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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

Sovietization in Poland and its Impact on Education and Pedagogy

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Abstract The purpose of this article is to identify the roots of the phenomenon known as Sovietization, and to explore its implementation in Polish education and pedagogy.

In Poland (and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe), which was left in Stalin's sphere of influence as a result of the conferences at Yalta (February 4–11, 1945) and Potsdam (July 17, 1945 – August 2, 1945), Sovietization is a painful page of history. Understood as the imposition of economic, social, and cultural solutions modeled on Soviet Russia and then the USSR, combined with communist in-

doctrination, it had negative consequences for education and pedagogy. These effects resulted from the anthropological and cultural assumptions of Sovietization, which were implemented in education by the creation of a new paradigm of knowledge about education – socialist pedagogy.

The history of Sovietization in Poland had two politically distinct stages. It operated 1) during the period of Polish independence (1918/20 – 1939) and 2) during the period of communist enslavement (1945–1989). In the first period, the influence of communism was limited. The second stage, which represents an interesting and at the same time cruel experience of the Poles, demands greater attention from historians.

Keywords Sovietization, ideological terror, Sovietization in Poland, Sovietization in education, Soviet pedagogy, socialist pedagogy

The Roots of the Term and the Phenomenon

The term 'sovietization' is of Russian origin [from Russian совет (soviet) – council], but its actual roots reach back to the tradition of the structures and operations of the international communist movement. The colloquial association of sovietization with Russia is warranted only superficially, being connected with the political upheaval

inspired by the movement known as the October Revolution of 1917. Subsequent to its victory, the name of the newly created state that emerged from Russia began to be used as *Sovetskaya Rossiya* – Soviet Russia; *Sovietskiy Soyuz* – Soviet Union (Rosja Sowiecka, in: *Encyklopedia PWN*). The councils (СОВЕТЫ), as the structures that managed the various roles of the state, were mostly workers' councils that represented the working class, since the Marxists of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries took this social group to be their proletariat.

The councils (soviets) operated in many European countries in which a Marxist-inspired socialist movement developed. In Germany, for example, a sailors' revolt broke out in Kiel in November 1918. Soldiers seized the city; the rebellion was supported by workers, following which the revolutionaries formed the soldiers' and workers' councils in the city they controlled. The All-German Congress of Councils was then formed, and the Bavarian Republic of Councils came into existence. And although the November Revolution of 1918 in Germany was ultimately unsuccessful, its structures in the form of workers' and soldiers' soviets are a historical fact. The significance of the soviets intensified as the Red Army approached Warsaw in 1920 (Nowak, 2020), and the leaders of Soviet Russia announced their willingness to “shake hands” with their German comrades following their march “through the corpse of white Poland”.

The delegate councils of the socialist (communist) movement were also active in Belgium, where a number of parties of Marxist origin were established at the time. In Poland, they were active before the regaining of independence in 1918 within the left-wing parties the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL) and the Polish Socialist Party-Left (PPS-Lewica), as well as after WWII.

In Russia, councils of workers' delegates were originally formed during the 1905/1907 revolution, mainly to manage strikes in factories. They were liquidated by the police before 1907 but revived during the February Revolution of 1917, mainly as the Councils of Soldiers' Delegates, and by July of that year, they became an element of the two powers in Russia, i.e. the Provisional Government and the Councils of

Delegates. Initially, the councils were led by the representatives of the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. After the October coup, they were taken over by the Bolsheviks¹ and then, under the dictates of the Executive Committee of the Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, the seizure of power in Russia was announced.² In the structure of power, a *soviet* was the basic unit which gave the impression of the power being taken by the people.

All this leads us to the claim that the Councils of Workers' Delegates (also of Soldiers' and Peasants') known as *soviets* were politically representative institutions used by the Marxists associated with the Communist International. In fact, hardly any European country managed to avoid an invasion of the international communist movement and the impact of its powerful structures in the form of *soviets*.

Despite the clearly international status of the communist (Marxist) movement and its organizations, its effects – in the form of sovietization – are commonly attributed to Soviet Russia.³ Sovietization is thus understood as the process of the USSR (as the Russian state) imposing upon the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which were dependent on it as a result of the Yalta agreements, of its political forms, institutions of public life and the model of social and individual

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- 1 The term “Bolshevik” originates from Lenin’s work. In 1903. “at the Brussels-London congress of social democrats he brought about a split into Mensheviks (mieńsze – less) – those who were in the minority and Bolsheviks (bolshe – more), those who had the majority” (V. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 1919, p. 100, quoted after Szymański, 1920, p. 7).
 - 2 The Bolshevik government in Russia consisted of the Council of People’s Commissars; after the October Revolution the Councils of Peasants’ Delegates (RDCh) were formed; from March 1918 the delegates’ councils were called the Councils of Workers’, Peasants’ and Red Army Delegates ([cit. 2021-08-16]. Available at: <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/Rady-Delegatow-Robotniczych;3965574.html>.)
 - 3 In 2010, Walicki wrote the same as Szymański did in 1920: treating the Soviet Communists “as heirs of the French Revolution and executors of the testament of its radical wing (as Richard Löwenthal, for example, does) is not unfounded” (R. Löwenthal, 1988). Beyond the “Institutionalized Revolution” in Russia and China. In *The Soviet Union and the Challenge of the Future*, Vol. 1, New York, p. 14 (after Walicki, 2010, p. 127).

life inherent in the ideological doctrine of Marx–Engels–Lenin–Stalin (MELS), aimed at creating a “new man” and a “new civilization”. The process itself, understood in this way, was to lead to the lasting subordination of the countries placed by the anti-Hitler coalition at the Yalta Conference under the “protection” of the communist center of Moscow, and to their ideological unification (Sowietyzacja, in: *Encyklopedia PWN*). This act of placing central Europe “under Stalin’s protection” is sometimes seen as of a gesture of payment for the Soviet Union’s war effort, whereas in all truth, it was a violent expansion of the international communist movement’s sphere of influence, without the consent of the central European countries.

Since Russia was the first country in which the communists successfully seized power, the gradual domination of the MELS ideology in the region began to be seen as Russian in origin. This colloquial association is as obvious as it is essentially untrue, as was the recognition of countries such as Poland, Hungary, Romania and others as communist states by international communities. The whole fallacy of this categorization can be explained in terms of the nations under Soviet rule fighting for many years against the imposed communist power and its ideology, Poland being a leading example. As already mentioned, the real sources of sovietization lie in the operations of the communist internationals, not Russia as a nation-state. After all, it was under the aegis of international socialism /Marxism/ communism that it was not only possible to successfully execute a revolution in Russia (and later in China), but also to start a process of sovietization in Central and Eastern Europe and, in the popular perception, shift the blame for the degrading crimes committed by the international communists onto the Russian people⁴. Another issue is the presence of representatives of this nation among core communists, which could be down to strong

4 The 1917 revolution “imported” in an armored train (Moskała, 1920) also had its Russian background perfectly described in: J. Kucharzewski, *Od białego caratu do czerwonego* [From White to Red Tsarism] Vol. I – 1923, Vol. 2 – 1925, Vol. III – 1928, Vol. IV – 1931, Vol V – 1931, Vol. VI – 1933, Vol. VII – 1935, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Kasy im. J. Mianowskiego.

beliefs but also fear and many other reasons, as well as the strength of the resistance against sovietization – an example of which can be found in Alexander Solzhenitsyn “The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956”.

Such a diagnosis can be found in the analyses of the Polish Sovietologists of the interwar period, with the prevailing view that the October revolution of 1917 consisted in the enactment of Marxist ideology with the aim of creating a communist system, which was accomplished with the participation of German plans and money, and Swedish banks. It was also suggested that it was an experiment by Western socialists, into which the Russian people fell in a situation of their government being weak and the country devastated by war, and that the “liberators” succeeded in sacrificing the Russian nation for the verification of the Marxist vision of the world (Szymański, 1920, p. 3; *ibid.*, 1939, p. 444)⁵.

Anthropological and Cultural Dimensions of Sovietization⁶

Bolshevism interpreted man and man’s nature from a materialistic and naturalistic viewpoint, rejecting all religiosity and the realm of the spirit, which the Bolsheviks deemed unfounded and redundant. Man was merely a tool of history with its creative economic factors. The Bolsheviks argued that man is by nature a creature of revolution, continuous struggle and always in the process of ‘becoming’, and that revolution itself was an organic law of the world and life. Critics of Bolshevism pointed out that these anthropological assumptions are

5 Antoni Szymański published the analysis of documents included in the collection: *Spisek niemiecko-bolszewicki. Dokumenty, dotyczące związku bolszewików z niemieckim naczelnyim dowództwem, wielkim przemysłem i finansami oraz reprodukcja fotograficzna dokumentów* [German-Bolshevik Conspiracy. Documents, concerning the Bolsheviks’ connection with the German high command, big industry and finance, and a photographic reproduction of the documents] Warsaw, 1919 (Szymański, 1920, p. 3). In 2010 Walicki writes that Lenin’s treatise *State and Revolution* served „as an explanation and legitimization of the communist experiment in Russia” (Walicki, 2010, p. 125); he also says, “we regard with distrust those who remind us of this obvious fact” (*ibid.*, p. 123).

6 The remainder of this chapter is a compilation of content from my publications mentioned in the bibliography.

not without their axiological consequences. In revolution, as defined by Bolsheviki, truth and all norms leading to the spiritual development of man are lost (Kosibowicz, 1937, p. 122). Although these presuppositions do not work in a positive sense, they have practical implications, as they consider individuals to be without volition. On this view, humanistic values are abandoned along with the idea of man as an independent, self-conscious, searching and responsible being. Such was an inevitable consequence of historical materialism, mainly because in Bolshevism (communism) only economic relations are conceived of as the determining factor, while man alone is, and continues to be seen as, next to nothing (Szymański, 1937, pp. 231–232). Even though Marx recognizes the influence of man and the institutions created by man in the course of history, he sees them as secondary factors, because the assumption of complete determinism (“existence determines consciousness”) is paramount, economic determinism being its variant (Szymański, 1937, p. 232).

Polish criticism of Bolshevism recognized the fact that the collective was supposed to be the only reality, and within the collective, the individual was to be entirely deprived of privacy, even in the psychophysical sphere. People were to think like the collective, feel like the collective, and act like the collective. Collective thinking was augmented by the loss of private ownership and the introduction of shared property. These rules were applied in schools, organizations and workplaces.

Sovietization also affected the family and morality. Bolshevik doctrine opposed both, and argued for the redundancy of the family. This was drawn directly from Marx’s *Capital* (1867), where he argues that the family is an “obvious absurdity” in its Germanic-Christian formula regarding socialization into social roles and child rearing. This was reiterated by Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), where he claims that monogamy is linked to private property, which means that when the ownership of the means of production is shared, the family loses its *raison d’être*; child-rearing becomes a public affair, and love finally regains its freedom (Szymański, 1937, pp. 240–241). Following this, in Soviet Russia, divorce laws were liberalized as early as November 1917, and abortion on demand was introduced.

Children were provoked to make ideologically critical statements about their parents, which resulted in loss of employment, imprisonment, or internment in a labor camp. This created a 7–9-million-strong army of “biezprizorni” – homeless children without care, which persisted in these numbers for many years, despite the drastically high mortality rate. Prisons for children were common. The death penalty was applied to 13-year-olds, and reportedly also to 10-year-olds (Podoleński, 1938, pp. 241–242).

Culture, as desired by the Bolsheviks, was to be international and ultimately nation states were to be abandoned. This was a culture of struggle and, as a new form, was to create a better world. Szymański refers to this hope, along with many other Marxist claims behind materialism and militant atheism, as ‘unjustified’. The concept of godlessness was crucial to Bolshevism; they even issued a Moscow-published periodical called ‘Bezbozhnik’ (Godless). Atheism was considered to be a direct consequence of dialectical materialism and combined with a materialistic interpretation of the world, it was to create a new “religion” whereas, as Szymański says, in fact “it has its dogmas that require faith, its infallible masters and books that are interpreted by the ruling group” (ibid., pp. 221–223).

The newly proposed “religion of socialism” was programmatically a religion of hatred, its symbol being the outstretched fist (ibid., p. 225). The word “hatred” was promoted as the second most important word after “exploitation”. Polish magazines often quoted Soviet examples of the promotion of hatred in order to abolish exploitation. The need for the idea of hate, speech and practice of hatred was proclaimed. Their application at school was made effective by the activists of pioneer and Komsomol organizations, who evaluated teachers and used their position to marginalize any demands made by teachers. A comprehensive critique of the culture of communism (Bolshevism) cannot be conclusive because the communists either lack the final vision, or it is altogether infantile. They simply lack a description of the paradise to be achieved. Polish critics of Marxism argued that the West ‘practiced’ Marxism theoretically, but actually practiced it in the East.

Although the young General Tukhachevsky dreamt in 1920 of reaching “red Paris”, owing to the Polish army he did not even reach Berlin; neither did Lenin and Stalin reach Prague, Vienna or Rome (Nowak, 2020). In the context of sovietization, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 is a pact of red and brown socialisms. Soon, in 1939–45, Nazism in its expansion into Central and Eastern Europe left Bolshevism behind in spreading evil, even though the latter came back to power after WWII, with the support of the Marxists, including the Frankfurt School intellectuals, and took possession of Central and Eastern Europe.

Implementation and Stages of Sovietization

For critics of Bolshevism, sovietization meant the loss of the cultural unity of Europe, including its philosophical, social and political concord, thus leading to the destruction of Latin civilization. As a global undertaking, it meant that Russia, conquered by the Bolsheviks, became the center for the worldwide expansion of communism.

The implementation of sovietization in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, began immediately after the victory of the October Revolution. It took place in stages and in particular forms. In Poland itself, two politically distinct phases can be distinguished: the period of the Second Republic (1918–1939) and the time after WWII. In the former, the Polish state successfully resisted the official Bolshevik line, while in the latter sovietization became the political program of the government as “presented to” Poland.

The first stage began with Lenin and his comrades (Trotsky, Stalin, Kamenev) deciding, as early as 1918, to attempt the military conquest of Europe and to break through to Germany, marching, as already noted, “through the corpse of white Poland”. To unite with the German socialists, the Western Front of the Red Army was formed in the fall of 1918, occupying successive lands abandoned by the German army. In Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, the Bolsheviks immediately formed communist governments. A Soviet government for Poland was also established in Moscow. Michal Klimecki argues that Bolsheviks had an idea to create a Bolshevik Republic on the lands of central Poland.

In order to carry out the project, a Polish Bureau (Polbiuro) was set up in Moscow on July 19, 1918, with Feliks Dzierżyński, Julian Marchlewski, Feliks Kon, Edward Próchniak, and Józef Unszlicht declaring themselves the Provisional Revolutionary Committee of Poland (Polish abbreviation: TKRP). The group was to become the revolutionary authority until the seizure of Warsaw by the Red Army. Its defeat in a clash with the Polish Army in the Battle of Warsaw (August 1920) caused the TKRP to cease its activities and change its membership, and the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party (B) – RKP(b) – directed it to undertake covert tasks related to the sovietization of Poland (Klimecki, 2016). After losing the war of 1920⁷, communists who stayed in Moscow did not rest in their ideological efforts to make a win, while sovietization in Poland focused on unofficial influence and external interference in the life of the Polish state.

The first stage of Sovietization was almost ineffective due to the resistance of Catholic Polish society. The memory of the victims of the war with the Bolsheviks (1920), the information reaching Poland about the cruel methods of Bolshevik operation in Soviet Russia, the anti-Bolshevik influence of the Catholic Church, the anti-Bolshevik attitude of the governments of the Second Polish Republic – all this resulted in a decisive blockade of Sovietization.

In the second stage, after World War II, the implementation of sovietization or MELS ideology [various researchers including Hejnicka-Bezwińska (2015) put an equal sign between the two] in the countries called the Countries of People's Democracy (KDL), including Poland, became possible with the rule of terror and an unimaginable number of victims. This took place not only prior to Stalin's death (1953), but

7 Sovietization past the "corpse of white Poland" would mean not only the fall of Poland, but also the spread of Bolshevism throughout Europe. Pilsudski anticipated it by directing Polish offensive to Kiev, but under the pressure of much stronger Red Army, the Polish army had to retreat. The Polish government's plea for help to the Western powers met with hostility, mainly from British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who aimed for an agreement with Soviet Russia and was willing to sacrifice Poland for this purpose (see A. Nowak, 2016; 2020).

also later (Poznań – June 1956; the Hungarian and Polish Octobers of 1956). The people who lived in the countries under Stalin’s “protection” were left alone by the international community, labelled “communist” and condemned to brutal methods of abuse and destruction by Marxists.⁸ Its essential element was the destruction of the social fabric. In addition to physical destruction, devastation occurred through wage policy, access to higher education, and distribution of goods. In Poland, most affected were those who resisted the new ideology, including the landed gentry, patriotic aristocracy and intelligentsia, national, Catholic and conservative circles, and all those who in any way voiced their criticism.

Protection of Poland against Sovietization in 1920–1939

The real invasion of sovietization began after the Red Army lost the war against Poland in 1920 (Podoleński, 1928; Kostkiewicz, 2020). Polish protective and preventive actions took place in terms of:

- intelligence and counterintelligence;
- official cultural policy deprecating Marxism and Bolshevism. As part of this, criticism of communism, led by the Polish state and its institutions and the Catholic Church in Poland, was developed through academic research and journalism via the creation of sovietological research;
- the dissemination of knowledge by the Catholic Church within the framework of Catholic social teaching, and humanists about the threats to spiritual life and morality posed by communism.

Soviet agents, embedded in interwar Poland, and their methods of operation were identified and recognized through the work of intelligence and counterintelligence. These facts are known to contemporary historians (Kołakowski, 2000), particularly that “the Soviet special services conducted intensive intelligence and sabotage work on the Polish territory. Especially dangerous were espionage actions organized by military intelligence. (...) It had at its disposal large financial

8 In this way, the 390,000-strong Home Army, the largest underground fighting organization in world history, was exterminated in Poland. Its last Polish soldier was killed by an UB bullet in 1963.

resources and consistently realized tasks entrusted to it by the General Staff of the Red Army. Military intelligence residences were designed as long-term, planned activity on the territory of the Polish state. For this purpose, the Intelligence Board directed agents from distant countries, such as the United States or Great Britain, to Poland. (...) Since mid-1939 the intensification of USSR intelligence was connected with preparations for the aggression against Poland” (Ibid., pp. 22–23). Polish intelligence responded counter-offensively (the work of military intelligence and counterintelligence will not be discussed further here). In addition to these services, resistance to sovietization was put up by means of press and literary agitation, cinema, and training courses conducted by various organizations and associations, and also by schools.

The cultural policy of the 20 years between the world wars was also anti-communist. Just as the expansion of sovietization was carried out by the communists from Moscow with the use of a large number of books and the press, Polish culture responded with anti-communist and anti-Bolshevik publications. Within this framework, one can distinguish texts published in magazines such as: *Prąd* (the magazine of the Catholic Academic Youth Association “Odrodzenie”), the *Przegląd Powszechny* [General Review] of the Krakow Jesuits, the Silesian *Chowan-na*, the elite magazine *Kultura i Wychowanie* [Culture and Education], the patriotic-national *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny* [Pedagogical Quarterly], the *Ateneum Kapłańskie* [The Priests’ Athenaeum], *Miesięcznik Katechetyczny i Wychowawczy* [Catechetical and Educational Monthly Magazine], *Przegląd Filozoficzny* [Philosophical Review], *Problemy Europy Wschodniej* [Problems of Eastern Europe], *Biuletyn Instytutu Naukowego* [Bulletin of the Research Institute], *Badania Komunizmu* [Research on Communism], *Przegląd Socjologiczny* [Sociological Review], and *Problemy Europy Wschodniej* [Problems of Eastern Europe] published from January to September 1939. Also series of monographs entitled *Komunizm bez maski* [Communism without a Mask] was also launched in Krakow. In addition to the academic/cultural texts, contemporary anti-Bolshevik articles were published in the press of a Catholic and patriotic profile (Kostkiewicz, 2020).

In the academic sphere, in 1930 Poland established the Research Institute of Eastern Europe at Vilnius University (Kornat, 2000), and in 1931 the Scientific Institute for the Study of Communism in Warsaw, which was financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Warsaw center led the way in collecting documentation in Russian, conducting press reviews, presenting the accounts of Russian refugees and witnesses of events, and issuing academic and popular publications. It was created for academic research on communism to make sure that the society was familiar with communist ideology, to be able to counteract its expansion. After 1936, the Institute was mainly engaged in anti-communist propaganda. J. Puchalski's work (2011) on its initiator and vice-president, Fr. Antoni Kwiatkowski T. J., is certainly of interest.

Polish critics considered Bolshevism as a Marxist doctrine which was subject to evolution. It was understood as intended, i.e. as an intention to create communism on a global scale (Czuma, 1930; Kosibowicz, 1937; Pastuszka, 1933; Urban, 1932; Szymański, 1937; Wyszynski, 1933). Adam Krzyżanowski wrote that Lenin's pamphlet *The State and Revolution* serves to justify the compatibility of Bolshevik doctrine with Marx's views, and that his writings were the gospel of Bolshevism (Krzyżanowski, 1920, pp. 3–4).

The main motive of Polish critique of Bolshevism was to protect the nation from sovietization and to defend Christian civilization. It focused mainly on criticism of the version of Bolshevism implemented in Russia, but with a full awareness of the global expansion of the Communist International. It was known, for example, that the manifesto of a local communist party postulating the communist revolution and the creation of the United States of Soviet America appeared in the US. People were aware of a slanderous campaign against the Second Polish Republic about the alleged daily executions and Pilsudski's terror against the population. American communist parties lobbied for US non-involvement in Poland's defense after German and Soviet aggression in September 1939 as long as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact lasted. Things changed in 1941; after Hitler invaded the USSR the American communists, aiming at extending the communist rule, began lobbying the Roosevelt government in the direction of 'paying'

Stalin for the war effort by bringing Poland and Central Europe under his influence (Kostkiewicz, 2020).⁹

Sovietization in Poland after World War II

Sovietization in its next stage, after WWII, was carried out by the government established for Poland, with methods of implementation sanctioned by supra-national arrangements¹⁰.

In Poland, sovietization was confronted by the tradition of the Polish Underground State and the struggle waged against the Germans by the Home Army and the National Armed Forces during World War II. On the face of it, the goal of the independence underground was to liberate itself from Bolshevism. After 1945, everyday life was reduced to the protection of civilians from the NKVD and the freeing political prisoners from communist torture, e.g. the liberation of approximately 350 inmates from the Kielce prison by Captain A. Hedy “Szary” in August 1945, or a release of almost 300 political prisoners from a prison in Radom by “Harnaś” in September 1945. Open battles were also fought between partisan units and operational groups of the UB, NKVD, militia, or the army.

The anti-Soviet conspiracy began to shrink once 35–45 thousand soldiers took advantage of the amnesty announced in August 1945. Its official purpose was to allow the partisans to return to normal life. In fact, the mass independence resistance ended with the amnesty of 1947. The last soldier of the Home Army and Freedom and Independence organization (WiN), Józef Franczak “Laluś”, died in 1963, which symbolically ended the stage of armed resistance against sovietization.

9 Antonio Gramsci’s concept of the “creeping” cultural revolution emerged already before 1937 (not changing the Marxist goals but the method). Eventually – after the contribution of H. Marcuse and other intellectuals of the Frankfurt School – it was called Cultural Marxism, with many variations still politically active today.

10 In 1947, leaders of 9 communist parties from countries destined for sovietization met in Szklarska Poreba, Poland to establish the Information Office of Communist and Workers’ Parties to coordinate policies implementing the new ideology (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 189).

The political consolidation of sovietization in Poland was served by legal procedures: “1) the unilateral denunciation of the Concordat by the Government of National Unity on September 12, 1945, 2) the establishment of the Main Office of the Press, Publications, and Stage Shows (GUPPiW) in July 1946, 3) the establishment of the Cultural and Educational Commission and the corresponding department in the Central Committee of the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR) in February 1947 in order to prepare the ideological offensive realized later” (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 188). The above-mentioned and other legal acts of the “Polish” government created the opening for the sovietization of education and science.

Sovietization in Education

Sovietization in education began around 1948, i.e. after the initial consolidation of power in the military, economic, and administrative areas.¹¹

Changes in adult and secondary education were particularly significant due to the need to fill the wartime gap in young people’s education (Hellwig, 1986). These were met by accelerated junior secondary school courses, which received the Ministry of Education’s guidelines with a declaration that they were created “in consideration of the needs of older youth, who, as a result of the occupation, suffered a long break in education”¹²

Schools and courses for adults initially resembled those of the pre-war period, although the curriculum had been thoroughly changed. Thus, public universities were established as knowledge-disseminating institutions along with people’s universities, and schools of social work. Thousands of young people passed through these in the first years after the war. As late as 1950, 84 public universities were in place with over 10,000 students enrolled and 27 schools of social work with

11 In the earlier stages of Sovietization, there was no access to school education due to the government’s policy and the attitude of Polish society.

12 Ordinance of 13. XII. 1944, L. Dz. II – 2617/44, on pedagogical care and supervision in the so-called accelerated courses and courses for adults, quoted after (Fassel, 1958, p. 9).

about 5,000 students (Fassel, 1958, p. 9). The authorities wanted to endure the education of activists for social organizations, who would remain in the service of the new ideology. Efforts were made to replace the elites, as the order stated “to make it possible for adults who in due time could not normally attend and complete secondary school to make up for the shortcomings of their previous education, to facilitate further education, to enter universities and to have opportunities for the so-called social advancement, and at the same time, to create the cadres of professionally educated intelligentsia”.¹³

The goals thus formulated in August 1945 did not yet foreshadow the obsessive ideological offensive that emerged in middle and high schools for adults after 1949 (Kozmian, 2002). The tasks put forward by the authorities in 1949 already included the postulate of “preparation for work in the construction of socialism by providing a new folk intelligentsia. The obligation to consolidate the principles of a scientific worldview, socialist morality, popular patriotism, and proletarian internationalism is emphasized, and therefore the need to fill the subject curricula with ideological content” (Fassel, 1958, p. 17). This program also involved the use of the collective to consolidate the students’ Marxist worldview so that they would become conscious builders of the socialist system.

The sovietization of education was carried out with the help of deliberately chosen ideologizing tools, such as student self-government, self-government activism, frequent meetings of activists and of whole classes, student evaluation cards, a grade for ‘behavior’ for adults, and the entanglement of teacher evaluations with suggestions by class activists, which was in fact a form of supervision of inexperienced but fanatical student activists over the teaching staff.

Let us look at a description of this reality: “The school self-government consisted of an executive elected (...) from representatives delegated by the classes, by the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR) and

13 Ordinance of August 29, 1945, No. VII OD-96/45 N, on the organization of junior high schools and high schools for adults, quoted after (Fassel, 1958, pp. 9–10).

Socialist Youth Union (ZMS) activists, and from the presidents of the various [school] groups and teams. Meetings were held once a week with the school principal in attendance (...). At each meeting, the class delegates presented important events and communicated the classes' postulates. Once a week, class meetings were held in the presence of the class teachers – all at the same time, usually after the second lesson on the day following the school self-government meeting. Resolutions of the self-government required the approval of the Director (...). In order to ensure the full implementation of these resolutions, social control committees consisting of representatives of the self-government and student activists were set up. Each class (group, team) was visited by committee members at least once during the period (...). (...) An important tool for control were the student evaluation cards kept by the class activists, in which comments were recorded on the attitude of each student, his/her attitude towards learning and school duties, social work, his/her colleagues, etc. At each meeting the entries from several cards were read and discussed; this provided a factual basis for criticism and self-criticism, for evaluating the remedial measures used, and for assessing the impact of individual classmates on the moral and political atmosphere of the class. At the end of each period, the class activist in conjunction with the class teacher determined an evaluation of each student's social attitude and entered it in the card" (Fassel, 1958, pp. 41–43).

These tools of ideologization were combined with the surveillance of students and teachers by the special services, which triggered internal ideological terror¹⁴.

Sovietization also involved students' families. The school's sphere of influence was broadened by inviting students to parties and celebrations, by including them in excursions, collective visits to museums, cinemas or theatres. There was also a direct ideological influence on the workplaces of the students through the school's participation in cultural-educational activities, through inviting factory employees to

14 The specifics of terror varied in different countries (Kasper, 2018).

school celebrations and parties, and through providing assistance in organizing events.

The influence on the workplace was a deliberate transfer of experiences and habits learned at school, particularly in the area of socialized goods, which had been already taken away from their owners, and means of production.

Neither party organizations nor ZMP units were founded at schools for working youth, as the students were forced to belong to these organizations at the workplace. Yet PZPR and ZMP activist cells were organized in each class, as well as on a school-wide basis. Their task was to make sure that “each member of the organization fulfilled his or her duties in an exemplary manner and that his or her socialist attitude (...) contributed to the proper approach towards science and social work (...). PZPR and ZMP activists maintained contact with appropriate organizations in workplaces” (ibid.).

The sovietization of education system destroyed institutions, most often those of great merit. Thus, when members of the Folk School Association [Towarzystwo Szkoły Ludowej], the Association of Folk Libraries and the Polish Educational Society [Towarzystwo Czytelni Ludowych i Polskiej Macierzy Szkolnej] came forward with a project to establish a single, joint organization called the Society for the Development of National Culture and Education in Poland [Towarzystwo Rozwoju Kultury Narodowej i Oświatowej w Polsce], the administrative authorities did not permit its registration, and in this way the enormous achievements accumulated since the time of the partitions were destroyed. The position of the authorities was dictated by the PPR's desire to gain full control over education and child-rearing” (Wojtas, 1995, p. 65).

Some educational institutions originating from the Second Polish Republic did not easily submit to liquidation, due to the terms ‘folk’, ‘democratic’ being part of their names. Yet they were liquidated because of their roots in the Polish independence tradition of the partition or the interwar period. And so, for example, began 1947 the process of liquidating the organisational independence of the People's Institute of Education and Culture [Ludowy Instytut Oświaty i Kultury], which

had been created in 1940 from a merger of the Institute of Adult Education [Instytutu Oświaty Dorosłych], the Library Advisory Centre of the Polish Librarians' Association [Instytutu Oświaty Dorosłych, Poradni Bibliotecznej Związku Bibliotekarzy Polskich], the Staszic Institute of Education and Culture [Instytutu Oświaty i Kultury im. Staszica], and the Association of Educational and Social Organisations [Zrzeszenia Organizacji Oświatowo-Społecznych] (*ibid.*, p. 66).

In 1949, resolutions of the 5th Plenum of the Central Committee of PZPR resulted in the centralisation of all activities in the area of education and culture. The enormity of the changes, and mainly of the liquidation processes, seems unbelievable nowadays, as “all socio-cultural organisations, all educational journals, all people’s universities were liquidated” (Kargul, 1998, p. 89). The new model of an employee of a cultural and educational institution was to be a propagandist and agitator.

In the process of Sovietization of education in Poland after 1948, stronger and weaker forms can be identified. Stronger forms were related to the content of textbooks, compulsory school readings, and ministry-controlled curricula, mainly history. These forms resulted from government policy. The weaker element of Sovietization were teachers – in practice, they often did not implement the recommendations of the communist government; resistance to Sovietization also came from students’ families. The factor that overall weakened Sovietization was the Catholic Church. In Poland in the years 1948–1989 we have a situation of unequivocal trust in the Church and a hostile attitude of the majority of Poles towards the communist authorities.

Sovietization in Pedagogy in 1948

Pedagogy as a science shared the fate of the humanities. Its pre-war model and practice were questioned. The analysis of changes in pedagogy inspired by the Soviet version of Marxist ideology can be found in the works of many researchers (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, 2019; Śliwerski, 2019; Kostkiewicz, 2019).

The sovietization of the humanities and social sciences began around 1948, following the patterns developed in the Soviet Union,

and relying on people from the apparatus of power established by Moscow. Among those at the forefront of change were Jakub Berman, Adam Schaff, Zhanna Kormanova, Leszek Kołakowski, Zygmunt Bauman (all of them not of Polish origin), Jerzy Borejsza and others. The year 1968 would be for many MELS functionaries an escape to a better world and new versions of Marxism.

The meaning of these changes in the humanities and social sciences was determined by the model of science presented by Soviet scholars at the London Congress of the History of Science in 1931, who spoke of its practicality and subordination to society according to Lenin's three functions of practice, i.e. the source of knowledge, the criterion of its truthfulness and the means of transforming reality, and the project of action "N", or the "dekulakization of science", presented by Adam Schaff at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in April 1949 (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 195).

As a result, many highly educated scholars were removed from the active practice of science. The transition, postulated already in 1947, "from a culture with a predominantly humanistic element to a culture of the humanistic-technical type, actually meant the liquidation of the traditionally understood humanities and a double distortion of the social sciences 1) resulting from ideological indoctrination in the teleological sphere; 2) resulting from practical instrumentalization" (Hejnicka-Bezwińska, 2015, p. 199). Scientism became a model of scholarship; it was supposed to make it possible to replace ethicality with methodological correctness along with appealing to ideological interpretation. This condition resulted in the reduction of pedagogy to a practical science capable of building only so-called small theories (e.g. the theory of collective upbringing).

The replacing of the pre-war academics who had managed to survive WWII was aided by structural changes at universities. Following the Soviet model, chairs were abolished and replaced by institutes and departments, and the management staff was also replaced. Professors who did not sign a declaration of loyalty to the new ideology were denied contact with students. Among the pedagogues most affected, to say the least, by the authorities of Soviet origin were Professor Ludwik

Jaxa-Bykowski, who after investigation and torture by the Department of Security (UB) was released from prison and died in 1948, and also Jan Stanisław Bystron. Other prominent scholars who were placed “on leave” or outright removed from universities by the Main Council for Science and Higher Education included Władysław Tatarkiewicz, Janina Kotarbińska, Roman Ingarden, Stanisław Ossowski, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Ludwik Kolankowski (*ibid.*, p. 201) and Bogdan Nawroczyński.

In pedagogy, new periodicals giving ideological direction to educational thinking and research came to the fore. These were *Nowa Szkoła* [New School] (the first issue appeared as early as July 1945) and *Nowe Drogi* [New Ways] (the first issue appeared in July 1945). Notably, it was Zhanna Kormanowa who played an important role on both editorial boards. The eminently anti-Polish article she wrote, expressing outright hatred towards Polish children and repeating the motif of “our children ate bread”, is detached from historical facts while also outlining a vision of an extension of anti-national Marxist policy. The textbook by Ivan A. Kairova, *Pedagogika*, vol. 1–2 (many editions, e.g. Warsaw, 1950), was in use at university pedagogy departments. Other works by this author include, e.g., *New Program of the CPSU and the Tasks of Pedagogy* with an Introduction by B. Suchodolski (Warsaw, 1965), or the monograph *Narodnoe obrazovanie v SSSR* [Public Education in the USSR] (Moscow, 1957). Nikolai Goncharov, Boris Yesipov, Antoni Makarenko and his *Poemat Pedagogiczny* [Pedagogical Poem] (Warsaw, 1955) became leading authors who set the tone in Polish pedagogy. Bogdan Suchodolski, Zygmunt Mysłakowski and Heliodor Muszyński, among others, took part in the creation of a new model of socialist pedagogy.

This list would not be complete without the mention of the Central Office of Press, Publication and Stage Show Control [Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk], established in 1946, which was the censorship office responsible for all press, book and stage show distribution.

Socialist pedagogy of 1948–1989 lost its autonomy and identity as a result of having its non-Marxist theoretical foundations questioned and undermined. Subordinated to ideological and political interests, in the same way as sociology, psychology, political science, economics,

or law, it merely became a tool for the worldview of the revolution (Śliwerski, 2019). Its particular task was to eliminate any pedagogical idea that failed to conform to communist ideology and Marxist orthodoxy. It was meant not to address or censor the results of research on issues such as religious or civic education, historical truth, social maladjustment, and many other areas. As a result, the value and legitimacy of knowledge and educational measures that were founded on different pedagogical thought were destroyed. Some scholars focused on the so-called politically safe issues or cognitive problems that were still of interest to them, narrowing down the field of their investigations in the name of alleged methodological accuracy. In their analyses, they had to sever all links with the history of pedagogical thought, macro-social analyses of educational policy, comparative studies, socialization and educational pathologies, dysfunctions of public educational institutions, etc. Still, Polish pedagogues did not become fascinated by the Soviet pedagogy the way some scholars of other nationalities did, nor did they fully accept its tenets (Śliwerski, 2019).

Conclusions

The roots of sovietization, which consisted of the Marxist doctrine in the MELS version, lie in the international communist movement and its organizational structures. Poland, as the neighbor of a Russia swept by communist power, was the first to stand in its way in 1920. Polish humanists of the interwar period demonstrated exceptional knowledge of the issue of sovietization, and they not only conducted in-depth research of Bolshevism but also created a wave of criticism of it. At this point, the Polish state and culture in its broadest sense resisted sovietization.

When Poland fell into the USSR's sphere of influence after WWII, education and pedagogy suffered from its destructive impact and ideological consequences. During the period of its official rule (1944–1989), it seemed to those who were in opposition to socialism that it would never penetrate the collective life of Poles, that it would not take over and impose the “only right” axiological profile. Yet it did, leaving many

people deeply entangled in the process; some are still professionally and socially active today.

More than three decades ago the majority of Polish pedagogues faced the task of restoring the academic status of the discipline devastated after 1948 by socialist ideology. For, as Śliwerski emphasizes, unlike in other socialist countries, in Poland certain paradigms of research and thinking developed, the results of which were only given as part of university lectures or were published underground (Śliwerski, 2019).

Today, on the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, it is time to admit that sovietization has left deep scars in Poland by deceiving many educators and drawing them into the space of evolving Marxism (neo-Marxism/cultural Marxism). Leaving aside its current state it must be said that in 1989 Polish pedagogy was well-prepared for the political change and the shift in the paradigm.¹⁵

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15 Translated by Marta Robson.

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