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Country Report

Civic learning in Czech educational debate: Changes of the concept in the 20th century between educational sciences and school practice(*)

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Highlights:
- Civic education in interwar democratic Czechoslovakia as a way to civic emancipation and worldview tolerance.
- Active methods of civic education in education - the example of interwar Czechoslovakia.
- Political instrumentalisation and ideologization of civic education: the example of communist Czechoslovakia.
- 1968 and the Prague Spring: changes and breakdowns of the reform model of civic education in Czechoslovakia.
- Civic education in totalitarian systems: educational goals, curriculum, teaching methods, role of the teacher, extra-curricular education.

Purpose: The aim of this study is to reconstruct the development of civic learning within Czech debate during two periods: 1. the interwar period; 2. the communist era in Czechoslovakia.

Design and approach: The study is based on printed materials related to educational policy –laws, educational programmes, curriculum documents and teaching journals. Using a text-analytical and hermeneutic approach, it reconstructs the direction and "power of discourse" within educational policy concerning civic learning in Czech debate in the 20th century.

Findings: The first part of the study reconstructs the formation of the concept of civic learning seeking to link the national and cosmopolitan models of coexistence (the curriculum of civic learning, civic learning in the wider school life, the didactic concept of teaching and the implementation of active forms of teaching civic studies and education). The second part of the study analyses both the changes and stability (macrodidactic and microdidactic levels; curricular and methodological levels) of the ideological Marxist orientation of civic learning (as a school subject and as school life) in communist Czechoslovakia.

Research limitations: The report is based on the analysis of educational policy documents, i.e. primary sources of the "official" educational debate, only partially taking into account the levels of actors (teachers, pupils, parents), "transfer" and implementation from the political curriculum level (macrodidactic level) to the level of implementation of objectives and contents in teaching (microdidactic level).

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1 INTRODUCTION

The study aims to present the main goals, starting points and debate frameworks defining the changes of civic learning in what is now the Czech Republic from 1918 to 1989. It focuses on the development of school-based civic studies and education, with only a marginal focus on the role of out-of-school activities and institutions that also played an important role in fulfilling the goals of civic learning. The study is divided into two parts. The first part defines the concept of civic studies and education in school education in interwar democratic Czechoslovakia. The second part focuses on the period that Czechoslovakia was under communist totalitarianism, in a divided Europe during the Cold War and under the "control" of the Soviet Union.

Presenting a "report" on the development and state of civic learning in Czech debate in the 20th century and today within the format of a single article reveals many limitations and challenges – both in scope and methodological approach. Unfortunately, Czech educational debate has significantly neglected the "treatment" of the development of educational sciences, as well as school and out-of-school education, during the communist totalitarian period. Post-1989 debate (not only) on civic learning evolved rapidly, shaped by "Western models", i.e., the ideas of Europeanism, open society and global society (Greger & Najvar, 2010; Mitter, 2010; von Kopp, 2010). However, this progress often occurred without sufficient reflection on the domestic tradition or only partially addressed it (Greger, 2011; Janík, 2013; Janík et al., 2011). The interwar period was romanticised as the "golden age of democracy", without sufficiently analysing to what extent the concept of Czech civic education (with Slovak and German variations) went beyond the requirement of national civic education towards the concept of a citizen tolerating and respecting national, cultural, social, religious and gender specifics, striving for equality of civil rights and finding human uniqueness and diversity as a positive value (Kasper & Kasperová, 2020). In contrast, the period from 1948 to 1989 was "overlooked" or even "suppressed" during the transformation of the post-socialist school system and curriculum reform after 1989 (this trend was not unique to the Czech Republic (Birzea, 2008; Halász, 2007; Janík, 2020; Janowski, 2007; Kosová & Porubský, 2007; Veselý, 2015; Walterová, 2007; Walterová & Greger, 2007). The primary motivation for politicians, education experts and teachers during this time was reintegration "back into Europe", rather than reflecting on domestic educational developments. As a result, there is a lack of studies and publications critically analysing and reflecting on the civic learning developed in the Czech territory and asking questions about the continuity and discontinuity of the topic (Dvořáková & Lánský, 2024; Zounek et al., 2017, 2018). In this respect, the state of reflection of the Czech civic learning debate can hardly be compared, for example, with the debate on the development of civic learning in the former German Democratic Republic (Benecke, 2022; Blessing et al., 1995; Blessing, Grammes & Schluss, 2012; Grammes et al., 2013; Tenorth & Wiegmann, 2022), but also in other countries of the post-socialist region (Kudláčová, 2023; Medveš, 2015; Protner, 2020).

The first part of the study analyses primary sources – especially curriculum documents, pedagogical journals, contemporary reports and educational programme documents – in the context of political and societal-social changes in interwar Czechoslovakia. Using a text analytical and hermeneutic approach, the study reconstructs the basic premises, goals, agenda, debate frameworks, rules, "optics" and logic of promoting and fulfilling both the knowledge and educational goals of civic learning (Keller, 2011; Keller et al., 2018; Schriewer, 2003) in the political and societal changes of Czechoslovakia in the first half of the 20th century (Kasper et al., 2018).

The second part of the report, reconstructing the concept of civic learning under the weight of totalitarianism, ideological superiority and Marxism-Leninism control, is based on several "official" sources – school curricula, approved textbooks, bulletins and reports of the Ministry of Education, and many "professional" publications addressed to civic studies teachers and senior officials within the school and education system. Many of the sources available today were designed to shape a picture of what the state of affairs should be. As such, these materials do not allow for conclusions that the reality matched this "intended picture". It is difficult today to reconstruct the actual and authentic conduct of civic studies classes and civic learning in communist Czechoslovakia. The question is to what extent individual teachers followed the official political educational line, to what extent they actually fulfilled the educational goals that were declared and what their teaching actually looked like. It is also a question of the extent to which the pupils "accepted" the ideological goal embedded in the teaching content and, conversely, the extent to which they developed their own understanding and personal attitudes. The following analysis reconstructs the official goal of communist educational policy in the field of civic studies and must be approached as such.

The present report faces methodological challenges. The first part of the report, dealing with developments in the interwar period (1918–1939), works with a broader source base than the second part of the report (1948–1989). There is only a limited source base on the development of civic learning during the period of communist totalitarianism in Czechoslovakia. Unfortunately, a significant collection of the Research Institute of Pedagogy in Prague, which, as a ministerial research institute, planned and implemented changes in the concept of teaching in socialist Czechoslovakia, has not been preserved. Likewise, many journals on civic learning were only partially published in the period 1948–1989, and they mainly reflect the control of Party and state policy over the debate on civic learning. "Authentic" statements by teachers and pupils are also missing. Putting together the story of civic learning in communist Czechoslovakia will be difficult and will require not only a great deal of time but also demanding research in archives and other sources (school chronicles, pupils' papers, journals, etc.). Deeper and interpretative perspectives are lacking, such as the viewpoints of pupils and teachers, which could unveil a hermeneutic understanding of internalised goals, principles, conceptions and conduct of teaching, and communication of civic studies teachers in different periods of totalitarianism – 1950s (building of communism), 1960s (societal and political liberation), 1970s ("normalisation") and 1980s (gradual "restructuring" of socialism). At the moment, we do not have precise analyses that would show who could teach civic education in the given periods of socialism, how they were educated and politically trained, what their involvement in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was, how they were involved in politics, and how they accepted the "scientific world view" and Marxism-Leninism. (It should be noted that in the 1970s and 1980s, civic education was taught mainly by school principals or persons collaborating with them in "political" development. Both groups had to be members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.) There is also a lack of studies that would, in addition to examining the training of civic studies teachers, explore their collaboration with school methodologists of extracurricular civic learning in youth organisations. In addition to the teacher's perspective, the pupil's perspective is also missing, i.e., a deeper look at whether the Marxist "catechism" and ideological perspective were accepted, consciously or unconsciously internalised, questioned, etc., by pupils. There are materials available from which one can infer the macrodidactic and school-political level in educational goals and contents of civic learning. The

methodological and microdidactic aspects (lessons, teachers' lesson plans and their execution) of the implementation of curricular goals are lacking.

The following article on the development of civic education analysed all the legal regulations and recommendations of the Ministry of Education on teaching and socialisation activities in the framework of the education of the communist citizen at the level of "general" (basic) school and secondary schools. Moreover, textbooks and methodological materials for teachers approved by the Ministry of Education for civic education in general and secondary schools were analysed. Last but not least, conceptual and professional documents of academics who published in civic education were also included in the analysis. In the next stage of the research, we intend to analyse the teachers' and academic journals related to civic education from the period 1945/1948-1968 and 1968-1989 that have been saved.

2. CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN INTERWAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA

2.1 The founding of the Czechoslovak Republic – a challenge for civic learning

The year 1918, marking the end of the First World War, signalled the defeat of the nationalist and imperial ambitions of Germany and Austria-Hungary, as well as the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the German Empire. The establishment of a multiethnic Czechoslovakia, a democratic republic, was a major historical milestone that required significant democratising changes in the political, societal-cultural and social spheres. Ideas about the democratic functioning of society in multinational Czechoslovakia varied depending on the national discourse – different perspectives dominated within the Czech, Slovak, German, Hungarian, Ruthenian, Polish and Jewish communities. In particular, the "code" in the various "national" discourses differed based on the cultural-political "key" of teachers. The views of the liberal-nationalist, social-liberal (referred to as socialist in the first half of the 20th century), national-conservative, social-conservative, nationalist and communist parts of the teaching community were different. A significant factor to highlight is the gender aspect. Interwar Czechoslovakia quickly allowed female teachers professional freedom following the establishment of the state. The equalisation of rights for female teachers with their male counterparts, both in civic and professional terms, brought an important example of changing relationships and the evolving roles of actors within the educational sphere into the debate on civic learning. Similarly, attention was given to the overall transformation of the teacher-pupil relationship and communication within the school environment. The school was expected to foster both the individual development of pupils (by didactic work through individualisation methods) and their socialisation within the framework of forming a "school community" (classroom and school pupil councils, school celebrations, performances, parents' associations, cooperation with municipal and city institutions, as well as representatives of public, cultural and economic life).

The diversity in the overall debate on the significance, conception, goals, contents and methods of civic learning was enriched by the political and cultural openness of Czechoslovakia. Efforts were made to identify new "models" and "best practices" for the direction of civic learning. During the interwar period, the influence of American pedagogical debate was especially significant in Czech educational circles. Czech expatriates in the USA, along with Czech educators and professors of pedagogy, facilitated the transfer of pedagogical principles from the American debate through numerous, repeated and long-term study and educational trips to the USA (Kasper & Kasperová,

2020). This international experience changed and greatly dynamised the overall direction and agenda of the domestic pedagogical debate and school reform, including the issue of civic learning (Kasper et al., 2024).

The values of democracy and the republican political system were to be supported by citizenship education, implemented through public enlightenment, a system of popular education and out-of-school education, but primarily through the reform of the school system. Below is an outline of how civic learning in schools was specifically meant to carry out and fulfil this task in interwar Czechoslovakia.

2.2 The concept and goals of civic learning in interwar Czechoslovakia

The independent Czechoslovakia regulated civic education and studies soon after its establishment, in August 1919, by a decree of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment (Decree No. 37581 of 29 August 1919). This decree supplemented the history and geography curricula with lessons on the constitution and administration of the Czechoslovak Republic, the duties and rights of citizens, and the development of democratic communities (Decree No. 25256 of 7 July 1919). It was not until the Education Act of 1922 (No. 226/1922) that compulsory civic learning was introduced at what was then known as “general (basic) schools” and “citizen schools” (generally corresponding to the primary and lower secondary level of education) as part of the newly established subject of civic studies and education. Based on this law, all pupils were allowed to be exempted from compulsory religious education.

Civic studies and education were a compulsory subject for all pupils at the upper level of general (basic) school (if attended for 8 years) and at citizen school (i.e., from Year 6 to Year 8 of compulsory education, with one lesson per week). It was not, however, only this separate subject that was to deal with issues of civic learning in the period in question. At the primary (lower) level of general (basic) school, the role of national history and geography, understanding the world (a primary level subject) and primary natural sciences was strengthened in citizenship education. At the lower secondary level, civic learning was linked to geography, history and natural sciences, but also to mother tongue, handicrafts for boys, household care for girls and physical education. The educational dimension of civic learning called for attention not to be focused on a single new subject, but for citizenship and citizenship education to run through all subjects, through the whole of school life, to become a principle in cross-curricular teaching.

The very title of the subject (Civic Studies and Education) reflected both interconnected goals – study/knowledge-focused (studies) and educational (education). Throughout the interwar period, this relationship between the educational and knowledge-focused aspects of civic studies and education remained the central theme in both academic and teacher discussions. The educational aspect emphasised the whole-day course of instruction, the significance of the hidden curriculum in school education and school life, as well as the socialising aspect of out-of-school education. The school was advocated as a school community, where social life, self-governance, pupil work and independent pupil activities – including various forms of pupil initiatives, such as artistic and physical education activities – contributed not only to the enrichment of the intellect but also to the development of the body, will, emotions and the personality of the child, or the pupil, thus supporting the essential qualities for civic engagement.

The main actors discussing the concept, content and methods of teaching civic studies and education were teachers[1], as well as academics and the broader cultural and professional public, including politicians. Discussions were mainly in professional journals, and there were also those that were directly aimed at the development of civic studies and education.[2] Textbooks (and readers) for civic studies and education were crucial. The majority of the textbooks provided descriptive and informative content on topics such as the state system, state institutions, international institutions, as well as issues related to family and community.[3] However, attempts at activity-oriented teaching of civic studies were also important, as evidenced by textbooks published in the 1930s[4], i.e., in the period of the "interwar school reform" inspired the active school principles. The activity aspect of teaching also required teachers to be highly familiar with and sensitive to the developmental specifics of pupils, especially those in the adolescent stage. It is not surprising, therefore, that many civic studies and education teachers were also very active in the field of youth psychology and sociology and developmental psychology (Skořepa, 1928, 1930, 1932).

The Czech debate[5] emphasised the interconnectedness of moral and civic education (*Občanská nauka a mravouka*, 1922), viewing them as a unified whole essential for both individual and societal life (Dejmek, 1921). Josef Černý (1863–1942), a prominent theorist and practitioner of interwar civic education, also stressed that civic life can only function in a state where its citizens strive to achieve justice. Černý (1922) argued that moral education cannot be imposed authoritatively through state power or church influence but must arise from the harmony between civic and moral maturity within an individual. A similar argument was made by Miloslav Skořepa (1895–1942)[6], a teacher and author of many textbooks on civic studies and education. Skořepa (1924) finds civic education to be the means to moral education. According to Skořepa, the essence of citizenship education lies in fostering individuals to respect, tolerate, and refrain from infringing upon the beliefs or national

[1] Teachers: Miloslav Skořepa, Josef Černý, Karel Štech, Petr Dejmek, Josef Oldra Novotný, Kamila Spálová, Lidmila Žofková, František Pátek. Academics: Jan Uher, Emanuel Rádl, Otokar Chlup and, from the "fading" positivist wing of Czech pedagogical science, František Krejčí and Otakar Kádner.

[2] Časopis pro občanskou nauku a výchovu (1924–1935), renamed after 1936 as Časopis pro občanskou nauku a brannou výchovu (1936–1939) and in 1940 as Časopis pro občanskou a tělesnou výchovu, from 1940 to 1942 published as Časopis pro školní výchovu.

[3] An example is the three-volume textbook by Jan Uher and Josef Kopeček for citizen schools Za novým životem. Občanská nauka a výchova pro školy měšťanské, 1934, 1935 and 1936.

4 These include Miloslav Skořepa's three-volume series of working textbooks for general schools Červánky: Občanská nauka a výchova v úkolech (1935) and the four-volume textbook Červánky pro měšťanky (1936 and 1937). Skořepa's textbooks Červánky were also published in Slovak, German and Hungarian in the 1930s and would certainly merit further research attention.

[5] German teachers discussed in Monatschrift für Bürgerkunde und staatsbürgerliche Erziehung in 1924–1938. The production of textbooks by German teachers in the field of civic studies and education during the interwar period was notably extensive. These textbooks were published both by German representatives of teachers' associations (Emil Karl Berndt) and by other prominent and active teachers (Anton Herget, Hugo Kotzurek, Gustav Treixler, Josef Blau, Heinrich Rauchberg). Their perspectives on citizenship and the transition from Heimatkunde to Bürgerkunde merit deeper scholarly attention. However, the aim of this section is not to compare the German and Czech approaches to the starting points and goals of civic learning in interwar Czechoslovakia. Therefore, the focus shifts exclusively to the discourse among Czech teachers.

[6] Miloslav Skořepa (1895–1942) was a citizen school teacher and a prominent figure in the reformist pedagogical movement in interwar Czechoslovakia. He published extensively on topics related to pupil development and adolescence, as well as civic studies and moral education. A leading personality among Czech teachers, Skořepa was highly active in teachers' associations. He headed notable interwar educational journals – Komenský and Školské reformy. For his involvement in the resistance movement during the Second World War, he was arrested following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich and executed in Prague on 15 June 1942.

identities of others. He contended that no single worldview could serve as the foundation for morality. The development of citizenship and the promotion of democratic values were not to be derived from higher spiritual or philosophical authorities but rather grounded in the principle of "service to the collective", which was also reflected in the promotion of pupil self-governance, classroom and school councils, and the development of parents' associations, as the natural outcome of cooperation between schools and families. While Skořepa and other proponents of civic learning did not reject religion,[7] they emphasised a form of religion devoid of dogma, ecclesiastical influence and mythology. The only unacceptable stance was intolerance towards difference (Skořepa, 1924).

2.3 Instructional and educational contents and methods of civic studies and education in interwar Czechoslovakia

As is evident above, the debate on the content of civic studies and education began immediately after 1918 and intensified particularly in 1921 and 1922, when the future curriculum of this subject was proposed.

In terms of the content focus and knowledge part of civic studies, key topics included instruction on the state system, democracy, the rights and duties of citizens, freedom of assembly and association, the institutions necessary for the functioning of a democratic state, the institutions and possibilities of social assistance, the obligation to attend school, the military and tax obligations, the right to vote, judicial power, and the organisation and administrative division of the state. Additionally, the curriculum encompassed institutions promoting world peace and international cooperation, such as the establishment of the League of Nations and other international institutions fostering cultural cooperation. Further topics addressed health, labour, social benefits and welfare, justice, order and security. In the spirit of a pedagogy based on the life of the child, and also with regard to the anchoring of civic education, which should begin with the child's knowledge of and growth in the communities they know well and live in, additional contents of this subject were determined. These included family, family care, municipality, school, home and nature.[8] Both education for civic readiness and instruction in the functioning of the state, as well as knowledge of the homeland, home, municipality and family, were to result in a synthesis of the idea of

[7] Firstly, topics of religious education remained on the periphery of published articles in the analysed journals for a considerable time. The significance of religion was viewed through a pantheistic and deistic lens, emphasising the presence of a higher, binding force in the world and nature, inspiring efforts towards serving the greater good and overcoming individual interests and needs. If the goal of citizenship education was to encourage pupils to work for the welfare of all, the focus could not be placed on individual morality driven by hedonistic or self-serving motives, nor on morality grounded in a higher entity (mysticism, the Absolute, religious doctrine or dogma). Religious education, therefore, could not be the domain of the church, a higher spirit or philosophical teachings. Christian values were not dismissed; rather, their importance was recognised as a means to foster love and support for others, especially the weak and vulnerable. Space for Western Judeo-Christian values, stories and figures was not rejected, but this was not intended to impose limitations on the personal faith of pupils or the individual spiritual autonomy of teachers.

[8] The content of civic studies and education included the following topics (Křivánek, 1933): Year 6: Family, rights and duties of family members. Work, protection of work by law. Education and its importance for man/society, self-education. Health – personal and "societal", temperance movement, use of leisure time. Year 7: Municipality, life in the municipality, leadership of the municipality, home rule, elections in the municipality, regulation of the municipality and care of the municipality. Local government, district, region, country. Truth, conscience, lie, wrongdoing, punishment, trial. Year 8: State and nation, constitution, state authorities, state economy, school system, health care, social welfare, culture. League of Nations, war and peace, national defence.

humanity in the spirit of being ready to serve and help develop a democratic community. This conception and the content definition of the subject of civic studies and education remained practically unchanged in the Czech interwar pedagogical debate.

With the adoption of the school reform programme after 1928, which embraced active forms of teaching in the sense of pedagogical pragmatism, as well as the introduction and development of forms of school self-governance and school democracy, the 1930 curriculum shifted focus towards strengthening the educational component over studies. This entailed a slight decrease in the teaching time for civic studies and education. On the other hand, the curriculum increased the teaching time for the topics of civic studies and education within the framework of early subjects such as understanding the world, national history and geography, and primary natural sciences in the first five years of general school. In addition, at citizen schools and at the upper level of general schools, from Year 5 to Year 8, the topics of civic studies and education were to be more intensively integrated into almost all subjects of both studies and educational types. This change was met with some reservations and concern by some teachers, who feared that the importance of citizenship education might decline in school education. On the whole, however, leading and active teaching personalities succeeded in convincing the broader teaching community that the curricular change could and should be viewed and interpreted as an opportunity and a positive development (O. Novotný, 1930). How was the integration of civic studies and education intended to be implemented, and what experience was gained in achieving this goal?

Civic studies and education were to be integrated into the teaching of the mother tongue. (For example, pupils' reading skills were to be developed through texts addressing important and contemporary social issues, such as minutes from municipal council meetings.) Civic studies were also to be connected with history (development of national culture and its importance for both the collective and individual identity of pupils, the development of European culture, the importance of global organisations for peace in Europe and the world); with geography (economic and social conditions in different parts of the world and their importance for the stability of the world, questions of cultural reciprocity and cooperation between countries, cooperation between countries in various associations, pacts and agreements); with the teaching of mathematics (calculations were to be based on examples of municipal budgets and state budget items, or using expenditure and income in the child's household; pupils' savings and the establishment of school savings banks were encouraged, the proceeds of which were to be used to support a good cause). The linking of civic learning with the teaching of natural sciences was encouraged (nature conservation – protection of plants and animals, the establishment of animal protection societies in schools, research stations, nature clubs, tree planting and forest work as part of school instruction and wider school life, trips and nature school principles and outdoor learning); and with physics (issues of industrial development, technological development and its impact on health and social and civilisational advancement, the importance of scientific knowledge for modern society).

Citizenship education also intertwined with artistic subjects (fine arts, architecture and sculpture were considered cultural expressions that children should explore, appreciate and use as inspiration in their own creative efforts within school lessons; similarly, the joy of music, of singing, of one's own musical activity was seen as an aspect that strengthens both collective belonging and individual resilience and pleasure in a technical, often alienating world). Civic education was also in line with physical education (education for health, for responsibility for the

health of one's own body and for a healthy spirit in the body, for hygiene, for self-discipline, self-control, self-command, the importance of scouting, hiking, trips, educational walks outdoors, in the open air; Neumann, 1929). The most prominent focus, however, was the relationship between civic education and the new subjects introduced after 1918 – handicrafts for boys and household care for girls. The principles of the working school, which emphasised active learning through life-relevant experiences and the natural cycle of the year (Pátek, 1929), aimed to cultivate a sense of civic responsibility in children, closely tied to the values of work both for society and the individual.

Attention was drawn to the dangers of formalised, mechanical working practices in pupils' learning. Instead, the focus was placed on creative work that would incorporate the pupil's personal input to ensure that the activity contributed to their moral development and helped ground their future life path. Work was not idealised in the Czech pedagogical debate as a means to elevate pupils to "higher" forms of culture. Rather, it was seen as a tool and a space that supported both individual growth and collective solidarity, fostering cooperation as well as the social and cultural progress of the nation and humanity.[9] Balance was emphasised in the inclusion of craftwork, domestic tasks, artistic endeavours and gardening activities within the school routine and curriculum (Mauer, 1919).

In terms of methods, "intellectual" approaches (such as teacher-led explanations and instruction) leading to the acquisition of knowledge about the political structure and functioning of the state were not neglected. However, priority was given to methods that supported education for democracy – "lived democracy" within the school environment, i.e. methods focused on appealing to the emotional dimension of pupils and fostering their willpower. Textbooks and teaching processes were designed to leverage the power of storytelling (life stories and events, as well as narratives, tales, fables and poems) highlighting figures from cultural history (politics, literature, theatre, science, music, painting, sculpture), personal experiences, pupils' diaries documenting their personal and school lives (Spalová, 1924), and activities that engaged the broader facets of pupils' personalities (film, dramatisation, eurythmics, attending theatrical or musical performances, listening to music, nature walks, visits to cultural landmarks such as buildings, statues and monuments, etc.). In this context, the teacher's role was pivotal. Teachers served as both role models and individuals who directly engaged with children. This required personal knowledge of pupils in out-of-school settings (with a focus on sports, hiking, camps and walks, trips with children, as well as home visits), a deep interest in their lives, respect for their unique personal life stories, and a strong emphasis on the teacher's behaviour and communication with pupils and other participants in the teaching process. It was recognised that pupils tended to emulate or replicate the behaviours they observed in their immediate social environment. Consequently, the importance of developing parents' associations and fostering cooperation between schools and families was highlighted.

2.4 Political twilight over Czechoslovakia and the change of civic learning

While the aims and content of civic education and studies did not change in the interwar period, it was not the consequences of the economic crisis of the 1930s that changed the focus of the subject,

[9] In this progressive, optimistic and obliging spirit, handicrafts were intended to provide pupils with opportunities to refine their skills in working with materials such as paper, cardboard, wood, sheet metal, metal and stone.

but the political changes in Europe after 1933. In neighbouring Germany, Adolf Hitler seized power, and the effects of the economic crisis also radicalised many political attitudes of the German population in Czechoslovakia, including general, citizen and upper secondary school pupils. Police stations and national societies reported to the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment numerous cases of national and racial intolerance of German pupils and teachers from ethnically mixed areas of Czechoslovakia (Kasper, 2007). The outcome was the Decree on Improper Behaviour in Schools and on Civic Education of April 1933, highlighting that the values of tolerance and respect for national, cultural and religious differences were shaken in the national crisis after 1933. The Decree on the Education of Pupils for Civil Defence of May 1935 had an even more fundamental impact. This led to a swift revision of the curriculum and additional recommendations, which, while not questioning the previous goals of civic education, realistically required civil defence preparedness among pupils (Bradáč, 1936). This is evidenced by the change of the name of *Časopis pro občankou výchovu a nauku* (Journal for Civic Education and Studies) from 1936 to *Časopis pro občanskou a brannou výchovu* (Journal for Civic and Civil Defence Education) and by the articles published. The articles continued to call for democracy to remain the highest value for Czech teachers of civic studies and education, as well as education for peace and national and religious tolerance. The threat to Czechoslovak democracy posed by fascism and the dictatorial system was rejected. The active defence of democracy by upholding the values of tolerance was encouraged, and there was an increased emphasis on physical exercises, marching drills, civil defence clubs in schools, school self-governance, the development of strong personalities and overall preparedness (both physical and moral) in case of attack. Civil defence education became a theme for both boys and girls (Provazníková, 1936). Pacifism, which could mean succumbing to the power of an undemocratic enemy, was rejected. The denial of military conscription was not accepted.

3 THE "NEW" COMMUNIST CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE EDUCATION OF THE COMMUNIST "CITIZEN"

The liberation of Czechoslovakia in May 1945 brought celebrations of freedom and the end of wartime suffering. However, it was evident that the post-war development of Central Europe, including the restored Czechoslovakia, could not simply resume the pre-war trajectory. The years 1945–1948 were characterised in the schooling and educational sector by a struggle for power between democratic and communist forces. This struggle was reflected in the appointments for the post of Minister of Education, as well as in debates regarding the direction and significance of civic learning. The political events and the crisis at the turn of 1947 and 1948, during which the Czechoslovak Communists gained dominance in government despite their insufficient mandate from free elections, marked the end of free political, economic and cultural development in post-war Czechoslovakia. The aim was to educate the communist "citizen" and to disintegrate the model of civic studies and education from the interwar period.

3.1 The "new" communist society and the new concept of civic learning (1948-1953)

The direction of civic learning within the framework of basic education was changed by Act No. 95/1948 of 21 April 1948. The Act regulated both the educational system and the educational goal:

Youth are led to active participation in school life and in the nation-building efforts of the Republic. Schools cultivate a sense of community within the family, the nation, the Slavic world

and humanity. Schools educate nationally and politically conscious citizens of the people's democratic state, courageous defenders of the homeland, and devoted supporters of the working people and socialism. (Zákon č. 95/1948, *Věstník*, 1948, p. 184)

It is clear that the fundamental transformation of education in communist Czechoslovakia consisted of a very strong politicisation and ideologisation. This is evident in all the documents issued by the bodies of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, as well as by the then Ministry of Education and, in various forms, by the Ministry's departmental professional institute – the Research Institute of Pedagogy (which prepared curricula and textbooks) and the J. A. Comenius Institute of Pedagogy at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (which conducted pedagogical research). The vocabulary and language of transformation of education called for

socialist patriotism, proletarian internationalism, the defeat of imperialism and bourgeois nationalism, the development of a world view in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, school in the spirit of science and progress, anticlerical school, school building the practice of socialism and communism, school of world peace, school of labour.

Between 1948 and 1953, civic studies were a compulsory subject in both lower and upper secondary education. At the primary level, it was not a separate subject, but the principles of civic education were reflected in national history and geography, understanding the world, handicrafts, Czech language, as well as in writing, artistic subjects and Russian language. Starting from Year 3, national history and geography were to foster not only love for the homeland and Slavs but also for the USSR; it was also to teach students to scientifically understand natural phenomena and cultivate a "responsible attitude to work" (*Učební plán*, 1948a). The specific content of the subject from Year 3 to Year 5 shows that it extended beyond simple indoctrination and ideological messaging. It continued to focus on topics such as family, life in the municipality and in the immediate community of pupils, but these topics were presented as supporting the "people's democratic" transformation of life in Czechoslovakia. Weeks focused on recitations, cleanliness in the classroom, coming to school on time, planting trees, cleaning the school and the municipality, or planting flowers, etc., were intended to develop qualities in pupils that were in line with the idea of the future citizen of the communist state.

At the lower secondary level, civic studies were already a compulsory and graded subject. However, its specificity was emphasised, since education in the spirit of communist ideals was not to be a matter of the subject of civic studies (rooted in Marxism-Leninism and underpinned academically by the "theory of education"), but all subjects (including the Russian language and, naturally, history, geography and mother tongue, but also natural sciences promoting a "scientific world view"[10]), as well as the overall functioning of the school (school rules[11]) and the life of the school (including the establishment of pupil committees at class and school levels, as well as parents' associations tasked with managing school-family cooperation). The aim of civic studies

[10] In Year 3, national history and geography focused on understanding natural phenomena ensuring that pupils did not resort to explanations other than those grounded in scientific and natural principles. Among the values emphasised were help and love within the family, as well as help and mutual support in the classroom, school and community for the benefit of socialism.

[11] The school rules of February 1951 already emphasised the collective aspect of education over the individual aspect in education, aiming to foster the education of the socialist citizen. The school rules stressed the obedience and discipline of pupils towards teachers. For reference, cf. Decree of the Ministry of Education, Sciences and Arts No. 70 000-I School Rules for Unified School Pupils. In Věstník MŠVU, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 4–6.

was to educate politically conscious, active, but also "courageous defenders of the homeland"[12], dedicated advocates for the working class and socialism (*Učební plán*, 1948b, p. 44) – in school, in out-of-school activities and in civil defence training. The content of the subject (Nejedlý, 1949) focused on the topic of the people's democratic state system, life in the collective, in socialism (organs of power, the role and importance of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the state-planned economy, the rights and duties of the citizen in communist Czechoslovakia, workers' struggle, socialist patriotism, cooperation with the USSR and other socialist countries). Pioneer groups were tasked with guiding their members in clubrooms, workshops, gardens, nature or gyms, fostering "love for the people's democratic state and world peace, diligence, discipline and friendship with others" (*Zakládáme pionýrské oddíly*, 1949, p. 9). Similarly, hobby clubs and "after-school clubs" established at schools were closely monitored by state authorities – these measures were a response to the rapid increase in employment among mothers in communist Czechoslovakia, ensuring that young children were not left unsupervised by adults after school hours. At the upper secondary level, the state mandated compulsory civic studies. At gymnasia, the first two years were dedicated to this subject, while the following two years focused mainly on Marxist philosophy, logic, psychology and economics in the spirit of Marxism.

3.2 "New" forms of education of the communist citizen

Civic education also extended into the domain of labour. As early as 1948, a work stay was introduced for young people in the final Year 9 of the upper secondary level, lasting up to four weeks. This stay aimed to instil a "real" understanding of work as essential to the development of the communist individual and to assist in career decision-making. Future communist citizens were further "socialised" through the celebration of significant personalities and events, which were to be commemorated in a glorified and "educational" manner, highlighting their importance and role in building socialism. These celebrations included honouring key dates and figures of the workers' movement and communist ideology, such as Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Klement Gottwald, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. After 1948, "national icons" from the interwar period were replaced with communist leaders, and "new milestones" were introduced (for example, events like "Victorious February", marking the Communist Party's seizure of power in Czechoslovakia in 1948, the Great October Socialist Revolution, the birthdays of Lenin and Stalin, and the founding of the Red Army became major celebrations).[13] Many traditional holidays were "rebranded". For example, the celebration of the founding of the Republic (28 October) was reframed as a day to celebrate the victory of internationalism. Similarly, the interwar tradition of the Christmas tree, which provided gifts to children from underprivileged families, was replaced by the celebration of Ded Moroz (Grandfather Frost). This occasion emphasised the friendship between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, with discussions about Ded Moroz's journey to Czechoslovakia. From 1950, International Women's Day replaced Mother's Day, focusing on women as builders of socialism, survivors of wartime struggles and exemplary workers. Friendship weeks between socialist countries, particularly emphasising ties with the USSR, were also celebrated. Within schools, Soviet

[12] The "cooperation" between civic education and the civil defence education that was being formed was a major topic of debate and practice in schooling in the 1950s.
[13] Pupils were to celebrate together with workers from factories or agricultural cooperatives.

"heroes of labour", called Stakhanovites[14], and agricultural experimenters, called Michurinites[15], were prominently featured, alongside outstanding tractor drivers and other standout workers from various economic sectors. Celebrations took many forms, including school decorations (noticeboards), pupils' cultural performances, pupils' work activities, youth and teacher summer work stays, subscription to and reading of Soviet magazines, attendance at film shows, especially of selected and approved Soviet films, lectures, discussions with workers or war heroes, pupils' art exhibitions, as well as physical education competitions, victory runs, sports games, cycling relays, competitions in civil defence prowess, etc. Other activities included collecting herbs and raw materials, and saving paper.

Another significant means of instilling communist consciousness in pupils was organising excursions to agricultural cooperatives, factories, steelworks, mines and similar sites (which not only emphasised the "practical application" of the curriculum but also played a role in helping pupils choose their future professions). Excursions provided pupils with direct exposure to labour, albeit less hands-on compared to pupils' work activities. From the 1950s onwards, schools developed excursion plans. Additionally, emphasis was placed on practical education, which aimed to "socialise" and educationally guide pupils to socialist labour. Education for life in a socialist and communist society was further supported by the development of a comprehensive system of competitions and "Olympiads" across nearly all areas and subjects. A similar approach was applied to physical education and civil defence education. Pupils were expected to demonstrate exceptional school achievements, mirroring the model of exemplary workers in socialist labour competitions for the best factory/cooperative and the most productive worker. During the 1970s and 1980s, schools organised a wide array of pupil competitions, with names and schedules aligned with "significant days and events in the building of communism". The Ministry of Education's Bulletin increasingly provided detailed methodological instructions on how to announce and organise these competitions, as well as how to organise various celebrations and discussions, what films and theatrical performances to attend, how to prepare pupils for these cultural events in advance in the "spirit of socialism" and then engage them in post-event reflections to ensure they internalised the appropriate "message".

An equally important factor in the education of the communist citizen (both within and outside the subject of civic studies) was the personality of the teacher. This was given considerable attention by the Ministry of Education, other school system management bodies and faculties of education for forty years. As early as 1951, 1952 and 1954, regulations were issued concerning the conduct and instruction of teachers, emphasising their political and ideological consciousness, their "service" to the socialist system, their pledge to the people's democratic republic, and their awareness of the importance and role of education for the development of socialist society.[16]

[14] Alexei Grigoryevich Stakhanov (1906–1977) was a Soviet worker who achieved extraordinary work success and performance. He became a symbol of socialist competition in production and the successful over-fulfilment of socialist production plans. The so-called Stakhanovites were exemplary workers of socialist production and economy.

[15] Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin (1855–1935) was a cultivator in the USSR who achieved exceptional results and conducted experiments aimed at "reforming" socialist Soviet agriculture. He was held up as a model for collective socialist farming, both in the USSR and across other socialist bloc countries. The so-called Michurinites became symbols of agricultural socialist progressivism.

[16] The 1957 Teachers' Work Regulations, which obliged teachers to work only with approved textbooks and aids and to be also aware of their role vis-à-vis parents and the broader society, was similarly focused and codified the conduct of teachers. Teachers were required to cooperate with the "revolutionary trade unions", i.e. groups of communistically conscious "cells"

Starting in the 1950s and continuing through to 1989, the Ministry and other authorities relentlessly developed a system of ideological training and further political education of teachers. A significant "support" for ensuring ideological stability among teachers was their concentration in trade unions. From the 1970s onwards, teacher training institutes played a crucial role, organising not only training but also excursions, discussions, readings, conferences, lectures, exhibitions, trips and "professional pedagogical readings" for teachers. Given this context, it was exceedingly difficult for teachers to maintain their professional and ideological autonomy. Officially, teachers were obliged to support socialist society and the preparation of pupils for life in socialism. An interesting area of study would be the internal and external resistance that teachers exhibited against this task, though there is unfortunately no space for such an exploration here.

3.3 Soviet and domestic models in the concept of civic education

Let's turn our attention to school civic studies classes. In 1953, Czechoslovakia underwent a radical change in its school education system with the introduction of a new law (Act No. 31/1953), which closely followed the Soviet model. The gymnasium (general upper secondary school) was removed from the educational system, an eleven-year secondary school system was introduced (based on the Soviet model), and the subject of civic studies and education was abolished. The period between 1953 and 1960 in the Czechoslovak school system was seen as a "period of belief" that the consciousness of the communist citizen should be the outcome of educational work across all subjects[17], as well as school and out-of-school educational activities. The only school subject guaranteeing "communist consciousness" among pupils was the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic and the USSR[18], taught in Year 9[19]. However, this "optimism", as implied by the absence of the subject of civic education, weakened at the end of the 1950s due to the general failure of the development of socialism in the economic sphere, but also due to the proliferation of cautious yet critical voices about the development of communism in Czechoslovakia at that time. Czechoslovakia began discussing the "reform of the political system", but at the same time, it sought to avoid questioning the post-1948 developments. The need for a deeper and "genuine" understanding of socialism and communism, and its "sincere" implementation in everyday life, led to the reintroduction of civic studies. In 1959, civic education was experimentally reintroduced and, from 1960[20], it became a compulsory subject at what was known as the second stage of basic schools

at workplaces, including schools. *Věstník ministerstva školství a kultury* 13, 1957, No. 9, 102–112. A similar "logic" guided the assessment of teachers, which also gained in importance after 1957.

[17] The pedagogical strategic materials of the time emphasised the importance of history, geography and the Russian language for the development of the consciousness of the communist citizen.

[18] In Year 9, with two lessons, later only one lesson, per week, it was to acquaint pupils with the basics of "socialist law", the economic and state structure of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the USSR, the organs of state power, the socialist judiciary, and the rights and duties of citizens in a "people's democratic state". This subject was attended only by pupils continuing after eight years of common education at the upper secondary three-year level of the "general eleven-year secondary school". Most pupils therefore left compulsory education without this "instruction".

[19] In Years 10 and 11 of the "eleven-year secondary school", the subjects Psychology and Logic were introduced, taught in a Marxist spirit. These subjects were attended by only a part of the pupils who did not go to technical or vocational schools after Year 8. At secondary pedagogical schools, Marxism-Leninism was taught in Year 4 from 1956, i.e. even pre-school teachers were not to be left without proper political-ideological training.

[20] The new curriculum was also related to the adoption of Act No. 186 of 1960, which introduced nine-year basic education, followed by secondary technical schools, vocational schools and a three-year cycle of general secondary school (providing a total of twelve years of education).

(i.e., at lower secondary schools), at upper secondary schools (Rosenzweig, 1965; Rosenzweig & Lukš, 1963, 1964)[21] and at vocational schools[22]. The educational character of the subject, called Civic Education, was emphasised. It was taught in Years 6, 7, 8 and 9[23] with one lesson per week, and until 1967/68 it was not graded, as its goal was educational development rather than knowledge (M. Novotný, 1961). Naturally, it continued to be emphasised that the goal of educating the socialist citizen should permeate all subjects – again, especially mother tongue, Russian language, history, geography, and the general functioning of school and pupil life (*Nástin*, 1964; Rosenzweig & Dunovský, 1966). It was stressed that the content should be age-appropriate, aligned with pupils' cognitive development and understanding of the world. The methodological manuals for the newly introduced civic education focused on pupil activity in lessons, but it was clear that the teacher was responsible for managing the class and ensuring the proper flow and control of the lesson (Rosenzweig, 1963, 1964; Rosenzweig & Výborný, 1964).

At the end of the 1960s, two views clashed in what is known as Prague "Pre-Spring". The reformist current was open to the reduction of civic education in the school curriculum and its transformation, especially at upper secondary school, in psychology, philosophy, sociology and logic. Opposed to this was the conservative wing, which feared that an open and critical discussion and change in the concept of the education of the communist citizen could mean a general questioning of the political and social development in the Czechoslovak Republic after 1948. This conservative wing remained cautious about reforms in both societal and educational spheres and prevailed. However, shortly before 1968, a shift in the approach to civic learning did occur at upper secondary schools, and the curriculum moved towards the fundamentals of social sciences. While the instruction remained grounded in Marxist teachings, it allowed pupils broader intellectual development and deeper insight into philosophy, psychology, sociology and logic (*Učebné osnovy*, 1966). While there was a "loosening" and weakening of ideological and political goals[24] at the upper secondary level, at the basic education level the conception and curricular goals of civic education did not differ significantly from the 1949–1953 period. What was to change after 1960 in the teaching of civic education within basic education was the methods of teaching. A dialogical and activating approach in teaching was emphasised (working with texts, questions, problem-solving discussions, debates, films, exhibitions, role-plays, reading contemporary press, etc.), as well as application of the curriculum to the life of pupils in the family and society/school, and fostering a positive relationship between the civic education teacher and their pupils (Lukš, 1963). Education for the ideals of the communist citizen in out-of-school activities deserved considerable attention. The role of school-organised work activities and pupils' participation in them was weakened. Work activities were found to be excessively disruptive and to distract pupils from concentrating on their

[21] The content of civic education at upper secondary schools included the materialist Marxist world view, Marxist political economy, the theory of the socialist state, and the teachings of the "classics" of Marxism-Leninism.

[22] At upper secondary schools and vocational schools, civic education received one lesson per week; only at secondary pedagogical school was it two lessons in Year 4, because in addition to civic education, Marxism-Leninism was taught as a compulsory subject.

[23] From 1966/67, civic education was no longer taught in Year 6, and from 1 September 1972, it alternated with civil defence education in Years 6 and 7, switching every term.

[24] Starting in 1965, the teaching of civic education underwent changes at general secondary schools – in Year 2 and final Year 3, civic education was no longer part of the curriculum and was replaced by social sciences. Similarly, the spirit of the Prague Spring left its mark on secondary technical schools – from the 1967/68 school year onwards, civic studies were transformed into courses on philosophy and social sciences, taught in Year 3 and Year 4.

studies and to shorten the time required for mastering the curriculum. Thus, the education of the communist citizen through labour was deprioritised in favour of ensuring pupils had sufficient school preparation for "building" socialism and its theoretical underpinnings in the classroom.

The Prague Spring, the defeat of the reformist wing in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the "political normalisation" in Czechoslovakia after 1968 also left an impact on the reflections on the meaning and conception of teaching civic education. In 1968, the effects of liberal reforms were still apparent, leading to adjustments in the scope of civic education lessons. The teaching of civic education was reduced to only Years 8 and 9, with one lesson per week (partly influenced by the introduction of a five-day school week). However, this situation changed rapidly. From the 1971/72 school year onwards, civic education was reintroduced from Year 6 to Year 9, with one lesson per week, a framework that remained in place until 1989. A pivotal development occurred in 1974, when the emphasis on not only the educational but also the knowledge-based aspects of civic education was reinstated, along with the reintroduction of the term Civic Studies as the official subject name.

3.4 Communist ideological awareness as a direction of civic education after the defeat of the Prague Spring in 1968

In the findings of the above analysis, the allocated teaching time for the subject is less significant than the observation that civic education/ studies were an important topic in the direction of both basic and upper secondary education in Czechoslovakia before and after the Prague Spring. Its political and ideological character remained largely unchanged, although during the period of liberalisation and the pursuit of "socialism with a human face", the concept of the subject became the topic of numerous professional and political discussions. After 1968, in the aftermath of the "shock" of the Prague Spring, the conservative part of the Party leadership and the Ministry of Education endorsed a conception of civic education that would explicitly emphasise the importance of Marxism-Leninism, the workers' movement and the communist revolution for the development of socialism (Slouka, 1974). Subsequently, the scope and the name of the subject were changed, until in the 1970s both the name Civic Studies and its scope became established as a compulsory subject in all years of the second stage of basic school.

The Prague Spring also left its mark on the concept of civic learning at upper secondary schools. Starting from the 1969 school year, civic education/studies ceased to be taught and were replaced in the last two years of gymnasia by Introduction to Philosophy (which covered topics from psychology, philosophy, logic and sociology). However, this situation rapidly changed and from the 1971/72 school year, compulsory civic studies were reinstated in all years of gymnasia, upper secondary schools and vocational schools.[25] Its conception was very ideological. It was de facto a selection from Marxism-Leninism, often delving into detailed accounts of the workers' movement.

[25] The content of civic studies was strictly prescribed by the curriculum and was knowledge-based. In Year 1, the emphasis was to be placed on the Communist Manifesto, documents on the historical role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Lessons from the Crisis Development, a document responding to the "political crisis" of the Prague Spring. Year 2 focused on the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and documents on Czechoslovak-Soviet friendship and the congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Year 3 was dedicated to documents on the international labour movement and the "communist morality of man", and Year 4 delved into the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

The upper secondary school preparation of the citizen for a communist society required a high level of theoretical knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism not only at gymnasia but also at upper secondary schools and even vocational schools – something more typically expected at university level. The content in the four years of upper secondary schools partially overlapped and repeated. However, its ideological orientation was evident (Rosenzweig, 1972; Rosenzweig & Podmele, 1972; Slouka et al., 1972).[26] The textbooks show that upper secondary school students were not to doubt the correctness of the communist order in the world or in Czechoslovakia, nor were they to question the significance of Marxism-Leninism and the role of communist parties in socialist countries. After 1972, the Socialist Youth Union became the main official organisation for youth education, tasked with closely collaborating with schools, much like its counterpart at the basic education level – the Pioneer Organisation. Additionally, after 1972, ideological and political training for teachers was "reformed" and made mandatory.[27]

3.5 The 1980s in civic education: content stagnation and methodological innovations (activation of pupils)

In the 1980s, the goals of civic studies at both basic and upper secondary school levels did not change fundamentally. However, there was a more pronounced emphasis on the topic of the scientific and technological revolution and its significance for the socialist economy. The curriculum continued to oppose unscientific world views, emphasising scientific understanding of nature as the foundation for pupils' interpretation of the world. Lesson content included concepts such as socialist humanism, socialist internationalism, socialist legality, etc. (*Učební osnovy*, 1986). Less emphasis was placed on pupils' immediate surroundings in connection to the subject's topics. Although the appropriateness of the subject matter for pupils' ages and the activation level of lessons were still stressed, the objectives remained primarily knowledge-based and abstract. The curriculum allowed teachers the freedom to choose the topic for three (!) lessons per year. Even this minimal number of lessons dedicated to content determined by the teacher was seen as a significant "progress in freedom" for educators.

A certain "innovation" in the concept of civic studies also occurred at the upper secondary school level. The upper secondary curriculum for this subject in the 1980s emphasised inter-subject connections in teaching civic education, its integration with other subjects and the interrelation of educational content (thematic units) with history, geography and, in some cases, other subjects such as civil defence education, as well as chemistry and natural sciences in general, emphasising their importance for a scientific world view (*Občanská nauka*, 1984).

The textbooks show a similar view. If we compare the civic studies textbooks for basic schools from the 1970s and the 1980s, it turns out that the 1970s textbooks had a very rigid scheme and served as a basis for the lessons. Each chapter in the textbook corresponded to a single lesson and

[26] Over the course of the four years, the curriculum covered not only an introduction to Marxism-Leninism but also materialist philosophy, materialist dialectics and the economic system of the socialist economy – including cooperativism, planned economy and the de-emphasis of personal property. It also addressed the "crises" of capitalism, the "imperialist" nature of capitalism, the exploitation of Third World countries and Western colonies by capitalist systems, the economic alliances of socialist countries, and the importance of technology and industry for the development of socialism. The teaching also emphasised the Marxist interpretation of knowledge and the world.

[27] On 1 June 1974, the Central Institute for the Education of Pedagogical Workers was established, focusing on training school principals and inspectors and further educating teachers in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

was systematically organised – heading, topic, objective, explanation, questions and summary ("Remember"). It is evident that these textbooks were designed to deliver a clear and unambiguous explanation of the topic, ensuring the intended message was conveyed (*Občanská nauka*, 1974a, 1974b, 1974c, 1975). Space was not allowed for discussion of the topic, for different views on the topic, etc. The 1980s textbooks for basic schools (*Občanská nauka*, 1981, 1982, 1985) underwent a transformation in both form and, hence, function. In line with the emphasis on "activating" pupils in the teaching process, these textbooks included far more images, graphs/charts, tables and photographs, and made use of two different text colours. Chapters began with a motivational element, encouraging pupils to engage with the topic, express their thoughts, and consider their own experiences or knowledge about the topic. Only after this introduction did the explanatory text follow. The text was more structured, with subheadings, highlighting key concepts, etc., and was followed by questions related to the text, the topic itself, and application-based questions relating to "pupils' lives", a summary, sometimes optional questions, and revision questions and summary. It was clear that the textbooks aimed to actively "engage" the pupil in the topic, giving them a chance to express "their views". On the other hand, the chapters in the textbooks still conveyed a clear content and objective. The summary at the end of each chapter reinforced what the pupil was expected to take away from the topic, highlighting what was essential and what should be known. It seems that pupils' views were considered necessary and desirable only to the extent that they supported the intended message and objective of the chapter, without conflicting with the objectives of the lesson.

Similarly, when comparing the form of textbooks for upper secondary schools from the 1970s and 1980s (*Občanská nauka pro SŠ*, 1974, 1975, 1977, 1978; *Učebnice*, 1984, 1985), we find that the 1980s emphasised greater pupil activation in learning and provided more room for pupil involvement. On the other hand, it is striking today how theoretical and conceptually demanding the explanatory texts in these civic studies textbooks were, not only for upper secondary schools, including vocational schools. The level of abstraction in the texts was also high. The textbooks for upper secondary schools also contained a clear summary of the "truth" about the topic and a set of knowledge at the end of each chapter, as well as an appeal to the pupil's attitudes which were deemed desirable. The texts were purely explanatory. The textbooks did not contain authentic texts for pupils to assess and interpret. If photographs were included, they were properly described to support the message of the explanatory text. An interesting comparison can also be made between the photographs and explanatory texts in the textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1970s, the photographs primarily supplemented the explanation and were highly politically oriented. For example, the 1977 civic studies textbook for upper secondary schools (*Občanská nauka pro SŠ*, 1974) included a photograph for the topic of the Second World War, with a caption showing a gathering of workers in a factory destroyed by US bombing. For the topic of political changes in 1948, there were photographs of weapons that were meant to serve the "bourgeoisie" in attempting to reverse the course of the communist transformation of Czechoslovakia in February 1948. In the 1970s, the explanatory texts were still heavily loaded with expressive language. For example, they described the Prague Spring as a counter-revolution and a disruption of the socialist order, noting that the only entity that did not betray Czechoslovakia in 1938 (the signing of the Munich Agreement) was the USSR. The texts were unafraid to use strong language, such as referring to fascism as the power of the high bourgeoisie over society. In the 1980s, the textbooks predominantly featured photographs depicting youth of a given age in various situations of socialist daily life, often showing

them joyful or motivated to deal with “tasks of socialism”. The texts were less expressive, and the explanations were more “neutral”, focusing on scientific definitions of many concepts. While the explanatory texts in the textbooks for upper secondary schools and vocational schools in the 1980s were very similar, the photographs differed. In the textbooks for vocational schools, the youth were often dressed and styled to reflect the lifestyle of vocational school pupils.

The development of civic learning in professional circles in the 1980s is particularly interesting. Professional publications (Čára et al., 1985; Rosenzweig & Effenbergerová, 1979) show that educators no longer thought only about the goals and contents of civic studies in terms of the completion of the development of communism and in the context of socialist society, socialist economy and socialist cooperation. The questions of other views of the world and of man, non-Marxist approaches and philosophical currents and the possibilities of their inspiration for discussion in socialist Czechoslovakia came to the fore. Although everything remained confined to academic discussions and nothing of the scholarly debate was reflected in textbooks and curriculum, it marked a significant “opening” of civic education and teaching in socialist Czechoslovakia. Further studies would need to explore where this development led after the radical political and societal change of 1989.

4 CONCLUSION

The example of civic learning in Czechoslovakia illustrates the educational “struggle” of the 20th century over values such as civil liberty, tolerance, respect for human individuality, the efforts for European cultural solidarity and political cooperation amidst a century marked by devastating war conflicts (two world wars and the Cold War), as well as the dangers posed by totalitarian regimes that trampled on the values of an open civil society and universal humanity. Thus, the example of Czechoslovakia serves as more than “just a report” on the development of civic learning in a single country.

The changes of civic learning in Czechoslovakia are not merely a “report on development”. Understanding the historical evolution of civic learning is also crucial for comprehending the challenges faced in developing civic learning in the Czech Republic after 1989. Its concepts often stemmed from the European Union’s strategic educational documents, many of which had a neoliberal orientation (Štech, 2013), and were only partially accepted and internalised by Czech educators and the broader public. (A similar development can be observed in other post-socialist countries, and even in reunified Germany.) This is understandable. Czech educational debate could only partially understand European concepts, as after forty years of socialism and the specifics of its own development, it had to implement educational strategies and programmes that were the result of the “West’s” educational debate, which was fortunate enough not to be under the political and cultural influence of the Soviet Union after the Second World War. However, this study demonstrates how important it is to engage reflectively with tradition and historical experience in both national and European educational debate if efforts to create an open, pluralistic and tolerant European society are to be successfully implemented and not remain mere challenges.

The current international political situation has opened up fundamental, painful and very “sensitive” questions of rethinking the post-Cold War world order. It is therefore essential for the international debate to look deeper into the specifics of the development of civic education in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe “under the control” of the Soviet Union before 1989. At the same time, it is important to open up courageous topics - to what extent the West and post-

socialist countries were able to formulate a common vision of a democratic and liberal model of civic education after 1989 and not only formulate, but also internalise, adopt and implement it. The present text aims to contribute to this, in particular by reconstructing the goals, contents and methods/media of civic education in the cultural, geographic and political space of Central Europe both in the interwar period and in the socialist period (1948–1989)

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Civics textbooks emphasised the power of science, technology, and the overall scientific worldview for the consciousness of communist youth and for their life in a socialist society

Figure 1. Workers working with modern machines in socialist industrial production, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1984

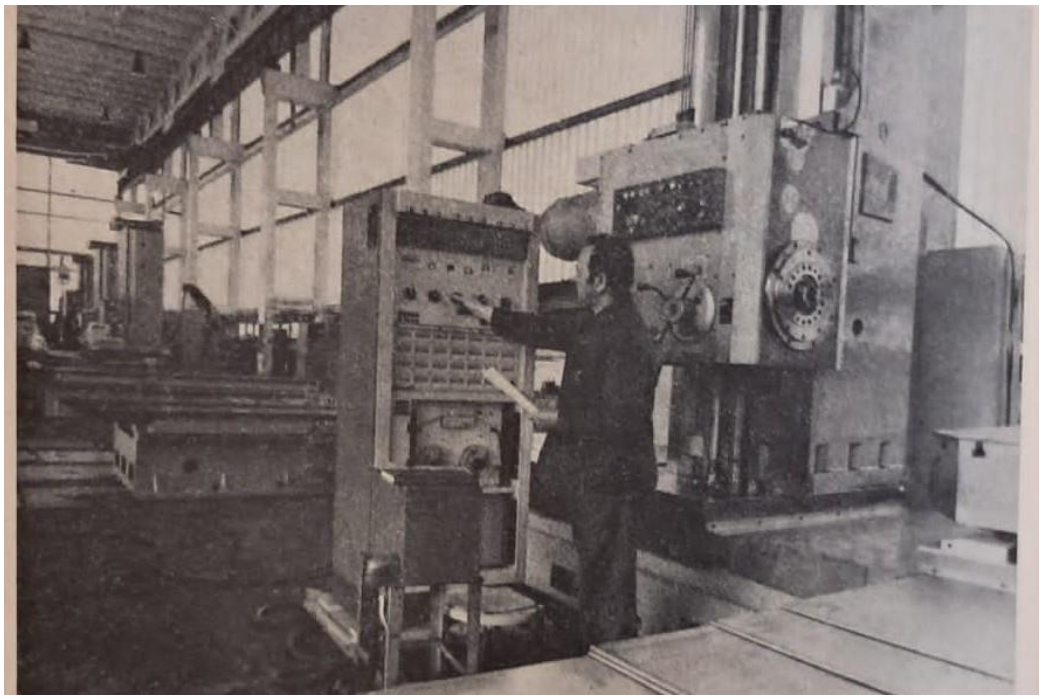


Figure 2. Youth in foreign language learning modern technology-assisted teaching, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1986

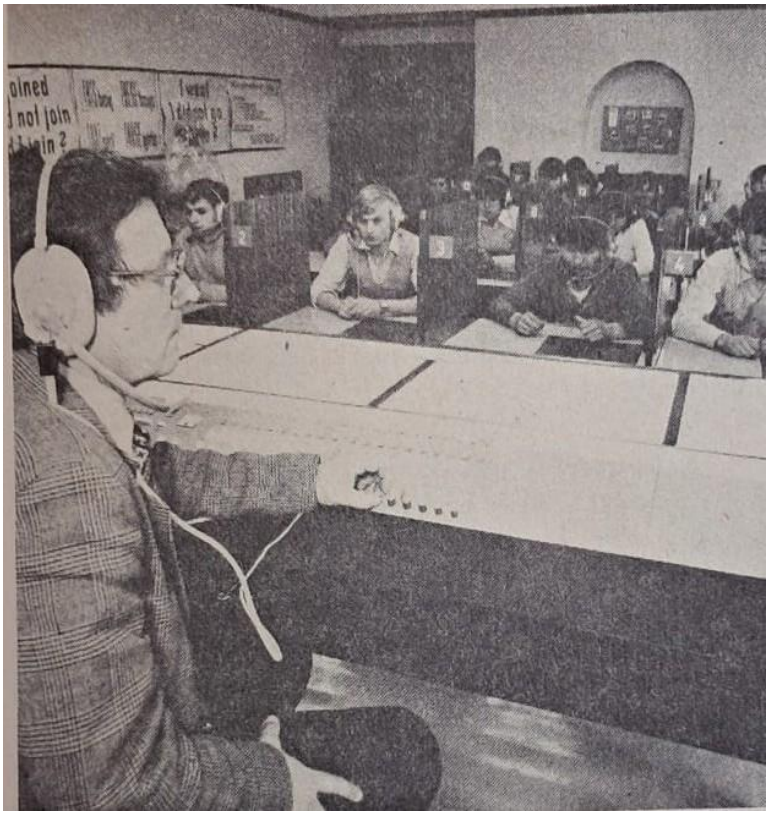


Figure 3. Nuclear power station in Jaslovské Bohunice - symbol of the power of socialist science and peaceful use of nuclear energy, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1984

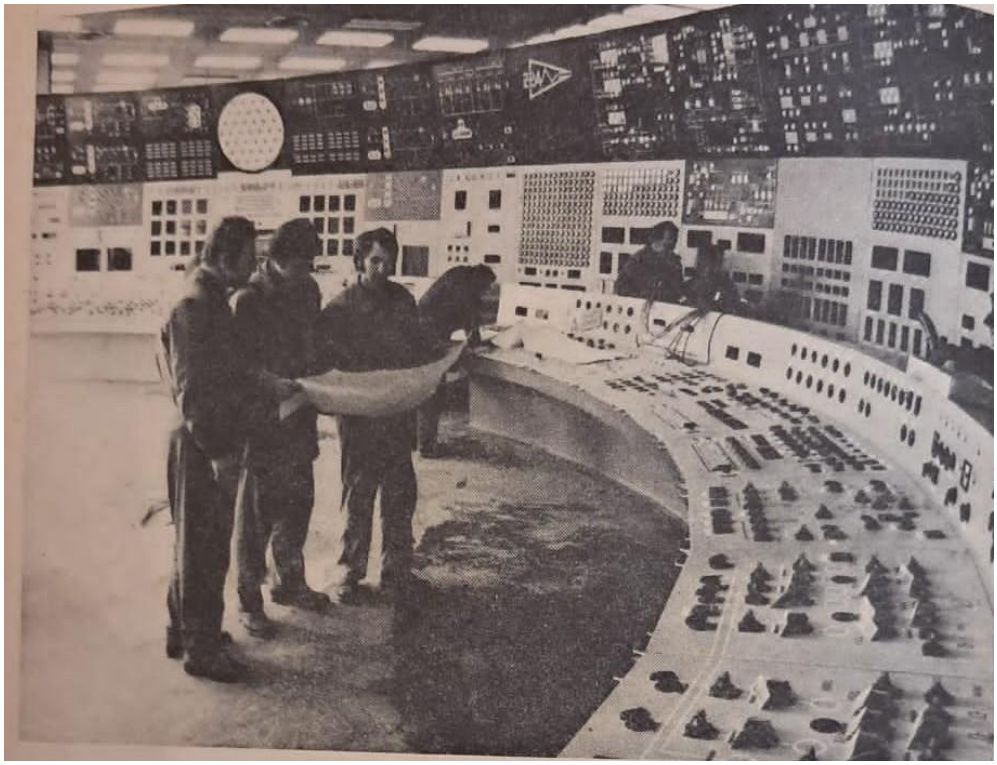


Figure 4. A picture from space - only modern socialist science (astronomy) will answer the fundamental questions scientifically and with a scientific world view, Civic education for grammar schools, Prague, 1987

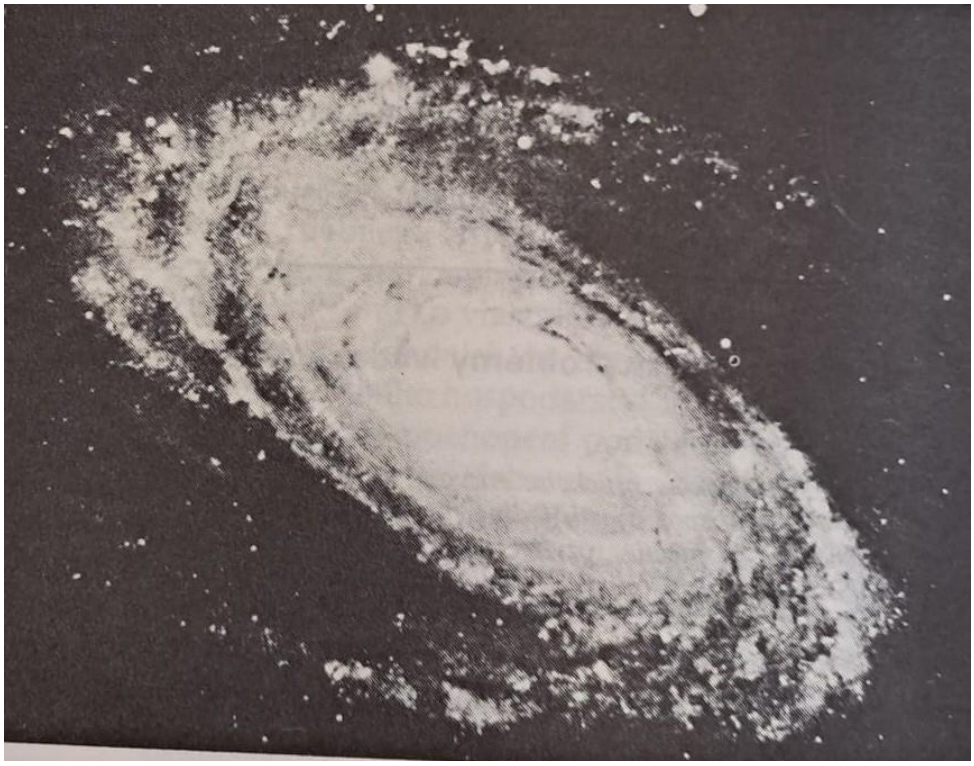
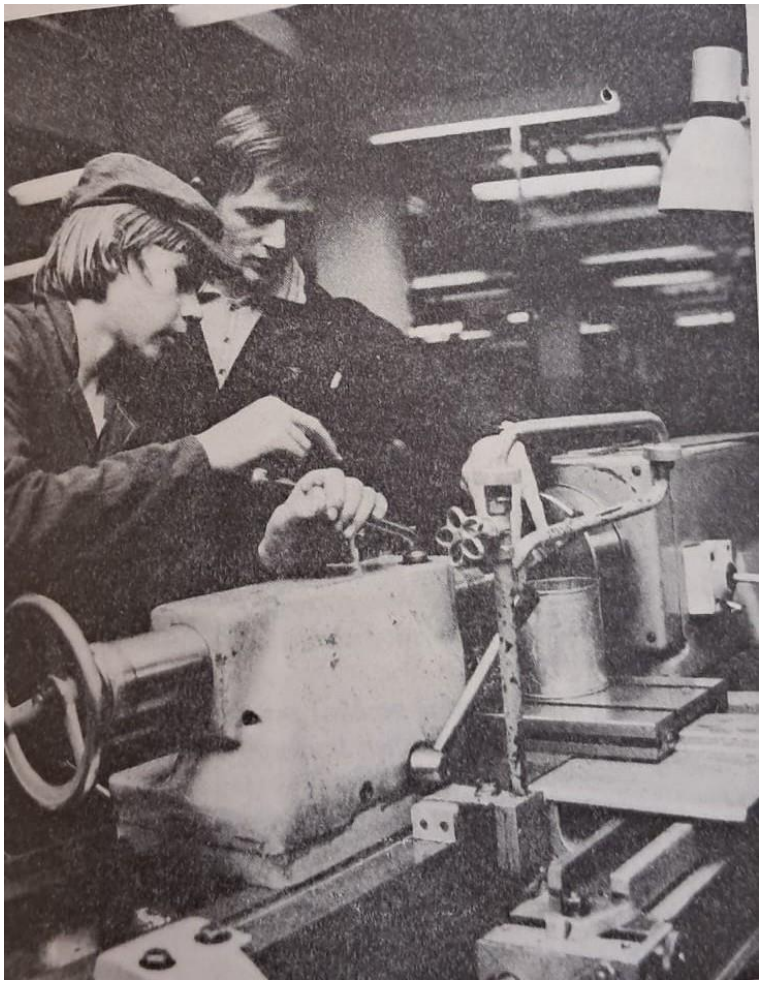


Figure 5. Education using modern technical instruments in secondary schools, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1984

Figure 6. Socialist agriculture developing thanks to modern technology, Civic education for general (basic) schools, textbook for 6th class, Prague, 1982

Figure 7. Youth in education using machines, technology, Civic education for general (basic) schools, textbook for 7th class, Prague, 1982



Civics textbooks created the idea that a socialist society was a space for a happy family, personal and political life-optimistic view of the socialist man in a socialist society

Figure 8. Vocational training in vocational schools, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1981

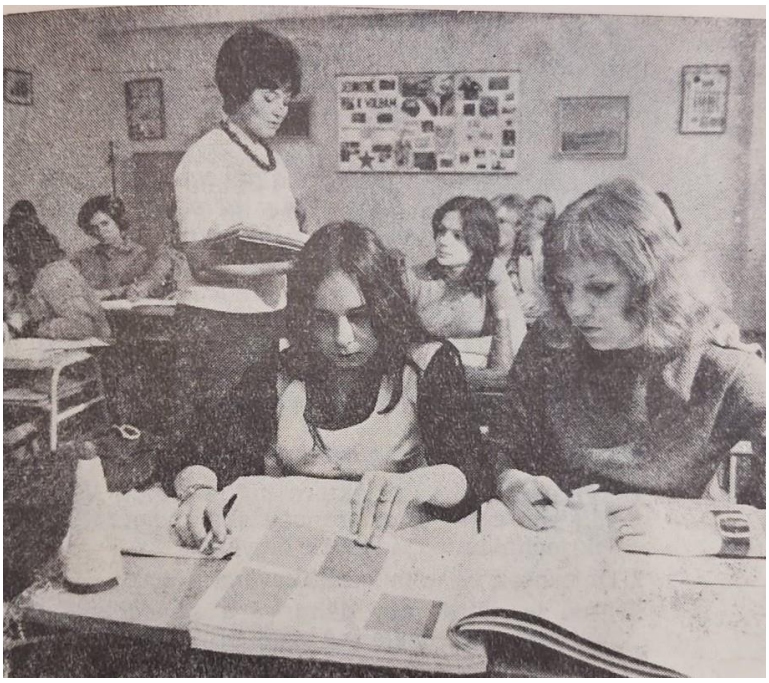


Figure 9. Youth participate in work brigades in the development of socialist society, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1986

Figure 10. Self-education of youth, Civic education for general (basic) schools, textbook for 8th class, Prague 1985

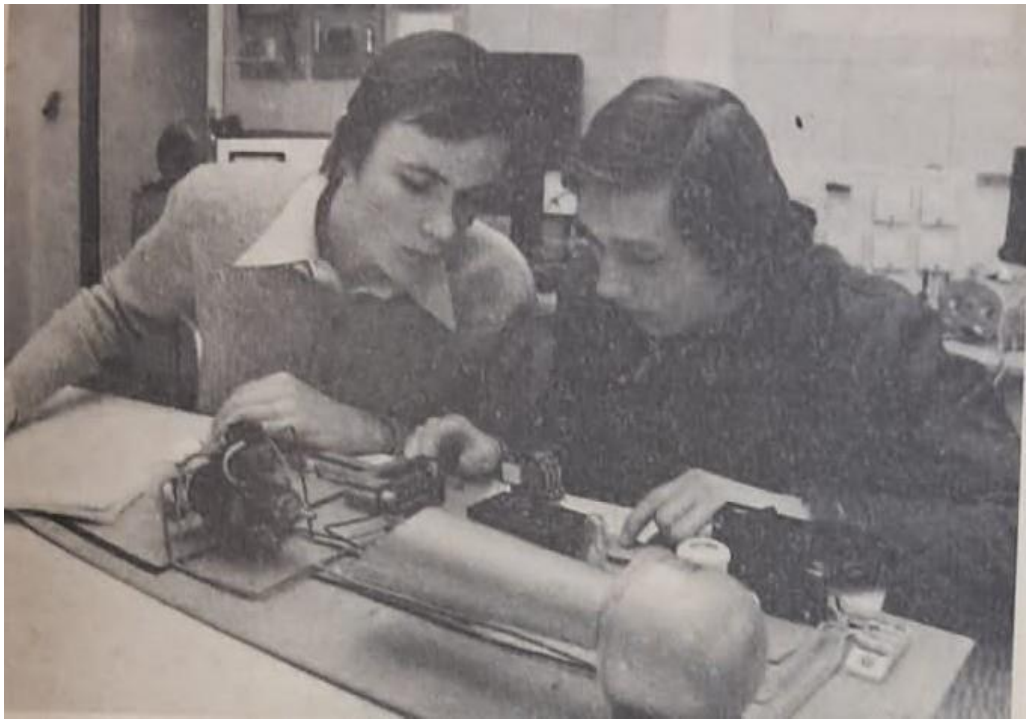


Figure 11. Youth participation in social and political life - youth discussions in national committees (local political organisations), Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1986

Figure 12. Youth participating in the political life of socialist society - meeting with the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1982

Figure 13. Leisure time of the youth, Civic education for general (basic) schools, textbook for 8th class, Prague 1985

Figure 14. Socialist family - an ideal picture from a flat in a panel block of flats, Civic education for general (basic) schools, Prague, 1982

Civics textbooks pointed out the need to protect, defend and guard the socialist order

Figure 15. Socialist "security corps" - the formation in Brno, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1984

Western society was stylised as a space of unfreedom, capitalist imperialism and colonialism

Figure 16. Young generation at a demonstration in Frankfurt am Main against the "ban" on the professional career for "activist" youth, Civic education for secondary vocational schools, Prague, 1981