

## ABSTRACT

This diploma thesis deals with the historical context and reasons for the development of alternative education in Czechoslovakia after 1989, including legislative changes which enabled the implementation of alternative schools. The main focus is on the emergence of Waldorf schools, which are one type of education of the alternative reform movement. The aim of the thesis is to determine the motivation of the founders and to map the circumstances of the establishment of Waldorf schools in Czechoslovakia after 1989. Special attention is paid to the research of the establishment and development of the Waldorf school in Prague 4.

The diploma thesis has the character of qualitative research. In order to fulfil the objectives, methods of analysis and synthesis have been applied during the examination of legislative and official documents as well as in the evaluation and comparison of interviews. Oral history methods, specifically interviews with eyewitnesses, have been employed to ascertain the authentic perspectives of the witnesses of the beginnings of Waldorf education in Czechoslovakia after 1989. Additionally, the effect of the Waldorf schools and their educational approach on pupils with special educational needs is illustrated through two case studies.

Waldorf schools were formed on the principles of the reform movement and at the same time on the foundations of the spiritual science of anthroposophy developed by Rudolf Steiner. In the 1920s, the Community of Christians and the Anthroposophical Society was established in Germany and Austria. Branches of such Community groups also started to be established in Czechoslovakia since 1925 and thanks to them the idea of Waldorf pedagogy was introduced to us. World War II put an end to all reform efforts. By mapping the development of education from 1948 to 1989, when there was a fundamental change in the legislation, it is possible to define the reasons for the creation of alternative schools in Czechoslovakia after 1989. The explanation of the creation of Waldorf schools in Czechoslovakia after 1989 and the determination of the motivation of the founders are enabled by interviews with witnesses.

The development of the Waldorf school in Prague 4 is examined through the school's official documents and through interviews with the founder, teachers and parents of pupils who were at the beginning of the school's existence. Thanks to the willingness and openness of the teachers, their personal motivations and motivations for why they put their efforts into the promotion and implementation of the Waldorf school and the reasons due to which they still work at the Waldorf school are also recorded in the interviews with their consent. The work represents the specificity of the Waldorf school in relation to the upbringing and education of

pupils with an emphasis on the freedom and responsibility of the human being in relation to the world, responsibility to the community and to oneself. It provides an insight into the principles and experience of the Waldorf method of education and upbringing. Parents of graduates are also approached for a comprehensive view describing the way they experienced the beginnings of Waldorf schools with their children, and their retrospective view of Waldorf education are presented here. The case studies present a concrete picture of students with disadvantages, shows their characteristics and conduct at the beginning of school attendance at the Waldorf school and analyse their development in the observed areas over a period of six years.

The number of Waldorf schools in the Czech Republic and in the world is on the rise. To some extent, the Waldorf schools change according to the development of society. However, they still take into account the developmental transformation of the child and the young person, the development of their relationship to the world and their development of learning abilities. The principles of Waldorf pedagogy are still valid and effective in education.