

DEVELOPMENT AND NATURE OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE LANDS OF PRESENT-DAY CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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The vocational school system in the lands of the present-day Czechoslovakia was shaped by Austria-Hungary. Its beginnings, as in all the other European states, go back to the time of enlightened absolutism. The Austrian model manifests itself not only in a preference for theoretical training in full-time day schools prior to taking up an occupation, over a lesser degree of training through continuation schools during the apprenticeship, but also in its manysidedness. The following types of schools can be identified: The continuation school (Fortbildungsschule), which was attended during the apprenticeship, educated, above all, apprentices in retail trades, small industry, and the crafts. The predominant vocational technical schools (Berufsfachschule) offered at least a year-long preparation of graduates of higher-grade elementary schools or lower-grade intermediate schools for artisan, commercial or household occupations. The technical schools (Fachschule) at last could be attended only with adequate prior practical vocational preparation and served the purpose of further vocational training.

For all these types of schools, antecedents can be found already as early as in the mid-18th century. In the realization of Maria Theresa's school regulations of 1774, great open-mindedness for vocational schools was displayed, especially in the Crownland of Bohemia. The director of normal schools of Bohemia, Ferdinand Kindermann, not only promoted the Sunday repetition lessons required under the school regulations, but was also the founder of the so-called industrial schools. Around 1792, industrial schools were attached already to 562 elementary schools — i. e. to a quarter of all the elementary schools in Bohemia. From the first half of the last century on, they were supplanted by newly established vocational technical schools. Kindermann's suggestions led in the year 1791 also to the establishment of schools of husbandry

and forestry and artisans' Sunday schools. The first European school of mining, on the other hand, was founded already in 1753 in Joachimsthal.

With the foundation of the first technical school in Prague in the year 1806 — the later school of technology (Technische Hochschule) — Bohemia increasingly acquired the position of a testing ground in Austri-Hungary for the introduction of new types of schools for vocational training. In 1850 the first agricultural college (Landwirtschaftliche Hochschule) of the Monarchy was established in Tetschen-Liebwerd; in 1852 the first trades school in Austria was founded in Reichenberg. Two years earlier than the Viennese, in 1856, the merchants of Prague founded a commercial school, which from 1866 on was called Commercial Academy (Handelsakademie) and was directed by Dr. Carl Arenz from Leipzig. He considered the model countinghouse (practice countinghouse) to be the heart of his school and advocated principles of instruction which are still valid today. In 1855, Steinschönau got the first technical school for glass-making; in 1862, Weißwasser, Kaaden and Chrudim acquired technical schools for agriculture. Five of the eight state trades schools founded in the Monarchy in the year 1876 were in the Sudeten lands. In northern Bohemia the syllabuses for commercial schools and commercial academies which were later prescribed were first tried out.

The Czechoslovak Republic founded in 1918 took over to a large extent this highly developed and strongly specialized vocational school system. The changes which were introduced were above all national in character, as well as representing standardization and nationalization. The standardization planned in 1938 would have endangered the differentiated vocational school system in the Sudetenland, but one finally satisfied oneself with redesignations along the lines of the German Reich and with the introduction of practical periods in the vocational technical schools. Under the Protectorate, on the other hand, the old system, was retained but received no encouragement whatsoever. A complete change was represented only by the new school laws, which first introduced the ten-year comprehensive school in 1948, and in 1953 the eleven-year comprehensive school, which do not allow the making of distinction between the general-education school system and the vocational-training school system.

Now, only the commercial schools and technical schools built up by individual Sudeten German scholars after the Second World War in the Federal Republic of Germany, such as the technical school for glass-making in Rheinbach, recall the former well-developed vocational-school system of the Sudeten lands.