



His
toria
scholas
tica

2024
10

Mezinárodní časopis
pro dějiny výchovy a vzdělání

International Review
for History of Education

Národní pedagogické muzeum
a knihovna J. A. Komenského

Technická univerzita
v Liberci

Praha 2024

Historia scholastica

Číslo 2, prosinec 2024, ročník 10

Number 2, December 2024, Volume 10

Vedoucí redaktor *Editor-in-chief*

prof. PhDr. Tomáš Kasper, Ph.D. (tomas.kasper@tul.cz)

Zástupkyně vedoucího redaktora *Deputy Editor*

PhDr. Markéta Pánková (pankova@npmk.cz)

Redakční rada *Editorial Board*

prof. PhDr. Martin Holý, Ph.D. (Historický ústav Akademie věd ČR)
doc. PhDr. Dana Kasperová, Ph.D. (Technická univerzita v Liberci)
prof. PhDr. Jiří Knapík, Ph.D. (Slezská univerzita v Opavě)
prof. PhDr. Milena Lenderová, CSc. (Univerzita Pardubice)
prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc. (Univerzita Pardubice)
doc. Mgr. Jaroslav Šebek, Ph.D. (Univerzita Karlova v Praze a Akademie věd ČR)
doc. PhDr. Růžena Váňová, CSc. (Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy v Praze)
Mgr. Magdaléna Šustová (Muzeum hlavního města Prahy)
prof. Dr. Marta Brunelli, Ph.D. (Università di Macerata)
prof. Dr. Antonella Cagnolati (Università di Foggia)
prof. Dr. Marcelo Caruso (Humboldt Universität Berlin)
prof. Dr. Lucien Criblez (Universität Zürich)
prof. Andreas Fritsch (Deutsche Comenius Gesellschaft)
prof. Dr. Gerald Grimm (Universität Klagenfurt)
prof. Dr. Andreas Hoffmann-Ocon (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich)
prof. PhDr. Blanka Kudláčková, Ph.D. (Trnavská univerzita v Trnavě)
prof. Dr. Eva Matthes (Universität Augsburg)
prof. Dr. András Németh (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Budapest)
prof. Dr. Jürgen Oelkers (Emeritus Professor Universität Zürich)
prof. PhDr. Jaroslav Pánek, DrSc., dr.h.c. (Historický ústav Akademie věd ČR)
prof. Dr. Simonetta Polenghi, Ph.D. (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Milano)
prof. Dr. Edvard Protner (Univerza v Mariboru)
prof. Dr. Dr.h.c. Ehrenhard Skiera (Univ. Prof. a.D. Europa-Universität Flensburg)

Výkonná redaktorka *Executive Editor*

Mgr. Lucie Murár (murar@npmk.cz)

Vydavatelé *Publishers*

Národní pedagogické muzeum a knihovna J. A. Komenského
Valdštejnská 20, 118 00 Praha 1, Česká republika, IČ 61387169, www.npmk.cz
Technická univerzita v Liberci, Fakulta přírodovědně-humanitní a pedagogická
Studentská 1402/2, 461 17 Liberec 1, Česká republika, IČ 46747885, www.tul.cz

Obálka a grafická úprava *Cover and Graphic Design*

Pavel Průša

Sazba *Type Setting*

Mgr. Lucie Murár

Tisk *Printed by*

Tiskárna PROTISK, s. r. o., Rudolfovska 617, 370 01 České Budějovice, Česká republika

Časopis *Historia scholastica* vychází 2× ročně. *Historia scholastica is published twice a year.*

Indexováno v *Indexed in*

SCOPUS, ERIH+, DOAJ, EBSCO, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory

ISSN 1804-4913 (print), ISSN 2336-680X (online)

Číslo registrace MK ČR E 22258

Obsah

Contents

Úvodník	7	— Tomáš Kasper & Markéta Pánková
Editorial		
Studie	11	Improving Children's Health. Hygiene, Medicine and Pedagogy in the Italian School-medical Service and the Case of Milan (1950–1970) — Simonetta Polenghi
Studies	33	Schule und Unterricht unter den Bedingungen des Strafvollzugs im 19. Jahrhundert am Beispiel des Nürnberger Zellengefängnisses <i>School and Lessons under the Conditions of the Penal System in 19th Century on Example of the Nuremberg Cell Prison</i> — 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 <i>Schullandheim</i> (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 <i>Conflicts of Meaning within the Implementation Period of a New School Subject Economics – a Historical Discourse Analysis of the Pedagogization of Social Problems</i> — 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

“What We Can Do.” New Year’s Pioneer Revue at Prague Castle and the New Image of Socialist Childhood

Jiří Knapík^a

^a Silesian University in Opava, Faculty of Philosophy and Science, Department of Historical Sciences, Czech Republic
jiri.knapik@fpf.slu.cz

Received 28 May 2024

Accepted 5 August 2024

Available online 31 December 2024

DOI 10.15240/tul/006/2024-2-007

Abstract This study examines a pioneer revue, which was broadcast live from Prague Castle by Czechoslovak Television on 1st January 1965. By reconstructing the programme, the study aims to shed light on the circumstances surrounding the creation of the revue, examining both the critical reflection on the pioneer movement at the time and the formulation of a new image of socialist childhood influenced by changes in the post-Stalin Soviet Union – two general aspects previously explored in the literature. Utilizing cultural historical research methods, the study combines

media research and the cultural-political elements of the children’s movement within the socialist state. It investigates contemporary attitudes towards some of the values associated with childhood and the image of the ideal pioneer (e.g. children’s public service activities, engagement, physical fitness, and relationship with authority), linking them to efforts to reform the pioneer movement in the second half of the 1960s.

Keywords childhood, pioneers, celebrations, propaganda, Pioneer Organization of the Czechoslovak Youth Union (PO ČSM), television, pioneer revue, variety show, Antonín Novotný

Six decades ago, a specific programme was a staple of Czechoslovak Television’s New Year’s programme – a live broadcast of the Pioneer Revue from the Spanish Hall at Prague Castle, airing right after the President’s New Year’s speech. In the second half of the 1960s, this two-hour cultural show featured children’s groups, hundreds of pioneers and top communist officials, highlighting the importance the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) placed on the Pioneer Organization of the Czechoslovak Youth Union (PO ČSM), and not only that. At that

time, as membership in the pioneer organization reached historic highs with nearly every schoolchild being a pioneer or a spark, affiliation to the PO ČSM lost its exclusivity, and being a pioneer became synonymous with “socialist childhood”.¹ This fundamental shift towards a dual understanding of childhood inconspicuously elevated the New Year’s programme of “pioneers for pioneers”, which was purposefully broadcast on television from 1965, into a highly political event.

The main programme at Prague Castle during that era included a pioneer revue called “What We Can Do” (Co my dokážem). This show served as a dramaturgical synthesis of the media portrayal of socialist childhood, incorporating all established symbols and reflecting some of the current priorities of the pioneer movement. The programme’s exclusive airtime invites exploration into the circumstances surrounding the creation of the pioneer revue. The present study aims not only to reconstruct the revue’s form but also to provide insight into why this specific dramaturgical form was adopted by comparing the few surviving scripts from the New Year’s celebrations at Prague Castle. By understanding the creators’ intentions, we can situate this forgotten pioneer cultural programme within a broader context of the mediatization and political instrumentalization of childhood. Additionally, we can place it in the context of celebrations and propaganda templates in general. These practices have historically served to legitimize the power of various totalitarian regimes, which have become highly skilled at utilizing mass media for this purpose (cf. e.g. Taylor, 1998, Reichel, 1991, on the instrumentalization of May Day celebrations, see Somogyvári, 2022).

The relationship between children and the media is a significant aspect of historical research on the young generation, although it has not been extensively studied in the context of television. In the Soviet bloc countries, initial discussions in the early 1950s emphasised that

1 On the development of the pioneer movement in Czechoslovakia, including a summary of research to date, see Knapík et al., 2022. The more general topic of childhood in socialist Czechoslovakia has been addressed by the same research team in Knapík & Franc et al., 2018. On the concept of socialist childhood in a broader context, see e.g. Andresen, 2006, Bühler-Niederberger, 2020.

television, as a new and attractive medium, should not distract children from their school duties. However, the desire to educate children through television quickly took precedence, establishing the foundations of programmes designed exclusively for children (Kelly, 2007, pp. 482–483). In the Czechoslovak Television, broadcasting for school and preschool children was set in the first half of the 1960s. The programmes tried to balance leisure, aesthetic appeal and educational purposes, often incorporating propaganda content. The need for attractive programmes resulted in a variety of children’s shows and cabarets, sometimes in collaboration with East German or Polish productions. By 1966, viewers could compare them with the French variety show broadcast as part of Eurovision (Jirák & Köpplová, pp. 121–131; for a more detailed discussion of the subject, see M. Štoll in Knapík & Franc et al., 2018, pp. 199–228). Throughout the 1960s, there was a particular focus on “engage” pioneer themes and the pioneer viewer, highlighted by the magazine “Vlaštovka”, which was broadcast from 1958 (on pioneer broadcasting, see M. Štoll in Knapík et al., 2022, pp. 363–405). In contrast, as historian Paula S. Fass’s methodological encyclopaedia points out, the Western world in the 1950s debated whether children could become actors in television programmes (Fass, 2004, pp. 814–815). In the Soviet bloc countries, this issue was essentially irrelevant.

Children were not only subjected to the propaganda interests of communist or generally undemocratic regimes. The first half of the 20th century demonstrated that modern propaganda viewed children as crucial tools for influencing society, such as to support the war effort during both world conflicts (Collins, 2023). The propagation of an ideal image of the child and childhood, often based on cultural stereotypes of a particular country, became a permanent feature of media coverage. The proliferation of television in the 1950s and 1960s only reinforced this trend. In the Soviet bloc countries, the image of childhood can be viewed as part of efforts to formulate a new socialist individual (cf. Nečasová, 2018). This image changed over time, though. Historians have noted that during the first two decades of the Cold War, the portrayal of children in the West and the East exhibited more similarities

than differences (Peacock, 2014, p. 119). Consequently, similar values were often associated with the image of childhood in both contexts.

New Year's Meeting of Pioneers at Prague Castle

The tradition of New Year's meetings of pioneers at Prague Castle became closely associated with Antonín Novotný when he assumed the presidency of the Czechoslovak Republic in November 1957. This tradition also signified a new approach of the Czechoslovak Communist leadership towards children at the end of the 1950s. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, children's engagement was prominently featured as part of building the pioneer movement. However, communist leaders at the time used the pioneers primarily as a backdrop for party congresses and various other official events. This approach lacked a personal dimension and was limited to reminding children of the duties that the regime expected them to perform. Personal contact with children was first established by President Antonín Zápotocký (1953–1957), but significant systemic change occurred only under his successor, Novotný. While party officials continued to use pioneers as mere backdrops at important public events, Novotný *reversed the roles*: high-ranking party and state officials started to attend new mass events to engage with the pioneers. This shift demonstrated interest in the children's world, granting them a certain sense of distinctiveness. By the late 1950s, these children represented a truly "socialist generation" – they had never experienced any other system than the one established in Czechoslovakia after the communist regime assumed power in February 1948. Additionally, the regime aimed to positively influence society as a whole, with a special focus on parents (Knapík & Franc et al., 2018, pp. 80–83).

On 1st January, starting in 1958, pioneers from all over the country gathered in the representative premises of Prague Castle. Much like the "meetings of the pioneers with the representatives of the party and the government" held at the end of the school year, this event brought together the best pioneers, pupils of the 6th to 8th grades of primary schools, from all regions of the country. Initially, about a thousand pioneers attended each year, though this number was later reduced to

between six and eight hundred. Selection criteria included good school grades (not necessarily excellent) and exemplary pioneering engagement, particularly community service. The press occasionally wrote about some of the selected children in this context.² Over the course of eleven years, nine thousand children participated in the event. Preparations for the New Year's festivities at Prague Castle always started in the autumn and were coordinated by all branches of the Czechoslovak Youth Union (ČSM) in cooperation with the Office of the President of the Republic and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The festive afternoon, attended by top party and state officials, followed a fixed programme. The main highlight was always a varied entertainment programme in the Spanish Hall, provided by the cultural groups of the pioneers. Additional activities were offered in other halls of Prague Castle, where children engaged in discussions with interesting guests and met their favourite actors or singers (the fixed structure of the pioneer afternoon was comparable to the stereotypical choreography of May Day celebrations; Somogyvár, 2022). Such an event did not have a tradition in Czechoslovakia, nor could it find inspiration in other Soviet bloc countries. For example, the Moscow Kremlin hosted an annual lavish social evening with politicians, diplomats and long-standing workers, while Soviet television aired a New Year's Eve extravaganza featuring the country's leading artists.³ Soviet children were entertained at the New Year's Yolka (Kelly, 2007, p. 552).

Although the format of the Czechoslovak "New Year's meetings" of pioneers with leading figures of the Communist Party and state was largely innovative, it developed a new presentation of the image of childhood common to other Soviet bloc countries against the backdrop of changes in the post-Stalin Soviet Union. Similarly to the first half of the 1950s, children were primarily depicted in the media as

2 E.g. the report about the best boy of the pioneer group in Sulkov, Pilsen region. – (hk): Vašek pojede na Hrad... *Pravda*. Vol. 43, 29 December 1962, No. 308, p. 2; Pionýři jedou na Hrad. *Rovnost*. Vol. 81, 31 December 1966, No. 314, p. 1.

3 -ZH-: Novoroční svátek v Kremli. *Rudé právo*. Vol. 44, 2 January 1964, No. 2, p. 3; *Czechoslovak Radio and Television*. Vol. 31, 1964, No. 45, p. 1.

symbols of peace and the peace efforts of the progressive countries. However, they were no longer portrayed as passive victims of potential aggression from behind the Iron Curtain. Rather, they were presented as active *co-creators* of a “new world”. The previous image of children gratefully looking up to Stalin or other leaders was replaced by the depiction of a children’s collective, with the party leader being present but not central. This shift emphasized the ideal of children’s independence and active participation, moving away from mindless imitation of adult activities. This new perspective was explicitly articulated by N. S. Khrushchev in his 1962 speech (Peacock, 2014, pp. 94–98).

The dramaturgy of the New Year’s pioneer event was based not only on the aforementioned concept of childhood but also on the presentation of adults, particularly political leaders. The event was attended by Antonín Novotný, the President of the Republic who was also the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Czechoslovak Republic, along with members and candidates of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Czechoslovak Republic, secretaries of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, heads of the First and Second Departments of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Czechoslovak Republic, the Minister of Education, the President and Deputy President of the National Assembly, chairmen of the National Front parties, the Chairman of the Central Council of Trade Unions, the heads of the Czechoslovak Union of Physical Education, the Union for Cooperation with the Army, the CSM and the secretaries of the Central Committee of the ČSM.⁴ These dignitaries all arrived at Prague Castle before 2 p.m., having likely adapted their private New Year’s Eve celebrations to accommodate this event. At precisely 2 p.m., the President and his wife, accompanied by the pioneers, entered the Spanish Hall to the sound of festive music. The harmony between the official representatives and the pioneers was underscored

4 E.g. The Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Youth Union Fund (ÚV ČSM), card 1444. National Archives (NA); Sign. Z I d 3. Archives of the Office of the President of the Republic (hereinafter A KPR).

by subtle reminders of significant political anniversaries of the coming year incorporated into the main programme; for example, in 1964, it was the 15th anniversary of the Pioneer Organization, followed by the 20th anniversary of Liberation and the 3rd National Spartakiad (1965), and the 13th Congress of the Communist Party (1966). State representatives engaged in informal discussions with children in various halls of Prague Castle. The event concluded at around 6 p.m. with a pioneer party that featured dancing and the pioneers thanking the President for the invitation. The pioneers were consistently referred to as “the President’s guests”, and press photos frequently showed the President surrounded by pioneers, who were often officials of the pioneer group. Until 1965, when the event began to be televised, the press always reported that the children would eagerly share their impressions of Prague Castle and their meeting with the President with other children upon returning home. The narrative that Prague Castle also belonged to children was further reinforced by the establishment of the House of Czechoslovak Children in the burgrave’s house at the castle (1963) (see Rollová, 2019, pp. 202–226). Simultaneously, similar New Year’s meetings of pioneers were organized in Bratislava. The format was replicated also in Brno, where in 1966, a New Year’s meeting was held with the best pioneers from local schools and the artistic director of the Moscow House of Culture.⁵

The presence of the pioneers at Prague Castle at New Year’s time conveyed a clear message to the public. It not only demonstrated the interest of the highest political leadership in the children’s generation but also provided an opportunity to highlight important attributes of socialist childhood. In the early years, this was achieved through political propaganda (including the final shout-out to the Communist Party), contrasting childhood experiences during the “bourgeois republic” with the bright prospects of contemporary children. In 1958 and 1961, the theatre club sketches inspired by the activities of the

5 Nové formy výuky ruského jazyka. *Rovnost*. Vol. 80, 19 October 1965, No. 250, p. 4.

pre-war Red Pioneers illustrated this contrast.⁶ “Joyful childhood” was naturally associated with the pioneer movement and its symbols (red scarves, the opening pioneer fanfare). The pioneers showcased their public service achievements in the programme, including reports about the collection of scrap metal and the number of trees planted. In 1960, a model of a blast furnace was featured in the programme to commemorate the so-called pioneer smelting. In 1962, President Novotný closed the meeting by reiterating the vision that today’s children would live in a communist society.⁷ By the mid-1960s, the straightforward political agitation had noticeably receded, but the theme of children’s active participation in a happy future remained prominent. This future was often associated with space explorations, symbolized by starships, satellites, cosmonauts and journeys to distant stars. In 1959, Grandfather Frost came to the pioneers on an “interplanetary plane”.⁸ Emphasizing children’s physical fitness and the importance of education were also enduring themes. The President of the Republic always reserved a speech for this purpose at the end of the festivities. Despite his efforts to connect with the children, President Novotný sometimes struggled to find the right words. In January 1961, he tried to engage with the children by “exercising with them in a disciplined manner” (along with the Minister of the Interior Rudolf Barák and the Chairman of the CSM Vratislav Krutina). However, he ended the meeting with an encouraging but somewhat misplaced statement: “So children, on the threshold of the third five-year period, together with the workers, take a firm, bold step into the new learning!”⁹

Until 1961, the dramaturgy of the main programme was to present a simple, albeit festive pioneer variety show, featuring a mix of collective

6 The scene in 1961 culminated in a “brutal police intervention against proletarian children.” *Rudé právo*. Vol. 38, 2 January 1958, No. 2, pp. 1–2; *Rudé právo*. Vol. 41, 2 January 1961, No. 2, p. 1; MICHÁLKOVÁ, V. Písničko, zpívej, hudbo hrej – našim dětem! *Rudé právo*. Vol. 41, 2 January 1961, No. 2, p. 2.

7 MAŠÍN, J. Pokolení v nástupu. *Rudé právo*. Vol. 42, 2 January 1962, No. 1, p. 2.

8 Radostné odpoledne pionýrů. *Rudé právo*. Vol. 39, 3 January 1959, No. 2, pp. 1–2.

9 MICHÁLKOVÁ, V. Písničko, zpívej, hudbo, hrej – našim dětem! *Rudé právo*. Vol. 41, 2 January 1961, No. 2, p. 2.

games, sports performances, children's dances and songs. The simplicity was partly due to the participation of up to two hundred pioneers of all ages, including sparks (a precursor to membership in the Pioneer Organization for children aged 6 to 9) and preschoolers who performed in the Spanish Hall. While this approach effectively showcased the concept of "socialist childhood", it also limited the potential for more complex performances. In the following years, this approach began to change significantly, as evident from two dramaturgical innovations. While in 1958, the cultural programme was presented by the pioneers themselves (with the help of the figure of Všechnovidělek [See-It-All]),¹⁰ in the subsequent years, an adult performer – initially more of a mentor – began to add dynamism to the variety show. In 1959, it was the aforementioned Grandfather Frost to whom the pioneers reported their public successes. He, in turn, encouraged them to participate in household chores. In 1962, the show featured a mime called "Přítel" (Friend), portrayed by the dancer Antonín Hodek or the popular Robot Emil (played by Jiří Šašek) and his "mechanic" Karel (Antonín Šůra). These characters marked a transition to figures more relatable to children. In later years, this type of adult friend was further developed by the actor and cartoonist Miloš Nesvadba (1925–2020), who appeared in several pioneer programmes.

The second significant change was the introduction of critical elements directed at the children's collective. This approach was first employed in the stage play "We Were Born for the Boldest Deeds" (My zrodili se k nesmělejším činům) (1962),¹¹ which aimed to highlight various children's vices and shortcomings within pioneer life. The sketches were authored by poet and leading pioneer official Oldřich Kryštofek (1922–1985). The dance sketch called "Slabikář" (Spelling Book) used rhymes to caricature the inhabitants of different fictional places: "Darebník" (Naughtyville), representing those who did not observe the rules of proper behaviour; "Hledsebe" (Mirrorville), where

10 *Rudé právo*. Vol. 38, 2 January 1958, No. 2, pp. 1–2.

11 ÚV ČSM, file 1438. NA.

girls paid too much attention to their appearance; and “Hlupice” (Dumbville), where the children failed to apply themselves at school. The criticism extended to “Poradov” (Counselville), where the pioneers neglected their duties in favour of taking endless meetings and resolutions, and “Závazkov” (Dutyville) which abounded with promises and empty words. Although the form of such criticism remained “child-like”, it can be viewed as part of the efforts to mobilize the pioneer movement at the time. By the mid-1960s, these efforts culminated in attempts to reform the pioneer organization. This shift was reflected in the transformation of critical tones into a more coherent pioneer satire,¹² which was incorporated into meetings of pioneers with party and state officials. Additionally, this period saw the cultural variety show evolve into a pioneer revue.

From Castle Variety Show to Television Pioneer Revue

In 1963–1964, the creators of New Year’s pioneer programmes began to experiment with a pioneer satire. The main programme still retained the character of a series of dance, singing and dramatic performances aimed at children around the age of 10, also featuring performances by younger schoolchildren. The script “To the Shores of Future” (K břehům budoucího času) (1963) was again authored by Oldřich Kryštofek. The programme highlighted the playful and active pioneers while being critical of those who “do not yet resemble Gagarin”.¹³ The show included a playful song, short sketches and slogans that admonished those circumventing pioneer tasks, did poorly at school, and devoted their free time to fashion and idleness.¹⁴ Another satirical song touched on the

12 The satirical sketch “The Waiter and the Guest” (Číšník a host) was performed in January 1959, but it was not part of the main programme. It was staged in one of the side halls by members of the National Theatre drama Miloš Nesvadba and Ljuba Skořepová using a puppet.

13 ÚV ČSM, file 1438. NA; dále (haj): K břehům budoucího času. *Rudé právo*. Vol. 43, 2 January 1963, No. 2, p. 2.

14 The performers presented various “slogans”: “I’ll be a pioneer of new technology. Always the latest models... – Obstacles are for others to overcome. – I have gained more badges /pioneer badges/ than anyone else. By trading them with others. – I’ll

current anti-religious campaign and problems in the supply industry. In 1964, the main programme (conceived as a “living” pioneer newspaper) criticized superficiality and snobbery among the pioneers, alongside other common childhood vices (selfishness, laziness, grumpiness).¹⁵

The potential of the pioneer programme was underscored by the “meeting of pioneers with representatives of the state and the government” in the summer of 1963, which was similar to the New Year’s events at Prague Castle. Since 1958, President Novotný had been convening these meetings at various locations around the country to coincide with the end of the school year and the start of summer holidays. The two-day meetings were attended by over two thousand pioneers and featured cultural and sports programmes. These events also included discussions with the highest party and state officials (Knapík & Franc et al., 2018, pp. 86–88). In early July 1963, the fourth such meeting was held in Hluboká nad Vltavou, where the pioneer revue “We Are Everywhere” (Jsme všude) was presented. The show, watched by 1,500 children alongside President Novotný, was written by the scriptwriter Jiří Bauer (1929–2009).¹⁶ Actor Miloš Nesvadba played an important role in both the design and as the key adult guide.

The programme was notable for its length, running 75 minutes without an intermission. Unlike earlier variety shows that consisted of a sequence of dance, singing or sports numbers, this programme was characterized by a simple yet coherent plot and elaborate dialogue. Previously, a very short sketch or a song with critical content constituted only one of many numbers, but in this instance, multiple performances were integrated into a unifying *story*.¹⁷ The story centred around a seven-member girl pioneer team (with roles played by members of the

take part in every sports competition. As a spectator. – I’ll stay active right where I am. On the couch, in front of the TV.”

15 *Rudé právo*. Vol. 44, 2 January 1964, No. 2, p. 1; *Mladý svět*. Vol. 6, 1964, No. 2, p. 2; *Československý sport*. Vol. 12, 2 January 1964, No. 1, p. 1.

16 J. Bauer co-wrote the screenplay for the short children’s film “Pětikoruna” (1960). Available from: <https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/person/75887/jiri-bauer>. [cit. 2024-10-30].

17 ÚV ČSM, file 1438. NA.

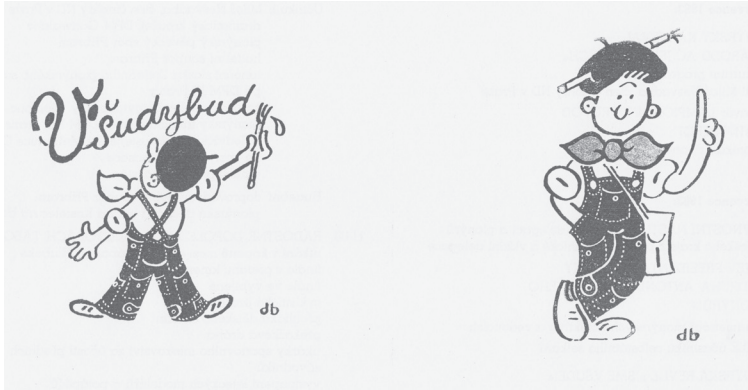
drama club of the House of Pioneers and Youth in Gottwaldov, now Zlín). From the opening dialogues, it was evident that the girls were bored – they showed no interest in the Sunday match of the pioneer teams taking place behind the fence. Originally, they were supposed to go on a Sunday outing with their leader, who had missed the past few meetings. As the story unfolds, it is revealed that the leader had been neglecting the club because of her boyfriend.

The central character of the revue is Všudybud (Ubiquitous), a figure drawn by one of the girls on a (paper) fence. At one point, this character comes to life and enters the scene. Všudybud, whose name is inspired by a key work of the reformer and educator J. A. Comenius (1592–1670), “The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart”, is portrayed as the “younger brother” of the youth union member Všudybyl (Everywhere).¹⁸ Miloš Nesvadba brought Všudybud to life as a positive character, who initially communicates with the pioneer girls through pantomime. As the performance progresses, he begins to speak and express himself through vivid drawings on a large glass board placed on the stage.¹⁹ In twelve scenes filled with songs and dances, Všudybud engages the girls, encouraging their collective spirit. He also interacts with thousands of children in the audience, using both words and drawings. In the end, it becomes clear that the girls are not entirely disillusioned with pioneering. Instead, they craved adventure and new experiences but were held back by the monotony of the pioneer life, as well as by teachers and parents who lacked understanding. The story reveals that the true enemy was their own feelings of guilt and hurt. Having fulfilled his mission, Všudybud returns to the paper fence, ready to help the next pioneer unit in need.

18 The Všudybyl movement was launched as a campaign by the ČSM to boost the productivity of young workers and to highlight issues within businesses.

19 For responses and images see Ljb. Hluboká 1963. *Mladý svět*. Vol. 5, 12 July 1963, No. 28, p. 3; MOULÍKOVÁ, Vlasta. Prezidentská vlajka na Hluboké. *Vlasta*. Vol. 17, 17 July 1963, No. 29, p. 2; Radostné setkání. *Lidová demokracie*. Vol. 19, 9 July 1963, No. 162, p. 1; *Večerní Praha*. Vol. 9, 8 July 1963, No. 158, p. 1.

The central moment of the programme “We Are Everywhere” was a critique of one of the main issues within the pioneer movement, delivered through lively satire and presented from the perspective of the children themselves, in their own language. The audience heard the girls express their frustrations about the pervasive suppression of initiative and personal freedom: those wanting to learn to play the guitar are labelled as troublemakers; school collecting activities are dull because they are compulsory; the school library offers only required reading; the adults at home or school does not understand them... Although the girls participate in pioneer leisure activities, they do not enjoy them because everything feels “somehow compulsory”. Instead of sympathising with them, Všudybud challenges the girls not to wait for an adult to entertain them. He urges them to come up with their own pioneering activities and make them both diverse and meaningful. At the same time, he subtly reprimands the negligent pioneer leader and the teacher who believes that a proper pioneer is always an obedient and disciplined child. The solution for the bored pioneer unit ultimately lies in cooperation, symbolized by a large collection of paper brought onto the scene by truck. This collection is the result of an initiative announced by Všudybud at the start of the gathering of all pioneers in Hluboká nad Vltavou – they had been collecting small scraps of paper that might not have otherwise made it to the recycling centre, all while helping the environment. As a result, even the members of the “bored team” on stage enthusiastically join the pioneer initiative.



Picture 1. The figure of the pioneer Všudybud in a pen-and-ink drawing by Miloš Nesvadba. The initial “V”, designed as a face, was briefly used in print as a logo for pioneer public events. ČSM Central Committee Fund, card 1438. NA; printed with permission of the National Archives and Michal Nesvadba.

The innovation of mass pioneer events featuring a revue programme captured the attention of both organizers and audiences. From the outset, the creators envisioned that the character of Všudybud / Miloš Nesvadba would continue to inspire pioneer engagement, especially in public service activities. The drawing of Všudybud (or his initial) was prominently featured in the promotion of the national pioneer game “Always Ready” (Vždy připraven).²⁰ Additionally, the event “Všudybud with a Magnifying Glass” (Všudybud s lupou) was created in connection with the youth union. Soon after, a “winter pioneer revue” titled “He’s Here” (Už je tu) (directed by Jiří Bauer) was staged at the Convention Palace of the Prague Park of Culture and Recreation for three thousand older children. Once again, Nesvadba’s pioneer character Všudybud was the star, joined by actress Pavlína Filipovská, singer Karel Gott (1939–2019) and others.²¹

If the ambitious pioneer revue was intended not only as entertainment but also to engage pioneers and offer critical reflection on the

20 Všudybud. *Vedoucí pionýrů*. Vol. 19, 1963, No. 11, p. 2.

21 *Lidová demokracie*. Vol. 19, 5 December 1963, No. 290, p. 4; *Večerní Praha*. Vol. 9, 10, December 1963, No. 291, p. 2.

movement, an apparent paradox had to be addressed: why present a satirical programme, such as the one about “a bored pioneer unit”, to a select group of the *best pioneers* in the country? The solution lay in expanding the audience through a television broadcast. Prague Castle provided the ideal setting for presenting the revue.²² Due to the demands on the organization, it was possible to test this model with a delay – during the New Year’s meeting of the pioneers with the President in January 1965. This marked the first time the main programme was broadcast live, offering viewers a glimpse of what was happening in other halls as well.

“What We Can Do”

The eighth New Year’s Eve meeting of the six hundred best pioneers with the President of the Republic at Prague Castle was also reported in a television guide; the accompanying information specified that the programme was intended for children aged eight and above, emphasising its focus on *pioneer-aged* children rather than the youngest viewers or sparks. The live broadcast of the event began at 2 p.m. and concluded shortly before 6 p.m.²³

Preparations in the Spanish Hall had been underway since mid-December 1964, with the set and scenery being constructed according to the design by architect Miloš Ditrich (1927–2016). Raised platforms for the large orchestra and smaller backing band were built on the sides of the open stage, which was designed in a star shape in the background. Two hundred performing pioneers arrived in Prague on 27 December, and starting the next day, 11 children ensembles began rehearsing the programme. The dress rehearsal, which included the television technicians, took place on New Year’s Eve. The Pioneer

22 Pioneer variety shows were broadcast by Czechoslovak Television from 1955.

23 *Rudé právo*. Vol. 45, 3 January 1965, No. 2, p. 1; *Radostné chvíle na Pražském hradě*. *Lidová demokracie*. Vol. 21, 3 January 1965, No. 2, p. 1; *Červené šátky na Pražském hradě*. *Mladá fronta*. Vol. 20, 3 January 1965, No. 2, p. 3. Se snímky z akce – viz Pionýrský rok. *Květy*. Vol. 15, 16 January 1965, No. 2, p. 1; Děti se setkaly s prezidentem. *Vlasta*, Vol. 19, 13 January 1965, No. 2, p. 3.

delegations arrived in Prague at the turn of the year and stayed at the dormitories of the Party University; the House of Czechoslovak Children organized the children's stay and also prepared their New Year's Eve entertainment.²⁴

The main programme, entitled "What We Can Do", along with the live broadcast, was directed by the experienced television director Miloslav Zachata (1925–1970), who also wrote the script for the pioneer revue and lyrics for some of the songs.²⁵ The leadership of the Youth Union intended for the revue to provide viewers with "a balanced view" of the pioneer movement: it would satirically point at some of "the darker aspects of pioneer life" while also drawing attention to "the good things that surround us and that we help to create". Again, the creators were asked to keep a child's perspective on the central themes. This time, the satire targeted the stereotypical and uninventive meetings of pioneer units or the dishonest practices in collecting waste materials. Criticism was also directed at the arrogant children who elevated themselves above others and forgot the basic pioneer principles in the pursuit of primacy. Using songs and dance performances, the programme aimed to emphasize the importance of cooperation as a fundamental prerequisite for achieving goals. This generally optimistic message was also meant to reflect the current political themes of the coming year, including the 20th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia and the Third National Spartakiad. Additionally, the revue featured references to space rockets, cosmodromes and the theme of space exploration in general, celebrating the peak achievements of the human spirit.²⁶ The New Year's event (apart from the main pioneer revue) also included activities in other representative halls of

24 Sign. Z I d 3. A KPR. Report on the New Year's celebration (22 November 1964).

25 The lyrics for the songs were written by Alois Palouček (1931–1986) and Oldřich Flosman (1925–1995). M. Zachata began collaborating with television in 1956. In addition to a series of productions, he recorded performances, including rare recordings of the plays "Těžká Barbora" and "Balada z hadrů" (1960) by J. Werich and J. Voskovec.

26 ÚV ČSM, file 1444. NA; Sign. Z I d 3. A KPR.

the Prague Castle, culminating in a final dance party, a gathering of all pioneers and a speech by the President of the Republic.

The very first scene introduced the core theme of the revue. A vocal ensemble, accompanied by soloists, performed the opening song, which was later repeated in various forms throughout the programme. The song celebrated creative work across all professions. The pioneers, too, were encouraged to prepare for their future contributions to society: “Our country may ask: what can we do?” The development of children’s creativity was presented as a fundamental goal of the pioneer movement: “Although we are still small / everyone must learn a skill / one day we’ll be generals / or fly to the stars.”

The revue opens with a conversation between pioneers Karel and Pavel about what they plan to submit to the Youth Creativity Competition (STM).²⁷ It quickly becomes apparent that Pavel is far from modest, and while ambition and engagement are valued in pioneers, he tends to be a bit of a “braggart”. He boasts that he can build a rocket that can travel 100 trillion kilometres per hour, construct a fountain pen with a radio, or build a bridge over the Vltava River. Karel even invites his classmates to come up with something Pavel cannot do but to no avail. However, when it comes to simple tasks like chopping wood or hanging a picture, Pavel dismissively says: “I don’t do such simple things. I leave those to my sister.” In contrast, Karel plans to submit a practical household item in the competition – a table to hold a TV – something Pavel scoffs at before exiting the scene. At first, it seems that Pavel is quickly losing the audience’s sympathy, but one of the girls (Helenka) puts things into perspective: “He’s a clever fellow, but when he starts bragging, he doesn’t know when to stop.” As a result, the children decide to “take him down a peg”. When Pavel returns to the scene, Karel tells him that they have something better than his rocket – a set of “life-like” pioneer figurines – and invites him to go and see them at the Pioneer House. The children quietly share

27 The Youth Creativity Competition was a large-scale event organized by the Youth Union. Participants could apply for the technical or artistic section.

the plan among themselves. What follows is a variation of the opening song, this time cautioning against those who “lag or race ahead in the relay” and risk losing the entire race for the collective...

In the next scene, Pavel grapples with the concept of “life-like pioneers”. He attempts to imitate Karel but fails, managing only to create a large paper puppet of a pioneer that he cannot move even with the help of his sister Helenka. Frustrated, he concludes that constructing “life-like pioneers” is impossible and plans to mock Karel. In the fifth scene, Pavel comes to observe Karel’s mechanized pioneers represented by his friends, whom he instructed to stand rigidly like statues at all times. Pavel is unimpressed with the result, especially when the pioneers do not move at Karel’s first command. Karel responds, “Have you ever seen a pioneer who obeyed immediately?” Eventually, Karel sets the pioneers in motion, leading into the main part of the revue – the following four scenes satirize various vices and shortcomings of the pioneers through song, addressing issues like dull pioneer meetings, unfair scrap metal collection practices, excessive body weight and vanity.

The first song showcases the “mechanized pioneers” in meetings that resemble school classes more than enjoyable gatherings. The oft-repeated refrain captures this sentiment: “First they sing a song / then recite what they read in school / and finally they go wild / playing Chinese whispers.” The image concludes with a mocking verse: “So it went day after day / just like clockwork. / They reported how they had / *such varied* (this is meant ironically) meetings.” Pavel is quite impressed by the mechanized pioneers and is particularly curious how Karel managed to “get them to sing”. In response, Karel tugs on his ear and explains that his mechanized pioneers have a wire installed in a sensitive spot and “their wailing makes for quite a good song.” It is now clear that the *sensitive spot* is a metaphor for a deeper issue within the pioneer movement that needs addressing. Karel then adds that

his mechanized pioneers have several such sensitive spots: “There are enough of them to make a Prague Spring.”²⁸

Another song features pioneers who “are touchy about being accused of lacking independence and initiative compared to adults”. The song tells the story of Jirka, a pioneer who wins a competition by collecting twelve tons of scrap metal. However, this impressive feat turns out to be a scam: “It’s not rocket science, / just get the family involved. / They collect the cast iron, / I collect the receipts. My dad, my mom, my grandmothers and grandfathers, / they all collect iron for my competition.” And so Jirka wins the main prize – a holiday at the international pioneer camp in Soviet Artek in Crimea – despite facing challenges at home, such as worrying “what will they say in Artek when I bring my grandmothers along”. The song ends with Jirka receiving cheers for making it to the national competition: “Everyone praises Jirka now, the Central Committee invited him to the Castle / and all he did was collect receipts – not even one kilo of iron.”

The third scene with the mechanized pioneers caricatures clumsy, chubby children who struggle with simple exercises and disrupt the gymnastic performances of their peers. Their failures are attributed to laziness and excessive TV time. Before the final scene featuring the mechanized pioneers, Karel hands Pavel a pair of large, odd glasses, described in the script as looking like “the glasses brought to the Fučík from Helsinki”.²⁹ Through the glasses, Pavel sees a pioneer strikingly similar to himself – constantly boasting while avoiding collective activities. Recognizing the critique, Pavel initially tries to “get back at the other children” by pretending to be “mechanized”. However, he eventually reveals his true self and seems to have reformed. The finale, featuring a final rendition of the theme song, transitions smoothly into

28 Prague Spring is a traditional international music festival that has been held since 1946.

29 A possible reference to the dance group of the J. Fučík Ensemble from Prague, which performed at the 8th World Festival of Youth and Students in Helsinki (1962). KRA-TOCHVÍL, Jiří. A few remarks on Helsinki. *Hudební rozhledy*. Vol. 15, 30 August 1962, No. 16, p. 682.

the second part of the programme – a series of performances by pioneer cultural groups, including songs, dances, Spartakiad routines and gymnastic numbers. The finale of the Pioneer Revue celebrates the competencies and future of the pioneers with the lyrics: “The country is calling: Pioneers / you are my future / today’s pioneers / will be tomorrow’s heroes.” As the last verse plays, the pioneers march to the party leaders with flowers, reflecting the political anniversary of the coming year: “While the children are still young / the country is twenty years old. / Youth has always wanted to play / youth has always wanted to move forward.”

It might have seemed that a bright future awaited not only the youth but also the pioneer revue as a new genre. However, this turned out to be the last revue of its kind. The New Year’s gatherings at Prague Castle reverted to variety shows in the following years. In 1966, the television aired the pioneer variety show “Relay of Youth” (Štafeta mládí), hosted by Miloš Nesvadba.³⁰ The next year brought the show “Merry-Go-Round” (Kolotoč)³¹ and the final New Year pioneer programme was broadcast in 1968. The vibrant variety show “Little Masters and Big Masters” (Malí a velcí mistři) had to be postponed to 7 January due to a major political event – the historic meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee at Prague Castle, which launched the reform process known as the Prague Spring of 1968. This meeting with the pioneers was attended not only by President Novotný but also by the new First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Alexander Dubček, who symbolized the coming reforms.³² The reason for the shift in programme content remains unclear. In addition to musical, dance and sports performances, the pioneer programmes continued to feature satirical sketches criticizing the issues within the pioneer organization. These sketches were written and directed by the experienced Miloslav Zachata. This suggests that the revue format could have been

30 *Rudé právo*. Vol. 46, 3 January 1966, No. 2, p. 1; ÚV ČSM, file 1446. NA; Sign. Z I d 3. A KPR.

31 *Rudé právo*. Vol. 47, 2 January 1967, No. 2, p. 1.

32 *Rudé právo*. Vol. 48, 8 January 1968, No. 7, p. 1.

too demanding for the child performers and the live television production. It is also possible that a family-oriented television programme was preferred over a more complex satirical revue.

The Image of a Childhood of the Pioneer Age (Conclusion)

Pioneer cultural programmes, which became a regular feature of meetings between selected pioneers and the highest state and party leaders in Czechoslovakia during the late 1950s and early 1960s, offer a unique glimpse into the presentation of “socialist childhood” and the role of pioneers during that era. These programmes were part of a series of media-exposed celebrations created by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia, in which children either represented a segment of broader social groups (May Day celebrations, International Women’s Day, Spartakiads; see, e.g., Ratajová, 2000; Roubal, 2016) or took central stage (International Children’s Day; Knapík & Franc et al., 2018, pp. 67–80).

Initially, the New Year’s celebrations at Prague Castle followed relatively straightforward and familiar formats that were easy for schoolchildren and young pioneers to understand, while also catering to the expectations of a politically conscious audience. The cultural programme centred on children and youth, highlighting their bright prospects in a socialist society. Children’s lives were portrayed as joyful and filled with diverse and creative activities designed to help them choose a future profession. In contrast, the audience was reminded that the lives of most pre-war children had been shaped by their parents’ struggles with existential hardships. This perspective, which primarily reflected the regime’s and adults’ view of the world, gradually began to take into consideration the mentality and real experiences of children. As a result, cultural programmes started to convey more complex messages, which inevitably influenced their format. The original pioneer variety shows, which featured songs, dances and sports games, began to offer a critical view of the life of contemporary Czech and Slovak children. Over time, the introduction of satirical elements transformed these variety shows into pioneer revues, complete with a central theme and underlying message.

This shift was undoubtedly driven by a change in the communist leadership's view of the youngest generation and the growing dissatisfaction with the pioneer organization. On the one hand, politicians emphasized that the schoolchildren of that era had grown up entirely in the post-revolutionary system; on the other hand, they increasingly reflected that children took many social and extracurricular activities for granted. This led to a perception that the pioneer movement had become overly formal and had little impact on the children's leisure time. These concerns were reflected in the pioneer revues of 1963–1965, which can be perceived as a distinctive media format aimed at promoting the pioneer movement and highlighting the necessary changes.

The programme “We Are Everywhere” incorporated many of the criticized aspects of the pioneer movement (see Knapík et al., 2022). The lax attitude of the pioneer leaders, especially the unionists, undermined the movement crucially by eroding the children's trust in adolescents and adults. One of the persistent issues was the high turnover and unavailability of leaders, which made it difficult to maintain consistent guidance. It is therefore not surprising that the character of *Všudybud* encouraged children to take initiative on their own. The two revues we examined share a common trait: the shortcomings of the pioneers (such as boredom and boastfulness) were never confirmed – the children had “a healthy core” and ultimately reformed themselves. There was always room for personal engagement.

In the mid-1950s, the Pioneer organization also discussed the need for an authentic “pioneer romance” – a set of activities that would not only be socially useful but also appealing and truly engaging for children. The term “healthy romance” was revived again between 1962 and 1965 amid discussions on the urgent need to innovate the methodological approach within the pioneer movement. There was a persistent tension between the requirements of the educational system (outlined as “What a pioneer should know and be able to do”) and the voluntary activities of the pioneers. The variety revue “We Are Everywhere” addressed this issue by encouraging the spontaneous collection of old paper by the pioneer collective. During this event, one of the girls remarked: “Collecting every scrap of paper that would have gone up

the chimney unnecessarily, discovering lost values by ourselves and voluntarily – that’s something!” At the same time, this “wholesome romance” sought to avoid the educational practices associated with forbidden scouting. Before 1948, scouting had effectively worked with scout troops, which were groups smaller than pioneer units. In contrast, the system of pioneer units, which had theoretically been part of the pioneer organization since its inception, proved dysfunctional. The *troop* played an important role in “We Are Everywhere”, and the show encouraged children to follow this model of pioneer activity. And not only that. Let us point out that this was an unschooled troop *of girls*. In contrast, the TV show “What We Can Do” included a disparaging remark about the girls made by the boastful Pavel.

The revue “What We Can Do” elaborated on the criticism of pioneer life, particularly addressing the monotony of pioneer meetings that resembled school and the dishonesty in collecting activities aimed at achieving quick success. Beyond these issues, the revue also tackled broader aspects of children’s lives.³³ Previous variety shows often emphasized physical fitness and sportsmanship as essential elements of a healthy childhood. For instance, a newspaper report from a New Year’s Day celebration in January 1962 mentioned a pioneer who had participated in a cultural programme and was described as “a slim boy”.³⁴ The revue “What We Can Do” went even further in its criticism, portraying excess weight as a major negative factor that prevents pioneers from leading an active life. The references to fuller body proportions in the revue went to extremes; at the opening of the fourth scene, Pavel complained that Helenka had “fat legs”, which he claimed impeded his ability to build a paper pioneer puppet. Additionally, in the eighth scene, the script called for two “fat pioneers” (!) who struggled to perform even basic exercises. It remains unclear whether

33 In this context, we can recall the harsh criticism of the PO ČSM in J. Fairaizl’s documentary “Malované děti” (1967), which appeared to adopt the style of critical television journalism seen in the programmer “Zvědavá kamera”. For more details see M. Štoll in KNAPÍK et al., 2022, pp. 363–405.

34 MAŠÍN, J. Pokolení v nástupu. *Rudé právo*. Vol. 42, 2 January 1962, No. 1, p. 2.

the show's creators altered the performers' costumes for these roles or cast genuinely overweight children, thus subjecting them to ridicule *on live television*... Such portrayal is not surprising; it aligned closely with the contemporary campaign against obesity, which political leaders increasingly viewed as a pressing social problem affecting children. Notably, Antonín Novotný had long advocated for the increase in the price of confectionery, a policy implemented in 1962. He commented at the time that "our children are fat" (Franc, 2009, p. 34). Therefore, the emphasis on physical fitness and the specific criticism of "fat pioneers" in the New Year's programme likely reflected Novotný's personal concerns.

The portrayal of adult characters in pioneer cultural programmes evolved in interesting ways over time. As older children took on roles in the more ambitious pioneer revues and the programme was more targeted at their peers, the representation of adult figures also shifted. We can observe a transition from the "guide/friend" archetype to more complex representations of adult authority. In "We Are Everywhere", the character of Všudybud is accompanied by a lax pioneer leader who fails to win the children over. A particularly intriguing development occurs in "What We Can Do", where *the school caretaker* is introduced at the start of the revue as the sole embodiment of adult authority. In the second scene, when one of the children announces the caretaker's arrival, all the children immediately freeze, quiet down and – as the script notes – "greet him most respectfully and politely". This raises the question about the source of the caretaker's unique authority. By the 1960s, the feminisation of primary education was essentially complete, with a sharp decline in male teachers. Yet, the school caretaker retained a strong presence in this environment, remaining "omnipresent" as he both lived at the school and took care of its maintenance. Interestingly, the caretaker was not a particularly likeable figure (as reflected, e.g. in the famous children's book by Bohumil Říha)³⁵. "What We Can

35 Říha, 1959, p. 52; Here, we see the character of the school caretaker Vozáb: "He was a sullen fellow and did not care for the school youth much."

Do” mirrors this sentiment as well when the caretaker’s male authority is relativized by the children – after the caretaker leaves the scene, the pioneers “jump up / and run away”.

During the New Year’s celebrations, the President of the Republic consistently embodied the unquestioned adult authority. His influence was evident not only in his speeches but also in his interaction with the pioneers and his participation in the closing feast. However, he did not always manage to foster a genuine connection with the children. A clear example of this disconnect occurred during Novotný’s speech at the celebration in January 1965. When he asked the children if they were preparing for the Spartakiad, everyone in the hall raised their hand. Perhaps influenced by the revue “What We Can Do”, which poked fun at formality and insincerity, Novotný doubted the authenticity of the children’s responses. He pointedly remarked that “the Castle has the names and addresses of those present and could double-check”.³⁶ And at that very moment, the President effectively assumed the role of the proverbial “school caretaker” ...³⁷

Literature

- ANDRESEN, Sabine, 2006. *Sozialistische Kindheitskonzepte. Politische Einflüsse auf die Erziehung*. 1st edition. München: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag. ISBN 978-3497018666.
- BÜHLER-NIEDERBERGER, Doris, 2020. *Lebensphase Kindheit. Theoretische Ansätze, Akteure und Handlungsräume*. 2nd edition. Weinheim – München: Beltz Juventa. ISBN 978-3779926238.
- COLLINS, Ross F., 2023. *Children, War and Propaganda*. 2nd edition. New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers. ISBN 978-1433196805.
- FASS, Paula S. (ed.), 2004. *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society* 3. New York: MacMillan Reference Library. ISBN 978-0028657158.

36 Co my dokážem... (*What We Can Do*). *Československý sport*. Novotný eventually stopped challenging the children’s claim and said, “Let us part as allies,” urging them to join him in promoting the Spartakiad.

37 The article was translated by Mgr. Markéta Johnová, PhD.

- FRANC, Martin, 2009. Tloušťka a socialismus. Obezita jako vědecký a společenský problém v Československu 1948–1968. *Kuděj: časopis pro kulturní dějiny*. Praha. Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 28–42. ISSN 1211-8109.
- JIRÁK, Jan & KÖPPLOVÁ, Barbara, 2014. Nabídka televizních programů dětskému publiku v 60. letech. In: KNAPÍK, Jiří et al. *Děti, mládež a socialismus v Československu v 50. a 60. letech*. Opava: Slezská univerzita, pp. 121–131. ISBN 978-80-7510-057-3.
- KELLY, Catriona, 2007. *Children's World. Growing up in Russia 1980–1991*. 1st ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. ISBN 978-0300112269.
- KNAPÍK, Jiří & FRANC, Martin et al., 2018. *Mezi pionýrským šátkem a mopedem. Děti, mládež a socialismus v českých zemích 1948–1970*. Praha: Academia. ISBN 978-80-200-2890-7.
- KNAPÍK, Jiří et al., 2022. *Pionýři, malované děti? Pionýrská organizace ČSM a dětský kolektiv (1949–1968)*. Praha: Lidové noviny. ISBN 978-80-7422-837-7.
- NEČASOVÁ, Denisa, 2018. *Nový socialistický člověk. Československo 1948–1956*. Brno: Host. ISBN 978-80-7577-185-8.
- NOSKOVÁ, Gabriela, 2006. *Vývoj českého činoherního divadla na obrazovce České televize (50. a 60. léta)*. Brno. Diploma Thesis. Masaryk university, Faculty of Arts.
- PEACOCK, Margaret, 2014. *Innocent Weapons. The Soviet and American Politics of Childhood in the Cold War*. 1st ed. The University of North Carolina Press. ISBN 978-1469618579.
- REICHEL, Peter, 1991. *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus*. 1st ed. Carl Hanser Verlag. ISBN 978-3446148468.
- RATAJOVÁ, Jana, 2000. Pražské májové oslavy 1948–1989. Příspěvek k dějinám komunistické propagandy. *Kuděj: časopis pro kulturní dějiny*. Praha. Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 51–64. ISSN 1211-8109.
- ROLLOVÁ, Veronika, 2019. *Pražský hrad na cestě ke komunistické utopii (1948–1968)*. 1st ed. Praha: Vysoká škola uměleckoprůmyslová. ISBN 978-80-87989-80-7.
- ROUBAL, Petr, 2016. *Československé spartakiády*. 1st ed. Praha: Academia, p. 405. ISBN 978-80-200-2537-1.
- ŘÍHA, Bohumil, 1959. *O letadélku Káněti. Veselé příhody pekelských dětí i jejich psa s malým letadlem*. 2nd ed. Praha: Státní nakladatelství dětské literatury.
- SOMOGYVÁRI, Lajos, 2022. Celebrating May 1: Visual Propaganda from Different Perspectives in Communist Hungary. *Historia scholastica: International Review for History of Education*. Prague. Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 59–78. ISSN 1804-491.
- TAYLOR, Richard, 1998. *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*. 2nd edition. I. B. Tauris. ISBN 978-1860641671.

Archival sources

The ÚV ČSM Fund. National Archives (NA).

Archives of the Office of the President of the Republic. A KPR.

The Period Press

Československý rozhlas a televize, 1964.

Československý sport, 1964–1965.

Hudební rozhledy, 1962.

Květy, 1965.

Lidová demokracie, 1963, 1965.

Mladá fronta, 1965.

Mladý svět, 1963–1964.

Pravda, 1962.

Rovnost, 1965–1966.

Rudé právo, 1958–1968.

Večerní Praha, 1963.

Vedoucí pionýrů, 1963.

Vlasta, 1963, 1965.

Electronic resources

J. Bauer [online]. [cit. 2024-10-30]. Available from: www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/person/75887/jiri-bauer.