

The ideological aims and organisational structure of the Vladimir Lenin All-Union Pioneer Organisation and its place in the system of education of a new man (*homo sovieticus*)

Abstract

One of the characteristics of the second half of the 19th century and 20th century was the tendency of young people to associate in youth associations and organisations. Some of them were created spontaneously and their activity was illegal while others were created by the authorities of particular states, especially the totalitarian ones. One example of such organisations was the All-Union Pioneer Organisation, established by the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1922. Its strategic goal was to participate in the education of the *new man*, who was to become *homo sovieticus*, a higher homo sapiens variety, in the future. The Pioneer Organisation fulfilled this task by organising children in the school age (aged 9 to 14) and subjecting them to a systematic ideological and political training based on the Lenin or Stalin model. The activity of the Pioneer Organisation was supervised by Komsomol and additionally by the leadership of the communist party exercising power in the USSR. The structure of the Pioneer Organisation included groups, packs and cells. Like Komsomol, the Pioneer Organisation also had its symbols, such as the three-pointed red scarf that symbolised three generations: communists, komsomolets and pioneers, as well as a pioneer badge, a pioneer salute, a uniform, bugles and a snare drum.

Keywords: Pioneer Organisation, Komsomol, Soviet Russia, *new man*, *homo sovieticus*, indoctrination, pioneer

Genesis and conception of a *new man* in Russia

Bearing in mind the state of research on the education of young generations under the conditions of authoritarian state, it is advisable to once again explain both the idea of upbringing of a *new man* (*homo sovieticus*) and the organisational and pedagogical assumptions made by the Soviet Russia authorities with a view to realising this particular educational ideal¹. Therefore, it seems justifiable to perform the analysis of the Pioneer

¹ In Polish science, an in-depth analysis of the ideal of a *new man* (*homo sovieticus*) has been conducted by e.g. MAZUR, M., *O człowieku tendencyjnym... Obraz nowego człowieka w propagandzie komunistycznej*

Organisation (Vladimir Lenin All-Union Pioneer Organisation), an ideological extension of Komsomol and a sort of kindergarten of the communist education in the USSR. This task seems even more justifiable because the experiences of Soviet Russia became a model and a particular reference point for the actions taken by the communist authorities in Poland after 1945, who aimed at creating a native version of the model of the communist education of children and youth². The discussion of the research topic focused on the idea of the education of a *new man* is further supported by the fact that the term *homo sovieticus*, which entered the Polish language at least a dozen or so years ago, is very differently – usually incorrectly – understood.

The task to achieve this research goal should begin with the reminder that the 1945 inclusion of Poland and other Central European countries into the orbit of the Soviet Union meant not only a limitation of their sovereignty and a political enslavement but also an imposition of a special model of the state – the Soviet state based on a lie. This particular characteristic of the USSR had already been highlighted in the 1930s. by one of Sovietologists, who said: “The USSR is a country of lies, absolute lies, integral lies (...)”³. A country applying the principle “when everybody lies, then nobody lies when they lie (...)” Every article of the constitution contains multi-level lies (...). The rights of peoples, democracy, constitutional law: one big lie (...). Evidence: a lie. Photos: a lie. Witnesses and their testimony: a lie. Meetings, reunions: directed performances. The dictatorship of the proletariat: monstrous fraud. The enthusiasm of the masses: meticulous organisation (...). Joyful life: grim farse (...). Culture: vulgarity. Brilliant leader: blinded despot (...)”⁴.

The functioning of a state organised in such a way required far-reaching changes in the consciousness of its citizens. It also made it necessary to create a new society, which was composed of enslaved and intimidated people who would be ready not only to accept but also identify with the communist state (which was based on lies and terror). Thus, the leaders of the victorious Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 were not satisfied with the takeover of power in the country. Their next strategic goal was to create a new man – *homo sovieticus* – a being that was supposed to be an improved form of *homo sapiens*⁵. A pre-condition for the achievement of the last of these goals was the incorporation of not only the school but also the entire system of education of the young generation into the structures of the totalitarian state. This state of affairs reflected the specific nature of the

w okresie Polski Ludowej i PRL 1944-1956), [About a tendentious man... An image of a new man in communist propaganda in the period of People's Poland and the People's Republic of Poland 1944-1956], Lublin 2010.

² Cf. e.g. GRZYBOWSKI, R., “U podstaw kształtowania się totalitarnego systemu wychowania i opieki nad dzieckiem i rodziną w Polsce w latach 1945-1956”, [“Fundamentals of the development of the totalitarian system of education and child and family care in Poland in the period between 1945 and 1956”], *Studia i Prace Naukowe. Pedagogika*, Y. II, no. 2, Gdańsk 2008, p. 233-253.

³ SOUVARINE, B., “Aveux a Moscou”, *La Vie Intellectuelle*, Paris 10 April 1938. As cited in: HELLER, M., NIEKRICZ, A., *Utopia władzy. Historia Związku Sowieckiego. Od narodzin do wielkości 1917-1939*, [Utopia of Power. History of the Soviet Union. From birth to greatness 1917-1939], Poznań 2016, p. 13.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 13.

⁵ HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki. Jak hartował się człowiek sowiecki*, [Machine and screws. How was the Soviet man hardened], Paris, 1988, p. 9.

Soviet state, characterised by the total influence of the ruling party on all spheres of life at a scale unknown to the world so far. This situation, as Michał Heller observes, “determined the nature of all Soviet institutions (...). This total pressure deformed the course of normal processes typical of a modern society and led to the formation of a new, unprecedented form of society and state”.⁶ It also began the history of *homo sovieticus*.

In the context of the above statements, it is worth recalling the essential stages of the process of shaping the idea of *homo sovieticus*. The concept of a “new man” was born in the 1860s in the circles of the radical Russian student youths gathering in the Central Revolutionary Committee. It was developed by Pyotr Tkachev, who characterised the man of the future as a new superior type of man – a revolutionary, the opposite of a townsman (a man of lower type). The purpose of a human life was to seek to ensure the happiness of most people⁷. The concept of a *new man* outlined by P. Tkachev was deepened by the *Catechism of a Revolutionary*, a programme document of the Narodnaya Rasprava secret society⁸. The *new man* portrayed in this document is a professional revolutionary, a man lost to the world, who has neither business, matters nor feelings of his own. It is a person who has no private property and sometimes even a name, is totally subordinated to the sole purpose and the only passion which was the revolution⁹, someone who despises public opinion and hates all manifestations of public morality. “Everything that favours the victory of the revolution is moral and everything that gets in its way is immoral and criminal”¹⁰. The revolutionary (*new man*) should be hard on both himself and others. He should also suppress all feelings of friendship, love, gratitude and even honour, as well as feelings arising from kinship. They were supposed to replace by the cold passion for the cause of the revolution.

Rachmietov, the hero of the novel *What Is to Be Done? Tales of New People* by N. G. Chernyshevsky (published in 1863) became the embodiment of the *new man* – the revolutionary¹¹. Said Rachmietov is a man who lives only for the revolution, renouncing his parents, friends and women. He is characterised by high self-esteem and the sense that the revolution needs him. For this reason, he does sports, trains his intellect by reading appropriate books and shapes his will by sleeping on nails. In his personal life, he exercises a certain type of asceticism – no excess in food and no spending money on products he can do without.

⁶ HELLER, M., NIEKRICZ, A., *Utopia władzy...*, p. 23.

⁷ From this population, however, Tkachev excluded enemies, among whom he was prepared to count anyone raising a feeling that was inconsistent with the ideal of human happiness. *Ibidem*, p. 17

⁸ The *Catechism of a Revolutionary* is associated with the name of Sergei Nechayev but his authorship has not been definitively established. Cf. HELLER, M., *op. cit.*, p. 18. The above-mentioned M. Heller describes it as the most radical model of the *new man*.

⁹ HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki...*, p. 19.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

¹¹ CHERNYSHEVSKY, N. G., *Chto delat?*, Moscow 1970.

Vladimir Lenin, who linked the theory of social revolution to the concept of a man entangled in certain social relations, made references to the *new man*¹². In his view, the new man took the form of a *communist militant* – a socialised entity capable of acting for the common good (but understood very broadly – at the scale of the whole of society)¹³. The fundamental characteristic of the *communist militant* was the deep social commitment and active attitude in the fight for justice and progress in the area of collective coexistence¹⁴. In addition, there was a conscious discipline, hatred for the old society (combined with readiness and ability to unite and organise forces to fight) and the tendency to work for the good of one's own country¹⁵.

The idea of a *new man*, realised in the Bolshevik Russia from the first months after the victorious revolution, evolved constantly. Its starting point was the afore-mentioned Leninist model of the *communist militant* – a revolutionary and a destroyer of the old order. Its embodiments were unbreakable-as-iron commissioners and hard-as-steel chekists¹⁶. The next phase of development of the USSR was dominated by the model of the builder of the new order, which appeared in the following variants: *an industrial man, a scientific-organisation man and an improved communist man*, characterised by ideals, energy and initiative.

According to Stalin, a complete reflection of the Soviet man was a screw: in this view, the new Soviet *new man* should be considered a screw in a great state machine. In turn, Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, was convinced that shaping the *new man* should aim to create a screw that would combine ideological relentlessness with extensive education, moral purity and physical perfection¹⁷. Regardless of the phase of shaping the *new man* in the USSR, each of these models should take into account the sense of belonging to the state and the collective. The Soviet *new man* should also be fully aware that he as an individual does not mean anything to the state¹⁸.

The final variant of the Soviet *new man* (*homo sovieticus*) was formed in the second half of the 20th century. Its leading characteristics included personality dispositions,

¹² WIŁOCH, T., „System wychowawczy a socjalizm w ujęciu Lenina”, [„Educational System and Socialism in Lenin's Perspective”], *Nauczyciel i Wychowanie* 1970, No. 2(64), p. 17-20.

¹³ MUSZYŃSKI, H., „Poglądy Lenina na wychowanie i ich znaczenie dla rozwoju socjalistycznej pedagogiki”, [„Lenin's views on education and their importance for the development of socialist pedagogy”], *Nauczyciel i Wychowanie*, 1970 no. 3/65, p. 28.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 33.

¹⁵ LENIN, V., *Zadania lig młodzieżowych. Przemówienie wygłoszone na III Ogólnosocjalistycznym Kongresie rosyjskiej Młodej Ligi Komunistycznej 2 października 1920 r.*, [The Tasks of the Youth Leagues. Speech delivered at the Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League on 2 October 1920], [in:] *Źródła do dziejów wychowania i myśli pedagogicznej*, ed. S. WOŁOSZYN, vol. III, Warsaw 1966, p. 534-535.

¹⁶ *Prawda* [The Truth] as of 18 October 1961. Discussed as cited in: HELLER, M., op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹⁸ “Is it not self-evident that assuming that “I” may have some rights before the state is synonymous with the assumption that a gramme can balance a tonne? Hence the division: a tonne has the rights and a gramme has duties; and the natural way from nothingness to greatness: forget that you are a gramme and start feeling that you are a millionth of a tonne.” As cited in: HELLER, M, op. cit., p. 12.

commitment to the communist ideology and partisanship (expressed in his world view and approach to the communist ideals). The Soviet man was also described as a man of work – absolutely devoted to the multinational socialist homeland; a man of the collective, characterised by a sense of responsibility for everything that happened in the USSR, engaged in both international affairs and daily life of neighbours. He was also perceived as a man of higher ideals, an active proponent of the programme of the October Revolution, who developed harmoniously and was happy at the same time. *Homo sovieticus* was supposed to have the conviction that the communist state looked after him, as proven by the progress of the communist fatherland (USSR). Another of the significant qualities of *homo sovieticus* was the full trust in the leadership of the party and the state authorities, which – as he believed – exercised power on his behalf and for his interest¹⁹. In addition, he was “taught to live in (...) difficult conditions, ready to face difficulties (...), he expected even worse times, praised the actions taken by the authorities, tried to hinder those who violated the norms of conduct, supported the leadership with all his heart, had a standardised ideological awareness and sense of responsibility for the country and was prepared to offer sacrifice of himself and others, as well”²⁰.

It should be emphasised that the lengthy process of forming *homo sovieticus* was based on the premise that each of the following generations would treat the conditions they encounter as the norm²¹. Therefore, they will not rebel against them nor will they question them because the only thing that can be chosen is the improvement of the system. For this purpose, children and young people in the USSR underwent the process of intensive total moulding of their mentality. The education in the spirit of communist morality was given a particular priority²².

Training as a proven mechanism for shaping a *new man*

Bearing in mind that the subsequent fate of the revolution “depends [...] on the extent to which the young generation would be transformed into human material capable of building the socialist economy of the communist society”²³, the communist authorities of the USSR took steps to create a coherent system of institutions and select methods that ensure effective indoctrination of Soviet children and youth. After a search period (which in-

¹⁹ *Sovietskiye ludi*, Moscow 1974, p. 4-5. Discussed as cited in: HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki...*, p. 27-28.

²⁰ ZINOVIEV, A., *Homo sovieticus*, Lausanne 1982. Discussed as cited in: HELLER, M., op. cit., p. 28.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

²² GRZYBOWSKI, R., *O wychowaniu w duchu moralności komunistycznej w ujęciu pedagogiki stalinowskiej oraz o niektórych metodach jej realizacji*, [About the education in the spirit of communist morality in the perspective of Stalinist pedagogy and about some methods of its implementation], [in:] *Człowiek Idea Dzieło*, Prace dedykowane Profesor Stefani Walasek, ed. B. JEŃDRYCHOWSKA, Wrocław 2013, p. 211-229.

²³ HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki...*, p. 148.

volved, among others, educators²⁴), they recognised at the beginning of the 1930s that the most effective method to be used in the process of raising a *new man* (*homo sovieticus*) would be a training method, also known as a taming system²⁵.

The training method required systematic repetition of the same gestures and words on the one hand and constant reminders of the leader on the other hand (Stalin until the mid-1950s, afterwards mainly Lenin). Therefore, critics of Soviet education talk about generations “trained” on a Stalin or Lenin model. The creators of the system consistently ensured that the figure of the leader (for example his portrait) accompanied a child from the first days of its life. The word “Lenin” was supposed to be the first thing that a child starting education at school would read in the primer²⁶. References to the model (leader) should accompany the child both at school and outside school, especially in the structures of children and youth organisations²⁷.

The realisation of such a goal required that the communist authorities ensure a monopoly on the educational influence on children and youth. In practice, this meant striving to break up the traditional family²⁸ and the complete removal of the Church from the education of children and youth²⁹. These actions led to the disappearance of traditional authorities. As a result, the social life in Bolshevik Russia in the first decades developed in a peculiar axiological vacuum, which led to a variety of degenerations, such as the idea of free love and full sexual freedom. This is well illustrated by the old Bolshevik’s quote cited by one of the contemporary Soviet magazines: “The authority of parents? – it does not exist;

²⁴ The withdrawal from the mild form of “moulding the human material”, which consisted in the assumption that the change of political, material and social conditions in the USSR would entail changes in the mentality of a man, occurred in the mid-1930.

²⁵ According to Sovietologists, the emergence of the training system, also called “the method of hypnotic, terrorist pressure on children”, was determined, among others, by the departure of the leadership of the party led by J. Stalin from the ideology understood as a set of views and the renouncement of the faith in the dogmas underlying the communist ideology. Instead, the consciousness of the Soviet people was instilled with thoughtless faith in the slogans and content communicated by the leadership of the party and the cult of the leader of the Soviet state, who became the highest, most reliable authority and model – the source of values and patterns of behaviour – for the training system. cf.: ZALKIND, A., *Pedology in USSR*, Moscow 1929. As cited in: HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki...*, p. 154.

²⁶ HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki...*, p. 155.

²⁷ This also applies to upbringing in kindergartens organised in the Polish conditions in the Stalinist period. Cf. e.g.: GRZYBOWSKI, R., *Podmiot czy tworzywo? Kilka uwag o sytuacji dziecka w teorii i praktyce pedagogiki stalinowskiej*, [Subject or material? Several remarks about the situation of a child in the theory and practice of the Stalinist pedagogy], [in:] *Dziecko w rodzinie i w społeczeństwie. Dzieje nowożytne*, ed. K. JAKUBIAK and W. JAMROŻEK, vol. II, Bydgoszcz 2002, p. 260-274.

²⁸ KOSIŃSKI, K., *Oficjalne i prywatne życie młodzieży w czasach PRL*, [Official and private life of youth in the time of the Polish People’s Republic], Warsaw 2006, p. 233. Cf. also: WALICKI, A., *Marksizm i skok do królestwa wolności*, [Marxism and the leap to the realm of freedom], Warsaw 1996, p. 359.

²⁹ *Dokumenty WKP(b) i rządu sowieckiego w szkołach*, [Documents of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) and the Soviet government on school]. Discussed as cited in: *Źródła dziejów wychowania i myśli pedagogicznej*, vol. III, p. 545-546.

the authority of faith? – it does not exist; tradition? – it does not exist, a sense of morality? The old morality has died and the new one has not yet been born”³⁰.

The elimination of the family and the Church from the structure of the educational institution system created a space for a special social experiment of raising a *new man* – *homo sovieticus*. Explaining the essence of this inhuman pedagogical experiment conducted on children and adolescents born and raised in the USSR, Mikhail Kalinin³¹ stated: “a new man of the socialist society is being born here. This man should be taught the best human qualities”³². M. Kalinin and other representatives of the communist authorities of Soviet Russia associated the process of teaching these qualities with the education understood as “a defined, purposeful and systematic influence on the psyche of the student in order to instil the qualities desired by the educator”³³.

In the first months after the takeover of power in Russia, in order to guarantee the success of this kind of education, the leadership of the Bolshevik party adopted and implemented the principle that education in the communist state “should be subordinated to the goals of the party and the Soviet state” because “the fundamental and primary task of the Communist education [is] to offer as much help in our class struggle as possible”³⁴. In this way, the education (shaping) of the young generation in the USSR was completely subordinated to the interests of the Communist party.

Pioneer Organisation as a tool for shaping *homo sovieticus*

In order to successfully carry out the process of education of a *new man* (*homo sovieticus*), it was necessary to conduct an intense indoctrination of children and young people that reached all spheres of social life. It was to be conducted both at school³⁵ and in the organisations established after the revolution and carefully controlled by the communist authorities: All-Union Pioneer Organisation for children and All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) for youth.

³⁰ As cited in: HELLER, M., *Maszyna i śrubki...*, p. 170-171.

³¹ One of members of the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) during the first decades of the existence of the USSR.

³² M. Kalinin, Address at the meeting of the best teachers of urban and rural schools, convened by the editors of the Uchitelskaya Gazeta magazine (20 X 1938), [in:] KALININ, M., *O edukacji komunistycznej*, [On Communist Education], Warsaw 1955, p. 47.

³³ KALININ, M., *O edukacji komunistycznej*, Paper presented at the meeting of active party members of Moscow, [in:] KALININ, M., *O edukacji komunistycznej*, p. 78-79.

³⁴ KALININ, M., *O edukacji komunistycznej*. Paper presented at the meeting of active party members of Moscow (2 October 1940), [in:] KALININ, M., *O edukacji komunistycznej*, Warsaw 1955, p. 82.

³⁵ I. Kairov put it tersely in the textbook entitled *Pedagogika* (under his own editorial): “The Soviet school is set up to shape the foundations of the scientific communist world view in its pupils.” As cited in: *Pedagogika*, ed. I. KAIROV, vol. II, Warsaw 1950, p. 46.

A special role in this process was to be played by the Pioneer Organisation, which has been wrongly marginalised in many studies devoted to this issue so far. However, given the age of the children covered by its influence (9–14) and the extent of its influence, it can be considered one of the most effective tools for the upbringing of *a new man* in the USSR. This is confirmed by the information on one of the first pages of the *Pioneer Leader's Book*³⁶, which could be considered a textbook of the methodology of communist education. There we learn that the All-Union Pioneer Organisation is a “mass communist organisation of children in the Soviet Union”³⁷ whose goal is to “educate the fearless, brave, joyful fighters for the freedom and honour of our homeland and the cause of Lenin–Stalin’s party, the victory of communism, who have confidence in their strength and are ready to overcome all the difficulties they encounter”³⁸. The communist authorities of Soviet Russia proudly stated that in the ranks of the Pioneer Organisation: “children are brought up in the spirit of communism. They grow up (...) to be ardent patriots of the Soviet homeland, absolutely devoted to the Lenin–Stalin cause, to be educated, cultured, active and conscious builders and citizens of the communist society”³⁹.

When presenting the programmatic assumptions of the Pioneer Organisation, it is important to emphasise its close association with the Komsomol (established in November 1918). The main task of the Komsomol was “(...) to actively support the Bolshevik party and the Soviet government in the continuous development and strengthening of our school, in consistently raising the level of teaching of pupils, in the education of the youth (...)”⁴⁰ and in the ideological shaping of the working youth”⁴¹. One of the most important tasks of the Komsomol was to direct and supervise the activities of the Pioneer Organisation⁴².

13 February 1922 is considered the beginning of the Pioneer Organisation. It was then that the komsomolets of Moscow organised a meeting of the first pioneer pack attended by 52 children⁴³. This event marked the beginning of the process of formation of subsequent packs in both Russia and other republics of the Soviet Union. However, the Pioneer

³⁶ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, [Pioneer Leader's Book], Warsaw 1952, p. 4. From the perspective of the present day, the *Book* can be considered an exemplary textbook on the methodology of communist education of children and youth at early school age in the USSR.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

³⁸ MOLOTOV, V., *W 30. rocznicę wielkiej październikowej rewolucji socjalistycznej*, [On the 30th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution]. As cited in: *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 32.

³⁹ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 7.

⁴⁰ KURDIAYEV, A., *Wydział Pionierski Rejonowego Komitetu Komsomolu*, [Pioneer Division of the Komsomol District Committee], Warsaw 1951, p. 3.

⁴¹ KAFTANOV, S., *Komsomol w walce o przodującą naukę i kulturę*, [Komsomol in the fight for the leading science and culture], Warsaw 1951, p. 3.

⁴² The full dependence of the Pioneer Organisation on the Komsomol is proven by e.g. the procedure of removal of a child – pioneer from the Pioneer Organisation. Any decision on this matter had to be approved first by the Komsomol school committee, the school head and the municipal or district Komsomol committee. Cf. *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 39.

⁴³ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 10.

Organisation was officially founded on 19 May 1922 at the Second All-Russian Komsomol Conference. During the Fifth Komsomol Congress (in October 1922), these packs were merged into one communist organisation⁴⁴ and its strategic goal of “organising, uniting, educating and preparing the masses for the fight for the interest of the proletariat”⁴⁵ was defined in reference to Lenin’s thought. The assumptions of the pioneer movement from the period of Lenin’s rule were confirmed by the next congress of the party, which occurred already under the leadership of J. Stalin⁴⁶.

However, the propaganda materials devoted to the Pioneer Organisation emphasised that its pedigree was older and dated back to the Russian Civil War. In particular, 25 May 1919 was highlighted as the day on which the youth of Moscow celebrated the day of common civil defence training⁴⁷. On this occasion, Moscow children, who described themselves as “the pack of young communists”, assembled at Red Square⁴⁸. In a speech addressed to them, V. Lenin stated that children (the growing generation of workers) should help the revolution. He also formulated the thesis that the children’s organisation was the best school for the education of communists. In another speech, continuing with the subject of communist education of the youth, Lenin stated that anyone joining the Komsomol faces the challenge of “helping the party build communism and assisting the entire young generation in the creation of the communist society”⁴⁹.

Lenin’s death (21 January 1924) became another turning point for the Pioneer Organisation: on the days of official national mourning, according to the forming ritual of the totalitarian state, the leadership of the Central Komsomol Committee promised the Communist Party and its leader, Stalin, that it would educate “a worthy generation of Leninists in the Pioneer Organisation”⁵⁰. At the same time, the Plenary Assembly of the Central Committee of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League decided to name the Pioneer Organisation after Vladimir Lenin. The act of adopting the name of Lenin by the Pioneer Organisation, dated 23 May 1924, took place in Moscow at Red Square. According to the assumption of the training system, the event had a rich propaganda setting. Its culmination was the taking the “oath of allegiance to the work of the great lead-

⁴⁴ URBAN, A., *Podolan, Organizacja pionierska, pionierzy*, [Podolan, Pioneer Organisation, Pioneers], [in:] *Encyklopedia Dzieciństwa* [http://encyklopediadzieciństwa.pl/index.php?title=Organizacja_pionierska], access as of: 10 December 2016.

⁴⁵ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 10.

⁴⁶ It should be emphasised that from the very first moment of its existence, the Pioneer Organisation was a part of the Komsomol and therefore it was considered its extension.

⁴⁷ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 9. The above-mentioned statement meant in practice that the Pioneer Organisation – besides the school and the Komsomol – became one of the most important tools for the education of *a new man* – the primary slogan and goal of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

er of the proletariat” by 10,000 pioneers⁵¹. The witnesses of this event were, among others, the delegates to the congress of the Bolshevik Party. Thus, in accordance with the principles of human training, V. I. Lenin became the leader, the model and a substitute of God, whom the Communists had eliminated from the educational space, to the communist movement in Russia.

Lenin’s successor, Joseph Stalin, used Lenin’s authority. On the occasion of the first anniversary of Lenin’s death, he addressed the public, especially young people, with a particular appeal: “Keep Ilyich in mind, love him, study the work of Ilyich, our teacher and our leader. Fight against internal and external enemies and defeat them – as Ilyich did. Build a new life, a new being, a new culture – as Ilyich did”⁵². The official declarations by Pioneer Organisation leaders about the children and youth’s loyalty to Lenin could not change the fact that the Pioneer Organisation operated in accordance with “the wise guidelines of comrade Stalin”⁵³ practically from the very beginning of its existence.

This situation was reflected in the programme of the Pioneer Organisation. Its motto for the first thirty years of existence was the following slogan: “Be ready to fight for Lenin–Stalin cause”⁵⁴. It can be treated as a universal goal set by the leaders of the Soviet state to members of this mass communist children organisation, which operated practically throughout the Soviet Union. Initially, the Pioneer Organisation was a voluntary organisation, which all children aged 9–14 could belong to. However, as the Stalinist version of the Soviet state strengthened, participation became increasingly obligatory for students of this age group. Thus, pioneer groups were created in both schools, orphanages and children’s camps.

The procedure for the admission of a child into a Pioneer Organisation was a multi-step process. A pioneer candidate who wished to join the ranks informed the chairman of the council or a pack leader. Then, one of the council members acquainted the newcomer with the objectives of the Pioneer Organisation, its pioneering symbols and the text of the solemn oath. They also explained the future pioneer’s obligations and informed them that the pioneer should learn well, be disciplined, take an active part in the work of their cell and pack, and above all “set an example for other children everywhere and in everything”⁵⁵.

In general, though, the pioneer candidate did not need to meet any specific conditions. The admission of a new member who had already become acquainted with the pioneering symbols and the text of the solemn oath was resolved in an open vote at the gathering of the pack. The new student was automatically included in one of the cells. However, in order to gain full rights, they had to make a solemn oath. Usually, the oath was made by several new pioneers standing in a separate row during a gathering. First, the newly recruit-

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 13.

⁵² STALIN, J., *Dziela*, [Works], vol. 7, Warsaw 1950, p. 25.

⁵³ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 14.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 37.

ed persons loudly “uttered” the oath, then each of them signed its content and handed it to the pack leader. After accepting the oath, the leader tied a red scarf on the pioneer, handed over the badge and addressed every newcomer with a pioneering slogan: “Be ready to fight for Lenin–Stalin cause”. The newcomer responded: “Always ready” and saluted in a pioneering fashion⁵⁶. Then he stood on the left wing of the pioneer pack. From then on, they became a full member of the Pioneer Organisation.

One should also devote a few words to the subject of the structure of the Pioneer Organisation. Its basic unit was a pioneer group, which was divided into packs while those were divided into cells⁵⁷. A pioneer group could be created in a school or an orphanage if it consisted of more than 30 pioneers. The tasks of the group included reviewing pioneer packs’ activities, subject groups and artistic presentations, sports competitions, exhibitions of pioneers’ works in the field of technology, fine arts and the exhibition of news bulletins. In addition, a group carried out celebratory meetings on the occasion of revolutionary holidays. A pioneer group had also the privilege of recommending the admission of the best pioneers (who were over 14) into the Komsomol ranks⁵⁸. Each group published their own news bulletin. A group organised its meetings every 2–3 months.

A pioneer group was managed by the council (consisting of 7–15 people) chosen by the members of the group in an open ballot. Formally, the council managed the group but in practice it was the group leader, who was not chosen by the council but rather appointed by the Komsomol Pioneer Division, that ran the group. Each pioneer group had its own banner and each pack had its own pennant, bugles and snare drums. They were kept in a pioneer chamber. In accordance with the principles of training, pioneer groups were named after “an outstanding activist of the Bolshevik party, a scholar, a hero of the Soviet Union or a hero of the socialist work”⁵⁹. In order to attract the largest number of students into a pioneer group, pioneer groups (in cooperation with teachers) created a variety of school interest groups, such as sightseeing, nature, radio, modelling, art and sports groups.

A part of the group was a pioneer pack, which usually included pioneers of one or two parallel classes. A pack was divided into cells. In accordance with the *Pioneer Leader’s Book*, the pack was the place where the mass indoctrination of pioneers took place. During meetings, the pioneers took part in discussions on the Bolshevik party and Komsomol and were told the biographies of the revolutionaries (Lenin and Stalin) and the pioneers who left a heroic mark on the brief history of the USSR. In addition, pack meetings were organised in relation to revolutionary holiday celebrations and film screenings were held, during which pioneers were shown carefully selected propaganda films. Film screenings were combined with a discussion (more frequently a lecture) on topics raised in the films.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵⁷ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 32.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 32–33.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, p. 33.

A pack organised various types of field games, sports competitions and published a news bulletin, as well. A pack meeting was carried out once a month on average.

As in the case of the group, the pack was run by the pack leader (appointed by Komsomol) and the pack council, which consisted of 5–7 persons selected in an open ballot for a period of one year⁶⁰. Although not elected to the pack council, the leader was its member *ex officio*. As in the case of groups, the Komsomol Committee could name a pioneering pack after a prominent activist of the Bolshevik Party, the great commanders, scholars or heroes of socialist work. Decisions on this matter were announced to the pack on a meeting held specifically for this purpose.

The propagandist dimension of the operation of the group or pack was of great importance to the nature of the Pioneer Organisation. This was reflected, among other things, by the procedure of election of the council members: the chairman and the editor of the news bulletin were elected first. The particular care for the news bulletin and the information and ideological and political comments it distributed confirm that the entire Pioneer Organisation was treated by the USSR authorities as a tool for the indoctrination of the young generation.

The cell was the smallest element of the organisational structure of the Pioneer Organisation. It included from 8 to 10 pioneers of one pack. The daily pioneer work took place in the cell. During a (regular) meetings, pioneers – the members of the cell – were to perform socially useful work they were able to do, organise trips in the neighbourhood, read books, children and youth magazines, discuss articles they read and organise games and sports competitions. In addition, the pioneers who belonged to a cell were to control the progress that their fellow students made in learning and organise help in case they have difficulties.

Technically, a cell was run by a cell leader. The leadership of the Pioneer Organisation recommended that they be “brave, energetic, good at school, disciplined, respected by their fellows and capable of organising work and lead other cell pioneers with them”⁶¹. In reality, it was the pack leader that was responsible for the activity of the cell. It was a duty of every pioneer cell to keep a diary, which included a list of the pioneers – members of the cell, work schedules, pioneers’ remarks on the social work performed by the cell, as well as manifestations of pioneers’ artistic creativity, such as poems written by them.

Like the Komsomol, the Pioneer Organisation had its symbols. They included a red pioneer scarf, which every pioneer was obliged to wear at all times – at school, at home and on the street. They were also obliged to guard the red scarf. Its symbolism was thoroughly permeated with communist ideology. The red colour of the scarf, which referred to the red banner of the Red Army, symbolised the blood of “thousands of militants hanged and shot by landowners and capitalists”⁶². Therefore, pioneers were instructed to: “Wear this

⁶⁰ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego*, p. 34.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 34.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 45.

red scarf with great respect, hold firmly the red banner of communism in your hands”⁶³. In turn, the three ends of the pioneer scarf symbolised the connection between the three generations: communists, komsomolets and pioneers. Based on this symbol, pioneers’ obligation to fight for the revolutionary traditions of Leninist Bolsheviks, “for the cause of our great proletarian communist party”⁶⁴.

The leadership of the Pioneer Organisation did not limit the command to guard the red scarf to washing and ironing. Pioneers were told that guarding the scarf meant honouring Lenin’s commandments: learn well, be a good friend, help adults in their work, be a faithful and genuine patriot. After the Second World War, the strength of the message of the above-mentioned symbol was reinforced by reference to the pioneers’ heroic actions during the war between the Soviet Union and the Nazi Germany.

Another important symbol of the Pioneer Organisation was the pioneer badge – a red five-pointed star with the radius of 1.5 cm. Above the star, there were three tongues of yellow flames that referred to the above-mentioned three generations: communists, komsomolets and pioneers. The two lower ends of the star were wrapped in a white ribbon labelled “Always ready”. At the top of the badge, there was a sickle and a hammer – the symbols of the USSR⁶⁵.

The Pioneer Organisation also had its salute – pioneer’s greeting. It was five fingers of the right hand, joined tightly and raised above the head⁶⁶. Pioneers were obliged to salute when meeting with another pioneer, a guide, when they addressed adults, when they met a member of the military and also while listening to the anthem of the USSR and the International. In addition, they were obliged to salute at the Lenin mausoleum and before every Lenin monument.

The uniform, which consisted of a white shirt or blouse and dark trousers or a skirt, served as an important element of the Pioneer Organisation’s symbolism. A pioneer wore a flying cap or a beret (dark or protective colouration) on the head with the above-mentioned red scarf (tied up under the collar). A pioneer wore a pioneer badge on the blouse. On the left sleeve above the elbow, they had special badges – made for the members and chairmen of the group and pack councils and cell leaders. A pioneer wore their uniform when participating in meetings, rallies, parades and demonstrations⁶⁷.

Bugles and a snare drum played an important role in the functioning of a pioneer group. Bugles were used to summon pioneers, transmit various signals and commands⁶⁸ played by a trumpeter at the command of the leader or chairman of a pack or group coun-

⁶³ Ibidem, p. 45.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, p. 45.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 48.

⁶⁶ Ibidem. P. 48.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 48.

⁶⁸ The trumpeter should be able to play various signals, such as attention, assemble, get up, dinner, meeting, alarm, sleep, cancellation, raise the banner, set off for a march.

cil. In turn, the snare drum was used during the group's participation in marches, parades and demonstrations.

The outlined origin and elements of structure and symbolism of the Pioneer Organisation show how the nature of social institutions becomes perverted in the conditions of the totalitarian state. They become façade constructs, which – under the cover of well-known and accepted programmatic slogans – hide thoroughly developed elements of a system of enslavement of its members and also members of the whole society in a broader perspective. The philosophy of lies typical of totalitarian states is fully reflected in the programme of the Pioneer Organisation, as it was created by the leaders of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia with a view to realising their ideological and political goals. In the social sphere, they were expressed in the pursuit of the education of a *new man*, who was to become *homo sovieticus*, a higher form of *homo sapiens*, in the future.

In pursuing its goals, the communist authorities of the USSR did not hesitate to reach for children, who they treated as the material to produce the above-mentioned *homo sovieticus*. For their own purposes, they also used the qualities typical of school children, such as the need to spend time with their peers, the desire to experience adventures, explore the environment and serve the homeland and the people in need. The above-mentioned developmental regularities, which were reflected by the tendency of children to associate with more or less official children and youth associations and organisations, were used by the communist authorities of Bolshevik Russia to include millions of girls and boys into a system of the ideological shaping of the young generation. The Pioneer Organisation was an extremely important component of this system, as it appealed to both the needs of children and the high standards and timeless values but it also subjected its members – pioneers – to methodological indoctrination in the form of training.

It should be noted that superficially the Pioneer Organisation made references to scouting. However, the similarity was only apparent, as scouting put emphasis on the development of its members, made boys “brave” and paid attention to the development of noble aspirations and good habits⁶⁹. In turn, the Pioneer Organisation prepared its members (boys and girls) to become worthy replacements of komsomolets and party members in the future. Pride was taken in helping the party and the Komsomol shape and indoctrinate Soviet children in the Communist spirit⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ *SCOUTING jako system wychowania młodzieży. Na podstawie dzieła Generała Baden – Powella przedstawił Andrzej Małkowski, [SCOUTING as a youth education system. Based on the work of General Baden-Powell, described by Andrzej Małkowski], Krakow 2017, [Reprint of an issue of 1911], p. 14.*

⁷⁰ *Księga przewodnika pionierskiego Pioneer Leader's Book...*, p. 8.

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