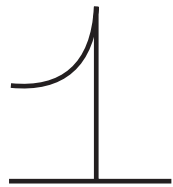




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# Věnování

## *Dedication*

Toto číslo je s úctou věnováno prof. Tomáši Kasperovi, šéfredaktoru časopisu *Historia scholastica*, k jeho životnímu jubileu.

*Redakce časopisu Historia scholastica*

This issue is respectfully dedicated to Prof. Tomáš Kasper, editor-in-chief of *Historia scholastica* Journal, on the occasion of his jubilee.

*The editors of Historia scholastica*

# From Scout Boy to Pioneer. An Example of Political Misuse of the Concept of a Youth Organization of Scout Boys in Slovakia<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract** The Scout Boys, which had the original name Junák in Czechoslovakia, began official activity on our territory in 1914. Their promisingly developing membership base and attractive activity were disrupted by the events of World War II. Even before the coup in 1948, the Communists began massively building their party structures. One of the goals was to build a single and unified youth organization under the control of the Communist Party. Between 1945 and 1949, they gradually “united” all children’s and youth organizations that resumed their activities after World War II. One of them was Junák, which before the war had the largest membership base in Czechoslovakia and a well-developed system of working with children. The goal of our research was to find out how the children’s organization Junák was incor-

porated into the Czechoslovak Youth Union after the communist coup in 1948 and how its gradual transformation into the children’s Pioneer organization. In our research, we used periodical professional literature and periodical press, archival sources in the Slovak National Archives and the archive of the Slovak Youth Institute (IUVENTA) in Bratislava, as well as unpublished memories of Mr. Jozef Míkloš, chairman of the Historical Commission of Slovak Scouting.

**Keywords** scout boys, pioneers, youth organisation, political abuse, communism, Slovakia

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1 The study is supported by the project of Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic VEGA No. 1/0190/24 *Regime Engagement vs. Silent Resistance in Totalitarian Education in Slovakia*.

## Introduction

Uniting children and youth into a single and unified monolithic organization is a typical feature of all totalitarian regimes (cf. Kubat, 1965; Kelly, 2007), be it Italian Fascism, German Nazism or Russian Communism. These are political systems characteristic of the 20th century, which is also referred to as the age of totalitarianism.<sup>2</sup> The main goal of these organizations is to prepare children and young people to become a new, successor generation for life in a country with a specific totalitarian regime. Emphasis is mainly placed on their ideological preparation which is in accordance with the ideology of the given regime. Young people naturally trust adults, they believe that they want to protect them and guarantee their future, therefore, this very trust and inexperience of theirs can be easily abused. A detailed description of childhood and influence of society on children in individual stages of the totalitarian regime in Russia can be found in Catriona Kelly's monumental book *Children's world. Growing up in Russia, 1890–1991* (2007).<sup>3</sup> Childhood, according to Kelly, was a key phenomenon in modernization ambitions of the Soviet Union, which sought to expand formal education, provide comprehensive institutional care, and interventions in family education. There would be nothing wrong with this, if it was not clear abuse of state power to indoctrinate and consolidate the regime. The Soviet model of childhood was a model that was successfully applied, with minor or major deviations, in all countries of the former Eastern Bloc after the World War II.

Recruiting young people in Slovakia for political goals was also the task of the newly emerging organizations focused on working with children and youth, first under the supervision of Hlinka's People's Party

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- 2 See BOREJSZA, Jerzy W., ZIEMER, Klaus & HUŁA, Magdalena (eds.), 2006. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes in Europe: Legacies and Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. New York: Berghahn Books, the Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the German Historical Institute, Warsaw. ISBN 978-15-718-1641-2.
  - 3 Kelly describes childhood in the period that lasted until the Great October Socialist Revolution (1890–1917), from the October Revolution to the period of Stalinism (1917–1935), in the period of Stalinism (1935–1953) and in the post-Stalinist era, ending with the collapse of the Soviet Union (1953–1991).

in the First Slovak Republic during the World War II and later under the supervision of the Communist Party in the restored Czechoslovakia in the post-war period<sup>4</sup>. The declaration of the first Slovak State in 1939 was accompanied with great enthusiasm, as the Slovak nation had an independent state for the first time in history. However, Slovakia was under a significant political influence of the Nazi Germany, and Hlinka's Slovak People's Party became the only ruling party. In education, emphasis was placed on the religious and national aspect, which Štefan Polakovič (1941), the state ideologist, designated as Slovak national socialism. Although the duration of the Slovak state was short, it was a very dynamic period. Education was ideologized very fast and it was misused for political goals, which has been mainly documented by analyses of pedagogical journals, contemporary legislation and archival documents.<sup>5</sup>

After the end of the war, taking into consideration the victorious powers, it was completely clear that the restored Czechoslovakia would focus on the East and its foreign policy orientation would change. The basic features of the post-war regime were contained in the Košice Government Program [orig. Košický vládný program], which was adopted on April 5, 1945 in Košice. Besides defining the domestic political regime as a people's democratic one, the program also explicitly determined the pro-Soviet foreign policy orientation. Also, it reflected adaptation to the post-war growth of left-wing tendencies in society and political influence of the Communist Party. The coup in February 25, 1948 was only a formal act by which Czechoslovakia became part of the Eastern

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4 The First Czechoslovak Republic was established on October 28, 1918. Its first division was caused by Germany's preparations for war and the signing of the Munich Agreement in September 1938. However, during the World War II, there were two separate states: on March 14, 1939, the independent Slovak State was established and two days later, on March 16, 1939, Hitler issued the Decree on the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the occupied Czech territory. In 1945, the Czechoslovak Republic was restored.

5 See publication KUDLÁČOVÁ, Blanka (ed.), 2015. *Pedagogické myslenie a školstvo na Slovensku v rokoch 1939–1945*. Trnava: Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis. ISBN 978-80-8082-842-4.



Bloc in the Soviet sphere of influence controlled by the communists. It was completion of a long-term process, controlled mostly from the Soviet Union, which began during the World War II and continued in the so-called pre-totalitarian phase, between 1945 and 1948. A fundamental step in the creation of the communist regime was the adoption of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic by the Constituent National Assembly on May 9, 1948 in Prague. The Constitution characterized Czechoslovakia as a people's democratic state which, thanks to the victory of the working class, embarked on the path of building socialism.

The research is focused on the development of youth organization Junák (name of the Scout Boys in Czechoslovakia) and its transformation to youth Pioneer organization after the World War II<sup>6</sup>. It is obvious that it represents an example of political instrumentalization of work with children; however, we seek to examine the specific way this process took place in. The aim of the research was to discover in what way the gradual transformation of the children's organization Junák into the children's Pioneer organization, which was part of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth [orig. Československý zväz mládeže; ČZM] (hereinafter CUY) took place and in what way the inclusion of Junák to the CUY occurred. It represents an area of the modern Slovak history that has not been examined yet. Professional literature and press of the given period, archival sources in the Slovak National Archives in Bratislava, the Archives of the Slovak Youth Institute (IUVENTA) in Bratislava, materials from the Scouting Museum in Ružomberok and from the private archives of Jozef Mikloš, the chair of the Historical Committee of Slovak Scouting, were utilized in the research.

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6 For more on education in Slovakia after the World War II and under communism see OLEJNÍK, Milan, 2018. *Implementácia marxisticko-leninskej ideológie vo sfére vzdelávania na Slovensku v kontexte politického vývoja v rokoch 1948–1953*. Prešov: Univerzum. ISBN 978-80-89946-06-8 or KUDLÁČOVÁ, Blanka (ed.), 2019. *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989*. Trnava: Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis. ISBN 978-80-568-0369-1.

## **History of the Junák (in the Czech Lands) and the Slovak Junák (in Slovakia)**

The Junák was a Czech scout organization that was founded on the basis of the Woodcraft Indians movement (founded in 1902 by the American writer, painter and naturalist who promoted the return to nature, Ernest Thompson Seton) and the Boy Scout movement (founded in 1908 by the English General Robert Baden-Powell, as the first British Scout organization). Antonín Benjamín Svojsík (1876–1938), Czech pedagogue and physical education teacher, shaped the development of scouting in the Czech lands and partly also in Slovakia. In 1911, he visited scouts in England “to see scouting with his own eyes” (Nosek, 2002, p. 12). He realized that it is not possible to simply apply the English model of scouting in the Czech environment, so he started to use the name Junák. Šantora (2012) states that Svojsík had the ambition to take only those elements from the Baden-Powell system that were acceptable for Czech conditions and enriched it with national elements. In 1912, he published the book *Základy junáctví* [tr. *The Foundations of Scouting*] and in the summer of the same year, he held the first experimental summer camp in nature in Lipnice (Lenčo, 2016). Following his initiative, Junák – the Czech Scout – was officially founded on June 15, 1914 (Belan, 2015). In 1915, Svojsík started publishing the magazine *Junák*.

In Slovakia, which was part of Hungary at the time, the Hungarian Scout Association was founded in 1912. The first scout troop in Slovakia was founded on May 23, 1913 in Komárno, its founder was Alexander Karle. It was a troop of Hungarian scouts, students of the Benedictine grammar school. In the same year, Hungarian scout troops were established in Rimavská Sobota, Bratislava, Lučenec, Trnava and other towns. Their bases were not as big as in the Czech lands, they were mainly Catholic scout troops. In March 1919, the first Slovak student scout troop was founded at a secondary school (Realschule) in Žilina. It was led by Ján Vančík and Gejza Khade, students of this school. In April 1919, the first Bratislava scouts took a pledge under the leadership of Albert Dutka at Železná studnička in Bratislava. In 1919, another Slovak scout troop was also founded in Prešov, in April 1920 in Svätý

Jur, in 1921 in Košice, in Lučenec, and a little later in Banská Bystrica, Trenčín (Janota, 2015). According to Belan (2015), scouting in Slovakia was officially founded only in the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1920. The centre of Slovak scouting was Žilina, secondary school teacher František Šmilauer was appointed a chief for Slovakia in 1921.

In the interwar period, several scouting organizations were formed, differing in confessional, national or social basis, e.g. Catholic Scouts, Evangelical Scouts, Jewish Scouts, even so-called Spartacus Labour Scouts supported by the communists. The largest and most important unifying organization was *Zváz junákov – skautov a skautiek republiky česko-slovenskej* [tr. the Union of Junáks – Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the Czechoslovak Republic], which had the ambition to unify the scouting organizations that emerged on the territory of Czechoslovakia after the war. However, this plan did not work, and many comparatively large scouting organizations existed side by side, some of which were united in the competing *Federácia československého junáka* [tr. *Federation of the Czechoslovak Junák*]. The promisingly developing membership base and attractive activities of scouting organizations were disrupted by the events of the World War II.

In 1938, based on the regulation of the Slovak autonomous government No. 70/38, all scouting organizations were abolished, except for the Association of Catholic Scouts [orig. Spolok katolíckych skautov]. Only a single organization was allowed – Hlinka's Youth, into which the Catholic Scouts were incorporated and which also took over their property in May 1939 (Janota, 2015). Most scouts refused to collaborate with the regime, and many scout groups carried out intense resistance activities against the Nazis. After the declaration of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Czech Junák was abolished in 1940, too.

After the end of the war in May 1945, Junák resumed its activity with a mass response from the youth. At the end of 1945, it had over 144,000 registered members in the Czech Republic, only around 5,000 in Slovakia (Belan, 2015, p. 51). The organization also gained great prestige due to its participation in domestic and foreign anti-fascist resistance (Gubricová, 2022). On October 2, 1945, a meeting of representatives of Czech and Slovak scouts took place in Prague, where the

delegates agreed to create a joint organization. Its formation was also discussed at the first Slovak Junák Congress in Žilina, between November 10 and 11, 1945. Between February 10 and 11, 1946, the first post-war Czech-Slovak Congress was held, at which the joint organization Czechoslovak Junák was renewed.

The post-war Slovak Junák operated on the pre-war principles. Its activity was well-elaborated, well-considered and varied. Great attention was also paid to the training of leaders (Pavlík et al., 1985). The goal of Junák was to supplement school education with extracurricular activities. It also gained popularity through good marketing and its magazines (*Činovník, Junák, Slovenský junák, Skautka, Junák hlási a Kapitánska pošta*), which quickly expanded its membership base. As a result, several problems occurred, which had to be solved, e.g. lack of clubhouses, campsites and spaces for scouts, and as reported by Knapík et al. (2022), primarily the lack of leaders, which was one of the most fundamental problems for post-war scouting.

### **“Fight for Unity of Youth” in Slovakia after the Second World War and Transformation of Junák to Pioneer Organization**

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (hereinafter CPC) aimed at creating a youth organization since its establishment (1921). However, it succeeded only at the end of the World War II, when a new political regime with a pro-Soviet orientation began to develop in Czechoslovakia. Even before the coup in 1948, the communists started building their party structures massively. One of the goals was to build a unified youth organization that would operate under the auspices of the CPC.

#### *Restoration of Junák vs. Establishment of Unified Youth Unions between 1945 and 1946*

According to Čmolík et al. (1983), the foundations of a unified youth organization in Slovakia were laid at the regional level, directly in towns and villages where young people lived. Already during the Slovak National Uprising (1944), “[...] the insurgent youth in Tisovec, Hnúšťa and Brezno founded the organization Slovak Youth Union [orig. Zväz slovenskej mládeže]. In January 1945, the Carpathian Youth Union was

established in eastern Slovakia” (Ibid, p. 35).<sup>7</sup> Some members of the communist party were trained also in the Soviet Union to work with youth, as the Soviet model served as a model for building a unified organization in Czechoslovakia (Martínek et al., 1982). At the initiative of the regional leadership of the Communist Party of Slovakia (hereinafter CPS), on January 30, 1945, the first youth meeting took place in Košice, at which they decided to establish a unified youth organization, the Slovak Youth Union [orig. Zväz Slovenskej mládeže] (Bartoš et al., 1982). Official support for the forming Slovak Youth Union (hereinafter SYU) was also shown by the leadership of the CPS at its conference held on February 28, 1945 in Košice<sup>8</sup>.

The process of ideological, political and organizational consolidation of youth unity in post-war Czechoslovakia was completed at the beginning of 1946. Between March 21 and 23, 1946, the first congress of the Czech Youth Union [orig. Zväzu českej mládeže] (hereinafter CYU) was held in Prague, and between March 28 and 31, 1946 the first congress of the SYU took place in Baťovany.<sup>9</sup> At the congress

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7 An interesting situation arose during the development of the pioneer movement in Slovakia. In May 1945, the first pioneer units began to be formed at the Carpathian Youth Union. They were intended for Ruthenian children between the ages of 6 and 15. At the end of 1948, they united about 1,500 children. Simultaneously with them, in 1947, pioneer units for Slovak children aged 10 to 14 began to be established in schools. They were oriented towards the activity of the Slovak Youth Union. Paradoxically, their development was interrupted in February 1948. Political events oriented the leadership of the Slovak Youth Union to the integration of Slovak Junák into its own structures and its transformation into a “progressive” children’s organization. Therefore, in the spring of 1948, the Slovak pioneers’ units were integrated into Junák (Čmolík et al., 1983).

8 In a short time, the magazine *Hlas mladých*, which was a platform of the SYU, started to be published in Košice. It was called *Tribúna* from its second issue (Bartoš et al., 1982, p. 288).

9 The town Baťovany was named after Antonín Baťa, a well-known shoe producer, because he founded a big company there. However, Baťa was unacceptable for the socialist regime. The ceremonial renaming of the town of Baťovany to Partizánske took place on March 13, 1949 and was attended by the Chairman of the Slovak National Council Karol Šmidke and Deputy Prime Minister and at the same time Chairman of the CPS Viliam Široký.

in Prague, Junák became a collective member of the CYU, and at the congress in Baťovany, Junák “became a collective member of the SYU”.<sup>10</sup> The prominent communist politician, Gustáv Husák (vice-chairman of the CPS at the time), commented on it as follows: “The organization of the unified youth did not assert itself before the war. [...] However, the foundations were laid and they could not be disrupted. [...] Generally, it was felt that after the liberation, things must be done differently, therefore, the establishment of a solid unified youth organization was already planned during the harsh frontline battles.”<sup>11</sup> At the congress in Baťovany, the entry of the SYU into the World Federation of Democratic Youth was approved and the Presidency of the SYU with the first chairman Ernest Sýkora was elected.<sup>12</sup> The March congresses in 1946 “represented ideological and organizational consolidation of the unity of our youth”<sup>13</sup> and the idea of unity was promoted from the very beginning.

The strong unifying factor in Junák, which was the anti-fascist resistance and its abolition during the World War II, grew weak and new political influences came to the fore, especially the influence of the CPC and its efforts to carry out a communist coup to gain power. This can also be seen in the intention of the CPC, “to continue to impact social organizations in a national and democratic direction from the inside and outside and win over their members for people’s democracy” (Hofbauer, 1966, p. 82). The CUY also played an important role here, demanding that Junák become its subordinate organization, give up educational autonomy, tie to the international scouting movement,

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10 *Počiatky a vznik Jednotnej organizácie mládeže. Prejav G. Husáka na sjazde SSM v Baťovanoch 31. marca 1946 v Baťovanoch.* Fund (hereinafter f.) The Slovak Central Committee of the CYU, Presidium, box No. 1, S/I VII/55, 1946–48, p. 2. Slovak National Archives (hereinafter SNA), Bratislava.

11 Ibid.

12 *Zápisnica z I. celoslovenského pracovno-manifestačného sjazdu Sväzu slovenskej mládeže, ktorý sa konal dňa 28.–31. marca 1946 v Baťovanoch.* Ibid., SNA Bratislava.

13 *Boj za jednotu mládeže v letech 1945–1949. Příspěvek k historii mládežnického hnutí v ČSSR.* A-10 Junák, 1945–48. Archives of the Slovak Youth Institute (IUVENTA) in Bratislava (unprocessed fund).

and abolish religiously oriented units (Šantora, 2012). Member base began to split. After the Slovak Junák and Czech Junák joined the unions and they were promised autonomy, worries about their dissolution were temporarily dispelled. However, it didn't last long. These steps also represented a well-considered preparation for the creation of a unified nationwide organization that was supposed to cover and unite all youth in the Czech lands and Slovakia. Both in the Czech Junák and in the Slovak Junák, we can observe various attempts that introduced unorganic elements into their educational system in the sense of “[...] giving a new progressive content to the forms of Junák education that correspond to the interests of the development of people's democracy”<sup>14</sup>. The effort to popularize the pioneering and unionist Soviet educational system was also evident and it can be identified from the content of the articles published in the magazine *Činovník* during this period. Many of them had a clear propaganda character (Gubricová, 2022) (Picture 1).



Picture 1. The socialist propaganda of activities of pioneers in the USSR in the journal *Činovník*, Vol. 7/1946. Source: Private archive of the author (J.G.).

14 *Tradice PO ČSM (2. část). Předpoklady vzniku PO ČS (květen 1945 – únor 1948)*, p. 4. Ibid. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

The process of unification of youth was also confirmed by the congress of youth in Czechoslovakia that was held between July 4 and July 6, 1946 in Prague. In the presence of representatives of both unions (SYU and CYU), representatives of collective members of unions – Junák, the Slovak Junák and the Union of university students [orig. Zväz vysokoškolského študentstva], and the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement [orig. Revolučné odborové hnutie]<sup>15</sup>, the Headquarters of the Youth of the Czechoslovak Republic [orig. Ústredie mládeže Československej republiky] was established as a joint body of both unions.<sup>16</sup> These steps represented preparation for the creation of a unified nationwide organization that was supposed to cover and unite all youth in the Czech lands and Slovakia.

### *1947, the Year of Building*

The activity of unions in the post-congress year got fully started. Unions worked intensively on expanding their base and completing the goals and tasks that were adopted at the constituent congresses. Young people were involved in the post-war reconstruction of villages, in the building of tracks, roads, schools, factories, especially as part of the two-year economic renewal plan of the republic between 1947 and 1948. In 1947, young people from the SYU “began to build the partisan village of Baláže, which had been burned down by the fascists. This building, called Building of National Gratitude, became, together with the building Lidice – Most – Litvínov (built by CYU), the beginning

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15 The Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (hereafter RTUM) was founded at the first congress in Prague on April 19–22, 1946. It had a similar policy to the CPC. Until 1989, it was the largest social organization in Czechoslovakia. Svatoš (1978, p. 68) explains the participation of the RTUM in the youth congress and its relationship to children and youth as follows: “Czechoslovak trade unions participate in education of the young generation in the spirit of a scientific worldview, socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism. Their participation in the education of the youngest – children, pioneers – cannot be separated from the educational mission of the trade unions among the young generation.”

16 *Prejav G. Husáka na sjazde SSM v Baťovanoch 31. marca 1946 v Baťovanoch*. Ibid. SNA Bratislava.



of the tradition – buildings of the youth in Czechoslovakia” (Pavlík et al., 1985, p. 643). In October 1947, at the initiative of the SYU Presidium, a Slovak-wide conference of volunteers was held in Bratislava, the participants of which accepted the commitment to build a railway track from Hronská Dúbrava to Banská Štiavnica, known as the Track of Youth [orig. Trať mládeže], in the next two years. The activities of the SYU supported the policy of the communist party and were also important in unification of the Slovak youth.

The activities of Junák also developed, but not as successfully as the activities of the unions. However, the “illegal” activity of the unions in Junák developed rather successfully. Both unions used various practices to recruit leading representatives in Junák, thereby contributing to the weakening of its activities. “Progressive officials” were co-opted into the headquarters of Junák,<sup>17</sup> who were supposed to contribute to its internal decay and the introduction of socialist elements. The leading representatives of the Youth Commission of the Central Committee of the CPC were preparing the gradual restriction of Junák’s independence. Its representatives Nečásek and Pošusta suggested to dissolve Junák as a disruptor of youth unity (Šantora, 2012). For this reason, several Junák representatives placed great emphasis on preserving the purity of Junák education: “We recommend that the troops organize representative Junák academies instead of balls (dance parties), which will be a demonstration of our social maturity and a point of culmination of a year’s work...”<sup>18</sup> It is interesting that the Chief of Junák, Rudolf Plajner and the Chief of the Girl Scouts, Vlasta Koseová, who initially called for the purity of the Junák education, started to appeal to Junák members to participate in the two-year renewal plan through various progressive challenges via the magazine *Činovník* (cf. Plajner, 1946, 1947a, Koseová, 1947a). At Plajner’s initiative, every Junák and Girl Scout should have received a builder’s card, which was proof of their efforts in the

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17 *Tradice PO ČSM (2. část). Předpoklady vzniku PO ČS (květen 1945 – únor 1948)*, p. 4. Ibid. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

18 *Obežník č. 2, Prešov, 1. februára 1947*. Ibid., JUNÁK – Východoslovenská oblasť, 1947. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

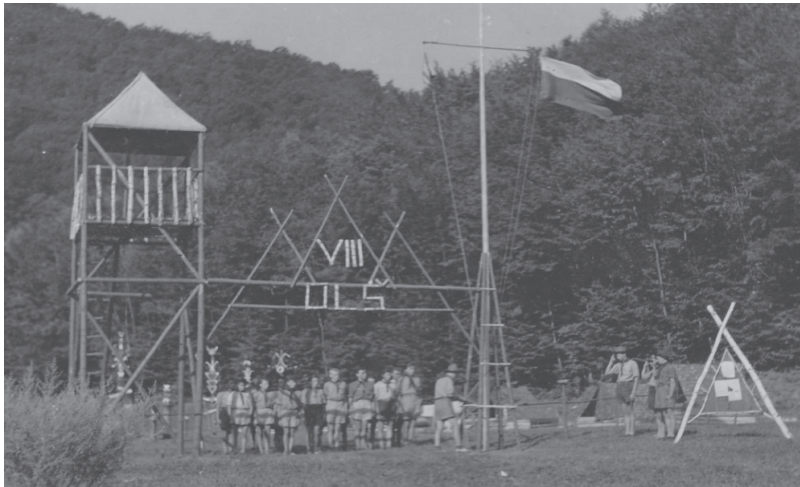
service of the republic (Martinovský, 1947, p. 23). As stated by Janota (2015), the involvement of scouts in the renewal plan and construction of the Track of the Youth represented friendly steps of scouting in order to prevent its liquidation. Progressive officials in Junák tried to include political education in Junák training. This is also confirmed by Koseová, “Scouting, undoubtedly, provides young people with all the prerequisites to grow into good citizens – however, that is not enough today. We need conscious citizens!” (Koseová, 1947b, p. 84).

The situation in Junák was very tense for a long time. On the one hand, it was related to practical problems that the organization faced, on the other hand, it was an internal and external pressure related to the shaping of Junák’s relationship with the unions. “I am attentively following the growing tension and nervousness, both among the workers at the headquarters and in all organizational units. Irritability has internal causes in Junák, but it also has its roots in external political conditions, and both deserve to be clarified and dealt with in a style of Junák” (Plajner, 1947b, p. 129). This caused the need to organize the Second Congress of Junák in Banská Bystrica, between January 31 and February 1, 1948, which was attended by 400 delegates from all over Slovakia. The congress adopted a resolution from which several problems that it addressed can be identified. It is clear that already before February 1948, two directions in the Slovak Junák can be observed: the first direction followed preservation of the traditional Junák<sup>19</sup>, the

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19 “The Assembly elected and entrusted the leadership of its movement to the following experienced and proven scout workers: Honorary mayor: gen. Dr. Mikuláš Ferjenčík, County mayor: col. Ján Stanek, Deputy mayor: Ing. Lojzo Janza, Regional chief: Miroslav Striženek, Tribal chief: Ľudovít Zelenka, Tribal chief: Prof. Lýdia Jurajová, Deputy head: e.g. Mikuláš Vojtovič, Deputy chief: Gabriela Horváthová, Chief’s secretary: František Doležal, Chief’s secretary: Ing. Alžbeta Společníková. Similarly, the scout assembly entrusted its members with the leadership of the Economic Council (Prof. Ctibor Grandtner), the Economic Department (Ľudovít Jankovič, Mária Lulayová), the Educational Department (Dr. Dionýz Chmelo, Prof. E. Smiešková), the Health Department (Dr. Janček), intelligence department (Ing. Igor Janota, Táňa Puškárová). The spiritual council and the organizational committee were not filled.” (*Dokument k priebehu II. Junáckeho snemu*. F. SÚV ČSM, Junák, Box No. 656, 1948. SNA, Bratislava.

second one led to its merging with the SYU<sup>20</sup>. The feeling of threat and confusion can also be seen in the following part of the Resolution: “Participants of the congress of Junák unanimously agree that Junák’s policy must always and under all circumstances be first and foremost a scout’s policy, following the oath, state citizenship policy, following the program of our government, but condemning the transfer of any party interests and doctrines into our movement, because Junák must be strictly, and we emphasize this once again, 100% non-partisan.”<sup>21</sup> The Czech Junák Congress planned for 28–29 February, 1948 in Zlín was no longer held due to the political coup on February 25, 1948.



Picture 2. *Eastern Slovak Regional Forest School in the Svinka River Valley, 1947.*

Source: Private archive of Jozef Mikloš.

20 This is confirmed by the contributions of the guests who spoke during the Assembly on February 1, 1948: Gustáv Slivka for the District National Committee in Banská Bystrica, Col. Tlach for the army, deputy Pavel Styk for CPC, as well as deputy Ernest Sýkora for SYU (Ibid).

21 Ibid.

### **Junák in the Whirlwind of the February “Victory”**

Zdeněk Nejedlý, president of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and a leading representative of the CPC, stated, before the February coup, that he could not imagine Czechoslovak youth without Junák. Right after the communist coup, however, the scouts were a beam in the eye of the new government. So-called action committees<sup>22</sup>, which replaced the duly elected highest and also regional scout bodies, were established. Ernest Sýkora, who had never been a scout, was appointed chief of the Slovak Junák.

Simultaneously with the events of February, the process of proper integration of Junák into the unions also took place. It was a situation that the officials from the unions, as well as the “progressive” members of Junák, were waiting for, and our findings show that they had been planning it and preparing it for a long time. Already on February 25, 1948, the Junák’s action committee issued a “Declaration” in Prague, which expressed support for Gottwald’s government, confirmed Junák’s active participation in the building of the state, supported the fight against the enemies of the People’s Democratic Republic, and called for unity with the Czechoslovak Youth Union.

Similarly, in the Slovak Junák, “on February 26, 1948, as a result of the victory of the progressive forces in the government, the National Front established a three-member Central Action Committee of Junák (hereinafter referred to as CACJ), consisting of the progressive members (L. Kysel, L. Jurajová, V. Černušák), who took over the leadership of Junák in Slovakia. In its resolution, announced to all the members of Junák, the CACJ declared that it supports the program of the government of Klement Gottwald and that it will direct the education of the youth organized in Junák in the spirit of progressive, socialist development of our state. The CACJ immediately established a connection with

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22 The Action Committees of the National Front were repressive bodies without a legal basis, which, after the communist coup in February 1948, carried out politically motivated purges in political parties, social organizations, public administration, state and economic apparatus and cultural institutions (Action Committees of the National Front. *Encyclopaedia Beliana* [online]).

the Presidency of the SYU and prepared Junák's entry into the unified youth organization, in which Junák took over the education of youth up to the age of 15."<sup>23</sup> Already on February 27, 1948, the Presidency of the Central Action Committee of the National Front decided that the Czechoslovak Union of Youth [orig. Československý zväz mládeže] (hereinafter CUY) would become a single and unified organization of all youth. It included Junák in the CUY, declaring it to be the only children's organization. It was entrusted with management, and it was also supposed to be a tool for mass and socialist-oriented extra-curricular education of children (Hofbauer, 1966). A similar measure was also implemented in Slovakia based on the resolution of the Central Action Committee of the Slovak National Front of February 29, 1948, making the SYU the only and exclusive youth organization in Slovakia. At the same time, in May 1948, a committee of CUY representatives and educators was created at the Central Committee of the CPC, which prepared documents for establishment of the Pioneer Organization according to the Soviet model. However, it was not clear whether Junák would be used for this purpose or a completely new organization would be founded (cf. Knapík, 2018).

On March 1, 1948, a special meeting of the broader Central Committee of the SYU and representatives of the Action Committee of Junák (hereinafter referred to as AC of Junák) took place in the Youth Club in Bratislava. The chairman of the AC of Junák, Kysel, announced that "according to the decision of the AC of Junák and after the agreement with the Czech Junák, Junák ceases to be a collective member of the SYU, and becomes its inseparable organic part"<sup>24</sup>. At the same time, he announced that, in cooperation with representatives of the SYU, the program would be revised and it would be harmonized with the political changes that had occurred, which means that pioneer and scout

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23 JURAJOVÁ, L. & ELIAŠOVÁ, V., 1948 (?). *Zpráva o vykonanej činnosti a situačná zpráva Junáka*. Ibid. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

24 *Zápisnica zapísaná na mimoriadnom zasadnutí ÚV SSM, ktoré sa konalo dňa 1. marca 1948 v Klube mládeže v Bratislave*. F. SÚV ČSM, Predsedníctvo, Box No. 1, S/I VII/55, 1945–48. SNA, Bratislava.

education will be united; and those who do not have a positive attitude to People's Democratic Czechoslovakia and the Košice Government Program will be excluded from the leadership. At the meeting of the SYU Presidency, held on March 9, 1948 in Bratislava, representatives of AC Junák (Kysel, Jurajová, Pajenský, Bukva) and representatives of the SYU Presidency (Lacek, Nemeč, Falčan and Rázus) were given the task to discuss the issue of Junák's inclusion in the SYU and prepare a proposal for organizational guidelines for Junák until March 10, 1948.<sup>25</sup> Already in the April issue of *Činovník*, B. Jedličková (1948) presented *the Principles of the inclusion of Junák in SYU*.

Political courses for Junák's officials began to be held soon. The first one took place between March 24 and 26, 1948 in Jinošov in Moravia. "The purpose of the course was to explain to Junák's officials political situation, mission of Junák in a unified organization and to give directives for further cooperation. A survey was carried out, which investigated the reflection of political events in the thinking of the present Junák's officials for the needs of Junák's future cadre policy."<sup>26</sup> Further courses took place in Dolní Bečva and Rajnochovice. The courses were completed by 109 attendees in total.<sup>27</sup>

On April 3–4, 1948, a national conference of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth took place in Prague, at which the following tasks were outlined: purge off the officials who are not progressive, reorganization of Junák in terms of the new political regime, and education of a new generation of boys and girls of the age of 5 to 15 years according to the principles of socialism. As a follow-up to this national conference, the National Working Conference of the SYU was held on May 22–23, 1948 in Bratislava, at which working guidelines for the further process of unification of Junák were approved. The goal was to turn "Junák to a powerful children's organization of the SYU, which would unite 100,000 boys

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25 *Zápisnica zo zasadnutia Predsedníctva ÚSSM, ktoré sa konalo dňa 9. marca 1948 v Bratislave*. F. SÚV ČSM, Predsedníctvo, Box No. 1, S/1 VII/55, 1945–48. SNA, Bratislava.

26 JURAJOVÁ, L. & ELIAŠOVÁ, V., 1948 (?). *Zpráva o vykonanej činnosti a situačná zpráva Junáka*. Ibid. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

27 Junák, 1949 (?). Scout Museum in Ružomberok (unprocessed fund).

and girls under the age of 15 in a short time”<sup>28</sup>. In accordance with the aforementioned directives, the Act of Junák was also amended, which marked the culmination of the process of its liquidation. This was also reflected in a significant drop in Junák members.<sup>29</sup> The conference also called for the establishment of so-called Junák’s school units, which were based on the basic principles of the Soviet pioneer. Their activity was connected with the school environment. As reported by Knapík et al. (2022), it was a new element in the Czech scouting movement, which indicated a deeper break with its previous principles. Junák’s school units represented “a hybrid between Junák, student self-government and Pioneer” (Ibid, p. 27). Since scouting was an extracurricular movement, this initiative can be seen as an effort to utilize the scouting membership base and the system of working with children, since the CUY did not have this area resolved. Scout units established at schools became the base for the establishment of pioneer units and later they were transformed to units of the unified children’s Pioneer organization of the CUY (cf. Knapík, 2018).

After the integration of Junák into the union structures, Junák began to complete the first tasks aimed at building a children’s pioneer organization. “Junák’s task since the merger conference was: to capture local units, to continue the trial establishment of pioneer units at schools, to re-evaluate previous experiences with them, to prepare prerequisites for the mass growth of the children’s organization.”<sup>30</sup> Junák was of great importance in the process of unification of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth. “Junák was shown great trust by being entrusted, as the only children’s organization, with the education of the youngest in CUY” (Vančurová, 1948, p. 39).

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28 *Pokyny č. 6. Celonárodní konference SSM 22.–23. mája 1948 v Bratislave. Pracovné smernice pre Junáka.* Ibid. Ústredný akčný výbor Junáka, Bratislava, 12. jún 1948. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

29 While in 1945, Junák had more than 200,000 members, in 1947 there were about 180,000 members (Šantora, 2012). In 1948, it had only 57,000 members (Knapík, 2018), and in April 1949 there were only 30,000 members in the Czech Republic and 7,000 in Slovakia (Šantora, 2012).

30 Junák, 1949 (?). Scout Museum in Ružomberok (unprocessed fund).

*Junák at the Service of Building Children's Pioneer Organization of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth*

Building a pioneer organization in Czechoslovakia and clarifying its conception was accelerated by a conference of workers of pioneer organizations from several European countries, which was organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth and which took place on August 2–4, 1948 in Budapest<sup>31</sup>. At the conference, “the reactionary nature of scout education was sharply criticized, and this conference gave impulse to preparations for the establishment of a pioneer-type children's organization”.<sup>32</sup> Based on the resolution of the conference, the school units of Junák were supposed to form the basis of its new structure, however, the district, regional and central leadership was supposed to be independent of the existing bodies of Junák (cf. Knapík, 2018, pp. 332–333). At the beginning of September 1948, the Central Committee of the CPC approved the concept of the creation of pioneer units of Junák (hereinafter PUJ), which were created by renaming Junák's school units. However, it was still not clear how this process should be carried out in practice. According to the above-mentioned authors, this is also documented by the discussion at the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPC on December 23, 1948. Even though the participants were aware of the fact that Junák is already relatively corrupt and has unreliable leaders, they acknowledged that it still represents attractive forms of working with children. For this reason, it needs to be used and the new children's organization needs to be built gradually. Václav Kopecký expressed it clearly, “if we want to have a political children's organization, then Junák represents the most consolidated organization. Pioneer units would only be new units, not a new organization. [...] Junák has not yet been a political youth organization. The pioneer units would cultivate embryos of communists for us” (cited by Knapík,

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31 *Tradice PO ČSM (2. část). Předpoklady vzniku PO ČSM (květen 1945 – únor 1948)*, p. 3. Ibid. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.

32 JURAJOVÁ, L. & ELIAŠOVÁ, V., 1948 (?). *Zpráva o vykonanej činnosti a situačná zpráva Junáka*. Ibid. Archives of IUVENTA, Bratislava.



2018, p. 335). And Rudolf Slánský<sup>33</sup> concluded by saying, “we are taking Junák, we will give it a new position and we will have to take it into our hands” (ibid, p. 336). This also stopped efforts of quick abolishment of Junák. Alongside them, in the fall of 1948, the so-called experimental pioneer units that no longer had any ties to Junák were established. They were inspired by the Soviet pioneer movement. However, these experimental pioneer units did not become the basis for the creation of the pioneer movement. On the contrary, in the spring of 1949, they were incorporated into the structures of the PUJ, which, according to Knapík et al. (2022), was perceived as degradation among their founders. The process of building a children’s organization was complicated and ambiguous even within the KSČ party itself.

According to Hofbauer (1966, p. 113), this path to clarification “was neither easy nor straightforward... It began immediately after the events of February and was completed by the unification congress of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth in April 1949” (precisely April 23 and April 24 in Prague). This is also confirmed by Z. Hejzlar’s<sup>34</sup> speech as follows: “[...] The Czechoslovak Union of Youth manages the work of the children’s organization Junák, whose task is to educate children up to the age of 15 and prepare them for membership in the Czechoslovak Union of Youth.”<sup>35</sup> A single organization, the Czechoslovak Union of Youth was created from the united organizations CYU and SYU during the unification congress under the supervision of the Communist

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33 Rudolf Slánský (1901–1952) was a Czechoslovak communist politician, long-time member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and its general secretary in the years 1945–1951. In 1952, he was convicted and executed in a fabricated trial (the Slánský trial).

34 Zdeněk Hejzlar (1921–1993) was a Czechoslovak communist politician, member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and a post-February member of the National Assembly of the Czechoslovakia. In the years 1946–1952 he was the chairman of the Czech Union of Youth. In the same year, as part of the purges in the CPC, he was deprived of all functions, he was rehabilitated in the 1960s. After 1969 he emigrated to Sweden.

35 HEJZLAR, R. *Prejav na zlučovacej konferencii*. Praha, April 23, 1949, p. 5. F. SÚV ČSM, Predsedníctvo, Box No. 1, S/I VII/55, r. 1946–48. SNA, Bratislava.

Party of Czechoslovakia. During the socialist period, the Czechoslovak Union of Youth was the only organization to develop organized activities for children and youth in the field of non-formal education. The Slovak Union of Youth [orig. Slovenský zväz mládeže] was established at the congress, too. Pavlík (1985) considers the date of the conference to be the beginning of the Pioneer Organization of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth. However, Belan (2015) considers June 10, 1950 to be the founding date of the pioneer organization, when the organization rules were adopted. The term “Pioneer Units of Junák” was abolished a year later, at the 1st Congress of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth in June 1950.



Picture 3. The Slovak Congress of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth (May 25–27, 1951) is greeted by the best pioneers from Slovakia. Source: IUVENTA archive, Bratislava.

The Budapest conference confirmed the end of Junák in Czechoslovakia. Criticism of the bourgeois understanding of scouting escalated, and at the same time, mistrust to Junák’s officials began to grow.

Gradually, they either left their work in Junák, or were excluded from it (Belan, 2015). Junák was removed from the register of associations of the National Front by a decree of the Ministry of the Interior from October 12, 1950, and on January 1, 1951, it was officially dissolved by the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth. Scouting was considered the enemy of youth. In the 1950s, several fabricated trials with Junák's officials took place in Czechoslovakia, including the chief of the Czech Junák, Rudolf Plajner, and the chief of the Slovak Junák, Miroslav Stržínek.<sup>36</sup> They were accused of anti-state activity, treason and espionage. Many former members of Junák emigrated. Of those who remained, some joined the anti-communist resistance, which also meant that they were persecuted by the communist regime and considered its enemies. Scouting went underground, from which it emerged only during the Prague Spring in 1968, when Alexander Dubček brought about significant political changes and conditions for the restoration of scouting in Czechoslovakia.

## Conclusion

Communist and political organizations – the Pioneer organization and the Youth Union – played an important role in lives of children and the youth in the period of socialism in Czechoslovakia. It may be stated that they influenced their professional as well as personal life significantly. Membership and activity in the pioneer organization and later, in the youth union represented a natural part of school attendance (Moree, 2008). Admission to the organizations was compulsory; pioneer organization was joined in the third year of primary school and the youth union was joined in the first year of secondary school. Their goal was to influence young people from their childhood, use their trust in ideals and prepare them for building a socialist society. “Not only did the Soviet and other socialist constructions of childhood become spaces for putting revolutionary visions into practice,

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36 Karel Skála, Dagmar Skálová, Karel Průcha, Jiří Hejna, Vladivoj Tomek, Bedřiška Synková, Anna Machová Švecová and others were among the other scouts with whom trials were held after 1948 (Šantora, 2012).

but children themselves were imaged as rational, independent, and powerful agents of building a socialist future” (Piattoeva et al., 2018, p. 2). According to Kubat (1965), socialization into the socialist reality was strongly ritualized by these two organizations.<sup>37</sup> Many of them gradually came to believe that only communism would guarantee a happy future. However, it needs to be observed that in totalitarian regimes, “education is an instrument of political control, a way of supplying the new state with the technically and politically literate subject” (Kelly, 2007, p. 93). For this reason, totalitarian regimes and their representatives pay a lot of attention to education. As presented in the paper, non-formal education is just as important as formal education. Totalitarian regimes want to have control over children and youth not only during their classes, but also outside of the school time, and even strive to influence their families through them.

The first years of the 21st century prove that “we can consider the epoch of classic ‘totalitarianisms’ to be past, but not completely closed... The three totalitarianisms remain our closest historical references point, not only for Europe” (Borejsza, 2006, p. 8). We believe that this paper will help readers to uncover the secret corners of a totalitarian regime, which have been little explored so far and will enable them to understand its insidiousness and danger not only in its time, but also at present. Because, as stated by Katuninec (2009, p. 14), “knowledge of totalitarian ideologies and regimes is above all a warning against the possibility of a recurrence of the rise of arrogance of unlimited power and it makes us think not only about their criminality and recognize their forms and differences, but also observe historical circumstances, atmosphere and deformations that enabled the rise of government criminality of unprecedented proportions”.

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37 See SILOVA, Iveta, PIATTOEVA, Nelli & MILLEI, Zsuzsa (eds.), 2018. *Childhood and Schooling in (Post)Socialist Societies: Memories of Everyday Life*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-3-319-62790-8.

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