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PHILANTROPINUM IN KUNVALD – THE REGIONAL SCHOOL IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

Location and the historical background

The village Kunín is located in the Moravian-Silesian region. The name Kunín was introduced in 1947, after the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia. Until then, the village bore the name Kunvald. Based on its geographical location, the village was primarily inhabited by Sudeten Germans, and more than a thousand German-speaking inhabitants were expelled after WWII.¹

The first mention of the Kunvald village dates to the end of the fourteenth century, but not much else is known. We are certain that a rather small fort was built there at the end of the sixteenth century; along with the fort, a brewery is mentioned to have existed there back then. The house of Cetryš from Kynšperk were the owners, passing the fort to a Hungarian-based nobility, the Serényis, in the middle of the seventeenth century. Through several more owner changes, the Kunvald fort eventually became the domain of Maria Eleonore von Liechtenstein. Eleonore and her husband, Count Friedrich August von Harrach, employed a very well-known and sought-after architect in Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt. The architect transformed the fort into a two-tier baroque-style château between 1726 and 1734.²

Several decades later, Maria Walburga, the granddaughter of Eleonore, became the sole owner of Kunvald Château in 1781. The countess Maria Walburga and her Philantropinum will be further commented on and explored in the rest of the paper. After Walburga's death, a former Philantropinum student inherited the Kunvald château. Friedrich Emil Schindler (1809-1867) owned the château for 39 years, then his offspring decided to sell the château to the house of Fürstenberg. The Fürstenbergs have forsaken the château, thereafter, leaving it to the last nobility owners, the family of Victor Bauer.

¹ J. Kubový, *Dějiny Kunína*, Kunín 1970, p. 70

² <https://www.muzeumnj.cz/kunin/historie> (20.04.2022).

Victor Bauer (1876-1939) was a lawyer and mainly an entrepreneur who ran the family business in the sugar industry. Bauer's plans to renovate the Kunvald Château in the style of functionalism, with Adolf Loos as the leading architect, were not realized. Bauer's wife and two daughters remained in Kunvald until the very last moment, abandoning it just a month before the Soviet army arrived in Kunvald in May 1945.³

The château was ravaged by Soviet soldiers and very poorly managed through the period of 1945 to 1989, leading to a full cessation of its use in the 1980s. The Kunín Château underwent a complete six-year reconstruction from 1998 to 2004 and is now open to the public.

Austrian education policy in the late 18th Century

The Empress Maria Theresa is known as an enlightened ruler, especially for her changes in the state education policy. During her reign, compulsory schooling was introduced in 1774 as a part of a broad educational reform carried out by the Prussian abbot Johan Ignaz Felbiger. Although school attendance was so-called compulsory, many of the children didn't attend school because of child labour.

Maria Theresa's son and successor, emperor Joseph II (1780-1790), continued and broadened his mother's reform measures. His aim was to weaken the influence of the Catholic Church and to reduce corporate privileges.⁴ Joseph's comprehensive system of reforms was later named Josephinism, although Szabo admits, that the term is perceived more narrowly as merely the church-related reforms. The emperor also sought to diminish Catholic Church's influence in the educational sphere, with the Edict of Tolerance and Serfdom Patent representing cautious and slow steps towards this goal.

Joseph's reforms were debilitated by two factors: firstly, in the late 1780s, Joseph II himself watered down many of his reforms, and secondly, after Joseph II's death, his successor, Leopold II reversed most of Joseph's reforms, albeit not all of them. The era of Josephinism thus ends with Leopold II.

Later, the Austrian chancellor Clemens von Metternich, wrote about Josephinism: "*Josephinism acted as a ghost, which passed through the land, wanting to overthrow everything but only managing to form a movement that built nothing*".⁵

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ E.A.J. Szabo, *Cameralism, Josephinism, and Enlightenment: The Dynamic of Reform in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1740-92*, "Austrian History Yearbook" 2018, 49, pp. 1-14.

⁵ S.M. Berg, *In the shadow of Josephinism: Austria and the Catholic Church in the Restoration, 1815-1848*, 2010, p. 9.

The Countess Maria Walburga

Maria Walburga, the Countess of Truchsess-Waldburg Zeil was born in 1762 as the only child to Franz Xaver, the Count Harrach, and his wife Maria Rebecca, the Countess of Hohenems. Walburga was educated in the era of the Enlightenment, allegedly speaking fluently in four languages. Her being an only child resulted in her inheriting most of the domains of her parents, with Kunvald Château as the most important one when speaking about her philanthropic efforts.⁶

Walburga was betrothed to an officer of her father's regiment, nearly ten years older, Klement Alois, whom she married at the age of 16. Walburga gave birth to four children in quick succession, however, the first three children died before or at the age of two. This wounded Walburga mentally and cleaved the marriage to the extent that the couple separated shortly after the death of the third child. The countess's last son was adjudicated to his father, leaving Walburga in her Kunvald domain solely with the personnel of the château. The last son died several years after the couple separated, leaving Walburga without any heirs.

Due to unfortunate family circumstances, Walburga had time to learn more, read, and travel. She travelled to Switzerland, where she paid a visit to Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, an expert on modern educational theory, who also held a school inspired by philanthropic ideas.⁷ Pestalozzi adopted some of Rousseau's educational ideas and offered an alternative to public schools in his school project in Yverdon. Pestalozzi insisted on modern methods, opposed grades and tests, and provided education for a very low (or no) fee. Similarly to Walburga, the school timetable was quite exhausting, totalling at 60 lessons per week.⁸

Ideas behind Kunvald Philanthropinum

Inspired by the Enlightenment, especially the French branch represented by Jean Jacques Rousseau, by the Masonic lodges located in Morava, that she visited, by Pestalozzi's ideas and last, but not least, by Basedow's Philanthropinum in Dessau, Walburga decided to start her educational project.

It is important to note that the year of the foundation of Kunvald Philanthropinum, Basedow's Philanthropinum in Dessau was closed. It is possible to perceive Walburga's school as one of the last attempts to preserve the era of the Enlightenment, while Europeans have already shifted to conservative thinking.

⁶ J. Zezulčík, *Znamenitá pani hraběnka*, "Časopis Poodří" 2004, 2 (7), pp. 14-33.

⁷ T. Corcoran, *The Centenary of Pestalozzi*, "An Irish Quarterly Review" 1927, 16 (61), p. 134.

⁸ <https://en.heinrich-pestalozzi.de/biography/yverdon> (20.04.2022).

Little is known about the very beginnings of Kunvald Philanthropinum; however, it can be deduced that it followed Basedow's ideas. Philanthropism can be generally described as a movement that is in a large part pedocentric, thus putting the child in a privileged position.⁹ The pedocentric approach is shared with the ideas of the Enlightenment, in the educational theory represented by Rousseau's work named *Emile, or Concerning Education*. Children are believed to be pure beings, not yet corrupted by the world, as they are independent and natural. The purpose of schools is to help children broaden their potential and develop their independence through separation from parents and growing up in the company of peers.

Rousseau's concept lies in realizing the true power of liberty – because being free allows the child to explore and satisfy his urges, thus becoming truly independent and self-reliant.¹⁰ Rousseau further instructs teachers to do as little as possible.

*I am recommending a difficult art to you, young teacher, the art of governing without rules and of doing everything by doing nothing at all.*¹¹

Realizing the 'natural self' as defined by Rousseau, raises the question of the praxis in Philanthropina in Europe. It is necessary to keep in mind that we are still at the end of the eighteenth century and that the age certainly influenced the shape of education. The Dessau Philanthropinum educated children based on an individualistic approach, directing rather than suppressing children's natural behaviour. However, the classical characteristics of schools persisted: children were obliged to wear uniforms; the tuition was organized in classes. The main changes were in the attitude: the Philanthropinum was open to children regardless of their religion, sex, or state. These characteristics have inspired the educational theory for years on, especially in the field of secularization of the educational sphere and the education of women.¹²

Walburga's Philanthropinum

Little is known about the foundation of the Philanthropinum, apart from the fact that it was founded in 1792. The first mentions of Walburga's intention to run small-scale school were dated five years before the Philanthropinum foundation.

The lack of pertinent literary sources leaves plenty of covert details that are probably never going to be clarified. Walburga certainly moved the existing village school to

⁹ R. Koerrenz, S. Engelmann, *Forgotten Pedagogues of German Education: A History of Alternative Education*, Cham 2019, p. 53.

¹⁰ J.J. Rousseau, *Emile or Concerning Education*, translated from French by E. Worthington, Illinois 1889, p. 157.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 88.

¹² F.N. Magill, *The 17th and 18th Centuries: Dictionary of World Biography*, Vol. 4, Oxon 1999, p. 94.

the château, converting it into a two-class school. Her Philanthropinum educated up to 60 children at one time, providing them with accommodation and food as well.¹³

As mentioned above, Walburga was influenced by Basedow's ideas, so it seems reasonable to believe that some of the characteristics were shared between these two educational facilities.

More reliable literary sources are accessible from the years when Karl Jurende was appointed as a main teacher of the Philanthropinum. Jurende's time in Kunvald is dated between 1806 and 1809.

The timetable prepared for the children at school was very harsh. According to the ideas of the Enlightenment, children were educated in a rather broad area of subjects, including languages (German as the maternal language, French and Latin as 'foreign' languages), mathematics, arts, and religious education. The tuition was scheduled six days a week with each day having 13 hour-long lessons. This resulted in 78 lessons per week.¹⁴

Such a harsh school schedule was complemented by regime measures; e. g. children underwent cold exposure training, and experiencing tuition with opened windows until the end of November. The regime established in Walburga's school was aimed at controlling children's eating habits, she was concerned about children eating predominantly healthy foods. The tuition started every day at 5 am and ended at 7 pm, thus filling the whole children's day. It is important to note that there was hardly any selection of children entering the school – Walburga ran the school at her own expense, providing children with tuition free of charge and giving them uniforms, schoolbooks, food, and accommodation. Children of Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religions were welcome in her Philanthropinum and attended mixed-gender classes for most of the subjects, with a little alteration, e. g., girls being educated in practical activities and boys having exclusively physical education. Jurende's notes suggest that Kunvald Philanthropinum was one of the first documented schools that implemented physical education in form of gymnastics propaedeutics, swimming, and the already mentioned cold-exposure training.¹⁵

In addition to school tuition, Walburga provided children with extracurricular activities, such as trips to nature. There were some areas in her château gardens set aside for the growth of fruit trees. It is documented that Walburga was the first in the monarchy in Austria to perform vaccination against smallpox at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁶

¹³ K. Musil, *Kronika obce Kunín 1953-1972*, Kunín 1972, p. 17.

¹⁴ J. Zezulčík, *Znamenitá paní hraběnka*, "Časopis Poodří" 2004, 2 (7), pp. 14-33.

¹⁵ V. Linhartová, *Zajímavá cesta do života pozoruhodné moravské ženy: Marie Walburga hraběnka z Truchsess-Waldburg-Zeilu*, "Univerzitní noviny" 2000, 9 (7), p. 39.

¹⁶ J. Zezulčík, *Znamenitá paní hraběnka*, "Časopis Poodří" 2004, 2 (7), p. 19.

The whole Philanthropinum goal was to educate boys as future teachers and girls to be exemplary housewives. Although the tuition was very demanding, it indisputably provided attendees with multidisciplinary knowledge that could be used in follow-up studies. Let us not forget that Walburga's Philanthropinum educated children aged 5 to 12 years of age, leaving plenty of room for further studies.

Another interesting phenomenon was part of the daily routine of Philanthropinum. The countess implemented a reward-punishment system that encouraged children to behave and discouraged them from being rude to teachers. Several literary sources suggest that the final exams of every year were viewed as a celebration of knowledge, with the very best students competing for valuable prizes, such as banknotes and religious books. According to Jurende's notes, Walburga was hesitant to punish the children, and although he admits the use of canes during school tuition, these occasions were quite rare.

Rewarding children with religious books brings us to another question – Philanthropinum was said to be tolerant of all religions, thus Walburga made effort to pick a book acceptable to the religion of the awardee. She was said to be very tolerant and, to further prove it, educated in the school herself. She made sure that religious education is more of an ethics course, giving moral lectures and raising children in the ideas of religious tolerance.

To sum up this part of the paper, this educational facility existed for 22 years, spanning from 1792 to 1814. Due to being repeatedly denounced and reported to the Moravian-Silesian land governorate for being too harsh and deviating from state educational policy, the Philanthropinum was shut down. The countess kept only a fragment of former students, formally following the governorate's decision. One of the students became the heir of the countess, since Walburga's last son did not live long, nor did his siblings.

Fourteen years after the Philanthropinum was closed, in 1828, the countess died at the age of 66. Her inheritance is to be seen at the château exposition, with precious artefacts from the era of her and her Philanthropinum.

Famous students

As already mentioned, The Kunvald Philanthropinum has educated about a thousand students in its 22 years of its existence. The most famous student was František Palacký, historian and politician, who attended this school between 1807-1809. Palacký, a native of Hodslavice, was sent to the Kunvald Philanthropinum and reportedly achieved great study success (as he states in his memoirs as well), but left the school due to a poor relationship with the school chaplain.

Aside from Palacký, two other students stood out – Joseph von Kronenberg, a general and a founder of Austrian gendarmerie, and Friedrich Emil Schindler, who inherited the Kunvald Château from the deceased Walburga.

Conclusions

The Kunvald Philanthropinum represented an example of a school run in the ideas of the Enlightenment, following Basedow's educational approach. This type of educational facility played an important role in the history of general educational theory, giving the example of the pedocentric school way before alternative education made it more common in the twentieth century.

Thanks to a very broad scope of Walburga's activities, the Philanthropinum also represents a copybook example of complex school impact, from tuition as the cornerstone to Walburga's insights into social pedagogy, and exceptional school schedule and extracurricular activities. The Philanthropinum played a crucial role in the life of its students, leaving them with valuable experiences while preserving their status as an individual. This aspect, in conjunction with other presented features, makes this Philanthropinum not insignificant.

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IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

S u m m a r y

The owner of the Kunvald Château, the countess Maria Walburga, attempted to copy and improve the concept of Dessau Philanthropinum and inspired herself in the works of J. B. Basedow. She established her own Philanthropinum in Kunvald village between 1792 and 1814. It is an interesting example of a school based on ideas from the late Enlightenment and Philanthropy, where children studied regardless of their gender, religion, or social status. The Philanthropinum in Kunvald employed various modern methods, and was exceptionally religiously tolerant. This article tries to summarize basic information about Kunvald/Kunín and its surroundings; to briefly introduce families that owned the château, and the main goal of this article is to aptly describe the schedule and regimen of the Kunvald Philanthropinum.

Keywords: regional education, Philanthropism, educational concept, social pedagogy

PHILANTROPINUM W KUNVALD – SZKOŁA REGIONALNA
W XIX WIEKU

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Właścicielka Kunvald Château, hrabina Maria Walburga, podjęła próbę skopiowania i ulepszenia koncepcji Philanthropinum w Dessau, inspirowując się pracami J.B. Basedowa. Między 1792 a 1814 rokiem utworzyła swoje własne Philanthropinum we wsi Kunvald. Jest to interesujący przykład szkoły bazującej na ideach późnego oświecenia i filantropizmu, gdzie dzieci uczą się niezależnie od swojej płci, wyznawanej religii i statusu społecznego. W Philanthropinum w Kunvald stosowano nowoczesne metody, przy jednocześnie wyjątkowej tolerancji religijnej. Niniejszy artykuł podsumowuje podstawowe informacje o Kunvald/Kunín i jego otoczeniu; krótko przedstawia informacje o rodzinach, w których posiadaniu było château; głównym zaś celem artykułu jest opis harmonogramu nauczania i reguł omawianej szkoły.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja lokalna, filantropizm, concept edukacyjny, pedagogika społeczna