

The “New” Civic Education in Czechoslovakia between Pedagogical Autonomy, Political Instrumentalization, Educational Sciences and the Soviet Model (1945-1953/1960) – Transfer Analysis*

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ABSTRACT: The article focuses on the development of a “new” model of civic education as one of the results of the “new” educational sciences in Czechoslovakia after 1945 and especially after 1948, when political power was concentrated in the hands of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Civic education played a fundamental role in the task of building the “new” communist man and the socialist mind of man. The article reconstructs the transformations of the concept of civic education in the years 1945-1953 (the subject of civic education was part of compulsory school education) and contextualizes it with regard to the socio-political changes after 1948 and the “model” discussion of civic education in the Soviet Union. The article analyzes the discourse and practices of civic education actors in 1945-1953 on the basis of primary sources – journals, scientific

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publications. Through the optic of pedagogical transfer, policy borrowing, and cross-national analysis, the processes of Sovietization of civic education in the former Czechoslovakia are discussed, including with regard to the Sovietization of educational sciences of the time.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: Civic education; Marxism; New Soviet Man; Policy Borrowing; Czechoslovakia; XX Century.

Introduction

After 1945, Czechoslovakia embarked on a “new path” in politics, culture, science and, naturally, education. The years 1945–1948 were primarily shaped by the response to the Second World War and the search for a socio-political model that would continue the modernisation of society while addressing social issues “better” than the interwar parliamentary democracy¹. On one hand, the actors sought to build upon pre-war debate. On the other hand, it was impossible to simply resume debate from where it had been interrupted in 1939. In particular, communist representatives in post-1945 Czechoslovakia fostered a critical perspective on the interwar model of liberal (*bourgeois*) democracy, which they deemed a failure, and promoted a “new model” of «people’s democracy». This system was presented as the key to resolving Czechoslovakia’s political, social and educational challenges «for the benefit of all people». At the same time, even weakened democratic political figures sought change in socio-political and social life – though not in the way of a «necessary curtailment» of democracy.

When the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, with Soviet support and in the context of the emerging Cold War, seized full political control in February 1948, science, culture and (both school and out-of-school) education were subordinated to the creation of a communist society and socialist consciousness². The education of citizens was to become the foundation for shaping the “new man” – a person who thinks, feels, understands and, above all, acts in accordance with communist ideals, serving the “construction” and “victory” of communist society³. Attention was given to reforming both school and out-

¹ R. Krakovský, *State and society in communist Czechoslovakia: transforming the everyday from World War II to the fall of the Berlin Wall*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2018; K. McDermott, *Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945-89: a political and social history*, London, Palgrave, 2015. and J. Korbel, *The communist subversion of Czechoslovakia, 1938-1948: the failure of coexistence*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2015.

² M. Devátá, M. *Marxismus jako projekt nové společnosti*, Praha, AV ČR, 2014; M. Devátá, D. Olšáková, *Vědní koncepce KSČ a její institucionalizace po roce 1948*, Praha, AV ČR, 2011.

³ J. Cuhra *et alii*, *Pojetí a prosazování komunistické výchovy v Československu 1948-89*, Praha, AV ČR, 2020.

of-school education, preparing teachers for the “challenges” of building a communist society, ensuring their ideological commitment and “correct” political beliefs⁴. In addition to undermining and weakening the interwar educational tradition, post-1948 efforts focused on strengthening “new” educational models based on the Soviet model. The new type of intellectual was envisioned as someone educated in a polytechnic fashion⁵, i.e. with comprehensive technical and scientific knowledge. Alongside this polytechnic education, the “victory” of communism was to be guaranteed by a strong ideological-political education embedded in the “newly” conceived civic education. This article explores civic education as a school subject between 1945 and 1953, as seen through the perspectives of teachers and educational policy. The year 1945 marked the beginning of a “new era” for civic education as a subject, yet in 1953, unexpectedly, it was abolished in both basic and upper secondary education.

1. *Questions, sources and methodological framework*

The reconstruction and analysis of transformation in civic learning between 1945 and 1953 from the perspective of the actors is based on the concept of educational knowledge transfer⁶ and employs a discourse-analytical approach⁷. The article analyses texts published in the key journal for civic education teachers, namely *Politická výchova* («Political Education», 1945–1946), later renamed *Občanská výchova* («Civic Education», 1946–1948),

⁴ Regarding the topic of teachers in socialist Czechoslovakia see: J. Zounek, M. Šimáně, D. Knotová, “*You have betrayed us for a little dirty money!*”: the Prague Spring as seen by primary school teachers, «*Paedagogica Historica*», vol. 54, n. 3, 2018, pp. 320-337. About the “own identity” of educational sciences in socialist Czechoslovakia see T. Kasper, D. Kasperová, *Tauwetter im Kalten Krieg und in der Pädagogik*, in C. Bach, E. Berner, S. Engelmann, V. Gräbe (edd.), *Krieg und Frieden*, Bad Heilbrunn, Klinkhardt, 2024, pp. 38-61. For similar analysis of teacher re-education in Soviet Latvia on the topic of “voluntary and compulsory” reception of the Soviet model see A. Rahi-Tamm, I. Salēniece, *Re-educating teachers: ways and consequences of Sovietization in Estonia and Latvia (1940–1960) from the biographical perspective*, «*Journal of Baltic Studies*», vol. 47, n. 4, 2016, pp. 451-472.

⁵ The polytechnically trained man, as opposed to the vocationally trained man, was not to be a “slave” to one discipline, as capitalist industry and production was to “dictate”. The polytechnically trained man was to be able to guarantee the economic development of the socialist state-planned economy and was to be the guarantee of the economic dominance of the East over the West.

⁶ J. Schriewer, “*Problemdimensionen sozialwissenschaftlicher Komparistik*”, in J. Schriewer, H. Kaelble, *Vergleich und Transfer. Komparistik in den Geschichts-, Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Campus, 2003, pp. 9-54.

⁷ P. Sarasin, *Diskursanalyse*, in M. Sommer, S. Müller-Wille, C. Reinhardt, *Handbuch Wissensgeschichte*, Stuttgart, Metzler Verlag, 2017, pp. 45-55; R. Keller, K. Hornidge, J.W. Schünemann, *The sociology of knowledge approach to discourse*, New York, Routledge, 2018 and R. Keller, *Diskursforschung*, Wiesbaden, VS Verlag, 2011.

and its successor *Společenské nauky ve škole* («Social Sciences in Schools», 1948–1953). This is a considerable corpus of articles by the educational policy makers of the time, politicians themselves, as well as reflections and reports by teachers on teaching civic education (but also history and geography). Civic education as a school subject was only one component of a broader concept of civic learning. Particularly after 1948, communist-oriented civic learning became the aim of the entire schooling system rather than being confined to a single subject. The formation of an «all-round socialist personality» (intellectually, emotionally, morally and physically) gained importance, not only within the classroom but also through out-of-school activities, celebrations, competitions, academic Olympiads and school-community collaborations (pupil visits to socialist model enterprises, mines, construction sites and agricultural cooperatives, as well as work activities, etc.). The question is how this broader framework of civic learning influenced the conception of civic education as a subject between 1948 and 1953, or even after 1945.

We acknowledge the limitations of using journal sources, as articles published after 1948 were subject to ideological and political control by the totalitarian regime. In this sense, teachers' journals from the post-1948 period largely functioned as a “staged” platform for presenting pedagogical practice and theory. Although they do not provide a free and authentic perspective, but often a controlled view dictated by the totalitarian educational policy, imposed on and demanded of teachers, these journals – alongside curricula, official educational documents and biographical memoirs – remain valuable sources for reconstructing teachers' and professional pedagogical debate.

We approach the corpus of texts on civic education in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1953 as part of a body of knowledge that is shaped, transformed and transferred⁸. The following analysis examines to what extent civic learning in Czechoslovakia was part of the «educational and cultural import»⁹ from the Soviet Union, i.e. the processes of Sovietisation of the Czechoslovak education system¹⁰. However, we do not view the transformation of civic learning as a «direct imprint» of Soviet influence and power. Instead, within

⁸ B. Behm, T. Drope, E. Glaser, S. Reh, *Wissen machen*, «Zeitschrift für Pädagogik», vol. 63, n. 1, 2017, pp. 7-15.

⁹ On the import of the Soviet image of the body and mind of the new Soviet man see. I. Kestere, B. Kalke, *Controlling the image of the teacher's body under authoritarianism: the case of Soviet Latvia (1953–1984)*, «Paedagogica Historica», vol. 54, n. 1-2, 2018, pp. 184-203. On the interest medium of “cultural import” by pen pals as part of the so-called socialist internationalism see I. Stonkuvienė, I. Ivanavičė, “Looking for pen pals”: *internationalist upbringing in a school of the Lithuanian SSR in the late Soviet era*, «Paedagogica Historica», vol. 60, n. 6, 2024, pp. 972-991.

¹⁰ An analysis of the “Americanization” of German education and German science can be used as inspiration for the reconstruction of the Sovietization of education in the “Eastern Bloc”. The transfer of American experiences, positions and values in science and education is analysed in a very inspiring way in S. Wedde, *Kulturtransfer und Wissenszirkulation in den*

the framework of transfer analysis, we consider the actions of the actors in the educational sphere as they either followed or rejected reference examples ("models"). We approach civic education and civic learning in Czechoslovakia from the perspective of knowledge circulation¹¹ within the countries of the Eastern Bloc at that time¹². With regard to the concepts of policy lending and policy borrowing¹³, it turns out that in the processes of transfer (reflection, perception, reception, selection), acculturation and the search for a new "identity", it is impossible to simply determine a "code and procedure" without taking into account the specificity of tradition, the "logic" of who reads, why, what and how. We assume that, despite all the "imperial" Soviet cultural and scientific efforts to unify and unite «across the Eastern Bloc» (cross-national view¹⁴), the transfer of civic learning in Czechoslovakia (as in other countries of the communist world¹⁵) was a specific and "unique" elaboration of Soviet "best practices". For the reconstruction and understanding of the meanings that shape perception/selection and acceptance/resistance, the role of both continuity and discontinuity is crucial¹⁶. These factors determine by whom (the actors and their practices) and how the "imported" models from the "home country" will be defined and further developed¹⁷. At the same time, it is clear that it was not possible to negate, reject or delegitimise the Soviet model. The

langen 1960er Jahren : das deutsch-amerikanische Fulbright-Programm für Lehrer:innen, Bad Heilbrunn, Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, 2023.

¹¹ M. Caruso *et alii*, *Zirkulation und Transformation: pädagogische Grenzüberschreitungen in historischer Perspektive*, Köln, Weimar, Wien, Böhlau, 2014.

¹² R. Applebaum, *Empire of Friends: Soviet Power and Socialist Internationalism in Cold War Czechoslovakia*, New York, Cornell University Press, 2019. and G. Steiner-Khamsi, *The Development Turn in Comparative Education*, «European Education», vol. 38, n. 3, 2006, pp. 19-47.

¹³ G. Steiner Khamsi, *Understanding Policy Borrowing and Lending*, in G. Steiner Khamsi, F. Waldow (edd.), *World Yearbook of Education*, New York, Routledge, 2012, pp. 3-17; G. Steiner Khamsi, *Cross-national policy borrowing: Understanding reception and translation*, «Asia Pacific Journal of Education», vol. 34, n. 2, 2014, pp. 153-167; D. Philipps, K. Ochs, *Process of Policy Borrowing in Education: some Explanatory and Analytical Devices*, «Comparative Education», vol. 39, n. 4, 2003, pp. 451-461.

¹⁴ E. Fuchs, E. Roldan (edd.), *The Transnational in the History of Education*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

¹⁵ J. Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2000. On the specific reception and rejection of the polytechnic education model in Hungary see L. Somogyvári, *Political decision-making in socialist education: a Hungarian case study (1958–1960)*, «History of Education», vol. 48, n. 5, 2019, pp. 664-681. On the Sovietization of Slovak education see B. Kudláčová (ed.), *Two Sides of the Same Coin. Examples of Free and Unfree Education in Slovakia during the Period of Socialism*, Berlin, Trnava, Peter Lang, 2023.

¹⁶ On the limits of implementation and rejection within the transnational transfer of the communist model of education and training, see M.E. Mincu, *Communist education as modernisation strategy? The swings of the globalisation pendulum in Eastern Europe (1947–1989)*, «History of Education», vol. 45, n. 3, 2016, pp. 319-334, in partic. pp. 325-329.

¹⁷ M. Caruso, F. Waldow, *Historisch-vergleichende Bildungsforschung. Transnationa-*

“autonomy” of adoption within transfer was always constrained by the force of political power. Even in cases where acceptance was merely formal and did not internally alter the knowledge system, the “new model” could not be officially refused. This is why our case does not represent a classic example of policy borrowing¹⁸, but rather a hybrid of partially instrumental and partially voluntary borrowing. The dominance of power is further evident in the “sudden” abolition of civic education as a compulsory subject in 1953, following the Soviet model. This prompts us to ask why and how this decision was made and what implications it had for the next phase of “new” civic learning in the Czechoslovak socialist schooling system.

2. *Political or civic education? The debate between 1945 and 1948*

Following the liberation of Czechoslovakia in May 1945 (partly by Allied forces but primarily by the Red Army), the new school year began in September 1945. This was a time deeply shaped by the traumatic experience of war, as well as the lingering bitterness over the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the failure of allied treaties, and the signing of the Munich Agreement in 1938. These political experiences often led to the questioning and weakening of interwar liberal democratic values in pedagogical publications. After 1945, liberal democracy was widely perceived as flawed, having failed to address key social challenges, having been «unable to defend itself» against the threat of fascism, and having ultimately led to the loss of national sovereignty (the breakup of the state). It is important to highlight and explain this perspective, as it was dominant in the newly established journal «Politická výchova» [«Political Education»] during the 1945/46 school year, legitimising the demand for a “new beginning” – one that was both partially voluntarily chosen and partially politically instrumentalised.

lisierung/Transnationalität, in G. Kluchert, K.P. Horn, C. Groppe, M. Caruso, *Historische Bildungsforschung*, Bad Heilbrunn, Verlag Julius Klinkhardt, 2021, pp. 79-89, in partic. 84-85.

¹⁸ D. Philipps, K. Ochs, *Researching Policy Borrowing: Some Methodological Challenges in Comparative Education*, «British Educational Research Journal», vol. 36, n. 6, 2004, pp. 773-784, in partic. 776.

2.1. Political education – curricular definition

We do not want to continue where we left off in 1939; we want to build the state on new foundations. Our return will not be a return to the past. We must understand the new facts¹⁹.

These new facts were to lead to a new worldview and thorough political education²⁰, through which «the people were to overcome their individualism and fulfil the gigantic tasks of the time»²¹. The leading proponent of this “new” political approach to civic education, teacher and later university professor Karel Angelis, spoke in early 1946 as follows:

It was clear that the principle of politicisation in schools meant exploring and drawing connections, evaluating all phenomena and facts in relation to the needs of our working people (...). Regarding the content of political education, there was and remains a shared conviction that the new ‘political education’ must differ from the former ‘civic studies and education’, which lacked this unified people’s democratic political orientation and did not have a single, consistent perspective and starting point for evaluating all aspects of our economic, political, social and cultural life. (...) Pre-war liberal democracy was, at times, remarkably deaf to these needs²².

Political education was introduced as a subject in all years of both lower and upper secondary schools²³. The interim curriculum from late 1945 defined its objective as follows:

A conscious and active attitude of young people to the construction of a new people’s democratic society and state, an awareness of national unity, a sense of kinship with all Slavic brothers and solidarity with other nations, a cooperative spirit in work and in sharing its fruits, and good social habits among pupils are strengthened through systematic instruction on social life and social structures, on the institutions and structures of people’s power, and through the organised life and work of pupils both in and outside school in the spirit of people’s democracy²⁴.

To support the establishment and further development of political education as a subject, a dedicated department was created within the newly founded Research Institute of Pedagogy at the Ministry of Education (established

¹⁹ B. Uher, *Základem politické výchovy je vědění*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 1, 1946, pp. 3-4, in partic. p. 4.

²⁰ O. Chlup, *O politické výchově mládeže*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 1, 1946, p. 3.

²¹ K. Angelis, *Úvodem*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 1, 1946, pp. 1-3, in partic. p. 3.

²² K. Angelis, *Občanská a politická výchova do nového školního roku*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 1, 1946, pp. 2-4, in partic. p. 3.

²³ *Přechodné učební osnovy pro školy obecné, měštánské a střední na školní rok 1945/46: výnos MŠO z 30.XI.1945, č. 10584*, Praha, Státní nakladatelství, 1946, p. 5, p. 23, p. 50.

²⁴ *Přechodné učební osnovy pro školy obecné, měštánské a střední na školní rok 1945/46: výn. MŠO z 30.XI.1945, č. 10584*, Praha, Státní nakladatelství, 1946, p. 29.

in 1946, the department for political and moral education and later for civic education), which was mainly responsible for the creation of curricula, as well as textbooks and other aids.

From the 1945/46 school year onwards, the goal of the new political education (which replaced interwar civic education) was to cultivate individuals with a unified worldview, political awareness, a collective and work-oriented moral code, and firm habits and beliefs for life in a people's democracy²⁵. This goal was not to be undermined by liberalism, individualism, or what was referred to as moralising, which had allegedly been prevalent in interwar civic education²⁶. A key issue was the fulfilment and implementation of political education. Should it exist as a standalone subject, or should it be a principle integrated across all subjects (particularly in the "new" history²⁷, geography, and Czech and Russian language classes)? Both approaches were to be pursued: political education as a standalone subject and political and ideological consciousness embedded in other subjects. History was to highlight the nation, the new world order, the historical role of the USSR and the history of the USSR. Geography, beyond its economic aspects, was to emphasise the transformation of landscapes through socialist construction projects²⁸. The world and history were to be shaped through human constructive labour²⁹. Historical and geographical topics were to be interpreted through the lens of contemporary political education requirements, acquiring an explicitly political significance. Similarly, literature and the Czech language were expected to highlight national traditions and the solidarity of Slavic nations³⁰.

The connection between school-based political education and events in the outside world was to be achieved through the appropriate didactic approach to the subject. Lessons were to feature presentations, discussions, current affairs updates, reviews of weekly or monthly events (both domestic and international), conversations, readings of selected texts, as well as newspapers, magazines, etc. While grading was introduced in political education, formal examinations and written assignments were not required, and assessment was to be approached with caution³¹. With no curriculum or textbooks available for the new subject, the journal «Politická výchova» [«Political Education»] played

²⁵ *Přechodné učební osnovy pro školy obecné, měštanské a střední na školní rok 1945/46: výn. MŠO z 30.XI.1945, č. 10584, Praha, Státní nakladatelství, 1946, p. 3.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ O. Fidrmuc, *Dějepis a politická výchova*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 2-3, 1946, pp. 5-6.

²⁸ M. Drástová, K. Angelis, *Zeměpis a politická výchova*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 2-3, 1946, pp. 6-8.

²⁹ M. Drástová, K. Angelis, *Zeměpis a politická výchova*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 2-3, 1946, pp. 6-8, here p. 7.

³⁰ J.V. Bečka, *Občanská výchova a čeština*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 1, 1947, pp. 5-6.

³¹ J. Baxová, *Politická výchova na školách 2. stupně*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 4, 1946, p. 4.

an important conceptual-pedagogical role (formulation of objectives, definition of curricular content), but also a didactic role (how the subject should be taught, what methods, procedures and means should be used, how pupils should be communicated with, what tools should be used, what the role of the teacher should be, how the school and the broader social environment should be connected within the subject, how pupil and school self-government should be conceived and implemented).

Teachers' notes on the curriculum for the lower secondary level reveal that the subject matter, grounded in pupils' personal experiences within their family, local community and region (economic and cultural life), extended to political life in the state – people's democracy, security, socialist patriotism, the economic and cultural life of the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR, and the emergence of the workers' movement. The subject was intended to instil awareness of Slavic unity and emphasise the USSR's significance as the only state that had successfully addressed social issues and that had not only liberated Czechoslovakia but also defeated fascism with the greatest sacrifice and loss of lives. In addition, the new concept of work, the relationship of pupils to work, and the importance of work for society were brought to the fore³². The aim was to cultivate a relationship to the collective. Pupils were to be taught about new forms of economic life – the importance of planned and nationalised economies, and the potential of cooperative ownership. The journal also gave prominence to the importance of science and a scientific worldview, expressing a highly sceptical stance towards faith and the role of church institutions in both society and individual life.

At the upper secondary level, the curriculum was given a proper theoretical foundation. Topics included the nature of slavery, feudalism, capitalism and the emergence of socialism. Attention was also devoted to socialist theorists and leaders (Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin), as well as to the roots of imperialism, Nazism and fascism³³.

2.2. *The dispute over the politicisation of school and education – autonomy and heteronomy / continuities and discontinuities in civic learning*

The first volume of *Politická výchova* (Political Education) was marked by a certain «ideological and professional inconsistency». Readers were confronted with a broad spectrum of perspectives, from the writings of President

³² See *Themata občanské výchovy*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 5, 1946, pp. 2-15; *Themata občanské výchovy-pokračování*, «Politická výchova», vol. 12, n. 1, 1946, pp. 5-46.

³³ *Přechodné učební osnovy pro školy obecné, měšťanské a střední na školní rok 1945/46: výn.* MŠO z 30.XI.1945, č. 10584, Praha, Státní nakladatelství, 1946, pp 63-64.

Edvard Beneš, who sought to position Czechoslovakia as a political bridge between the East and the West, to the works of the “new classics” – Joseph Stalin and Vladimir Lenin. Discussions also included the humanist and democratic ideas of interwar President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, the pedagogical concepts of John Amos Comenius, and the goals and principles of the Scouting movement³⁴ (which had symbolised interwar pedagogical life). The journal reported on students participating in hop-picking («helping the people and the economy»), and on the way back, stopping at the grave of President Masaryk, reflecting on the idea that only now could his vision of a «social revolution»³⁵ truly be realised. Similarly, other articles referenced the legacy of the interwar Sokol physical education society while simultaneously emphasising the importance of a unified physical education association for the health and security of citizens in the people’s democratic republic and for shaping the people’s democratic army³⁶.

How should we assess the “breadth” of views and opinions that were presented for the development of political education and also for finding the grounding of this subject? Was it an unclear profile of political education? It is hard to assume that. Or was it a reflection of the “transition” (requiring a bridging of familiar names and meanings) of Czechoslovakia from the values of the interwar liberal democracy to the order of «people’s democracy» and the values of socialism? Or can we see behind this strategy a deliberate approach and tactic of gradually “rewriting” the meanings and “legacy” of interwar authorities of civic learning, by positioning their goals alongside the goals of socialist citizenship and the “leaders” of socialism, as illustrated by the appeal of the theorist of the “new” civic learning, Karel Angelis:

The new patriotism, the new conception of Slavic identity, the new concrete conception of humanity and Masaryk’s ‘being human’ and the conception of a new humanism of socialising people’s democracy and socialism appear to us as a conscious synthesis of all the best that our people and our nation have been striving for (...) for which it fought with its social struggles against the exploitation of man by man, for the eradication of this slavery and exploitation and for the rights of the working people, for the real rule of the ‘common people’, for people’s democracy³⁷.

The diversity of published texts partly reflected the dispute over the politicisation of education and school. A part of the teaching, professional and political community disagreed with the name of the subject. These teachers con-

³⁴ M. Trapl, *Politická výchova ve vyšších třídách škol středních*, «Politická výchova», vol. 1, n. 2-3, 1946, pp. 1-3, in partic. p. 3.

³⁵ K. Angelis, *Škola pomáhá republice a republika škole*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 10, 1947, pp. 1-3, in partic. p. 3.

³⁶ R. Plajner, *Junácká výchova*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 9, 1947, pp. 2-4.

³⁷ K. Angelis, *Mravňí výchova v nových osnovách*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 5, 1947, pp. 1-3, in partic. p. 2.

tinued to speak of civic education and downplayed the significance of political education in schools, or even questioned this task. This group of teachers emphasised the ideals of interwar civic learning, which upheld values of individual freedom and social solidarity, the ideas of cosmopolitanism, tolerance and openness, national identity and supranational, universal humanity. Opposed to them was another group of teachers, supported in the years 1945–1946 by the Minister of Education Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962), a member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and a former member of the Czechoslovak exile in Moscow. This group viewed political education as the foundation for «defence and protection», ensuring that the national catastrophe would not be repeated and that the values of life in socialism, people's democracy and friendship with the USSR would be “definitively” supported.

By 1947, the dispute had somewhat subsided (or at least was no longer as sharply debated in the journal as it had been in 1946). This shift coincided with the appointment of a new Minister of Education, Jaroslav Stránský (1884–1973), a representative of the democratic Czechoslovak National Socialist Party. Stránský encouraged professional pedagogical discussions within the Research Institute of Pedagogy³⁸ and at the Ministry of Education³⁹, aiming to reduce the politicisation of education within the curriculum⁴⁰. He advocated for abandoning the term Political Education and reinstating Civic Education as the subject's official name from the 1946/47 school year⁴¹. The journal was also renamed «Občanská výchova» [«Civic Education»] from the 1946/47 school year, shifting its focus away from political-ideological articles and towards more didactic texts. Although there were fewer contributions that explicitly challenged the politicisation of civic education, they carried significant weight, as they were authored by state figures such as President Edvard Beneš:

I perceive all world events as a whole, synthetically, seeking their historical and philosophical meaning. Just as Masaryk did, I have always emphasised that we must align ourselves with the spirit of European and global politics. We must strive to embed our Czechoslovak identity within the broader currents of world history. We must strive to understand where

³⁸ *Usnesení pléna konference OPS konané v Praze 8.-9. listopadu 1947 o občanské výchově, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 4, 1947, pp. 141-142.*

³⁹ *Učitelům občanské nauky, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 4, 1947, pp. 98-100.* A survey of the Ministry of Education included representatives of ministries headed by Communist and non-Communist politicians, experts supporting both the “new direction” of civic education and supporters highlighting the need to save schools from direct political orders.

⁴⁰ *Přechodné učební plány z roku 1946 a výnos z 25-7. 1947 č. A 162.332-III.*

⁴¹ Civic education became the basis already at the primary level (especially in the context of the national history in the fourth and fifth grades), then in the grades of the communal school at the lower secondary level, also at the lower and upper secondary high schools and at the secondary vocational schools and training colleges. The relevance of civic education in terms of the introduction of a compulsory subject at various types of school has increased significantly in comparison with the interwar period.

the world is headed and what it desires, and adjust our course accordingly, guided by truth and justice, by universal morality, and by a correctly understood and correctly determined philosophy of world history⁴².

Even more resolutely opposed to the politicisation of education in schools and the “new” direction of civic education was the Minister of Education Stránský:

In our democratic Czechoslovakia, there will be no imposed, so to speak, standardised unity in the interpretation of political principles or the assessment of political practice. Our Constitution allows, and will continue to allow, opposition politics⁴³.

Despite the political change in the position of Minister of Education, the expert discussions at the Research Institute of Pedagogy and the Ministry of Education, and the reintroduction of the subject name as Civic Education, the voice of some “revolutionary” teachers was not easily diminished. Bohumil Kujal, who would later become the director of the Research Institute of Pedagogy and a member of the J.A. Comenius Institute of Pedagogy at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, actively published and spoke in favour of «civic education that enhances the people’s democratic consciousness of the youth, for youth participation in the building of the republic and for supporting their work ethic»⁴⁴. Similarly, Karel Angelis, a teacher who rapidly advanced his career to become an associate professor of pedagogy at the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague, “agitated” for the idea that the “new” civic education should lead to «political consciousness on a scientific basis»⁴⁵. The same principle was to apply to history⁴⁶ and geography⁴⁷. History lessons about the nation’s past were to lead to an awareness of current historical tasks. Geography lessons, too, were to help students understand the current distribution of power in the world and the necessity of the economic and social transformation of the postwar world. Similar positions and orientations towards civic learning were also held by another prominent figure of the journal, Bohumil Uher⁴⁸, originally a teacher and very soon also a university lecturer.

⁴² E. Beneš, *O politické výchově*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 1, 1946, pp. 1-2.

⁴³ J. Stránský, *O občanské výchově*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 2, 1947, pp. 33-34, in partic. p. 34.

⁴⁴ B. Kujal, *Třetí rok občanské výchovy na školách*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 2, 1947, pp. 34-37, in partic. p. 35.

⁴⁵ K. Angelis, *Občanská výchova ve škole a časopis Občanská výchova*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 1, 1947, pp. 1-3, in partic. p. 2.

⁴⁶ O. Fidrmuc, *Vztah občanské výchovy k dějepisné látce*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 3, 1946, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷ M. Drástová, *Hospodářská a politická základna učební látky nového zeměpisu*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 3, 1946, pp. 3-5.

⁴⁸ K. Konečný, *Sonda do zakladatelského období pedagogické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity. “Případ” profesorky Růženy Tesařové*, «Dějiny a dějepis», vol. 37, n. 1-2, pp. 80-93.

Uher focused not only on the goals but also on the means and methods of civic education, especially the "new" school self-government.

The curriculum of civic education after 1946 indicates that both the goals and content of the subject were largely similar to those of the earlier political education⁴⁹. The fundamental goal of civic education remained the same – to educate and inform about the nature of people's democracy, the close relationship with Slavic nations, especially the USSR, the value of work for the collective, and patriotism in a people's democratic state⁵⁰. Other points in the curriculum included education on national economy matters (the significance of a state-controlled economy, cooperatives)⁵¹, the development of society (slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism)⁵², security and the state, and the governance of the municipality, region and state. This is evidenced both by the civic education curriculum itself and by published analyses of the educational content on the pages of the renamed journal *Občanská výchova* (Civic Education) in 1946/47. In the recommended contents, which were further analysed in detail in the journal alongside the curriculum, the image of the national catastrophe caused by the Munich Agreement, the "rescue" through liberation by the Red Army, and the new security provided by the "protection" of the USSR were presented. According to the journal, the Czechoslovak resistance in Moscow was to be presented in more depth than the resistance in the UK. The role of President Edvard Beneš during the war was thematised in the journal mainly in connection with his trip to the USSR and the signing of the peace treaty with the USSR in 1943.

The educational contents mentioned were also intended to play a role within pupil self-government. Pupils were to thematise significant moments in «national history», important figures of the "national culture" and the role of the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union during celebrations, discussions, interviews, school assemblies, reading groups, school clubs, trips and walks, as well as through school magazines or school radio programmes. Members of cooperatives were to be invited and state-controlled enterprises were to be visited⁵³. News was to be focused on developments in the USSR and Slavic countries politically aligned with the USSR – Bulgaria, Poland, and possibly Yugoslavia. Pupils' own work, learning and sports were to be seen as contributions to the people's democratic republic.

⁴⁹ *Osnovy občanské výchovy*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 1, 1946, pp. 10-47.

⁵⁰ *Státní zřízení lidově demokratické republiky Československé*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 5, 1947, pp. 20-30.

⁵¹ *Themata občanské výchovy*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 2, 1947, pp. 2-28, in partic. p. 3.

⁵² J. Vlček, *Národní hospodářství v občanské výchově*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 1, 1947, pp. 3-5, in partic. p. 4.

⁵³ *Návrh prozatímního řádu žákovské samosprávy pro školy II. stupně*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 1, 1947, pp. 24-27.

Civic education was to be taught in an active and engaging manner, utilising discussion, induction and deduction – not merely through dictation, rote memorisation or self-directed learning. Instead, a heuristic, experiential approach was preferred (emphasising the role of personal stories, visual imagery and narrative)⁵⁴. Articles on the subject provided guidance on structuring lessons, setting lesson objectives, managing time within the lesson, and selecting methods that would ensure active pupil and student participation. This included incorporating current events, pupil presentations, discussions with pupils on contemporary issues, discussions related to presentations, as well as direct instruction, the importance of the teacher's summary of the topic, and the final consolidation of key takeaways from each lesson⁵⁵.

The role of the “new” civic education teacher was also given particular attention. This teacher was expected to have a firm grasp of the contents and their importance in guiding pupils towards the values of the people's democratic republic. More than that, the teacher was to serve as a model of the “new” citizen through their own life. They were required to study the works of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, as well as Edvard Beneš and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk⁵⁶. Additionally, they were to be devoted friends of the USSR, well-versed in Soviet life and culture. Their political commitment, personal beliefs and moral character were emphasised, along with the necessity of independent study in line with the principles of the people's democratic society⁵⁷. These ideological expectations were also to become fundamental to university-level teacher education after the establishment of faculties of education at universities in 1946⁵⁸.

2.3. *The exemplary role of the Soviet model for the “new” civic education*

The promotion of the “new” and politically conscious direction of civic learning in the journal was to be supported by Soviet authorities. In 1947, work was underway on translations of excerpts from the texts of the Soviet academic and educator Ivan A. Kairov (1893-1978) for publication in the journal. His texts on the political tasks of education were published in November 1947 and were evidently intended to serve multiple functions. The first text, which was relatively general and theoretical, framed the debate on

⁵⁴ V. Hýl, *Metoda občanské výchovy*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 1, 1947, pp. 6-7.

⁵⁵ *Praxe občanské výchovy*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 2, 1947, pp. 36-47.

⁵⁶ V. Hýl, *Politická sebevýchova*, «Politická výchova», vol. 2, n. 2, 1946, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁷ J. Macháček, *Kvalifikace učitele občanské výchovy na škole III. stupně*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 1, 1947, pp. 7-9.

⁵⁸ K. Galla, *Občanská výchova jako studijní obor na pedagogické fakultě*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 6, 1948, pp. 117-118.

the importance of political education while also providing its foundation, justification, significance and purpose⁵⁹. In addition, another text by Kairov offered insights into the procedures and methods for conceiving civic learning in a politically and ideologically driven manner, rooted in Marxist principles and applied systematically⁶⁰. Kairov's text emphasised the necessity of teaching civic education in line with clearly defined goals, with thoroughness and consistency, based on the principle of unified pedagogical influence (where the teacher was to serve as a steadfast role model and a "correctly" thinking citizen). Furthermore, his text advocated for the «unity of content and form» in teaching civic education, where strong ideological commitment to Marxism-Leninism was to be instilled not only through instruction but also through the cultivation of willpower and strong character. The text by a Soviet authority on pedagogy marked a shift in the Czechoslovak debate on civic learning. Previously, references to the Soviet model had relied on secondary rather than primary sources, providing indirect accounts of Soviet society and its civic and political education⁶¹. Now, for the first time, contributors to «Občanská výchova» [«Civic Education»] could directly cite Soviet sources and use them as authoritative references⁶². Moreover, the Soviet texts published before the Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia (February 1948) made no effort to conceal their Marxist foundations or the political-ideological purpose of civic learning in securing the victory of communism. In this sense, Kairov's texts foreshadowed the imminent Communist takeover of February 1948⁶³.

The "new direction" of civic learning was further reinforced by statements from Soviet authorities during their "friendly visits" to Czechoslovakia. (The visit by the Moscow Academy of Sciences educator Ivan A. Kairov⁶⁴ took place in Prague in early 1948, meaning it was planned and carried out even before the «February victory of the working people»).

⁵⁹ J.A. Kairov, *Methody mravní výchovy*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 3, 1947, pp. 65-69.

⁶⁰ Id., *O ideově politické výchově na sovětské škole*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 3, 1947, p. 71.

⁶¹ Gonchar's fundamental work, *Pedagogika*, was translated into Czech and published in 1952. See N.K. Gončarov, *Pedagogika*, Praha, SPN, 1952. Other textbooks and books on Soviet educational sciences were published quite early in the 1950s, because one of the goals of the "new" Czechoslovak educational sciences was, among other things, to quickly introduce the ideas and nature of Soviet education to the wider educational community. See J.N. Medynskij, *Dějiny pedagogiky*, Praha, SPN, 1950; N.A. Konstantinov, J.N. Medynskij, M.F. Šabajeva, *Dějiny pedagogiky*, Praha, SPN, 1959.

⁶² K. Hanuš, *Politická výchova sovětské mládeže*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 3, 1947, pp. 69-71.

⁶³ K. Angelis, *Občanská a politická výchova po únorových událostech*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 9, 1948, pp. 273-276, in partic. p. 274.

⁶⁴ I.A. Kairov, *O výchově sovětské mládeže*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 8, 1948, pp. 245-246.

3. *Civic education fulfilling the ideals of communism and people's democracy in the Czechoslovak Republic – debate and practice in civic learning after 1948*

The first reports and enthusiasm surrounding the political transformation in Czechoslovakia – marked by the victory of communism and the working class – came both from the Minister of Education Zdeněk Nejedlý⁶⁵, who resumed his position after the communist takeover, and from the active proponents of the “new” politically oriented civic learning. The authors of fervently celebratory articles in March and April 1948 were primarily representatives of the “new” elite in pedagogical science (K. Angelis, B. Kujal and B. Uher)⁶⁶.

3.1. *Education of the communist-minded and conscious citizen*

The shift in political direction was swiftly reflected in the adoption of the new Education Act of 21 April 1948 (No. 95/1948), which introduced a unified model of education at the lower secondary level⁶⁷. This Act was accompanied by a newly approved curriculum⁶⁸, in which both the overall instructional and educational goals of schools, as well as the specific objectives and contents of compulsory civic education, were aligned with the ideals of the people's democratic republic and its alliance with the USSR. This applied not only to civic education (compulsory at both lower and upper secondary levels) but also to geography⁶⁹, history⁷⁰, Russian language, and natural sciences⁷¹. (The journal was renamed «Společenské nauky ve škole: časopis pro občanskou nauku,

⁶⁵ *Programový projev ministra školství a osvěty k pražskému učitelstvu*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 8, 1948, pp. 241- 242; B. Kujal, *Výchova sovětské mládeže*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 8, 1948, pp. 242-243.

⁶⁶ *Redakce časopisu Občanské výchovy k II. a III. ročníku*, «Politická výchova», vol. 3, n. 8, 1948, p. 241.

⁶⁷ Based on Law No. 95/1948, multi-year grammar schools were closed as a symbol of unequal access to education and a school system guaranteed the common education of pupils over eight years – at primary and lower secondary levels – was introduced.

⁶⁸ *Učební plán a učební osnovy pro školy národní*, Praha, SPN, 1948, pp. 8-11 and *Učební plán a učební osnovy pro školy střední*, Praha, SPN, 1948, p. 44.

⁶⁹ J. Pravdová, *K osnovám dějepisu na školní rok 1953-1954*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 7, 1951, pp. 269-272 and also S. Mařan, *K osnovám zeměpisu v letošním školním roce*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 7, 1951, pp. 286-288.

⁷⁰ A.V. Jefimov, *Úkoly ideově politické výchovy při vyučování dějepisu nové doby ve střední škole*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 2, 1948, pp. 40-45 and E. Struška, *Vlastivěda v nových osnovách*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 2, 1948, pp. 49-55.

⁷¹ Also, the curriculum contents and objectives of science courses were to promote the development of the economy and the “victory” of communism, the promotion of the scientific world point of view in explaining the facts of nature.

dějepis, zeměpis a vlastivědu» [«Social Sciences in Schools: A Journal for Civic Studies, History, Geography, and National History and Geography»]). Civic studies were to be further reinforced within school life through a new concept of work (pupil work activities), excursions to socialist enterprises and cooperatives, a number of well-thought-out and planned celebrations of holidays (marking significant events and figures as part of character education), various forms of collective education and a system of out-of-school communist education. Many of the aims and contents of civic education, as outlined in the 1948 curriculum, remained unchanged from the educational plans of 1945-1948. However, a new overarching goal was explicitly declared: the formation of the communist citizen, rooted in Marxist pedagogical principles and grounded in instruction on scientific communism and socialism.

The generally outlined curriculum was further elaborated through explanatory didactic texts published in the journal. These texts addressed topics such as the emergence of the working class, its struggle, the founding of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the shortcomings of liberal democracy, the significance of the USSR for the global socialist order, the role of the USSR in the liberation of the Czechoslovak Republic, and the defeat of fascism and Nazism. Other key topics included the political and social nature of «people's democracy» – state power bodies⁷², national committees, the socialist constitution, socialist judiciary, the importance of nationalised economy and planned economy⁷³, the importance of heavy industry for post-war reconstruction and for the socialist economy⁷⁴, socialist culture, socialist physical education, health protection in socialism, strengthening scientific socialism⁷⁵, and materialist science as a “remedy” against idealist and spiritual views of the world. Between 1948 and 1953, these educational contents were presented as eternal, immutable, uniform, deeply embedded in the life of every individual – they explained the workings of the state (the socialist world), as well as everyday life in the family, school, community and region.

In civic education, concepts such as community and family were not presented as organic social structures into which a child is naturally integrated, providing them with acceptance and development. Instead, they were framed exclusively within the socialist worldview: not simply family, but socialist family⁷⁶; not community, but socialist community; not the importance of creative

⁷² *Občanská nauka*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 3, 1948, pp. 102-105 and also *Občanská nauka*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 4, 1949, pp. 152-159.

⁷³ K. Angelis, Škola pětiletému plánu, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 5, 1949, pp. 193-195 and also K. Angelis, *Pětiletý plán – naše cesta k socialismu*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 5, 1949, pp. 196-199.

⁷⁴ *Občanská nauka*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 6, 1949, pp. 252-264.

⁷⁵ *Občanská nauka*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 8, 1949, pp. 361-376.

⁷⁶ B. Uher, *Společenské skupiny, rodina jako základní sociální jednotka. Rodina dříve a dnes*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 6, n. 1, 1950, pp. 1-7, in partic. p. 3.

work, but socialist work⁷⁷, etc. Both the contents and forms of work in civic education were “re-coloured” and guided by the logic of the socialist world order⁷⁸ and scientific worldview⁷⁹. Similarly, pupil self-government bodies were to be established to teach pupils about social life in line with socialist principles. The aim was not to instil habits of cleanliness, discipline and order for their own sake but to foster cleanliness for socialism, socialist discipline and socialist order⁸⁰. The school was not to support the moral development of the pupil, but to take care of the development of communist morality and socialist feeling and to emphasise collective goals⁸¹.

What changed in the debate on civic learning among teachers and in the educational policy requirements after 1948? The key changes were ideological rigidity and an uncompromising stance. It was no longer possible to question or debate the new political direction and the new direction of civic learning. The new course had to be unconditionally accepted, implemented and followed. As a result, the number of ideologically driven texts grew, occupying more than half of the journal's content. These texts were written by Soviet academics⁸², or, alternatively, by Czechoslovak representatives of the emerging “new” pedagogy. In addition, there was a rise in political articles celebrating political changes, commenting on current political events and recalling milestones on the path “to the victory” of socialism and communism in the USSR and Czechoslovakia. Political-proclamatory texts by the communist president Klement Gottwald were published, alongside works by Joseph Stalin⁸³, as well

⁷⁷ E. Struška, *Vlastivěda v nových osnovách*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 1, 1948, pp. 37-39, in partic. p. 38.

⁷⁸ I.A. Kairov, *Ideově politická výchova žactva*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 3, 1948, pp. 97-100; I.A. Kairov, *Ideově politická výchova žactva – pokračování*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 4, 1949, pp. 145-148 also see A.J. Zis, *O komunistické morálce*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 3, 1948, pp. 100-102; A.J. Zis, *O komunistické morálce – pokračování*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 4, 1949, pp. 149-152 and also N.K. Gončarov, *Výchova k marxisticko-leninskému světovému názoru*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 9, 1949, pp. 387-392.

⁷⁹ L. Bakoš, *Svetový názor jako jednotný systém názorov o přírode a společnosti, jako základ konania*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 5, n. 1, 1949, pp. 21-22.

⁸⁰ S. Eduard, *Vlastivěda – učební plán na měsíc září v nových osnovách*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 1, 1948, pp. 39-47.

⁸¹ I.A. Kairov, *Některé problémy organisace dětského kolektivu*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 6, 1949, pp. 241-248.

⁸² See texts fby Soviet authors: M.N. Skatkin, P.I. Simakov, A.J. Jefimov, N.K. Gončarov, A.J. Zis, E.A. Kosminskij, I.A. Kairov.

⁸³ Although the XXth Congress of the CPSU in 1956 criticized the cult of personality of J.V. Stalin, this «political earthquake» did not have an immediate impact on the content and discussion of civic education in Czechoslovakia. In 1956, very soon after the congress, a publication was published which noted that in courses on the Constitution of the Czechoslovakia and the USSR, in the subjects of Psychology and Logic, the importance of the people, their achievements and their role in the formation of socialism should be emphasized at the upper secondary level over the importance of personality. However, there has been no fundamental rethinking of edu-

as Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. These writings demonstrated the theoretical depth and Marxist foundations of civic learning, emphasising that the interwar and immediate post-war period of "uncertainty", theoretical freedom, and inconsistency between pedagogical theory and practice had been overcome. The texts were intended to continuously and repeatedly legitimise the «victory of the new» political system, providing a clear explanation of why and how this victory had been achieved, and why it must be honoured and continued to be supported so that it could never be thwarted by anyone⁸⁴. Another change was the complete disappearance of references to and symbols or acknowledgements of the interwar period. If the period was mentioned at all, it was only as a time of political, social and cultural failure – one that had therefore been rightfully replaced by the "new" model of people's democracy and socialism.

After 1948, didactic texts in journals served as substitutes for the missing textbooks and workbooks that would have reflected the revolutionary and victorious spirit of February 1948⁸⁵. The texts were structured into subsections that effectively corresponded to the topics of individual lessons in subjects such as civic studies, history, geography, and national history and geography. In addition to explanatory content, the texts included summaries, questions and prescribed objectives to help teachers clearly understand their significance and immediately incorporate them into their lessons. The texts provided discussion prompts and guiding questions, formulated expected outcomes from class discussions and pupil activities within lessons, and included control questions. They were designed to aid in the planning and execution of lessons, ensuring that the prescribed ideological and political educational objectives were met. However, it must be noted that, in terms of conceptual complexity, these texts were often too difficult for lower secondary school pupils to fully grasp, and their direct application in the classroom was not always successful, as reflected in self-assessments published in the journal⁸⁶. Despite these challenges, the style of the articles remained largely unchanged⁸⁷. As a result, there was an

cational content, methods in civic education. Moreover, Czechoslovakia was very cautious about rejecting the cult of personality and was slow to open up criticism of the 1950s. See *Dějepis, Ústava ČSR a SSR, Psychologie*, Praha SPN, 1956, especially pp. 27-28.

⁸⁴ G. Bareš, *Naplňit školy novým životem*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 5, n. 6, 1950, pp. 241-243.

⁸⁵ K. Angelis, *Společenské nauky v nových osnovách*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 4, n. 1, 1948, pp. 2-4, in partic. p. 3.

⁸⁶ *O lepší práci v předmětech společenských nauk*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 5, n. 6, 1950, pp. 241-243.

⁸⁷ From the school year 1950/51 the curriculum was partially changed, when the "more complex curriculum" (conceptually more abstract and theoretical – Marxist foundations of social life, dialectics, national economic concepts), which the pupils could only partially understand, was made simpler and reduced. See *Občanská nauka ve školním roce 1950/51*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 6, n. 1, 1950, pp. 17-19.

urgent demand for the development of new textbooks to ensure that post-February civic studies were not dependent solely on journal publications⁸⁸.

3.2. *The “sudden” end of compulsory civic education*

The analysed first five years of the “new” civic studies ended in a completely different way than one might have expected, and contrary to the perspectives published by teachers and educational policy makers. The new Education Act n. 31 of 1953 aligned the Czechoslovak school system more closely with the Soviet model, and, in particular, the subsequent curriculum reform introduced a surprising change: the abolition of civic studies as a separate subject. Between 1953 and 1960 (until the adoption of the 1960 Education Act), the Czechoslovak school system operated without compulsory civic studies. Instead, following the Soviet model, the ideological and political objectives of education were to be embedded in the overall goal of the school, integrated across all subjects (whether social sciences, natural sciences or other subjects such as art, music and physical education)⁸⁹ and all out-of-school activities⁹⁰. Justifying such a fundamental and unexpected change required both political and academic explanations:

The social sciences play a crucial role in shaping new people, in developing patriotic and civil defence education. Therefore, in the new curriculum, following the Soviet model, the social sciences have been strengthened⁹¹.

That this was a political decision, made without prior consultation with teachers, is further evidenced by the fact that, after the law was passed, publications on this topic primarily consisted of translations of Soviet authors. These Soviet educators had extensive experience with this form of civic learning, experience that Czechoslovak teachers were now expected to acquire as well.

After 1953, civic learning remained compulsory only at the upper secondary level. In Year 9 of the «eleven-year unified secondary school», a subject called The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR was introduced, mirroring a similar subject in the Soviet curriculum (The Constitu-

⁸⁸ *O lepší práci v předmětech společenských nauk*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 5, n. 6, 1950, pp. 241-243.

⁸⁹ K. Angelis, *Za zlepšení ideopolitické výchovy při vyučování předmětům společenských věd*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 7, 1953, pp. 265-269.

⁹⁰ K. Angelis, *Nový školský zákon – nová etapa ve vývoji naší školy*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 6, 1953, p. 264.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

tion of the USSR). This subject was designed to educate pupils on the system of the people's democratic republic, the socialist system of government, and Czechoslovak-Soviet «friendship and cooperation»⁹². In Years 10 and 11 of the eleven-year secondary school, two additional subjects were introduced: Psychology (mainly the psychology of I.P. Pavlov and Russian reflexology) and Logic (which also included broader Marxist epistemological foundations and philosophical premises)⁹³. However, it is important to clarify that after Year 8 of general education in basic school, only a portion of pupils continued to the upper level of the eleven-year secondary school. The majority pursued education in secondary technical schools and vocational schools, where subjects such as The Constitution, Psychology and Logic were not included in the curriculum. As a result, the majority of pupils between 1953 and 1960 left the education system without having studied any subjects specifically focused on civic learning!

4. Civic learning in Czechoslovakia (1945–1953) from the perspective of pedagogical transfer

What does the case of civic learning in Czechoslovakia before and after the Communist Party took power (1945-1953) reveal? Pedagogical historiography often generalises the development of the school system and the transformation of pedagogical thinking and educational science in the cultural-political space of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1950s as a period of “adoption” of the Soviet model of education. The Soviet pedagogical model is typically presented as a cohesive and “homogeneous” system, rooted in Marxist-Leninist ideology and built upon a framework of educational goals, contents, methods, means and institutions – both in and outside of schools – for the education of the communist citizen. This model was to be uniformly and consistently “adopted” by the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with the ultimate aim of securing the revolutionary victory of communism over capitalism and ensuring the dominance of the “East” over the West. However, the narrative of “adoption” only captures part of the reality of transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, because no process of cultural transmission occurs in a one-way, straightforward or unproblematic manner. An analysis of civic and political education after 1945 and 1948 in Czechoslovakia, from the perspective

⁹² A.M. Dostál, *K novým osnovám ústavy ČSR a SSSR*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 7, 1953, pp. 272-274.

⁹³ K. Angelis, *Za zlepšení ideopolitické výchovy při vyučování předmětům společenských věd*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 7, 1953, pp. 265-269; A.M. Dostál, *O výchově k socialistickému vlastenectví při vyučování ústavě ČSR a SSSR*, «Společenské nauky ve škole», vol. 8, n. 9, 1953, pp. 372-376.

of knowledge transfer and circulation, reveals a more complex process – one shaped by the actors involved, social change, cultural meanings, implementation strategies, dynamics and reception, etc.

The geographical space that the pedagogical culture of Marxism-Leninism sought to transform in Central and Eastern Europe after the Second World War (not to mention other parts of the world) was highly diverse in terms of traditions and the cultural and social “input” characteristics of the “receiving” countries. The question of why, how and to what extent each individual country would identify with the “global” concept of Marxism-Leninism depended on its reading (reflection) of its own historical tradition (particularly the experience of the Second World War), its interpretation of the processes of societal modernisation and social change, its economic and industrial strength, and its geopolitical role both within its immediate geographical region and on a global scale, i.e. on the cultural context of the “receiving space”. The path to the acceptance, implementation and legitimisation of the “new” worldview – the communist view of man and the world – was in many ways country-specific. Although debate on civic learning in Czechoslovakia portrayed the process of transfer as occurring uniformly across various countries (such as Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and the GDR), differences existed in how each nation received the “grand narrative” of educating the communist citizen⁹⁴.

In the analysed debate on the transformation of civic education in the Czechoslovak Republic between 1945 and 1953, several levels of educational transfer can be identified (Phillips, Ochs 2003)⁹⁵ – cross-national impulses, decision, implementation and internalisation.

I. *Impulses and decision*

The example of civic education in Czechoslovakia illustrates that the “demand for a new” direction of civic education could only arise if society or individuals attributed “meaning” to the transformation of society and to changes in individual thinking, feeling and behaviour. The construction of this meaning was based on both personal historical experiences, familiar symbols, narratives and figures, as well as on the goals, rules and logic of the new system.

⁹⁴ Also, the real knowledge of the implementation of the communist model of civic and political education was only partial among the Soviet bloc countries. The discussion of civic education in Czechoslovakia called for more attention to the Slavic countries of the Soviet bloc. There was more discussion of Poland, Bulgaria, and even Yugoslavia at first, and less of the GDR or Hungary.

⁹⁵ D. Philipps, K. Ochs, *Process of Policy Borrowing in Education: some Explanatory and Analytical Devices*, «Comparative Education», vol. 39, n. 4, 2003, pp. 451-461.

Both continuity and discontinuity played a crucial role in the process of acculturating the "new" civic learning in Czechoslovakia.

Czech and Slovak teachers, along with the broader pedagogical community, began shaping a narrative immediately after 1945 that called for a "reconstruction" of the existing understanding of the purpose, significance and form of civic learning. In the analysed journals, teachers in the immediate post-war period and at the start of the 1945/46 school year emphasised the need to transform the concept of civic learning. Their arguments were largely based on Czechoslovakia's "new" historical, cultural and political experience – namely, the loss of national political independence and the "national" threat experienced during the Second World War. In these journals, both teachers and representatives of educational policy swiftly adapted the narrative of the "failure" of interwar liberal democracy to fit pedagogical needs, justifying its necessary replacement with the model of «people's democracy».

After 1945, an example was therefore sought that should serve as a model for the Czechoslovak concept of political and, subsequently, civic education. Its legitimisation in the debate among Czechoslovak teachers, as well as within parts of the academic and political community, was as early as 1945/46 based on the experience of fostering socialist consciousness following the Soviet model. Although in the immediate post-war years the Soviet model was ideologically and culturally distant for some Czechoslovak teachers, Soviet orientation in civic learning gradually strengthened after 1945, further reinforced by the increasingly polarised and heated debate on the politicisation of civic education in 1947/48. Following the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia's seizure of power in 1948, the Soviet model was positioned as the sole "correct" approach to civic learning in the Czechoslovak Republic.

II. *Implementation*

Although the aim was to implement a transnational transfer of the "global" pedagogical model of educating the «new Soviet citizen», it had to be appropriately adapted to Czechoslovak conditions and circumstances. It became the task of civic education and learning to ensure that this change was adequately explained, prepared and implemented. Consequently, the content and methods of civic learning were to break away from interwar traditions and align with the "new" socio-political reality. In the transfer, this did not mean entirely abandoning the meanings of civic learning that both teachers and pupils understood and had been socialised into. However, these meanings were subtly reshaped, rewritten, overlaid, and ultimately displaced and forgotten. This process of displacement and forgetting was a gradual fading-out and a well-prepared, continuously monitored and evaluated process of rewriting

values and meanings. Particularly after 1948, civic learning in Czechoslovakia was to greatly assist and play a key role in this process of forgetting and «rewriting meanings» – both within civic studies as a compulsory subject and as part of the broader educational framework of schools and out-of-school organisations.

After 1946, and even more markedly after 1948, the educational contents and teaching methods for civic education as a subject were developed, encompassing both the official curriculum and a range of supplementary didactic teaching materials. These were adapted to the domestic context while also aligning with the ideological foundations and political demands of educating citizens within the people's democratic system (1945–1948) and later within the communist society (from 1948 onwards). Although these contents and practices were continually adjusted and adapted to meet evolving political requirements during their implementation (acculturation), analysis suggests that the “new” civic education was built upon firmly established content and methodological foundations. Both the contents and teaching methods of this “new” civic learning underwent minimal changes between 1948 and 1953.

In this process, the key actors were both the new and old pedagogical authorities. Some members of the interwar pedagogical elite were deemed a threat to the process of acceptance and were therefore silenced. However, a part of the interwar pedagogical elite, along with active teachers, played a significant role both after 1946 and again after 1948, as they endorsed the “new order”, provided it with the aforementioned meaning, explained the necessity of change and justified its importance. These figures acted as «guarantors of change» and trusted authorities who bridged the old and new worlds. At the same time, they helped the emerging pedagogical elites, who were addressing teachers through the journal, establish themselves within the pedagogical debate and practice.

A crucial “player” and agent in this transfer was the voice of “export” – the Soviet authorities, who intervened in the debate particularly at moments when it was necessary to weaken the “democratic” side in the dispute over the new model of civic education and strengthen the side advocating for a political form of civic learning in line with the Soviet model of education of the communist citizen (at the turn of 1947/48). The role and influence of Soviet authorities were profound, approaching the power and function of myths. It is evident that domestic actors in the reception and implementation process could only construct the meaning and logic of the narrative, as well as its methods and strategies, to the extent that they did not threaten the fundamental power-political goal: the victory of the communist order through the acceptance of civic learning. Soviet authorities did not merely serve an informational function but also played a normative and controlling role in the discourse of civic learning in post-war and communist Czechoslovakia.

The Soviet voice held a privileged status; it originated from the very centre

of the new system, represented the system being implemented, and became the means through which the system itself was learning. The publication of Soviet texts on civic learning and political education in a communist society at the turn of 1947/48 thus represents a crucial milestone in the dynamics of the transfer of "new" civic learning. The texts of N. K. Goncharov and I. A. Kairov, followed by their personal visits and lectures in Czechoslovakia in early 1948, staged the significance of the Soviet patronage in the "reform" of civic learning. The Czechoslovak debate, as documented in the analysed journals, repeatedly referred back to Soviet voices, drawing on them as a key source of argumentation to legitimise the transformation of civic learning and to plan its implementation. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to reconstruct whether and how the experience of the transfer of the Soviet model to the Czechoslovak environment also influenced the very conception of the Soviet model of civic education in the Soviet debate.

III. *Internalisation*

It is important to highlight that the debate among Czech and Slovak teachers of civic studies between 1948 and 1953 repeatedly referred back to the Soviet theoretical and ideological-political foundations of civic learning. It appears that the promotion of the new model of civic education was not as easily accepted as the political authorities had hoped, and its implementation was not assessed as entirely successful. This "slowed down" the development of the "new" model of civic learning, as significant time and effort were devoted to legitimising it rather than advancing its further development. Another danger became evident in the arguments "justifying" the new direction of civic studies – namely, the risk of a formalistic adoption of "new" models and the threat of their "hollowing out". The "new" pedagogical elite seemed aware of this and, therefore, repeatedly emphasised the need for a "genuine" acceptance and understanding of the Marxist view of man, society, nature and history.

Conclusion

The story of civic education is an important part of the formation of communist society in Czechoslovakia during the analysed period of 1945/1948-1953/1960. The "new" civic learning was to weaken the foundations of the interwar education system and to facilitate, on a mental, cultural and political level, the promotion and acceptance of the ideals of communist citizen education and the "rapprochement" between the Soviet Union and Czechoslo-

vakia. We consider “new” civic learning within schooling in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1953, particularly from 1948 to 1953, as an example of a politically and ideologically motivated, politically driven pedagogical transfer rather than an instance of policy borrowing. It is an example of a transfer in which the implementation and internationalisation of the “new model” had to adapt both to the specific socio-cultural and political conditions of the target country after 1945 and to the pedagogical and social traditions that differed between the home and target countries.

The Sovietisation of civic learning in Czechoslovakia did not begin with the totalitarian seizure of power by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1948. The case of Czechoslovakia demonstrates that, to a considerable extent, the goals of civic learning after 1945 aligned with those after 1948. In many respects, the goals of civic education between 1945 and 1948 (the period of «political-social searching») were closer to those of the post-1948 period than they were to the interwar era. Although it is clear that the totalitarian communist system after 1948 instrumentalised civic education for ideological-political purposes, civic education had begun to move away from the direction of education based on the values that had formed the basis of civic education in both schools and out-of-school activities during the interwar period – namely the values of a liberal-democratic, tolerant, open, national and cosmopolitan-oriented society – in many respects during the period of 1945-1948. The politically motivated transfer of the Soviet model of civic learning did not “begin” in Czechoslovakia after 1948 but in 1945 at the latest, albeit not yet to the same extent or with the same intensity.

Although the communist authorities in Czechoslovakia expected a swift and successful transfer of Soviet best practices after 1948, the process was far more complex. Despite the fact that some teachers and education experts worked intensively – after 1948 at the latest – on defining and outlining the objectives, contents, methods and means of the “new” civic learning in line with the Soviet model, the reception and acceptance of this model within the reality of the Czechoslovak school system unfolded contrary to the plans of its proponents, influenced by numerous, often not entirely predictable factors. As a result, educational policy increasingly emphasised and reiterated the “new concept” of civic learning. Even though Czechoslovak pupils did not undergo compulsory civic education between 1953 and 1960, the official orientation and goals of civic learning, rooted in the education of the communist citizen, changed and “thawed” only very slowly during this period.