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The 130th volume of the *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* (*Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika*) – position and polemics

Abstract: This year, we celebrate the 130th volume of *Popotnik*, which was later renamed *Sodobna pedagogika* (*Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*). *Popotnik* was first published in 1880, but during World War II, it was not published for about three years. It very soon became the most reputable journal in the field of education in the Slovene territory and the most prominent theorists and practitioners of education wrote articles for it. *Popotnik* familiarized and educated teachers on new achievements in the field of education. It was also a place to confront different views and understandings of the theory and praxis of education. In 1950, the journal was renamed *Sodobna pedagogika*, which has continued and enriched the tradition of *Popotnik* until the present. In this article, the author defines position of the journal in selected periods based on analysis of three significant polemics in the journal and selected texts, which served as the guidelines or directives for the journal in decisive moments of its publication. The author determines that neither *Popotnik* nor *Sodobna pedagogika* ever clearly indicated subversive positions or tendencies in relation to the existing authorities and political system; however, neither was the journal just a docile instrument for the implementation of their ideas in the field of education.

Keywords: *Popotnik*, *Sodobna pedagogika*, Herbartism, socialism, pedagogic paradigms, history of school, *Rimski katolik*, reform pedagogy, new school, old school, theory of education, praxis of education, Slovenia

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Introduction

In 2013, we celebrate an important anniversary: This year's volume of *Sodobna pedagogika* (*Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*) is the 130th volume of the pedagogic journal *Popotnik*, which was renamed *Sodobna pedagogika* in the mid-20th century. Between 1942 and 1945, because of the war situation, three volumes of *Popotnik* were not published; as a result, the years of publication (this year is in fact the 133rd year of publishing) do not match the volumes of publishing (this is the 130th volume of publishing). As we will see below, near the end of the 19th century and especially between the two world wars, *Popotnik* had already become the most important, and we can also say, the most influential journal in the field of education in the Slovene territory. Over this time, *Popotnik* has been educating, instructing, and acquainting teachers with achievements in the theory and praxis of education, as well as consolidating their professional identity and self-confidence; on the other hand, it has also been a place of confrontation of different views and understandings of the theory and praxis of pedagogy and education in their broadest sense. These confrontations were more or less supported with facts and evidence and were more or less vehement. In *Popotnik*, the most prominent theorists and practitioners in the field of education were publishing articles throughout the time the journal was published under that name. After its renaming, *Sodobna pedagogika* continued *Popotnik*'s tradition and even strove to improve it in terms of its reputation and influence in the field of education.

In this article, based on a description of selected events and advances of *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika* through a historical perspective on its 130 volumes, we will analyze the development of the journal over three centuries (late 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries). Above all, we intend to define its position in selected periods on the ground of editorials or other articles that functioned as the guidelines for its further work in a transition periods or crucial moments for the journal, as well as on the grounds of three significant polemics that emerged in either *Popotnik* or *Sodobna pedagogika*. The intention of this article is not to analyze all polemics in *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika*, because there have been

many of these during the publication of the journal; however, to avoid criticism related to selection bias, we must remark that they were selected because they exemplify typical characteristics of the time, irrespective whether they took place at the beginning or at the end of the period. More attention will be paid to *Popotnik* than to *Sodobna pedagogika*. A comprehensive bibliographical description and presentation of the development of *Popotnik* as a whole and *Sodobna pedagogika* until 1979 was prepared by Tatjana Hojan, Albina Perkič, and Andrej Vovko (Hojan, Perkič and Vovko 1983; Vovko 1983) for the 100th anniversary; however, the later period – at least to the year 2000 – is still waiting for a similar review. A lot of articles (i.e., conceptualizations, discussions, polemics, propositions, etc.) in *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika* are also analogously waiting for thematization, as well as (more detailed) analysis and evaluation. Based on this, we will be able to illuminate and appropriately evaluate single periods, as well as simultaneous advancements in the field of education. With this anniversary article, we would also like to encourage theorists and practitioners in the field of education to evaluate the present time correctly and not repeat past errors in the future based on the perceptions and evaluation of the past.

Perhaps we will even provoke a new polemic.

In the development of *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika* we will define the following periods for the purposes of our analysis: *Popotnik* during the time of Austria-Hungary; the period between both world wars (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Kingdom of Yugoslavia); *Popotnik* after World War II (Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia); the renaming of the journal – as *Sodobna pedagogika* up to the 1990s; and *Sodobna pedagogika* in the late 20th and early 21st century.

Short historical survey of the publication of *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika*

The first issue of *Popotnik* was published in Celje on 10 January 1880. Initially, it did not have extensive professional pedagogic ambitions; as a main reason for its publication, it was stated that teachers could be “taught in a pleasant way and amused in various things,” and that the journal would be “a center of an intellectual work for the welfare and culture of its nation,” wherein “learned and simple-minded people of different classes and different age [would meet] to learn from each other what they still need for the accomplishment of their own intellectual or physical well-being” based on the articles and other contributions (Žolgar 1880, p. 1). “The journal will be named ‘Popotnik’ [Traveler].” (Ibid.) Its objectives, too, were initially more oriented toward the national awakening of the teachers and nation-affirmative as pedagogic-professional. The most important concerns of the journal would be to inform readers about “important and necessary things, to narrate some wise word exactly and at the same time plainly,” to observe successful teachers and “recommend imitation” of their work in articles, to acquaint readers with tales, songs, and “manners and customs” of “simple folks,”

and to inform the readership “where a certain already deceased person had done something remarkable and famous for the prosperity of mankind; it will describe lands, towns, markets and villages, through which it will travel.” Its attention would also be turned to the “literary field”; in every issue, “a joke or riddle for its friends” would also be published (ibid., p. 2). With time, the quality of the articles improved and the journal was increasingly oriented toward the field of education.

The first editor(-in-chief) of *Popotnik* was Jakob Lopan, who was followed by Mihael Žolgar. Until 1883, the journal was published in Celje; afterwards, with the change of editor, it was transferred to Maribor, where Mihael Narat remained its editor(-in-chief) for 36 years (1883–1919). In 1890, *Popotnik* became the official publication of the Association of Slovene Teachers’ Societies (*Zaveza slovenskih učiteljskih društev*), which it remained until the dissolution of Austria-Hungary and the reorganization of the teachers’ societies.

Pavel Flerè followed Nerat as the editor-in-chief in 1919 and edited *Popotnik* for the next 10 years, until 1929. For the next two years, the journal was edited by an editorial board instead of an individual editor; this board included Anton Osterc, Franjo Žgeč, and Ernest Vranc. These individuals were quite radical representatives of the school reform movement. Their aim and task was for *Popotnik* to become a “consistent propagator of living-work school” (Žerjav 1939, p. 8). The editing of the journal, as Žerjav estimated, represented a real pedagogic “Sturm und Drang period,” which was, as he said, “in some extent inclined to fight, yet idealistically conceived” (ibid., p. 9). When they resigned in 1931, Matija Senkovič, who was a much more moderate defender of the school reform movement, took on the editing of the journal. In 1940, Ernest Vranc was appointed as the editor-in-chief, while the editorial board included Miloš Ledinek, Vladko Majhen, and Miroslav Zor, who continued work that had been started in 1929. *Popotnik* was published with this editorial structure until its last interwar issue in 1941. One of the new developments initiated by this editorial board was to look at thematic issues (e.g., “Society, arithmetic and school,” “Our village school,” “Concern about the future of Slovene primary school,” “A nice word and a book to the youth!”).

After the end of World War II, *Popotnik* began being published again in the autumn of 1945; starting in 1947, France Ostanek was the last editor-in-chief of the journal under this name. After the change in the social, political, and economic system in 1945, all periodicals in the field of education were placed in the service of the new, revolutionary doctrine. In 1949, *Popotnik* became the official publication of the newly established Pedagogic Society of the People’s Republic of Slovenia (*Pedagoško društvo LRS*).

In 1950, *Popotnik*’s 70th anniversary, it was renamed *Sodobna pedagogika* (*Journal of Contemporary Educational studies*). At the time of the reorganization and renaming of the Pedagogic Society at the end of 1950s, the Association of Pedagogic Societies of the People’s Republic of Slovenia became publishing of *Sodobna pedagogika*; in the 1970s, this organization was renamed the Association of Slovenian Educationalists (*Zveza društev pedagoških delavcev Slovenije*), and this body continues to publish the journal today. The first editor-in-chief of *Sodobna pedagogika* was Vlado Schmidt (1950–1952), who was followed by Marica Dekleva

(1953–1960), Vladimir Cvetko (1961–1984), France Strmčnik (1985–1990), Boris Kožuh (1990–1998), Metod Resman (1999–2007), Janko Muršak (2008–2009), Mojca Kovač Šebart (2010–2012), and Jasna Mažgon (2012–).

For this short historical overview of the publication of *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika*, the following sources were used: Hojan 1964, 1973, 1981; Hojan, Perkič, and Vovko 1983; Vovko 1983; Žerjav 1939; and relevant issues of *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika*.

***Popotnik* during the Austria-Hungary period**

In the mid-1880s, when Herbartism in Germany supposedly culminated, it was not even particularly well known, let alone acknowledged as a predominating pedagogic conception in the territory of Slovenia (cf. Protner 2001, p. 202). In *Popotnik*, the first article using Herbartian theory was published in 1882 (i.e., Ivan Klemenčič's article titled *Higher emotions and their formation in the school*) (cf. *ibid.*, p. 200–201).

Polemic about Herbartism between Anton Mahnič and Tomaž Romih

One of the most characteristic and most bitter polemics evidenced in *Popotnik*, in the 19th century was that between Anton Mahnič (at that time the prefect and principal of a seminary in Gorica) and Tomaž Romih (chairman of the Association of Slovene Teachers' Societies, which published *Popotnik*).

The polemic ran in 1890 and 1891, and was actually initiated by Mahnič; in 1890, in his journal titled *Rimski katolik* (*Roman Catholic*), Mahnič wrote an uncompromising critique of the textbook *Obče vzgojeslovje* (*General Education, Allgemeine Erziehungslehre* of 1886), written by Gustav Adolf Lindner, a renowned professor of philosophy. This critique was made on the grounds that the book was antireligious and that it was founded on Herbart's rationalistic doctrine, which was derived from Kant's philosophy (cf. *ibid.*, p. 214). In the next issue of *Rimski katolik* his critique was directed toward the "antireligious or liberal orientation" of *Popotnik* and the Association of Slovene Teachers' Societies, both of which were allegedly influenced by Lindner and Herbart, who was in fact – as Mahnič was convinced – a Pantheist (Mahnič 1890b).

In *Popotnik*, Tomaž Romih responded to this criticism quite vehemently (Romih 1890). He absolutely refused Mahnič's reproaches and expressed his indignation because of Mahnič's tendency to manipulate sentences out of context: "He draws single sentences from their context, which he then twists and misrepresents. [...] Finally, he uses religion, the pope and bishops to assist him – and the argumentation is finished; he shapes teachers to his arbitrary will." (*Ibid.*, p. 257) Romih was convinced that liberalism and Christianity were not *a priori* opposed; however, he was very concerned about Mahnič's instigation of division and discord among Slovenes. He concluded his response very sharply: "For a conclusion, I appeal to all the soberly thinking clergy, I appeal especially to You, churchmen, who were

personal friends of Dr. Lindner, or who had been lucky enough to listen to this very gentle man as his students, to remember, if Dr. Lindner have ever offended Your religious sense, or if he have scandalized any one of You; I appeal as well to You, churchmen, with whom I fought unanimously against our mutual enemy; I appeal to You all, soliciting You: Shout already to the false prophet in Gorica 'Stop! You have already sowed enough discord and hatred!'" (Ibid., p. 260)

Soon after, *Rimski katolik* carried Mahnič's answer in the form of two articles. In the first of these, analyzing Lindner's works, Mahnič found and exposed Lindner's antireligious and anti-Christian belief, because of his connection with Kant and Herbart, his opposition to religious dogmas, and suspicion of Protestant and Pantheistic tendencies (Mahnič 1890a). In the other, he presented his understanding of liberalism, of which a defining attribute is – in opposition to Romih's statements – a tendency toward the independence from God in education, as well as in the State (separation of Church and State) (Mahnič 1891a).

The polemic continued with Romih's answer in *Popotnik*, which finished the polemic on his side (Romih 1891). He compared Mahnič's statements from Lindner and quoted original parts of the works to which Mahnič was referring and; on this basis, he pointed out that Mahnič reviewed the Lindner's concepts in very arbitrary and ill-intentioned ways (ibid.). Romih concluded by expressing doubt in Mahnič's erudition and his morality: "A reasonable reader should make his own interpretation of the erudition of Dr. Mahnič and his character. With such a person, any further polemic is unnecessary and meaningless." (Ibid., p. 50) The editorial board completely agreed with his viewpoint and even sharpened Romih's position a little: "We have had such an opinion for a long time, since one cannot succeed with truth and honesty against a malicious twister of the truth; therefore, it is best that we do not pay any attention to a modern Don Quixote." (Ibid., p. 50, footnote) Subsequently, Mahnič published his response in *Rimski katolik*, where he also concluded this polemic on his side with a detailed analysis of Lindner's concepts (Mahnič 1891b). In spite of good knowledge of Lindner's thinking, he "was to the extreme culminating a schism between liberally and clerically oriented teachers through his militant conduct and search for heresies" (Protner 2001, p. 217).

The period between the world wars (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and Kingdom of Yugoslavia)

From the articles in *Popotnik* during the Austria-Hungary period, we can comprehend the loyalty to the authorities and to the organization of the State, where there are neither subversive tendencies nor allusions. However, until 1918, the nationally minded sense was very strong, encouraging Slovene identity against tendencies toward Germanization. At the beginning of the 20th century, a sense of neo-illyrism and Yugoslavism was rising. This culminated in 1918 when Austria-Hungary ceased to exist and the Slovenes were united with Croats and Serbs in a new (South) Slavic State, which evolved to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes and was later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The first programmatic text, although non-formal, that was published in *Popotnik*, in the changed political circumstances was a panegyric to a new time, new State, and new hope; it was published in the first issue of 1919 (Spectator 1919). The author, who used the name "Spectator" (*Observer*), enthusiastically talked about a "new world": "As the wheel of politics will ever turn, one thing is unquestionable: we will live as masters on our own soil and work henceforward for ourselves and for our children." (Ibid., p. 1) In order to accomplish this, the author said, it was necessary to get rid of the "historical rubbish" and "German characteristics of old Austria"; above all, it was necessary to "get out of the chains of German pedagogy and its degenerate Austrian educational theory," which served political, denationalizing, and Germanization aims (ibid., p. 2). He thought that until then, the organization of schools had not suited the national character of the Slovenes, as the "intricacy of the German soul expresses itself in the paragraph-regulated intricacy of the Austrian school system, which was imposed on us with its presumptuous school hierarchy and methods, that with their immense, variegated multiform demolished not only teachers' work, but also the simple souls of our children. This educational theory had been filling us up under cover of modernity with tons of new and renewed slogans – ephemerides and thus stupefied us so much that we did not see the only modern way before us, i.e., a spontaneously developed education of a national character." (Ibid.) However, as he wrote, Slovene people were also at fault for the situation, having tolerated intellectual idleness and not taken care of "real progress in educational work," especially in terms of reading competent professional literature, except what the school authorities had prescribed as mandatory. However, the influence was all German; Slovenes knew nothing about school systems in France, England, and America, nor about school systems of "our closest, Slavic brothers," Serbs and Russians (ibid., p. 3). The author hoped that every Yugoslav educator would be able to see and reject the slavish Austrian legacy (ibid., p. 4–5).

In the second issue of 1919, the editor(-in-chief) formally presented the orientation of the journal in a new period and a new State (Fleré 1919). The key-note could be summed up into a maxim – Let us reject everything German! The author wrote that it would be wrong if German pedagogy was rejected simply for being German, but Slovenes had been too one-sidedly informed about what was happening abroad, and that this had occurred almost exclusively in the German language and through a German understanding. "German scientific rubbish" should be removed from libraries and rejected; unfortunately, the biggest part of the existing literature could be, in essence, counted in this category (ibid., p. 33). Readers should examine other nations or States more closely, but the problem was also in (not) knowing foreign languages; this is why readers needed to be acquainted with foreign achievements, at least through translations (ibid., p. 33–34).

Between the world wars, *Popotnik*, as a leading professional journal in the field of education, was at some kind of a juncture and intersection concerning ideas, concepts, didactic instructions, presentations of good praxis, etc. In accordance with the postwar announcement, it informed its readers (of different professional profiles, but mostly teachers) of developments and novelties in the field

of education at home, in Europe and around the world – as much in the theory of education as in educational praxis. Heterogeneity and incompatibility, even a contradiction in concepts and their practical derivatives, led their representatives and defenders into mutual, mostly productive discussions and polemics. One of numerous polemics that was conducted in *Popotnik*, and which agitated the professional community and significantly marked the period between the world wars, was the polemic about the so-called “old” and “new” school. Its consequences were evident even after World War II.

Polemic about the “old” and “new” school between Karel Ozvald and Stanko Gogala on one side and Anton Osterc on the other

In the polemic about the “old” and “new” school, on one side there were Karel Ozvald and Stanko Gogala, who were representatives of the “*geisteswissenschaftliche*” or cultural pedagogy, and on the other, there were teacher-practitioners and defenders of reform movement and work school, especially Anton Osterc.

The polemic was initiated with an article by Karel Ozvald called “New’ School” (Ozvald 1928), where he questioned the “added value” of the idea of a “new” school, the name with which the educational community designated a *work school* at that time. The moving force for the efforts to create a “new” school was, according to the author, a deep dissatisfaction with the existing school. He was also convinced that the “old” school should not be completely rejected, while the “new” school was not a pedagogic “*passepartout*” (ibid., p. 148). The duty of primary and secondary school was to be an “educational institution” (*obraževalnica*) and not an “experiential institution” (*doživljevalnica*); that is, school must prepare a child for active participation in cultural life “through his own reason,” to act always in his life in the way that he “himself considers as the most appropriate in forms of life at that time,” and not automatically and obviously in a way that “his educators think the only right is” (ibid., p. 149). Ozvald was convinced that a division of teachers into two parties, where those who did not support a work school were counted the educational reactionaries, was a mere confusion of minds, as a result of pedagogic dilettantism; for him, a demagogue was convincing the teachers-beginners that only within the framework of a work school would success be possible (ibid., p. 174). At the end of the article, he presented his own draft of a program of work which should be considered for school reform or for the conceptualization of school (ibid., p. 175–176). One of Ozvald’s concerns was that the idea and concept of the work school, or “new” school, were undefined, because even in theory, every person had something different in mind, and there were as many different methods as there were concepts and contents (ibid., p. 149–149).

This article provoked a very harsh, almost pamphlet-style reaction from Anton Osterc, one of the most radical defenders of the reform pedagogy and a *work* or “new” school (Osterc 1928). He reproached Ozvald, saying that his article would be harmful for school life because he had advocated passivity (ibid., p. 257). The center of interest needed to be shifted to the study of a child and removing

obstacles for their free development (ibid.). "Of course, the point is primarily the immediate understanding and regarding a child and only afterwards his scientific study." (Ibid. p. 259)

The polemic continued in January 1930 with Ozvald's article titled *Attempt for the Final Estimation of a "New" School* (Ozvald 1930). In it, the conceptualized the intellectual structure of a "new" school, where its most important attributes would be concentration (*strnjen pouk*), a home orientation, and a professional self-dependence or work principle; this was not entirely new, as its representatives and defenders often asserted. Rather, as he wrote, it was about "old thoughts, presented in a new form," which existed as early as the time of the Enlightenment (ibid., p. 130). Ozvald was convinced that the "old" and "new" school were not necessarily alternatives; for him, it was problematic that defenders of the "new" school were *a priori* denying that the "old" school could provide anything good, although even for him it was undeniable fact that the "old" school had many deficiencies that should be either removed or amended (ibid., p. 131–132). A principle of "originating in the child," which the "new" school advocated, did not demand according to Ozvald that school life should reject "as a trash [...] everything that is included in words: authority, duty, discipline, modesty, norm (rule)" (ibid., p. 133), because these are principles of culture, and without them, interaction in highly developed periods and societies could not be imagined (ibid.). Establishing a "new" school on the concept of freedom was problematic, because it was often misunderstood (ibid., p. 132).

In the same issue of *Popotnik*, Osterc's answer (Osterc being one of the members of the journal's editorial board) was published under the title *What Kind of School Then: Old or New?* (Osterc 1930). Significant for Osterc's grounding of his reaction to Ozvald's theses, as well as for the continuation of the polemic, was his refusal of the content argument: "I do not intend to describe and advocate for a new school here; I do not want to repeat what I have already written. I want to highlight the character of Dr. Ozvald's article." (Ibid., p. 138) From Osterc's response, it is clear that for him, what was problematic and unacceptable was primarily Ozvald's wish or demand to combine the good characteristics of the "old" and "new" school, as well as his neutral or integrative position (ibid., p. 139). Osterc used aggressive, even personally offensive vocabulary in reproaching Ozvald's "combative psychosis," because of which he was presumably distorting notions and veiling his "clear view of the problem," as well as his lack of "analytical force" and the "objectivity and balance" that were needed for a scientific work (ibid., p. 140).

In the next issue, Gogala gave a very harsh response to Osterc in the article *To the Polemics of a 'New' and 'Old' School* (Gogala 1930). He generally had more inflexible positions than Ozvald in prewar confrontations with representatives of the reform movement with more radical orientations. According to him, one mission of the school was to transfer cultural values to youth; however, the question was how to accomplish this. Gogala's answer was that a child "grows into a culture that means something, which in fact lies outside him"; such growth should not be oppressive. A culture must be presented to youth as values that she can become fond of (ibid., p. 263). Gogala shared with Ozvald the fear that the motto

“work school” could turn into a “military device against the old school” (ibid.). He pointed out that every new ideational movement was defining and propagating people who themselves had genuinely experienced values of the movement and who had infinite trust in the triumph of their ideas; problems occurred when other individuals who had not experienced original values of the movement so genuinely and immediately adopted the content of the idea (ibid.). Gogala was certain that the idea of a *work school* was sound, but it demanded much more readiness and knowledge on the part of the teacher than the “old” school did; therefore, it was more probable that average teachers, who were in the majority, could not satisfactorily fulfill its demands (ibid., p. 263–264). He also criticized the entire editorial board, whose acting was for him “stubborn, undemocratic and non-pedagogic,” because “if the editorial board did not agree with the thoughts of professor Ozvald and felt the need to explain another side, it could answer a seriously written article with the same seriousness and with that offer an opportunity for evolving factual and successful discussion about an urgent pedagogic problem.” (Ibid., p. 262) After World War II, a thesis prevailed on the grounds of the specific interpretative paradigm whereby Ozvald was skeptical towards the ideas and actions of the representatives of the reform movement, while Gogala approved them (cf. Vidmar 2002).

With this, a public polemic in *Popotnik* was complete. As a kind of echo of this polemic, we could count an article by Matija Senkovič titled *Primary Goals of New Pedagogy and Means for Their Achievement* in 1931 (Senkovič 1931). At any rate, polarization related to the understanding of a “new” or *work school* continued in Slovene educational (“academic” as well as “practical teaching”) circles until the beginning of World War II. Shortly before the war, Ozvald considering the growing intensity of the criticism from the radical representatives of the reform movement, where Marxist-oriented pedagogues prevailed. As he wrote: “Two or more conceptions of the world, which do not fit together, are not necessarily an obstacle for productive work in the field of education, but in its essence they can even be a living fountain, from which a healthy current of pedagogic activity is supplied. Of course only then, if I do not see a person with a different world view as an enemy, who should be knocked down, but – a co-human, who thinks, judges and wants differently from the way I do, whatever his thinking, judging or wanting, it is perhaps of more worth than mine.” (Ozvald 1939, p. 13–14) Instead of “an earlier opposition or antithesis, which was, with all its ‘combativeness,’ more a denial of previous conditions, [there should be] a creative-work-oriented synthesis (a reconciliation, not a corrupt compromise) of the positive elements the ‘new school’ offers us, and that is of some value from the ‘old.’” (Ibid., p. 18)

Change of orientation at the fiftieth anniversary of publishing

In 1929, in the 50th year of *Popotnik*’s publication, three coeditors began to edit the journal instead of one editor(-in-chief). Franjo Žgeč, Anton Osterc, and Ernest Vranc also changed the mission of the journal, which would become incomparably more practically oriented and oriented toward reform. It was stated

that, "With this issue, *Popotnik* steps into a new phase of its activity!" (Uredniški odbor 1929, p. 1)

As they wrote, *Popotnik* should accomplish three ideas with its articles, that is, the self-education of teachers; directing attention to a child, especially to his state of mind and environment; and a "work for a nation," that is, encouraging the cultural, political, and economic activity of teachers, as well as their social-awareness work in school (ibid., p. 2–3). A lodestar of work would also be the encouragement of a "new" school and criticism of the "old" one. According to the editorial board, "fictitious successes of the old school on account of child development could not satisfy either teachers or needs of youth, nor could they appease the demands of society! The result of its work was the passivity of the child; motionless sitting inhibited physical development and damaged his health. All of the work produced competitiveness and egoism in young hearts, while falling behind triggered envy, invidiousness etc. We are suffering consequences and true failures in contemporary society at every corner. This is why reform is needed! That is why a call which the great Rousseau first shouted to the world with *Emile* and Pestalozzi, Tolstoy, Ellen Key and thousands of fighters for the liberation of a child from the old-school classroom later proclaimed is becoming stronger and stronger." (Ibid., p. 2)

The editorial board of *Popotnik* (Miloš Ledinek, Vladko Majhen, and Miroslav Zor), with Ernest Franc at its head, announced a similar orientation as it radicalized its mission in 1940: "That is why we do not want to be a theoretical journal, where nonobligatory-creative educational workers are gathering. [...] [*Popotnik's*] task is not only to present individual perceptions and reveal isolated pedagogic visions, but also to carry out well-considered purposefulness and mutual work, according to the principles of the owner, i.e., the teachers' organization. Educational and school questions are very closely related with all of our other national problems [...] Let our driving force be the understanding of a child in our elementary school, with special regard to the Slovene milieu, where he lives, grows and – advances." (Uredništvo 1940)

Calming down passions on the 60th anniversary of publication

In 1939, Matija Senkovič, a moderate advocate of reform ideas, which he had shown 10 years earlier during the dispute about the "old" and "new" school, wrote in an editorial on the 60th anniversary of the journal's publication – because of divisions and conflicts between advocates of different pedagogic movements, orientations and concepts in Slovenia, which were often politically and ideologically motivated – very conciliating views and expectations for the future of pedagogic and educational activity (Uredništvo 1939). He focused particular attention on the frequent intentional and purposeful intensification and deepened conflict between theory and praxis in the field of education: "Our era feels the vivid need for establishing a natural connection between a high flight of creative thoughts in the field of pedagogy and ordinary detailed school work. [...] There should be a mediator between thought and action, which would try to accomplish high

concepts. Never was this successful and never will one high idea be completely accomplished. However, the ideal and the reality should walk together, they should fructify each other and stimulate the creation of the new: An ideal illuminates and shows the path to the goal; praxis, on the other hand, tries with meticulous, creative work to approach the goal. The ideal and reality should not stand adverse to each other, the first in its unreachable distance, the other burdened with the feeling of backwardness and weakness. [...] We need workers who will connect the upper and lower layer, the exterior and interior, the pedagogic world of thoughts and the school workshop. We also need a journal for such fruitful and repairing work. Such a journal should be our 'Popotnik,' which principally wants to serve the true needs of the Slovene teachers, but which also wants to be open to leading educational ideas. Our journal does not want to avert anyone with potentially biased harboring or even forcing of utopian tendencies, but neither does it want to remain sticking in triviality and close its eyes to high goals." (Ibid., p. 1–2) He also articulated a thought that the "theorists" defended, but for a major part of the "practitioners" was barely imaginable: "If you want to be a good practitioner, you should also be concerned with a theory of education." (Ibid., p. 3) Unfortunately, due to the beginning of World War II, his expectations were not realized.

***Popotnik* after World War II (Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia)**

After World War II, Slovenes were again united with Croats and Serbs in Yugoslavia, but this time in altered political, social, and economic circumstances. The Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia was founded on a socialist system and a Marxist ideology. A one-party political system was implemented, controlled by a Communist party, which exercised factual and ideational control over all fields of social activity, including education. Periodicals in the field of education, including *Popotnik*, which was again published soon after liberation in 1945, adapted to a new situation. Activist and exclusionary language was characteristic of the articles in the first postwar period.

In the first postwar issue of *Popotnik* either based on his own belief or forced by authorities, Vlado Schmidt presented a program of work in the field of education in the new State, a concept for the development of the theory and praxis of education, and the content-relating orientation of *Popotnik* in the new political and social circumstances, in the article *Guidelines of Modern Educational Work* (Schmidt 1945). The point of the text, similar to the editorial published after World War I, was to break connections with the old, but this time more radically.

School in the new era should be in a duty of "workers, farmers and working intelligentsia" (ibid., p. 5); above all, "our own pedagogic mentality should be reeducated and reoriented," because, as the author asserts, "our pedagogic generations were growing up under the influence of German pedagogy. [...] German theories of education have been represented as to have a general validity and therefore it was much easier for someone who studied them without criticalness to succumb

them, especially because they were carefully concealing their reactionary tendencies. [...] All this demands of us to take an extremely critical position in relation to German pedagogy. In doing this, the study of Russian and Soviet pedagogic literature will be very useful, where this has already been done." (Ibid., p. 6)

He goes on to explain what kinds of "German" should be rejected: the understanding of the subject of education, that is, the child; class formalism; school organizational bureaucracy; a "pedantic" relation to children; the chauvinistic aim of education; a starting point in the intellectual world and not practical life in educational work; and the methodization of "new" schools (ibid.). These were actually almost all areas in which pedagogy as a science¹ during the first half of the 20th century in Germany, in prewar Yugoslavia and elsewhere in Europe was engaged. Evidently, a demand for rejection and removal was not primarily intended for dispersing and withdrawing national socialist, racist, and related elements, but in essence there was a demand for abandoning the idealistic starting points. As the principle understandings that European pedagogy as a science and theory of education were forming before World War II had been significantly grounded on those of German pedagogues, Schmidt pointed to a new attitude in the field of pedagogy in the period between both world wars. His attitude to the scientific results in the field of pedagogy is obvious in the statement that "in pedagogy, in its theory and praxis, a person cannot essentially be wrong who has progressively involved himself in present social activity, who has his eyes open for the interests of people." (Ibid., p. 7)

New pedagogy or new work in the field of education should be grounded on "a connectedness with the people and its fight," on progressive, democratic and humanistic thoughts from domestic pedagogic history and on the study of Russian and Soviet pedagogies, which in the author's opinion were "already in the second half of the 19th century the most progressive in the world" (ibid.). It is interesting that for the realization of the second foundation, that is, domestic pedagogic thought, "Slovene pedagogic and other cultural creativeness needs to be critically reviewed from its beginnings until today to elicit everything that can serve us in educating new, free, democratic citizens" (ibid.).

Schmidt also directed his sharp criticism to the "new" school; as we have seen, between the world wars, this was defended and stimulated in Slovenia, especially by left-wing reform pedagogues/practitioners, as seen in the polemic about the "old" and "new" school. For Schmidt, the "new" school was actually the "old" school in disguise, because the "new" school was never really new, but just another version of the 'old' school adjusted to different historical conditions," with its focus shifted to the implementation of "methodical innovations" (ibid., p. 8). All this "new" school had achieved was "that youth learned less in school, that they acquired less general-educational knowledge, that they knew less during their life," (ibid.) where every motto that opposed the importance of the subject of instruction,

¹ In continental Europe, and especially Central Europe, an autonomous and integral science called *pedagogy* began to develop in the 19th century in Germany with the principal aim of theoretical and practical research and implementation of all aspects of education. In the English-speaking world, the corresponding term is *educational sciences*.

planned presentation of the contents of instruction, and opposed the principal task of a school, which is to teach, was considered reactionary (ibid. p. 9).

He went on to censure Slovene pedagogy between the two world wars, where he had in mind a theory of pedagogy or education represented especially by Ozvald as a university professor of pedagogy (although in this circle we can also count Gogala and Čibej). He reproached the “official” pedagogy in that it had been uncritically transferring foreign achievements into domestic praxis, and that it had not been concerned with the actual economic, social, and cultural environment, but had rather “fallen back on abstract, ‘principled’ problems”; he also exposed the alienation of the theory and praxis of education (ibid., p. 11). The and demands connected with the attitude toward pedagogic tradition in Slovenia, which the new era and changed social and political circumstances set in front of pedagogy and all who were occupied with education, were as follows: denunciation of “the reactionary character of many theories in the field of education” and of school organizations and practices in Yugoslavia; a critical attitude towards German pedagogy; and the essential source of pedagogic education and work in the connectedness of the people with the National Liberation War (ibid.).

Renaming of the journal – as *Sodobna pedagogika* up to the 1990s

In 1950, *Popotnik* reached its 70th anniversary and became the official publication of the newly established Pedagogic Society of the People’s Republic of Slovenia; on this occasion, it was renamed *Sodobna pedagogika* (*Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*). With this act, a tradition of activity in the field of education was explicitly ended. However, in 1985, Schmidt – who was one of the proponents of renaming the journal – expressed sincere regret in changing the name of the most respected journal in the field of education. He said: “It was narrow-minded; I would resist doing it today with might and main.” (Schmidt 1985, p. 270) He also said that in the 1950, when they renamed the journal, they were still optimistic, but that this was no longer the case. He made a comment that is still relevant today: “In the present hard times, it could occur to someone that we do not need educational journals anymore and that we could, after all, manage without *Sodobna pedagogika*, which focuses on suspicious and mostly ‘unnecessary’ theory.” (Ibid.)

At the occasion of its renaming, the editorial board wrote that when the Pedagogic Society was taking possession of the journal, it would also be appropriate to change its name to one that would “correspond to the broad contents of pedagogic journal and which will be more suitable for the present time” (Pedagoško društvo LR Slovenije 1950, p. 1). As a new journal in the field of education, *Sodobna pedagogika* would publish “new socialist pedagogic creative work” (ibid.). They invited all pedagogic workers who believed a “new reality” was approaching as the result of the people’s revolution, and “who want[ed] to contribute to a better and faster development of our school and to a purging of the educational questions,” as well as those who wished to help educated “socialist humans, better humans for a better

life" (ibid., p. 2). The goals of education could be achieved if the theory and praxis of education were inspired the fight for establishing a socialism that leaned on the domestic pedagogic tradition and included critical use of modern findings in the field of education from abroad (ibid.).

Polemic about postwar paradigms of Slovene pedagogy between Franc Pediček and France Strmčnik

In 1990, Franc Pediček published an extensive article titled *Paradigms of the Slovene Pedagogy. Demonstration of Ideological Oppositions and Questions Discussed in Slovene Pedagogy (1945–1988)* in *Sodobna pedagogika* (Pediček 1990). The author polemically treated the definitions and development of the Slovene pedagogic (micro)paradigm in the time of the socialist social system in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. He focused on an analysis of articles in *Popotnik* and *Sodobna pedagogika*. Pediček identified seven criteria for defining or changing the pedagogic macroparadigm in Slovenia (some were in essence already obsolete and anachronistic): society with its ideology and politics is the starting point for the work in the field of education; all participants of the pedagogic process are defined exclusively in a socio-political and historical-class pertaining way; educational theory and praxis have ideational-revolutionary direction and guidance; the initial theoretical pattern is interweaved with the individual and social pedagogy; the teleological norms of pedagogy are sociopolitical pragmatism and directed technologism, which are leading to the ideal of the all-round developed socialist personality; an individual is subjected to the basis of social production, and human consciousness or spirituality is its passive result; theory and research in the field of education are under permanent ideological control of the established authority of the appointed theoretician and the group around him (ibid., p. 364). Based on these parameters, he identified seven periods or (micro)paradigms for 1918–1941 (instructional-didactic, individual-pedagogic, social-pedagogic, Christian-Catholic, cultural-pedagogic, democratic-axiological, experiential-associational), as well as for 1945–1988 also seven (micro)paradigms (diamatic ideologization, individual pedagogization, inductive methodologization, interdisciplinary thematization, self-managing anthropologization, Marxist dogmatization, pluralization of thinking) (ibid., p. 364–366). In the rest of the article, he detailed seven "after-liberation micro paradigms of Slovene pedagogy" (Pediček 1990). Because of the author's formulations and the style of presentation of defined periods and their leading representatives, his personal emotional engagement was emphasized as much as the content of the article itself.

Because of the publication of this article, France Strmčnik, editor-in-chief of *Sodobna pedagogika*, resigned both from this position and from the editorial board of the journal.

In the first issue of *Sodobna pedagogika* of 1991, an extensive polemic discussion between members of the editorial board was published stemming from Pediček's article. Strmčnik (1991a) explained his resignation and clarified the situation, complaining sharply about the considerations of the editorial board,

which mostly differed from his own, giving his answer in invective style. At the beginning of his discussion, Strmčnik assessed Pediček's article as being "scientifically biased and unfounded, emotionally uncontrolled and human tactless, in essence, takes revenge on his opponents, in order to [...] exalt himself as much as possible. It is an explicitly black and white description of postwar development in the field of education. [...] Thus follows that for the postwar theoretical pedagogic tradition, far more dangerous and harmful is the malicious pen of Dr. Pediček than all its past objective and subjective weaknesses altogether, from which, as the characteristic for a development of every science, and especially for social sciences, even pedagogy could not have been defended." (Ibid., p. 74) He continues: "That is to say, I am not interested in the (un)truthfulness of the author's judgments and statements at all, even if I am personally fully convinced that many of them are not truthful." (Ibid., p. 70)

It is undoubtedly true that Pediček had a very direct style and manner of writing, occasionally even personally offensive, but above all he was hard to comprehend with his neologisms. However, if there had not been a response from Strmčnik, in time, his writing would most likely have sunk into oblivion. In this way, however, he probably has obtained more important status of a "rebel" by the opponents of a "recognized" or "official" pedagogy. On the other hand, very interesting in all of this is the attitude of Schmidt, who did not want to answer Pediček's article (ibid., p. 75).

The editorial board of *Sodobna pedagogika* responded to the criticism of Strmčnik and published minutes of a meeting with written and authorized reviews of its members (Pojasnilo uredniškega odbora 1991). Five of six members, despite having scruples, decided in favor of publishing Pediček's article (ibid.). As a common denominator of the arguments for publishing, we will quote Olga Kunst Gnamuš: "We are meeting a very complex professional matrix now, when the relation between the place of pronunciation and the content of pronounced will have to be regarded considering two different ideological contexts. [...] Can a science be satisfied with such a position or what is a science whose predominating paradigm of comprehension has a color-blind ideology which sees black and white only? Pedagogy is the first of sciences, which is obliged to confront these complex questions in order to avoid the role of an executioner in the future, the role which a ruling ideology assigns to it with the greatest pleasure, and which it perhaps does not even want to decline. There are evidently enough reasons for unpleasant, but needed professional debate; otherwise it can happen to us that executioners and victims will change roles, but the 'paradigm of comprehension' of the pedagogic science will not change." (Ibid., p. 78–79) Somewhat similarly was the view of Zdenko Medveš, who wrote that "the article indeed rests on the subjective description of ideological discussions, connected with the discussing of theoretical questions of pedagogy. Irrespective of that, it is one of the testimonies or understandings of development and has its value as such, although it is certainly not a scientific analysis of the objective development of pedagogic thought in Slovenia in the postwar period." (Ibid.)

Pediček (1991) responded to Strmčnik's answer with a public letter to the Association of Slovenian Educationalists, which after reforming and being renamed as the Pedagogic Society became publisher of *Sodobna pedagogika*, in the last issue of 1991. He rejected Strmčnik's arguments as written in the manner of a "Marxist scholasticism," and at the same time, reproached the editorial board for having allowed a triple manipulation (with him at the publishing of the "Paradigms," with Schmidt, who was wrongly interpreted and with Strmčnik, whom the editorial board allowed such an outbreak of a "critical fury") (ibid.). In the same issue, a longer answer by Strmčnik was published, where he denied statements of Pediček, although he was analyzing Pediček's book *Orientation in Education* from 1985 more than discussing his accusations (Strmčnik 1991b). In this context, he declared himself a person, to whom close is "everything that is grounded upon a Marxist method of comprehension of a dialectic materialism and upon a social view of a socialism" (ibid., p. 559); Pediček, on the other hand, troubled him with his "uncritical support of career-oriented education (*usmerjeno izobraževanje*)" and "exaggerated, almost one-sided subjecting of an individual to the production and socially regulated reproductive processes," and "work as a social phenomenon" as "the only starting point" for a "gradual limiting of the pedagogic science" (ibid.).

With the publication of this article, the editorial board finished the polemic, into which it did not want to interfere, except for a confirmation of its views during the publishing of the *Paradigms* (Uredniški odbor 1991).

***Sodobna pedagogika* in the late 20th and early 21st century**

In the 21st century, thematic issues were again introduced to *Sodobna pedagogika* so that authors could focus more thoroughly on particular recent problems and so that a certain topical subject would be discussed and concluded in a single issue. Perhaps this decision was also partly responsible for the fact that fewer polemic tones are present or that polemics are less personally engaged, as they were in the years when *Popotnik* or *Sodobna pedagogika* were publishing completely non-thematic articles.

The journal has encountered a double challenge in last few years, connected with financing and inclusion into international bibliographical databases, in other words, how and to what extent to publish local or national topical subjects and give preference to domestic authors, and how to best relate theoretical and scientific articles and professional experiences and reflection in the work of education practitioners.

Because of a bigger international effect and the need for the inclusion into international bibliographical databases, which is the only way it can maintain its high level of published articles, *Sodobna pedagogika* has lately been issued bilingually, in Slovene and a foreign language, mostly English. All articles are therefore published in the Slovene language, and some in English, as well.

Conclusion

Popotnik and *Sodobna pedagogika* have been published through four different States, two organizations of State, and two social and economic systems. The journal has almost always been under the patronage of central teachers' or pedagogic organizations and been their official publication.

Several times, the publication of *Popotnik* was threatened, but always for financial reasons, never political ones; the same situation could occur with *Sodobna pedagogika*. From editorials either at the change of the organization of the State or of the political or social system, or just at the change of the editor(-in-chief) or editorial board, we cannot recognize any revolutionary, anti-State ideas or tendencies; under both names, the journal demonstrated its loyalty to the existing authorities and regulation. However, this does not mean that the journal was a "trumpet" of the authorities and a willing instrument for executing its ideas, although the connectedness of *Popotnik* and later *Sodobna pedagogika* with the authorities was tighter immediately after World War II and the ideational monolithism bigger as earlier and even later. However, this can also be attributed to the exclusivity of the predominating ideology.

The editorials and polemics that authors published in *Popotnik* or *Sodobna pedagogika* over 130 years of publication prove that the journal under both names was mostly a place to present and confront different (critical) views, thoughts, and suggestions in the field of education. Editorial policies as a rule allowed or even stimulated the pluralism of views and convictions, and tried to inform readers of the best in the field of the theory and praxis in the field of education. Because of this, *Popotnik* became the most appreciated and influential pedagogic journal in Slovenia; this tradition was continued when the journal was renamed *Sodobna pedagogika*, which is still in fact a successful publication. For the future, we can only hope and believe that in all the flood of "instant" literature in the field of education with its *ad hoc* questionable empirical articles and advices, readers and authors will know and want to support *Sodobna pedagogika* to further continue and improve the excellent tradition of the past 130 years of publishing.

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