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The Czechoslovak Librarianship 1945-1959

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Abstract: The article focuses on the transformation of the role of public libraries in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s in dependence on the political development of the country. It describes the changes of educational goals of Czechoslovak librarianship in the reporting period and methods used in educational activities.

In the period after the end of WWII, Czechoslovak librarianship continued its development, especially in the legislative area, on the foundations built during the 1918–1938 period. Even in the post-war period, the General Public Libraries Act remained in force and there was a coordination center for educational activities which after the end of the war adopted its original name - Masaryk Institute of Adult Education.

However, after 1945, training and public librarianship were in a completely different social and political situation. The field of adult education and the public librarianship remained priority areas of interest for political representation and individual political parties that operated in post-war Czechoslovakia. The political representation of post-war Czechoslovakia cooperated intensively with the USSR, and the left-wing ideas had very strong position in the political and public life of the state. In the first part of the article, we study the efforts of the communists in the period 1945–1948 to control the public libraries, which were one of the most important elements of the educational system and were of importance, especially in the rural environment. The second part of the article focuses on the period 1948–1959. It shows the development in the field of legislation and on the examples of the activities of public libraries, it shows how they concentrated on their main task, i.e., how they worked with the reader.

Introduction

Libraries open to the general public were established in the Czech countries since the second half of the 19th Century in relation to the liberalization of political and social life. From a legal point of view, libraries accessible to the public were association institutions until 1919. Then, the General Public Libraries Act incorporated public libraries in the public adult education system. The law was intended for public libraries only, as special libraries were governed by the standard of 1825 (this standard was in force until 1948).

Public libraries, in collaboration with adult education courses and folk high schools, were to become the most important institutions providing education to the public in interwar Czechoslovakia. Emphasizing the adult education and extra-curricular education were not a mere imitation of foreign tendency, coming especially from the USA (Williams, 1988, pp. 41-63) and Germany, even had practical purposes. When the war was over, most countries were undergoing political, social, and economic changes. Czechoslovakia was a multinational state¹, the other reason to do so were the efforts to make social and living conditions of inhabitants in all parts of Czechoslovakia equally. The General Public Libraries Act stated that education of the broader public was the primary purpose of establishing public libraries. The statistics on the results of educational and librarian activities showed ambiguously the popularity of the entertaining literature (Brožovská, 2021, pp. 73-87).

Public Libraries 1939–1945

During World War II (WWII) collections of public libraries in the Czech lands were the subjects of censorship several times. Politically incorrect literature referring to liberal and democratic ideas, Marxist literature and anti-war works were removed, censorship was then, of course, also motivated racially and ethnically. The activities of the Czech public libraries were not interrupted unlike in the Reichsgau Sudetenland². The public library was an important institution providing adult education in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia³, during the 1939–1945 period it operated in accordance with the conception of adult education and public librarianship in the Third Reich (Dalton, 1992). A lot of public and special libraries suffered material losses, collections lost at the end of WWII were particularly irreplaceable.

The Adult Education and Public Libraries after 1945

After the military operations were finished, the activities of public and special libraries gradually resumed. Collections of public libraries were completed with

¹ 30% of the Czechoslovak population was of German nationality, in South and Southeast Slovakia there were a lot of inhabitants of the Hungarian nationality, a lot of Poles lived in the Teschen region. The majority of inhabitants in Carpathian Ruthenia declared to be Rusyns.

² Parts of Czechoslovakia directly added to the Germany in 1938–1945.

³ The name of the occupied part of Czechoslovakia (it excluded Sudetenland, Slovakia and some others regions).

books that had been removed by the censorship during the occupation, literature propagating the Nazi ideology was discarded.

A network of Czech and Slovak public libraries was built in Czechoslovakia between the world wars and has not been notably changed until the 1960s. Statistical data in Table No. 1 show the development of the Czechoslovak librarianship, the building of a network of public libraries, the number of readers and the growth of book collections in the years 1945-1960. According to statistics, the number of readers in the Czechoslovak population in 1949 was 8%. In the years that followed, the number of them increased, and in 1960, there were 12% of readers in the Czechoslovak population.⁴ As the statistical data show, as in the period before World War II, the popularity of fiction literature prevailed among readers. The category of fiction also included socially and politically engaged literature. In 1958, fiction accounted for 57% of total loans, children's and youth literature for 32% and educational literature for 11% (Statistical Yearbook of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 1962, 1962, p. 462).

Activities of the Czech public libraries, closed down in border areas of the Czech lands, were resumed in the second half of 1945. Collections of these libraries mostly could not continue in the pre-war tradition as they had been destroyed and used as scrap paper in the occupation period.

In the first post-war years, the library collections of Czech libraries in the border areas were replenished by their collections. However, up-to-date and quality fiction and professional literature (books of educational value to an average person) were not always available to readers. Where possible, the so-called bibliobuses were therefore used, in this way current and classic literature reached the readers, especially in the countryside.

⁴ In 1937, the last statistical survey before World War II was conducted. In the population of Czechoslovakia, 6.8% were library users.

Table 1: Public libraries, library fund, number of loans and readers in Czechoslovakia between 1937-1960

Year	Number of public libraries				Fund(volumes) (in thousand)		Number of readers (in thousand)			Loans (in thousand)		
	Czech lands	Slo- vackia	bran- ches	Czecho- slovakia	Czech lands	Slo- vackia	Czech lands	Slova- kia	Czecho- slovakia	Czech lands	Slova- kia	Czecho- slovakia
1937	12887	0	3760	0	8118	930	738	192	930	15642	1658	17300
1948	11324	280	3228	70	8428	905	(864)*	(196)*	(1060)*	(15510)*	(1298)*	(16808)*
1949	11356	320	3172	100	8853	930	860	208	1068	17124	1342	18466
1950	11197	451	3277	206	9658	1437	903	231	1134	19214	1866	21080
1951	10876	513	3354	270	9699	1307	1243	280	1523	19447	1760	21207
1952	10901	566	3226	95	9956	1671	1339	324	1663	18685	3435	22120
1953	10857	523	3299	75	11029	1803	1213	301	1514	20365	2380	22745
1954	10861	583	3354	33	11742	1956	1150	360	1510	21808	2814	24622
1955	10961	496	3444	23	12727	2678	1195	418	1613	24673	3468	28141
1956	10952	536	3439	22	13625	3227	1181	400	1581	26856	4305	31161
1957	10964	509	3456	23	14628	3442	1225	388	1613	27079	4188	31267
1958	10955	502	3476	32	15533	3697	1253	409	1662	29525	4797	34322
1959	10961	486	3495	63	16599	4144	1284	460	1744	31355	5566	36921
1960	10413	649	3423	69	16651	4151	1229	460	1689	32101	5970	38071

*estimate

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 1960, 1960. p.399.

Table 2: Development of inhabitants in Czechoslovakia between 1930-1961

Year	Czech lands	Slovakia	Czechoslovakia
1930	10674386	3324111	13998497
1946/47**	8762361	3327803	Not comparable
1950	8896133	3442317	12338450
1961	9628092	4113437	13741529

** In the Czech lands, it is the census of the whole present population since 5.22.1947, in Slovakia the census of the whole civilian population since 4.10.1946.

Source: Statistical Yearbook of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic 1961, 1961. p. 60.

After the end of World War II, the German public and special libraries were not restored. In the territory of the Czechoslovak part of the Cieszyn region⁵ after 1945, in addition to public libraries, library collections were built up at the Polish Cultural and Educational Union in Czechoslovakia (Polski Związek Kulturalno-Oświatowy PZKO). In 1958, the collections of the PZKO libraries were transferred to the ownership of the folk libraries operating in municipalities (Molinová, Legowiczová, p. 220).

When the war finished, Adult Education Committees managed by the state were stimulated; organizations that had been part of the education of the public before WWII resumed their activities as well⁶. Those had to be members of the National Front (Kaplan, 2012). The elementary document to guide the Adult Education Committees was the Decree of the President of the Republic Concerning the State Adult Education Care No. 130/1945 Coll (Beneš, 1945). The Masaryk Institute of Adult Education (Masarykův lidovýchovní ústav MLÚ), the theoretical and coordination headquarters of adult education activities, also continued its pre-war activities. The word organizations of political parties providing education to the public (e.g., the Social Democratic Workers Academy and Socialist Academy, the enlightenment organization of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia — Komunistická strana Československa KSČ) were also resumed. The field of library legislation did not undergo any changes then, the General Public Libraries Act was still in force.

Librarian Associations after 1945

Soon after WWII was over, the activity of librarian professional organization was resumed as well, the Czech Librarians' Association (Svaz českých knihovníků SČK) was formed in Prague on June 27, 1945. It continued the tradition of professional associations in interwar Czechoslovakia. Its foundation was laid on the merger

⁵ The region with important Polish minority.

⁶ The system of state adult education was not dissolved during the period of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. After part of Czechoslovak area was annexed, the district of scope of state Adult Education Committees was changed in 1938. German Adult Education Committees were separated from the Czech ones. The administration of the occupied area attempted, not always successfully, to use the existing adult education system to promote the Nazi ideology. The Czech Adult Education Committees were dissolved in areas annexed as the result of the Munich Agreement in 1938. Even the Czech adult education organizations had to cease their activities there.

of two important associations operating in interwar Czechoslovakia – the Central Association of Czechoslovak Librarians and Czechoslovak Bibliographical Society. After 1945 the adult education on the Czechoslovak territory was divided between two ministries. The Ministry of Education and (National) Culture (Ministerstvo školství a národní osvěty MŠANO) oversaw the area of adult education provided by state and public librarianship from 1919. In 1945 the Ministry of Information (MI) was established. In accordance with the framework plan stipulated by the Decree of the president E. Beneš of October 26, 1945, MI was to concentrate on, especially, state and political education focusing on the then time (Beneš, 1945).

As mentioned above, the field of librarianship was in the scope of MŠANO, headed by the member of the KSČ, Zdeněk Nejedlý in the 1945–1946 period. After the Parliamentary Elections of 1946, this Ministry was headed by Jaroslav Stránský, the member of the Czech National Socialist Party, until February 1948. The task of MŠANO was to make an ideological program of education of the public and to take over the role of its coordinator.

In the 1945–1948 period, the KSČ successfully exerted their influence through, apart of others, institutions that were able to address broad masses of the population, aside from the public libraries, it was, for example, via radio broadcasting. The Czechoslovak Radio was under the control of the KSČ as early as from 1945, by means of the MI⁷.

Disputes in the Czech Librarians' Association broke out before the parliamentary elections in May 1946 and continued even after Jaroslav Stránský was appointed the Minister of Education. Frantisek A. Toufar, Library Inspector, managed to enforce becoming a member of the committee of SČK in March 1946, and thus the strengthening the non-communist wing of the organization. The crisis inside the SČK deepened in autumn 1946. The stimulus was a call of the party newspaper Rudé Právo of September 22, 1946 (N, 1946) for establishing political libraries, the so-called Libraries of Klement Gottwald (GK), in basic organizations of KSČ (Novotný, 1962, pp. 52, 55)⁸. Part of SČK committee members resigned in December 1946, the committee was completed by the left-wing members. The committee was co-opted mostly by GK librarians and librarians of Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (Revoluční odborové hnutí ROH). The communist left wing asserted themselves at the General Meeting of SČK that took place on March 23, 1947. Members who did not agree with the changes in SČK established their own library organization by the Association of Towns and Municipalities, the Czechoslovak Bibliographical Society also resumed its activities. Efforts to eliminate the communist wing failed, these attempts ceased in February 1948. In February,

⁷ The Ministry of Information was established in 1945, from 1945 to 1953 the head of the Ministry was Václav Kopecký, one of the authors of the Czechoslovak cultural policy of the 1950s.

⁸ The task of the Library of Kl. Gottwald was to be a tool of systematic political education of members of KSČ. Only the most politically aware members of the organization, able to influence and “educate” other members, became KG librarians. Creators of KG Libraries, as well as many political parties in interwar Czechoslovakia, utilised a thoroughly chosen and systematically built library collection for ideological education of the party members in the field of Marxism–Leninism. There were about 15 000 KG libraries and 5 000 ROH libraries by the end of 1949.

KSČ immediately took control over the area of public librarianship, the branch of librarianship was in the scope of the Ministry of Information and Adult Education from February 28, 1948. A new socialist line and ideological unity were promoted by the First Congress of Czechoslovak Librarians that took place from the 13 to the 14 of May 1948 in Brno. After the Coup d'État of February 1948, an ideological radicalisation in the field of librarianship as well as in the whole cultural sphere was initiated, the radicalisation was under the control of the Cultural Council of the KSČ's Central Committee (Knapík, 2006, p. 40).

Librarianship in Czechoslovakia also underwent a generational change in the 1940s and 1950s. The younger generation of librarians (e.g., Jaroslav Frey, Jaroslav Kunc, Josef Vinárek and also the young Jiří Cejpek) who were influenced by the socialistic ideas of the time, asserted themselves in the professional and associational life and also formed the ideological basis of the educational work of public libraries. The generation of authors of the General Public Libraries Act gradually left their active professional careers. After 1945, Ladislav Jan Živný (1872—1949) hardly participated in discussions about the form and future of public librarianship in Czechoslovakia. Another eminent figure of the Czech and Czechoslovak public librarianship of the interwar period, Zdeněk Václav Tobolka (1874—1951), retired from public life already in 1939. Jan Thon (1886—1973) remained active despite being forced to leave the post of the director of the municipal library in Prague (in November 1948). Until 1959, he was a lecturer and educator at the Charles University in Prague (Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví, fond Thon Jan).

Legislation

The area of adult education was, after the WWII as well as in the previous periods, in the field of activities supported by the state. Košice (Governmental) Program of April 1945 planned to have libraries resumed (N, 1984, p. 33). When WWII was over, efforts to amend the library law became relevant again. Anyway, the form of the law was discussed in new social and political circumstances that were installed after 1945. Public librarianship remained the key element of the adult education system as well, as it was in the previous periods; even though new mass media – film and radio broadcasting – became commonplace, and so did the television broadcasting after 1953.

The amendment of the library law was required as early as in the 1920s. The aim of the amendment of the library legislation was to remove the biggest weaknesses of Czechoslovak public libraries of the interwar period – acquisition in most rural libraries¹⁰. In the 1930s discussions in professional and daily press resulted in plans to create library districts (according to the system in Great Britain). Such districts would have been headed by an accredited library, the task of which

⁹ Television broadcasting in Czechoslovakia began in 1953.

¹⁰ Based on the General Public Libraries Act, activities of public libraries were mostly funded by municipalities in interwar Czechoslovakia. There were also district supplementary libraries but not everywhere.

(among many others) would be dealing with acquisitions for other libraries in their district and to manage the circulation of interchangeable library collections. This system was launched in the form of central libraries in the second half of the 1960s (Koutník, 1931, p. 130).

The Unified System of Libraries Act came into force in 1959. Based on this act, a unified system of libraries of various types was created. The system included public (folk) libraries, professional libraries (scientific, technical, etc.), ROH libraries, libraries of Unified Agricultural Cooperatives (Collective Farms) and libraries of social and cultural organizations associated in the National Front. Local (National) Committees (Czechoslovak state administration organs from 1945 to 1990) fulfilled their duties in those municipalities that established, maintained, ran, and checked local folk libraries since 1945. Superior organs of local folk libraries were district folk libraries in district towns and regional folk libraries in then regional capitals (Národní shromáždění Republiky Československé, 1959). The unified system of libraries was headed by the State Library of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The Central Librarian Board by the Ministry of Education and Culture took over the task of the coordinator and professional supervisor over the activities of libraries; this job in regions and districts was conducted by library commissions.

The Unified System of Libraries Act laid the foundation for a library system that existed in Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech lands until 2001 (Národní shromáždění Republiky Československé, 1959). The Bill of the Unified System of Libraries Act was approved by the Cultural Council of the KSČ Central Committee in November 1949. The work on preparation of the library act was interrupted in the 1950s due to the changes in the cultural policy of KSČ. The work on the new legislative norm did not continue and was not finished before the end of the 1950s (Knapík et al., 2011, p. 429).

Opinions on Aims and Methods of the Adult Education in Public Libraries after 1948

Activities of public libraries in the field of adult education and education of readers were not unknown in Czechoslovakia after 1945. The discussions on the mission of public libraries and appropriate selection of books related to this institution since its establishment. An example might be the dispute over fiction that arose at the turn of the 20th century in the Anglo-American region. After WWI the idea of the library, as an educational institution focusing on the area of adolescent and adult population, made a mark on the public librarianship for several decades. Such a mission of public libraries might have been seen in the USA and Great Britain at first. The conception of a public library as an educational institution became commonplace in many other countries, e.g., in Germany or in the Soviet Union. Even librarians in interwar Czechoslovakia accepted the idea of providing education of the adults in the public library environment. Discussions about the

mission of public libraries took place there too, as well as about the possibility that the libraries might participate in the adult education movement, like in the USA or in neighbouring Germany.

The adult education activity in Czechoslovakia was co-ordinated by the Adult Education Association (from 1925 the Masaryk Institute of Adult Education). The MLÚ published lists of recommended literature for public libraries in the 1920s and the 1930s (MLÚ, 1930, p. 70). Similar lists completed with short reviews were supplements to adult education journals (e.g., regular supplement to the *Česká Osvěta* journal). The adult education mission of public libraries was to be supported legislatively, e.g., by a regulation that at least 20% of public library collections should be comprised of professional literature. Librarians also prepared first selective bibliographies for particular readers' segments, literary topography, and a free choice of selected literature (Frey, 1933, p. 16; Hora, 1934, p. 95; Frey, 1935, p. 7). However, activities related to adult education in the form of individual and group courses were not organized in libraries in interwar Czechoslovakia unlike in the USA or the USSR.

In 1945, in the period of post-war euphoria, as well as a few decades later in 1968 and 1989, the readers longed for titles that had been declined by censorship and that currently mapped the recently terminated war conflict in all its forms. The period of the desire for banned literature did not last long. Readers soon returned to their pre-war customs, even concerning the choice of literature, as it was documented by e.g., Oldřich Sedlář from the public library in Ostrava in October 1945: "Jásali jsme, že se narodil nový čtenář. Ale netrvalo celý měsíc a zájem dnešního čtenáře se dá znovu vyjádřiti jmény: Brodský, Mahlerová, Wallace..." ("We cheered, a new reader had been born. It did not last for a month and the interest of the reader today is focused on names: Brodský, Mahler, Wallace ...again.") (Sedlář, 1946, p. 10).

In the post-war period, discussions about the value of fiction literature arose again and a campaign against pulp fiction and the influence of private book rental services on the youth resumed (Lipovský, 1947, pp. 174-175). The process of evaluation of aesthetic qualities, moral and ideological harmlessness of literature took place in a lot of countries in the reporting period. The censorship in the Soviet Union serves as a traditional example; however restrictions were also applied in public libraries in the USA in the McCarthyism period (1946–1956), as the library historian Wayne Wiegand states in his book *Part of Our Lives* (Wiegand, [2015], pp. 165-172).

In the post-war Czechoslovakia, the process of book discarding took place in several stages, the first stage occurred shortly after Czechoslovakia was liberated, the second one succeeded after Coup d'État of February 1948 and followed in the 1950s (Šámal, 2009, pp. 41-64).

The conservative current was enforced due to the war experience and also to the new social and political orientation of Czechoslovakia. This current supposed books and literature to be, first of all, "moral and cultural security"

(Šnabr, 1946, p. 202). Folk library was assumed to be “the cultural basis of a nation and state” that “increases the level of folk layers”; and it is the source and a tool of public opinion, the strength that nourishes the nation and that is expressed by the state (Šnabr, 1945, p. 9). However, the beginnings of such a concept of the mission of librarian work cannot be connected with the period after WWII and adopting Soviet patterns. Similar ideas of the mission of the public library and librarians’ tasks in building national community were shared by many librarians from public libraries not only during the 1938–1945 period, but they were also commonplace in a liberal environment of interwar Czechoslovakia. The conservative concept of libraries’ work specified the goals of librarians’ tasks, too, the librarian was, according to J. Šnabr’s opinion of 1934, “an advocate for a new style of a spiritual life, for a society willing to go forward, and for a person the education for whom would be a necessity...” (Šnabr, 1934, pp. 239-243). The roots of this conception of educational task of librarianship can be seen even during the period of the emancipation of the Czech nation in the second half of the 19th century.

The liberal current of educational workers and librarians, pointing out the relaxation effects of reading as well, was overshadowed. E.g., Bohuslav Koutník was excluded from the Czech Librarians Association in 1945 for a friendly attitude toward the Western fiction reading – the so-called *Rodokaps* (Pocket Novels, similar to the *Pulps*).

Educational and artistic goals of public libraries were also emphasized in a proposal of a framework program published in *Česká Osvěta* journal by Josef Poch and Jan Šnabr, heads of folk (public) libraries department at the Ministry of Education. This framework program represented a commitment on the Czechoslovak Two-Year Plan anniversary (Poch and Šnabr, 1946, p. 408). After February 1948, the political elite of Czechoslovakia of that time, like their Soviet pattern, started to exploit public libraries as educational institutions promoting a socialist society, its success, and educating a new, socialist man. Public library stopped being an apolitical institution, as it had been in the interwar period. On the contrary, the First Congress of Librarians in March 1948 requested a conversion of the public libraries into active agents of political education of the masses (Lipovský, 1955, p. 131). The attention was drawn to the adult education in the rural environment, as declared in the Soběslav Plan of July 1950 (Knapík, 2006, p. 48) and the Tenth Congress of KSČ that took place in 1954.

Thoroughly prepared list of reading, establishing Readers’ Circles in libraries and adult education activities became tools of the realization of the mission. The adult education activities were focused on a wide range of recipients, e.g., propagation of political literature, engaged fiction and professional literature.

A “Julius Fučík’s Badge” Competition (*Fučíkův odznak – FO*) can be ranked among mass political and educational events that formed the world view of the young generation. The first FO competition took place in 1949. The applicants for FO got a reading list containing Marxism-Leninism works, Czech and Slovak

political prose and poetry (M. Majerová, P. Jilemnický), Soviet socialist-realist and war prose. Classic Czech and Slovak literature was represented by selected works by Alois Jirásek. The youth prepared in readers' circles to meet the criteria and obtain the badges; guided by instructors they learned to interpret literary texts and professional political literature. The authors of the criteria attempted to encourage reading Slovak books in the Czech part of the country, which is why the applicants for the Fučík's badges from the Czech lands had to read at least one book (thoroughly selected, of course) by a Slovak author in the original language. This contest also supported reading of engaged and social poetry (e.g., Jiří Wolker or Petr Bezruč).

Such engaged educational activities of Czechoslovak public libraries were some of the activities (criteria) that folk libraries fulfilled in the national competition called "We are building an exemplary folk library" (Budujeme vzornou lidovou knihovnu BVLK). The first BVLK contest was held in 1950.

Involved libraries had to meet the standards from the standpoint of the content of the collection (the collection should have comprised mostly politically engaged literature), activities (e.g. cooperation with educational organization, support of politically engaged literature for children, the youth and adult population as well) and the location of the library (N, 1950, pp. 228-232). Not taking the significant political motivation and engagement of the whole competition into account, the competition might have been a possibility to guide libraries to meet standards of library services provided by public libraries. An analysis of the BVLK competition criteria shows that they were based on and were an extension of the General Public Libraries Act that was in force then (e.g., reading rooms in public libraries, standardized loan period, cataloguing library collection, location and furnishing of libraries, cooperation with other subjects, e.g., schools or company libraries).

Activities of public libraries considered in the competition included also educational activity, especially lectures and discussions on contemporary topics associated with propagation of selected literature. Collectivization of agriculture was one of such key topics in the 1950s. Libraries and books were, along with increasingly expanding radio broadcasting (Ješutová, 2003, p. 613; Srb, 1983, p. 67)¹¹, the most accessible mean of education of the public. Like folk libraries in the USSR, the folk Czechoslovak libraries took part in adult education activities in the country (support of collectivization of agriculture in the 1950s), in industrial companies (cooperation with ROH libraries, e.g., in the methodology), in facilities for children (e.g., reading to children and the youth in young pioneer camps), or in hospitals (Roznerová, 1953, p. 301). The BVLK competition also continued in the following decades of the 20th century. A gradual change of the Czechoslovak society from the 1960s also influenced the area of the public librarianship; although there were norms requiring engaged adult education activities still in force, the bias propagandistic purpose of the existence of folk libraries gradually faded away. Public

¹¹ In 1958 3 million inhabitants were holders of Czechoslovak Radio broadcast receiving licence. According to the Population Census of 1950 there were about 12.3 million people living in the area of the Czechoslovak Republic.

libraries offered again other kinds of books, different from the politically engaged ones, war fiction or works by classical Marxism-Leninism authors. As a reader survey of 1959 shows, the most popular authors of the pupils aged 11- to 14-year-old¹² were, besides the Czech authors (A. Jirásek, E. Štorch), writers of classic world literature, e.g., authors who had also been popular in the First Czechoslovak Republic (J. Verne or J. London). Readers over the compulsory school attendance age mostly preferred authors of classic world literature (S. Lem, H. Balzac, E. M. Remarque, E. Hemingway, T. Dreiser, etc.) or travelogues by J. Hanzelka and M. Zikmund (Kádnerová, 1959, p. 106; N, 1959, p. 105). Critics of such an approach to reading reproached the librarians for formalism in fulfilling library standards and for lending books regardless of their topicality (Daniel, 1963, pp. 134-135)¹³.

Summary

In the first years after the end of WWII, librarians of public and professional libraries in Czechoslovakia tried to build on the results achieved by public librarianship in the Czechoslovakia in the interwar period. The focus of the post-war attention of librarians was not only the renewal of the functional network of public libraries but also the amendment to the General Public Libraries Act.

As in many areas of public life and librarianship, since the end of the war in 1945, there were efforts of left-wing groups to gain key management positions in the SČK's professional associations and to politicize this field. The field of enlightenment and folk librarianship was one of the key ones because during this period libraries, together with radio and film, were one of the effective possibilities of mass influence on the population and formation of the public opinion.

As early in the interwar period, according to the legislators, public libraries were to be included as one of the main elements of the planned system of enlightenment. However, this assumption was not fulfilled until after February 1948, when public libraries began to fulfil the unilaterally conceived role of a political-educational institution. Socialist enlightenment in Czechoslovakia focused mainly on the young generation who they could reach easier. One of the activities that helped in the education of young people in the spirit of socialist ideology was obtaining the Fučík's badge, which was a possibility of a politically advanced reader. At the end of the 1940s, in connection with the change in the agricultural policy and the commencement of rural collectivization, the rural population was another priority group for awareness-raising events and the work of public libraries. Another event that was to help promote the goals of socialist enlightenment was a competition of public libraries entitled "We are building an exemplary folk library." In addition

¹² According to the statistics, 40% of the readers of the folk's libraries in 1959 belonged to the age category under 14. In the 1950s and 1960s, the network of school libraries (for pupils and teachers) also began to expand in Czechoslovakia. In the Czech lands, school libraries have had a tradition since the first half of the 19th century. Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic*. Praha: SNTL, 1960, p. 469.

¹³ The criticism related to meeting some standards, e.g., the loan of specialized agricultural literature included books on growing house plants as well, the Specialized Literature category contained travelogues.

to ideological education, the criteria of the competition were to help improve the conditions for the activities of public libraries (e.g., premises for a public library, cataloguing) and to standardize their equipment.

One of the great priorities for the library practice of amending the library legislation was not fulfilled until 1959 with the approval of the Act on the Unified System of Libraries. The tasks of the People's Library in the field of socialist enlightenment set in the 1950s remained valid in the following decades but were no longer conducted as radically as in the founding period.

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Czechosłowackie bibliotekarstwo w latach 1945–1959

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Jana Brožovská Onderková pracuje jako adiunkt w Instytucie Języka Czeskiego i Bibliotekoznawstwa Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Opawie w Czechach. Zajmuje się historią bibliotekarstwa publicznego w Czechosłowacji (1918–1938), stowarzyszeń i partii politycznej w Czechosłowacji w okresie międzywojennym (1918–1938).

S

Słowa kluczowe: Czechosłowacja 1945–1959; edukacja dorosłych; publiczny; bibliotekarstwo; cenzura

S

Streszczenie: Artykuł koncentruje się na przekształceniu roli bibliotek publicznych w Czechosłowacji w latach 50. XX w. w zależności od rozwoju politycznego kraju. Omówiono zmiany celów edukacyjnych czechosłowackiego bibliotekoznawstwa w okresie sprawozdawczym oraz metody stosowane w działalności edukacyjnej.

W okresie po zakończeniu II wojny światowej bibliotekarstwo czechosłowackie nadal rozwijało się, zwłaszcza w sferze legislacyjnej, na fundamentach zbudowanych w latach 1918–1938. Nawet w okresie powojennym obowiązywała ustawa o powszechnych bibliotekach publicznych i istniał ośrodek koordynacji działań edukacyjnych, który po zakończeniu wojny przyjął swoją pierwotną nazwę – Instytut Edukacji Dorosłych im. Masaryka.

Jednak po 1945 r. kształcenie i bibliotekarstwo publiczne znajdowały się w zupełnie innej sytuacji społeczno-politycznej. Dziedzina edukacji dorosłych i bibliotekarstwo publiczne pozostały priorytetowymi obszarami zainteresowania reprezentacji politycznej i poszczególnych partii politycznych, które działały w powojennej Czechosłowacji. Polityczna reprezentacja powojennej Czechosłowacji intensywnie współpracowała z ZSRR, a idee lewicowe miały bardzo silną pozycję w życiu politycznym i publicznym państwa. W pierwszej części artykułu przyjrzymy się wysiłkom komunistów w latach 1945–1948 w kontroli bibliotek publicznych, które były jednym z najważniejszych elementów systemu oświaty i odgrywały ważną rolę, zwłaszcza w środowisku wiejskim. Druga część artykułu skupia się na latach 1948–1959. Pokazuje rozwój w zakresie legislacji i na przykładach działalności bibliotek publicznych ilustruje, w jaki sposób instytucje te skoncentrowały się na swoim głównym zadaniu, czyli na pracy z czytelnikiem.

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Tschechoslowakisches Bibliothekswesen in den Jahren 1945–1959

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Jana Brožovská Onderková arbeitet als wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin im Institut für Tschechische Sprache und Bibliothekswesen der Schlesischen Universität Opava in Tschechien. Sie beschäftigt sich mit der Geschichte des öffentlichen Bibliothekswesens in der Tschechoslowakei (1918–1938), der Vereine und der politischen Partei in der Tschechoslowakei in der Zwischenkriegszeit (1918–1938).

S

sch **w**orte: Tschechoslowakei 1945–1959; Erwachsenenbildung; öffentlich; Bibliothekswesen; Zensur

Z

usammenfassung: Der Beitrag konzentriert sich auf die Umgestaltung der Rolle von öffentlichen Bibliotheken in der Tschechoslowakei in den 1950er Jahren im Spiegel der politischen Entwicklung des Landes. Geschildert werden die Änderungen in den Bildungszielen des tschechoslowakischen Bibliothekswesens im genannten Zeitraum sowie die Bildungsmethoden. Nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges entwickelte sich das tschechoslowakische Bibliothekswesen fort, und zwar vor allem im gesetzgebenden Bereich auf den Fundamenten aus den Jahren 1918–1938. Das Gesetz über die allgemeinen öffentlichen Bibliotheken und das Zentrum zur Koordination der Bildungstätigkeit war sogar in der Nachkriegszeit immer noch gültig und trug nach dem Kriegsende zunächst den Namen „Masaryk-Institut für Erwachsenenbildung“.

Doch nach 1945 befanden sich die Bildung und das öffentliche Bibliothekswesen in völlig anderer sozialpolitischer Lage. Die Erwachsenenbildung und das öffentliche Bibliothekswesen standen im Fokus der politischen Repräsentation und der einzelnen politischen Parteien, die in der Tschechoslowakei der Nachkriegszeit tätig waren. Die politische Repräsentation der Tschechoslowakei der Nachkriegszeit arbeitete sehr eng mit der Sowjetunion zusammen, und die linken Ideen hatten eine starke Stellung im politischen und öffentlichen Leben des Staates. Im ersten Teil des Beitrags untersuchen wir die Bemühungen der Kommunisten in den Jahren 1945–1948, die öffentlichen Bibliotheken, welche einer der wichtigsten Bestandteile des Bildungssystems waren und eine nicht mindere Rolle vor allem im Dorfmlieu spielten,

unter Kontrolle zu stellen. Der zweite Teil des Beitrags fokussiert auf die Jahre 1948–1959, zeigt die Entwicklung im Bereich der Gesetzgebung und schildert anhand der Beispiele aus der Tätigkeit der öffentlichen Bibliotheken, auf welche Weise sie sich auf ihre Hauptaufgabe, d.i. die Arbeit mit dem Leser vorbereiteten.