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Articles

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Leninas kaip vaikas. Vizualinė propaganda ir pedagogika

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Abstract: My study aims to reveal the connections between visual propaganda and pedagogy during the Hungarian state-socialism by analyzing different variations of a single picture of Vladimir Lenin. The ideological indoctrination played an important role in the socialization of children, even teachers; thus, the communist power tried to create a new ceremonial-ritual order and a socialist identity. The following analyzed images (photos and paintings) show different functions and meanings; by reframing and transforming photographs and contexts, we can demonstrate how the viewers could have been manipulated. The starting photo comes from my studies (based upon the corpus of Hungarian pedagogical journals) published in 1970, showing a seemingly unconventional representation: Lenin as a child.

Keywords: Visual propaganda, History of education, Pedagogical journals, Lenin Cult, Communist education.

Summary: Tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti vizualinės propagandos ir pedagogikos ryšį socializmo laikotarpiu Vengrijoje, analizuojant įvairius vienos Lenino nuotraukos pateikimo variantus. Idėjų indoktrinacija buvo labai svarbi to meto vaikų ir netgi mokytojų socializacijos procese, todėl komunistų valdžia bandė sukurti naujų ceremonijų ir ritualų tvarką bei socialistinę tapatybę. Straipsnyje analizuojami vaizdai (nuotraukos ir paveikslai) atskleidžia jų skirtingas funkcijas, reikšmes. Parodoma, kaip, keičiant ir transformuojant nuotraukas bei kontekstus, galėjo būti manipuluojama tais, kam jie buvo skirti. Pirmoji nuotrauka, paimta iš mano tyrimų (juose buvo analizuojamas praėjusio šimtmečio aštunto dešimtmečio Vengrijos pedagogikos žurnalų turinys), rodo netradicinį Lenino kaip vaiko atvaizdą.

Keywords: Vizualinė propaganda, Svetimo istorija, Pedagogikos žurnalai, Lenino kultas, Komunistinis švietimas.

Introduction

Visual propaganda and the Lenin Cult constitute the theoretical background of this analysis: these ideas will be used in a specific historical context, with the methodology of visual studies in the history of education. At the beginning, I introduce these approaches, which are followed by the visual corpus and methodology in the particular sociopolitical situation of the Kádár Era in Hungary.

Using images as a propaganda tool, the transformation of meanings and functions under political dominance is a current research trend (Dussel 2018), which is a fundamental part in this study. My visual sources give good examples to illustrate possible answers and reactions to Inès Dussel's four comments, related to the visual turn in the history of education (Dussel 2013). These remarks make our presuppositions in this research field questionable: first, the idea about the photographs as transparent sources, closer to reality than verbal documents, with a truth-claiming intention. We will see, based on the case of the image of Lenin as a child, how a photo could have been decontextualized and modified to create different suggestions, according to the needs of ideology – that is one of the main tasks of propaganda, and not just across totalitarian systems. The second aspect is historicizing visual technologies, the effects of mediation: in my analysis, this feature appears at the mutual influences and interactions between painting and photography, framing and changing the visual (similar to what these days we might refer to as “photoshopping”). There have existed a lot of unreflected topoi of the socialist pedagogy, a special visual space with activities, symbols, icons, and leaders, like Lenin – his figure was included in the everyday experience of communism (Zakharova 2013), and this visuality formed our social constructions in an unnoticed manner. That is the third reason for emphasizing the importance of such interpretations. Finally, we can see and observe how the “visual pleasure” is working, when the popular images of the innocent child (both with their religious and traditional connotations, see Higonnet 1998) determined the political picture of Lenin.

I formulated the following hypotheses grounded on the abovementioned theoretical basis:

1. The different visual representations of Lenin's life stages played an important role in communist propaganda and made Lenin appear as an idol to the average socialist citizen.
2. In this process, Lenin as a child became an icon, an amalgamation of several traditional visual elements and techniques, used in developing the cult of a leader.
3. The Party tried to socialize the children and teachers using a familiar image transmitted by the mass media, like pedagogical journals.

4. There was a specific historical context after 1956 in Hungary when the ideological indoctrination became more and more important, especially toward the youngsters, because they were involved in the revolution against communism to a great extent.

Cult and Propaganda

According to the historiography of the Lenin Cult, every similar form such as this contains the main elements: symbols and ritual activities and anniversaries that express the importance of the heroes in front of the target audience and give the possibility to live through the common experiences amongst the participants. In this sense, we can speak about the iconography of Lenin (Coquin 1990): Lenin became a conventional and heroic figure, connecting and unifying in one person material and spiritual power. He survived his own mortal existence in a transcendental sphere of the international struggle of the working class, as Mayakovsky, the propagandist (and later disenchanted poet) of the communist dream (Jangfeldt 2014) wrote in *The Komsomol Song*: “Lenin – lived, Lenin – lives, and Lenin shall always live” (Mayakovsky 1985, 101).

The terminology and phrases – not accidentally – invoked religious beliefs and ideas. One of the most current interpretations connects these special discourses about Lenin with the role of religion in Russian historical traditions; therefore, the Bolshevik tribune satisfied the needs of the masses to be ruled by a strong leader that is legitimized by a higher supremacy. Mária Ormos, a famous Hungarian historian, considered the political religion (which substituted the sacral sphere) a main characteristic of the totalitarian regimes: Bolsheviks had suggested that people can constitute the heaven in the world if they follow the right leader and the right ideology (Ormos 1994). Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler appeared as Messiahs, appointed the right way to a better future, and designated the enemy obstructing these goals. In this process, the new generation was evaluated as a key factor, and that is why (political) education was so important – through different verbal and visual messages.

Nina Tumarkin argued in her studies (1981; 1983) about the continuity between the religious tradition and the Lenin Cult, which helped the Soviet people identify emotionally with the Party and unified the image of the leader. The charisma of Lenin turned the real person into an enormous figure, which was also the reason why Lenin’s body was mummified after death and laid to rest in a newly built mausoleum, itself a symbol of immortality. In the schools, the Lenin Corners had a similar function: they were the tools in educating the new man of the communist society (Zviagintseva 1970) – this ultimate ambition became more and more formal from the 1970s. The original creators of the cult in the 1920s established the Lenin Icon to stabilize their power, while his later successors (like Stalin and Khrushchev) always referred to Lenin, positioning

themselves as his original followers (sometimes in very contradictory ways). Thus, Leninism became a “religion of the state,” its founder a prophet who had written the sacral texts, reinterpreted again and again (Riegel 2005).

According to Benno Enker, Bolshevism did not establish a secular religion; the Lenin Cult served actual political needs to secure communist power – we should not forget that the ideology and practice of Marxism-Leninism stood against every kind of religious expressions. The proletariat and its struggle were manifested in the figure of Lenin, a symbol of the Revolution, Party and the New World, which could be a perfect tool to mobilize the masses (Enker 1987; 1996) – Peter Kenez’s thesis about the Soviet Union as a propaganda state (1985) fits into this sentence. To sum up, two main discourses have existed about the role of this Cult: one emphasizes the political religion and its founder, the Messiah-like Lenin; the other evaluates him as a one-man army, in the process of the transformation of Russia into a Bolshevik country. Victoria Bonnell’s work about Soviet political iconography (Bonnell 1998) combined these two theories, and the author clarified that the communist system incorporated old cultural elements and created a new tradition (like the Pioneer movement in Hungary had used symbols and activities of interwar scouts a little differently), the Lenin Cult, to legitimize its power and socialize the next generations, adding new beliefs, values, and behavioral patterns to them. The deeply rooted orthodoxy and the nationalist idea of the Empire were reflected in a new context, like the examples of Stalinist rhetoric during the Second World War or as in the development of the Lenin Icon.

Sources, Methodology, and Historical Context

My dissertation was based on photographs published in Hungarian pedagogical journals between 1960 and 1970 – 5371 items in total (Somogyvári 2014). From these, I made different foci of discourses (or thematic tags, see Keller 2013, pp. 89–106). One was about the image of the historical past, its actors and events, and the most influential character: Lenin. He represented the founding myth (the idea comes from the theory of the cultural memory, see Assman 2011) of communism – the most often cited hero in the workers’ movement, his figure had transmitted plural messages in 1960s Hungary: the slogan to get return to the real Leninist roots, the tools of de-Stalinization, the growing importance of the ideology in a more complex geopolitical situation, etc.

Visual studies in the history of education as a methodological tool have a long tradition reaching back to its beginning in the early 2000s, when the first texts were published in this research field (Depaepe & Henkens 2000; Burke 2001; Grosvenor 2001; Rousmaniere 2001). The recent trends move toward problematizing the values of images as historical evidences and transparent sources, displaying the interactions and changes between the users of visual content, making the mediation and broadening context and making

it more visible (Dussel & Priem 2017). In relation to this, I choose only one image to show its different modifications and framework within the special sociohistorical context of Hungary in 1970. We must briefly discuss the antecedents before “reading the images”: the Lenin-figure and other leaders, the connection between the 1956 revolution and the Kádár-regime, and the aspect of ideology.

From 1945, Lenin had been the idol and referencing point of the communist movement in Hungary, next to Stalin and his most faithful pupil, Rákosi. After 1953, Stalin disappear increasingly from the discourses: it was symptomatic when the de-Stalinization campaign reached to rename Stalin-City to Dunaujváros (“New City by the Danube”) in 1961 (Horváth 2017, p. 4). The same process happened to Rákosi, who had stayed in the Soviet Union since 1956 because of a forced medical treatment, meanwhile Kádár, the new leader, judged him and his clique as one of the main reasons of the revolution (in the communist terminology – the counterrevolution). In 1956 the revolution proved the failure of the communist ideological indoctrination and propaganda amongst youngsters, because they were involved to a large extent in the uprising and the resistance.

The decree of the Temporary Central Committee of Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party made the following conclusion in 1957: “The counterrevolution played the fool with our youth by fake nationalism and fake socialism. [...] One of our main goals is to enlighten and return them to the real power of the people” (Vass & Ságvári 1973, pp. 45–47) In this aspect, the teachers were guilty, so the Party aimed at ideologically educating the educators intensively: for example, the Party underlined to the editors of the pedagogical journals to become more political and fought against nationalism and religious thoughts (Feljegyzés a pedagógiai folyóiratok szerkesztőivel tartott megbeszélésről, 1959). The following image of Lenin was a tool, first to (trans)form the teachers’ thinking, and then to transmit the ideology with their help to the students.

“A Boy Like Any Other”

The centenary of Lenin’s birthday in 1970 gave the opportunity to the social sciences, journals, and different organizations at that time to highlight the historical figure of Lenin and his real ideas (Krausz 2008, pp. 11–12). The Hungarian pedagogical journals commemorate this event too: the first picture was taken from the monthly paper called *Gyermeünk* (“Our Child”), published in April, 1970.

If we interpret the Lenin image (Picture 1) without the context and the connotations (Barthes 1977), it is an average child’s portrait, but every image should be analyzed within its own cultural-historical background. A picture about a child seems familiar in our culture, containing the meaningful elements of clothes, a figure of the body, hair, furniture, indoors and outdoors spaces, or activities represented. Without the verbal surrounding and knowledge, the political

dimension of this image remains hidden, which showed a characteristic feature of the Kádár Era – the consequence of the pacified, de-politicized society (Swain & Swain 1993, p. 172) and non-direct indoctrination (contrasting to the early 1950s). But beyond the surface, the real ideology functioned: the Party-controlled public opinion was organized in numerous ways. For example, in Pest County, to remember the birth of Lenin (1870–1970), the Party organized mass meetings, made statues, and organized obligatory courses for the teachers titled “The Actuality of Lenin’s Educational Thinking.” There were different exhibitions, the so-called Lenin Days, a movement of the pioneers (“In a Free Country, on the Road of Lenin”), a competition in Russian language for elementary and secondary school pupils, supplementary to the daily journal, and, above all, various forms of celebrations and parades (Határozati javaslat... 1969).



Picture 1.

A Boy Like Any Other (detail). In Gyermekünk (“Our Child”), 1970, Vol. 2. No. 4. page 18.

Celebrations were very important in the communist system: both the repetitive ones every year and the single jubilees. For example, the 20 year-anniversary of Hungary’s liberation (1965) was one of these: the Second World War ended in Hungary on April 4, 1945, when the last German troops and their Hungarian allies were expelled by the Soviet Army. After that, April 4 became an official holiday in the occupied country, and the Red Army stayed in Hungary until 1991.

Half century-anniversaries followed: the “Great October Socialist Revolution” in 1967, the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1969, and the next year (1970) was Lenin’s centenary. A festive calendar can be compiled from the anniversaries and celebrations in the socialist Hungarian society – a liturgy, which could mean either formal or emotional events, unifying the community, creating continuity with the past (Connerton 1989), as always, in a selective way.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party and the Hungarian Communist Young League constructed the concept of the “Revolutionary Youth Days” (Forradalmi Ifjúsági Napok), a new form of celebration in the late 1960s, amalgamated on March 15 (revolution of 1848), March 19 (anniversary of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, 1919) and April 4 (the Liberation Day, when the Red Army liberated/occupied the country in 1945). To organize these three week-long events, propagandists of the party sent readymade scenarios to the schools; a directive (Iskolai ünnepélyek, megemlékezések... 1958) listed Lenin’s birthday (April 22) in the “Revolutionary Youth Days,” too: “...when we celebrate the organizer and leader of the Great October Socialist Revolution, his working life, and struggle.” The commemorations had to be held at the last lesson of the day; the teachers were obliged, then, to reflect the ideological consequences of Lenin’s birth: “The most important factor of his success was his insistence on the principles of scientific socialism. He fought against every kind of declination, the wing-revisionism and opportunism and the leftist dogmatism, too.” After 1956, János Kádár, First Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party, declared a “two-front struggle” to stabilize his power: against both the “revisionist” Imre Nagy (the revolutionary leader of 1956) and the “dogmatist” Mátyás Rákosi, the communist dictator, who had failed after the mid-1950s. The abovementioned instructions of the celebration reflected these political intentions; Lenin was either an instrument or an argument here, illustrating actual political needs and filling the messages according to the purposes of the Party.

The first picture represents Lenin at the age of 4, fitted to the profile of the journal, *Gyermekünk* (“Our Child”), which focused on early child development and family content. The context of the photograph determines its interpretation and reception; first, the title (A Boy Like Any Other) suggests a high-contrast paradox. We know the afterlife of this boy, and an average viewer tries to discover the characteristics of the future leader on the face. If we neglect our presumptions, the conventional visual topos of the “Innocent Child” was presented here: curly, light hair, harmless eyes, a gender-neutral figure (it can be both a boy and a girl, like the angels and the putti) symbolized the lost Paradise (for the narrative of the Innocent Child, see Higonnet 1998). The general image of a child connected with a specific figure, embedded in history, and the interdependence of the two dimensions were utilized by the editorial board. We can read a quote beside the picture, which gives another point of view to the interpretation (the translation is from an English publication):

The spectre of Communism haunted Europe, withdrew, then roamed again throughout its girth. For all these reasons in Simbirsk, [...] Lenin, a boy like any other, came to birth. (Mayakovsky 1965, p. 197)

The poem is called Vladimir Iljich Lenin and published in 1924, the year when the Bolshevik leader died. The quotation connects Lenin to the Communist Manifesto: the birth of a famous document and Lenin signed a new Era; the angel-like face and the context together refer to the figure of the Messiah. The spectre of the communism and the star that declared the incarnation of God were analogous; both Jesus and Lenin were born faraway – Bethlehem and Simbirsk – this idea might be familiar to the children with a traditional religious background, too. The following line from the poem proved this hypothesis: “no God Almighty bade him be a saviour” (Mayakovsky 1965, p. 198). The sacrality of the discourse is undoubted, the communist liturgy fixed the New Beginning, the birth of the founder – a secular religion, but this picture is manipulated. Let us observe the total layout, because it gives a different impression to the viewer!

The composition on Picture 2 consisted of four elements:

- the title (A Boy Like Any Other),
- the picture of Lenin,
- a quotation from Mayakovsky,
- and the group photograph at the bottom of the page.



Picture 2.

A Boy Like Any Other. In Gyermekünk ("Our Child"), 1970, Vol. 2. No. 4. page 18.

Overlooking the development of the Hungarian pedagogical journals, this design is a perfect example to the magazine-like press from the late 1960s, containing a lot of pictures and short lines of text that capture the reader's the attention and emphasize importance of an outlook (it could be a poster to an event) – this attitude reflects to the practice of Western journals (Somogyvári 2014, p. 33).

Every eye on this page stares to the viewer, who is going to read the whole setup overall and its parts separately: this is a multimodal experience, with verbal and visual effects utilized all at the same time (Fendler 2017). The montage can be seen through different political lenses; one is following the original intentions, image, and prognosis of the future leader of the workers' movement and the new society, anticipating revolution, a unity of the individual and the masses. The other approach discovers the working process of the propaganda, reflecting to the idea of the paternal state and its children, the citizens, or the child as a symbol of the new state (Pinfold 2011), describing how the founding myth was demonstrated, what tools were used, etc. From this layout, one can recognize several affections and emotions, like power, integrity, trust, belief, and a longing for better times to come – an expression of an ideal socialist consciousness, a concept worth a deeper study in the next years (about emotions in the history of education, see Sobe 2012).

The image of Lenin is above the crowd (physically and symbolically), but this picture is not the original portrait, only a trimmed version of it, which was cut out from a bigger photograph and modified, resulting in a mixed version of a photograph and a painting – by comparing the two pictures, differences and similarities emerge. In conclusion, it can be said that the face of the child here is more akin to a part of a complex symbol system or a representation (Dekker 2015) rather than a real historical person.

The Real Photograph about the Boy

The third picture is the original; with the cut-out, it became a widespread portrait and contained only Lenin's face on the first picture, which warns us of the importance of techniques, the "visual regimes" that may modify our perception (Dussel 2013). From this photograph, the unknown pictorial editors made a type of image closer to a painting, with the playful transitions of light and shadow (see the background in Picture 1 – the child came from brightness!); the resulting image is more suitable to the heroic-mythical times described below than this particular bourgeois genre of a family portrait. It was originated in painting too – members of the middle-class would order such pictures be made in the 19th century to record their families' images, which rendered the painters' and photographers' profession profitable (Szilágyi 1982, pp. 73–74). Images made of the families were idealistic, because these portraits could be designated as representation forms in front of the public. A portrait remains from 1879, with eight members of Lenin's family (e. g., Zevin & Golikov 1977, p. 158), and there is only one picture showing the children (Olga and Vladimir Uljanov) separately.

The Marxist theory of photography interpreted the portrait as a dialectic connection between typical and unique elements (Fischer 1980, p. 15): the bourgeois context is typical on the second photo, meanwhile the given family and child were unique, especially in the aspect of the later revolutionary movement. The picture was likely taken in a studio; the composition contains characteristics that refer to the family's prosperity, like the cushioned chair and the fashionable clothes. The third picture had not spread widely in the Eastern Bloc, because the smaller face-portrait (Picture 1) was more appropriate to the idea of a conventional tribune rather than the image of bourgeois well-being suggested here. Vladimir became, some years later (in 1886), a member of the nobility because of his father's position at the Assembly of Deputies of Simbirsk (Pipes 1996, p. 19) – this heritage and everything connected with or reminding of it associated him to this upper-class situation of Picture 3, and this could have been embarrassing for him in the Soviet times; not surprisingly, the child Lenin was represented only by his face in 1970.



Picture 3.

Vladimir Uljanov at the age of 4, with his younger sister, Olga. Simbirsk, 1874. (Photographed by E. L. Zhakrzhevskaya). Retrieved on July 15, 2016, from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/photo/family/012.htm>

The clothes of the boy, a favorite style of those times by the representatives of the Russian farmers' circle (little boots, white trousers), was typical of a high-middle class family with a progressive attitude. The Narodnik movement (with the slogan of "going to the people") culminated in these decades; the clothes might reflect to their ideas, although Lenin struggled against them in his adulthood. We can analyze every personal photograph as part of the collective past with its cultural-historical background (Sturken 1999): the meanings are determined by family-memory and the retro perspective-view. After Lenin's death, these pictures became the visual elements of his hagiography. The first item of his life's chronology was the image of the four-year-old Vladimir Ilyich Uljanov – without the signs of any privileged class origins.

Transition from Photography into Painting

The next version of the same picture (a painting) appeared too in a Hungarian pedagogical journal, designed for the Pioneer-leaders (Úttörővezető). Picture 4 raises many questions about the paradigmatic shift and/or transitions between the photographic and the pictorial language, the problems of the observer (Crary 1990),

and the changing forms of representational and color composition (Moholy-Nagy 1969), which were intentionally poor and pure here. The backdrop is dark, and the figure is white: as simple as the dualistic view of the communism.



Picture 4.

V. I. Lenin at the age of 4. Úttörővezető ("Pioneer-Leader"), 1963, Vol. 17. No. 4., inside cover.

The relationship and interactions between photography and painting was an important topic to pictorialism, a decisive trend in visual representation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Representatives of this direction interpreted photographs as paintings, or similar artworks, and created scenic photos with a lack of sharp focus (Tóth 2010); like the fourth picture (a painting), which was probably grounded on the previous photographs. Ivan Parkhomenko was the artist (1870–1940) who made this oil on canvas in 1920 (Lenin/Ivan Parkhomenko). The painter combined realism with transcendence to suggest the unique character of a real individual. We can observe the original features of the photograph (the child's face, hair, and shirt), but the backstage completely disappeared on the artwork – an opposition of the white figure and black foreground reflects pictorialism and a super-reality. Conversions between the two modalities, a translation from the painting to photography meant an important problem in the age of mechanical reproduction (Benjamin 2008), while the inverse direction (from photography to painting) implies the sublimation of the real figure and historical context into art and the sacral world. Lenin had existed at different levels; reality and myth interfere into each other in these representation spaces. The last (fifth) picture shows the original painting.



Picture 5.

Parkhomenko, Ivan: V. I. Lenin at the age of 4 (1924). Retrieved on July 15, 2016, from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lenin_V_I_at_age_of_4.jpg

The enlightened figure appears from the dark past, with a more conscious and adult-like look (than before) to the better future – as small adults in Ariès famous work on the history of childhood (1962). In this aspect, the fifth picture expresses a pictorial (and cultural) convention; on the other hand, the early version of the future leader's face is manifested as well. The oval-shaped portrait is a traditional one in this period, the same version being published in a popular book about Lenin's life in 1950s Hungary (Lenin élete képekben 1950, p. 12). The painter changed the mimicry, position of the lips and face, so the previous angel-like child became an assertive, ready-to-fight person.

The Lenin myth started with constructing his life, selecting, forming, and decontextualizing its different elements, as we can see on these pictures. This meant a shortened and manipulated image, focusing and emphasizing some components while hiding others; the becoming portrait was separated from its original sociocultural background, transforming the individual into a timeless hero. The child as a symbol of the new world has been well-known in our culture, disposing the identification power, which was needed to the political regime.

Conclusions

As Catriona Kelly stated in a conference volume, “a major innovation of the twentieth century [...] was the emergence of genres of political propaganda aimed explicitly at children” (Kelly 2004, p. 102). In the communist systems, “sovietized rituals” were used by the propaganda, which showed both continuity and innovation at the same time (Apor, Apor & Rees 2008, pp. 135–198). The politicized image of the innocent child of Lenin is a good example to this. The most interesting part of my analysis is the confrontation of realities and images and the existence of their entanglement. Bourdieu pointed out that the eye and perception is a historical-sociological construction (1996, pp. 313–322): it is very interesting how we see these conventional pictures then and now, with very different knowledge.

I review different versions of the same picture in this paper: an “ID-picture,” its layout in a journal, a family portrait, and a painting. Changes, transitions, continuities, and discontinuities can be observed through one figure, the role model of the “new man,” the final goal of communist propaganda (Cioflâncă 2010). It would be necessary to make a transnational perspective to future research, related to the connections between visual indoctrination in the Eastern Bloc and further (for example, for how the Soviet Union “used” Lenin for different purposes, see Fedosov & Konev 2015; Fedosov 2018). An impressive and broad field to study is the concept of indoctrination, with its philosophical and educational consequences (Snook 2010; Momanu 2012), because the key factor of every education is authority and belief – the question always rests on how to treat these aspects.

Several aspects of the Lenin Cult were useful in the analysis: the discourses about Lenin were influenced originally by the sacral sphere, even the scientific ones; the publication of the pictures in pedagogical journals ensured educational goals to make the next generations ideologically more conscious. Great historical figures have been models for a long time, introduced by editorial boards, teachers, politicians; the idea of political socialization describes the complex interrelation between pedagogy and politics (Szabó 2000). The political power uses values and norms in every decade, with images, celebrations, and symbols to unify the society and different communities and legitimize the control over them. The picture of “a boy like any other” might help this process, which draws historical trends closer to the ordinary people and makes heroes like Lenin more human.

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