

TENDENCIES IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT IN SLOVAKIA AFTER 1989

Ladislav MACHÁČEK

Institute for Sociology, Slovak Academy of Sciences,
Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia

The principles of the state youth care and Programmes of Youth Support and Protection in Slovak Republic for 1992 significantly encouraged the development of out-of-school pursuits of young people in individual districts of Slovakia, helped to build a new network of associations, unions, youth initiatives as well as adult citizens with a deeper relation to youth work.

The representatives of youth civic associations keep looking for a path toward young people. This takes the form of the search for the consensus in defending specific youth interests reflected in the deepening process of *pluralization of the youth movement*. It is also the search for the consensus in defending universal youth interests reflected in the process of detatizing of the youth movement, i.e. through *replacement of state paternalism* by a new relation of the state to young people (best expressed by the term subsidiary).

Shaping of the state youth policy

We are witnessing the return of the concept of civic society to our language which is thus enjoying its renaissance. Only recently it was entirely replaced by the concepts of “political and social activity, commitment, consciousness”. Instead of the notion of citizen expressions like “people, working people, masses, inhabitants, street” were used. We became citizens only when we were to be punished for driving offences. Only “citizens of Gypsy origin” were official citizens throughout the past totalitarian period. There is nothing to wonder about such degradation of the concept of citizen, its marginal use. Civic society opposes non-freedom and dictatorship, it includes the demands for freedom and democracy as an attribute of spontaneous activities in human lives (Občianska spoločnosť, 1991, p. 184).

Civic society represents the sphere of the spontaneous assembly of people who share partial, mostly non-political interests; it represents the space for people’s self-organization and self-regulation, where a variety of interests of the citizens – members of voluntary associations, unions, movements and social organizations – are articulated and defended and also satisfied (Sociológia, 1991, Nos. 1–2).

Some experts agree that it concerns a sum of all relatively autonomous spheres of social activities in which the state does not interfere, if so, just indirectly, by creating favourable conditions, by acting as an arbiter in extreme cases of conflicts and misunderstandings following from the conflicts of interests of their actors.

The essence of the transformation of our society cannot therefore be just the strengthening of the market economy but also the return of some functions of the state and state-guaranteed activities to civic society. De-etatizing is not, however, a one-way process of transferring the obligations of the state to voluntary social associations, movements, non-profit making agencies providing citizens with service. It is also a process of decentralization, that means regionalization up to direct strengthening of the powers of local governments.

The sphere of the civic society should be protected by state through the rule of law according to which the citizens are allowed to do anything which is not explicitly prohibited. State bodies do only what is permitted by law. The state power limits thus itself by law in the interest of enabling creation of a community of responsible subjects from civic society. Their self-confidence follows from taking over the substantial part of the burden of the state which was usurped by the totalitarian state in social and cultural areas to the detriment of civic society. This is why efforts at legislative amendment of this relationship in principles or in the law about young people whose mission is to define the role of the state in youth protection and support are so important.

The Principles of state policy in relation to young people adopted by the government of the Slovak Republic (Principles 1992) emphasize:

1. State policies in relation to young people constitute a system of measures aimed at protection and promotion of young people which shall be prepared and implemented primarily within the family, school, cultural, social, economic, healthcare, population, and ecological domains.

2. The state shall create legislative and material prerequisites for the protection and promotion of young people in the interests of the broad development of children and young people.

3. Young people in the sense of state policies shall be understood as the social group (provisionally defined as ranging from 15 to 26 years of age; the age range shall be stipulated ultimately in the Act) who are preparing themselves and gradually entering social life.

4. The aim of state policies in relation to young people shall be the creation of conditions suitable for their high-quality education, instruction and professional preparation and their entry into employment and social life. The policies support the development of the skills and talents of young people both inside and outside the school.

5. State policies in relation to young people shall devote special attention to the protection and the promotion of young people from socially weak families (single mothers bringing up their children, divorced parents with children, unemployed

parents with children and youth coming of the age, etc.). It shall create the conditions for development of a preventative, prophylactic and supportive system aimed at endangered, problem-causing and marginal groups of young people.

6. The major areas of state policies in relation to young people include the following:

- protection of civic rights and freedoms, creation of legislative and material conditions for participation of young people in the life of democratic society,
- care of the family as the basic educational environment for children and young people,
- creation of conditions for activities of civic associations of children and young people,
- education and instruction of children and young people, their professional and qualification-increasing training for jobs and professions,
- support before employment, stimulation of youth employment and protection against unemployment,
- creation of conditions for leisure time, recreation and entertainment,
- promotion and creation of conditions for youth exchange, youth mobility and development of international youth contacts,
- promotion of youth participation in the cultural life of society, creation of conditions for creative contribution of young people into cultural advancement,
- creation of specific conditions for advancing the talents of young people in various areas of people's activity,
- protection and broad promotion of health care for young people,
- specific care, education, protection and promotion of physically disabled young people, and inadequately socialized young people,
- protection against negligence, demoralization, cruelty and other phenomena endangering the healthy moral development of children and young people.

Young people as a group belonging to the civic society suffered a lot of harm in the totalitarian period not only because different worldviews and political orientations were not admitted and non-traditional cultural activities of young people were suppressed, but also because the functions of the state concerned with the care of young people were transferred to the youth organization. All-embracing institutional care enabled all-embracing control and supervision.

There has hardly ever been any better example expressing this reality than that of a participant in a discussion about the relationship between the state and the youth organization in 1968, when the question of establishing the Ministry for Youth was raised for the first time in our country: "It seems to me at this moment that this ministry could be created but it would have to be followed by the abolition of the Union of Young People" (Macháček, L.: 1992). Of course, it would have been much better to say – The Union of Young People as a youth organization to which the functions of the state concerned with the care of young people were transferred or nationalized and which swallowed up its initiatives. That is why ques-

tions of the aim and functions of the state administration in the area of the youth work have been and still are discussed. Therefore the functions of the central state administration have to be precisely defined within the principles of state policy in relation to young people.

The Principles of State Policies in Relation to Young People, which were adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic on January 7, 1992, emphasize the following tasks of the central state administration concerned with young people:

- preparation of the concept of the state policies in relation to young people, its planning and coordination in cooperation with the representatives of children's and youth associations,

- legislative activities in the area of the care of young people, as well as cooperation in legislative activities affecting young people either directly or indirectly and securing participation of young people in their creation,

- financial support for the activities of children's and youth associations as well as other non-profit making entities, which take care of young people

- cooperation with other central state administrative bodies for the benefit of stipulation of the scope of authorities, time and space regulation of state policies in relation to young people,

- to implement and monitor through the mediation of local state administrative bodies the fulfilment of the intentions of the state policies in relation to young people within the particular region,

- to collect, record, and review the information required for preparation, planning and implementation of the state policies in relation to young people, to facilitate the setting up and functioning of an information system on young people, as well as the centres of information services for young people,

- to support the development of scientific research on young people and to utilize the results in the interests of young people, pursuant to the intentions of the state policies in relation to young people

FIRST TENDENCY: pluralization of youth organizations

Assessments of the democratic transformation of the political system of the Slovak Republic after November 1989 never forget to emphasize the position of the young generation in this process. Secondary school and university students acted as the detonator which released a mass civic movement of discontentment, which, as a whole, led to the fall of the old power structures. As R. Dahrendorf comments wittily: "Older people lost their appetite after the experiences from the years of 1956 and 1968 and other smaller protests, young people tried to do it since they did not realize that to turn regimes upside down is impossible and so they turned them upside down" (Dahrendorf, R.: 1991, p. 19). The real destruction of the political system of the "state-party" was in fact launched when groups of university and secondary school students were formed which later refused cooperation with the lead-

ers of the Slovak Socialistic Youth Union Central Committee and were registered as the first new youth organizations at the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (VÚS – University Student Union of Slovakia on 8 December 1989, SJS, Slovak Union of High School Students on 8 December 1989). This led not only to the destruction of one of the elements of the political system – the uniformity of the youth organization and the National Front – but also to the launching of the wide process of restoration and shaping of civic society in its ‘youth’ class.

The basic tendencies of the pluralization of the youth movement after November 1989 can be well defined on the basis of the registration of youth associations at the civil-administration division of the Slovak Ministry of the Interior amended in the Act No. 83, Collection, of 27 March 1990. The fact that state bodies do not approve associations but only register them, allows understanding of the documents placed there as a suitable source of sociological information about the shaping of a number of subjects of the youth class of civic society, about tendencies in the institutionalization of the interests of different youth groups. Information on the status of the registration of civic associations with the nature of childrens’ and youth organizations or whose activities are oriented towards children and young people, confirms that of the total number of 4,000 associations, unions and organizations, about 90 were of that kind. Their number thus approached the level of some countries with pluralist democracy with a comparable number of inhabitants (Rohál-Ilkiv, I.: 1991, p. 100) and thus also the incidence of all types of youth associations which correspond to the social structure or stratification of society with a market economy. From that moment their number has been decreasing.

The tendency towards formation of youth associations which had not been admitted and had been suppressed by the preceding power structure was enforced most remarkably. There is a special group of organizations of confessional character whose activities are based on religious ideals and their continuance, for example the YMCA, the movement of Christian Childrens’ Associations, Movement of Christian Youth Communities, Christian Sport Union, Tatranský orol, etc. National minority groups built up a compact structure of associations. For instance, the Hungarian national group established the Union of Hungarian Students, Hungarian Scouts Union, Union of Students of Hungarian Nationality, Union for the Protection of Hungarian Youth Interests. The Club of Young Croats in Slovakia, Union of Romany Youth were founded and the Jewish young people also have their youth organization.

Although a tendency towards de-ideologization and distance from political groups prevailed in the first stage of differentiation of the youth movement, we witnessed the accomplishment of the efforts of political parties to attract young people to political work and youth activities through politically defined youth organizations. The low number of their members is typical of these organizations.

One of the first was Democratic Youth of Slovakia (DMS), which, in terms of the ideological orientation of the Democratic Party, laid emphasis on the formation

of a platform for the implementation of the political opinions of liberally oriented young people. The programme of Social-democratic Youth of Slovakia respects the objectives of the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia. Christian Democratic Youth of Slovakia associates young people following Christian moral values and is based on the experiences and activities of existing Christian-based movements. Young people of Slovak nationality are grouped in the Union of Young Slovak Youth (USM); their activities include development and strengthening of the national consciousness of Slovak young people. The split of the first civic movement in Slovakia – Public against Violence into two political movements or parties: the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and Civic Democratic Union (ODÚ) led to the establishment of the two new youth organizations – Movement of Youth for a Democratic Slovakia (May 1991) and Civic Democratic Youth (November 1991). The programme announcement of the Young Democratic Left says that it is an independent civic association of young left-oriented people which was formed on the basis of the natural needs of young people to participate in the shaping of the new form of civic society.

The process of the constitution of youth organizations close to the existing political parties – DS, SDSS, KDH, SNS, HZDS, ODÚ, SDL can be considered to have been completed.

This process can be evaluated as a negative phenomenon introducing ideological and political differentiation among young people which does not correspond to its real social stratification and specific social interests. On the other hand, the transfer of the centre of the antagonism between youth organizations in the Youth Council of Slovakia (RMS) built on a sort of intolerance of “new” youth organizations with respect to the succession youth organization (SZM) to a new level was remarkable. Disputes and conflicts springing from antagonism the politically and ideologically defined youth organizations according to the place of their mother parties – either in government or in opposition – came to the fore. This created new prerequisites for the acceptance of such organizations like Pioneer, the Tree of Life Movement, University Students’ Union of Slovakia, Youth Union, who, after their establishment tried to operate as organizations of people who shared similar interests but their links with the old totalitarian youth organization (SZM) were undeniable mainly owing to the role which they had to accept after the division of the property of SZM.

Special types of youth organizations, which de facto are not classical youth organizations but rather organizations of young workers focused on youth work concerned with particular interests of young people. Its representative – AMAVET – is a non-political organization helping children and young people broaden their interests and develop their scientific and technical skills in their leisure time. The organization Rainbow (Dúha) is also concerned with the leisure-time activities of young people. In the area of cultural activities of young people there are the Union of Young Slovak Culture, Folklore Union in Slovakia and Association of Young Depeche Mode Fans of

Slovakia which play a similar role. In September 1990 the Association of Young Depeche Mode Fans had approximately 1,500 members, it organized discussions, videotheques and phonotheques, contests (MaS, 1990, pp. 48–57).

The activities of youth organizations concerned with supporting the professional shaping of their members are also developing remarkably. They include for instance, the Society of Business and Management Students (attached to the Economic University in Bratislava, 18 members), Association of Students of Architecture, Forum of Young Theatre-players, TV Youth Organization, Association of Disc-jockeys of Slovakia, Union of Young Entrepreneurs.

Youth associations and organizations for youth work in Slovakia are built on the basis of pluralist, shared interest, political, and confessional activities. They are presented as a plethora of subjects whose structure based on the simplest classification method engenders problems and difficulties. This is also because many of them presented themselves in this period only with programme announcements and a small group of leaders, who tried to attract new members or to organize events which would be of interest to large groups of young people. But this should not be understood as a malicious statement. There is a sort of aversion among young people to associating into a youth organization or even to being active within it. This was confirmed by the sociological research among pupils of elementary and secondary schools in Slovakia (Vlček, M.: 1991) and their feedback information about the membership in youth organizations. The research showed that 17% of respondents reported being active in youth organizations with the highest activities in secondary grammar schools, followed by secondary apprentice schools, secondary occupational schools, and the lowest in basic schools. On the other hand, young people are well informed about the existing youth organizations in their places of residence: 30% of respondents reported one organization and 61% even two youth organizations.

A relatively short period of the shaping of the “youth” class of civic society shows that youth organizations are on their way towards activation of the civic potential hidden in young people in favour of solving their own problems. There is no doubt that youth organizations have the best preconditions for articulating and defending and also satisfying a variety of the interests of young people.

SECOND TENDENCY: De-etatizing of youth organizations

The first theoretical and methodological reflections on the harm done to young people as a class of civic society in the past period of the dominance of uniform, totalitarian state youth organization (ČSM and SZM) indicated that the transfer of the functions of care for young people provided by the state to youth organization is a source of the same burden as ideological and political doctrine hindering any possibilities to demonstrate the interests of young people in the plurality of youth associations.

The development of the processes of de-etatizing of youth organizations is associated with the expectation of the strengthening of the “youth dimension” of civic society. This process has been strongly affected by the ideas of experts engaged in the issues of youth organizations and their functioning in traditional pluralist democracies (A. Kager, M. Heger, O. Stafseng, V. Puuronen, B. Henrikson, P. Lauritzen). They reflected the reality that state bodies are active in many European countries, particularly in relation to the conditions of various social agents including youth organizations. In the conditions of pluralist democracy, the state does not exert direct influence on the activities of childrens’ and youth organizations. Its aim is to protect and support young people pursuant to the adopted norms.

Experts in relationships between state and youth associations also stressed the second, in our opinion non-negligible “guarantee” of de-etatizing process: “The impact of the state is also counterbalanced by the fact that the support and help is provided to young people by non-profit making organizations and services and through private and local means.” (Macháček, L.: 1991, p. 557). Precisely the diversification of the financial means for the development of youth work, mainly through youth organizations should have been conducive to an establishment of a wide variety of youth associations and initiatives at local levels, but precisely the opposite was reality in that period. Formation of the “middle class”, small-scale entrepreneurs, small private firms lagged behind. This situation represents a characteristic background in Slovakia without which the persisting debate about “de-etatizing” of youth organization cannot be understood since the state and international solidarity of the voluntary sector remain the most important sponsors of the activities of civic youth sector.

In the first stage the dispute emerged within the incapability of “youth representatives” in succession organizations of SZM and the new ones to reach consensus on the fair divisions of the property of SZM. The property and legal union of child and youth organizations was established in order to take over the SZM property with the exception of the property of SZM and PO (pioneer organization) in basic organizations was obtained by their own activities (registration at Ministry of Interior, 12 June 1990). The result of this long-lasting debate was the state “intervention” which, on the basis of the decision of the Slovak government, transferred all property owned, administered or used by former SZM in Slovakia to the state and conferred its administration on the Slovak Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Culture (20 June 1990). The decision concerned succession organizations of SZM, particularly Union of young people, whose leaders protested against the decision in their Standpoint and denoted it as a measure that contradicts the existing legal norms (Smena, 22 June 1990, p. 2). It should be said that a similar Czech government decree on further procedure during the transfer of property was dated, according to the Constitutional Act No. 497/1990 Collection on the restitution of the SZM property to the people of the CSFR, 23 October 1991 and the Ministry for

Economic Policy and Development of the Czech Republic became the trustee of the youth organization property.

The ideas about establishing the Foundation or Fund for Young People in Slovakia were gradually shaped, in which, according to the Act of the Slovak National Council, the process of “de-etatizing” would be implemented so that the youth organizations and other non-governmental subjects would be represented in the Council of Management of the Foundation which would take responsibility for maintaining and developing the youth property in favour of the interests and needs of young people. The Foundation was established later but the influence of the existing youth organizations on its decision-making was minimal.

In the second stage representatives of youth organizations were unable to reach agreement on adequate criteria for the division of the donation of the financial means from the state budget earmarked in its special chapter and administered by the Slovak Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Culture. It succeeded as late as in January 1992 and the above-mentioned Principles represent a compromise.

A definite agreement between state and youth organizations is de facto impossible only unless youth organizations cover by their activities at least such its part that financial means allocated to them would be used effectively. Although a relative stagnation in the interests of young people to work in youth organizations is stated, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the status of crisis will be overcome and the number of youth unions and associations and their influence on young people not showing interest in entering youth organization activities will gradually increase.

The arguments of the representatives of the Youth Council of the Czech Republic and Youth Council of Slovakia indicated the awareness of this connection. According to them, the existence of a large group of young people sharing interests in the activities within society (represented by youth organizations) should be registered and this group represented by the Youth Council of Slovakia should be provided with opportunities to take part in decision-making. “...To accept legitimate representatives of active young people (Youth Council) as *partners* representing the civic society of young people which should be the source of the activities of the state and not only the object of its administration and an object of etatizing” (Agenda proposal 1991, p. 6). This concerns a number of justified exigencies of the participation in the legal process concerning young people, in contest commissions that decide about financing of the projects concerning youth work, etc. The achievement of this should have meant gradual implementation of the principle applied in the relationship between young citizens and the state – deviation from state paternalism and inclination to the partnership of generations.

At the end of the struggle for “de-etatizing” as a separation between the sphere of civic society (voluntary associations) and the state youth work, “which should be a long-term part of the process of de-etatizing of the society” (Agenda proposal

1991, p. 6) there was an idea of the model which exists in some states of Austria and Germany. Association of youth organizations in the region is not just a union. It is a subject of public law.

For example, in its statute the Bavarian Youth Council pledges to take on the overall responsibility for youth work, responsibility which affects all regions of youth work and includes accountability to consider not only the interests of their members but also to represent the interests of all young people. M. Heger explains it as follows: “By this statute, the Bavarian Youth Council at the level of the state in the federation takes over the present largely state functions (chiefly administration of the state means for the support, education and guidance to communal youth workers, planning and conception functions)” (Heger, M.: 1991, p. 14). The aim of the association of youth organizations is extended from the representation of young people in public or abroad to executive supervision work within the whole system of youth work. It becomes a sort of connection between the state and youth organizations.

For instance, in Vorarlberg, a state in the federation of Austria (State and Youth, 1991, p. 20), in contrast to other Austrian states, financial means for youth work are divided on the basis of the recommendations of youth organizations. There is a “key to activities” approved in the Council of Youth Organizations which is a basis for the division of the state financial means. The state has only financial control instruments at its disposal and its efforts to gain a sum of money allocated to young people or youth work within the state budget corresponding to its needs are made in cooperation with youth organizations closely linked with political parties.

From the principle of state paternalism we pass to the principle of the subsidiary relationship between the state and youth organizations. This principle expresses concretely, for example respect for their independence and retreat of the state to competition in the sphere of activities among young people.

THIRD TENDENCY: decentralization of the activities of youth organizations

Contemporary youth organizations built on pluralist interest, confessional, and political foundations present themselves in Slovakia as a wide variety of numerous subjects of the youth class of civic society although it is questionable whether it always expresses institutionalization of the real interests of young people. There is no doubt, however, that chiefly youth organizations based on the civic potential concealed in young people have the best preconditions to involve young people in problem-solving, satisfying their own interests and helping them. The state support for their activities is reflected on subsidies of 1991 and 1992 (subsidies in 1990–1992 and in 1993–1995 amounted to about 90 million and approx. 30 million Slovak crowns respectively).

The separation of state care objectively liberates all contemporary youth organizations from the professional bureaucratic-administrative apparatus and its negative

impact on youth movements. A significant prerequisite was created for authentic democratic and autonomous development of the youth movement and its gradual transformation into one of many currents of free, independent “bearers” of youth work (Jugendarbeit). The youth organizations determine their objectives, content and forms of their activities independently. On the other hand, “public bearers” of youth work are closely connected with the state and solve chiefly the problems of such groups of young people which are not associated into youth organizations or problems which require the professional approach of full-time youth workers – teachers or social workers – (e.g. leisure-time centres, resocialization and prevention health counselling and consulting centres).

Changes in the structure of youth work take on clear shape from the perspective of their organizers. Although it should be said that there is a lot of vagueness, disputes and conflicts. They follow from different understanding of rights and responsibilities of the state administration and both groups of the bearers of “youth work”. It is not just our specialty resulting from the transient period of the crystallization of the relationships between state and civic society. It was only recently that the Chairman of CENYC (Council of European National Youth Committees) complained at the Third Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth Issues in the Council of Europe in Lisbon: “Uncertainties over subsidies to youth councils and all services to support the youth whether thanks to changes in the way of financing, systematic nationalization of non-governmental bodies or current reduction of finances and sources that are available mean that the atmosphere in which national youth councils operate, becomes increasingly difficult” (Whithey, M.: 1991, p. 61).

Experiences gained in this area in our country, their comparison with the situation in the Czech Republic but also the known facts about youth work in Austria, Germany, Sweden, and Finland led to the formation of the idea that the basic impact on the young generation in the future are expressed in the objectives of the programmes for protection and support of children and young people which should be resolved through particular projects. Any subjects of civic society can participate in their implementation by competition as independent youth workers. They have the right to be awarded a grant from the state budget as defined by the Slovak government. The programmes are a challenge to youth organizations, charity, civic initiatives, nonprofit making agencies providing services to young people. All these subjects have a chance to complete a social and humanitarian rescue network targeted at adolescents. The programmes are vehicles of civic society more concentrated towards solving youth social problems in particularly disadvantaged regions of Slovakia and problems concerning threatened and marginal youth groups. However they also expect a joining of the forces and strengthening of the bonds of the state administration and local government bodies with union and public youth workers.

It is primarily this point of the proposal of the programmes for protection and support of young people that is in full agreement with the European Charter on the

Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life which was established on the basis of the recommendation of the Standing European Conference on local and regional youth policy. I specially emphasize the idea of the Charter in ensuring the institutional participation of young people in local life which is chiefly expressed by a demand to delegate a youth representative into local government institutions.

The youth delegate's role is, together with all those representing young people or involved in solving their problems (social workers, people working in family planning centres, in information and counselling centres) to support the dialogue between young people and the elected local or regional representatives. It is also expressed in the demand to create "municipal youth councils" which should embody fora for monitoring the needs and desires of people analysing whether projects focused on their satisfaction are realizable and evaluating their achievements (Charter 1991).

The participation of young people in municipal life can create one of the important prerequisites for deepening the relatively slow and complex process of the renewal of municipal communities and for overcoming the mass segregation of the citizen from the municipality. The regional and district local government representatives concerned with young people and sport should look for the routes to reach harmony between municipal and state interests, to reach consensus between the state administration and local government in order to find solutions to the problems of young people and in the interest of participation in municipal life.

Conclusion

The problem of democratization of the social life in Czechoslovakia before 1993 also had its particular course in the special social class setting of young people and their civic associations. Of course, people also struggled here for their thoughts, opinions and attitudes. The majority of young people watched the struggle rather passively since they were actively involved in problem solving following from demanding tasks in the market of education and labour.

The organization of matters concerning the youth property and the extent of the state support for the activities of youth associations are determining tendencies in the development of the youth movement in this short period (1989–1992). However, this is precisely the reason why it has not enough inner strengths to break the psychological barriers of young people to associate into youth organizations.

The real youth movement "lives" outside the structures of youth associations. It has the form of local cultural and sports life or of the movements of sport and song fan clubs of young people, even the form of spontaneous skin-head groupings in cities.

In such a process of transformation it is useful to foster the tendency of decentralization or regionalization of the pursuits of youth associations. This role is evi-

dence of the unusual route towards pluralist democracy and the market economy. It is the state, which, in the situation of economic insufficiency of local governments and of unorganized civic society has to overcome its immanent tendency that can be characterized as an effort to minimize the impact of all that cannot be centrally directed. It was the youth division of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Slovak Republic that achieved, through re-division of the significant portion of financial means in favour of regional and local youth organizations, something that leaders of youth organizations operating all over Slovakia failed to do. Local and regional youth work started to develop.

The development of civic youth associations is a source of the renovation and transformation of young people into citizens of the republic. The system of institutions of extracurricular education and training of young people is thus expanded, the role of the school as an educational and training institution is strengthened, a system of education towards citizenship, its active or participative paradigm is created.

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