



# His toria scholas tica



2025  
11

Mezinárodní časopis  
pro dějiny výchovy a vzdělání

International Review  
for History of Education

Národní pedagogické muzeum  
a knihovna J. A. Komenského

Praha 2025

## Historia scholastica

Číslo 1, červen 2025, ročník 11

Number 1, June 2025, Volume 11

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Valdštejnská 20, 118 00 Praha 1, Česká republika, IČ 61387169, www.npmk.cz

### Obálka a grafická úprava *Cover and Graphic Design*

Pavel Průša

### Sazba *Type Setting*

Mgr. Lucie Bortová

### Tisk *Printed by*

Tiskárna PROTISK, s. r. o., Rudolfovská 617, 370 01 České Budějovice, Česká republika  
Časopis Historia scholastica vychází 2× ročně. *Historia scholastica is published twice a year.*

### Indexováno v *Indexed in*

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

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

Číslo registrace MK ČR E 22258

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# Úvodník

## *Editorial*

The first issue of *Historia scholastica* Journal presents 10 studies, most of them in some way thematizing the impact of the totalitarian regime on the field of education. A. Canales focuses on the change of educational policy of the Franco Regime in Spain in the 1960s, which was in contradiction with the still prevailing political and ideological principles of Franco's Dictatorship. E. Protner's study provides insight into the discontinuity of pre- and post-war Marxist pedagogy in Yugoslavia, using the example of slovenian pedagogue Jože Jurančič. How communist ideology was reflected in the functioning of education in Yugoslavia, specifically in Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows in her study S. Šušnjara.

Three other studies focus on education in the area of states in the territory of the former Soviet Union. I. Nelin examines the evolution of psychoanalytic pedagogical ideas in the Soviet Union, his study highlights the experiments in psychoanalytic education and their subsequent prohibition due to political shifts.

E. Bērziņš and I. Ķestere examines how Soviet narratives in the field of history of education were deconstructed in the Baltic States and how historians constructed a new view of the national history of these states.

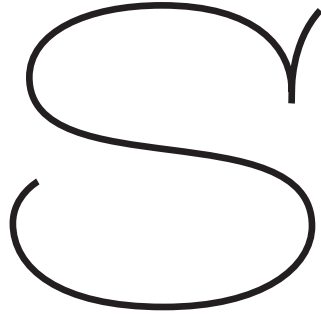
I. Ivanavičė and I. Stonkuvienė focuses on the mechanism of ideological assimilation of Lithuanian Roma through school and education in the Soviet Union; the study explores key dimensions of Roma education, including the construction of the New Soviet Man, the impact of forced sedentarisation, and the role of schooling in promoting linguistic assimilation, discipline, and social control. Belonging is an important phenomenon, the basis of which does not have to be only belonging to one ethnic group, as is the case in the study of Roma in Lithuania. F. Guerrini explores generational belonging in the generation of children born during the war. Her work focuses not only on specific research on belonging in the war generation, but also shows the theoretical perspectives of research on such a complex phenomenon as belonging.

Two studies in this issue relate to special education. J. Randák looks into the situation in special education in Czechoslovakia after the communists came to power in February 1948 and shows that the optimistic proclamations of the state representatives were often at odds with the real experience of teachers at special schools. K. Eliášková and M. Šmejkalová examine teaching of Czech language of visually impaired pupils at special schools from 1972 to 2010. The long period of research allowed the authors to examine not only the development of didactic approaches, but also the change in the ideological framework of education during this time.

While most studies deal with education in the second half of the 20th century, I. Garai investigates the issue of deprofessionalization of secondary school teachers in pre-war Hungary.

We believe that all of the submitted studies will contribute to the clarification of many unresolved research questions as well as stimulate interest in further research.

Jan Šimek



## Studie *Studies*

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# The Discontinuity of the Left-oriented Pedagogical Paradigm after the Second World War in Slovenia on the Example of Jože Jurančič<sup>1</sup>

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Received 14 March 2024

Accepted 15 December 2024

Available online 30 June 2025

DOI 10.82130/hs2025-01-002

**Abstract** In the time between the two wars, left-leaning teachers in Slovenia created a specific pedagogical paradigm based on empirical research into the effects of the social environment on the child and supported alternative didactic forms of teaching. A typical representative of this paradigm was Jože Jurančič, a pre-war communist teacher who was interned in an Italian concentration camp on the island of Rab during the war. There, upon the capitulation of Italy, he heroically organized the liberation and creation of the Rab Bri-

gade. Immediately after the war, he assumed high political positions in the new regime. Newer research reveals the cynicism of the authorities that sentenced Jurančič during the time of the Informbiro to prison, which he spent from 1949 to 1954, among other places, in Goli otok, a famous communist prison. As a hero of the Rab camp, he was forced here in 1953 as a political prisoner to carve a stone for a monument on the 20th anniversary of the liberation of the camp. In a metaphorical sense, he was carving a memorial to himself. After his release from prison, Jurančič withdrew from public life. Still, in 1957, he published a controversial article criticizing the leading Slovenian theoretician of post-war socialist pedagogical doctrine for his negative attitude towards the pre-war progressive efforts of left-oriented teachers and his excessive reliance on Soviet pedagogical doctrine. This controversy reveals interesting differences between Marxist-oriented pedagogues, offers an essential insight into the discontinuity of pre-war and post-war Marxist pedagogy, and, at the same time, opens up the possibility of interpretation that recognizes the pluralism of concepts in post-war pedagogical thought.

**Keywords** left-leaning teachers, totalitarian state, pedagogy, history, discontinuity

- 1 The article was written (also) within the programme group “Slovenian identity and cultural consciousness in linguistic and ethnically contact areas in the past and present”, No. P6-0372, financed by the Slovenian Research Agency.

## Introduction

In Central Europe, the State has been the „owner of education“ at least since 1770, when Empress Maria Theresa issued the famous decree declaring that „education is and will always remain politicum“ (Engelbrecht, 1984, p. 98, p. 490). School is a *politicum*, a matter of the State even today. Of course, there is an essential difference between politics in a monolithic (this mostly means one-party) political organization of the State or in a politically and party plural state, which we associate with parliamentary democracy (Medveš, 1990). In the territory of today's Slovenia, both forms of political organization have changed several times since the time of Maria Theresa. The Austrian period during the absolute monarchy, temporarily interrupted by the events of the Spring of Nations in 1848, can be characterized as politically monolithic. Still, the constitution was already abolished in 1851. The revival of the constitution took place at the beginning of the 1860s, which finally led to the creation of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the implementation of the so-called December Constitution in 1867. After that, it remained the framework of the constitutional monarchy until its dissolution in 1918. At that time, after a short episode of the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created. In it, the constitutional framework was very similar to that of Austria-Hungary, as it was a constitutional monarchy with a strong role of the king. Due to a severe political crisis, on January 6, 1929, the king abolished the constitution, dissolved the parliament, banned all political parties, and imposed a dictatorship. Parliamentary life resumed (in a much-reduced form) in September 1931 (Vodopivec, 2010).

We Slovenians felt the power of the totalitarian State most cruelly during World War II when the German, Italian, and Hungarian armies occupied Slovenian territory. After the end of World War II, Slovenia joined the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (name since 1963). At that time, the communists took power and made it impossible for all other political parties to function. The Union of Communists of Yugoslavia disbanded after the congress in March 1990, when the Slovenian and Croatian delegates left the congress due to the outvoting

led by Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević. It was followed by various parties in the former republics, which began to become independent. In Slovenia, the first rudiments of political parties started to emerge in 1988, and their legalization was made possible by amendments to the Slovenian constitution, which the Slovenian Assembly adopted on September 27, 1989. The first multi-party elections were held in Slovenia in April 1990. Two months earlier, the Union of Communists of Slovenia formally dissolved and reconstituted itself as the Party of Democratic Renewal. In the country's complex political situation, the Slovenian Assembly adopted a series of independence declarations and resolutions in the summer of 1990, vehemently opposed by Serbia and the Yugoslav army. The landmark event was the December 23, 1990, referendum, in which most people voted for Slovenia to become an independent country. On June 25, 1991, Slovenia promulgated the Basic Charter on the Independence of the Republic of Slovenia and the Constitutional Law, which transferred all the federation's powers until then to the republican authorities. The next day, the Yugoslav army intervened, but the clashes lasted only ten days. After the first military clashes in Croatia, Serbian politics and the army focused all their attention there, culminating in large-scale military clashes on the territory of the former common State. Still, Slovenia was given a free path for diplomatic recognition of the new State (Vodopivec, 2010).

Since our article is related to the thematic framework of the international scientific colloquium entitled *State as the Owner of Education and subtitled Involvement of Totalitarian Regimes in the Field of Education in Europe in the Second Half of the 20th Century*,<sup>2</sup> let us first point out some commonly known facts that illustrate the involvement of the Yugoslav or Slovenian political regime in the field of education after World War II:

- immediately after assuming power in 1945, the Communist Party took control over the realization of the ideological goals of education in building a socialist society (Gabrič, 1991);

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2 Trnava, October 12–13, 2023 (Kudláčová, Martincová & Wiesenganger, 2023).

- the first post-war years were a time of discrimination against the children of defeated political and ideological opponents (Okoliš, 2009, p. 110);
- teachers were expected to fully agree with the principles of state ideology (Gabrič, 2009);
  - private schools were abolished and banned (Kodelja & Kodelja, 2021);
- in the 1951/52 school year, religious education was removed from the curriculum – it was replaced by the subject *Social and Moral Education* (Šuštar, 1991; Gabrič, 2005).

We could continue to enumerate the encroachment of communist political power in the school field, but that is not the purpose of this article. In this magazine issue, colleagues from the former Eastern Bloc countries will list similar illustrations of education in totalitarian regimes. But we must be aware that the Yugoslav political regime, at least after 1948, when the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia became independent from Stalinist domination and began to pave its own way of building socialism, cannot be equated with the regimes of other communist countries under Soviet influence. There is even doubt whether it is possible to unambiguously define Yugoslavia as a totalitarian state (Flere & Klanjšček, 2019). There are also detailed analyses of the relationship between political power and education development in the socialist period of the former Yugoslavia for individual countries that emerged on its soil after 1990. The situation was described in Croatia by Igor Radeka and Štefka Batinić (2015), in Serbia by Nataša Vujisić Živković (2015), in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Snježana Šušnjara (2015), in Montenegro by Vučina Zorić (2015) and in Macedonia by Suzana Miovska Spaseva (2015).<sup>3</sup> We mainly highlight the article by Zdenko Medveš (2015), which analyzes the situation in Slovenia. The starting

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3 The articles were published in the thematic issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies / Sodobna pedagogika* (see also Protner & Vujisić Živković, 2015). The thematic issue is available at: <https://www.sodobna-pedagogika.net/en/issues/02-2015/>.

point of his analysis is based on the distinction between school policy and pedagogical theory. The author defends the thesis that the term “socialist pedagogy” is not a helpful classification term for naming the pedagogical trend in post-war Yugoslavia, as pedagogical theory (at least in Slovenia) was too plural to be limited by the term “socialist”. According to him, this theory was closer to scientific pedagogical currents in the international space than to communist school policy.

When we try to understand and analyze the dependence of education on state ideology in Slovenia, we have, on the one hand, indications that the Slovenian political regime did not succeed in completely subordinating pedagogical theory and that there was a certain pluralism that eluded the generally accepted notions of education in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. On the other hand, however, we have richly documented evidence of the totalitarianism of the Yugoslav and, in this context, the Slovenian political regime from 1945 to 1990 (Jančar, 1998). In this article, we will present and illustrate the pedagogical aspect of the tension between pluralism and totalitarianism in the socialist social system of post-war Slovenia with the incredible life story of Jože Jurančič (1902–1998), a communist teacher who was described by Božidar Jezernik as one of the greatest heroes in Slovenian history (Jezernik, 2013).<sup>4</sup>

First, we will outline the pedagogical context in which Jurančič worked before the war and illustrate his pedagogical activity with a few examples. An outline of his actions and heroism during World War II will follow. We will continue with his activities after the war, when, as an old communist and war hero, he took leading positions within the new social system. His rise came to a radical end in 1949 when he

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4 Božidar Jezernik (2013) wrote in the dedication to the monograph about *Goli otok – Tito's Gulag*: “To Jože Jurančič, one of the greatest heroes in Slovenian history”. For those interested in the history of this Yugoslavian prison for political opponents, the monograph is also available in Serbian (2012), German (Jezernik, 2014), Czech (Jezernik, 2020), Russian (Jezernik, 2018) and Polish (Jezernik, 2013a) editions. Otherwise, he analyzed Jurančič's heroism in more detail in two articles (Jezernik, 2021; Jezernik, 2021a).

was imprisoned. In conclusion, we will describe how Jurančič, despite his terrible experience with the post-war political authorities, publicly criticized the school's misguided pedagogical image and thus school policy after serving his sentence. In this criticism, it is possible to recognize the discontinuity of the pedagogical concept defended by left-leaning teachers before the war.

### **The Pedagogical Concept of Left-leaning Teachers in Slovenia before the Second World War and Jurančič's Pedagogical Activity**

Previous research into the pedagogical theory of the interwar period in Slovenia has shown the presence of four or five pedagogical paradigms: together with Herbartist pedagogy, there was traditionally Catholic pedagogy, which derived educational principles from theological justifications, reform pedagogy, which derived educational principles from the child's nature, and based on psychology, cultural pedagogy (*Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*), which derived the educational approach from culture and relied on the philosophy of life, and socially critical pedagogy, which derived the educational approach from the child's environment and relied on sociology<sup>5</sup> (Protner, 2000).

Jože Jurančič was an active representative of this last pedagogical paradigm. Its representatives were left-leaning teachers. Jurančič became a member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1925 (Jurančič, 1985). It is essential to point out that this party was banned

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5 The reader will easily find analyses of the aforementioned pedagogical paradigms in a domestic or international context, as we use names that are sufficiently generally established in the profession. The greater difficulty lies with the paradigm that we call socially critical pedagogy here. In fact, it is a pedagogical concept that cannot be called Marxist pedagogy, because the authors sympathized with Marxism, but concealed it due to censorship. We cannot call it socialist pedagogy, because the social system of that period was not socialist. We cannot call it critical pedagogy, because this concept is usually associated with the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, but despite some related ideas, we do not trace any concrete influence on Slovenian teachers between the two wars. Thus, this concept remains specific to Slovenia. For a more detailed description, see Protner, 2020.

in Yugoslavia from 1920 onwards, and its members operated illegally (Vodopivec, 2010, p. 167). This is a crucial circumstance – because of this, the theoretical derivations of the representatives of this paradigm have less political visibility and ideological sharpness than they would have if they could publicly defend their Marxist views.

Fran Žgeč, who was a member of the Communist Party since 1919, is considered the founder of this pedagogical direction in Slovenia (Žgeč, 1991). In 1923, he published his doctoral dissertation in which he analyzed the social situation of proletarian and peasant youth and developed the thesis that social circumstances determine a child's development. To enable the healthy development of proletarian children, "major social reform is necessary, a change in the social position of children and parents, and the education of the proletariat, especially of proletarian mothers" (Žgeč, 1923, p. 45). Here, the fundamental characteristic of Slovenian social critical pedagogy is already present: the focus was not on class struggle but on reflection on the position of the proletarian and peasant child and reflection on the appropriate didactic form of school lessons, which would enable the child to emancipate in the conditions of capitalist exploitation. In 1925, he also began collecting statistical data to prove the dependence of children's physical and mental development on the social conditions in which the child lives. On this basis, he stood up for school autonomy, which he understood in the spirit of the new pedagogical movements of reform pedagogy (or *working school*, as this pedagogical direction was called at the time). Based on these program guidelines, some empirical research was created until 1930, including the book by Jože Jurančič entitled *From School to the Nation* (1930). After 1936, this program was taken over by younger left-oriented teachers who organized themselves into the Teachers' Movement Association. Jurančič worked closely with them. They systematically deepened their statistical knowledge, and in the years leading up to the start of the war in 1941, some important research was done on the physical development of Slovenian children, their nutrition, and their general social situation (Protner, 2022). In the didactic sense, they advocated integrated lessons, a form of teaching that does not follow the logic of the subject but connects the learning

contents into integrated sets. The foundational work was contributed by Ernest Vranc (1936) with the book *Basics of Integrated School Work in Theory and Practice*.

Let's illustrate Jurančič's teaching activity with his memories of his work as a teacher before the Second World War. Jurančič was admitted to the teachers' college in Maribor in 1917, i.e., during the First World War. He remembers that even as a student, he was fascinated by the ideas of the Russian Revolution. While still a student at the war's end, he joined the military formation that occupied Maribor and ensured that the city remained within the borders of the new State of Slovenes, Serbs and Croats. During this time, he came into contact with workers, primarily social democrats. Even when he continued his education in 1919, he maintained contact with the workers and, at the same time, began to study Marxist literature. In 1922, he finished school and got a job as a teacher in a small town, where he taught 81 children simultaneously. From this time, he remembers that in his free time, he "greedy devoured the theory and practice of the Viennese 'school reformers' under the leadership of Otto Glöcklel, as well as the first reports on the Soviet school, whose ideologists were Krupska and Blonski" (Jurančič, 1974, p. 60).

After completing his military service in 1924, he got a job at a bourgeois school in a larger city. He remembers that he was already distributing illegal party literature then, including the "Balkan Federation" published in Vienna (Jurančič, 1974, p. 60). In the spring of 1925, he agreed with members of the Communist Party to move to a mountain village on the border with Austria to organize a channel for the passage of communists and illegal literature. That year, he was officially accepted into the Union of Communists (Jurančič, 1974a, p. 105).

In this secluded place, he encountered wretched social conditions, the hostile attitude of his parents towards the school, and poor school attendance. Jurančič describes that here, with his kindness, he soon won the affection of the children, and he won the affection of the parents after a random event when he helped in the happy outcome of the birth. He gained even more affection from parents and children when he inspired the children to calculate the cubic capacity of felled trees.

They enjoyed measuring wood in the forest and then spent long hours in class learning various arithmetic operations until they mastered the calculation of cubic capacity so well that their parents used their calculations, who were often cheated by merchants (Jurančič, 1985). There were many children in the place who did not have the means to purchase school supplies and textbooks. Together with the parents, Jurančič's proposal was accepted that the pupils establish a committee to buy school supplies and textbooks, take care of the records, and control the costs. In addition to the fact that the pupils now had to familiarize themselves with bureaucratic procedures, they also encountered concrete calculation problems, as they didn't understand what a 10% discount was, for example. It was an opportunity to cover the percentage calculation in the lesson, which the pupils quickly learned. This self-government succeeded perfectly and brought concrete benefits for the school, pupils, and their parents (Jurančič, 1974b).

Jurančič's reform pedagogical approach is already recognizable here, about which he wrote: "A teacher should have absolute freedom in his work. For me, curricula were always just a general framework in which I moved freely [...] in the days when we calculated the cubic capacity of wood, we abandoned all other subjects, from language classes to history. There was so much interest among the children that it would be a shame to interrupt the interest in calculus and divert it elsewhere for the sake of the curriculum. Only when we were done with our calculations did we move on to other subjects and achieve excellent results within the prescribed curriculum." (Jurančič, 1985, p. 850). In fact, it was a modern approach at the time, and Jurančič gained a lot of attention and respect with it in pedagogical circles. Students of the teachers' college attended his school, he organized internships for other teachers and began publishing expert discussions in the pedagogical press. Before moving to a new job, he published the book *Iz šole za narod* (Jurančič, 1930), in which he accurately described the socio-demographic image of the place and presented his teaching experience. His work was also appreciated by school inspectors (Auror, 1988, p. 14). But although his illegal party activity was never proven, on suspicion of being a communist, he was criminally transferred to a new post after five years.

In the next place where he served, the social conditions were better, but here, he felt the ideological narrowness of the official school program even more. Apart from this, he also faced the problem of discipline in an overcrowded class. Like the previous job, the solution was to bring the lessons closer to the children's interests and encourage their activity. The following example is illustrative: when a pupil once said that he had heard about the discovery of the bones of a prehistoric person in a nearby place, Jurančič took the children to that place on an excursion, and while viewing the archaeological remains, the children constructed the critical points of the development theory themselves through questions (Jurančič, 1985). Along with the modern pedagogical approach, Jurančič's worldview (Marxist) attitude is also quite evident here. Even in this place, Jurančič was involved in general economic and cultural progress. He joined various agricultural associations, organized agricultural cooperatives, gave economic initiatives, connected farmers, and inspired them to rationalize work. With this action, he won the sympathy of the population. And yet, even in this activity, his political orientation is evident. For example, he admits that his intention in the youth agricultural courses was "to develop a materialistic understanding and worldview" (Jurančič, 1974c, p. 300).

In 1936, due to his political views, he was transferred again, this time to a backward wine-growing hill village. Like other teachers before, the authorities were counting on him getting drunk here. Instead, residents remembered him long after the war as a teacher who recovered the school's debts and got it back on its feet. In addition, he organized the collection of funds for constructing a fruit-drying plant, enabling farmers to sell their produce effectively (Jurančič, 1985).

In short, Jurančič's pedagogical motto has always been an effort to equip pupils with knowledge that will enable them to achieve social and economic emancipation in the conditions of the capitalist social system. Following the spirit of reform pedagogy, he prioritized the interests and curiosity of children and the needs of the school environment.

### **Jurančič's fate as a war internee during World War II and a political prisoner after the war**

With the beginning of WW II on Slovenian territory in April 1941, Jurančič's ordeal began. Due to the threat of war, he and his wife and four small children moved to the area of the Italian occupation authorities in January 1942. Due to his participation in the resistance movement, the Italian army arrested him in April 1942. In September of that year, he was interned in a fascist concentration camp on the island of Rab, where internees died en masse due to poor living conditions. The fascists executed his wife as a hostage, and their children were left without parents (Jezernik, 2021). In the camp, Jurančič stood out for his help to fellow prisoners. He founded the illegal party committee and executive committee of the Liberation Front. When Italy capitulated on September 8, 1943, the Executive Committee of the Liberation Front took the initiative to free the internees. They met with the camp's military commander and invited him to a meeting of the internees on September 10.

There, in the presence of armed Italian soldiers, the internees announced the seizure of power in the camp. Jurančič was the main speaker and negotiator. At the rally, they confirmed the decision to establish the Rab Brigade, whose political commissar Jurančič became. Undoubtedly, Jurančič deserves the most outstanding credit for the peaceful takeover of power (without revenge) in the camp and the disarmament of the Italian army (2,200 soldiers and carabinieri) (Jezernik, 2021a). Jurančič returned to Slovenia with the Rab Brigade. In the liberated territory, he organized education, conducted party courses, and acted as the reconstruction and social welfare department head. From the fall of 1944 to 1945, he was the provincial secretary of the Liberation Front and the Communist Party, and just before the end of the war, he was present at the establishment of the first Slovenian government (Jurančič, 1985).

We can imagine that a man with such a biography was the ideal cadre to take over the highest political positions after the end of the war. After the constitution of the communist government, he became the assistant minister of education. In the spring of 1946, he was transferred to another position and was in charge of organizing the cooperative.

Among other things, he was an education counselor, head of the education department and secretary of the party cell at the Cooperative Committee at the Presidency of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, a member of the school committee at the Central Committee of the Communist Party and a federal deputy (Jurančič, 1985). In short, he became part of the political elite. But he resented political decision-makers because of his self-centered views on building socialism. Because of the false accusation, he was expelled from the Communist Party, forced to retire, and imprisoned in April 1949 during the time of the Informbiro – that is, during the tremendous political purges that followed the conflict between Tito and Stalin and the final liberation of Yugoslavia from the Soviet communist doctrine. He was jailed until December 1953, including on Goli otok, a famous communist gulag where the authorities imprisoned political opponents (Jezernik, 2021).

Here, Jurančič experienced the second biggest ordeal of his life. With his life experience, we can most vividly illustrate the perversion of Yugoslav communism. Goli otok is regarded in Yugoslav historical consciousness as a symbol of the violent conversion of political opponents. For many years, no one dared to speak about what was happening on this island. Jurančič was one of the first to vividly describe the psychological and physical violence he experienced in prison in an interview in 1985 (Jurančič, 1985). However, a detail nicely illustrates the old metaphor: “Revolution eats its children”. For the 10th anniversary of the dissolution of the concentration camp in Rab, an initiative was taken to arrange the cemetery of Rab victims and erect a monument. The large-scale stone-cutting works were taken over by a company that used prisoners on Goli otok as a workforce, and Jože Jurančič was among them. As a prisoner on Goli otok, Jurančič carved a monument to himself and the heroism he demonstrated on the neighboring island during the war. At the 10th anniversary ceremony on the island of Rab, Jurančič’s name was carefully kept silent (Jezernik, 2021; Jezernik, 2021a).

### **Jurančič, as a Critical Observer of Education Reform in Post-war Slovenia**

After his release from prison in December 1953, Jurančič was unemployed for some time and worked as a construction worker. Still he was later employed as a secondary school secretary until his retirement in 1963 (Jurančič, 1985). Anyone familiar with totalitarian regimes in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc would recognize here a typical pattern of silencing dissidents. However, we must mention again that the freedom of action in the former Yugoslavia was different than in the countries under the influence of the Soviet Union, and Jurančič's story illustrates this well. Already four years after his release from prison (1957), Jurančič became involved in a controversy in the official teacher's newspaper about the reform of curricula at the elementary school level. The polemic was started by Ernest Vranc, the aforementioned pre-war theoretician of the didactic image of the school from the ranks of left-oriented teachers and an advocate of integrated lessons. The article was entitled "Why a 12-year vacuum?" (Vranc, 1957). In the introduction, he pointed out that the teachers received the first instructions for implementing the curriculum reform for the first three grades of primary school and that the older teachers were surprised to find that this reform reintroduced integrated lessons, as developed in the "left-wing Teachers' Movement" and enforced before the war. His assessment of post-war school activities is harsh: "The history of Slovenian education will have to assess the post-war era as a fatal emptiness when education was oriented according to models far removed from successful social development" (Vranc, 1957, p. 1). He described how "progressive teachers" adopted the concept of integrated curriculum before the war and introduced it in many experimental schools. "Progressive teachers easily recognized the dynamics and social dialectics in the 'nature-society' complexes, which were already discussed in the Soviet Union by the curricula of Blonsky, Pistrak, and Krupskaya (1922), but eight years later Stalin had them destroyed as 'unscientific'. And yet, in recent decades, youth psychology has found that we cannot ignore the legality of child development. If a component of a progressive society is still joining us, the question is forced upon us: What

have we lost already 12 years to? [...] Why the persecution of ‘integration’ in the first years when we are introducing it again now?!” (Vranc, 1957, p. 1). He described a pre-war effort to reform curricula according to the principle of integration, which was listened to by the Ministry of Education in 1939. Still, then, the storm of war interrupted this effort. Nevertheless, this concept has taken hold in many Slovenian schools and has shown promising results. The curricula created during the war were also drawn up according to this principle. In his opinion, this didactic doctrine was stopped by an article from 1946, in which one of the leading pre-war social critical pedagogy actors assessed it as a “bourgeois delusion”. “The era of strict systematics and isolated subjects according to Russian models has arrived...” (Vranc, 1957, p. 1).

In one of the following magazine issues, Jurančič appeared with the article *That’s why the 12-year vacuum*. His condemnation of the post-war school policy was significantly harsher than Vranc’s. In doing so, he directly condemned Vlado Schmidt, the leading pedagogical theorist and the absolute authority of post-war socialist pedagogical thought, who maintained this status until the 80s, for the discontinuity of pre-war pedagogical thought. He accused him of stopping the further development of the work of pre-war progressive pedagogues with his criticism of reform pedagogy (in an article from 1947 – he discussed reform pedagogy under the term *youth studies*). Between the lines, it is also possible to recognize the criticism of Schmidt that “after liberation, we imitated education in the SU. We did not want to understand that our compulsory education is over a hundred years old and that illiteracy no longer exists, that we must continue our work where progressive pedagogues were interrupted by the war, and thus, in the new socialist era to create more than they did in the West, where after the revolution they barely introduced compulsory education. Therefore, we should create much more and, in a short time, be a model for all socialist countries” (Jurančič, 1957, p. 2).

We do not have the space to analyze in more detail Schmidt’s article *Youth Studies – a Sign of the Decline of bourgeois pedagogy in the Age of Imperialism* (Schmidt, 1947), which Jurančič argues with. The fact is that here, Schmidt primarily rejected the ideas of reform pedagogy, i.e.,

pedagogical direction, which derived educational principles from the child and presented itself as a non-ideological doctrine. His criticism is weighty and worthy of attention even today. But it is clear that Jurančič also recognized himself in this criticism, even though before the war, the representatives of social critical pedagogy did not fully identify with the ideas of reform pedagogy. This was not corrected even by Schmidt's *Correction to the article Youth Studies – a Sign of the Decline of bourgeois pedagogy in the Age of Imperialism* (Schmidt, 1948), in which he explicitly admitted that in the first article, he neglected “the germs of progressive thoughts that would be appreciated and taken into account all the more in the more difficult conditions they made their way through” (Schmidt, 1948, p. 223). In this article, he explained that pedagogy, which originates from the child, can also play a progressive role, and he explained this with the example of Rousseau and Tolstoy, who put “free education” in the fight against “the influence of reactionary ideology on the youth”. The progressiveness of this theory lies in the fact that it is helpful as a “justification for the opposition against the ruling ideology. This is precisely the element of its social value, where the ruling ideology is reactionary (emphasis in the original). In our country today, the ruling ideology is progressive, and therefore – if we were to represent the point of view of this theory – we would find ourselves on the same line as the reactionaries who are fighting for the soul of our youth by trying to lead them away from the advanced educational standards of our society” (Schmidt, 1948, pp. 229–230). Another emphasis in Schmidt's text is essential, which helps us to explain why the post-war didactic doctrine interrupted the idea of integrated lessons developed by Vranc, Jurančič and other pre-war socio-critical teachers. In doing so, they were based on psychological studies of the child. For Schmidt and the post-war pedagogical doctrine, “pedagogy based on psychology was an apolitical pedagogy”. He continues: “This pedagogy, for example, with its demand that we start from the child, from the needs of his growth, destroyed the systematic of learning contents, what is the positive side of the old school. Because without it, we cannot arm the youth with the knowledge, with the education necessary to fight for social progress” (Schmidt, 1948, p. 227). This pedagogical

logic helps us to understand why in the first post-war years, “the era of strict systematics and isolated subjects according to Russian models began,” as we quoted Vranc above and as Jurančič also criticized.

Schmidt connected the pedagogical activity of pre-war left-oriented teachers more with the ideas of reform pedagogy than with the revolutionary struggle for a school according to communist ideology. Although Schmidt set up a consistent theoretical critique of reform pedagogy in his first post-war articles, he was unfair to pre-war left-oriented teachers’ actions or interpreted them too one-sidedly. That is why Jurančič justifiably blamed him for not considering the social conditions in which teachers could not express their Marxist views due to censorship. He says: “Comrade Dr. V. Schmidt is probably unaware that pre-war progressive educators were not homogenous. There were few of us Marxists, and more were sympathizers of various variants. We did not turn them away; on the contrary, we attracted them to work. Progressive pedagogues were rarely ideologues but more progressive didacticists. The era in which we worked must be properly understood. Many ‘pedagogical texts’, published under the names of progressive pedagogues, were edited by official pedagogues so that they could then be published. More ‘pedagogical texts’ were not published; some were not even written. Comrade Dr. V. Schmidt should review these as well. We hid and wrapped up the problems we wanted to bring to the world as members of a materialistic worldview under youth studies (Jurančič, 1957, p. 2).

Jurančič’s criticism that Schmidt did not evaluate the statistical research into the social circumstances in which Slovenian youth grow up deserves special attention. “Is comrade Dr. V. Schmidt not familiar with the works of our progressive teachers and professors, with which they statistically determined the corrupting consequences of the capitalist social order on the youth? Was it ‘escape from social reality’, ‘the starting point of education be a child’, ‘pedagogy has isolated them from social problems’, etc.?” (Jurančič, 1957, p. 2). It is true that the results of this research only implicitly expressed a socially critical

attitude towards political power, but left-oriented ideological goals and intentions were utterly recognizable.

In the end, one more criticism of Jurančič should be highlighted, which illustrates the feelings of a communist teacher whose pre-war pedagogical activity was entirely devalued by the post-war pedagogical doctrine. He asked Schmidt the following question: “Were progressive pedagogues before the war persecuted, fired from their jobs after being imprisoned because of ‘collapsing bourgeois pedagogy’, ‘reactionary and racism’? Comrade Dr. Schmidt could be answered about this by former county chiefs, police bosses, state lawyers, investigating judges, school superintendents, etc., who were our bosses, as well as official educators and editors of magazines, who, according to their official duty, had to repel revolutionary bones from our works that we published” (Jurančič, 1957, p. 2).

Schmidt (1957) responded to personal criticism in the next issue. He pointed out that he insists on criticizing youth studies and that (at least) the reformist pedagogical ideas advocated by the members of the Teacher’s Movement before the war could not have an “advanced social role” after the war. In this regard, his criticism is interesting, “that those who now miss realization of these ideas, after liberation, had every opportunity and social support for their implementation” and somewhat cynically adds that Jurančič blames him, a post-war university lecturer and theoretician stagnation in the development of education during the time when he himself was the assistant minister of education (Schmidt, 1957, p. 2).

## **Conclusion**

The reasons for the discontinuity of the pre-war pedagogical paradigm of left-oriented teachers with the post-war socialist pedagogical paradigm are highly complex. Due to censorship, Marxist teachers in the pre-war period did not develop their theoretical concept in the form they might have wanted. This concept has yet to be reconstructed, whereby it is not possible to rely solely on their texts from the pre-war period. Still, it is necessary to include the memories and

interpretations they published in the post-war period. The story of Jože Jurančič is exemplary. It reveals the pedagogical enthusiasm of a communist teacher at a time when the Communist Party was banned and when it was in power. Pre-war officials of the illegal Communist Party did not show any particular interest in the pedagogical work of teachers. That is why the left-leaning practicing teachers in Slovenia created a unique pedagogical concept, which in its didactic model was inspired by the ideas of reform pedagogy. Still, regarding ideology and worldview, they strove for the emancipation of children from the working and peasant classes. In doing so, they relied on the results of empirical socio-pedagogical research based on the Marxist understanding of society.

The controversy we described above reveals that the part of their pedagogical practice that the leading pedagogical theorist of the socialist period criticized as “free education” and interpreted as “bourgeois delusion” was entirely unacceptable for the post-war pedagogical doctrine. On the other hand, empirical pedagogical research on the connection between the child’s psychophysical development and the social environment, which unambiguously placed the pre-war left-oriented teachers in the circle of actors in the effort for a revolutionary change in the social order that took place after the war with the seizure of power by the Union of Communists of Yugoslavia, was overlooked for a long time. The reasons for such a dismissive attitude towards pre-war left-oriented teachers will have to be studied in more detail. Undoubtedly, the pedagogical theory of the first post-war years was inspired by the pedagogical doctrine of the Soviet Union. Still, it cannot be overlooked that Schmidt’s pedagogical criticism of reform pedagogy (called progressive education in the Anglo-Saxon world) was theoretically wholly legitimate and is still relevant in many aspects today.

This observation once again confirms the idea raised in the introduction that when interpreting the post-war development of pedagogical doctrine in socialist Slovenia, it is necessary to distinguish between school policy, which was implemented by the political authorities, and pedagogical theory, which, however, also followed the independent

logic of pedagogy as a science. If we follow this logic, we can recognize in the described controversy the existence of a pluralism of pedagogical concepts and views on the development of education in Slovenia in a time characterized as totalitarian. The fact that Jurančič won the highest republican award for the field of education in 1972, in the period that we represent as the “leaden years of communism” in Slovenia, illustrates how misguided the notions of complete pedagogical single minding are at this time (M. K., 1972).

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