

Forming Pupils' Positive Relationship to the Soviet Union in the Period of Socialism in Czechoslovakia Through the Lens of Chronicles

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The cooperation of Czechoslovakia (and other socialist countries) with the Soviet Union was an important phenomenon during the period of socialism. It represented one form of building and consolidating socialism within socialist countries. Relationships with the Soviet Union affected political, ideological, economic and cultural domains, including education. This study follows points of departure and forms of building children's positive relationship with the Soviet Union in the period of socialism. The content analysis of the Pioneer Organisation chronicles shows that the most frequently identified forms of activities were regularly organised (celebrations of memorial days and public holidays, politically motivated commitments, correspondence, games, expeditions, competitions, etc.). Some identified activities could be considered occasional, as they reflected current events in the Soviet Union (showing Soviet films, deaths of prominent politicians, anniversaries of birth/death of politicians, etc.). The proclaimed "diversity and attractiveness of content and forms" can characterise the process, and it affected many domains of children's lives. However, the (in)direct power interest of the Soviet Union was hidden in the proclamation of "children's well-being", while the programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was implemented to reinforce the communistic ideology and actual political interests.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, cooperation, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, ideological influence, forming pupils, Pioneer Organisation chronicles

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INTRODUCTION

Cooperation with the Soviet Union belonged to one of the basic pillars of building socialism not only in Czechoslovakia but also in other countries, which started to orient politically and ideologically towards the East during and after World War II. Czechoslovakia, primarily thanks to the activity of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, already exhibited signs of pro-Soviet orientation in the interwar period (in more detail Gottwald, 1951). These attempts were formally recognised and sealed by signing several agreements and treaties,¹ which declared mutual assistance, cooperation and friendship between the two sovereign states. However, the reality was different. The primary intention of the Soviet Union was to prepare and consolidate the political-economical influence not only in Czechoslovakia² but through similar “partnerships” also in other countries, which started building people’s democracies based on the model of the Soviet Union. The attempts were a cause, but also a response to the emerging and escalating polarisation of the world into the East and the West. This unequal relationship worked not only in the sphere of politics and economy but reached also culture, sport and education in many different, eventually even absurd looking forms.³

- 1 The relationship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union started to be built in the 1920s. With the gradual development of the relationship, its character also changed. The first interim bilateral agreement between Czechoslovakia and the Russian Socialist Federal Republic Nr. 258/1922 on the 5th June 1922 [Dočasná zmluva medzi Československou a Ruskou socialistickou federatívnou republikou č. 258/1922 z 5. júna 1922] and on 6th June 1922 with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as predecessors of the Soviet Union n.259/1922 [Dočasná zmluva medzi Československou a Ukrajinskou sovietskou socialistickou republikou č. 259/1922 zo 6. júna 1922] concerned the regulation of commercial-administrative matters. The Treaty of 16th May 1935 on mutual assistance between Czechoslovakia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Nr. 195/1935 [Zmluva č. 195/1935 o vzájomnej pomoci medzi Československom a Zväzom sovietskych socialistických republík] should have provided mutual assistance and support during a war attack on one of the concerned states. The treaty was followed by other treaties from 1941 (Gottwald, 1951: 345–346) and 1943 (also Decree Nr. 11/1946 [Vyhláška č. 11/1946]) related to the outbreak of World War II, which delimited mutual progress in the war against Germany and outlined the form of post-war assistance and cooperation. The influence of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia was also related to the division of the post-war influence right before the end of WWII, which was negotiated by three representatives of world power of the anti-Hitler coalition – F. D. Roosevelt, W. S. Churchill and J. V. Stalin in Yalta, where Czechoslovakia came under the influence of the Soviet Union (Bystrický, Londák, Londáková, Michálek, Pešek, Petruš, 2008: 11). In the post-war period, this proclaimed post-war cooperation between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union was fulfilled in the sphere of building peace and economic aid. The Agreement between the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Government of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics on the Mutual Supply of Goods of 12th April 1946 (also Decree Nr. 79/1947 [Vyhláška č. 79/1947]) was one of the significant agreements designing cooperation between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. After 1948, the cooperation of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union concerned not only the sphere of the economy but also culture, education and other spheres, by which the Soviet Union gradually solidified its influence. It was manifested also in 1968. After an attempt to reform socialist society in Czechoslovakia, it was violently suppressed and the Soviet Union through the Treaty between the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Government of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics on the Terms of Temporary Stay of Soviet Troops in the Territory of Czechoslovakia of 16th October 1968 (Decree Nr. 11/1969 [Vyhláška č. 11/1969], also Bystrický et al., 2008: 230) revealed primarily the political interests of the Soviet Union that were carefully guarded for over twenty years.
- 2 For the sake of objectivity, it is necessary to note that the treaties and agreements in the post-war period were for Czechoslovakia really beneficial in the sphere of defence, economy, but also in other spheres (in more detail Gottwald, 1951: 189).
- 3 In 1947, the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship Union took over formal and ideological patronage over

SOCIAL EVENTS IN SOCIALIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ITS IMPACT ON FORMING CHILDREN

The formation of children and youth in socialist countries also fell under the ideological influence.⁴ Establishing the communist regime in Czechoslovakia affected all spheres of society, including the sphere of education. It was education that played an important role in the ideologisation of society (Olejník, 2018). This process was started by the Law Nr. 95/1948 C. l. a e. Adopted on 21st April 1948 in regard to a basic change of unified school system [Zákon č. 95/1948 o základnej úprave jednotného školstva], according to which all schools, except universities, military and theological, were supervised by the state. To meet the goals, the political training of teachers⁵ (in more detail Kudláčová, 2018), which could really influence the formation of children, became more and more important. It is also confirmed by Olejník (2018: 34), who points to the fact that: “for the acceleration of the socialist transformation of our school, the school administration focuses on the systematic increase of the ideological-political and professional level of teachers” while drawing the attention to the point of departure in the process presents “... the introduction of our teachers with the Soviet school and Soviet pedagogy built on the foundations of Marxism-Leninism...” (ibid: 34). The increasing influence of the Soviet Union in the sphere of education manifested itself in diverse forms. In the school year 1948/49, learning the Russian language became compulsory in national schools (Knapík, Franc, Štoll, Skopal, Česálková, Rákosník et al., 2018: 403), the works of Soviet pedagogues were translated (ibid: 412), etc. It also influenced the sphere of children’s extracurricular activities. The emerging system of interest education was supposed to have prepared children for performing their future profession, and as stated by Knapík et al. (2018: 419), the system of extracurricular education aimed, beside the social function, also at forming “a socialist man” and acquiring a basic set of ethical and “class” conditioned norms. Also, children’s and youth organisations, activities of which started to regrow promisingly after WWII, were “unified”, following the model of the Soviet Union, into the Pioneer Organisation (PO) of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth (ČSM, after 1970 the

the developing cooperation between the two countries. According to Pavlík, Hotár, Baláž, Blaškovič, Brenčíčová, Brožík et al. (1985: 637) it presented a voluntary social organisation, the aim of which was to make knowledge on politics, economy, culture and life in the USSR available, to develop and strengthen relations of friendship and cooperation. This activity in the sphere of science and culture started to be developed in 1950 also by the Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute. Gottwald (1951: 325) described its activity: “Czechoslovak science and our entire culture have ahead of them a great task to adapt the results of the most advanced science in the world, Soviet science, and to work in close fellowship with it on the further progress of the human spirit. Without it, it is not conceivable to develop our science, without it the science cannot meet the requirements that are laid down on it to build socialism in our homeland”. The development of the Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship was provided also by Houses of the Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship, which presented significant political, cultural and educational establishment in the period of socialism (in more detail Pavlík et al., 1985: 637), as well as other institutions.

- 4 Recently, several comprehensive monographs have been published (e.g. Londáková, 2007; Gabzdilová, 2018; Olejník, 2018), as well as partial studies (e.g. Gabzdilová, 2003; Kudláčová, 2018; Krankus, 2019; Lopatková, 2019; Hasárová, 2020a, b), which in the gap of over 30 years reflect upon the school system, its development and changes in the period of socialism.
- 5 Liberčanová (2019) points at the increasing significance of educational counsellors, who planned to place pupils into different spheres of the economy according to the needs of society.

Czechoslovak Socialist Union of Youth – SZM; in more detail Gubricová, 2019), which since 1949 presented de facto the sole children's and youth organisation. The unification of children's and youth organisations was brought about by the supervision of the Communist Party. *The establishment of communist children's and youth movement in our homeland is determined by the establishment of the Communist Party. The party did not surrender to the education of the youngest generation even in the most difficult conditions of the political struggle, while it was relying on the experience of Soviet communists. Forming a new person was one of the main goals of the Communist Party from the beginning.* (Baláž, 1972: 557). The system of school and extracurricular activities, therefore, created optimal conditions for unified education of a generation of young builders of socialism.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF FORMING CHILDREN IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

The unified system of education of children and youth, following the model of the Soviet Union, was established with minor differences also in the educational systems of countries of the Eastern Bloc. Although children's and youth organisations in individual countries slightly differed, they were united in the principal matters.⁶ The point of departure for forming and functioning of children's and youth organisations in individual countries in the socialist bloc “were experiences from PO of V. I. Lenin, a quarter-century older and more experienced organisation” (Brenčičová, 1974a: 9).

Čmolík (In: Martínek et al., 1982: 57) presents the following primary characteristic features and traits of children's and youth organisations in the socialist society: socialist or communist ideological orientation, integration of members of the organisation into the struggle for social progress, peace,⁷ democracy and national independence, the voluntariness of membership, striving for a broad development of activities of individual members, their groups and organisation for the benefit of the whole socialist society or the support of progressive powers of the country, similar internal arrangement, the versatility of content and application of diverse methods and forms of work, striving for mass membership and wide influence on other children that are

6 The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) sponsored the activity of the children's and youth organisation at the international level. Later (in 1958) under its sponsorship the International Committee of Children's and Adolescents' Movements (ICCAM; the name CIMEA was adopted in 1962) was established. Its goal was to fight for peace and friendship among the children of the world, to co-create a new educational programme aimed at the development of a personality of a new (socialist) age. Its active member was also PO SZM (Martínek, Beroušek, Hirschová, Janoušková, Staňková, Steiner et al., 1982: 63).

7 Pavlík et al. (1985) state that the determination to fight for peace, the right of youth to participate in the peaceful future of humankind in the fight against imperialism was also the topic of several world festivals of youth and students. The festivals were political, social and cultural events attended by young students from different countries. The first World Festival of Youth and Students took part in Prague between 14th July and 17th August 1947. 17 thousand delegates from 72 countries attended it. The festivals, aside from others, responded sensitively to events in the world, which posed a threat to peace (e.g., they expressed disapproval of the war in Korea, Indochina, Vietnam, etc.). The element of peace-building is found also on the badge of the World Federation of Democratic Youth: “... (it) is made of a globe with profiles of the faces of a young European, an African and an Asian with the text: SFDM – young, unite! Forward for lasting peace! (Pavlík et al., 1985: 339).

not yet members, leading or influencing by the communist or worker's Marxist-Leninist parties, close cooperation with progressive organisations of youth, unions, progressive women's organisations or other bodies.

Pioneer organisation (PO) functioned as a children's organisation along with the Czechoslovak Socialist Union of Youth (SZM). It aimed to unite most children⁸ into one mass organisation to educate a young generation in the spirit of socialism and communism⁹ (Brenčíčová, 1974b). It attempted to achieve it by the following means:

- Enriching the content and manner of its implementation with practical activities of pioneers outside schools with an emphasis on physical education, tourism, polytechnic education, civil defence and aesthetic education,
- Striving for a relative stabilization of the content and manners of pioneer work using a framework of themes and requirements, which delimited the demands on the individual levels of pioneers,
- Establishing a pioneer caucus allows the establishment of pioneer staff and committees for long-term actions or training of pioneers – instructors (including training of leaders),
- Developing the pioneer word in the place of their residence,
- Establishing close relationships, cooperation with other organisations (e.g. sporting, labour union, interest, etc.),
- Creating councils or pioneer organisation by the bodies of the youth organisation,
- Creating independent basic documents, which delimited the mission, aims, arrangement, operation and status of the organisation,
- Increasing the interest in the study of historical and contemporary issues of pioneer work by different sciences (Čmolík, 1983).

It reflected the experience of the Soviet Union in all primary issues of mission, functioning, activity, composition and conditions of the functioning of the PO (Čmolík, 1983). They were also an inspiration in the creation of the symbolism and structure of PO, but also the symbolism and structure of children's and youth organisations in other socialist countries (Pavlík et al., 1985: 59).

The international connection of children's organisation in the period of socialism largely influenced the PO in Czechoslovakia. They enabled developing cooperation with other children's and youth organisations of the socialist world (Čmolík, 1983) and following their example, to build a functioning mass children's organisation.

8 Bizová (2019) pointed out that children with disabilities were not accepted to the PO. They were mostly children with mental and sensory disability. However, also: the *chronicles of special primary schools contain a number of ideologically oriented records of the fulfilment of ÚV KSČ resolutions, party celebrations, anniversaries of significant political events, political agitations, participation of pupils and teachers in mass events, etc.* (Bizová, 2019: 393).

9 Šuhajdová (2018; 2019) adds that the PO SZM, besides the formation of children and youth, also provided social care of children and youth, under the supervision of national committees.

FORMING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS OF CHILDREN TO THE SOVIET UNION

The main aim of the PO was: "...along with the school, the family and society, to provide communist upbringing of children" (Brenčíčová, 1978: 91). This process was supervised by the Communist Party, which, using the PO, supported and strengthened relationship not only with the socialist establishment but also with the Soviet Union, as the leader in the process of building socialism, from a very early age.¹⁰ It was significantly demonstrated also in the ideologization of the activities of the PO (Beňušková, 1994; Gubricová, 2017, 2018). These studies particularly focused on the way of celebrating memorial days and holidays in the period of socialism (Beňušková, 1994), identification of overlap of the socialist ideology in children's leisure activities (Gubricová, 2017, 2018), as well as identification of non-verbal elements related to the Soviet Union in chronicles of PO (Gubricová, 2020), presented the points of departure of further research. Its aim was the analysis and description of the forms and their content used in the educational system of the PO to form a positive relationship of their members to the Soviet Union.

The research utilises content analysis of school and pioneer chronicles¹¹ as a research method. More specifically, it was a qualitative analysis focusing on the content of the examined sources in the context of the circumstances of their origin. Based on the analysis of the chronicle texts,¹² meaningful text units were identified and subsequently, the basic analytical categories were created, which would represent primary forms of children's formation of a positive attitude to the Soviet Union. They were the following primary analytical categories: celebrations of memorial days and holidays, commitments, propaganda, leisure activities, national games, expeditions, competitions, twinning.¹³

10 It is evidenced by several monographs (e.g. Knapík, Křestán, Franc, Závacká, Jiráček, Köpplová et al., 2014; Belan, 2015; Knapík, Franc, Štoll, Skopal, Česálková, Rákosník et al., 2018) and studies (e.g. Gubricová, Bučová, 2018; Bizová, 2019; Gubricová, 2019), which deal with the issues of education and forming of children and youth in the period of socialism, and several of them deal directly with the activities of PO SZM.

11 The pioneer chronicle in chronological order recorded the most significant events in the organisation. Besides the information on the activities of the pioneers, it contained also records on the most significant visits, results and achievements of the pioneer group (team, unit, etc.). Drawings, photographs and other documentary material often accompanied the written chronicle record (Pavlík et al., 1985: 55). Although the mention of events pioneer chronicle were supposed to record was not found in the literature, the structure of analysed chronicles was similar. They were written by teachers, group leaders or pioneers themselves – chroniclers. In some chronicle texts, it is not possible to rule out an intervention and "supervision" by adults (teachers, pioneer and unit leaders) into the contents of chronicles written by children. As the semantics of several texts of chronicles suggests, in some cases the writing of the chronicle by the child chronicler was only a transcript and illustration of the text formulated by the supervising teacher. Chronicles were often subject to inspection and evaluation. Schools were given the duty of keeping chronicles by the regulation of the Ministry of Education in 1921. Since 1948 they also had to keep pioneer chronicles (Horáková, 2009).

12 Specifically, these were the chronicles of ZŠ Lozorno (1945-52, [primary school, hereinafter referred to as ZŠ]) – school chronicle, it also contained records of PO; ZŠ Cífer (1948-1989) – school chronicle, it contained also records of PO; ZŠ Trnava Ul. J. Bottu no. 27 (the school years 1976-1989) – school chronicle, it also contained records of activities of PO; PS Abrahám (1978-1987) – the chronicle of pioneer group; District House of Pioneers and Youth in Považská Bystrica (1983-1989; [hereinafter referred to as ODPM, PB]) – the chronicle of pioneer group. In total, 76 years of chronicles were analysed.

13 The aforementioned research method is limited because the identified analytical categories in the

The chronicles present the available sample. While compiling the research set, the following factors appeared to be limiting: several approached primary schools declared that after 1989 they discarded materials (thus also chronicles) from the period of socialism. Some chronicles were only formal in character and the events were recorded schematically and briefly, or some records of activities were missing, which was evaluated as insufficient for this research. Several of the approached schools refused to make their chronicles available for research purposes due to privacy reasons, but also for the protection of the school's archival materials from damage. The chronicle of OPDM in Považská Bystrica, which was the chronicle of a pioneer group, was also included in the research set. Several chronicles of defunct primary schools, as well as chronicles of some houses of pioneers and youth, are not archived, therefore were not made available for this research (e.g. Chronicles of DPaM [House of Pioneers and Youth] in Trnava, archived in the State Archive in Trnava). The research set also includes the Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, which is available on the school's website. Although the analysed period of the chronicle only partially falls into the period of socialism, the Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno records the formation of children's relationship with the Soviet Union even before 1948, which was interesting from the research point of view. They were included in the investigation because they presented a unit or group chronicle, or the (school) chronicle recorded events related to the activities of PO.

FORMS OF CHILDREN'S EDUCATION TO A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP TO THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS CONTENT ORIENTATION

Forming a positive relationship of children towards the Soviet Union was an organic part of the activities of the PO. It was manifested in a variety of identified forms of activity, many of which were regular in character. Their records in chronicles appeared regularly, almost annually. Others were related to the current situation, the event and their occurrence were occasional.

The celebrations of memorial days and holidays presented one of the most frequently identified categories, which were associated with forming a positive relationship of pioneers to the Soviet Union. Although they were varied in character, they met similar goals. The celebrations were celebrations which:

- had a political subtext and were directly related to events in the Soviet Union or Soviet actors,¹⁴
- were local in character, but related to the Soviet Union, or political context could be identified in them,

chronicles document only the forms and course of events, which, aside from others, served also in formation of positive relation of children to the Soviet Union. Although children – chroniclers also participated in chronicle creation, the chronicles' texts do not allow finding out the influence of the identified forms of activities on the relation of children to the Soviet Union and what was the actual relation of children to the Soviet Union. Presumably, it would be necessary to extend the research to other research methods to find this out.

14 In chronicles, we identified a record on the celebrations of significant events in other socialist countries: *On 28.11.47 at school, we successfully celebrated the anniversary of establishing the comradesly FPR of*

- did not have a political subtext, but were “misused” for consolidation of socialist ideas,
- were the commemoration of anniversaries of births/deaths of significant communist personalities.

Celebrations of holidays and memorial days with political subtext started at the beginning of the school year and continued throughout the whole school year. A great portion of them presented a celebration of holidays and memorial days related to the events and holidays of the Soviet Union. Right at the beginning of the year, two holidays of the Soviet Union were celebrated: anniversaries of the establishment of the Soviet Union (Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, the school year 1947/48) and celebration of the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution (VOSR) (Fig. 1).

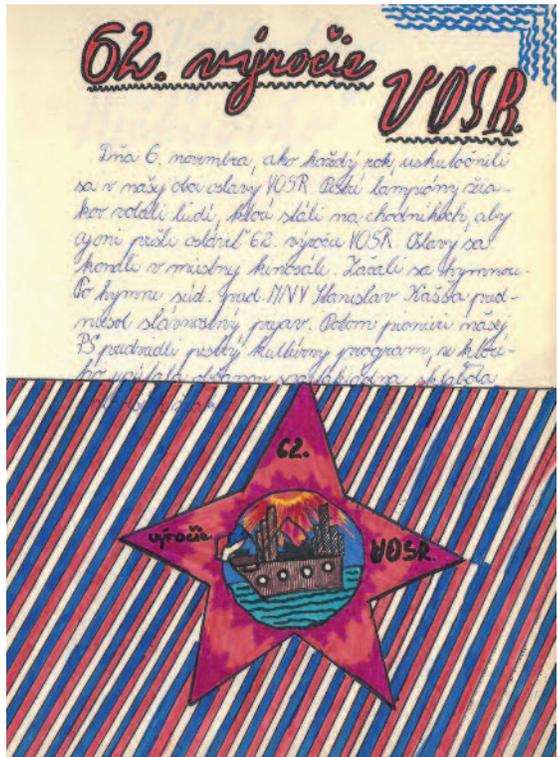


Fig. 1: Record of the celebration of the VOSR (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1979/80)

According to chronicle records, the scenario of celebrations was similar. The celebrations of the holidays had a form of ceremonial events with addresses of party members or school directors and a cultural programme. Other holidays included the celebration of the Anniversary of the Founding of the Soviet army (e.g. Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, the school year 1947/48) and ... 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Pioneer organisation of the USSR..., which took place in the pioneer group in Abrahám (the school year 1982/83). Celebrations of memorial days and holidays with a local character but relating to the Soviet Union, or with an identified political context, included, for instance, the Day of the Czechoslovak Army and the celebrations of the Czechoslovak coup d'état. Special attention was given also to the celebrations of the 1st May – Labour Day: ...we celebrated in our classroom with the decoration of the notice board and windows. Some pupils took part in peace manifestations in Sládkovičovo. There were only cheering people. They said peace slogans. Miners, soldiers, meritorious workers, commanders of towns and villages applauded them on the platform. People are happy to live in calm and peace. (Chronicle PS Abrahám,

Yugoslavia with the speech of col. Hauptvogel (Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, the school year 1947/48). It can be assumed that celebrations of this type of holidays should have contributed to building the identify within the emerging bloc of socialist countries.

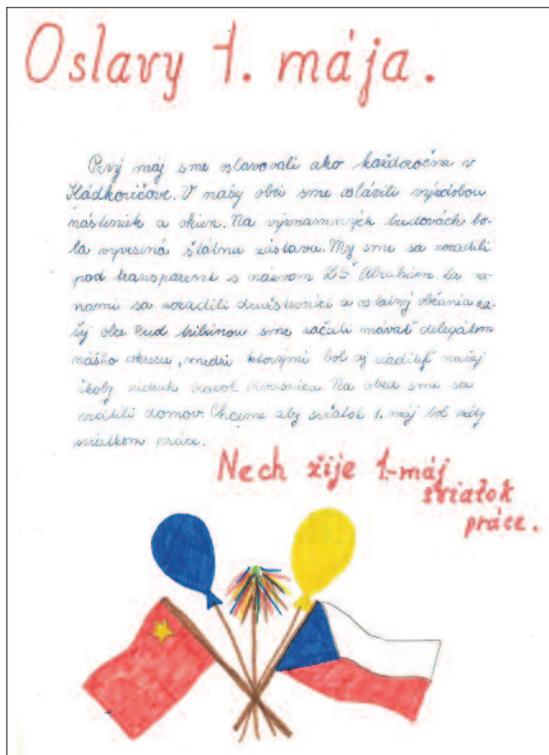


Fig. 2: Illustration of the festival of the 1st May (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1984/85)

the school year 1982/83). The festival was typical with the mass character of celebrations. It should have enhanced the impression of unity and power of the governing regime as well as being the demonstration of the celebrations of the working people as a ruling power of socialism (Fig. 2).

The Day of Liberation by the Soviet Army also had a specific status. It is documented by the record in the Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer (the school year 1964/65): *Our school has been preparing for the dignified celebration of the 10th anniversary of our liberation by the glorious Soviet army since the beginning of the school year... Two pedestals with ornaments were attached in the corridors, on which we placed statues of c. Gottwald and Lenin... Within the tidying of streets and areas in the village, our pupils took part in cleaning ditches and streets, they tidied the yard at the kindergarten, and planted*

flowers in the garden by the monument to the fallen. The celebration of the 10th anniversary of the liberation of our homeland was organized on 9th May in the cinema Maják with a valuable programme. (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1954/55). Within the analysis of chronicles, records of celebrations of holidays which could be included in the category of non-political festivals were identified. Also, among them, hidden context related to the celebration of the socialist way of life and consolidation of positive relationships to the Soviet Union can be observed. They included gatherings under the fir tree related to the arrival of Grandfather Frost, which presented an alternative to the Christian holiday of the Nativity of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ *On the occasion of the arrival of Grandfather Frost, a planned ceremony with a cultural programme, tea and cakes were organized at school on 30th December 1952* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1952/53). This period is related also to New Year's celebrations. They were celebrated by organizing ceremonial group gatherings, festive group meetings with prominent representatives of the Communist Party and sponsoring companies, sending New Year's greetings, etc.

The International Women's Day, World Teacher's Day and International Children's Day also supported socialist ideology, and therefore also indirectly the Soviet Union.

¹⁵ Gathering under a fir tree and the character of the Grandfather Frost has no historical or cultural support in the traditions of then Czechoslovakia. It is therefore obvious that the content and form of this tradition arrived from the Soviet Union, as confirmed also by Hasárová (2020b).

These holidays could be included in the category of non-political festivals. However, the manner of their celebration can unequivocally display ideological subtext, which can be identified, for instance, in speeches and addresses: ... *In the auditorium full of women, the celebration began with a ceremonial commencement of the President of the Local Committee c. Kašša. The opening speech was read by the president of DO KSS [Home Organisation of the Communist Party] and school director c. K. Kvasnica. He emphasised the role and contribution of women to the education of the young generation and building our socialist homeland. The cultural programme was performed by the pupils of our school.* (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1980/81). A part of the celebrations were also anniversaries of births and deaths of important personalities, statesmen and party members. Among the most significant soviet personalities,

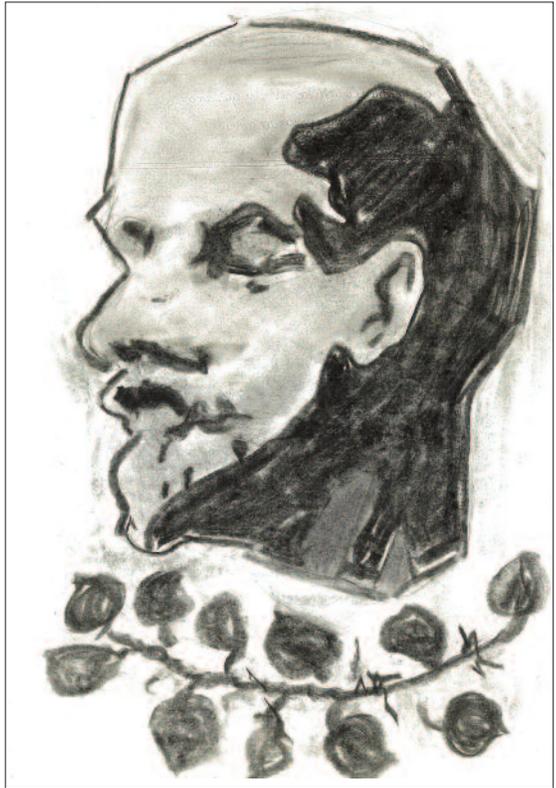


Fig. 3: Portrait of V. I. Lenin (Chronicle of ZŠ Trnava, Ul. J. Bottu no. 27, the school year 1980/81)

whose anniversary of birth/death was related to different varied forms of reminiscences and celebrations, belonged: 22. 4. 1970, on the day of the 100th anniversary of the birth of V. I. Lenin (Fig. 3), the school organized two celebrations in the local cinema. Separately for class 1. – 5. and 6. – 9. Celebratory address to pupils of the lower level was given by J. Hrušovský, deputy of the school director, to pupils of higher level by M. Bujaček, deputy of the school director. At the celebration, a literary series from the life of V. I. Lenin was performed... The remaining programme was filled by occasional poems and singing of pupils... (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1969/70), and J. V. Stalin.

Among the significant Czechoslovak communist personalities, the anniversaries of birth/death were subject to school celebrations, was G. Husák: *On 10. 1. 1983 we commemorated the 70th anniversary of the birth of Comrade President Gustáv Husák... We wish him health and success at work in the years to come.* (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1982/83) and K. Gottwald. Chronicles also mention the deaths of Soviet presidents, e.g. Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school years 1982-1985). These events were accompanied by displaying photographs of the deceased and holding a guard. The chroniclers enhanced the records about the information of the death by condolence poems and drawings. The record in the Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno (the school year 1947/48) can be considered interesting because it states that the organisation of celebrations presented also certain risks in the

work of the school: *Very frequent celebrations, whether school or public, due to their importance place great demands on the teaching staff, pupils are very distracted and teaching also struggles for alternating teaching. The school director wants to relieve this partially by building a school PA system.* In later periods it can be observed that even when the celebrations of memorial days and holidays took place in cooperation with the school, diverse interest groups were also involved in the preparation of the programme. A record in the Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer (the school year 1956/57) states that activities of certain clubs were irregular and often were related to rehearsing a cultural programme on the occasion of various celebrations.

Special attention was paid to the events organized within the Month of the Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship (hereinafter MČSSP), during which many events were organized: *They aimed to strengthen the friendship with the Soviet Union and further familiarise with this country. Events in the MČSSP and the 50th anniversary of the inception of the USSR: Launching of MČSSP. Celebrations of the 55th anniversary of VOSR. Sending the baton to the Soviet pioneers. Festive group gathering. Launching the play: In a country where tomorrow means yesterday... Civil defence play in honour of the 55th anniversary of VOSR. Participation in the girl's handball tournament on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of the USSR. Visiting the exhibition in Trnava on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the USSR. Visiting the room of traditions. ... Discussion with the participants of the trip of train Družba with Soviet soldiers. The contest "Na garmoshku zagrali". Singing Soviet songs... Games of Soviet pioneers. Discussion with Soviet soldiers. The contest in the most beautiful notice board about the establishment of the USSR... were organized three popular courses of Russian...* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1972/73). The number of events implies the significance of MČSSP. Through the activities, pupils familiarised themselves with the Soviet country, its culture, history or "regular" socialist life of Soviet children.

Another identified category of activities supporting the positive relationship of children to the Soviet Union and socialist society is presented by acceptance of commitments, following the model of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party also by the pioneers. It is documented, for instance, by the Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno (the school year 1950/51):

The aim of commitments is the political and patriotic education of pupils, which was practically carried out by:

- 1. wall newspapers, which were replaced 1 – 2 weekly in classrooms,*
- 2. five-minutes presentations of pupils before the lessons – on the current political life,*
- 3. work in action groups. The class was divided into teams – action groups, in which pupils studied and rehearsed together at home. Action groups aimed to cultivate a sense of teamwork,*
- 4. school PA system – one hour a week,*
- 5. subscribing magazines. Pupils subscribed to 134 copies of "Pionierske noviny", 27 copies of "Vpered" (Russian) and 11 copies of "Matičné čítanie",*
- 6. the youth of ČSČK [Czechoslovak Red Cross], which carried out the collection of apples – 28 kg – and sent them to the incomplete High School in Lomná, district of Námestovo,*

7. *corresponding. A pioneer group corresponded with the High school in Louny and class IV. with class IV. of High School – Křinec, district of Nymburk.*
8. *Interest groups. Two departments were established – boys' sporting group, ... led by Fr. Haffner and girls' sporting group, led by E. Mihalovičová, a club of the Russian language – O. Bernátová, gardening – A. Zvalová, physical (photographic) – A. Hauptvogel.*

Pioneers accepted the commitments in 2- and 5-years cycles. Chronicles focused on improving school work and public activities and they were also retrospectively evaluated (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1985/86). As can be observed from the commitments, their content was very varied and impacted different spheres of life. The ideological formation of children was carefully implemented directly through learning ideology, but also by entertaining activities that could be attractive to children due to their forms and content.

Learning the ideology of communism was related to direct propaganda, which presented another identified category. It was often related to the propaganda of the Soviet Union. According to chronicle records, it was a part of meetings (in leisure activities): *During member meetings of the Union of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship in series, recitations and songs pupils promoted the great USSR,¹⁶ its economic progress and culture* (Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, the school year 1951/52). Presentation of slogans varied, e.g. 1st May celebrations, decorations of clubrooms, classrooms, schools, etc., can be considered an element of propaganda: *...the whole school, all classes and corridors were decorated... with slogans of gratitude to the USSR.* (Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, the school year 1951/52), *in the corridor wall newspapers with the slogan "USSR – our model" were established* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1952/53).

The element of forming the relationship of children of socialist society and the Soviet Union also appeared in the forms that are included in the category of leisure activities. They were, for instance, club activities: *Michurin club ... initiated its activities only in the second term. Pupils have their work plan, they created working groups. Under the guidance of the comrades, they were acquainted with the basic knowledge of agrobiology, with the teaching of Michurin and Lysenko.* (Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, the school year 1951/52), activities of school clubs, which also fulfilled educational roles, where the main emphasis was on: *strengthening the socialist patriotism and internationalism.* As the chronicle further states: *Throughout the whole year educators used political anniversaries to develop socialist education.* Great attention was also paid: *to recreational, sporting and summer activities. Staying outside developed in children a relationship in team and moral qualities.* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1964/65). Various discussions represented other, very commonly used form of occasional leisure activity. They took place at different events with significant personalities of political and social life: *On 4th April an interesting lecture on the universe took place: SCIENCE REVEALS THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE... Pupils learned new information from the sphere of cosmos and it substantially contributed to forming a scientific worldview of pupils and scientific-atheist education.* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1976/77).

¹⁶ For instance Hudík (1971) compiled a Series of poetry on the Slovak-Soviet friendship.

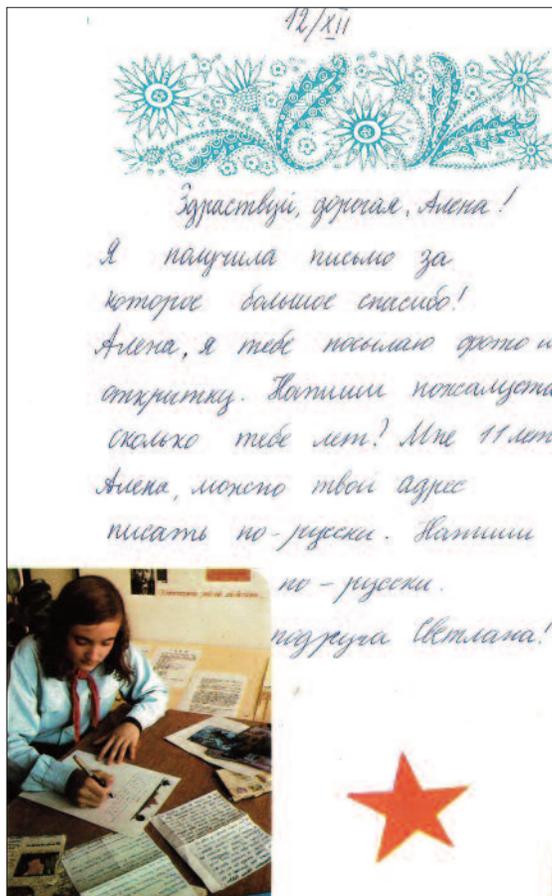


Fig. 4: A letter and a photograph documenting correspondence with pioneers from the USSR. (Chronicle of ZŠ Trnava, Ul. J. Bottu no. 27, the school year 1978/79)

Pioneers also attended film screenings within leisure activities. The films were often of the Soviet production, which were meant to promote life in socialism and by this “entertaining” form to strengthen children’s relationship to socialist society: *On the occasion of the Month of Csl-Sov. Friendship we attended a film screening: An Evil Spirit of the Taiga, Soviet film...* (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1981/82). Summer activities presented a specific form. It was realised primarily in the form of summer camps (modelled on the famous Artek in the Soviet Union), competitions, courses organised mainly by the houses of pioneers and youth, but also pioneer groups.

To consolidate the groups and form a positive relationship to socialism, a pioneer organisation regularly announced diverse games, expeditions and competitions, which presented another identified category: *ÚV SZM and ÚR PO SZM* [Central Committee of SZM and Central Council of PO SZM] *in honour of the 60th anniversary of establishing The Communist Party staged a national*

game of pioneer units and groups: A march towards a red flag P-60. (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1982/81), similarly: *A Journey to a Red Star* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1969/70), *In the country where tomorrow means yesterday* (Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1971/72), *On the Road to Freedom and Peace* (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1984/85) and other. These stage games were typically held throughout the whole school year. Pioneers fulfilled different task within them. Many of them were aimed at learning the history and culture of the Soviet Union, learning about the lives of the first pioneers, etc.

Twinning presented another phenomenon supporting the positive perception of the Soviet Union. It developed among different pioneer groups in Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, but also among other socialist countries. It aimed at learning about the life of other pioneer organisations (primarily in the Soviet Union). It had a form of information exchange on the activities of pioneers, exchange of pictures, illustrations, postcards, later also photographs and small presents, which were highly valuable in the period of socialism (Fig. 4).

The strong influence of the Soviet Union is evidenced also by illustrations of chronicles. A red star as a typical symbol of communism (figure 4), the flag of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in one picture, symbolising friendship (figure 2), portraits of significant communist personalities (figure 3), or anonymous soviet soldiers, pictures of significant typical soviet memorials – Kremlin, Aurora (figure 1) and other, but also pictures of other objects and ornaments typical for the soviet culture – for instance, Matryoshka, or motives of television series (figure 5) often appear in chronicles.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pioneer organisation under the leadership of the Communist Party used many forms with diverse content to build a positive relationship of children towards socialist society and to the Soviet Union. Many activities were typical in

their regularity. For instance, in the category of memorial days and holidays, most of them were regular and appeared in records of chronicles annually (VOSR, Czechoslovak coup d'état, International Women's Day, Labour Day, The Day of Liberation by the Soviet Army, Children's Day, but also other). Also, Beňušková (1994: 18), who in the context of celebrations of holidays and memorial days claims that almost all significant events of the pioneer calendar, as well as the whole society, celebrated every fifth or tenth anniversary of a key political event, which indicates a certain stereotype of forms of participation of children in celebrations.

Another characteristic feature of the activities was the variety of forms, which can be accurately observed in the example of the category of activities of the MČSSP. During its course, activities with a knowledge character aimed at the familiarisation with the Soviet Union (e.g. launching the game: "In a country where tomorrow means yesterday", games of Soviet children, etc.), civil defence-sporting games (civil defence play in honour of the anniversary of VOSR, handball tournament for the occasion of the 55th anniversary of establishing the USSR, etc.), artistic and cultural activities, which related to the preparation of ceremonial events, but also contests in singing Russian songs,

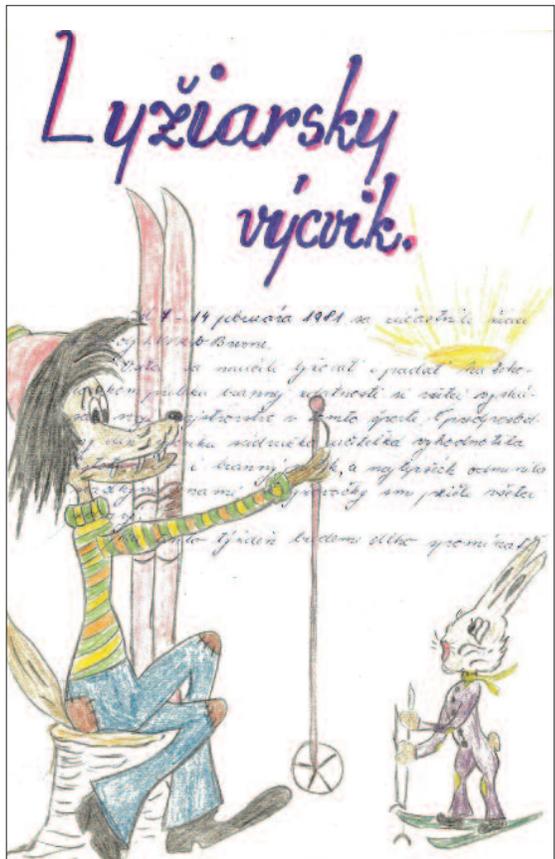


Fig. 5: A motive of a soviet story for children "Well, Just You Wait!" (Russian: *Hy, nozodu!*) used as an illustration (Chronicle of PS Abrahám, the school year 1980/81)

recitation of poems (“Na garmoshku zagrali” and other), work and technical activities, which were aimed at tidying the school surroundings, creating thematic school notice boards to strengthen the significance of the holiday, etc. Beňušková (1994: 18), for instance, states that during the celebration of VOSR, children found the most attractive participation in the lantern procession, which ended in fireworks. Also, this activity highlights that the pioneer activities were very diverse, and many activities could be (apart from their context) interesting for children.

For most of the identified categories, the mass character of activities was typical. It should have symbolised the unity and power of socialist society. It was manifested most significantly in the category of celebrations, commemoration days and holidays – for instance in celebrations of the Labour Day and the Day of Liberation by the Soviet Army, during which the mass character exceeded the school. It also manifested itself in the principle of the status of the PO as a united and mass children’s organisation, as well as in many activities, which the PO organised, e.g. making pledges (Beňušková, 1994: 19), ceremonial group and unit gatherings, national games and expeditions (Gubricová, 2018: 17), etc.

A strong ideological context is typical for the activities of the PO. It can be observed directly, e.g. in accepting commitments, content of which was also a political and patriotic education of pupils. The ideological context focused on many activities at the support of forming a positive relationship with the Soviet Union and was manifested for instance by subscribing to Soviet magazines, participation in collections to financially support children in the developing countries, corresponding or endorsing the Soviet Union by slogans, school decoration, etc. Gubricová (2017: 171) states that pioneers supported other PO in socialist or developing countries (e.g. Laos, Vietnam,...) by contributing to the solidarity fund.

The strong ideological influence is reflected also in the fact that the activities of the PO copied political events and changes in society. It can be observed from 1948, when several activities aimed at the support of emerging socialist society appear in chronicles (cf. Chronicle of ZŠ Lozorno, school years 1947/48). This trend of an intensive building of socialism can be observed especially in the 1950s and the early 1960s. Changes in 1968¹⁷ also reflected in chronicle records, by decreasing the activities related to endorsing the Soviet Union, or leaving out the address comrade (cf. Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, the school years 1967-1969). They were presented also in the visuals of chronicles, primarily by absence and incompleteness of several records, completion, schematism and simplification of illustrations, substituting illustrations by using reworked ornaments at page margins (cf. Chronicle of ZŠ Trnava, Ul. J. Bottu no. 27, the school year 1969/70) etc. This state changes again with the onset of the period of normalisation

17 In 1968, a non-violent attempt to reform the totalitarian way of governing and democratise the existing totalitarian regime (the so-called “socialism with a human face”) took place in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak public expressed their disapproval and resistance against the way of governing of the Communist Party and its impact on life in Czechoslovakia. The aforementioned attempt, however, encountered various domestic and international obstacles and was a possible threat not only to Czechoslovakia but also to the existence of the whole socialist bloc (related to the threat to the power status of the Soviet Union in the world). This threat resulted in the forcible entry of the armies of the Warsaw Pact into the territory of Czechoslovakia on 20th August 1968. For the first time in the history of the international communist movement, the act of aggression against a state led by a communist

and persists until the mid-1980s (cf. Chronicle of ZŠ Cífer, school years 1971-1988). Primarily in the early 1970s, increasing activity of PO can be observed. This state persists until the 1980s, when the chronicle records respond to political changes in the world and the Soviet Union. It is also confirmed by Beňušková (1994: 22), who states that: in pioneer chronicles from the 1980s the mentions of economic successes decreased, they are replaced by the events presenting peace policy of the Soviet Union – the school year began with a so-called hour of peace, peace meetings and peace marches were organised. Also in the pre-revolution years, the lack of consistency in writing several chronicles can be observed, which can indicate the loosening of the relationships and upcoming political changes (e.g. Chronicle of ZŠ in Trnava, Ul. J. Bottu no. 27, the school year 1987/89). This process was finalised by the events of 17th November 1989. They brought significant changes, which affected the whole society. It is evident by the record in the Chronicle in ZS Cífer (the school year 1989/90): *The most significant day of this school year was without doubt the 17th November. It was a day that shook the entire society. On this day, the International Students' Day, students in Prague began a velvet revolution against the totalitarian system here... In accordance with the Constitutional Act no. 135/89 Coll, Article 4 on the leading role of the Communist Party was abolished; education and formation got rid of ideological-political concepts from the privileged status of the communist party in the society. Education and formation begin to realise in the spirit of scientific knowledge and following the principles of patriotism, humanity and democracy...*

CONCLUSION

Children and youth presented a significant part of the socialist society. The Communist Party recognised the importance of the young generation, and therefore focused greatly on their upbringing. The process of building the socialist society in the bloc of socialist states was closely related to the Soviet Union, which presented a leader of the bloc of countries building socialism after the end of WWII. In these countries, it also had a significant influence (Bystrický et al., 2008: 11), which was reflected also in children's upbringing. They encountered varied activities aimed at familiarising and admiring the Soviet Union as a representative of the ideal of the socialist society from an early age. Despite the variety and attractiveness of the content and forms, they were in a prominent part ideologically based and had a political subtext. Their mission was not the declared “welfare of children”, but the Communist Party and its “Big Brother” – the Soviet Union. It had, by using the Communist Party and the identified activities, consolidated its power status and pursued its political interests in the process of building the dream (but never fully achieved) communism.

The facts describe only several activities of the PO related to the process of forming children in the period of socialism and forming their positive relationship to the Soviet

party carried out by ally troops took place. As a result of military and political intervention under the supervision of the Soviet Union and subsequent changes in the leadership of the Communist Party, a suppression of societal changes and the recurring reinforcement of socialism for the next twenty years took place in the territory of Czechoslovakia (Bystrický et al., 2008).

Union. Nevertheless, this process can be evaluated as ambitious and well-thought-out. Although it went through several crises (as described in more detail by, for instance, Knapík et al., 2018; Belan, 2015; Brenčíčová, 1969), it managed to “reform its activities on the go” (Čmolík, 1983 etc.) and successfully develop the entire forty years.

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- CHRONICLE of ZŠ Cífer, the school year 1948/1989
- CHRONICLE of ZŠ Trnava, Ul. J. Bottu no. 27, the school year 1976/1989
- CHRONICLE of ODPM, PB, the school year 1983/1989

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