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Obsah

Contents

- Úvodník** 7 — Tomáš Kasper & Markéta Pánková
Editorial
- Studie** 11 Improving Children's Health. Hygiene, Medicine and
Studies Pedagogy in the Italian School-medical Service
and the Case of Milan (1950–1970)
— Simonetta Polenghi
- 33 Schule und Unterricht unter den Bedingungen
des Strafvollzugs im 19. Jahrhundert am Beispiel
des Nürnberger Zellengefängnisses
*School and Lessons under the Conditions of the Penal System
in 19th Century on Example of the Nuremberg Cell Prison*
— Daniel Oelbauer
- 53 The Children in Need in Postwar Macedonia (1944–1950)
— Suzana Miovska-Spaseva
- 81 “Every City Dweller is, if not Ill, at Least in Need
of Recovery.” The *Schullandheim* (Rural School Hostel)
in the Context of Crisis and Reform after the First
World War
— Esther Berner
- 107 Education and Vulnerability. On the Historiographical
Analysis of the German Educational Discourse
on Punishment in the “Short” 19th Century
— Carsten Heinze
- 131 Deutungskämpfe um das Schulfach Wirtschaft –
Eine historische Diskursanalyse zur Pädagogisierung
gesellschaftlicher Problemlagen
*Conflicts of Meaning within the Implementation Period of a New
School Subject Economics – a Historical Discourse Analysis
of the Pedagogization of Social Problems*
— Maximilian Husny

**Studie
Studies**

- 153 “What We Can Do.” New Year’s Pioneer Revue at Prague Castle and the New Image of Socialist Childhood
— Jiří Knapík
- 181 Preparation of the Future Elites of the Communist Party in the Period of Communism in Slovakia
— Blanka Kudláčková
- 203 Sovietization in Poland and its Impact on Education and Pedagogy
— Janina Kostkiewicz
- 227 Latinčina ako predmet diskusie v rámci reformy strednej školy v 1. ČSR. Význam klasického vzdelania
Latin as a Subject of Discussion within the Reform of Secondary Schools in the First Czechoslovak Republic. The Importance of Classical Education
— Annamária Adamčíková
- 263 Škola – služba systému, státu či bezpečí žáka. Vývoj školní edukace v bezpečnostní problematice
School – Service to the System, State or Safety of the Pupil. Development of School Education in the Field of Safety Issues
— Miroslava Kovaříková
- 291 Vzdělávání jako podnikání: Role soukromých škol v procesu institucionalizace komerčního školství v Čechách do roku 1918
Education as a Business: the Role of Private Schools in the Institutionalisation of Commercial Education in Bohemia up to 1918
— Petr Kadlec
- Varia**
- 315 The State as the Owner of Education: Totalitarian Regimes and Education in Europe in the Second Half of the 20th Century. An International Conference, 12–13 October 2023, Trnava, Slovakia
— Simonetta Polenghi

Věnování

Dedication

Toto číslo je s úctou věnováno PhDr. Markétě Pánkové, zástupkyni šéfredaktora časopisu *Historia scholastica* a bývalé ředitelce Národního pedagogického muzea a knihovny J. A. Komenského, k jejímu životnímu jubileu.

Redakce časopisu Historia scholastica

This issue is respectfully dedicated to PhDr. Markéta Pánková, Deputy editor of *Historia scholastica* Journal and former director of the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius, on the occasion of her jubilee.

The editors of Historia scholastica

The State as the Owner of Education: Totalitarian Regimes and Education in Europe in the Second Half of the 20th Century.



An International Conference, 12–13 October 2023, Trnava, Slovakia

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The International Conference “The State as the Owner of Education” took place on 12–13 October 2023 in Trnava, Slovakia. Organised by team of researchers lead by Blanka Kudláčová from the Faculty of Education at Trnava University, it wel-

comed 23 scholars from 12 European countries. The aim of the conference was to analyse the involvement of totalitarian regimes in Europe in the field of education during the second half of the 20th century. The conference created a space to examine the issues in a pan-European perspective and bridged existing analyses that focused either on the countries of the former Eastern bloc with left-wing regimes or on the countries of Western Europe with right-wing regimes. Countries from the former Eastern European bloc (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia), were examined alongside Greece, Spain and Portugal. The papers presented dwelt on school legislation, youth organisations, the role of the Church, ideological doctrines, propaganda and the function of pedagogy. From a methodological point of view, different sources were used: aside from archival files,

pedagogical journals, the pedagogical press and textbooks were cited, while oral sources also proved an important means of reconstructing daily life during the era of totalitarian regimes.

A key point, shared by many scholars, was the aim of giving voice to the victims of the Soviet regime, shedding light on the life of people involved in resistance against it. Remembering the victims and the dissidents is a moral obligation inherent in historical research. In this respect, a new book with great value is *Two sides of the same coin. Examples of free and unfree education in Slovakia during the period of Socialism* (Blanka Kudláčová ed., Peter Lang – VEDA, Berlin, Bratislava 2023) which was presented during the conference. Two points highlighted both in this book and in the conference were the different kinds of dissent (e.g. religious, civic or artistic) and the memories of people who lived a double life, keeping their freedom, their religion and their thoughts. This was particularly painful for children, who grew up with a double morality, pretending, for example, not to be believers and hiding their faith when at school. An important role in maintaining a private faith was played by grandmothers, as Irena Stonkuvienė demonstrated in Lithuania. The Communist regime's atheist campaign was both very strong and highly active (e.g. posters showing the first astronaut also featured the statement "he did not find God in the sky"). 1940 saw more than 1000 teachers exiled in Lithuania as schools were sovietised. Some teachers used public shaming, blackmail, and psychological and physical violence towards children from religious families who refused to join the Pioneers.

Viewing the Eastern bloc as a typical socialist regime, the papers revealed the internal differences between various countries according to political changes, even if all sat within a common framework. The ideological beliefs were provided by the central governments in accordance with the USSR's Soviet guidelines. Blanka Kudláčová researched the college of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Prague and then its Faculty in Bratislava (1973) and its function in Slovakia in training party elites who would loyally follow Marxist-Leninist theory. Her paper highlighted the rigour of these Faculties, which provided

a well-organised, selective and comprehensive system of teaching, including free time. Considering other academic institutions, Tomáš Kasper and Dana Kasperová showed how science was planned, managed and controlled by the state. Every university student had to take a compulsory exam on Marxism-Leninism, but the ideology was not always “inner felt”: without necessarily leading a double life, it was also possible to have a merely formal adherence to the direction of the central Party. The Czech educational system was modelled on the USSR’s, with Marxism-Leninism replacing other pedagogical theories, and USSR books translated and imposed. Czech pedagogical science went through different periods which are analysed by the authors (Stalinism from 1948–1953; a careful “thawing” from 1953–1965; and socio-political liberation before the 1968 Prague Spring from 1965–1968).

Following World War II, Hungary also experienced different political phases that influenced the science of education (1945–48, 1948–56, 1956–72, and 1972–85). Lajos Somogyvári, Imre Garai, Zoltán András Szabó and András Németh, using already well-established research works, managed to illustrate how the Socialist age was not homogeneous in Hungary even within the ideological framework of Marxism-Leninism, being subject to the changing aims and tendencies of the leading political actors. Edvard Protner, too, demonstrated the swings of Socialism in Slovenia and the changes in pedagogical ideas within Socialist theories. Pre-war left-oriented educationalists were ignored or persecuted by post-war Slovenian communists. Both in Hungary and Slovenia the pedagogical world was more fragmented than one might think.

Similarly, the end of Stalinism and the economic crisis led to stronger support for technical education in Czech schools and universities in the 1960s. The Prague Spring, as Kasper and Kasperová demonstrated, gave impetus to a humanisation of schooling but also to polytechnic education. In the so-called Socialism with a human face there was an opening towards non-Marxist pedagogies, learning machines, audiovisual teaching, and programmed learning. Henning Schluß provided new sources for future teachers on video-recording lessons on the construction of the Berlin Wall in East Germany

(videotapes, photos, and personal memories). Polytechnic education with a production-oriented approach was introduced in Bulgaria in 1952, with the law that instituted 12 years of schooling for all pupils. Mariyana I. Ilieva and Alexander H. Hristov reconstructed the post-war Bulgarian totalitarian education, dividing it into the periods of 1944–48, 1948–59 and 1959–83. The Catholic religion was prohibited, textbooks were modelled on the Soviet ones, and schools and teachers had no freedom. In Bosnia and Herzegovina too, Soviet authors were translated and imposed. Snježana Šušnjara reconstructed school life during the totalitarian period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the campaign for adult literacy (in 1945, 72% of adults were illiterate) and the use of emotions in teaching (e.g. through the use of movies about WW II). Children's free time was controlled by the party, with TV, radio, and magazines as well as the Pioneers all affected.

Another common trait that emerged was that since Marxism-Leninism provided the educational aims, it replaced pedagogical theories. Education could simply provide the means, so that pedagogy was not considered a science, but a practice (in Lithuania the department of education was closed).

In Southern European countries, totalitarian Fascist regimes were to be found in Spain, Portugal and Greece. Antonio Francisco Canales described the Copernican turn of Franco's policy in the 1960s. The national Catholicism had produced a golden age for Catholic schools in Spain, with schools being ideologised and teachers deprofessionalised. But at the end of the 1950s, the regime began to support state schools. The reason behind this dramatic change was that the economic crisis experienced by the state obliged the regime to ask for international help and to open the market. External forces, such as the OECD, compelled Franco to change and modernise the school system, in order to receive economic support. Therefore, efficiency, technocracy and functional theories replaced the regime's religious legitimisation.

Luis Grosso Correia reconstructed the school system in the years of "Estado Novo" (1945–74), where the Catholic church played an important role, without being as strong as in Spain. In Portugal, too, modernisation took place in the 1960s with an expansion of the educational

system favoured by the OECD, and here, too, economic expansion required technical education. In 1970–74 a “democratization of education” under the totalitarian regime was reached, also ending the segmentation of post- elementary schools.

Dimitris Foteinos and Panagiotis Kimourtzis discussed the Greek military regime (1967–1974) and looked for totalitarian aspects in Greek education that may remain at the present time.

During the conference, the exhibition “Victims of the Communist Regime in Slovakia”, curated by the Nation’s Memory Institute in Bratislava, was opened. Although any comparison between Eastern Socialist countries and Southern Fascist states after WW II has to be conducted carefully, and despite the many differences (e.g. the very different role played by religion – being oppressed in the socialist countries and allied with leaders of totalitarian regimes in fascist countries), there are some common traits in pervasive totalitarian regimes that emerge in educational policy (modernisation, technological and polytechnic education, youth organisations, and political resistance). One of the great merits of this conference lies in bringing together leading scholars from various countries with formerly totalitarian regimes, providing a new and fresh in-depth analysis of educational systems under totalitarian regimes in the second half of the 20th century, but also giving back a voice to those teachers, children, educationalists and priests who resisted and were forced into silence by a totalitarian state.