

History of Education and Historical-Educational Research in Slovakia through the Lens of European Context

La Historia de la Educación y la investigación histórico-educativa en Eslovaquia a través de la lente del contexto europeo

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Abstract: Marginalisation of the discipline of history of education as well as historical-educational research in Slovakia, which is pointed out e.g. by Hamada (1995); Michalička (2004, 2012); Kudláčová (2009, 2010, 2012), resulted in a state in which educational past is no longer reflected and it causes disturbance of historical continuity of pedagogy. Historians of education are aware of it and they have been pointing out the importance of reflection on educational past recently (e.g. Kasper, 2008; Kudláčová, 2006, 2010; Sztobryn, 2010). These opinions that can be heard from the Central European environment are very close to a discussion that began in the Anglo-Saxon environment in the 1990s (e.g. Hargreaves, 1996; Woodhead, 1998; Tooley – Darby, 1998). The aim of this paper is: 1) to point out the development and transformations in the perception of the academic discipline history of education and historical-educational research in Slovakia, especially in the 20th century; 2) to identify current problems in the examined field and 3) to point out possible foundations and direction in the given field in Slovak as well as broader European context. Historical-educational research based on confrontation of scientists from various scientific fields, nationalities, methodological schools etc. can represent a new qualitatively higher level.

Key words: History of Education; Slovakia; historical-educational research; development; current problems; perspectives.

Resumen: La marginalización de la historia de la educación y de la investigación histórico-educativa en Eslovaquia, como señalan por ejemplo Hamada (1995); Michalička (2004, 2012); Kudláčová (2009, 2010, 2012), ha dado lugar a un estado en el que ya no se refleja el pasado educativo y esto provoca perturbaciones en la continuidad histórica de la pedagogía. Los historiadores de la educación son conscientes de ello y recientemente han venido señalando la importancia de la reflexión sobre el pasado de la educación (p. ej., Kasper, 2008; Kudláčová, 2006, 2010; Sztobryn, 2010). Este debate en Europa Central es similar a una discusión que se inició en el entorno anglosajón en los años 90 (p. ej., Hargreaves, 1996; Woodhead, 1998; Tooley – Darby, 1998). El objetivo de este trabajo es 1) señalar el desarrollo y las transformaciones en la percepción de la disciplina académica historia de la educación y investigación histórico-educativa en Eslovaquia, especialmente en el siglo XX; 2) identificar los problemas actuales en el campo examinado; 3) señalar posibles inicios y dirección en el campo dado en Eslovaquia, así como en el contexto europeo más amplio.

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La investigación histórica-educativa basada en la confrontación de los científicos de diversos campos, nacionalidades, escuelas metodológicas, etc. pueden representar un nuevo nivel cualitativamente superior.

Palabras clave: Historia de la Educación; Eslovaquia; investigación histórico-educativa; desarrollo; problemas actuales; perspectivas.

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1. Introduction

Several historians of education point out facts that confirm marginalisation of the discipline of history of education as well as historical-educational research in Slovakia¹. They argue that courses of a historical-educational character are rarely represented in the curricula structure of study programmes at Faculties of Education and Faculties of Arts at Slovak universities where prospective teachers and pedagogues are trained; also rare is the occurrence of research projects supported by grant agencies of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic focused on historical-educational research; another issue is a missing new generation of historians of education (Hamada, 1995; Michalička, 2004; 2012; Kudláčová, 2009, 2010, 2012). These facts resulted in a state in which educational past is no longer reflected and it causes disturbance of historical continuity of pedagogy. Consequently, the loss of continuity causes a problem with its further development. Historians of education are aware of it and they have been pointing out the importance of reflection on educational past recently (Kasper, 2008; Kudláčová, 2006, 2010; Sztobryn, 2010). However, they suggest that if the reflection is to be helpful, while searching for answers related to the direction, importance and problems of pedagogy, it has to be done in a different way. These opinions that can be heard from the Central European environment are very close to a discussion that began in the Anglo-Saxon environment in the 1990s (*e.g.* Hargreaves, 1996; Woodhead, 1998; Tooley – Darby, 1998). The discussion was led in the sense of justification of history of education and in extreme cases it even led to doubting its need at all (*e.g.* Lowe, 2002).

The aim of the paper is: 1) to point out the development and transformations in the perception of the academic discipline history of education and historical-educational research in Slovakia, especially the 20th century; 2) to identify

¹ It is difficult to separate the modern development and history of the Slovak nation from the modern history and development of the Czech nation, since we co-existed in a common state in the 20th century. The Czechoslovak Republic was formed in 1918. With the exception of the years 1939 – 1945, when there existed the independent Slovak Republic and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the co-existence of these two linguistically related nations lasted until 1993. Scientific communities in individual scientific fields have been closely interrelated since the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic and, despite the separation in 1993, they are still close to each other. Due to the given reason it is not fully possible to extract the development of Slovak pedagogy and, therefore, I also state some important facts related to the Czech environment.

current problems in the examined field and 3) to point out possible foundations and direction in the given field in Slovak as well as broader European context.

2. Metamorphoses in the Field of History of Education and Historical-Educational Research in Slovakia Emphasising the 20th century

The beginnings of historical-educational writing in Slovakia can be dated back to the origination of the work *Gymnaziológia* (orig. *Gymnasiologia evangelico-Hungarica, sive Historia scholarum et earundem Rectorum Celebrriorum*), written by a Slovak teacher and pedagogue Ján Režík (1650? – 1710) at the beginning of the 18th century, i.e. at about the same time as similar writings were created in other European countries. However, it remained a manuscript since Režík died of plague before his work was published. The work has an interesting history and it was only published in 1971 after overcoming many obstacles. V. Ružička translated it from the Latin original and added several historical-critical notes². *Gymnaziológia* is an excellent source of history of Slovak evangelical education in the period of the 16th – 18th century, where the author describes history of individual grammar schools with a chronological list of rectors and teachers, including a brief outline of their life and educational activity.

Ján Kvačala (1862 – 1934), an evangelical priest, pedagogue, church historian and a founder of modern Comeniology, is considered a pioneer in the field of history of education in Slovakia. His dissertation thesis entitled *Über J. A. Comenius Philosophie insbesondere Physik*, which he successfully defended at the University of Leipzig, determined his further scientific orientation (it was published in Leipzig in 1886). Following the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the birth of J. A. Comenius, his innovative work *Johann Amos Comenius. Sein Leben und seine Schriften* was published; it was labelled at the time by foreign reviewers as the best work in the field of Comeniology³. In Slovak language, Kvačala published the work *Komenský. Jeho osobnosť a sústava vedy pedagogickej* (1913) (tr. Comenius. His Personality and the System of Educational Science) and a year after his death the work *Dejiny reformácie na Slovensku* (1935) (tr. History of Reformation in Slovakia) was published. He describes the history of Slovak evangelical education and pedagogy from the beginning of the 16th century to the

² The work was published and entitled as follows: Režík, J. – Matthaëides, S.: *Gymnaziológia. Dejiny gymnázií na Slovensku [Gymnasiology. History of Secondary Grammar Schools in Slovakia]* Bratislava, 1971.

³ In 1905 Kvačala focused on research of the work of an Italian Renaissance thinker, T. Campanella. Kvačala's fundamental research question was whether it is Comenius who is the founder of modern pedagogy or Campanella as the Italian historians claimed. The research outcomes were published in works *Th. Campanella, ein Reformator der ausgehenden Renaissance* (Jurjev, 1909) and *Über die Genese der Schifften Th. Campanellas* (Jurjev, 1911). Like his comeniological works, the treatises on T. Campanella made him equally notable in the world.

beginning of the 18th century. His knowledge of several languages enabled him to carry out extensive scientific and publication activity (besides Slovak language he also published in the Czech, Russian, German and Hungarian languages and also partially spoke the Polish, Latin and French languages). The development of historical-educational research, which Kvačala took to an excellent level in the first third of the 20th century, continued. He was followed by two important generations of Slovak historians of education. The first generation asserted themselves through their research and publication activity mainly in the 1940s and 1950s. The most significant members include: Čečetka, V. Ružička, P. Vajcik.

A great part of J. Čečetka's⁴ (1907 – 1983) work is related to the history of Slovak education and its important representatives⁵. J. Mátej (1972) considers him a pioneer of the history of Slovak education. Čečetka together with P. Vajcik wrote *Dejiny školstva a pedagogiky na Slovensku do prvej svetovej vojny* (1956 a 1958) (tr. *History of Education and Pedagogy in Slovakia up to the First World War*). In a work *Zo slovenskej pedagogiky* (1940) (tr. *From Slovak Pedagogy*), based on the then research, Čečetka synthesized the history of Slovak education from the 16th century to the end of the 19th century. It is the first ever work that captures the development of Slovak educational thinking. In the first part of his two-volume work *Pedagogika I. – II.* (1947 a 1948, tr. *Pedagogy I – II*) Čečetka discussed the historical development of education in the world, Europe and Slovakia. He had excellent language skills: as well as speaking Hungarian, French, German and Latin, he was self-educated in Russian and English.

Another significant personality of the so called first generation of Slovak historians of education was Peter Vajcik (1902 - 1985). In 1955 he published an innovative work *Školstvo, študijné a školské poriadky na Slovensku v XVI. Storočí* (tr. *Education, Study and School Rules in Slovakia in the 16th Century*). Since he was proficient in Latin, Hungarian and German and used primary sources, the work has high scientific credentials. Vajcik also wrote some chapters on the history of Slovak education and pedagogy for the publication *Dejiny pedagogiky* (tr. *History of Education*) edited by Josefa Váňa (1956 a 1958). Vajcik is also a co-author of the publication *Dejiny českej a slovenskej pedagogiky* (1976) (tr. *History of the Czech and Slovak Education*) edited by Jozef Mátej. Together with Juraj

⁴ Juraj Čečetka is considered a founder of modern Slovak pedagogy. He was the first Slovak professor of pedagogy (1940), the director of the Seminar of Education at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, the founder and editor of an influential journal *Pedagogický zborník* (tr. *Pedagogical Proceedings*) and a journal for parents *Dieťa* (tr. *Child*).

⁵ *Výber zo slovenských pedagógov* [tr. *A Selection of Slovak Pedagogues*] (1947), *Učiteľ ľudu Samuel Tešedík* [Samuel Tešedík, *A Teacher of the Nation*] (1952), *Vavrinca Benediktovi z Nedožer z Vnútornej sústavy školskej a Reč nápravná* [Inner School System of Vavrinca Benedikt from Nedožer and Correctional Language] (1955), *Pedagogické dielo Jána Seberinovi* [Ján Seberini's *Pedagogical Work*] (1957), *Pedagogické dielo Samuela Tešedíka* [Samuel Tešedík's *Pedagogical Work*] (1959).

Čečetka he published the already mentioned university textbook *Dejiny školstva a pedagogiky na Slovensku do prvej svetovej vojny* (1956, 1958) and *Vybrané kapitoly z dejín školstva a pedagogiky na Slovensku* (1971) (tr. Selected Chapters on History of Education and Pedagogy in Slovakia). He also wrote forewords to Slovak translations of classic works of pedagogy.

The work of the historian of education and teacher Vladislav Ružička⁶ (1894 – 1973) is also largely scientifically correct and not impacted on by the period. In 1946 Ružička published a book on J. A. Comenius's student: *Eliáš Ladiver mladší, slovenský pedagóg* (tr. *Eliáš Ladiver Jr., a Slovak Pedagogue*) and in 1966 *Dejiny slovenského šlabikára* (tr. *History of Slovak Spelling Book*). In 1974 he published a significant work *Školstvo na Slovensku v období neskorého feudalizmu po 70. roky 18. Storočia* (tr. *Education in Slovakia in the Period of Late Feudalism up to the 1770s*). A great achievement of his was the publication of the already mentioned work *Gymnaziológia*.

Life of the representatives of the first generation of Slovak historians of education was affected by a change of political regime. In February 1948 a coup took place in Czechoslovakia and the crisis of government was used by the Communist Party, who seized the power. Educational science and education started to orientate towards Soviet pedagogy and the Soviet model of education. Historical materialism became a methodological base for history of education. In the 1950s translations of Soviet authors of history of education started to be published, e.g. *Dejiny pedagogiky* (tr. *History of Education*) by J. N. Medynskij (1950), *Dejiny pedagogiky* (tr. *History of Education*) by N. A. Konstantinov – J. N. Medynskij – M. F. Šabajeva (1959). It may be stated that the work of the first generation of historians of education, stretching from the pre-war period to the period of Socialism, tried to resist the ideological pressure (Čečetka was persecuted)⁷. They kept their distance from the regime and attempted scientifically correct work. However, this cannot be said about the second generation of Slovak historians of education, whose writings are connected with the period from the 1960s to 1980s. The most prominent representatives were J. Schubert (1904 – 2000), J. Mátej (1923 – 1987), F. Karšai (1918 – 1975), A. Čuma (1927 – 1997), Ľ. Bakoš (1919 – 1974), O. Pavlík (1916 – 1996), T. Srogoň (1920 – 1995), J. Gallo (1922 – 2008). Their work was substantially marked by the ideology of Marxism – Leninism. In order to be able to publish, they had to either identify with the ideology or just pretend by inserting such elements into their works. Many of them held important functions in the political sphere, e.g. Bakoš a Pavlík.

⁶ V. Ružička was a Czech teacher; in 1938 he had to leave Slovakia and returned only after 1945.

⁷ J. Čečetka had to leave his position at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University and was transferred to the university library staff (Archive of the Comenius University, Faculty of Arts CU, Rectorate Coll., Personnel Department, reg. mark B II/2, personal file of prof. Juraj Čečetka, box No. 26, letter No. 1494/59 from 15th May 1959).

Jozef Mátej, who dealt with history of Slovak education and pedagogy of the 19th and 20th century and also published works in the field of comeniology, can be considered the most significant historian of education in the second generation. He chaired the commission for entries on history of pedagogy and education in a two-volume publication *Pedagogická encyklopédia Slovenska* (1984 a 1985) (tr. Pedagogical Encyclopaedia of Slovakia). Among his most notable publications are: *Dejiny českej a slovenskej pedagogiky* (et al., 1976) (tr. History of Czech and Slovak Education) and *Dejiny školstva a pedagogiky* (1981) (tr. History of Education and Pedagogy). The most significant publication in the field of research on comeniology was his work *Ján Kvačala, život a dielo* (1962) (*Ján Kvačala, Life and Work*).

These two generations of Slovak historians of education were not followed by a generation of significant importance. In the last two decades of the 20th century only the works of a few individuals e.g. the already mentioned Ján Gallo and Jozef Pšenák⁸ (1939), can be noted.

The socio-political changes in the countries of the so called Eastern Block that took place at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s brought about many transformations. The processes of democratization started in the Czechoslovak Republic in 1989. However, the process of transformation in the field of sciences, humanities in particular, was not easy and smooth. The forty-year-long period of Socialism involved two generations living in an environment of political and social isolation which caused loss of professional contacts, scientific literature written in foreign languages, opportunities of study stays at foreign universities and ultimately stagnation in their development.

Humanities was infiltrated by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Regarding historical-educational writing, all publications published after 1948 misinterpreted the educational past and, depending on the author, they were in varying degrees conforming and tributary to the regime, otherwise they could not have been published e.g. university teachers had to be members of the Communist Party. This deformation in the development of historical-educational research meant that the course history of education was not interesting and not popular with the students due to its content. After 1989 it formed a part of study programmes only exceptionally, it was taught mainly as a complementary course by lecturers of other courses, because a new generation of historians of education was missing. It can be stated that continuity of well-developed historical-educational research in Slovakia gradually declined and this state continues at present.

⁸ J. Pšenák is the only author of a publication on Slovak education and pedagogy in the 20th century (*Slovenská škola a pedagogika 20. Storočia* [tr. The Slovak School and Pedagogy of the 20th Century], 2011) so far; it has a character of an outline and draws mainly from secondary literature and not from archival research.

3. Identification of Problems in the Field of History of Education and Historical-Educational Research in Slovakia

In the period from the creation of pedagogy to the first half of the 20th century, in continental Europe, history of education was a part of publications on general pedagogy. In our environment, a three-volume *Pedagogika* by O. Kádner (1925) and a two-volume *Pedagogika* by J. Čečetka (1947 a 1948) can be mentioned, for instance. History of education was a part of courses in the training of prospective teachers at teacher institutes. Gradually, it became one of the essential educational as well as academic disciplines. According to J. Kyrášek (1965), up to the period of the 1960s, history of education used to be mainly a historical outline, its aim being to influence the attitude of prospective teachers toward their occupation and their orientation in the field of educational development. Historical-educational works were mostly schematic and full of facts that were difficult to remember. It was rooted in the fact that the works were understood mainly as a school subject and were given little attention as a scientific discipline. They were often perceived also as a special part of cultural history, whose aim was to demonstrate cultural maturity of the nation. History of education, written from the perspective of cultural history, could not help to solve the problems of educational theory. However, works transcending the above mentioned schematism, works based on serious research can be found with Slovak provenance. Examples include the work of J. Kvačala and the representatives of the first generation of historians of education, namely J. Čečetka, P. Vajcik and V. Ružička, who managed to resist the ideology of the period of socialism relatively well. In the 1960s historical-educational research in Slovakia reached its peak due to political relaxation between 1968 and 69 (Prague Spring). However, after the intervention of Soviet troops and the rise of the period of normalisation, education and science were completely in thrall to the ideology of the political regime – this impacted on the field of historical-educational research too⁹. This situation lasted until the socio-political changes in 1989.

According to V. Michalička (2004), historical-educational research in Slovakia has never had much status. Its quality correlated with the quality and scientific potential of individual researchers in the given field. It had a non-institutional character¹⁰ and consisted of predominantly individual research. This statement also relates to the period after 1989. Historical-educational research

⁹ Jozef Mátej reported on the state of historical-educational research in Slovakia in the second half of the 20th century several times. His critical evaluation can be found, for example, in his papers: *Súčasný stav a ďalší rozvoj dejín pedagogiky na Slovensku* (1969) and *Vývoj dejín pedagogiky na Slovensku po oslobodení* (1985).

¹⁰ In 1954 – 1958 existed *Cabinet of Education of Slovak Academy of Sciences* (orig. *Pedagogický kabinet Slovenskej akadémie vied*) in Bratislava, whose part was the *Department of History of Education* (orig. *Oddelenie pre dejiny pedagogiky*). It was founded by O. Pavlík.

is not concentrated under any research institution or educational institution. It continues to be an effort of individuals who do not form larger teams. M. Hamada (1995, p. 5) described the situation as follows: «in historiography of Slovak education there is no research programme, people work randomly, uncoordinated and fragmentarily». Scientific and professional publications or papers in the field of history of education are a rare phenomenon among Slovak professional writings. One of the shortcomings of the generation after 1989 is weak language proficiency. Other problems include the diffusiveness of historical-educational research and its focus on partial themes. Research of more complex themes, which could be financially supported by national and foreign grant systems, is missing.

Besides the above mentioned conceptual and personnel problems there exists also a methodological problem that has been emerging more and more frequently in recent years: *how to examine educational past so that the outcomes would contribute to the answers to theoretical as well as practical questions in education?* This problem is connected to the particularity of the subject of history of education – educational past that no longer exists (B. Kudláčová, 2010). It can be reflected only from recordings and the examined phenomena cannot be repeated in contrast to natural sciences (G. J. Mouly, 1978). According to M. Skladaný (1998), the so called double subjectivism can be an issue too: on the one hand, the subjectivism of mediators of objective educational past; and on the other hand, the subjectivism of a researcher that is historically determined. B. Malík (2008) states that pedagogical viewpoints typical of a certain period can be discovered only indirectly, through the analysis of relevant historical symbols, artefacts and realia of everyday life reconstructed from preserved historical writings of various kinds. Thus, we need to consider whether our focus is on the knowledge of pedagogical viewpoints reflecting a given period or it is on the search for such historical testimonies about education that suit its contemporary understanding and our current opinions on education, which do not have to be representative for the given period. A period a historian of education lives in is inevitably reflected in his work, however, it should not be reflected to such extent that it distorts the image of the past projected by the historian.

I point out this matter due to the fact that in Slovakia educational history of the 20th century has not been reflected upon so far. The interwar period (1918 – 1939) could not be objectively reflected upon since it was followed by the period of the authoritarian Slovak State (1939 – 1945) and, subsequently, the totalitarian period of Socialism (1948 – 1989). Historians of education of these periods worked through ideological lenses, therefore reflection on the 20th century remains a challenge that could revive educational discussion in Slovakia¹¹.

¹¹ A shift can be noted in this field. A team of authors supervised by the author of the paper gained a scientific grant focused on re-evaluation of educational thinking and education in Slovakia from the

4. Foundations and Perspectives in the Field of History of Education and Historical- Educational Research or How to Proceed with Historical-Educational Exploration?

The poor state of the field of history of education and historical-educational research is one of the factors that cause a serious problem in distortion of historical continuity of education as such. In the former Socialist countries the reason was a political factor – dominance of a single ideology. An interesting fact is that, according to G. McCulloch (2002, 2008), historical-educational research in the Anglo-Saxon world got sidelined, too. One of the factors was a crisis of history in the second half of the 20th century. Although postmodern criticism pointed out the ideological premise of discourse in historical science correctly, by rejecting any rational discourse and questioning the notion of historical truth as well as historical untruth, they «threw the baby out with the bath water» (cf. Iggers, 2002). Another problem was «the turning to educational practice» and marginalising of theoretical training of teachers in the 1980s (Holey, 1982). The question of how to continue in historical-educational research is therefore a question of an all-European and worldwide character.

Let me add several remarks. Firstly, the crisis in the field of history of education in the Western European countries as well as non-European countries led to a new model of collaboration between historians of education with specialists from the field of historical and social sciences. This resulted in the formation of several societies focused on the field of history of education (*History of Education Society*) in the second half of the 20th century. Each of these societies organises regular conferences and has its own journal. Subsequently, these organisations started to network. For example, ISCHE – *International Standing Conference of History of Education*, established in 1978, associates several institutions focused on the field of history of education with the intention of encouraging internationalisation of historical-educational research as well as collaboration of researchers in the given field. Formation of these societies is responsible not only for overcoming the limits of individual scientific potential, but also the potential related to a certain region, nationality, culture. It created a new paradigm in the development of historical-educational research and changed its character and

period of the formation of independent Czechoslovakia (1918). The outcome of the research is represented by conference proceedings from two scientific colloquia so far: *Pedagogické myslenie a školstvo na Slovensku v medzivojnovom období* (2014) and *Pedagogické myslenie a školstvo na Slovensku v rokoch 1939 – 1945* (2015). They contain studies focused on historical reconstruction of educational discussion and individual fields of education, based mainly on archival research. The main outcome of the project will be a monograph of a collective of authors entitled *Pedagogické myslenie, školstvo a vzdelávanie na Slovensku v rokoch 1918 – 1945*, which will be published in 2016. Our intention is to subsequently start another project focused on the given field in the period of Socialism.

quality substantially. The opportunity to meet and to confront historians of education from various countries at scientific conferences and the reflection on educational past in historical-educational journals by authors from various cultural, linguistic and religious environments represent a real fulfilment of this paradigm.

Secondly, the symposium ECER (*European Conference on Educational Research*) held in 2008 in Gothenburg in Sweden, where the relationship among individual educational disciplines in the period of existence of international scientific networks was discussed, was another important step forward in historical-educational research. According to J. Goodman and I. Grosvenor (2011), it has to be admitted that scientific networks have a significant influence on the «construction» of history of education as a scientific discipline; they labelled it as a *moment of growth*. The participants of the symposium also formulated the second feature of current historical-educational research – a *moment of insecurity*. It means that historians of education, when «trespassing» on the borders of history of education, «broaden» and «blur» the borders of individual educational disciplines. However, it can also be related to «vague» and ambiguous determination of the place of history of education within educational sciences. According to the above mentioned authors, analysis of these two phenomena forms foundations for the development of educational sciences.

Thirdly, asking questions about the essence of the discipline history of education and searching for intersections with other disciplines causes «permeability» of its borders, which can lead to temporary disintegration. On one hand it represents a certain risk, but on the other it opens up the space for new possibilities, what J. Goodman and I. Grosvenor (2011) labelled as a *moment of curiosity*. Going beyond own borders, transdisciplinarity creates a space for collaboration with scientists from other scientific disciplines and application of their knowledge or methods. It can be said that this uncertainty is a certain stage in a process that could eventually lead to the development of history of education and that opens up new views and possibilities of approaches to the research of educational past.

Fourthly, following the previous points and welcoming new approaches, time-consuming archival research cannot be underestimated, because it is a presupposition for confrontation and objectification of outcomes at international forums and in international journals. A change of the research perspective of educational past can lead to greater openness for accepting new findings: no outcome of historical research has to be definitive and permanently valid. It does not mean that a historical fact was altered, it remains unchanged; however, we can see it in broader and new connections. The fact that an outcome of historical research does not have to be permanently valid is often considered to be negative and was one of the arguments for questioning historical research in the second

half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it is legitimate that a historian of education in the 18th century would see a certain historical fact differently to a historian in the 21st century. Constant re-evaluation of educational past does not regard only the Eastern European countries or other countries that have an experience with totalitarian regimes: it equally regards countries whose history of education has been developed in freer conditions. The reflection on educational past is never finished.

Fifthly, the first half of the 20th century in the continental Europe was typical of a peculiar tension between two fundamental philosophical approaches to educational past that were often perceived antagonistically: the empirical-positivist approach characterised by clustering of facts and the idealistic-teleological approach emphasizing the continuity of history. According to A. Rajský (2014), positivism appeared to be too sterile, fragmentary, de-personalised and forgetful about the meaning of history; on the other hand, the idealistic-teleological approach creates a space for a high degree of subjectivity and ideologisation of the past. Rajský (2014, p. 20) states that «a strict work with historical sources remains *sine qua non* condition, without which it is impossible to reconstruct the past. On the other hand, it is not sufficient if our intention is to understand the past times and its creations and to acquire a view respecting broader social and anthropological (and educational) connections». A historian conducts a discussion with the «foregone» that is in a fundamentally different situation to the situation of the historian and thus, it requires the interpretation of meaning.

Sixthly, there exist two ways to integrate historians of education from the countries of former Eastern Europe and the outcomes of their work into historical-educational research in a broader European context: a) integration of an individual into some of the existing societies for history of education and participation in organised activities (conferences, publishing in journals); and b) the more demanding way which is to establish new societies (in our case, the one for the Central or South European region) and offer a partnership collaboration to societies with longer traditions or integration into an already existing network¹².

5. Conclusion

History of education will never be a part of the mainstream; in fact, historians of education publish mainly in specialised journals and for a pre-determined

¹² A medium that can encourage historical-educational discussion in Central Europe on one hand, and its confrontation within a broader context on the other hand, is a new Czech journal *Historia Scholastica*, edited by T. Kasper (established in 2015), which is the first international historical-educational journal in the environment of the former Czechoslovakia (available online: <http://www.historiascholastica.com/mezinarodni-redakcni-rada>).

community of readers. On the other hand, historical-educational research is perceived as a part of research in the field of education which «bridges» the past with the present through a reflection of educational past. In recent years, a greater permeability of the borders of the discipline history on education can be observed which opens the space for joint historical-educational research across the spectrum of scientific disciplines, countries, regions, research methods, etc. Historical-educational research based on confrontation of scientists from various scientific fields, nationalities, methodological schools etc. represents a new, qualitatively higher level. The «permeability» of the borders of history of education also causes an opposite phenomenon: contemporary general-educational research begins to pay attention to the historical dimension of individual educational phenomena. Analysis of educational past can therefore lead to projection of educational future. History of education can play this important role only if it is redefined and developed to an adequate scientific level. It would entitle history of education to regain the position of honor that it has lost among educational disciplines and courses for the training of prospective pedagogues.

6. Archival Sources

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