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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

S Preparation of the Future Elites of the Communist Party in the Period of Communism in Slovakia¹

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Abstract The research is focused on organization and content of education of the future party elites in Slovakia during the period of communism. In 1953, a special Party College of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (renamed to the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1965, further on Political Institute of the CC CPC) was created in Czechoslovakia for the purpose of their training. It was directly managed by the Central Committee. After the suppression of the Prague Spring and the onset of nor-

malization (the beginning of the 1970s), a new faculty called the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC was established in Bratislava and it began its activities in 1972. The research is based on the study of archival sources of relevant funds of the Slovak National Archive in Bratislava. The research shows that the faculty 1) provided a relatively wide spectrum of graduate and postgraduate education in both full-time and part-time form, 2) also provided higher forms of education (rigorous examination procedures and scientific postgraduate studies), 3) had a well-thought-out and well-organized comprehensive system of education for the future elites of the ruling Communist Party, including spending their leisure time. The faculty disappeared after the fall of communism in 1990.

Keywords communism, communist party, party elites, party education, Slovakia

1 The study is a part of the research project VEGA 1/0190/24: Regime Engagement vs. Silent Resistance in Totalitarian Education in Slovakia.

Introduction

Totalitarian regimes typically exhibit a distinctive pattern marked by the dominance of a single leader, single party and single ideology. Therefore, Timothy Snyder, in his book *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* warns: beware a state where there is a single party (Snyder, 2017). The continuity of power in totalitarian regimes is ensured by various types of party education, in which the focus is mainly on ideological training of the future elites. The aim of the study was to explore how the education of the future party cadres was ensured during the period of communism in Czechoslovakia, specifically in Slovakia. Answers to the following questions were sought: *When was the education established and who decided about it? How was it organised? What was its development like? How did the education take place, in what ways and forms? Whether and to what extent was leisure time of the participants organised?*

As far as the current research is concerned, political education in Czechoslovakia is addressed from a broader perspective in publications by Urbášek, 2008; Devátá et al., 2011; Devátá, 2014; Olejník, 2018; Gabzdilová, 2018; Kudláčová (ed.), 2019 and 2023; Cuhra et al., 2020. As for the Political Institute of the CC CPC the studies by Dinuš (2008 and 2010) are to be noted. The presented research is based mainly on the study of archival sources of the Slovak National Archive in Bratislava (the Fund of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC), contemporary documents and secondary literature related to the topic.

Socio-political and Historical Context

After the end of the WWII, taking into consideration the victorious powers, it was completely clear that Czechoslovakia would focus on the East and its foreign policy orientation would change. The turn from an orientation towards the Western powers to a close alliance with the Soviet Union, was a key change in the post-war Czechoslovakia.²

2 Although the study focuses on party education during the era of communism in Slovakia, it is impossible to ignore the fact that Slovakia was part of Czechoslovakia at that time. Czechoslovakia was established on October 28, 1918, as one of

The February coup in 1948 was only a formal act by which Czechoslovakia became part of the Eastern Bloc and the Communist Party began to rule. A fundamental step in the formation of the communist regime was the adoption of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic on May 9, 1948 in Prague. From 1949, Czechoslovakia was part of the economic organization the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and from 1955, it was part of the military pact the Warsaw Pact.

It may be stated that all essential structural, organisational and personnel changes in the school system in Slovakia were carried out in the period of Stalinism.³ It was the first stage in the development of the socialist school, which was typical of the strongest indoctrination by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism⁴. The content of education at all

the successor countries after the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, while the state organization was defined by the Constitution of February 29, 1920. It is a Central European country that existed between 1918 and 1992, excluding the period of the WWII. After the end of the WWII, Czechoslovakia was restored to the borders it had before 1938, with the exception of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which became part of the Soviet Union. Already during the Second World War, in December 1943, an alliance treaty between the Soviet leader Joseph V. Stalin and the Czechoslovak president-in-exile Eduard Beneš was signed, making the Soviet Union Czechoslovakia's closest ally. After the communist coup in February 1948, the new Constitution of May 9, 1948 was adopted, which defined the Czechoslovak Republic as a "people's democratic state" and ensured the laying of the foundations of socialism in all areas of social life.

- 3 Stalin died in 1953, however, condemnation of the cult of his figure occurred only at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, which marked the process of de-Stalinization. On the politicization of the school system and education, see the collective monograph KUDLÁČOVÁ, Blanka (ed.), 2019. *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1945–1989* [tr. *Pedagogical Thinking and Education in Slovakia Between 1945 and 1989*]. Trnava: Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis.
- 4 For details on implementation of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism in all areas of society in Czechoslovakia, see DEVÁTÁ, Markéta, 2014. *Marxismus jako projekt nové společnosti* [tr. *Marxism as a Project of New Society*]. Praha: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR. On ideologization of the system of education and transformation of education in Slovakia, see OLEJNÍK, Milan, 2018. *Implementácia marxisticko-leninskej ideológie vo sfére vzdelávania na Slovensku v kontexte politického vývoja v rokoch 1948–1953* [tr. *Implementation of Marxist-Leninist Ideology in the Sphere of Education*

levels of schools “as well as extracurricular education were subordinated to it” (Gubricová, 2023). According to Cuhra et al. (2020, p. 30), Marxism-Leninism represented “a fundamentalist direction that was elevated to the state ideology in socialist countries of the Soviet-type”.

The forty-year period of communism was not homogeneous. The main landmark is represented by the period of reform process in the 1960s, known as the Prague Spring. Favourable conditions for liberalization of the regime arose as a result of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union. A secret speech delivered by Nikita Khrushchev, the new general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in 1956, represented an impulse for this. In the speech, he criticized the period of the cult of personality under Stalin and pointed to his crimes. Echoes of de-Stalinization reached Czechoslovakia with delay because the party leadership led by Antonín Novotný, responsible for the trials committed in the 1950s, postponed taking responsibility for these political processes (Londák, Sikora & Londáková, 2002).

The political liberalization in August 1968 ended abruptly due to the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops led by the Soviet Union. This was followed by a period known as normalization⁵, typical especially in the 1970s. In December 1970, the party leadership adopted a document that became the ideological canon of normalization, *Poučenie z krízového vývoja v strane a spoločnosti po XIII. zjazde KSČ* [tr. Lessons from the Crisis Development in the Party and Society after the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia]. It summarizes the goals of normalization as follows: to achieve normalization of conditions in the country on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, to restore the leading role of the party and the authority of the state power of the

in Slovakia in the Context of Political Development between 1948 and 1953]. Prešov: Universum.

5 The term “normalization” can be understood in a narrower and broader sense. In a narrower sense, it is the period of liquidation of the reforms of the Prague Spring contained in the so-called Moscow Protocol from August 1968 to the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in May 1971. In a broader sense, it is the historical period from August 1969 to the end of 1989.

working class, to eliminate counter-revolutionary organizations from political life and to strengthen international ties of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic with the Soviet Union and other socialist allies (Lessons..., 1970).

The reform process was presented by the communists as a counter-revolution and the Soviet occupation was portrayed as fraternal and international aid. In this sense, the regime proceeded to liquidate the reform measures and returned to the application of the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Marxist-Leninist ideology in all areas within the society. One of these steps was the establishment of Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava.

The Beginnings of Party Education in Czechoslovakia after the February Coup

The initial forms of party education began to take shape immediately after 1948. Its aim was to acquire and deepen the knowledge in the field of Marxism-Leninism, with the target audience being members of the Communist Party. Initially, it was organized in the form of training sessions known as the *Days of Communist Education*. The *Year of Party Training* was introduced in 1949. Within these programs, education took place in three forms: basic courses of Marxism-Leninism, Marxism-Leninism study groups, and evening schools of Marxism-Leninism. Starting in 1951, party education was also open to non-party members. In 1953, the evening schools of Marxism-Leninism were renamed to Evening Universities of Marxism-Leninism [orig. *Večerné univerzity marxizmu-leninizmu*, orig. abbr. VUML], and the duration of studies was extended to two years.

“Party education was founded on a unified and centrally approved ideological line and was systematized” (Cuhra et al., 2020). It was carried out through various forms (courses, study groups, etc.), some of which gradually took on the form of institutionalized education (e.g. Evening Schools of Marxism-Leninism). However, there was a lack of education for the future top party cadres. Therefore, on January 19, 1953, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of

Czechoslovakia⁶ decided to establish the Party College of the CC CPC in Prague [orig. *Vysoká stranická škola pri Ústrednom výbore Komunistickej strany Československa*] (Dinuš, 2008). This marked the transformation of party education to university education. Its goal was “to train party leaders so that, equipped with the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, they could implement the party’s policy in practice, selflessly lead workers in building the socialist society and be always ready to protect their homeland” (Organizational Statutes, 1953, p. 3). In 1965, this Party College was renamed to the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia [orig. *Vysoká škola politická pri Ústrednom výbore KSČ*, further on the *Political Institute*]⁷ and its graduates were trained as party cadres for the highest political positions. Formally, it was placed at the level of other universities, however, it was not a state school. It was funded by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (further on Central Committee of the CPC). As part of the normalization process, a new faculty of the Political Institute was established in Bratislava by the resolution of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPC from March 13, 1970.⁸

Establishment, Objectives and Structure of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava

The Faculty of the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Bratislava (further on

6 Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was elected by the Central Committee, in order to manage the work between the regular meetings of the Central Committee. It had 10 to 12 members and met once a week.

7 On the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the CPC see DINUŠ, Peter, 2008. *Vysoká škola politická ÚV KSČ* [tr. Political Institute of the CC CPC]. In: *Studia Politica Slovaca*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 14–32.

8 Resolution of the 165th Meeting of the Presidium from March 13, 1970. Fund of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (further on SNA, the fund of the Faculty), A-02, box 1, vol. 3, p. 1. Slovak National Archive.

the Faculty) was part of the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the CPC in Prague.⁹ The Faculty was established on September 1, 1971 and the classes started in 1972. According to the Statutes, its goal was: “1) education of Marxist-Leninist cadres for the needs of the party, state and social bodies and organizations, 2) participation in the development of social sciences, deepening their connection with the politics of the Communist Party, 3) scientific training of cadres in the fields of Marxism-Leninism and other fields of social sciences.”¹⁰ It was a politically oriented party education of the future communist cadres, potentially involving re-training of the already established cadres. The Faculty was funded directly from the budget of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia (further on Central Committee of the CPS).

The dean of the faculty was appointed by the Central Committee of the CPC and was a member of the board of the rector of the Political Institute in Prague. He dealt with all serious tasks together with the section of education and science of the Central Committee of the CPS and the political-organizational department of the Central Committee of the CPS. The board of the dean of the faculty was made up of senior staff and functionaries of the faculty: dean, vice-deans, head of economic administration, head of cadre department, chairman of the Institution Committee of the CPS [orig. Celozávodný výbor KSS], chairman of the Baseline Organization of the Communist Party of Slovakia and chairman of the Institution Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. Pursuant to the Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPC of March 13, 1970, the following structure of departments was proposed: 1) Marxist-Leninist philosophy, 2) political economy, 3) scientific communism, 4) theory and practice of party building, 5) history of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 6) history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 7) history of the international labour movement,

9 Ibid.

10 Statutes of the Political Institute, 1983. Fund of the Faculty, A-01, box 1. SNA.

8) national economic policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the economy of industry, 9) agricultural policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and economy of agriculture, 10) state and law, 11) cultural policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, journalism, science, education, 12) languages and rhetoric, 13) cabinet of physical education.¹¹ Departments were established gradually. Initially, the following departments were established at the faculty: Marxist-Leninist Philosophy (Department Head: RSDr.¹² Emil Gröhner), Political Economy (Assoc. Prof. Zdenka Sitárová), History of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (RSDr. Augustín Vanka), International Communist and Workers' Movement (PhDr. Milan Hrbko), State and Law (JUDr. RSDr. Ján Zemánek), and Theory and Practice of Party Building (Assoc. Prof. Juraj Bobota).¹³ Assoc. Prof. Jolana Herzková was appointed as the dean of the faculty in 1972. The faculty's management, alongside her, consisted of two vice-deans responsible for pedagogical and scientific activities (Prof. Juraj Zvara and Assoc. Prof. Jozef Danáš). As of October 1, 1971, the faculty employed 19 teachers, including 1 professor, 2 associate professors, and 16 research assistants.¹⁴

The Report on pedagogical and educational activities for the academic year 1974/75 states that "there were 12 departments and Cabinet of Physical Education at the faculty. The number of teachers increased to 57..."¹⁵ Apparently, departments specialised swiftly, and the number of full-time teachers was increasing. Activities of individual departments were regularly evaluated at the dean's collegium. Compliance

11 Ibid.

12 For the title RSDr. see footnote no. 24.

13 Uznesenie 36. schôdze ÚV KSČ zo dňa 25. apríla 1972 [tr. Resolution of the 36th Meeting of the CC CPC from April 25, 1972]. Fund of the Faculty, A-02, box 1, vol. 3, SNA.

14 Ibid.

15 Správa o pedagogicko-výchovnej práci na Fakulte VŠP ÚV KSČ v Bratislave v školskom roku 1974/75 [tr. Report on pedagogical and educational activities at the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava in the academic year 1974/75]. Fund of the Faculty, A-02, box 1, vol. 2, SNA.

with the so-called pedagogical norm by individual staff members as well as their publication and research activities were also evaluated.



Figure 1. *Opening of the new school year at the Faculty of the Political Institute of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, September 7, 1972.*
Source: Archives of the Press Agency of the Slovak Republic (photo by Borodáčová).

Possibilities of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education, Cadre Policy

The study at the faculty took place in the form of internal study (four years) or external study while employed (five years). In addition to regular study, the Faculty offered one-year specialized courses and a wide range of short-term courses, which were shorter than one year. The curriculum for each academic year was approved by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC¹⁶.

16 The Secretariat was another body of the Central Committee of the CPC. It managed the regular course of work, monitored implementation of resolutions, also dealt with cadre policy, and send and received national and international delegations.

In the academic year 1974/75, there were 312 students enrolled at the faculty in regular study programs (135 in internal form of study and 177 in external study while employed), and 168 students underwent training in short-term courses.¹⁷ The first graduates of the regular study graduated in 1975/76.

The faculty provided a large number of short-term courses, approved one year in advance by the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC. Their aim was to “ensure cyclical retraining of party officials and bodies included in the nomenclature of the Central Committee of the CPC, to acquaint the attendees with new knowledge in various scientific disciplines, especially Marxist philosophy, political economy, history, scientific communism, and the formation and work of the party”.¹⁸ Short-term courses lasted either one, two or four weeks or a month and they were focused on specific categories of the managerial personnel of the communist party. For instance, in the academic year 1973/74 the following short-term courses were conducted: in September, one-month course for officials of district committees of the CPS and chairmen of major baseline organisations of the CPS was held in the Hungarian language¹⁹; a month-long course for employees of regional committees and district committees in the field of ideological work of the party took place in September, too; in October, a three-week seminar for members of regional, district, and company committees of the CPS was held; in November, a month-long course took place

17 Správa o pedagogicko-výchovnej práci na Fakulte VŠP ÚV KSČ v Bratislave v školskom roku 1974/75 [tr. Report on pedagogical and educational activities at the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava in the academic year 1974/75]. Fund of the Faculty, A-02, box 1, vol. 2, SNA.

18 See *Zásady výberu a rozmiestňovania poslucháčov Vysokej školy politickej ÚV KSČ v Prahe, jej fakulty v Bratislave, pripojených kurzov a Vysokej straníckej školy KSSZ v Moskve* [tr. *Principles of Selection and Placement of Students of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Prague, its Faculty in Bratislava, Affiliated Courses and the Party College of the CPSU in Moscow*], 1971.

19 The Hungarian minority is the largest minority with historical roots in Slovakia. According to the population census from 1970, this minority consisted of more than 500,000 inhabitants (about 12% of the total population of Slovakia), available at: www.statistics.sk.

for personnel of regional and district committees of the CPS responsible for overseeing party work in the agricultural sector; additionally, a two-week seminar was organized for lecturers from regional and district committees of the party, as well as teachers from regional political schools, focusing on current issues related to scientific atheism and the church policy of the party (conducted twice). In December a two-week seminar was held for members of regional and district committees of the CPS. In February, a month-long course was conducted for nomenclature cadre of the Central Committee of the CPS in the field of personnel and human resources management. Additionally, there was a week-long nationwide seminar for members of regional and district committees of the CPS and a week-long nationwide seminar addressing current issues in the content and methodology of party propaganda for lecturers from district committees of the party and the Houses of Political Education [orig. Domy politickej výchovy] (conducted twice). In March, a one-month course for nomenklatura cadre of the CC CPS in the field of cadre and personnel work as well as a one-month course for nomenklatura cadre of the CC CPS in the field of national economy were held. In April, a two-month course for lecturers of the regional and district committees of the CPS focused on the national economy policy of the party took place.²⁰ The faculty also provided a one-year, one-and-half-year and two-year postgraduate programs focusing on the training of the officials of the party bodies.

Pursuant to the resolution of the Presidium of the CC CPC on cadre and personnel work from November 6, 1970, it was necessary to carry out an objective evaluation of personnel regularly, because “education of party personnel and the proposal for job placement requires a comprehensive evaluation of work, intensity of study, political activity and

20 See *Zásady výberu a rozmiestňovania poslucháčov Vysokej školy politickej ÚV KSČ v Prahe, jej fakulty v Bratislave, pripojených kurzov a Vysokej straníckej školy KSSZ v Moskve* [tr. *Principles of Selection and Placement of Students of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Prague, its Faculty in Bratislava, Affiliated Courses and the Party College of the CPSU in Moscow*], 1971.

character traits of each attendee”.²¹ The assessment was processed both continuously for each year of regular study, but also as a final assessment in one-year, one-and-a-half-year and two-year distance postgraduate courses. In all forms of study, there was a final comprehensive assessment, too. Within it, the following areas were evaluated: 1) academic performance, 2) political involvement and alignment in all activities, 3) character and personal qualities, health status.²² Each grade had its own grade teacher who worked out the assessment of individual students. For each grade, a so-called information report was processed, encompassing details such as the number of students and their enrolment at the beginning of the academic year, assessments of teaching quality, student participation, evaluation of order and discipline, along with conclusions and recommendations for any necessary measures. Both long-term and short-term courses underwent similar evaluation procedures.

The faculty also paid attention to integration of theory and practice. Students acquired practical experience through involvement in party and political-organizational activities within party, social, and state bodies and organisations. First and second-year students were required to undertake internships within party bodies, particularly in the district committees of the CPS, during holidays. Third-year students completed a pre-diploma internship. Furthermore, they engaged in practical training related to individual subjects throughout the academic year, ranging from 3 to 14 days in duration. The assessment of the practical training was also a part of the evaluation process.

The resolution of the CC CPS from June 5, 1979 states that “based on the impactful work results, the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava has firmly established itself as a university workplace in the Slovak Socialist Republic... and it gained public recognition as a pedagogical-theoretical institution. The Faculty of

21 Smernica rektora k hodnoteniu poslucháčov VŠP ÚV KSČ zo dňa 19. 10. 1978 [tr. Directives of the rector on evaluation of the students of the Political Institute CC CPC from October 19, 1978]. Fund of the Faculty, A-01, box 7. SNA.

22 Ibid.

the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava plays a significant role in education of cadres and in addressing political and theoretical tasks".²³ In the informative report on the resolution it was discovered that as of June 5, 1979, the faculty had an enrolment of 400 students in both internal and external study programs. By 1979, 179 students had successfully graduated from the faculty in both internal and external form of study, with 81 graduates earning the degree of Doctor of Social and Political Sciences (RSDr.²⁴), the faculty trained more than 300 students in one-year courses, and more than 3,000 students in short-term courses.²⁵ By 1979, education was carried out exclusively in the field of study *Ideological Work of the Party*, however, as stated in the report, education in two more fields of study was being prepared: *Economic Policy* and *Party Management and State Administration*. The faculty provided 12 forms of short-term courses, of which 5 were nationwide.²⁶ The quality of the teaching process, which took place in the form of lectures, seminars, exercises, students' independent work and consultations, was also regularly monitored. In the teaching process, the emphasis was placed on seminars and exercises, as well as on

23 Uznesenie z 80. schôdze Predsedníctva ÚV KSS zo dňa 5. 6. 1979 [tr. Resolution from the 80th meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPC from June 5, 1979]. Fund of the Faculty, A-02, box 1, vol. 2. SNA.

24 The academic degree RSDr. (Lat. *rerum socialium doctor*, Slov. *doktor sociálnych vied*, Eng. *Doctor of social sciences*, and since 1980, *doktor sociálno-politických vied* [doctor of social and political sciences], so called "small doctorate degree") is an academic degree awarded to graduates of schools of political focus during the period of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia who completed their studies with a rigorous exam. It used to be a target of many jokes and explanations of pejorative nature. The best known one: RSDr. – in the Slovak language "rozhodnutím strany doktor" (tr. by the decision of the party a doctor).

25 Uznesenie z 80. schôdze Predsedníctva ÚV KSS zo dňa 5. 6. 1979 [tr. Resolution from the 80th meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPS from June 5, 1979], Príloha III. [tr. Attachment III], Informatívna správa o činnosti Fakulty Vysokej školy politickej ÚV KSČ v Bratislave a návrhy na jej ďalší rozvoj a perspektívy [tr. Informative report on the activities of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava and proposals for its further development and perspectives]. Fund of the Faculty, A-02, box 1, vol. 2, pp. 1–2. SNA.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

individual work, which was meant to lead to the development of the students' activity. Pedagogical-Methodological Cabinet was established with the task of improving methodology and modernizing teaching. During this period, instruction was mainly conducted by internal faculty members, although some teaching continued to be carried out by external staff from the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Prague and external experts with extensive experience from the CC CPC, CC CPS, the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CC CPS in Bratislava, scientific research institutes of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, and Bratislava universities. As of June 1979, the faculty had 70 teachers, including 5 professors, 10 associate professors, 52 research assistants, and 3 assistants (1 with DrSc.²⁷, 20 with CSc.²⁸).²⁹ As of December 31, 1985, the total number of the faculty's teaching staff was 101, including 9 professors and 27 associate professors with CSc., 7 professors and associate professors without CSc., 16 research assistants with CSc. and 37 in postgraduate studies, 5 without CSc. outside postgraduate studies (including 4 DrSc.).³⁰ A comparison of the faculty's teaching staff in the mentioned years is in Table no. 1. The report also states that despite improvements in political education between 1971 and 1976, by the end of 1976, only 19,8% political workers of the communist party had university political education; 26.2% completed short-term courses and 6.9% had basic political education.³¹ Of the total number of nomenklatura cadres, approved for positions between 1971 and 1975, only 25%

27 DrSc. (Lat. *doctor scientiarum*, Slov. *doktor vied*) is a title awarded after the defense of a dissertation. Together with the title CSc., it formed a pair of scientific degrees in Slovakia, where DrSc. represented a higher title. It has been awarded based on significant scientific achievements only to exceptional individuals since 1953 to the present.

28 CSc. (Lat. *candidatus scientiarum*, Slov. *kandidát vied*) is a title awarded after the defense of a dissertation, used in Slovakia from 1953 to 1996.

29 Ibid., Príloha IV [tr. Attachment IV].

30 Zasadnutie Kolégia dekana 3. 1. 1986 [tr. Dean's collegium meeting], Materiál k bodu Zhodnotenie výsledkov a ďalšie perspektívy zvyšovania kvalifikácie [tr. Material to the point Evaluation of results and further perspectives of improvement of qualification]. Fund of the Faculty, A-01, box 10. SNA.

31 Ibid, p. 10.

of workers graduated from higher forms of political education (including the Evening University of Marxism-Leninism), which is only 28.4% of the total nomenklatura.³²

Table No. 1. *Comparison of the faculty's teaching staff in June 1970 and December 1985.*

Position	June 1979	December 1985
Professors	5	9
Assoc. professors with CSc.	10	27
Professors and Assoc. professors without CSc.	-	7
Research assistant with CSc.	20	16
Research assistant without CSc.	32	-
Research assistant in postgraduate studies	-	37
Research assistant outside post-graduate studies	-	5
Assistant	3	-
Total number	70	101

In addition to pedagogical and scientific activities, propagandist and lecturing activities for the purposes outside of the faculty represented an important component of the agenda of the faculty. "Over the past three years, teachers delivered over 5,000 hours of lectures as part of the propagandist activities. During the same period, they published up to 200 propagandist works in party publications, radio, and television. They actively participate in the preparation of background studies for party bodies, departments of the CC CPS and lecturing groups. In just the last two years, they have prepared 82 materials for these purposes."³³

In accordance with the resolution of the Secretariat of the CC CPC dated September 16, 1980, the faculty became a training centre for education of scientific aspirants in five scientific fields: dialectical and

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, p. 6.

historical materialism, political economy, theory of scientific communism, general history (with the focus on history of international revolutionary and communist movement, and history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), and Czechoslovak history and history of the CPC.³⁴ From 1988, the faculty provided scientific postgraduate studies also in the field of economic policy of the CPC and Marxist-Leninist sociology. The possibility of scientific postgraduate studies and improvement of the qualification structure of the faculty established the prerequisites for the Scientific Council of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava to be granted the authority to award the scientific degree DrSc. in the following fields: history, scientific communism, Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and political economy. Beginning in September 1, 1988, new study plans and programs approved by the Presidium of the CC CPC on January 6, 1988 started to be carried out. Also, two-year external postgraduate form of study began to be implemented.

In accordance with the concept of development of the faculty outlined in 1979, after the completion of building processes of the first part of a new building, the plan was to admit 50 internal students and 60 external students annually. This would result in 500 graduates of the internal study and 600 graduates of the external study, totalling 1100 graduates by 1985. Following the completion of the initial phase of the building, the plan was to increase the number of internal students to 70 to 80 annually, the same held for external students; thus, around 2,000 students were supposed to graduate from the faculty in regular studies by 1995. Considering the special one-year courses, the plan was to train 1,100 internal students and 900 external students by 1995, along with around 13,000 students in the short-term courses.

34 Ašpirantský poriadok Fakulty Vysokej školy politickej ÚV KSČ v Bratislave zo dňa 1. 9. 1986 [tr. Postgraduate regulations of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava from September 9, 1986]. Fund of the Faculty, A-01, box 1, SNA. The studies of political economy or history were possible at other universities as well; however, their content here was entirely subordinated to the needs of the Communist Party.

Around 800 students were anticipated to be trained in the postgraduate form of study.³⁵

Conditions for Admission of Students and Care for Students

Regarding the selection of students, the Secretariat of the CC CPC approved *Zásady výberu a rozmiestňovania poslucháčov Vysokej školy politickej ÚV KSČ v Prahe, jej fakulty v Bratislave, pripojených kurzov a Vysokej straníckej školy KSSZ v Moskve* [tr. Principles of Selection and Placement of Students of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Prague, its Faculty in Bratislava, Affiliated Courses and the Party College of the CPSU in Moscow] (further on Principles) on September 28, 1971. According to the Principles, the selection of the students had to strictly adhere to the “criteria of class, political awareness, loyalty to socialism, Marxism-Leninism and principles of the proletarian internationalism” (Principles, p. 1). For regular university studies (four-year and five-year studies), the selection was made from the leading political workers of the district and regional committees of the party, the Central Committee of the CPS and CPC, who have proven themselves in practice; workers of party bodies who were prospectively considered for these positions or who were capable of performing responsible positions in the state administration, mass and social organizations, the press, radio and television; the proven workers from the field of the Socialist Youth Union (further on SYU); but also from conscious and talented workers – officials, directly from the factory. The admission conditions were as follows: completed secondary school education with a school leaving examination diploma (in the case of comrades who could no longer pursue this study, completion of a preparatory

35 Uznesenie z 80. schôdze Predsedníctva ÚV KSS zo dňa 5. 6. 1979 [tr. Resolution from the 80th meeting of the Presidium of the CC CPS from June 6, 1979], Príloha: Informatívna správa o činnosti Fakulty Vysokej školy politickej ÚV KSČ v Bratislave a návrhy na jej ďalší rozvoj a perspektívy [Attachment: Informative report on the activities of the Faculty of the Political Institute of the CC CPC in Bratislava and proposals for its further development and perspectives], Fund of the Faculty, A-02, box 1, vol. 2, p. 12. SNA.

course for studying at the Faculty and successful passing of entrance exams were required instead), at least five years of membership in the CPC (exceptions were only allowed for members of the SYU up to 25 years of age, where a three-year membership in the CPC was sufficient), experience in execution of party and public roles and age up to 40 years³⁶ (cf. Principles, pp. 5 and 6). “With all students, their perspective and envisaged way of their political alignment must be clarified before their enrolment. Students admitted to studies commit to taking on roles according to party’s need after they graduate” (Principles, p. 6). The admission of students was determined by the Secretariat of the CC CPC based on proposals from the party’s regional committees and the Central Committee of the CPC. The proposals had to be accompanied by comprehensive personnel materials and a medical report on health status. Postgraduate students typically had to have completed university education, be politically active in party and public functions, and be under 50 years of age. The Secretariat of the CC CPC decided on the placement of all graduates.

Regarding the selection of students for year-long specialized courses, decisions on their admission were made by the Secretariat of the CC CPC. The admission criteria were as follows: at least five years of membership in the party, age up to 40 years of age, and a minimum of two years of experience in party work or work in the SYU, or other relevant civic organizations. Proposals for students for short-term courses were submitted by the regional committees of the party to the political-organizational department of the CC CPC no later than two months before the start of the course. In the case of short-term courses lasting longer than 3 months, the participants were approved by the Secretariat of the CC CPC; proposals for students for courses shorter than 3 months were approved by a committee composed of representatives from the political-organizational department of the CC CPC, the propaganda and agitation department of the CC CPC, the Political Institute

36 In the case of students admitted to external study, it could also involve older students, but up to a maximum age of 40 years.

of the CC CPC, supplemented by a representative from the department of the CC CPC for which the course was organized (Principles, p. 8).

The students of the faculty and their family members were provided with comprehensive care, which, based on the experience from the initial years of the activities of the faculty, was transformed to a written material entitled *Program komplexnej starostlivosti o poslucháčov a pracovníkov Fakulty ÚV KSČ v Bratislave na roky 1989–1990* [tr. *Comprehensive Care Program for Students and Staff of the Faculty of the CC CPC in Bratislava between 1989 and 1990*].³⁷ The care was provided by the faculty in cooperation with the Faculty Committee of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement. As the regular internal study at the Faculty had a residential nature, the program also regulated the basic conditions of accommodation and life of students in the faculty's dormitory. The program included care for students in the following areas: work and living conditions and environment; care for the conditions of study, accommodation, and the life of students in the faculty's dormitory; care for meals, recreation, physical education, and sports; care for cultural and social life; care for women and children; care for the housing matters of students; social welfare.

Change in Political Conditions and the Closure of the Faculty

There is no indication in the archival materials and reports that the Faculty would have responded to the policies of restructuring (orig. perestroika), which can be observed with the beginning of leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985. Some members of the KSČ leadership considered restructuring a Soviet specificity that could not be consistently applied to the Czechoslovak conditions. However, the KSČ could not completely resist the application of the new pro-reform policy and glasnost also emerged in Czechoslovakia on a limited scale. Expressions such as 'decentralization' or 'democratization' appeared in the public

37 Program komplexnej starostlivosti o poslucháčov a pracovníkov Fakulty ÚV KSČ v Bratislave na roky 1989–1990 [tr. Comprehensive Care Program for Students and Staff of the Faculty of the CC CPC in Bratislava between 1989 and 1990]. Fund of the Faculty, A-01, box 1, vol. 1. SNA.

space. At the beginning of 1987, the document *Principles of Restructuring of the Economic Mechanism in Czechoslovakia* (Štrougal & Jakeš, 1987) was published, and these principles became the basic starting point for the reconstruction of Czechoslovakia. Public dissatisfaction grew, because the problems felt by the public were also reported in the party press (McDermott, 2015).

The events of the Velvet Revolution marked the end of the totalitarian regime and the political primacy of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. By the resolution of the 2nd meeting of the Executive Committee of the CC CPC on January 27, 1990, the activities of the Political Institute, including its Faculty in Bratislava, were terminated. The management of the Faculty responded to this resolution at its meeting on January 29, 1990, where decisions related to the liquidation of the faculty, discontinuation of education in various grades, and termination of employment contracts with staff were adopted.³⁸ The activities of the faculty were terminated on August 31, 1990.

Conclusion

Collectivist ideologies reject seeing society as a result of free actions of individuals and specific human conduct (Schama, 1989) because it allows overlooking the responsibility of specific actors governing the given society. Bertrand Russell (2004, p. 23) asserts, “We have too readily assumed that if a man acquires certain abilities through knowledge, they will use them in a way that is socially beneficial.” This fact is confirmed by the results of the presented research. The concept of political education is still politicized in Slovakia, which is a result of the communist era. Historians and historians of education have focused on researching political education in the given period only in recent years. Dealing with the legacy of totalitarian regimes and totalitarian education, through which entire generations were ideologically indoctrinated, is not easy. This historical context of political education contributes

38 Zázpisnica z porady vedenia fakulty dňa 29. 1. 1990 [tr. Minutes of the faculty management meeting, January 21, 1990]. Fund of the Faculty, A-01, box 9. SNA.

to the fact that the term politics or political education itself has significantly negative connotations in Slovakia, closely resembling the meaning of indoctrination.

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