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IDEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN POLAND (1948–1956). WORDS AND DEEDS

The year 1948 marked a turning point in the functioning of the communist system in Poland and the whole of Eastern Europe. Polish Stalinism was nearing its apogee, approaching the totalitarian model. Historical research has shown that Marxist indoctrination was then intensified in the education and upbringing of children to a previously unknown extent¹. It was the national conferences of educational activists of the Polish Workers' Party (30.10.1948) and the Polish Socialist Party (15.11.1948) that were the starting point for the Stalinisation of education. Both conferences called for an acceleration of the "ideological offensive" in education, a revision of schoolbooks, and a change in the work of youth organisations². In November 1948, the Ministry of Education issued guidelines for authors preparing new school curricula. It was decided that Marxism–Leninism should be the

¹ See: F. Mielczarek, *Ideologiczno–polityczna indoktrynacja nauczycieli w Polsce w latach 1945–1956 (The Ideological and Political Indoctrination of Teachers in Poland in 1945–1956)*, Opole 1997; B. Potyrała, *Oświata w Polsce w latach 1949–1956 (Education in Poland in 1949–1956)*, Wrocław 1992, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis" № 1229, Prace Pedagogiczne LXXXIV; idem, *Środowisko nauczycielskie w Polsce w pierwszym powojennym dziesięcioleciu (The Teachers' Milieu in Poland in the First Post–War Decade)*, "Przegląd Historyczno–Oświatowy" 1991, № 3–4, pp. 149–167; C. Lewandowski, *Początki likwidacji niezależności szkoły polskiej po wyborach sejmowych w 1947 r. (Suppression of the Independence of Polish Schools after the Parliamentary Elections of 1947)*, "Dzieje Najnowsze" 1997, № 4, pp. 57–71; Z. Mazur, *Obraz Niemiec w polskich podręcznikach szkolnych do nauczania historii 1945–1989 (The Picture of Germany in Polish History Schoolbooks 1945–1989)*, Poznań 1995; W. Theiss, *Dzieci i młodzież — przeciwnicy stalinowskiego reżimu (Children and Young People Who Were against the Stalinist Regime)*, "Kultura i Edukacja" 1996, № 1, pp. 95–106; A. Radziwiłł, *Ideologia wychowawcza w Polsce w latach 1948–1956 (Educational Ideology in Poland in 1948–1956)*, Warszawa 1981; B. Jakubowska, *Przeobrażenia w szkolnej edukacji historycznej w Polsce w latach 1944–1956 (Changes in Schools' History Teaching in Poland in 1944–1956)*, Warszawa 1986.

² *Historia wychowania. Wiek XX (History of Education. 20th Century)*, ed. J. Miąszo, Warszawa 1984, pp. 353–354.

philosophical, cognitive, educational and methodological basis in the work on the curricula³.

Once these educational aims had been mapped out, it was necessary to re-interpret the previous pedagogical tradition, that is, to reject Janusz Korczak's ideas, for they were considered to be imbued with "the spirit of reformism and class conciliation", and to adopt the collectivistic Soviet conceptions formulated most comprehensively by Makarenko⁴.

I. Organisational changes

Many organisational measures were adopted to achieve the planned objectives and assure the state of greater control over institutions engaged in the education and upbringing of children. With this end in view the state began to take over educational institutions and child welfare establishments run by social and Church organisations. The competence of the Ministry of Education was increased. The state speeded up the process of taking over or liquidating social (including monastic) children's homes in the 1947/48 school year. Gradually, the Ministry took over the welfare and educational centres (mainly children's homes) of the Social Welfare Central Committee⁵, the Society of Kościuszko Villages (1949), the Union of Disabled Ex-Servicemen, the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (1950), the Society of the Friends of Children (Youth Palaces, 1951) and the Polish Youth Union (scouts' homes, 1951)⁶.

After 1950 and the establishment of state local administration bodies, the state took over the work previously carried out by self-government organs. The Society of Pupils' Hostels and Scholarship was abolished, the Society of the Friends of Street Children was dissolved and its educational centres were incorporated into the network of state children's homes. The Society of Orphans' Homes met with a similar fate⁷.

³ *Historia wychowania, op. cit.*, pp. 354–355.

⁴ A. Lewin, *Ogólne założenia systemu wychowawczego (General Principles of the Educational System). Remarks made in connection with an analysis of the opinions of Korczak and Makarenko*, "Wychowanie w Zespole", № 2, February 1952.

⁵ Communiqué concerning the taking over of the Social Welfare Central Committee, "Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty" № 4, item 67, of May 3, 1949.

⁶ Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (henceforward referred to as AAN), Ministerstwo Oświaty (henceforward referred to as MO) 3602, Directive of the Minister of Education of 11.09.1951, № Op 4-4541/51 concerning the taking over and management of Youth Palaces, Children's Houses of Culture and Scouts' Home, p. 5; see also "Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty" № 15, item 200, 11.09.1951.

⁷ A. Kelm, *Formy opieki nad dzieckiem w Polsce Ludowej (Forms of Child Care in People's Poland)*, Warszawa 1983, p. 90.

Another consequence of the growth of Stalinisation processes during the cold-war period was the severance of contacts with Western child welfare organisations (it is difficult to establish whose initiative this was). The Council of Foreign Charitable Societies wound up its work in Poland in May 1949⁸.

As a result of Stalinisation, Catholic societies could no longer function in schools and other state institutions for the youngest children; they were replaced by scouts' organisations, which were "cleared of hostile elements" and subordinated to the Polish Youth Union (*ZMP*)⁹.

The state not only took over educational institutions, it also tried to expand extraschool occupations for children and young people. The aim was to create not only better conditions for indoctrination but also an alternative to hooliganism and clandestine activity¹⁰. From 1948 on, summer camps¹¹, an institution which was becoming increasingly dependent on the state, were, in accordance with the directives of the Minister of Education,

⁸ *AAN, MO 4073*, Report on the meeting of the Council of Foreign Charitable Societies in Poland, held on 4.05.1949, p. 57.

⁹ See the Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 6.09.1950 (N^o II W-4758/50) concerning the organisation of the scouts' movement in general education schools, "Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty" N^o 17, item 220, 12.09.1950; T. B i e d r o Ń, *Organizacje młodzieży katolickiej w Polsce w latach 1945–1953 (Organisations of Catholic Youth in Poland in 1945–1953)*, Kraków 1991; K. P e r s a k, *Odrodzenie harcerstwa w 1956 roku (The Rebirth of the Scouts' Movement in 1956)*, Warszawa 1996, pp. 31–62; as Persak says (pp. 48–49), by the end of 1949, 90 per cent of the scouts performing the main functions in the command of troops had been replaced; in the spring of 1950, 60 per cent of the regular staff of the Polish Scouts' Union (*ZHP*) had belonged to the organisation no longer than a year. The authorities' line of conduct towards the *ZHP* was established by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (henceforward referred to as *KC PZPR*) at a meeting on 8.06.1950 which defined precisely the solutions adopted in the resolution of the Political Bureau's commission set up on 13.01.1949. It was decided that the Polish Youth Union (*ZMP*) would be responsible for the activity of the *ZHP*. This is why the leading *ZHP* cells were incorporated into the respective *ZMP* boards. The decision was taken to prepare a cadre of instructors for the *ZHP*. In schools with more than 150 children the *ZHP* instructor was to be a full-time employee, in smaller schools this work was to be done by a teacher whose working hours were to be reduced. It was established that in 1950/51 the *ZHP* should have 1,000,000 members and that in 1952/53 the majority of the primary school children should belong to the *ZHP*. See *AAN, KC PZPR*, 1638, micr. 2820/1, draft resolution of the Organisational Bureau of the *PZPR* Central Committee on the work of the *ZHP*, pp. 159–160; see also *AAN, KC PZPR*, 1634, Plan for the organisation of the *ZHP*, p. 27.

¹⁰ *AAN, KC PZPR*, 237/XVII–168, Information of the Education Department of the *PZPR* Central Committee on work outside of school hours and extraschool occupations (1952), pp. 14–17.

¹¹ *AAN, MO 3889*, Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 25.03.1948 (N^o VII Op-866/48) concerning the establishment of a Commission for Summer Camps for Children and Young People in 1948, issued in association with the ministers of Public Administration, Food Supplies, Transport, Art and Culture, Labour and Social Welfare, Trade and Industry, Agriculture and Land Reform, Health and the Recovered Territories, p. 49; Resolution N^o 146 of the Council of Ministers concerning the appointment of a Government's Plenipotentiary for Summer Holidays, "Monitor Polski" N^o A-30, item 379 of 1951.

Stanisław Skrzyszewski, not only to offer rest and entertainment to children and young people but also to lay stress on ideology¹².

II. Class priorities

Under the educational policy then in force the treatment of children and their parents differed, depending on their social background and the way they were implementing the state's objectives.

In 1948, children of workers, small holders, peasants possessing medium-sized farms, teachers and the working intelligentsia were granted priority in admission to secondary schools¹³. Nursery schools adopted similar criteria, giving priority to children of parents employed in nationalised work places and in particular to children of single mothers and single working fathers, and in the countryside, to children of workers employed on State Farms (*PGR*), in State Machine Centres (*POM*), Co-operative Machine Centres (*SOM*) and other work places, and to children of peasants who were members of co-operative farms; children of small holders and owners of medium-sized farms were next in line¹⁴.

¹² *AAN, MO 3588*, Proceedings of the conference held by representatives of Kuratorium Okręgów Szkolnych (School Superintendents' Offices — henceforward referred to as *KOS*) and heads of Child Care Departments on 28.02.1948 and concerning the question of summer holidays for children and young people, pp. 141–144. Control over the organisation of holidays was to be secured by The Commission for Summer Holidays for Children and Young People set up on 25.03.1948 and subordinated to the Ministry of Education. See: Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 25.03.1948 (Nº VII Op–866/48), “*Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty*” Nº 3, item 48, 12.04.1948.

¹³ See “*Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty*” Nº 6 items 112 and 116 of 1948. See C. Lewandowski, *Kierunki tak zwanej ofensywy ideologicznej w polskiej oświacie, nauce i szkołach wyższych (The Directions of the So-Called Ideological Offensive in Polish Education, Science and Schools of Higher Learning)*, Wrocław 1993, pp. 120–121.

¹⁴ See Directive of 19.04.1951 (Nº IIWP–2672/51) concerning the organisation of nursery schools, “*Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty*” Nº 8, item 86, 20.04.1951; Instructions concerning the organisation of the 1952/53 school year in schools and establishments subordinated to the Ministry of Education; annex to the Minister of Education's ordinance of 8.04.1952 (Nº G.M. Prez.–2210/52) concerning the organisation of the 1952/53 school year, “*Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty*” Nº 6, item 48, 24.04.1952; *AAN, MO 1484*, Instructions concerning the organisation of the 1953–1954 school year in nursery schools, pp. 2–17; Circular letter of the Department of Cultural and Social Facilities of the State Commission for Economic Planning of 8.04.1950 (SO4D–08–6) concerning admission to creches and nursery schools, “*Biuletyn Państwowej Komisji Planowania Gospodarczego*” Nº 8, item 116, 29.04.1950; L. Mokrzecki, J. Zerkó, *Koncepcje wychowania przedszkolnego w Polsce Ludowej i ich realizacja (Conceptions of Pre-School Education in People's Poland and Their Implementation)*, “*Zeszyty Naukowe Wydziału Humanistycznego Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego. Pedagogika. Historia Wychowania*” Nº 14, 1983, p. 142; Z. Woźnicka, *Wychowanie przedszkolne w Polsce Ludowej (Pre-School Education in People's Poland)*, Warszawa 1972, pp. 54–76. The Ordinance of the Chairman of the State Commission for Economic Planning of 21.02.1951 concerning the availability of child welfare facilities envisaged that payment for the use of nursery schools, creches, community centres, children's playparks, holiday and health homes could be annulled or reduced for children of small holders, peasants owning medium-sized farms, members of co-operative farms and shock-workers;

Such being the priorities, nursery schools were set up first of all in towns and workers' housing, and in the countryside on State Farms, in State Machine Centres and co-operative farms¹⁵.

It was decided in 1952 (against parents' protests)¹⁶ that children of working mothers would be given full nine-hour care and three meals a day, while children of unemployed mothers would stay only five hours in nursery schools and would receive only one meal; in the intention of the initiators of these solutions¹⁷, this was to "encourage non-working mothers, and even exert a moral pressure on them, to take up work"¹⁸. The political decision-makers even conceived the idea (not put into effect) to admit only children of working mothers to nursery schools¹⁹.

Admission to summer camps was based on similar class criteria²⁰.

These educational ideal checked the development of foster families as a form of orphan care. The Ministry's plans for 1950 and 1951 envisaged (this was gradually put into effect) the transfer of orphans from "kulak families" to children's homes or working class families in order to protect them from exploitation by "class enemies"²¹.

children of disabled persons, old age pensioners, orphans, half-orphans and "children requiring isolation from their home as well as children from families in which a member suffered from a prolonged illness" were next in line.

¹⁵ See *AAN, MO 14*, Directives for the budget (of the Ministry of Education) for 1951. Material for the meeting held on 9.08.1950, p. 205.

¹⁶ See *AAN, MO 1487*, Praesidium of the Municipal People's Council (*PMRN*) in Zabrze to the Praesidium of the Voivodship People's Council (*PWRN*) in Katowice, Zabrze, 17.01.1953, pp. 22–24.

¹⁷ E. N e y o w a, *Zadania wychowania przedszkolnego na rok 1952 (Principles of Pre-School Education in 1952)*, "Wychowanie w Przedszkolu" N° 8, April 1952.

¹⁸ *AAN, MO 1493*, Note on making nursery schools in towns and workers' housing estates accessible only to children of working mothers, Warszawa 27.06.1952, p. 58.

¹⁹ The documents analysed by me show that such an idea was discussed in June 1952; it was probably put forward by employees of the State Commission for Economic Planning. However, the participants in the meeting came to the conclusion that this might result in an outflow of children to the "wild children's havens" run by nuns, cause discontent among workers (especially miners and their families, where women as a rule did not work) and also lead to the closure of many nursery schools in places where few women worked. See *AAN, MO 1493*, Praesidium of the Voivodship People's Council in Opole to the Ministry Education, 24.06.1952, p. 8; *ibidem*, Note on making nursery schools in towns and workers' housing estates available only to children of working mothers, Warszawa 27.06.1952, pp. 57–61.

²⁰ *AAN, MO 15*, Proceedings N° 1 (15) of the meeting of the governing body of the Ministry of Education held on 8.01.1951, pp. 9–12.

²¹ *AAN, MO 14*, Directives to the budget (of the Ministry of Education) for 1951. Material for the meeting on 9.08.1950, *ibidem*, Directives for the 1951 budget, p. 212.

III. Re-education of educators

The ideological-political changes which were being introduced in the upbringing of children called for new methods of educating persons who were in daily contact with children, that is, teachers, educators, nursery school teachers, the personnel of community centres, etc.

The August conferences organised by the education authorities in 1949–1956²² and ideological self-tuition (compulsory from 1949)²³ served the purpose of indoctrination.

As far as teacher training was concerned, stress was laid on ideological and political matters and on Soviet collectivistic methods of education²⁴. Since teachers (especially in the countryside) were obliged to take part in socio-political campaigns (quota deliveries, census, “peace plebiscites”, establishment of co-operative farms), they had no time for supplementary training; their professional level was therefore low, which had an impact on the results of teaching.

IV. Anti-clearicalism, atheism, the shaping of a “scientific outlook”

The process of accelerated Stalinisation taking place in Poland after 1948 influenced the aims and substance of education. What were the main ideological and political characteristics of the model of education at that time and how was it carried into effect?

The communists’ ideological offensive against the Catholic Church and religion in general, intensified after 1948, left a deep imprint on the conceptions of upbringing and education. The school became the ground where a fight was waged for the souls of the youngest generation of Poles. As early as February 1949, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (PZPR) mapped out a plan of action in this field²⁵.

²² B. Potyrała, *Szkoła podstawowa w Polsce 1944–1948 (The Primary School in Poland 1944–1948)*, Warszawa 1987, p. 53; idem, *Oświata w Polsce*, p. 122.

²³ Directives of 10.03.1951 (N^o DK 2–1060/51) concerning the organisation of examinations in ideological self-tuition, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N^o 6, item 67, 30.03.1951; F. Mielczarek, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–24; *Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego. Zarys dziejów 1905–1985 (Polish Teachers’ Union. An Outline of Its History 1905–1985)*, ed. B. Grześ, Warszawa 1986, pp. 446–448.

²⁴ 1,337 teachers belonged to the Polish Workers’ Party in February 1947, in March 1948 as many as 8,170. See B. Potyrała, *Przemiany oświaty w Polsce w latach 1944–1948 (Changes in Polish Education in 1944–1948)*, Wrocław 1991, p. 97.

²⁵ AAN, KC PZPR 1634, Proceedings N^o 4 of the meeting of the Political Bureau of the PZPR Central Committee held on 2.02.1949, pp. 100–102. See also J. Żaryn, *Kościół a władza w Polsce, 1945–1950 (The Church and the Authorities in Poland, 1945–1950)*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 209–211.

One of the methods applied in this fight was to deprive schools of religious teachers. As a result, the number of primary schools where religion was not taught increased from 12,144 (53.6 per cent) in the 1952/53 school year to 14,219 (65.2 per cent) in 1953/54, 16,754 (74.4 per cent) in 1954/55, and 18,904 (81.0 per cent) in 1955/56²⁶. The education authorities tried to limit the number of children and young people taking part in religious retreats by organising attractive sports and cultural events at the same time, by reducing the duration of retreats and fixing their date in such a way as to cause the highest possible absenteeism in churches²⁷. The removal of crosses from the walls of class-rooms to less conspicuous places²⁸, the elimination of pre-lesson prayers in 1954 and their replacement by morning assemblies served the same aim of laicisation.

Criticism of Christian moral principles was part of the laicisation and atheisation conducted by the administration. In 1952 the periodical “Wychowanie w Zespole” (“Education in Teams”) wrote: “We should... explain to the pupils that... love of one’s neighbour is a notion which is hostile to the working masses. From the religious point of view, people professing the same faith are equal before god; this means that bankers, landowners, merchants and capitalists of the same faith are neighbours and should therefore be loved. The social aim of this morality is to reconcile the working masses to their situation, instil in them love for exploiters and in this way paralyse the class struggle”²⁹.

The contents of schoolbooks were changed to adapt them to these principles³⁰.

Various ceremonies and events were organised in schools with the same end in view. In May 1953, for instance, the Ministry of Education recommended that lectures on the role and importance of Copernicus and his discovery be held in the 4th–11th grades and in teachers’ training colleges.

²⁶ See H. K o n o p k a, *op. cit.*, p. 130, table 10 and p. 160, table 12.

²⁷ Archives of the Department for Religious Denominations (henceforward referred to as *ADdSW*), Urząd do Spraw Wyznań (henceforward referred to as *UdSW*), 8/1536; *ADdSW*, *UdSW* 44/378, *PWRN* to *UdSW*, 20.04.1954; *AAN*, *MO* 614, *Rekolekcje w szkołach 1952 (Religious Retreats in Schools in 1952)*; *MO* 613, *Rekolekcje w szkołach (Religious Retreats in Schools)*. See also S. W ó j c i k, *Katechizacja w warunkach systemu totalitarnego. Na przykładzie Administracji Apostolskiej Dolnego Śląska w latach 1945–1961 (Catechisation under a Totalitarian System with the Apostolic Administration of Lower Silesia in 1945–1961 as an Example)*, Wrocław 1995, pp. 117–124.

²⁸ *AAN*, *KC PZPR*, 237/V–156, *Meldunki z terenu (Reports from the Provinces)*, Warszawa 28.01.1949, pp. 1–5.

²⁹ *EMZET*, *Zagadnienie świeckości w nauczaniu i wychowaniu (The Question of Secularism in Teaching and Upbringing)*, “Wychowanie w Zespole” N° 11, November 1952, and N° 12, December 1952.

³⁰ B. J a k u b o w s k a, *op. cit.*, pp. 194–195.

“Stress should be laid on those elements of Copernicus’ theory which are important for the development of a scientific outlook”³¹.

“The scientific dialectical Marxist view of the world” was to be promoted in extraschool biology lessons³², including those held on experimental school plots³³.

The aim of the Parents’ Committees, which began to be set up in 1949, was to “combat hostile ideological, especially religious, influence on youth and parents”³⁴.

In a special communiqué of November 21, 1951, the Ministry of Education condemned the practice of “child-carollers going from one house to another to collect offerings”. Schools “should come out against this practice and hold talks in order to explain to the children and young people that going the round of houses to collect offerings does not become a pupil in People’s Poland”³⁵.

The boy scouts’ and girl guides’ movement was assigned an important role in educating young people in the spirit of atheism. It helped to draw children away from religious practices by organising meetings at the time of Sunday services (scouting Sundays) and by preparing and holding New year parties. The scouts contributed to anti-religious propaganda by staging nativity plays which were to oust, especially in the countryside, the traditional nativity plays with “Herods and Jews” and replace them by a new secular repertoire³⁶.

The policy of reducing and eliminating religious elements was also pursued in centres of extraschool education. The necessity of shaping a “scientific view of the world” was emphasised in documents concerning

³¹ AAN, MO 3995, Ministry of Education, letter N° WP 3–785/53, Warszawa 16.05.1953.

³² Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 12.09.1953 (N° WP 2–1387/53) with directives relative to extraschool biology lessons, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N° 13, item 105, 7.05.1953.

³³ AAN, MO 18, Instructions concerning experimental school plots (proposal discussed at the meeting of the governing body of the Ministry of Education on 24.03.1954), p. 287.

³⁴ A. Podgórska, *Współpraca domu dziecka ze szkołą (Cooperation between the Child’s Home and Its School)*, “Dzieci i Wychowawca” 1949, N° 8–10. Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 7.10.1954 (N° SO–6519/54) concerning regulations for parents’ committees “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty”, N° 14, item 115, 20.10.1954; AAN, MO 1321, “Regulations of Parents’ Committees” sent by S. Dobosiewicz to Minister Jerzy Michałowski for approval on 27.09.1954; AAN, MO 1321, Annex to the Ministry of Education’s letter of 23.09.1953 (N° SO2–5920/53) concerning elections to parents’ committees for the school year 1953/54 — *Pogadanka o zadaniach Komitetów Rodzicielskich*, p. 16.

³⁵ Communiqué (N° II W–9335/51 of 21.11.1951) concerning New Year celebrations in schools. “Dziennik Urzędowy MO” N° 18/1951; F. Mielczarek, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

³⁶ Archiwum Główne Kwatery Związku Harcestwa Polskiego (Central Archives of the Polish Scouts’ Union Headquarters — henceforward referred to as AGKZHP), ZMP, *Harcerska Zima 1955/56 (Scouts’ Winter 1955/56)*.

nursery schools, children's homes and community centres³⁷. The nationalisation of these institutions was the first step towards the atheisation of upbringing.

Laicisation and atheisation were one of the aims summer camps, organised on an ever larger scale. Some of the chats and talks held at these camps were aimed at "combating superstitions and prejudices"³⁸. It was not a coincidence that the Ministry of Education's instructions of April 25, 1953 concerning education during summer holidays said: "Particularly attractive long excursions or film matinées, performances by work places' artistic ensembles, and the like should be organised on Sudays and Church holidays"³⁹. This was to draw children away from religious workshop.. In order to protect children at summer camps from the "negative influence" of their parents and from possible joint visits to church, instructions were issued to hinder parents' visits⁴⁰.

Organisers of winter holidays also had laicisation in view (to draw children and young people away from "participation in traditional nativity plays, the seemingly innocent texts of which contain the poison of chauvinism and anti-Semitism, to say nothing of their magic-mystical prejudices, which are completely alien to our line of education"⁴¹).

³⁷ AAN, KC PZPR 237/XVII-92, Statute of the State Children's Home (draft), 1950, p. 1; AAN, MO 1484, Instructions concerning the organisation of the school year in nursery schools, p. 17; *Kształtowanie naukowego światopoglądu dziecka (Shaping a Child's Scientific Outlook)*, "Dzieci i Wychowawca" 1950, N° 5.

³⁸ *Planowanie pracy wychowawczej na kolonii (Planning Educational Work at Summer Camps)*, "Światlice Dziecięce" N° 7, July 1950.

³⁹ AGKZHP, ZMP 66/IV, Educational Directives to be followed at summer camps for children and young people in 1953, Ministry of Education N° Op. 3-2002/53, Warszawa 25.04.1953.

⁴⁰ AAN, MO 4008, Summing up of the conference held on 12.11.1955 by activists who organise and run summer holidays for children and young people, p. 53. In 1950, "Światlice Dziecięce" proposed that in holiday camps children should spend one or two hours a week making drawings which would be sent as a kind of letter to their family. The drawings were to be furnished with brief explanations. Before they were sent off, they were to be displayed at an exhibition. "For the group this will be a «pictorial» verification of the work of its self-government; for the teacher this will be a verification of the results of their educational work and of the political consciousness they have instilled in the children". "Since children very often describe their impressions when they write home but do not inform their parents of the organisation of their occupations and holiday life, the educator may in the first week suggest that the children organise a joint meeting in order to write a collective letter. Such a meeting will be very important for many children who are away from home for the first time. Being homesick, children often are not fully aware of the joyfulness of holiday life and write alarming letters. A collective letter should be written before the end of the holiday so that the children may inform their parents of the day and time of their return. The educator should arrange individual letter writing on a beautiful day (not on a rainy day, as has often been practised) after occupations which were of great interest to the children. The children will then have something to write about and the tone of their letters will not be pessimistic". S. Chładek, *Współpraca wychowawców kolonijnych z rodzicami (Cooperation between Holiday Camp Instructors and Parents)*, "Światlice Dziecięce" N° 7, July 1950.

The Society of the Friends of Children (*TPD*) was assigned the pioneering role in laicisation and atheisation. The expansion of the Society's centres was only seemingly a departure from the principle that educational institutions should belong to the state, for the *TPD* centres carried out the state's policy. The number of *TPD* schools which, on principle, did not conduct religious instruction, increased gradually and in 1956 amounted to 573 with 330,364 pupils.

Fight against religion was also envisaged in the large-scale campaigns which the *TPD* launched in 1949. This question was discussed at a special conference of representatives of many institutions on November 14, 1949. The decision was taken to establish close co-operation between *TPD* and the Polish Film Industry, Polish Radio, the Polish Youth Union, the Polish Scouts' Union, ARTOS, the Orbis Travel Office and the Polish Touring Society. The conference concluded with the following resolution: "These institutions should, in consultation with the *TPD* and under its name, organise artistic events **on Sundays and Church holidays in antemeridian hours** [emphasis mine]"⁴².

The most important periodic mass campaign organised by the *TPD* with a view to replacing religious rites by new secular ones was the New Year party (with a Christmas tree), modelled on the Soviet ceremony. At first it was organised only in *TPD* centres but in 1949/50 it became a mass event. In 1951/52 the *TPD* organised these parties for 116,466 children in 24 towns and for 12,230 children from co-operative and State farms and children of farmers who had fulfilled their obligations to state in an exemplary way. In 1952/53 New Year parties were organised in 19 voivodship towns and 11 industrial centres and were attended by 244,463 children, of whom 10 per cent were from the countryside and 20 per cent were leading pupils⁴³. The aims of these parties were defined by the organisers, who emphasised in their instructions that the event was of a secular character. The *TPD* parties set an example for the New Year parties organised on a mass scale in schools, nursery schools, extraschool institutions and work places⁴⁴.

⁴¹ *O właściwe zorganizowanie ferii zimowych (For the Right Organisation of Winter Holidays)*, "Wychowanie w Zespole" № 12, December 1952.

⁴² *AAN, KC PZPR 237/XVII-84*, Proceedings of the meeting devoted to the *TPD* mass campaign among children and young people, p. 21. See also, *Akcja masowa wśród dzieci i młodzieży (Mass Campaign among Children and Young People)*, "Świetlice Dziecięce" № 11-12, December 1949.

⁴³ S. Tułodziecki, *Z działalności Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Dzieci*, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-136. Slightly different data in: *AAN, KC PZPR 237/XVII-168*, Information of the Education Department of the *PZPR* Central Committee on work outside of school hours and extraschool occupations (1952), pp. 13-14.

⁴⁴ *AAN, MO 3993*, Circular of the Ministry of Education of 11.12.1950 (№ Op. 4-6265/50) concerning New Year celebrations in schools, nursery schools and extraschool centres, pp. 104-105;

There is much to indicate that what was known as Sunday bonfires, i.e. attractive occupations for children on Church holidays, were organised with a view to discouraging children from religious practices. In 1951 these events were attended by more than 520,000 children and in 1952 by over 605,000⁴⁵.

V. The view of the outside world: friends and enemies

One of the methods used in 1948–1956 to Stalinise the education of children in Poland was to contrast the camp of socialism, headed by the USSR, with the capitalist camp directed by American imperialism. As the cold-war atmosphere intensified, children were shown an increasingly black-and-white picture of friends and external (not only) enemies. Such was the picture of the world imposed on the youngest generation by the state, which was monopolising education to an ever greater extent⁴⁶.

The USSR and the countries of the eastern bloc were presented as promoters of such positively evaluated values as internationalism, struggle for peace, progress, democracy, collectivism. The capitalist West was presented as a dichotomous world; on the one side were the rich, who constituted the governments, lived on injustice and exploitation, on the other side were the exploited masses of ordinary people, hostile to their governments. These contradictions had a bearing on the picture of world history; the “camp of progress” was represented first and foremost by the communist current of the working class movement and its leaders: Lenin, Marx, Engels and Stalin.

These didactic and educational principles found their reflection in the basic documents concerning the work of schools and institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education⁴⁷. The 1951/52 curriculum and school-book instructions for eleven-year general education schools enjoined history teachers to base their interpretations on Stalin’s pronouncements. During

Circular letter of the Department of Cultural and Social Facilities of the State Commission for Economic Planning of 13.11.1950 concerning New Year parties for children, “Biuletyn PKPG” № 24, item 284, 30.11.1950.

⁴⁵ S. Tułodziecki, *Z działalności Towarzystwa*, op. cit., p. 137; see also J. Mikołajewicz, *Jak zorganizował “Ogniska Niedzielne” Oddział Grodzki TPD w Krakowie (How “Sunday Bonfires” Were Organised by the TPD Branch in Cracow)*, “Wychowanie Pozaszkolne” № 1, September 1950.

⁴⁶ A. Radziwiłł, *Ideologia wychowawcza w Polsce w latach 1948–1956 (Educational Ideology in Poland in 1948–1956)*, Warszawa 1981, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 6.04.1951 (№ II P–1000/51) concerning the organisation of the 1951/52 school year. Annex: *Instructions concerning the organisation of the 1951/52 school year in schools and institutions subordinated to the Ministry of Education*, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” № 7, item 78, 13.04.1951.

the lessons on “Poland and the contemporary world”, teachers were to acquaint pupils with the struggle for peace and the growth of the forces of the socialist camp and bring it to them that “only in the socialist system can they have conditions for a full many-sided development, and that the individual’s interests are the same as the interests of a society organised on the basis of social justice”. In order to ensure that this vision of reality triumphed, the Ministry corrected old history books and introduced new ones as well as translations of Soviet history books by Evgeny Kosminsky (*History of the Middle Ages*), Alexei Yefimov (*Modern History up to 1870*), Ilya Galkin, Lev Zubok, Filip Notovich and F. M Khvostov (*Modern History 1870–1918*)⁴⁸.

As is testified to by centrally endorsed examination papers, the same line of political indoctrination was adopted in the promotion examinations, which were gradually introduced in ever lower grades⁴⁹.

Periodicals for children and young people were to help shape this vision of the outside world⁵⁰.

A proper choice of anniversaries and celebrations in schools and other educational institutions was very important for the success of the new educational line. Coexistence of Church and secular rites, which did occur previously, was no longer possible. The state authorities’ preferences in this respect were manifested in the plan worked out by the Ministry of Education

⁴⁸ Ordinance of the Minister of Education of 16.06.1951 (Nº GM Sekr.–2465/51) concerning programmatic and schoolbook instructions for 11-year general education schools for the 1951/52 school year. Annex to the ordinance: *Programmatic and schoolbook instructions for the 1951/52 school year*, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” Nº 11, item 135, 25.06.1951; S. Majewski, *Organizacja szkolnictwa podstawowego w województwie kieleckim 1944–1961 (The Organisation of Primary Schools in the Kielce Voivodship 1944–1961)*, Kielce 1993, p. 103.

⁴⁹ This is testified to by the 1954/55 list of history examination-papers for the seventh grade, which was discussed at a meeting of the Ministry of Education’s governing body. The list included the following questions: “What did the Communist Manifesto teach the workers”, “Say how Britain exploited her colonies before World War I”, “Explain why the First World War was an imperialist war”. “The importance of the Great October Revolution for all the nations of the world”. “The importance of the Great October Revolution for the Polish nation”. “The heroic fight of the Soviet nations against the Nazi invasion...” “Say how the American imperialists are striving for world domination”. “What, and in what way, are the working masses in the capitalist countries fighting for”. “Give examples of the Vatican’s hostile attitude to the Poles’ fight for national liberation”. “Give examples of the Vatican’s hostile attitude to People’s Poland”. See *AAN, MO* 21, Examination-papers for the seventh grade in the 1954/55 school year, p. 347.

⁵⁰ *AAN, MO*, 14, Proceedings Nº 12 of the meeting of the Ministry of Education’s governing body held on 21.08.1950, pp. 231–232.

for the 1953/54 school year⁵¹. The Ministry also decided that school celebrations could only be organised to honour an “event of momentous importance”, e.g. May Day and the anniversary of the October Revolution. The Ministry recommended that schools make wider use of such forms of celebrations as community room evenings, instruction evenings discussion soirées, morning assemblies.

The aims and forms of these and other celebrations were explained in the Ministry’s instructions on how to commemorate the anniversaries of the death of Lenin⁵² and Marx⁵³ and of Pushkin’s birth⁵⁴ how to celebrate Soviet Army Day⁵⁵ and, in particular, the events organised at the end of October and the beginning of November within the framework of the Polish–Soviet friendship month⁵⁶.

The annual celebrations of International Children’s Day were used to shape a positive view of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries and a negative one of the Western world. On International Children’s Day children were asked to write letters (centrally controlled) and send small gifts to children in other countries (Czechoslovakia, German Democratic Republic, USSR), to the participants in the youth rally in Berlin or to “little

⁵¹ I think that the favoured dates were as follows, in October: 1st — China’s national day, 2nd — International Peace Day, 7th — national day of the German Democratic Republic, 12th — Polish Army day, 12th — tenth anniversary of the battle of Lenino, 8.10.–7.11. — Polish–Soviet friendship month; in November: 7th — anniversary of the October Revolution, 10th — International Youth Day, 29th — Albania’s liberation day; in December: 30th — Romania’s national day; in January (1954): 25th—anniversary of the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, 21st — the death of Lenin; in February: 21st — International Day of Fight against Colonialism, 23rd — Soviet Army day; in March: 5th — anniversary of Stalin’s death, 8th — International Women’s day, 18th — anniversary of the foundation of the Paris Commune; in April: 4th — Hungary’s national day; in May: 1st — May Day, 9th — Czechoslovakia’s National Day, 9th — Victory Day; in June: 1st — International Children’s Day, 7th — anniversary of Ivan Michurin’s death; in July: 6th — anniversary of the Polish–German treaty concerning the Oder–Lusatian Neisse frontier, 20th — anniversary of Dzierżyński’s death; in September: 9th — Bulgaria’s national day. *AAN, MO 3995*, Anniversaries and ceremonies in the 1953/54 school year (draft), pp. 65–66; circular concerning anniversaries and ceremonies in the 1953/54 school year, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” 1953, № 13, item 108; see B. J a k u b o w s k a, *op. cit.*, pp. 239–240.

⁵² *AAN, MO 1787*, H. G a r b o w s k i, departmental director in the Ministry of Education to School Superintendents and Inspectors, Warszawa 9.01.1950; *AAN, MO 3995*, Ministry of Education’s letter № WP1–51/54, Warszawa 13.01.1954, p. 130.

⁵³ *AAN, MO 3995*, Ministry of Education’s letter № WP 2–318/53, Warszawa 24.02.1953, pp. 38–39.

⁵⁴ *AAN, MO 1787*, Letter № Sr–5684/49 concerning celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Pushkin’s birth, p. 186.

⁵⁵ *AAN, MO 1787*, Undersecretary of State Dr H. J a b ł o Ń s k i, Warszawa 9.02.1950, p. 30.

⁵⁶ *AAN, MO 3995*, MO Nr. WP–1–1386/53, Warszawa 18.09.1953, p. 70; *AAN, MO 3995*, Letter № WP 13/53 concerning celebrations of the Polish–Soviet friendship month (report), Warszawa 14.01.1953, p. 24.

Colette Gadois, daughter of a French worker murdered by a brutal American soldier”⁵⁷.

The organisation of foreign language teaching in schools reflected the state-favoured perception of the outside world. The first foreign language, Russian, became compulsory from the fifth grade on in the 1949/50 school year⁵⁸. It was stated in the programme for the teaching of Russian that its aim was among other things, “to deepen the feelings of friendships for the Russian nation and other nations of the USSR and to strengthen admiration for the achievements of socialist building”. In the view of the Ministry of Education, “the educational aims of Russian language teaching bring this subject closer to such subject as the Polish language, history, instruction on Poland and the contemporary world than to other foreign languages envisaged in the curriculum of general education schools”⁵⁹. The possibilities of learning Western languages were curtailed⁶⁰.

The activity of ideological organisations in schools, e.g. Circles of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society (renamed Circles of the Friends of the USSR in April 1951)⁶¹ was subordinated to the dichotomous vision of the world.

Ideological re-orientation was one of the most important problems for boy and girl scouts’ organisations in 1949–1950. In December 1948, the Congress of Scout Instructors adopted a resolution which severed Polish scouts’ contacts with the International Scout Bureau. A group of Polish scouts visited the Soviet Union from April 28 to May 23, 1950 to acquaint themselves with the achievements of Soviet pathfinders⁶². The scouts’ concept of education evolved in accordance with the directives of the Political Bureau of the PZPR Central Committee, which said that scouts

⁵⁷ AGKZHP, ZMP, ZG ZMP concerning preparation and celebration of International Children’s Day, 14.05.1952; AAN, MO 1787, Instructions N° II-W/2459/50, pp. 54–56; AAN, KC PZPR 16 44, Proceedings N° 89 of the meeting of the Organisational Bureau on 7.05.1951 and the Civic Committee’s directives concerning International Children’s Day, p. 519; AAN, MO 1787, Letter N° II-W 3124/51 concerning celebrations of International Children’s Day, Warszawa 10.05.1951, pp. 344–345.

⁵⁸ S. Majewski, *Organizacja szkolnictwa podstawowego, op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁵⁹ W.G. *Program języka rosyjskiego w 11-letniej szkole ogólnokształcącej (Russian Language Programme in 11-Year General Education Schools)*, “Język rosyjski” N° 4–5, November–December 1949, p. 60.

⁶⁰ AAN, MO 14, Note on foreign languages (worked out by the department of general education schools, p. 238. AAN, MO 14, Proceedings N° 12 of the meeting of the Ministry of Education’s governing body on 21.08.1950; foreign language teaching was discussed.

⁶¹ Communiqué concerning School Circles of the Friends of the USSR, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N° 8, item 92, 20.04.1951; Ł. S a a r, *Szkolne koła Przyjaciół ZSRR (School Circles of the Friends of the USSR)*, “Wychowanie w Zespole” N° 4, September 1951.

⁶² K. Persak, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

should regard “the heroic Soviet people” (in addition to Polish shock-workers) as their model⁶³. This evolution entailed criticism of scouting traditions, for they backed imperialist Britain’s colonial goals⁶⁴.

The organisation of scouts’ work in schools fully complied with these principles. At their meetings boy and girl scouts acquainted themselves with, for instance, “the economy of the Soviet Union, new constructions of communism, and the life of Soviet heroes and members of the pathfinders’ organisation, Pavlik Morozov, Dubinin, Chekalin⁶⁵. Scouts’ homes were organised after the Soviet pathfinders’ example⁶⁶. The scouts’ tourist activity was to shape a friendly attitude to the USSR: “We must see that the youth knows and deeply respects the places where Lenin lived”⁶⁷, wrote instructor Jerzy Żołnierkiewicz in October 1950. The scouts’ movement also joined in the struggle-for-peace campaign, which was organised at a great cost. Within the framework of this campaign rallies of the Youngest Peace Fighters were held in some towns in 1951⁶⁸.

This vision of the external world was binding not only on schools but also on state nursery schools, as is testified to by the list of talks recommended in the preliminary programme for nursery schools, issued in 1950⁶⁹.

Practical advice on how to implement these general ideas, can be found in the periodical “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu” (“Education in a Nursery School”), which published examples of talks about the USSR, Stalin and Lenin⁷⁰.

The *TPD* reports show that these ideas were put into effect⁷¹. Polish-Soviet friendship corners existed in many nursery schools⁷².

⁶³ AAN, KC PZPR 1638, micr. 2820/1, (brief) Report for the Secretariat of the Party’s Central Committee on the scout activists’ trip to the USSR from 28.04. to 23.05.1950, p. 197; *ibidem*, proceedings № 38 of the Political Bureau’s meeting on 8.06.1950 (annex), p. 160.

⁶⁴ W. Dewitowa, *O przebudowę ideologiczną harcerstwa (For an Ideological Transformation of the Scouts’ Union)*, “Świetlice Dziecięce” № 3, March 1949.

⁶⁵ Information № 2 on how scouts’ teams implement the directives for school year 1952/53, Rzeszów 13.01.1953.

⁶⁶ AGKZHP, ZMP 12, The tasks of scouts’ homes (1950).

⁶⁷ AGKZHP, ZMP 66/1, Note on tourist activities among school pupils, Warszawa 1.10.1950.

⁶⁸ AGKZHP, ZMP 39, note on the situation in the scouts’ union.

⁶⁹ *Zajęcia w przedszkolu. Program tymczasowy (Occupations in nursery schools. Preliminary programme)*, Warszawa 1950, pp. 4 and 62–63.

⁷⁰ Editorial, *Miesiąc przyjaźni polsko-radzieckiej w pracy z dziećmi (The Polish-Soviet Friendship Month in Work with Children)*, “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu” № 2, October 1949; A. Czyłok (nursery school teacher at Kęty, Cracow voivodship), *Pomoc Związku Radzieckiego treścią zabawy dzieci (Soviet Help as a Subject of Children’s Games)*, “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu”, № 3, November 1952; Editorial, *Dni leninowskie w przedszkolach (Lenin Days in Nursery Schools)*, “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu” № 5, January 1950.

⁷¹ AAN, *TPD* 12, Diary of the head of № 1 nursery school at Dębica, p. 345.

The more ambitious nursery school teachers encouraged their wards to take part in the peace plebiscite campaign⁷³. The same educational line was followed in children's homes⁷⁴, at summer camps⁷⁵, in children's day-rooms⁷⁶ and during Sunday meetings⁷⁷.

VI. The Shaping of a Positive Image of Bierut's Poland

Another important feature of the Stalinist upbringing of children was glorification of the state system established by the communists and condemnation of its internal enemies. This made it necessary to revise the interpretation of Poland's past so that it should comply with the objectives of the state and party authorities. In primary schools this was done through the introduction of new history books and a new subject (from 1.09.1952): "Instruction about the Constitution"⁷⁸. In addition to translations of Soviet books, new history books written by Polish authors were introduced. The obligatory handbook for the fourth grade was written by Gryzelda Miśłowska and Janina Schoenbrerner; it was praised by the Ministry

⁷² AAN, TPD 14, Head of the Nursery schools department of the TPD in Elbląg to the management of the TPD nursery school in Elbląg, Warszawa 23.04.1952, pp. 47–48.

⁷³ L. Kurzajek, *Piwonice, Kalisz district, Jak przeprowadziłam Plebiscyt Pokoju w Przedszkolu (How I Conduced the Peace Plebiscite in a Nursery School)*, "Wychowanie w Przedszkolu" № 1, September 1951.

⁷⁴ AAN, MO 3594, Points to a paper to be read on the second day of August conferences (Children's Homes section), p. 124; Z. Woźnicka, *Wychowanie na placówkach opiekuńczo-wychowawczych (Education in Welfare and Education Centres)*, "Dzieci i Wychowawca" № 4–5, April–May 1949; Z. Woźnicka, *Wychowanie patriotyczne w domach dziecka (Patriotic Education in Children's Homes)*, "Dzieci i Wychowawca" № 2, 1950.

⁷⁵ R. Pawuła, *Wczasy letnie dla dzieci i młodzieży (Summer Holidays for Children and Young People)*, a paper read at a national conference on summer holidays held in Otwock on 21 and 22 December 1948, "Dzieci i Wychowawca". The Ministry of Education's bimonthly dealing with methods of collective education № 1–2–3, January–March 1949.

⁷⁶ F. Zeliczer, *Świetlica w maju (The Day-Room in May)*, "Świetlice Dziecięce" № 4, April 1948; *Świetlica w październiku i listopadzie (The Day-Room in October and November)*, "Świetlice Dziecięce" № 10–11, October–November 1948; *ibidem, Co dała światu Rewolucja Październikowa (What the October Revolution Gave the World); O czym pamiętamy w marcu (What We Recall in March)*, "Świetlice Dziecięce" № 3, March 1950.

⁷⁷ J. Mikołajewicz, *Jeszcze o "Ogniskach Niedzielnych" (More about "Sunday Bonfires")*, "Wychowanie Pozaszkolne" № 3, November 1950.

⁷⁸ Instruction about the Constitution was introduced in the seventh and ninth grades of general education schools in the 1952/53 school year and replaced instruction on Poland and the contemporary world and instruction on society; see F. Mielczarek, *op. cit.*, pp. 76–77. The last two subjects were strongly imbued with ideology from 1948. See K. Stachura, *Wychowanie obywatelskie w szkole jako czynnik kształtowania kultury politycznej młodzieży. Rys historyczny (Civic Education as a Factor Shaping the Youth's Political Culture. An Historical Outline)*, "Prace Pedagogiczne" № 16, 1982, pp. 19–30; *idem, Treści ideologiczno-politycznego kształcenia i wychowania młodzieży w programach nauczania wychowania obywatelskiego w latach 1945–1950 (The Substance of the Ideological and Political Education of Youth in Civic Education Programmes in 1945–1950)*, "Prace Pedagogiczne" № 15, 1982, pp. 112–117.

of Education as “the first attempt at a Marxist synthesis of Poland’s history”, although the Ministry admitted that the book was “not adapted to the level of children in the fourth grade” and was of help mainly to teachers. “The book corrects the errors of the bourgeois historical science, which ignored many facts, blurred their class meaning and removed from schoolbooks many figures which are examples of our progressive traditions”⁷⁹.

It was the history of “class struggles”⁸⁰ that dominated in the schoolbooks propagated by the Ministry of Education.

Not only history lessons but also historical circles were to bring up “builders of socialism, ardent patriots of People’s Poland”⁸¹. This way of thinking and of interpreting Poland’s history was also required of pupils during promotion examinations⁸².

It was not only the teaching of history that was changed to comply with ideological principles; even the subjects which seemed resistant to such attempts, as for instance mathematics, were submitted to this process.

A little known form of this “fight about the past” was the Ministry of Education’s campaign to give new names to schools and verify the existing ones⁸³.

The Ministry of Education’s archives, by no means complete, show that the respective proposals sent in by councils of a lower level to the Voivodship People’s Councils and by these to the Ministry usually suggested not

⁷⁹ Circular N° 21 of June 30, 1952 (N° DK 2–2156/52) Directives for the use of schoolbooks in the 1952/53 school year, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N° 10, item 84, 25.07.1952, annex — directives for the use of schoolbooks in 1952/53.

⁸⁰ B. J a k u b o w s k a, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁸¹ J. S c h o e n b r e n n e r, *Zadania kół historycznych szkolnych, ich organizacja i problematyka* (*The Tasks of School Historical Circles, Their Organisation and the Questions They Deal with*), “Wychowanie w Zespole” N° 4, September 1951.

⁸² The examination papers for the seventh grade in the 1954/55 school year included the following questions, which were discussed at a meeting of the Ministry of Education’s governing body: *The Proletariat, the first Polish revolutionary workers’ party, its foundation and activity; The Social Democracy of the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania, its foundation, main leaders and its co-operation with the Russian proletariat; What were the most important changes announced in the manifesto of the Polish Committee of National Liberation? Why did all progressive Poles welcome it?; The Unification Congress of the Polish United Workers’ Party and its significance; How are the working masses in People’s Poland participating in ruling the state?; How is it that People’s Poland can have a planned economy and assure every citizen of the right to work while pre-war Poland was plagued by unemployment? How does People’s Poland look after peasants having small and medium-sized holdings and how does she protect them from exploitation by kulaks? How do workers and peasants help one another in People’s Poland? Explain that the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic is a result of the aspirations and struggles waged by many generations for social liberation. The Peasants’ Uprising under the leadership of Kostka-Napierski.* AAN, MO 21, Examination papers for the seventh grade in the 1954/55 school year, p. 347.

⁸³ Circular N° 17 of May 21, 1947 (II Sr–2121/47) concerning school names, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N° 6, item 140, 23.06.1947.

only the names of such patrons as Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, Emilia Plater, Stefan Czarniecki, Stanisław Staszic, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Stefan Żeromski, Bolesław Prus, Maria Konopnicka, but also Marian Buczek, Marcelli Nowotko, Julian Marchlewski, Hanka Sawicka, Karol Świerczewski, Janek Krasicki, Ludwik Waryński, Marcin Kasprzak. Many schools were called after the July Manifesto or Heroes of the Young Guard. Many previously chosen names failed to gain the approval of the state authorities. In the Lublin voivodship the schools named after Queen Jadwiga, King Ladislaus Jagiełło, Hetman Zamoyski, the Union of Lublin and Prince Adam Czartoryski were deprived of their old patrons but were not given new ones⁸⁴.

An intense verification of scouts' teams' patrons was also carried out from the beginning of the 1950s⁸⁵.

It was the scouts' movement that was assigned the leading role in popularising and glorifying Poland's Stalinist model among children. The new oath introduced in June 1950 enjoined scouts "to learn and to work for the good of the country and the cause of socialism" and "wholeheartedly serve People's Poland always and everywhere". Point 1 of the new scout law stated: "The scout loves People's Poland and serves her all his life"⁸⁶. Imitation of the institutions and phenomena existing in the Stalinist model of adults' public life was an ideal which was carried into life ever more effectively.

The aim of the scouts' touring activities was not only to shape "a cordial attitude to the USSR" but also to propagate Stalinist Poland⁸⁷. In accordance with this idea, rural scouts' teams were during the summer holidays of 1955 to organise excursions to co-operative farms, State Machines Centres, State Farms, leading small holdings and medium-sized farms in order "to deepen the children's love for the Party and the Polish Youth Union; they were to show them what the working class and the working peasants have achieved during the ten years of People's Poland and to demonstrate the Polish countryside' prospects for development, mapped out by the Second Party Congress"⁸⁸.

The activity of the School Youth Circles of the League of Soldiers' Friends was in keeping with the same principle of "love for People's Poland"⁸⁹.

⁸⁴ See e.g. *AAN, MO* 1339, 1342.

⁸⁵ K. Skusiewicz, *Ewolucja postaci bohatera drużyny w latach 1944–1956 (Evolution of the Figure of Scouts' Team Hero in 1944–1956)*, "Harcerstwo" 1989, № 8, pp. 16–21.

⁸⁶ K. Persak, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁸⁷ *AGKZHP, ZMP*, On scouts' spring tours, Warszawa 28.02.1952.

⁸⁸ *AGKZHP, ZMP* 66/11, Directives for the work of scouts' teams during summer holidays in 1955.

The three-day excursions of village children to large towns (Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań, Szczecin, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Łódź and Bydgoszcz), organised by the education departments of people's councils during summer months, were also to glorify the state and its policy. The aim of these excursions was to show children the achievements of People's Poland in the fight for peace and the six-year plan, "with focus on the economic, social and cultural transformations carried out during the ten years of People's Poland, to deepen the worker-peasant alliance and strengthen the economic ties between town and country. The organisers were to make it possible for children to participate in the celebrations of the anniversary of the July Manifesto, July 22⁹⁰.

Glorification of Bierut's Poland was probably the most important aim of the New Year parties. In the organisers' intention they were "to deepen and expand the influence of *TPD* schools, instil in children a joyful pride in, and enthusiasm for, the achievements of People's Poland and teach them respect for the work of the builders of socialism"⁹¹. The setting and programme of the event were subordinated to this main aim. The point was not only to eliminate St. Nicholas, as the Soviets had done. "The spruce tree with white doves of peace", wrote the *TPD* periodical "Wychowanie w Zespole", is a happy fusion of the valuable elements which we have taken over from old customs with the new secular socialist content. From under the spruce tree will flow a song about the six-year plan and peace, a peace which will not be given by heavens but must be fought for. The spruce tree, always connected in the past with poverty, humility and submissiveness to supernatural forces, for it was a reflection of the Polish people's living conditions during the period of feudalism, the pre-war Christmas tree organised for poor children by philanthropists of all sorts to salve the social conscience of the bourgeoisie, will, during this mass event turn into a symbol of a new life in our reborn people's country"⁹². The *TPD* events were to enchant participants by their extraordinary atmosphere. Their repertoire included dexterity games, the showing of a feature film, performances by a

⁸⁹ *AAN, KC PZPR, 237/XVII-167*, Regulations for the School Youth Circles of the League of Soldiers' Friends, October 1950, pp. 63–66.

⁹⁰ *AAN, MO 3946*, Annex to the Ministry of Education's Letter N° Op. 3–2270/54. Directives for the programme and organisation of rural children's excursions to towns.

⁹¹ *AAN, TPD 42*, Directives for *TPD* branches concerning the organisation of celebrations welcoming the New Year 1952, Warszawa 20.10.1951, pp. 31–32; see also *AAN, MO 1787*, Directives for *TPD* branches concerning the organisation of celebrations welcoming the New Year 1951, pp. 225–226.

⁹² *Znaczenie wychowawcze i propagandowe masowej imprezy noworocznej dla dzieci (The Educational and Propaganda Importance of Mass New Year Parties for Children)*, "Wychowanie w Zespole" N° 6, November 1951.

puppet theatre, raffle, performances by circus artists, the telling of fairy tales. Each of the halls of the building in which the event was organised was dedicated to a special subject (sea hall, aviation hall, astronomy hall, etc.)⁹³. Scouts' and pioneers' emblems as well as flags of the people's democracies were used as decorative elements. The organisers were instructed what decorations to use (miners, peasants, tractors and the like). The links of the paper chains were to be in the form of the figure six to remind the children of the six-year plan. At some parties the children could play with a electronic brain, a device with the help of which they guessed the geographical situation of the great constructions of the six-year plan. The scenarios and music for these parties were the work of — among others — Jan Brzechwa, Władysław Szpilman, Jerzy Czworakowski and Zbigniew Turski⁹⁴.

Glorification of Stalinist Poland did not bypass nursery schools. The preliminary programme of occupations in nursery schools in 1950 set instructors the duty "to bring up children in love for People's Poland, her leaders, builders and defenders, that is, the working class, working peasants and the Polish Armed Forces, instil in them attachment to the mother tongue and nature, explain the most important events in Poland and abroad in a way understandable to children". Chats with six-year olds about the social environment were to acquaint them "with the personality of President Bierut, some fragments of his life, with the Polish People's Army, with Marshal Konstanty Rokossowski..." The children were to be given "some information on the six-year plan, on the important things Poland wants to do under the six-year plan". The programme also envisaged information on shock workers and rationalisers⁹⁵. Educational periodicals published examples of such talks⁹⁶.

Attempts were made to introduce such adult forms of social life as labour competition and production commitments in nursery schools and children's homes; children were encouraged to make summer-houses for

⁹³ One hall was to play a special role during the New Year Party organised in Stalinogród (as Katowice was then called): "the children will see the astronomical instruments used by Copernicus and those in use in our times, will go to the planetarium in the Voivodship Park of Culture and will learn that the Church hampered the spread of Copernicus' theory". The exhibits in the hall were to document the materiality of the world so as "to strengthen the children's scientific outlook..." See *AGKZHP, ZMP 12*, Directives for instructors organising New Year celebrations (*s.a.*).

⁹⁴ See "Wychowanie w Zespole" № 6, November 1951; "Wychowanie Pozaszkolne" № 4, December 1950.

⁹⁵ *Zajęcia w przedszkolu. Program tymczasowy (Occupations in Nursery Schools. Preliminary Programme)*, Warszawa 1950, PZWS.

⁹⁶ A. Zachariaszowa, *Jak prowadziłam w przedszkolu pogadankę w dniu 22 lipca (How I Conducted a Talk on July 22 in a Nursery School)*, "Wychowanie w Przedszkolu" № 8, April 1950.

dolls on the occasion of May Day, to compete in “saving socialist property” and in eliminating bad marks⁹⁷.

Summer camps offered excellent opportunities for presenting an idealised picture of People’s Poland. Stress was laid on National Day (July 22) celebrations⁹⁸, on acquainting children with the life of Bolesław Bierut and Feliks Dzierżyński, with the six–year plan, etc. In 1949 many chats on the trial of Adam Doboszyński were organised⁹⁹.

The instructions of the Central Board of the Polish Youth Union of March 12, 1952 recommended that participants in rovers’ camps should choose routes that would take them to the constructions of the six–year plan¹⁰⁰.

The celebrations organised on the tenth anniversary of People’s Poland in 1954 were to play a special role in propagating its achievements¹⁰¹. Two years earlier, a similar role was assigned to the Rally of Young Shock–Workers–Builders of People’s Poland¹⁰² and the propaganda launched in connection with the draft of the constitution of the Polish People’s Republic¹⁰³.

VII. The results of Stalinist education

What were the results of this ideological education? Conflicts over religious instruction were probably the most important. They involved priest, parents, teachers and the children under their care. In order to protect their children from laicism, parents sent petitions to the authorities of various levels, sent delegations to Warsaw and even organised school strikes. Many large–scale strikes broke out over the establishment of *TPD* schools¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁷ H. Zachariaszowa, *Współzawodnictwo pracy i zobowiązania produkcyjne na terenie przedszkola (Labour Competition and Production Commitments in a Nursery School)*, “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu” N° 8, April 1951; *AAN, TPD* 5, Report on a Business Trip to the *TPD* Children’s Home at Konstancin, pp. 389–390.

⁹⁸ Circular N° 22 of 2.07.1949 (VII og–2762/49) concerning celebration of Poland’s National Day in summer holiday centres for children and young people.

⁹⁹ *AAN, MO* 3949, Letter N° VII–Og–/49 of 15.07.1949 from F. Pawuła, departmental director in the Ministry of Education, to school superintendents, pp. 5, 27–33.

¹⁰⁰ *GKZHP, ZG ZMP* 64, *ZG ZMP* to the Voivodship, District, Municipal and Town District Boards of the Polish Youth Union, Warszawa 12.03.1952.

¹⁰¹ *AAN, MO* 603, Circular N° 26 of 31.08.1954 (GM 1–2377/54) concerning the tenth anniversary of People’s Poland. Directives for schools and educational institutions; see also “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N° 12, item 101, 25.09.1954, p. 57.

¹⁰² *AAN, MO* 3602, Ministry of Education, Letter N° WP 2–159/52, Warszawa 12.04.1952, p. 2.

¹⁰³ Circular N° 4 of 15.02.1952 (II Sr–1238/52) concerning the participation of school pupils in the national discussion on the draft Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic, “Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Oświaty” N° 2, item 20, 15.02.1952.

¹⁰⁴ *AAN, KC PZPR* 237/XVII–85, Appraisal of the situation of *TPD* schools in the 1948/49 and current school years, p. 27; *AAN, MO* 342, Implementation of the plan for new *TPD* schools 191/52; *ibidem*, Report on incidents connected with the opening of a *TPD* primary school in Poznań (the

At the present state of research, an exact profound and scientifically correct evaluation of the results of the Stalinist model of education does not seem to be possible.

Documents, some of which have been quoted, show that the behaviour of some children approximated the models created by political decision-makers while the behaviour of others departed far from them. An important role was played by the stance of parents, educators and teachers and their attitude to the Stalinist aims and educational methods.

Many of the letters sent in to the periodical “Świat Młodych” (“World of Youth”) by the youngest readers testify to the spiritual conflicts created by the introduction of Stalinist canons of education. Some of these letters contain childish poems glorifying Bierut, the National Front and the Stalinist scouts’ movement, but there are also letters reflecting the political controversies of that period and controversies over the outlook on life. For instance, Józef K a p u s t a from the Busko Zdrój district wrote in 1956: “In biology lessons children are taught that man originated from the ape and in religious lessons they learn that man was created by God; they do not know what to believe”¹⁰⁵.

The re-interpretation of political opinions concerning Stalin and Bierut also aroused controversies. After the death of the Leader of the Proletariat, the press published accounts by nursery school teachers which testified to children’s concern over Stalin’s demise (they were said to ask: “Who will now drive out war?”, “Who will defend us against war?”, “Will Stalin’s son become leader now?”, “Perhaps Stalin will recover?”, “Has anybody called an ambulance in? When someone falls ill suddenly, an ambulance must take him to the health centre and he will then get well”)¹⁰⁶. But the criticism of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union brought requests for an explanation of “why Stalin was declared a traitor to the Russian nation and what the cult of personality meant”¹⁰⁷.

old school № 28 in Prądyński Street) on 5.09.1951, pp. 38–40; Central Archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Ministry of Public Security, 41/471, Biuletyn dzienny № 207/51, 6.09.1951, p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ AGKZHP 74, “Biuletyn Listów redakcji “Świata Młodych” za okres 1.02.–1.08.1956.

¹⁰⁶ *Dni żałoby w naszych przedszkolach (Days of Mourning in Our Nursery Schools)*, “Wychowanie w Przedszkolu” № 8, April 1953.

¹⁰⁷ AGKZHP 74, Bulletin of interesting letters sent to the editorial board of “Świat Młodych”. Here is an example of a letter from Warsaw: “They are now saying that Stalin was sinister. The whole Soviet nation was afraid of him and waited on him. It did what he wanted it to do in order to calm his anger... I have also heard that during the war Joseph Stalin ordered Polish non-commissioned officers and Polish people to be killed. Is this true?... Lenin said when he was dying that Stalin would misrule the Soviet state. This has been dinned again and again into my ears. I did not want to believe all this. I think that some accusations are false, that these are just rumours. I have also heard that Stalin’s portraits have been burnt in some schools. I wanted to take Stalin’s portrait off

The research conducted in 1950 in the fourth grades of schools by the State Centre for Programmatic Work and Pedagogical Studies about the assimilation of the history programme showed that the children, overpowered by a large number of dates, names and facts found it difficult to remember them and even more difficult to understand. Hence such frequent replies as “Stalin lives in Warsaw” and “Marx was a king”¹⁰⁸.

In 1957, I. Chmielewska pointed out the paradoxes created by the adopted educational ideology. She formulated her remarks in “Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny” (“Pedagogical Quarterly”) after observing extraschool education centres and *TPD* schools in 1952–1954; Chmielewska pointed out that the curricula were unadapted to the children’s intellectual development. She criticised cases of 10–11 year olds in a *TPD* school being asked to write such compositions as “Say why Egyptian culture is said to have been of a class character” or “What is imperialism?”. Children did not understand such notions as *PKWN* (Polish Committee of National Liberation), land reform, etc.¹⁰⁹

An evaluation of long-term effects of the ideological treatment of education during the Stalinist period is not the aim of this study for it would require toilsome profound research. We cannot say whether this large-scale work devised by political decision-makers produced lasting effects or whether it was a waste of time. One thing is certain: they made great efforts, their words were followed by deeds, but fortunately, the implementation of centrally programmed instructions came up against social resistance; this was mainly unspectacular, everyday, less showy resistance which, however, was widespread and effective. It is thanks to this resistance and also to the hesitations of decision-makers, clearly manifested in October 1956, that the example set by Pavlik Morozov existed only on paper in Poland.

the wall but I restrained myself when I looked at his face. I thought than all this was untrue. The whole world knew Stalin. The whole world sings songs and recites poems about him. And now they are censuring him. If they had known that Stalin did wrong, they could have all revolted against him and they would have won, all against one man... I have heard that Poles have asked for Bierut’s sickness charts from the USSR for they did not believe he had died, they thought he had been poisoned. I have also learned that Bierut had made mistakes for he had followed Stalin’s example. Please explain all this to me, editors”.

¹⁰⁸ B. Jakubowska, *op. cit.*, pp. 219–222.

¹⁰⁹ I. Chmielewska, *O niektórych błędach w wychowaniu postawy ideowej dzieci (Some Mistakes in Shaping the Children’s Ideological Stance)*, “Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny” 1957, N° 1, pp. 26–41.