

## DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION IN INTERWAR SLOVAKIA (1918 – 1938)

<sup>a</sup>EDUARD LUKÁČ, <sup>b</sup>KATARÍNA MAYER, <sup>c</sup>MARTINA LENHARTOVÁ

*Department of Andragogy, Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences, University of Presov, 17. Novembra 1, 081 16 Prešov, Slovakia*

*email: <sup>a</sup>eduard.lukac@unipo.sk, <sup>b</sup>katarina.mayer@unipo.sk, <sup>c</sup>martina.lenhardtova@unipo.sk*

The paper is a part of the research task VEGA no. 1/0303/17 "Adult Education in Slovakia in the Conditions of the Existence of Czechoslovakia (1918–1938)".

**Abstract:** New social conditions of the interwar Czechoslovakia (1918–1938) enabled the state authorities to focus, for the first time in Slovakia, on the domain of adult education. Several central state bodies were established and adopted the first legislative measures that laid the foundation for the future regional institutions of popular education and public libraries. Congresses of popular educators from Slovakia were organized on a regular basis and increased attention was paid to education of individual target groups of adults. The time was right for some individuals to shine in their efforts to provide theoretical background and practical guidelines for the future field of adult education.

**Keywords:** history of adult education in Slovakia, legislative measures, enlightenment boards and committees, congresses for popular educators, education courses for women and unemployed youth, K. Káľal, A. Zbaviteľ.

## 1 Introduction

The end of WWI (1914–1918), as an important historical milestone of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, brought a radical change in organization of states within the European region. After a foundation of a new independent state of Czechs and Slovaks on 28 October 1918 and its confirmation by the Declaration of the Slovak Nation (the Martin Declaration) on 30 October 1918, adult education was given immediate priority. Any popular educational endeavours until then were dependent on volunteer collaboration of many individuals, associations, and societies. Soon the state-governed cultural – enlightenment activities and policies started to develop, too. Some institutions, for instance, *Matica slovenská* and *Živena* resumed their activities. Favourable postwar conditions, however, provided a space for creation of the new institutions.

The supreme body responsible for education was the *Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment* [Ministerstvo školstva a národnej osvety] established in 1918 with its seat in Prague. The *Department of Enlightenment* [Osvetový odbor] formed an integral part of the Ministry's organizational structure. In 1922, the *Slovak Office of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment* [Referát Ministerstva školstva a národnej osvety] was created in Bratislava with the authority over primary and secondary school administration in Slovakia. Educational, enlightenment, and religious branches merged in one central Office in charge of management, control, human resources, and administration (Pavlík, 1985, p. 163).

First, it was needed to address terminological ambiguity accompanying both theoretical and practical aspects of educational activities performed by professionals and teachers involving adult population. The term *osveta* – enlightenment – was gradually replaced by the term *ľudovýchova* – popular education in order to ease the authoritative pressure of the intellectual elite trying purposefully to form the masses mostly by disseminating academic knowledge. If we interpret *ľudovýchova* as "education of the people" then by the people, we understand broad and low-educated masses of lower social rank, mostly manual workers whose education was rather fragmental (Šerák, 2005).

*Pedagogická encyklopédia Slovenska* [Pedagogical Encyclopaedia of Slovakia] defines *ľudovýchova* as "an intentional and purposeful educational endeavour of Slovak intelligentsia in specific conditions of economic, social, and national oppression aimed at raising national and political awareness of people, improving their economic and social standing and increasing their education level" (Pavlík, 1984, pp.

521–522). The Encyclopaedia links this concept to the activities undertaken before the establishment of Czechoslovakia [ČSR], but the term *ľudovýchova* was also used after 1918 mostly for ideological purposes as a counterweight to the term *osveta*, which had a slight bourgeois connotation.

The term popular education was used in relation to activities aimed at satisfying the needs of working class people. Czech Pedagogical Encyclopaedia *Česká pedagogická encyklopedie* [Czech Pedagogical Encyclopaedia] links the term *ľudová výchova* [a Czech equivalent of *ľudovýchova*] to the following terms "adult education, non-formal, post-school education, that is continuous education outside of school aimed at people beyond their school age, with the purpose of active development of their intellectual strengths and spreading knowledge among them" (Chlup, Kubálek, Uher, 1938, p. 251).

The entry *osvetová činnost* [enlightenment activity] in *Průručný pedagogický lexikón* [Pedagogical Lexicon] compiled by J. Čečetka in 1943 reads "it includes every extracurricular and non-formal educational activity which is intentionally directed at increasing cultural awareness and acquiring general and professional knowledge in civic education" (Čečetka, 1943, p. 33). The Lexicon specifies it further: "After 1918, enlightenment activities were placed in the service of civic re-education in the spirit of the new Czechoslovak Republic. Enlightenment activities, especially those governed by the state take on educational character in relation to civic upbringing" (Čečetka, 1943, p. 34).

In general, the interwar period can be described as the period of searching for optimal structures and laying foundations for the state-wide public enlightenment, in terms of legislative measures, a network of institutionalised provision, practical educational activity and work of several prominent figures.

## 2 Legislative measures in the adult education sector

The first legislative measure that laid the organizational foundation of the state-governed and institutionalised public enlightenment was the *Act No. 67 Coll. on the Organization of Popular Courses of Civic Education* adopted on 7 February 1919. Article 1 of the Act states that "in the whole territory of Czechoslovakia free courses of civic education shall be organized in order to provide professional, yet popularized explanation of the system of government, all aspects of state's operation, and about the rights and obligations of its citizens" (Škoda, 1960, p. 15).

These courses were to "educate the citizens and deepen their political education and strengthen the moral fitness of individuals" (Škoda, Paška, 1977, p. 30). In accordance with the Act No. 67, free courses in civic education were organized with an aim to provide the citizens with professional, but still very clear and accessible explanation of the abovementioned issues. The *Instruction No. 28 480 3554 "on the Organization of Popular Courses of Civic Education in Slovakia"* issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment on 14 July 1920 addressed the implementation of the Act No.67/1919 in the Slovak part of the new republic. The Instruction specified the main goal of the courses as follows: "educate the citizens for the republic, deepen their political education, and strengthen the moral fitness of individuals" (Jelínek, 1936, p. 10).

The Instruction also outlined the content of the courses:

- civic education (system of government, citizen's rights and obligations, activities of public institutions, political parties' programmes);
- national economy (economics of state, municipalities and organizations);
- history of Czechoslovak independence, historical events of the last century, world history;

- d) importance of democracy (moral foundation of the state);
- e) social foundation of living in a state;
- f) social healthcare and physical education.

Executive orders or decrees of the Ministry (e.g. No. 61.796 dated 15 December 1919; No. 61.977 dated 19 December 1919) provided the detailed structure of the enlightenment societies responsible for the enlightenment policy implementation:

- a) *okresné osvetové zbory* [district enlightenment boards] – consisted of no more than 20 people – representatives of political parties, local governments, district school boards, prominent educational associations and popular educators. Their main duty was the inspection in municipalities;
- b) *mestské osvetové zbory* [municipal enlightenment boards] – established in municipalities with over 10 000 residents, in larger cities, there could be more than one board; they were not subordinate to the district enlightenment boards;
- c) *miestne osvetové komisie* [local enlightenment committees] – local branch of the district enlightenment board in a particular municipality, had 3-4 members.

For practical reasons other bodies were established too, for instance:

- *ústredie osvetových zborov* [the Central Office for Enlightenment Boards]: covered the territory of a župa [a county] and ensured the coordinated organization of all cultural-enlightenment events. Its responsibilities were: popular educators' training, keeping records of all activities within the county, arranging meetings between individual district boards, maintaining a county library, etc.
- *menšinové okresné osvetové zbory* [district enlightenment boards for minorities]: established in a district with over 2 000 members of a particular national minority.

A prominent historian Š. Pasiar said: "In accordance with the Act on Civic Education free educational courses shall be organized on the whole territory of Czechoslovakia. The courses provided people with information about the state's structure and administration, and about their rights and civic duties, etc. It encouraged learning about the new reality – the newly established republic - which was very different from the state in which Czechs and Slovaks had lived before 1918" (Pasiar, 1975, p. 215).

The second legislative measure that contributed to the development of enlightenment activities was the *Act No. 430/1919 Coll. on Public Communal Libraries* adopted on 12 July 1919. Article 1 of the Act states: "to complement and deepen the knowledge of all social classes, the political municipalities are ordered to establish public libraries providing truly valuable books of educational, scholarly, and entertaining nature" (Bakoš, 1996, p. 36). In Slovakia, the Act No. 430 together with the regulation No. 607/19 Coll. did not come into force until 21 March 1925 due to unsatisfactory conditions and lack of financial resources.

In accordance with the Act, every municipality, within its own limits, was to establish a public library by the end of 1925. The district enlightenment boards in cooperation with district chiefs were to ensure compliance with the Act. The association libraries shall be made public; every municipality shall establish a library board members of which were to be a teacher, a notary public, and a local secretary. The district board also observed that municipalities allocate from their budget a certain amount of money to the establishment and a further support of public libraries.

To develop and organize popular librarianship the Slovak Office of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment issued on 21 March 1925 a decree No. 17-743 asking teachers of all categories to accept librarian posts, run public communal libraries and deliver lectures on the importance of libraries in accordance with the Act on Public Libraries (Jelínek, 1936, p. 144). District library officials were recommended to inform local

secretaries about the popular librarianship, to organize lectures in municipalities, where a library was to be established and to cooperate with Matica slovenská in Turčiansky Sv. Martin.

Table 1: *Public communal libraries in ČSR in 1926 – 1930*

year / number of	libraries	volumes	borrowers	books lent	income
1926	14 755	5 079 907	866 725	13 476 148	16 062 697
1927	15 355	5 444 884	880 326	14 440 593	16 275 308
1928	15 896	5 768 887	892 087	14 383 625	16 958 762
1929	16 168	6 334 319	961 769	14 899 798	19 036 524
1930	16 461	6 635 844	953 775	16 226 805	20 885 886

Source: Matula, 1934, p. 403

The library boards governed public communal libraries and the association libraries that were made public. Four people sat on the board in municipalities with over 2 000 residents, six people served on the board in municipalities with 2 001 – 10 000 residents, and the board had eight members in municipalities with over 10 000 residents. Half the members of the board were elected by the municipal council adopting a principle of proportional representation from among the municipal electorate (including representatives of local authority) and other members were initially co-opted into the board from among popular educators and later elected by the borrowers (Jelínek, 1936, p. 137). The head of the local enlightenment committee joined the board as its last (odd) member.

Library boards met at least four times a year to exercise their duties, which were:

- to appoint a librarian and auxiliary staff, to ensure that the municipal authority pays them their salary;
- to be responsible for financial administration of the library;
- to approve purchase of new books and removal of inappropriate books based on the librarian's proposal;
- to establish a set of rules for borrowing books from the library and for using the reading room;
- to safeguard the interests of the library against the municipal authority and the general public;
- to compile an annual report on their activities supplemented with a balance sheet and statistical statements, and send it to the municipal authority and the Slovak Office (Jelínek, 1936, p. 155).

Minority libraries were governed by a special library board, all the members of which were members of the national minority for which the library was promoted. At least four people sat on the library board in a municipality with over 2 000 members of a national minority. The board had six members in municipalities with 2 001 – 10 000 members of a particular minority and in municipalities with over 10 000 members of a particular minority, the board comprised of eight members. The composition of the minority library board was approved by the respective district enlightenment board. The board members were appointed for a two-year term and their service was gratuitous. The board elected a chairperson, a manager, and a treasurer. Besides the auxiliary staff and a skilled person responsible for financial administration, the library could also hire a music expert.

All libraries were under the close supervision of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment, and other special bodies created by the Ministry, as well as the district and county authorities. The supervision over the legal matters concerned provision of material and personnel costs. The supervision over the technical issues concerned suitable location and equipment of the library, and supervision over the ideological and educational matters concerned mostly suitability of book collections.

Librarians were responsible for their library's agenda; they were members of the library boards in an advisory capacity and they

could also be managers in local enlightenment committees. Initially, insufficient education and management skills hindered librarians in their efforts to establish a library, which often resulted in lack of initiative and ineffectiveness.

Therefore, the short-term or the three-week librarian training courses were organized. The development of libraries, the choice of books, planned (not random) restocking of shelves rested with librarians. They were also responsible for keeping statistical records of:

- inventory of a number of volumes at the beginning and the end of the calendar year by making reference to the local inventory and in smaller municipalities to the accession register;
- a number of lent volumes in individual groups according to entries in statistics diary after every hour of lending (according to the manual for public libraries in Slovakia);
- a number of borrowers per year, according to a number of issued library cards (Kraus, 1932, p. 131).

A public librarian was in charge of all sections of the library – i.e. the circulation section, the magazine reading room and the reference library. The reading rooms also served as places for organizing exhibitions, lectures, art soirees, talks, puppet shows, and similar cultural enlightenment events. It was expected that libraries would be involved in public enlightenment.

Articles 2 and 3 of the *Governmental Decree No.607/19* addressed the content unsuitability of the books kept in public libraries. In accordance with the regulation No. 65.273 issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment on 21 September 1933, the Ministry published lists of suitable books. The *Slovak Enlightenment Association* [Osvetový zväz pre Slovensko] was responsible for compiling the lists in Slovakia. In accordance with Article 2 of the Decree, every communal library should contain works of national importance, and valuable informative and entertaining literature.

Article 3 of the Decree specified the kind of books that were not permitted in public libraries: books of no artistic value or creations of indecent nature that is: chronicles, crime fictions that provoke reader's imagination, defamatory books, books that belittle the whole social class or books that compromise the integrity of the Czechoslovak state. For this purpose, a special *Committee for Selection of Good Reading for Public Libraries* was established with an aim to compile lists of suitable books. According to Article 8 of the Decree, the responsibility for adhering to suitable selection of books (or for their removal) rested with librarians and library boards.

The above-mentioned Decree was complemented with a Decree No.142.153 issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment on 11 December 1933, which banned books of German provenience in community libraries dissemination of which had previously been banned by regional courts. The Decree also ordered the removal of foreign books whose transport to Slovakia had already been banned.

Prohibited was also dissemination of all printed material that had already been published or was in print in Hungary after 28 October 1918, including publications whose date of origin was impossible to determine. Distribution of Austrian-Hungarian political periodicals was also prohibited based on their ideological content, which was deemed defective in terms of Czechoslovak law and order.

The Act on Public Libraries also contained specifications about vocational training of a librarian. The Act required a librarian to have completed education in a public town school followed by a three-week librarian course before passing a state required exam (in municipalities with 2 000 – 10 000 residents) or to have completed secondary education and one-year education in school for librarians (Repčák, 1935, p. 98).

Table 2: *Public communal libraries as of 31 December 1935*

municipalities /number of	Municipalities in Slovakia			
	up to 2 000 residents	2 001 to 5 000 residents	5 001 to 10 000 residents	over 10 000 residents
libraries	2 807	152	32	12
volumes	388 071	89 772	5 4207	133 370
borrowers	112 785	19 257	7 154	8 341
books lent	721 255	206 708	118 988	204 197

Source: Kraus, 1936, p. 69

The implementation of the Library Act in Slovakia proved difficult. Some municipality officials were reluctant to endorse the Act and establish a public library claiming that the people did not read books anyway, or that nobody could possibly make them read. Other excuses included library maintenance costs and expensive purchase of books, a low number of library boards in which participation was not salaried, the required two-year term of library board service or lack of their activities (Lukáč, Mayer, Lenhardtová, 2018, pp. 57-66).

Another legislative measure concerning popular education was the *Act No.80/1920 on Communal Commemorative Books*. Under this Act, initially applied only in Czech lands, every municipality was required to issue and financially support the keeping of a municipal commemorative book. The books were to be issued by the end of 1922. For Slovakia and Carpathian Ruthenia, the deadline was extended to 1 July 1933. The books would preserve local history for future generations. The chronicle was to be publicly displayed once in three years for the duration of 14 days and every citizen had a right to propose appropriate amendments. Chroniclers were offered short courses and they had to collaborate with the Historical Committee, which approved all texts that were going to be written in the chronicle.

The Act No.75/1920 adopted on 29 January 1920 is often considered the fourth popular education act, which addressed establishment of the Economic Volksschule. These schools provided young people in villages with an opportunity to broaden their general knowledge after the completion of their compulsory primary education and to be trained for practical life by providing education in economics and agriculture, or prepare them for a study at lower vocational agricultural schools. It was a two-year study with a possibility to open up a third year focused on special economic discipline. This school was compulsory for those who did not attend any other schools after completing their compulsory education at the age of 14.

*Regulation No. 9581 on Classrooms Provision for the Purpose of Popular Education* was issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment on 6 March 1919. All teachers were obliged to participate in organization of popular education courses without expecting to be paid and had to work at least four hours a week as organizers, tutors, or librarians. Many of the teachers had already been appointed to enlightenment boards or committees. They were taught to do that in the last year of their teacher's training when they were given lectures on:

- a) popular education – importance of popular education, reading of laws and regulations on enlightenment, organization and forms of popular education, a teacher's role in popular education;
- b) public librarianship – the Act on Public Communal Libraries, library administration, selection and purchase of books, organization of a library.

### 3 Congresses of popular educators

The first congress of popular educators in Slovakia was held between 3 and 6 June 1922 in Prešov, a town with rich cultural and school tradition. Minister of Education and National Enlightenment Vavro Šrobár, representing the Šariš region, proposed Prešov as a suitable location for the congress. On the agenda was:

- the assessment of individual areas of public enlightenment;
- the analysis of activities carried out by various institutions, for instance by Matica slovenská, Sokol, Spolok sv. Vojtecha, Slovenská liga, YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association);
- legislative measures concerning public enlightenment and the participation of different fields of culture in these activities;
- urgent fight against alcoholism.

Congress delegates had an opportunity to attend various cultural events, among them unveiling of two commemorative plaques – one dedicated to poet P. O. Hviezdoslav who studied at the Law Academy of the Evangelical Collegium in Prešov in 1870 – 1872. The other plaque was dedicated to writer Jonáš Záborský and put up in a nearby village of Župčany, where he was a parish pastor.

In the final hours of the congress, the participants adopted a formal declaration in which they defined “the aim of popular education - pious, moral, and educated nation” (Prvý slovenský, 1922, p. 1). They also appealed to the members of the intelligentsia and urged them to dedicate all their energy and capacities to public enlightenment.

Other appeals concerned: the use of Czechoslovak language in all spheres of public administration; improvement of teacher's education, as an essential prerequisite for increasing the educational level of working class; enforcement of the Act on Public Libraries; protection of nature and national heritage; the support from politicians and journalists in dissemination of knowledge in a joint effort to “rid Slovakia of alcohol”, etc. The first congress will also be remembered through a poem entitled *Vitajte nám, bratia!* (Účastníkom slovenského kultúrneho zjazdu v Prešove) [Welcome brothers! (To delegates of Slovak cultural congress in Prešov) composed by Anton Prídavok with a date of 2 June 1922 (Prídavok-Umkin, 1922, p. 1).

The next congress, held in Štubníanske Teplice on 22 – 24 May 1926, was attended by 128 delegates of district and municipal boards and local enlightenment committees, 70 students of teacher training college and another 60 guests. In his presentation, Matula, a head of the Popular Education Department of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment, defined the term *popular education* as “a systematic stimulation of intellectual development and life of adults outside of the regular schooling” (Matula, 1926, p. 15). Other terms used at that time were: adult education, after school education, non-formal education, popular enlightenment, national enlightenment, workers' enlightenment, or demopedagogy. From the perspective of the state and the citizen, the ideal goal of popular education was to re-educate the passive serves into able, i.e. active, agile, enlightened, and disciplined citizens who would be conscious of their rights and duties.

Křeméry, a secretary of Matica slovenská, opposed the idea of educating people into being “Czechoslovaks”. Instead, he defended the preservation of cultural particularities of Czechs and Slovaks and promoted education in statehood based on nationality, which would arouse in people permanent and growing patriotism (Křeméry, 1926). In the adopted resolution, the congress delegates demanded:

- to establish county enlightenment associations;
- to adjust working hours for teachers who were particularly active in performing culturally enlightening activities;
- to exempt public enlightenment events from fees;
- to start at least one puppet theatre.

A compilation of 17 selected articles with discussions entitled *Zjazd ľudovýchovných pracovníkov zo Slovenska v Štubníanskyh Tepliciach na Turíce 1926 dňa 22. 23. a 24. mája* [Congress of Slovak Popular Educators in Štubníanske Teplice on the Day of Pentecost 1926, 22 – 24 May] was published after the congress. The compilation also contained an overview of 74

district enlightenment boards in Slovakia together with a list of personnel.

The congress in Banská Bystrica was held between 2 and 6 July 1927. The delegates adopted a resolution in which they demanded clerks and other intelligentsia circles to have a duty to participate in enlightenment activities, just as teachers did. They also suggested attaching more importance to the radio, launching new radio stations in Bratislava and Košice, monitoring trashy literature and screening of unsuitable films. At the same time, the congress participants lodged a formal objection to municipalities refusing to finance the purchase of books and remunerate librarians.

The Resolution adopted at the congress of popular educators of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia held in Spišská Nová Ves on 8 – 10 July 1929 addressed similar issues. It reads: “We are fully aware of the growing interest in organising popular educational activities not only among public officials, but also among individuals. We know that the number of active public educators from all different walks of life has been growing too. There are, however, some unresolved issues that require urgent intervention from the authorities and the general public alike” (Rezolúcia [The Resolution], 1928, p. 9).

The pressing issues mentioned in the Resolution were: systemization of vacancies for female teachers who could teach courses for women in Slovak villages or help out in schools; popular educators having an option to borrow books from teachers' libraries; extra attention given to communal libraries in Eastern Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, etc.

The chosen location for the next congress was Zvolen, but eventually 131 representatives of the enlightenment boards and committees met in Žilina on 4 to 6 July 1930. They went on trips to Rajecké Teplice and Lietava Castle. The congress called for greater engagement of the intelligentsia in the cultural-enlightenment work. The 1930 Resolution proposed travelling cinema in every county and the establishment of *the House of Culture* [kultúrny dom] in every municipality, etc. (Rezolúcia zjazdu [The Congress Resolution], 1930, pp. 14-15).

Exactly one year later, enlightenment workers and representatives of *the Federation of Slovak Students* [Zväz slovenského študentstva] and regional student associations met at the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress in Zvolen on 4 – 6 July 1931. The delegates remarked that “Slovakia, too, was hit by the economic crisis. Its negative effects are also felt in popular education; subsidies for the popular educational activities were reduced” (Snemovanie [Session], 1931, p. 5).

In the discussion that followed the main presentations, delegates pointed out the need to focus on dissemination of informative as well as entertaining literature for adults, organization of courses for the illiterate, promote development of amateur theatres, organise courses for theatre directors, combat alcoholism, etc. The biggest problem seemed to be the economic crisis. Despite several resolutions and petitions, the authorities were forced to reduce the budget assigned to cultural-enlightenment activities and staff salaries.

For instance, in 1933, the budget for popular education and public libraries totalled 2.2 million, which was down by 3.2 million (60%) in comparison to 1932 (Štátny rozpočet [State Budget], 1933, p. 66). In those difficult times, the congress was convened to Nitra and it was held between 5 and 6 July 1933. The congress petitioned to adopt an amendment to the Act on Public Libraries, which would clearly define the competencies of library boards, their supervision, and the legal status of librarians (Zjazd ľudovýchovných pracovníkov [Congress of popular educators], 1933, p. 11). The financial crisis hit hard. In 1935, only popular educators from the Eastern Slovakia attended the next congress and in 1936, the congress was not convened anymore.

#### 4 Education courses for adults in ČSR (1918 – 1938)

The development of educational activities in the interwar period was greatly affected by the economic crisis (having negative effects on economy, politics, culture, etc.). Most notable was the impact on the economy, resulting in budget cuts for many ministries, including the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment. The crisis contributed to high unemployment rates, deterioration of the standards of living, and even pauperisation of people. Demoralization of society was just a natural consequence of the crisis.

In some regions with extremely high unemployment rates, "hunger valleys" emerged. The government tried to soften the negative impact of unemployment with different supporting projects (food and milk projects) and with financial incentives. The Slovak Office at the Ministry of Education tried to eliminate unemployment with popular education and enlightenment activities. In cooperation with enlightenment boards and committees, municipalities, trade unions, workers' associations, public school administration and the Kuratorium for Shelters for Unemployed Youth, the Ministry decided to fight the unemployment with education using trained popular educators, teachers, methodologists, and other professionals. For that reason, the Ministry organized different educational activities and courses in towns and villages: courses for the unemployed, for librarians, directors, women, popular educators or those working with alcoholics, etc. (Jelínek, 1936, p. 17).

Educational courses for the unemployed and the young were defined within the legislative framework of ministerial regulations.

- *Decree No. 118.920 issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment on 10 November 1923* stipulated that the courses were to be offered in municipalities with more than 200 unemployed people on benefits within a radius of six kilometres;
- *Decree No. 48.067/32 issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment dated 7 June 1932* supplemented and amended the Regulation No. 118.920 on Free Courses for the Unemployed issued on 1 November 1924 specifying special education courses for the unemployed (especially young people) of at least 40 hours focusing on *general education* – lectures on economics, social and political issues, labour laws; the Constitution and administration of Czechoslovakia; questions – about culture, upbringing, literature, healthcare; and professional training – language courses, stenography, course of typing, bookkeeping, technical courses and courses for unemployed women;
- *Decree No. 148.209/33 issued on 19 December 1933* on practical domestic skills courses for women.

All courses had to adhere to certain guidelines determining course specialization (lectures), a number of classes, and practical tasks to build up mental and physical strength. Highly skilled professionals, teachers of further education and office workers were in charge of delivering lectures. This general program was modified and adapted to local circumstances and needs, or supplemented with other appropriate activities (trips, free visits to events organized by enlightenment boards and committees, and to theatres and cinemas (Jelínek, 1936, pp. 63–65).

Based on the decrees of the Ministry of Education, several courses for the unemployed youth in Bratislava were organized together with educational courses for women provided by different institutions.

##### 4.1 Courses for the unemployed youth in Bratislava between 1931 – 1934

In 1931, at the instance of the former minister of education and national enlightenment, Dr. Markovič, the Bratislava city council decided to offer four educational courses for juvenile labourers.

The courses stretched over two months; the participants met twice a week (259 hours of instruction in total) and were provided with free lunches. The Slovak Enlightenment Association was in charge of the courses to which 180 men and 50 women enrolled in a short time.

Women were taught in one group since they usually had a good command of an official language. The lectures were briefly summarized in German or Hungarian languages, too. The course consisted of nine two-hour long lectures on physical culture, social intercourse, female body development, home hygiene, personal hygiene of children, sexually transmitted diseases, important documents, social legislation, and civic education. Other activities such as watching films, a Slovak language course, a German language course, handiwork, sewing, and dressmaking were also included in the educational process.

In order to facilitate understanding, men were divided into two sections: Czechoslovaks and Germans; and Hungarians. The courses for men consisted of seventeen two-hour long lectures: health science, social intercourse, male body development, sexually transmitted diseases, physical culture, important documents, and civic education. They were complemented by watching films, physical education, games, swimming, Slovak language classes, and German language classes. Some men also received professional training at apprenticeship vocational schools (*Bezplatné kurzy pre mladoletých nezamestnaných v Bratislave*, [Free courses for the unemployed youth in Bratislava], 1931, pp. 145–146).

Since the courses in Bratislava met with positive response, their mission continued. *Kuratórium pre pečlivosť o mladoletých nezamestnaných*<sup>2</sup> [The Kuratorium for Care of Unemployed Youth] developed a programme for the unemployed aimed at their successful placement into vacant jobs. Boys and girls aged 14 to 20 were given an opportunity to expand their knowledge and acquire new skills for their future practical lives. 159 boys and 62 girls enrolled and the *Kuratórium* created three departments. The courses contained 63 cycles of lectures (199 hours of instruction 5 days a week) on the subjects of medicine, social legislation, social protection, civic education, history, and geography. Language courses (Slovak, German, French, and English) as well as swimming, physical education and games were also available.

Women had to attend 85 lecture cycles (381 hours of instruction) on the same subjects as men complemented with classes of housekeeping, swimming, sewing, and handiwork. The English language was not offered to women.

Course participants were given free board (expenses covered by the city council) – breakfasts and lunches for men, women were also given dinners. In addition, they were offered shoes and stockings and the poorest ones were given winter coats too (*Kurzy pre mladoletých nezamestnaných v Bratislave* [Courses for the unemployed youth in Bratislava], 1932, p. 123).

In his work *Nezamestnaná mládež* [The Unemployed Youth] (1933, pp. 135–136), Štefan Juraš states that in 1933 the Slovak Enlightenment Association organized three courses for the unemployed youth. The courses were attended by young people aged 17 to 20, mostly from the environs of Bratislava, who had previously been employed in different professions (artisans, carpenters, upholsterers, musicians, shop assistants...) but had lost their jobs. Men (47 boys of Czechoslovak nationality and 50 boys of German and Hungarian nationalities) attended 64 half-day meetings (359 hours of instruction) in the YMCA building.

<sup>1</sup> "Mladoletý" – an archaic term meaning non-adult, juvenile (Bělič, Kamiš, Kučera, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> "Kuratórium pre pečlivosť o mladoletých nezamestnaných" – "The Kuratorium for Care of Unemployed Youth" comprised of the representatives of the city and the following institutions: Osvetový Sváz [Enlightenment Association], Okresná pečlivosť o mládež [District Care of Youth], Dorastový sbor [Youth Association], Odborová rada [Trade Union], Nemocenská poisťovňa [Health Insurance Company], Rodinná škola [Family School], and the representatives of vocational apprentice schools and other institutions (*Kurzy pre mladoletých nezamestnaných v Bratislave*, [Courses for the unemployed youth in Bratislava], 1932, p. 123).

Young women (20 of them were of Czechoslovak nationality and 13 of German and Hungarian nationalities) attended 48 half-day meetings (209 hours of instruction) in the YWCA building. Contentwise, the lectures covered Slovak, French and German languages, civic education, geography, history, maths, physical education, social legislation, healthcare, engineering, sports and sewing and handicraft for women.

Another course for the unemployed youth took place in Bratislava in the beginning of 1934. It was again the Slovak Enlightenment Association who organized the courses in the YMCA and YWCA for men and women respectively. One hundred and thirty men enrolled and they were divided into two sections (Czechoslovaks and Hungarians; Germans). The lectures of Slovak language, maths, German, engineering, physical education and games were planned for 50 half-day meetings (345.5 hour of instruction). Other subjects included agriculture, social legislation, watching films and slide transparencies.

Sixty-five women were educated together in one section. Just like men, women were taught every day (except for Sunday) and then two times a week in the afternoon (total of 48 half-day meetings – 187.5 hours of instruction) the following subjects: Slovak language, German language, social hygiene, civic education, anatomy, first aid, maths, chemistry of everyday life, lectures on social legislation, family education, geography, history, sewing and patching, and handiwork. Once a week they went to a spa and were given free tickets to the theatre and concerts by the director of Slovak National Theatre.

While courses for women were a success, many men became frustrated since they were unable to find a job despite having completed several courses. Instead of courses, they now demanded jobs or labour camps (Kurzy pre mladoletých nezamestnaných v Bratislave [Courses for the unemployed youth in Bratislava], 1934, pp. 122–123).

#### 4.2 Education courses for women

The trend suggested a need for a higher level of women's education. The change came with the Decree No. 112.234/1924 issued by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment in Prague on 10 October. The decree ordered the district boards to provide courses for a broad network of women. Courses promoted by the Slovak Enlightenment Association in Bratislava were organized with an aim to awaken an interest in public, civic, and economic life of the whole society, in self-education and domestic economy in relation to general public interests.

The Congress of popular educators in Spišská Nová Ves (10 July 1929) reinforced this idea, too. It was difficult to design a course curriculum ad hoc due to vast differences between regions in Slovakia. Important also was to find the best methodology which also had to be adapted to individual regions and towns where the courses were offered. There were two types of courses: theoretical courses focused on expanding horizons and education of public affairs; and practical courses dedicated to cooking, sewing, housekeeping, childcare, etc. Courses were offered in Tnava, Dolný Kubín, Turčiansky sv. Martin (the women's association Živena), Spišská Nová Ves, Rimavská Sobota, etc.

Popular educators also encouraged education of women from the rural areas, either directly in their villages, organising courses focused on practical skills – cooking, cooking and sewing, sewing in combination with other theoretical subjects, as of 31 December 1931, 35 courses were running in 21 districts (Kurzy pre ženy na dedinách [Courses for the women from rural areas], 1932, pp. 90–91), or in towns, such as *Kurz slobodného učenia sedliackeho* [Course of free farmer's learning] sponsored by the *Vyššia škola ľudová SUS* [Higher Volksschule] aimed at girls aged 17 – 26.

The course was the most suitable addition to vocational schools. The most important institutions providing education for women were the Slovak Enlightenment Association, Živena, Institute of

M. R. Štefánik, Higher Volksschule and the Slovak Fruit-Growing Association, all of which organized one-year courses, so called *náukobehy* for the general public. During the years of economic crisis, women were required to get involved in economic processes too (household expenses, housekeeping, and making traditional folk products) so they could become more independent and become open to better job opportunities. This was particularly relevant during the times of early twentieth-century emigration or the times when men were leaving homes for seasonal work. The childcare and housekeeping rested on women. Apart from these practical activities, civic education, promoting democratic ideas, remained the priority.

#### 5 Prominent figures and their contribution to the development of adult education and public enlightenment

In the newly established republic, very important was to build the Czechoslovak statehood, and to educate the population so that they would become conscious of their own democratic citizenship. The educational process does not cease after completing compulsory schooling. Very important in this regard is enlightenment. Contentwise, the priority was given to civic education focused on the promotion of democratic ideas. The popular education greatly influenced overall cultural changes within Slovak society. Concerning the formal aspect of popular education in the interwar period, traditional forms of enlightenment prevailed – mostly courses of varied duration and intensity, lectures complemented with educational films and activities associated with libraries (Kázmerová et al., 2016).

Educated people who volunteered and got involved in the cultural-enlightenment work sought to raise the level of general cultural knowledge among people and challenged prejudice, superstitions and other social evils such as alcoholism and self-indulgent lifestyle. They introduced new ways of life to rural people and taught them about healthcare and hygiene, explained new techniques in agriculture. They wanted to turn the illiterate mass of the rural population into readers and awaken in them love and interest for the printed word. “The enlightenment activities differed from region to region based on social structure of the population. There was a difference between popular education in towns and in rural areas, between popular education of adults and young people, men and women, manual labourers and farmers, and on an ethnically Slovak territory and in nationally mixed areas” (Orosová, 2016, p. 20).

Not only did Czech teachers teach Slovak students, they also build Slovak schools. Many of them assumed positions of directors, school inspectors or worked in the administration of the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment. Many Czech teachers authored first Slovak textbooks and became scholars in the field of education sciences. One third of the Czech secondary school teachers got involved in cultural and enlightenment societies. They brought to Slovakia a tradition of physical education and sport, established first clubs of Sokol, Orol, etc. (Pšenák, 2001).

#### 5.1 Karel Kálal (1860 – 1930)

One of the prominent figures was Karel Kálal who worked as a teacher in different schools. After 1918, he was appointed secretary for popular education in Slovakia. In 1922, he assumed a position of a director of the Business College in Banská Bystrica.

In the 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he participated in the development and strengthening of Czech and Slovak relations. As an active Slovakophile, he was an ardent advocate for Slovak culture in the Czech lands. Kálal closely collaborated with the representatives of Slovak national movement – mostly with *Hlasisti* (members of Slovak intelligentsia grouped around a periodical *Hlas* [the Voice]). He promoted Czech-Slovak reciprocity as a necessary defence mechanism against Magyarization and Germanization. Kálal was one of the leading representatives of *Československá jednota* [the Czechoslovak Association] (Bakoš, 1996) and the *Luhačovice meetings*; he

initiated the first congress of *Friends of Slovakia* (Pedagogická encyklopédia Slovenska, 1984).

He had great organizational, rhetoric and literary skills. His numerous articles were published in both Czech and Slovak periodicals: *Učiteľské listy*, *Posel z Budče*, *Česká škola*, *Komenský*, *Učitel'ské noviny*, *Pedagogické Rozhledy*, *Osvěta*, *Květy*, *Zlatá Praha*, *Dětské Květy*, *Noviny Malých*, *Malý Čtenář*, *Naše Doba*, *Nový Lid*, *Národné Noviny*, *Slovenské Listy*, *Slovenský Denník*, *Slovenský Východ*, *Česká Dívka*, *Národní Listy*, *Moravská Orlice*, *Opavský Týdeník*, *Jiskra*, *Národní osvobození*, *Ruch*, *Ludovýchovný Vestník*, *Slovenská škola*, *Sokolský Věstník*, *Hronské Noviny*, *Naše Orava*, *Vestník Detvana*, *České Slovo*, *Kostnické Jiskry*, *Husův Odkaz*, *Kritika*, etc. Particularly valuable are his articles published in the Slovak pedagogical journal *Dom a škola* (Zbaviteľ, 1929). This journal provided space for promotion of the idea of Czechoslovak reciprocity. Karel Kálal in the Czech lands and Karol Slava in Slovakia embarked together on a bloodless journey to Slovak freedom.

Karel Kálal authored several Slovakophile publications such as *Slovenské pohádky*, *Co si dva chlapeči dopisovali*, *Na krásném Slovensku*, *Nevěsta z Tater*, *Obrázky z pod Tater*, *Z posledních let jařna*, *Slovensko a Slováci*, *Češi na Slovensku*, *Dějiny Slovenska*, *Jiný svět*, *Národné poviedky*, *Nové rozprávky*, *Obrazy z dějin Slovenska*, *Die Unterdrückung der Slovaken durch die Magyaren*, *Vyhubiti!*, *Slovensko, země budoucnosti*, *Účinky lihových nápojů*, *O kouření*, *Omamování*, *Životní program*, *Na cestu životem*, *Dívka dospívající*, *Palackého mladá léta*, *Čtení o Fr. Palackém* etc. He co-authored *Slovník slovensko-český a česko-slovenský* [Slovak-Czech Dictionary] (Chlup, Kubálek, Uher, 1938). Other his books had informative character: *Slovenská vlastivěda* and *Přehled slovenských dějin*. A book entitled *Na krásném Slovensku* asks for a detailed study. Kálal penned over 40 publications about theory of education, didactics, and psychology of adolescents (Pedagogická encyklopédia Slovenska, 1984).

## 5.2 Alojz Zbaviteľ (1889 – 1977)

Kálal was a teacher and motivator of other Czech scholars passionate about Slovaks who were coming to Slovakia to teach. One of them was Alojz Zbaviteľ, a pioneer in popular education in Slovakia. He greatly contributed to the intensification of mutual Czech-Slovak relations. Zbaviteľ linked his educational activities with public enlightenment. He was a teacher and a school inspector, a chronicler, a museologist, an archivist, a founder of the Sokol movement and local enlightenment committees. He laid the theoretical foundations of popular education; he organized courses and congresses of popular educators. He worked in the Radio Košice and was a director of the first boarding popular education school (with a month stay). Zbaviteľ worked in Slovakia between 1919 and 1933, and his primary goal was to “*slovakise*” the Slovak population – i.e. to rid them of Magyarization, but not only in terms of a language, but especially in terms of nature and mentality (Plachý, Vojtek, 1969).

A spoken word (a lecture) and theatre came first in his hierarchy, only then came reading (a magazine or a book). He arrived in Slovakia as a skilful public speaker, but this did not satisfy him. Zbaviteľ constantly worked on his improvement and soon he became teaching speakers. He penned many articles on how to master the word and he published his own handbook for popular educators: *Uvedenie do rečníctva* [Introduction to Art of Public Speaking]. Zbaviteľ also organised rhetorical courses. He delivered 161 lectures for radio stations in Brno, Prague, Ostrava, and Košice.

Experience with cultural-enlightenment work and practical knowledge Zbaviteľ gained in organizing various activities, especially in the Slovak countryside, he transformed into a manual for popular educators, which he entitled *Ludovou výchovou k zaisťovaniu slobody* [Popular education towards freedom] in which he stresses how important it is to know the

psychology of the people and the soul of the listener, when being a good speaker does not suffice. The publication addresses the need of popular education; Zbaviteľ specifies the tools of popular education and characterizes a popular educator. He also focuses on the psychology of the listener who is the recipient of popular education. On 149 pages, Zbaviteľ provides a very valuable insight into popular education and his handbook proved to be a source of information on almost every question related to popular education. Zbaviteľ thus provided a solid theoretical foundation for popular education.

In Slovakia, Zbaviteľ also managed Slovak amateur theatre in Modra. He translated Jirásek's play into Slovak, and the rehearsed with actors and even performed. The spoken word, however, was his number one priority. He never stopped emphasising how important it is to hear the spoken word, especially during his time in Košice where he was appointed a secretary of the district board, a head of the county enlightenment association and the general secretary of *Slovenská liga* [the Slovak League]. For students, he founded the Holuby's society for self-education at the Teacher's training college and the Hviezdoslav's society for self-education at the Land Development Vocational School.

He actively participated in discussions at the mayors' meetings in municipalities, where he eagerly encouraged them to organize cultural and public life there. He visited Barca, Beňakovce, Moldava, Buzinka, Poproč, Rudno, Čaňa, Haniska, Žďaňa, Chrastné, Šaca, Michalovce, Silvaš, Nižný Čaj, Buzice, Kráľovce, Nižný Tejkáš, Krompachy, Siplak, Košické Hámre, Košická Belá, Rákoš, Kokošov, Nové mesto pod Sal., Kaľša, Prešov, Bardejov, Nižná Myšľa, Vyšný Olčár, Zlatá Ida, Kysak, Kokošovce, Gelnica, Zlatá Baňa, etc.

Zbaviteľ organised courses for popular educators and librarians. In 1929, he organized a course of economics education in Spišská Nová Ves. In 1930, he participated in the Slovak congress of popular educators in Žilina, in working congress in Prešov and in 1931 at the course for librarians and popular educators in Košice. In the same year, he was appointed a director of the first boarding school in Spišská Nová Ves. In 1928 -29 he presided a “*jubilee*” committee joining all political organisations and associations for the common goal of popular education. In 1931, the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment appointed Zbaviteľ the county's official of the state enlightenment service responsible for the administration units of district enlightenment boards in Dobšinej, Jelšava, Liptovský Mikuláš, Liptovský Hrádok, Kežmarok, Levoča, Poprad, Rožňava, Spišská Nová Ves, Stará Ľubovňa and Veľká Revúca (Plachý, Vojtek, 1969).

In 1932, Zbaviteľ published another handbook for popular educators with a title *Ludová výchova na vidieku* [Popular Education in the Country] as a methodical recommendation for practical implementation of popular education. With regularity, Zbaviteľ addressed burning issues concerning popular education in articles in a monthly *Náš ľud – ľudovýchovný vestník pre Slovensko* [Our People – Bulletin of Popular Education in Slovakia] published between 1928/29 – 1937/38. Some of his articles are listed here: *O potrebe výchovy kultúrnych pracovníkov*, *Utuženie pomeru medzi Okresnými osvetovými zborními a miestnymi osvetovými komisiami*, *Ekonomizácia síl ľudovýchovného pracovníka*, *K sedemdesiatke Karola Kálala*, *Reklama k ľudovej výchove*, *Tlač a ľudovýchovný pracovník*, *K podmienkam zdanu ľudovýchovnej práce*, *Služba na poli ľudovej výchovy službou národu a štátu*, *Do služieb ľudovýchovných najlepších ľudí!*, etc.

Zbaviteľ and other passionate Czech popular educators working in the Slovak Enlightenment Association introduced into the Slovak enlightenment movement some consistency and system. They developed methodology; spoke about education agents and tools, clarity and visualisation, chronological sequence and other principles of enlightenment work (Pasiar, Paška, 1964). For Zbaviteľ, popular education was a continuation of the nation's liberation process. Although he left Slovakia in 1933, he was



always remembered for his efforts and dedication to the field of popular education in Slovakia.

## 6 Conclusion

The organizational and legislative foundations of how we perceive enlightenment work today were built upon the foundations of a new state - the Czechoslovak Republic. The establishment of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks made it possible to adopt laws and decrees, which, for the first time in our history, governed the area of adult education and enabled the establishment of special educational institutions, training of professional educators and librarians and granted subsidies to cover the expenses of this domain. Thanks to them, adults became, for the first time, a specific target group of national educational activities and were given the opportunity to acquire elementary education about the state's mission and competences. After the establishment of Czechoslovakia, congresses of popular educators in Slovakia became an indispensable part of educational activities for adults, which provided a space for representatives of the Ministry, its Slovak Office, representatives of the district and municipal enlightenment boards, local enlightenment committees, librarians, representatives of other organizations, associations, and societies. Their discussions reflected current problems in legislation, organization, and personnel provision of cultural enlightenment work, as they reflected the development of adult education theory and enabled the confrontation with practice. The delegates always formulated their demands in a form of resolutions. They also included responses to socio-political events that affected the everyday life. In the interwar period, the increased attention was paid to the education of juvenile unemployed, who were negatively affected by the crisis. Women who had few opportunities to acquire education in the past suddenly became subjects of special interest in the field of education. This enabled saturation of their educational needs and increased their employability. In the early postwar years, a small number of Slovak teachers called for members of the intelligentsia from the Czech lands and Moravia, so that they could help launch the enlightenment movement in Slovakia. Among them were Karel Kálal and Alojz Zbavitel', who will always have a place in a history of enlightenment and popular education in Slovakia.

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Secondary Paper Section: AB