No. 196/1948 Coll., promulgated on 4 August 1948), *Věstník MŠVU* 4 (14a) (1948), pp. 351–353.

¹¹ *Ústava 9. května* (Constitution of the 9th of May) (Praha, 1948).

¹² For a more detailed view, see e.g. O. Chlup, F. Kahuda, and K. Král, *Školský zákon* (Praha, 1949), p. 50.

¹³ See Z. Nejedlý, “Projev ministra školství Z. Nejedlého,” *Školský zákon. Projev ministra školství a osvěty* prof. Dr. Zdeňka Nejedlého a text zákona o základní úpravě jednotného školství (Praha, 1948), pp. 5–7.

¹⁴ *Zákon ze dne 21. dubna 1948* (Act of 21 April 1948), p. 184.

¹⁵ Compare with e.g. O. Chlup, F. Kahuda, and K. Král, *Školský zákon*, pp. 35–36.

¹⁶ E. Walterová, “Vývoj primární a nižší sekundární školy v českém kontextu,” in E. Walterová et al., *Dva světy základní školy? Úskalí přechodu z 1. na 2. stupeň* (Praha, 2011), p. 33.

ple from different social classes and strengthens equality of educational opportunities.”¹⁷ The problem was that when the law was passed, the idea of an internally differentiated school¹⁸ was not adopted along with it. The same curriculum was to be delivered to all pupils, and uniform schooling was not understood in the sense of offering the same educational opportunities to all children.¹⁹ The uniformity of the school system was also to be ensured by nationalizing all schools (church and private ones) without compensation.

After the coup in 1948, significant ideological abuse of Czechoslovak education occurred. The influence of the Soviet Union and Soviet pedagogy became apparent²⁰ (with translations of Soviet authors being used). Increased emphasis was placed on the teaching of the Russian language (obligatorily taught in all types of schools) and on the study of Soviet works: “to teach children to know and love the language of Lenin and Stalin” was to be “the beautiful duty of patriotic teachers.”²¹ Stalin’s contribution to science and education was emphasized.²²

The Marxist-Leninist doctrine became the official state ideology. The objectives of communist education were to be met by the schools.²³ Political education was to permeate the entire educational process. A “progressive-minded generation” was to be raised. The link between school and state-building was emphasised, and the principle of the link between school and life was promoted. Czechoslovak schools were to produce ideologically trained individuals with socialist convictions and a scientific world view.²⁴ Moreover, pupils were not to be mere recipients of this distorted content, but the production of their own “politically conscious” material was also demanded.²⁵ Teachers were also required to cooperate with the regime, under the threat of sanctions for noncompliance.²⁶ School propaganda did not come mainly from outside the state, as under the Nazi occupation, but was shaped with the active participation of those domestic actors involved in the process.²⁷

¹⁷ J. Průcha, “Historický vývoj českého školství II. (1948–1989)” in J. Průcha (ed.), *Pedagogická encyklopedie* (Praha, 2009), p. 46.

¹⁸ E. Walterová, “Vývoj primární,” p. 34.

¹⁹ Compare with R. Váňová, “Václav Příhoda a jeho poválečné snahy o školskou reformu (1945–1948),” in A. Vališová et al., *Historie a perspektivy didaktického myšlení* (Praha, 2004), p. 86.

²⁰ Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship clubs were founded at schools, and days (months) of Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship were organized.

²¹ “35. výročí Velké říjnové socialistické revoluce a Měsíce československo-sovětského přátelství na školách (č. j. 19 100/52-I/4, 22. září 1952)” (35th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Month in schools; Ref. No. 19 100/52-I/4, 22 September 1952), in *Věstník MŠVU* 8 (27) (1952), p. 350.

²² See e.g. “Poznámky k využití Stalinovy práce „Ekonomické problémy socialismu v SSSR“, projevů a dokumentů XIX. sjezdu KSSS a celostátní konference KSČ při vyučování dějepisu, občanské nauce, politické ekonomii, filosofii a zeměpisu na školách II. a III. stupně,” in *Společenské vědy ve škole* 8 (5) (1953), pp. 1–6.

²³ See e.g. B. Kujal, A. Boháč, J. Kotoč, *Pedagogický slovník. 1. díl. A–O* (Praha, 1965), pp. 32–35.

²⁴ Compare with e.g. K. Angelis, “Za socialistickou školu – za socialistickou výchovu,” in *Společenské vědy ve škole* 7 (1) (1951–1952), pp. 33–35.

²⁵ M. Šmejkalová, *Čestina a škola – úryvky skrytých dějin. Český jazyk a jeho vyučování na středních školách. 1918–1989* (Praha, 2010), pp. 279.

²⁶ See J. Průcha, “Historický vývoj,” pp. 252–253.

²⁷ M. Šmejkalová, *Čestina a škola*, p. 249.

The basic goals of education in Czechoslovakia in the period 1948–1989 were set by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The specific form of education was then decided by the various branches of the political system – from the parliamentary level (the National Assembly, later the Federal Assembly) to the local level (national committees). The whole process was overseen by the Ministry of Education (its name changed several times during the period under review) and, after the introduction of the federal level, by the Ministries of Education of both republics (the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic).²⁸

The school system was changed from the ground up in 1948. The uniform system of schools was to consist of a nursery (3–6 years)²⁹, a national school (i.e. a first-stage school, 6–11 years), a middle-level school (i.e. a second-stage school, 11–15 years) and third-stage schools (from 15 years) – gymnasiums (i.e. grammar schools), professional schools and vocational schools or apprenticeships (the lower stage of the existing secondary schools was abolished, as it contradicted the idea of uniformity). There was an increase in particular in the number of professional secondary schools and apprenticeship (vocational) schools.³⁰ The educational peak consisted of universities.³¹ For children who could not be included in mainstream education because of a disorder or disability, so-called schools for young people requiring special care were established (in later terminology, these were called special schools).³² For the education of working people, special courses could be set up in which working people could supplement and extend their education.³³ Increased emphasis was placed on the education of workers in the later periods of Communist totalitarianism.³⁴

A nine-year compulsory schooling period (from ages 6–15) was enacted. Elementary education was provided by first- and second-degree schools (there had not yet been an organisational merger). Elementary education was to be compulsory and free of charge. Generally, schools were to be common for boys and girls. There was a fundamental change in the concept of secondary schools (see above), which was, prior to the time under review (and today is once again), understood to mean selective schools preparing learners mainly for university studies. In 1948, the term secondary school started to be

²⁸ Concerning the management of Czechoslovak educational system, see J. Wolf et al., *Školství v Československé socialistické republice* (Praha, 1982), pp. 71–74.

²⁹ Concerning the kindergartens in Czechoslovakia during the Communist period, see e.g. *Třicet let socialistického školství v Československé socialistické republice. 1945–1975. (I.) Základní školy* (Praha, 1975), pp. 9–13; M. Avratová, J. Bednářová, A. Soukupová, *Československé školství* (Praha, 1984), pp. 21–31. They were established by national committees, factories or cooperative agricultural organizations.

³⁰ Compare with *Třicet let socialistického školství v Československé socialistické republice. 1945–1975. (II.) Střední školy* (Praha, 1975), pp. 10–11.

³¹ On universities in the communist period in Czechoslovakia, see e.g. *Třicet let socialistického školství v Československé socialistické republice. 1945–1975. (III.) Vysoké školy* (Praha, 1975); J. Wolf et al., *Školství*, pp. 48–63; M. Avratová, J. Bednářová, A. Soukupová, *Československé školství*, pp. 87–96.

³² For a more detailed view, see *Třicet let socialistického školství v Československé socialistické republice. 1945–1975. (I.) Základní školy*, pp. 22–26; J. Wolf et al., *Školství*, pp. 32–40; M. Avratová, J. Bednářová, A. Soukupová, *Československé školství*, pp. 75–85.

³³ For a more detailed view, see M. Králíková, J. Nečas, V. Spěváček, *Nástin vývoje všeobecného vzdělávání v českých zemích* (Praha, 1977), pp. 90–91.

³⁴ See also J. Wolf et al., *Školství*, pp. 64–70; M. Avratová, J. Bednářová, A. Soukupová, *Československé školství*, pp. 97–103.

used to refer to second-degree schools (i.e. the lower stage of secondary school). There were to be no more than 40 pupils per class in a secondary school. The form of education was determined by nationally valid curricula and syllabuses.

From the 1950/51 school year onwards, secondary school pupils were required to complete their compulsory education with a final examination. On the basis of this examination, the committee was to recommend applications for certain professions or to one of the selective schools. The examination was to take into account the fact that the selective schools (*výběrové školy*) should admit pupils “who, by their social and class origin as well as by their development up to now, give hope that they will produce intelligentsia who are by their class and ideology linked to the working class.”³⁵ It was therefore no longer just a matter of the pupils’ abilities; consideration was also to be given to their “relationship to work and to the collective” and to their participation in the “building of the people’s democratic republic” (i.e., the pupils’ “consciousness”). Priority was to be given to the children of workers.³⁶ Children from “capitalist families” were to be admitted only in exceptional cases. This way, a “socialist” intelligentsia was to be recruited to ensure the building of socialism. These specific criteria for admission to selective schools remained in place throughout the whole communist period.

There was also a change in teacher training. Four-year pedagogical gymnasiums (colleges) were established to train teachers for nurseries and national schools. Teachers of secondary schools and, in some fields, also teachers of third-degree schools were trained at pedagogical faculties (established in 1946). Teachers were to be addressed as “comrade” (as was the custom in all areas of official dealings at this time).

The care of all extracurricular education was entrusted to the Union of Czech Youth, under which other organizations of children and youth were transferred. This was to prevent “fragmentation of the youth into organisations directed against the principles of the revived National Front”.³⁷ Young people aged 14 and over were to take part in the May Day celebrations. Religion was gradually pushed out of schools.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN THE 1950S

The year 1953 marked a significant turning point in the history of Czechoslovak education when a new school law was issued.³⁸ Compulsory schooling was shortened to

³⁵ “Závěrečné zkoušky na středních školách a přijímání žáků do výběrových škol třetího stupně (Výnos MŠVU z 15. III. 1951, č. 17 345-II)” (Final examinations at secondary schools and admission of pupils to selective schools of the third stage; Decree of the Ministry of Education of 15 March 1951, No. 17 345-II), *Věstník MŠVU* 7 (8) (1951), p. 78.

³⁶ For a more detailed view, see “Přijímání žáků do prvních ročníků výběrových škol III. stupně (Výnos MŠVU z 30. IV. 1949, č. 62 240-II)” (Admission of pupils to the first years of selective schools of stage III; Decree of the Ministry of Education of 30 April 1949, No. 62 240-II), *Věstník MŠVU* 5 (8a) (1949), pp. 173–175.

³⁷ “Účast žactva středních škol v jednotných organizacích mládeže (Výnos MŠO z 4. III. 1948, č. A-49 536-III)” (Participation of secondary school pupils in unified youth organisations; Decree of the Ministry of Education of 4 March 1948, No. A-49 536-III), *Věstník MŠVU* 4 (5–6) (1948), p. 111.

³⁸ “Zákon ze dne 24. dubna 1953 o školské soustavě a vzdělávání učitelů (školský zákon)” (Act of 24 April 1953 on the school system and teacher education; Education Act) (Praha, 1953).

eight years. This was justified by the needs of the economy and, prospectively, to ensure a complete secondary education for all young people. In this way, the state also sought to address staffing shortages in the education sector. There was to be an increase in the pace of socialist school-building – the ideological and political work of the schools was to be increased and they were to become a radical instrument for building a socialist and communist society. To achieve these goals, the experience of Soviet pedagogy was to be used even more (the school system and the content of education were to be approximated to the Soviet models).

The school system was newly composed of a kindergarten (3–6 years), two types of schools providing compulsory basic general education³⁹ – an eight-year secondary school (*osmiletá střední škola*, hereinafter referred to as OSŠ, providing elementary general education, established mainly in the places of the existing secondary schools) and an eleven-year secondary school (*jedenáctiletá střední škola*, hereinafter referred to as JSŠ; the first eight years provided elementary general education, the three following years were selective – providing higher general education and preparing pupils for university studies; the former gymnasiums were abolished), of schools for young people requiring special care, of professional schools, and apprenticeship schools. Universities continued to be the pinnacle of the system. Thus, there was a unification of first- and second-degree schools (the curriculum and syllabus of the OSŠ were the same as those of the first eight years of the JSŠ) and, in the case of the JSŠ, also of the third-degree schools. This way, the principle of the uniform school was to be promoted. Where there were no conditions for the establishment of an OSŠ or JSŠ, the first five grades were to be established and referred to as a “national school”. Classes in all types of general education schools were to have as a rule 40 pupils, and in a class with pupils in the first grade as a rule 30 pupils.⁴⁰

The new Education Act also paid attention to the training of teachers. This was to correspond to the “great mission of the socialist school.” The highest ideological and professional quality of pedagogical work was to be ensured. The existing pedagogical gymnasiums and pedagogical faculties were abolished. Four-year pedagogical schools (at the level of today’s secondary education, admitting graduates of OSŠ or eighth year of JSŠ) were established for teachers of national schools (1st–5th grade of OSŠ and JSŠ), and two-year higher pedagogical schools (admitting graduates of JSŠ, pedagogical schools and selective vocational schools) were established for the education of teachers of the 6th–8th grade of secondary schools. Teacher training colleges were set up for teachers of the 9th–11th grades of JSŠ, and for the teachers of pedagogical and vocational schools

³⁹ As for the general education schools in this period, for a more detailed view, see J. Keprta, *Organisace a správa československého školství (Úvod do studia)* (Praha, 1956), pp. 63–65.

⁴⁰ “Základní směrnice o zřizování, organizaci a správě škol mateřských, škol všeobecně vzdělávacích, škol pro mládež vyžadující zvláštní péči, škol odborných a škol pedagogických. Směrnice MŠO k přeměně dosavadních škol mateřských a škol prvního až třetího stupně na školy nové soustavy (Zn. A I. – 010.1- 2/16-53, dne 12. června 1953)” (Basic guidelines on the establishment, organisation and administration of nursery schools, general education schools, schools for young people requiring special care, vocational schools and pedagogical schools. Directive of the Ministry of Education on the conversion of existing nursery schools and schools of the first to third level into schools of the new system; No. A I – 010.1-2/16-53, 12 June 1953), *Věstník Ministerstva školství* (hereinafter *Věstník MŠ*) 9 (18) (1953), p. 163.

(graduates of JSŠ, pedagogical schools and selective vocational schools were admitted.) An increased ideological abuse of education was likewise noticeable in this area. There was no longer to be any teacher who “does not have a firm determination to educate the youth [...] deeply love their native Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, their People’s Democratic Republic and the great Soviet Union.”⁴¹ In order to increase the ideological and political work of schools, special directives were issued.⁴² Teachers were to educate comprehensively developed socialist citizens in schools. Pre-military education became a part of the curriculum.⁴³

JSŠs were established in a denser territorial distribution than the earlier gymnasiums, which can be perceived as a positive outcome.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the shortening of mandatory education without revision of the curriculum brought the problem of overloaded pupils and a high drop-out rate. As a result, the problem of the core curriculum began to be addressed. A number of other problems can be identified in Czechoslovak education in this period – e.g., excessive adherence to textbooks, the young age of students admitted to universities (i.e. the low level of their developmental stage), filling of leadership positions according to political criteria, persistent denial of higher education to gifted children from families of former businessmen, intelligentsia, etc.⁴⁵

In some school subjects, the shortening of compulsory schooling meant the transition from a cyclical curriculum to a linear one – some parts of the curriculum were thus transferred to selective years of the JSŠ, which were not attended by all pupils. Due to the above-mentioned problems, this period was perceived as a “blot on the development of education” and the “period of mistakes”.⁴⁶ The fact that changes were made by political forces without taking pedagogical considerations into account can be identified as a cause of these problems.

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN A “SOCIALIST” REPUBLIC

The changes implemented in the Czechoslovak education system after 1953 were subjected to criticism. The backwardness of the Czechoslovak education system was evident; the educational facilities should have reflected more closely the ongoing techno-

⁴¹ “Projev ministra školství a osvěty Ernesta Sýkory v Národním shromáždění v pátek 24. dubna 1953,” in *Zákon o školské soustavě a vzdělávání učitelů* (Act on the school system and teacher education) (Praha, 1953), pp. 4–17.

⁴² “Směrnice pro ideové pedagogickou práci všeobecně vzdělávacích škol ve školním roce 1954/55 (č. j. 74 306/54-A, dne 23. září 1954)” (Guidelines for the ideological and pedagogical work of general education schools in the school year 1954/55; Ref. No. 74 306/54-A, 23 September 1954), *Věstník MŠ* 10 (27) (1954), pp. 281–282.

⁴³ See “Příprava žactva škol všeobecně vzdělávacích, pedagogických a odborných k obraně vlasti (č. j. 62 307/54-A I/1, dne 14. srpna 1954)” (Preparation of pupils of general education, pedagogical and vocational schools for the defence of the homeland; Ref. No. 62 307/54-A I/1, 14 August 1954), *Věstník MŠ* 10 (24) (1954), pp. 232–240.

⁴⁴ See M. Králíková, J. Nečesaný, V. Spěváček, *Nástin vývoje*, pp. 81–82.

⁴⁵ For a more detailed view, see e.g. J. Mikulčák, “Padesát let vyučování matematice v naší republice”, *Matematika ve škole* 19 (1) (1968), pp. 21–23.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

logical and other changes in the world. Therefore, a number of documents were issued to ensure changes. The basic direction of change was presented by the 11th and 12th Congresses of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and by the document *On the Close Connection of School with Life and on the Further Development of the Upbringing and Education in the Czechoslovak Republic* from 1959.⁴⁷ New principles required for the development of schools were laid down – the comprehensive and harmonious development of youth, the extension of mandatory primary education to nine years, linking of education with life and production (emphasis was put on polytechnic and vocational training, on labour training, the combination of physical and mental work), on providing the possibility for all children to obtain a complete secondary education, the correct choice of profession, the development of workers' studies, and moral and aesthetic education. The aim was still to prepare the youth to build socialism and communism.

In 1960, a new constitution⁴⁸ was enacted stating that Czechoslovakia had achieved the establishment of socialism (the name of the state was changed to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the abbreviation ČSSR was used from this point). On this basis, a new education law was issued in 1960.⁴⁹ These documents were based primarily on ideological grounds, not on the actual state of society. Following the declared establishment of socialism, efforts were now to be directed towards creating the preconditions for the transition to communism. This development required, according to the law, a comprehensively developed and educated human. The schools were thus supposed to prepare enthusiastic builders of communism. Education and training were to be based on a scientific world view and on Marxism-Leninism. Thus, it was a mixture of the promotion of real reform and persistent ideological demands.

The school system was changed yet again. Mandatory education was extended to nine years. The uniformity of the system was maintained, but the schools providing primary education were again separated from the general secondary schools. Mandatory primary education was to be offered by a nine-year primary school (*základní devítiletá škola*, hereafter referred to as ZDŠ – from the 6th to the 15th year of age; the first stage consisted of grades 1–5, the second stage of grades 6–9).⁵⁰ As a rule, there were to be 40 pupils per class in a primary school, and no more than 34 pupils in a class for pupils in the first grade; if pupils from another grade were also present in that class, then no more than

⁴⁷ See J. Hendrych, *O těsném spojení školy se životem a o dalším rozvoji výchovy a vzdělání v Československu: referát Jiřího Hendrycha na zasedání ÚV KSČ dne 22. dubna 1959 a usnesení ÚV KSČ ze dne 23. dubna 1959* (Praha, 1959).

⁴⁸ “Ústavní zákon č. 100/1960 ze dne 11. července 1960” (Constitutional Act No. 100/1960 of 11 July 1960), See *Ústava Československé socialistické republiky* (Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic) (Praha, 1960).

⁴⁹ “Zákon ze dne 15. prosince 1960, č. 186 Sb., o soustavě výchovy a vzdělávání (školský zákon)” (Act of 15 December 1960, No. 186 Coll., on the system of education and training; Education Act), *Věstník Ministerstva školství a kultury* (hereinafter *Věstník MŠK*) 17 (1–11) (1961), pp. 1–7.

⁵⁰ For a more detailed view, see B. Kujal, “Československá základní devítiletá škola v etapě dovršení socialismu a přechodu ke komunismu (Poznámky ke studiu otázek výchovy a vzdělání na škole prvního cyklu)”, in B. Kujal (ed.), *Základní devítiletá škola. Příspěvek k přestavbě základní devítileté školy v podmínkách dovršení socialismu a přechodu ke komunismu* (Praha, 1961), pp. 4–98.

30 pupils.⁵¹ In the places where the conditions were not favourable for the establishment of all nine grades of primary school, primary schools could be established with the lower grades only. Pupils could receive secondary and higher education in various types of schools (general secondary schools, professional secondary schools, specialized schools, vocational apprenticeships, factory technical schools and institutes).⁵² The pinnacle of the school system remained universities. Considerable attention continued to be paid to education during employment. The ideological criteria for selecting pupils for higher education remained in place, in contradiction of the Education Act declaration that all pupils who showed interest and had the appropriate aptitudes could gain a complete secondary education. Every citizen was supposed to understand the close connection between the building of socialism and the defence of the homeland. Therefore, from September 1st, 1962, a course of general national training for civil defence was introduced on a compulsory basis for all pupils in grades 8 and 9 of the ZDŠ schools.⁵³ The entire educational process was to be permeated by conscription education, and conscription exercises were to be carried out.

A specific addition to the primary-school education system was the so-called “folk art schools”, which provided children and youth with basic art education (e.g. music, dance, drama, etc.) in the form of extracurricular studies.⁵⁴ Additionally, there were also other postgraduate facilities in Czechoslovakia dealing with the upbringing and education of young people (e.g. Houses of Pioneers and Youth, outdoor schools, etc.).⁵⁵

Changes were likewise implemented in the education of teachers when pedagogical institutes were established in 1959. There, teachers of both stages of the ZDŠ schools completed a common two-year basic course, and afterwards, the teachers of the first five grades of the ZDŠ schools continued their subsequent studies for one year, while teachers of grades 6–9 did so for two years. Teachers of selective secondary schools continued to be educated at the universities. In 1964, the faculties of education were re-established.⁵⁶

After 1964, following the enactment of one of the other resolutions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia⁵⁷, a certain degree of relaxa-

⁵¹ “Směrnice k provedení některých ustanovení školského zákona (č. j. 2036/61-I/2, dne 3. ledna 1961)” (Directives on the implementation of certain provisions of the Education Act; Ref. No. 2036/61-I/2, 3 January 1961), *Věstník MŠK* 17 (1–11) (1961), p. 13; “Organizační směrnice pro základní devítileté školy (č. j. 10 000/67-I/3)” (Organisational guidelines for nine-year primary schools; Ref. No. 10 000/67-I/3), *Věstník Ministerstva školství a ministerstva kultury a informací* (hereinafter *Věstník MŠ a MKI*) 23 (21) (1967), pp. 183–186.

⁵² Concerning secondary schools during this period, see *Třicet let socialistického školství v Československé socialistické republice. 1945–1975. (II.) Střední školy* (Praha, 1975).

⁵³ See e.g. “Kurs všennárodní přípravy obyvatelstva k civilní obraně (č. j. 33 673/62-II/1, dne 31. července 1962)” (Course for the All-National Training of the Population for Civil Defence; Ref. No. 33 673/62-II/1, 31 July 1962), *Věstník MŠK* 18 (23) (1962), pp. 290–291.

⁵⁴ For a more detailed view, see *Třicet let socialistického školství v Československé socialistické republice. 1945–1975. (I.) Základní školy* (Praha, 1975).

⁵⁵ See J. Wolf et al., *Školství v Československé socialistické republice*, pp. 41–44.

⁵⁶ For a more detailed view, see e.g. M. Šmejkalová, *Čeština a škola*, pp. 314–315.

⁵⁷ “K úkolům dalšího rozvoje školství a k výchově mládeže na školách. Usnesení ÚV KSČ z 22. října 1964” (On the tasks of the further development of education and the education of young people in schools. Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia of 22 October 1964), in J. Trajer (ed.), *Stranické a vládní dokumenty o škole* (Praha, 1970), pp. 150–157.

tion in the Czechoslovak education system can be observed – a new concept of work in schools was to be prepared, the methods and content of this work were to be modernized (emphasis was to be placed on the use of the different aptitudes of pupils).⁵⁸ For this reason, voluntary differentiated education was introduced.⁵⁹ It was the application of an individual approach to pupils, while respecting collective teaching in the classroom (teachers were to form groups in the classroom, to make demands on each group appropriate to the pupils' abilities, and to use appropriate methods – this was called internal differentiation and it was not supposed to mean favouring the more capable pupils). This was the first form of differentiation implemented after the establishment of the communist government. The principle of uniform schooling remained in force, and curriculum documents likewise remained uniform. However, the principle of uniform schooling was no longer to be understood as a requirement for the homogeneity of all pupils.

From September 1965, external differentiation was also possible – in some grades of the ZDŠ with multiple classes of the same grade, pupils could be divided into study and practical classes for the teaching of selected subjects (in the 8th and 9th grades of all subjects) according to their abilities and interests in further study or profession. In the case of ZDŠ schools without parallel classes, differentiated groups could at least be formed in some grades for the teaching of certain subjects.⁶⁰ In the interest class (group), the number of subject hours could be increased by one lesson per week. Differentiation in grades 6–9 appeared also to be a possibility for teaching optional subjects, tutoring groups and special interest groups.⁶¹ Differentiation was a frequently discussed topic in this period.⁶² Changes in teaching foreign languages were another manifestation of these shifts. The Russian language continued to have an important place and remained mandatory in all schools. However, the need for teaching of other foreign languages was also acknowledged, and English, French, Spanish and German were taught as optional subjects in ZDŠ schools. The learning of languages within the framework of extra-curricular activities was also encouraged.⁶³ Extended language education – Russian and one other language – was

⁵⁸ For a more detailed view, see e.g. M. Králíková, J. Nečesaný, V. Spěváček, *Nástin vývoje*, p. 93.

⁵⁹ See "Pokyny pro poloodborné a pro diferencované vyučování na základních devítiletých školách (č. j. 24 369/65-I/1, dne 31. května 1965)" (Guidelines for semi-vocational and differentiated teaching in nine-year primary schools; Ref. No. 24 369/65-I/1, 31 May 1965), *Věstník MŠK* 21 (17) (1965), pp. 169–173.

⁶⁰ For a more detailed view, see *ibid.*, and "Organizační pokyny pro základní devítileté školy (č. j. 21 190/69, dne 26. června 1969)" (Organisational guidelines for nine-year primary schools; Ref. No. 21 190/69, 26 June 1969), *Věstník MŠ a MK* 25 (7) (1969), pp. 81–85.

⁶¹ See "Zřizování doučovacích skupin na základních devítiletých školách (č. j. 29924/64 – I/2, dne 16. října 1964)" (Establishment of tutoring groups at nine-year primary schools; Ref. No. 29924/64 – I/2, 16 October 1964), *Věstník MŠK* 20 (30) (1964), pp. 340–341.

⁶² See e.g. M. Cipro, *Diferenciace výuky na základní škole* (Praha 1964); M. Cipro, *Diferenciace základního vzdělání* (Praha, 1966).

⁶³ See "Směrnice o organizaci vyučování ruštině a cizím jazykům v zájmovém studiu v zařízeních v působnosti ministerstva školství a kultury (č. j. 30 425/62, dne 6. července 1962)" (Directives on the organisation of the teaching of Russian and foreign languages in extracurricular studies in establishments under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture; Ref. No. 30 425/62, 6 July 1962), *Věstník MŠK* 18 (21) (1962), pp. 255–259.

introduced on a trial basis in selected schools.⁶⁴ Not only the establishment of classes but also of the (de facto selective) schools with extended language education was allowed.

Another manifestation of the changes in Czechoslovak education was the experimental re-establishment of multi-year gymnasiums (grammar schools)⁶⁵ and the establishment of other experimental schools and educational institutions. The publication of the Action Program of the Ministry of Education after the January 1968 plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was also a manifestation of these changes.⁶⁶ The program drew attention to the earlier deformations of the school system and expressed the need to develop the conditions for a creative and free atmosphere in schools.⁶⁷

In Czechoslovakia, the 1960s became a period of relaxation in political, economic and cultural life, and hope for change. The year 1968 was the culmination of this process, known as the “Prague Spring”. It was not an attempt to expel communism, but to reform it from within (sometimes also referred to as building “socialism with a human face”).⁶⁸ The reformist communists under the leadership of Alexander Dubček were trying to bring about changes. This hopeful process was ended by the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops on the night of August 20th–21st, 1968.⁶⁹ The period of hope was replaced by a period of “rigid” communism, known as ‘normalisation’.⁷⁰ The changes associated with the period of relaxation and the subsequent normalisation were also reflected in the field of education.

After the events of August 1968, Czechoslovak education was affected by ‘normalisation’ conditions – “consolidation measures” were introduced⁷¹, the socialist character of education was restored, and the Marxist-Leninist approach was fully applied again. The previous changes were criticised as a “subtle deviation” from “the stated aims of the socialist school system with its principles of democracy, versatility and harmony”.⁷² Measures implemented in the years 1964–1968 were also criticised for “failing to appreciate the significance of training the young working generation and opening up space for the weakening of state management and for the penetration of elitist ideas into the

⁶⁴ See “Pokusné zavedení rozšířeného vyučování jazykům na vybraných základních devítiletých školách a školách II. cyklu” (Experimental introduction of extended language teaching in selected nine-year primary and cycle II schools), *Věstník MŠK* 21 (1) (1965), p. 3.

⁶⁵ For a more detailed view, see *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁶⁶ *Akční program ministerstva školství* (Action Programme of the Ministry of Education), *Učitel'ské noviny* 18 (2) (1968), pp. 5–7.

⁶⁷ See also E. Walterová, “Vývoj primární,” p. 38.

⁶⁸ See e.g. M. Novák, *Pražské jaro 1968: přerušená revoluce?* (Praha, 2021).

⁶⁹ Compare with D. Povolný, *Operace Dunaj: krvavá odpověď Varšavské smlouvy na pražské jaro 1968* (Praha, 2018).

⁷⁰ For a more detailed view, see J. Petráš, L. Svoboda, eds., *Jaro '68 a nástup normalizace: Československo v letech 1968–1971* (Praha, 2017).

⁷¹ See “Poučení z krizového vývoje ve straně a společnosti po 13. sjezdu KSČ; rezoluce o aktuálních otázkách jednoty strany schválená plenárním zasedáním ÚV KSČ v prosinci 1970” (Lessons from the crisis in the party and society after the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia; resolution on current issues of party unity approved by the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in December 1970) (Praha, 1971).

⁷² M. Králíková, J. Nečesaný, V. Spěváček, *Nástin vývoje*, p. 96.

secondary and higher education”.⁷³ It was criticised for “the de facto liquidation of the teaching of Marxism-Leninism in the universities, the underestimation and restriction of civic education and [teaching of] the Russian language, the stirring up of nationalist and anti-Soviet sentiments among teachers, students and pupils, the revival of Masarykism”⁷⁴, the Stefanik legend⁷⁵, Social Democracy and other petty-bourgeois and bourgeois ideologies, and the retreat from the principles of proletarian internationalism. A considerable number of educators and teachers were losing the class view of social events, ignoring the fact that our world belongs to the world socialist system and can only develop as a sovereign socialist state within its framework.”⁷⁶

Political vetting formed the basis for purges carried out among teaching staff.⁷⁷ Again, the ideological and political level of teachers was to be raised by training and education.⁷⁸ ‘Normalization’ also once again significantly affected the selection of students in secondary and higher education (see earlier). Internal differentiation and elective subjects were still allowed, but the establishment of study and practical classes (dividing pupils according to their scholarly achievements) was prohibited. The socialist character of Czechoslovak education was also confirmed by the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, held in 1971, and by the so-called July meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1973.⁷⁹ After 1968, the experimental multi-year gymnasiums were abolished.⁸⁰ Schools with extended foreign language programs were retained.

In this period, the teaching cycle in Czechoslovakia was also changed, with an eleven-day teaching cycle being introduced in the 1967/68 school year.⁸¹ Up to this point, classes had also been held on Saturdays, but from then on, every second Saturday was to be free of school. A year later, the eleven-day teaching cycle was abolished and a five-day teaching week (still in force today)⁸² was introduced, in line with the introduction of a five-day working week.

⁷³ “Vývoj, současný stav a další úkoly československého školství (1973),” in B. Kujal et al., *Třicet let československé jednotné školy* (Praha, 1979), p. 209.

⁷⁴ The note referred to the first Czechoslovak president (in the years 1918–1935), Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (1850–1937). See e.g. A. Soubigou, *Thomas Masaryk* (Paris, 2002).

⁷⁵ The note referred to one of the „creators“ of the Czechoslovak Republic – the politician, soldier, aviator and astronomer of Slovak nationality, Milan Rastislav Štefánik (1880–1918). See e.g. M. Kšiňan, *Milan Rastislav Štefánik* (Brno, 2012).

⁷⁶ “Vývoj, současný stav a další úkoly,” in B. Kujal et al., *Třicet let*, p. 210.

⁷⁷ For a more detailed view, see M. Šmejkalová, *Čeština a škola*, p. 359.

⁷⁸ See e.g. “Zabezpečení ideové politického vzdělávání učitelů, výchovných i školských pracovníků škol I. a II. cyklu organizovaného ministerstvem školství ČSR ve školním roce 1972/73” (Securing the ideological and political education of teachers, educational and school staff of schools of the 1st and 2nd cycle organized by the Ministry of Education of the Czechoslovak Republic in the school year 1972/73), *Věstník MŠ a MK* 28 (8) (1972), p. 129–131.

⁷⁹ “Zasedání Ústředního výboru KSČ ve dnech 3.–4. července 1973” (Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on 3–4 July 1973) (Praha, 1973).

⁸⁰ See M. Králíková, J. Nečesaný, V. Spěváček, *Nástin vývoje*, p. 96; “Vývoj, současný stav a další úkoly,” in B. Kujal et al., *Třicet let*, p. 210.

⁸¹ See “Směrnice o organizaci školního roku na školách I. a II. cyklu a na odborných učilištích (č. j. 26 717/67-II/5, dne 7. srpna 1967)” (Directives on the organisation of the school year in cycle I and II schools and vocational schools; No. 26 717/67-II/5 of 7 August 1967), *Věstník MŠ a MK* 23 (23) (1967), pp. 203–204.

⁸² For a more detailed view, see e.g. “Pokyny k práci škol a výchovných zařízení I. cyklu v souvislosti se zavedením pětidenního vyučovacího týdne (č. j. 34 113/68-I/3, dne 5. prosince 1968)” (Instructions on the work of

THE LAST DECADES OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME

A significant event in the history of Czechoslovak education was the publication in 1976 of the document *Further Development of the Czechoslovak Educational System*⁸³, based mainly on the theses set out by the 14th and 15th Congresses of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.⁸⁴ The main objectives were to improve the quality of the educational process, to ensure its connection with production practice and social life, to modernize education content and methods, and to develop new curricula, syllabuses and textbooks. This was to bring about the modernization of Czechoslovak education (the so-called new concept of educational work). Again, the experience and developments in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries were to be taken into account. The reform did not touch the socialist character of Czechoslovak education.

Plans were made for the introduction of 10-year secondary education and the expansion of the full 12-year secondary education, with mass introduction anticipated. An increasing number of students were supposed to be able to obtain a university education. The content and scope of the curriculum in each type of school were to be redesigned (the core curriculum was to be defined, the links between subjects and between years and grades of primary school were to be better developed, and the polytechnic component of the curriculum was to be significantly widened). These theses were brought to life by the Education Act issued in 1978.⁸⁵

The design of the school system was also changed again. A major change was the shortening of elementary school education to eight years (the first stage was shortened by one year, consisting of grades 1–4, and the second stage consisted of grades 5–8). The name of the nine-year primary school (ZDŠ) was changed to primary school (*základní škola*, hereinafter referred to as ZŠ). In places where the conditions for the establishment of all eight grades were not met, primary schools with only first-stage grades could continue to be established. After the completion of primary school, pupils were obliged to continue their studies for at least two years in secondary schools. Mandatory education thus lasted ten years (from 6 to 16 years). The optimal length of full secondary education was projected to be 12 years. These changes were justified by the improvement of living conditions in socialist society, which was supposed to lead to faster intellectual development and maturity of children, as well as to the extension and deepening of pre-school education, the rational selection of curriculum and the use of appropriate educational

schools and educational establishments of the first cycle in connection with the introduction of the five-day school week; Ref. No. 34 113/68-I/3, 5 December 1968), *Věstník MŠ a MKI* 24 (36) (1968), pp. 431–432.

⁸³ *Další rozvoj československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy. Projekt a důvodová zpráva* (Further development of the Czechoslovak educational system. Project and explanatory memorandum) (Praha, 1976).

⁸⁴ Compare with "Důvodová zpráva k projektu dalšího rozvoje československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy" (Explanatory memorandum to the project of further development of the Czechoslovak educational system), *Další rozvoj československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy* (Praha, 1976), pp. 24–26.

⁸⁵ "Zákon ze dne 21. června 1978 o opatřeních v soustavě základních a středních škol (Č. 63/1978)" (Act of 21 June 1978 on measures in the primary and secondary school system; No. 63/1978), *Sbírka zákonů. Československá socialistická republika*, part 14, issued on 23 June 1978, pp. 258–267.

methods and forms.⁸⁶ The shortening of the full secondary education from the current 13 to 12 years was also justified by research results.⁸⁷ All strands of secondary education (gymnasiums⁸⁸, professional schools, vocational secondary schools) were to be equivalent (general secondary education and vocational secondary education were no longer to be distinguished, and the content of the secondary schools was to be integrated based on a general polytechnic education). In a new development, classes for the development of pupils' talents could also be established.⁸⁹ The number of extended classes as well as their pupils was increasing.⁹⁰ Later, the establishment of sports schools was also permitted.⁹¹ Experimental testing of the organization, forms and content of education and training was also allowed at schools.⁹²

In 1984, a new Education Act came into force.⁹³ The existing school system remained unchanged, and the aims and design of schools remained almost unchanged compared with the 1978 Education Act.⁹⁴ In 1989, about 60% of primary school graduates graduated from vocational secondary schools, 23% from professional secondary schools and 15% from gymnasiums. 16.1% of 18-year-olds entered academic education.⁹⁵

Gradually, an evaluation of the changes made so far took place – the factual correctness of the existing documents was noted, but also the gaps in their implementation.⁹⁶ Communist education in schools was to be “better, more versatile and more effective”.⁹⁷ However, a change in the tone of the documents was already apparent, stating, for example, that “*in the process of reconstruction, there is a change in the evaluation of historical events, persons, systems, management, etc. These changes are generally accepted, but young people, and not only them, are not used to such weighty changes of opinion.*”⁹⁸ Changes

⁸⁶ *Další rozvoj ...*, 4.

⁸⁷ See “Důvodová zpráva...”, 28.

⁸⁸ They have once again replaced the existing secondary schools providing general education.

⁸⁹ “Instrukce ministerstva školství ČSR ze dne 12. července 1985, č. j. 21 106/85-200 o základní škole” (Instruction of the Ministry of Education of the Czechoslovak Republic of 12 July 1985, Ref. No. 21 106/85-200 on primary school), *Věstník MŠ a MK* 41 (8) (1985), pp. 105–112.

⁹⁰ Compare with J. Průcha, *Historický vývoj českého školství II. (1948–1989)*, p. 48.

⁹¹ See “Směrnice ministerstva školství ČSR, č. j. 21 963/85-33 ze dne 15. července 1985 o školách pro mimořádně nadané a talentované žáky v oblasti sportu (sportovní školy)” (Directives of the Ministry of Education of the Czechoslovak Republic; Ref. No. 21 963/85-33 of 15 July 1985 on schools for exceptionally gifted and talented pupils in the field of sport – sports schools), *Věstník MŠ a MK* 41 (8) (1985), pp. 97–105.

⁹² See e.g. “Zásady pokusného ověřování organizace, forem a obsahu výchovy a vzdělávání v základních školách, v základních devítiletých školách, ve školách pro mládež vyžadující zvláštní péči a ve středních školách (schválené usnesením vlády ČSSR ze dne 28. srpna 1980, č. 283)” (Principles of experimental verification of the organisation, forms and content of upbringing and education in primary schools, nine-year primary schools, schools for young people requiring special care and secondary schools; approved by Resolution of the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic of 28 August 1980, No. 283), *Věstník MŠ a MK* 36 (12) (1980), pp. 157–159.

⁹³ “Zákon č. 29 ze dne 22. března 1984 o soustavě základních a středních škol (školský zákon)” (Act of 22 March 1984 on the system of primary and secondary schools; Education Act), in V. Kovářiček, *Soubor předpisů pro základní a střední školy* (Olomouc, 1986), pp. 5–30.

⁹⁴ For a more detailed view of the school system in Czechoslovakia during this period, see J. Wolf et al., *Školství*; M. Avratová, J. Bednářová, A. Soukupová, *Československé školství*.

⁹⁵ *Souhrnná zpráva k analýze československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy* (Praha, 1989).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 57–58.

⁹⁷ *Analýza československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy* (Praha, 1988), p. 1.

⁹⁸ *Souhrnná zpráva k analýze československé výchovně vzdělávací soustavy*, p. 61.

to Czechoslovak education were planned.⁹⁹ However, there was not enough time for their implementation. In 1989, the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia (the so-called Velvet Revolution¹⁰⁰) brought about fundamental changes in all areas, including education. The search began for a way forward for the form and function of education in a democratic society.

SUMMARY

The rise to power of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 brought about fundamental changes to the entire society, including the field of education. After the coup, a number of revolutionary changes were made, and in the following years, it was possible to observe gradual developmental changes. The shape of the Czechoslovak education system was fundamentally changed immediately following the onset of communism. A uniform school system was introduced, and private schools were nationalized. The shape of the school system changed repeatedly during the communist regime. The length of mandatory schooling was adjusted several times, and the system of schools and their names were changed.

Nationally binding curricula and syllabuses were in force throughout the period under review and were altered in response to changes in education laws. Numerous professional discussions were held about the shape of Czechoslovak education, however, they were not able to cross the “boundaries of the times” during the period under review. Moreover, a number of interventions were carried out primarily for ideological reasons and without taking pedagogical considerations into account. The misuse of the education system for the regime’s purposes (distortion of content) and limiting access to higher education on the basis of pupils’ origin and opinions should both be condemned. The period of the 1950s can be seen as particularly problematic in this respect. The 1960s brought hope, culminating in the so-called Prague Spring of 1968. However, these hopes were violently ended in August 1968 with the Warsaw Pact invasion. The following period of ‘normalization’ brought a return to markedly rigid communism, affecting the field of education as well. Even during the ‘normalization’ period, a number of changes could be observed. The influence of the Soviet Union and its pedagogy and the strong ideologization of education (influenced by the scientific world view – Marxism-Leninism) were evident throughout the period. Curriculum documents in this period were filled with propaganda phrases, under the layer of which it is sometimes difficult to find the rational core.

⁹⁹ *Analýza československé ...; Souhrnná zpráva....*

¹⁰⁰ See e.g. F. Emmert, *Sametová revoluce: cesta ke svobodě* (Brno, 2019). Concerning the reasons of the revolution, see I. Možný, *Proč tak snadno...: některé rodinné důvody sametové revoluce: sociologický esej* (Praha, 2022).

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The Educational System in Czechoslovakia in 1948–1989

The aim of this analysis is to present the Czechoslovak educational system under communist totalitarianism, i.e. from 1948–1989. The most important turning points and milestones of that system in the described period are presented, both the ideological changes, and the gradual reform efforts. The shape of the school system was modified repeatedly in Czechoslovakia under the communist regime. The length of mandatory education was changed several times, the system of schools and their names were changed. Throughout the period under review, nationally valid curricula and syllabuses were binding, and these were altered in response to changes in the education laws. A number of expert discussions were held on the shape of Czechoslovak education, however, these did not cross the "boundaries of the times" during this period. Moreover, many of the interventions were carried out primarily for ideological reasons and without regard for pedagogical considerations. The period of the 1950s can be seen as particularly problematic in this respect. The 1960s brought hope, culminating in the so-called Prague Spring of 1968. However, these hopes were violently ended in August 1968 with the Warsaw Pact invasion. The subsequent period of 'normalization' brought a return to a distinctly rigid communism. The influence of the Soviet Union and its pedagogy and the strong ideologization of education (influenced by the scientific worldview of Marxism-Leninism) were evident throughout this period.

KEYWORDS

Czechoslovakia, school system, communism, ideology, historical analysis

System edukacyjny w Czechosłowacji w latach 1948–1989

Celem niniejszej analizy jest przedstawienie czechosłowackiego systemu szkolnictwa w czasach totalitarnego reżimu komunistycznego, tj. w latach 1948–1989. Przedstawiono najważniejsze przekształcenia tego systemu w omawianym okresie – zarówno zmiany

ideologiczne, jak i stopniowe wysiłki reformatorskie. W czasach reżimu komunistycznego kształt szkolnictwa w Czechosłowacji był modyfikowany wielokrotnie. Kilka razy zmieniano długość okresu obowiązkowej edukacji, system szkół oraz ich nazwy. W okresie objętym analizą funkcjonowały ogólnokrajowe programy nauczania i sylabusy, które zmieniano w odpowiedzi na zmiany w przepisach oświatowych. Przeprowadzono wiele dyskusji eksperckich na temat kształtu czechosłowackiego systemu edukacyjnego, jednak nie były one w stanie przekroczyć ograniczeń ówczesnych czasów. Co więcej, wiele zmian przeprowadzono przede wszystkim z powodów ideologicznych i bez uwzględnienia racji pedagogicznych. Szczególnie lata pięćdziesiąte mogą być postrzegane jako problematyczne. Lata sześćdziesiąte przyniosły nadzieję, której kulminacją była tzw. Praska Wiosna 1968 r. Nadzieja ta legła jednak w gruzach w sierpniu tego roku wraz z inwazją wojsk Układu Warszawskiego. Późniejszy okres „normalizacji” przyniósł powrót do surowego komunizmu. Wpływ Związku Sowieckiego i jego pedagogiki oraz silna ideologizacja edukacji (będącej pod wpływem ideologii marksizmu-leninizmu) były widoczne przez cały ten okres.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

Czechosłowacja, system szkolnictwa, komunizm, ideologia, analiza historyczna

MIROSLAV JIREČEK, PH.D. – graduated from the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno (Czech Republic) and completed his doctoral thesis in Pedagogy there. He is currently an assistant professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University. His areas of interest include regional history, didactics of history, history of education and pedagogy, and history education in primary education. E-mail: jirecek@ped.muni.cz

MIROSLAV JIREČEK – absolwent Wydziału Pedagogicznego Uniwersytetu Masaryka w Brnie (Republika Czeska), na którym obronił pracę doktorską z pedagogiki. Obecnie jest adiunktem w Katedrze Historii na Wydziale Pedagogicznym Uniwersytetu Masaryka. Interesuje się historią regionalną, dydaktyką historii, historią edukacji i pedagogiki oraz edukacją historyczną w szkolnictwie podstawowym. E-mail: jirecek@ped.muni.cz