

Comparison of the documentaries and its use in the teaching of history¹

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Polubňáková, P. (2021). Comparison of the documentaries and its use in teaching history. *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal*, 13/2021/1, 157–172.

<https://doi.org/10.5817/cphpj-2021-011>

The aim of the presented study is to compare two documentaries that deal with the same personality – Klement Gottwald – President of the Czechoslovak Republic in the years 1948–1953. Based on selected films we want to analyse how the current social situation, state regime, results stemming from history knowledge and current history education are reflected in their content. For this reason, we chose a documentary from the Descendants and Ancestors series called Klement Gottwald made in 1986, as well as a documentary from the Red Presidents series called Unified in Fear – Klement Gottwald in 2018, since the aim was to compare images published before and after 1989.² At the same time, we look at the issue from a didactic point of view, when we present specific possibilities of using the comparison of documentary films in history teaching. At the beginning, we briefly define what a documentary is. Next, we introduce the personality of Klement Gottwald from the point of view of modern historiography, and for an overview we name and briefly inform about some documentary films that were made about him. Subsequently, we focus on the basic data for the selected images and then we move on to the comparison itself, where we focus among other things, on pointing out the influence of communist propaganda. In this section we focus on specific common or different features of both documents and analyse them in detail. Finally, we offer several alternatives for the application of the comparison of documentary films in educational practice.

Key words: *Klement Gottwald; documentary film; communism; comparison*

¹ This study was created within the grant task VEGA 1/0711/19 *Historical science and the modern school system in Slovakia – the theory of historical cognition in the changes of Slovak history education of the 19th – 20th century.*

² This is a great, major change bringing milestone, since back then, the Gentle Revolution happened in our country, which resulted in the abolition of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and the subsequent emergence of two independent and democratic states – the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic in 1993.

In history, film has indisputable advantages, since it intensifies the atmosphere of the time more intensely than interpretation, describes past events in a comprehensive way, affects emotions, develops empathy and its analysis allows us to observe minority groups or the position of women in the past. Not only can it evoke the climate of a given period, it can also be used effectively in problem or project teaching or in creating own document, which encourages students' creativity or teamwork.³

Based on the didactic processing, the film generally develops students' skills such as critical thinking, communication skills or independent perception of historical events. The undeniable benefit of this medium is its popularity, motivational effect, audio-visual appeal, authenticity, support of productive skills (writing, speaking), as well as practicing the ability to understand what is heard and seen.⁴

As far as documentaries are concerned, they have a "big impact on students in terms of popularity, trust and learning."⁵ As it incorporates authentic period photographs, comments or maps, it evokes an impression of immediacy and concreteness. It is basically created for educational purposes, usually without obvious artistic ambitions as an information source for the depicted time. Of course, it must be criticized.⁶ The limits of the use of documentary films at lessons are time consuming, insufficient space in the curriculum, greater demands on the teacher, the need to consider psychological suitability of the film or possible insufficient technical equipment of schools.

Creators of documentaries related to history usually use very similar techniques in their production. They often reveal the same basic elements as commentary, witness statements or archival materials seemingly "directly" capturing past events. At the same time, however, there is a difference in the case of a production whose way of narration claims historical objectivity or, on the contrary, the purpose of the film is to offer an individual subjective view and thus only one of the possible versions.⁷ Documentary films dealing with the past reality are usually the most

³ Labishová, D. – Gracová, B. (2008). *Příručka ke studiu didaktiky dějepisu*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, p. 122.

⁴ Čapek, R. (2015). *Moderní didaktika. Lexikon výukových a hodnoticích metod*. Praha: Grada, p. 84.

⁵ Kratochvíl, V. (2008). *Dokumentární film ako školský historický obrazový prameň. Metodické podnety*. Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, p. 9–14.

⁶ Labishová, D. - Gracová, B. (2008). *Příručka ke studiu didaktiky dějepisu*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, p. 122.

⁷ Ferencuhová, M. (2009). *Odložený čas. Filmové pramene, historiografia, dokumentárny film*. Bratislava: Slovenský filmový ústav, Vysoká škola múzických umení, p. 99.

accurate and objective representation of history, but it must not be forgotten that they also contain significant traces of the time of their origin. In their analysis, it is therefore necessary to take into account two temporal levels: the one that the film seeks to reconstruct and then the one in which the film was made and at the same time, simultaneously allowing it to speak about past events from a distance and knowing what followed.⁸

In general, history documentaries appear to be slightly ambivalent. On one hand, they try to be as close as possible to reality and, as already mentioned, they usually try to reconstruct it with the help of a lot of archival materials, to comment on the testimonies of witnesses or the testimonies of experts. On the other hand, it is obvious that the method of selection and assembly of archival images is influenced by current ideas about the past event, testimonies reflect the current state of memory (a memory that can be changed compared to the original experience) and expert comments are only an image of the current the state of knowledge of the past, even if they describe archival images in the present tense. In historical documentaries, there is usually a special mixture of several lines, where archival materials capture and supposedly “preserve” the past event in its presence, but at the same time their presentation within the document is the result of a completely different period.⁹

Nowadays, documentaries are a very useful and effective educational tool for history teaching. Especially, those related to the history of the 20th century are one of the important sources of primary historical evidence. However, a necessary role is played by the teacher, who must carefully assess the documentary before using it in class. Furthermore, he firstly has to point out, that it is not enough to watch the film thoughtlessly, but it is essential to realize, that it can offer us various interpretations, which need to be analysed in detail and from all sides after watching it.¹⁰ When working with a film, the most practically important phase is debriefing with students. It is the phase of feedback and reflection about what was seen.

In connection with the above-mentioned facts, it is precisely the role of a teacher to encourage students to critically evaluate other aspects in addition to the image and content of the audio commentary, and thus assess the documentary film from several perspectives. These are, for example, facts about the conditions under which the film was made, who created it and why, what audience was it

⁸ Ferenčuhová, M. (2004). Medzi históriou a mýtom. Aktuality, dokumentárne filmy a „hraná fikcia“. In P. Kopal (Ed.), *Film a dejiny*, Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, p. 50.

⁹ Ibidem., pp. 50–51.

¹⁰ Stuchlíková, I. – Janík, T. (2015). *Oborové didaktiky: vývoj – stav – perspektivy*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, p. 302.

intended for or what is its purpose.¹¹ To illustrate, in the case of Czechoslovak documentaries from the second half of the 20th century, it should not be forgotten that during the communist regime, film and history themselves served as tools of ideological manipulation. Therefore, we should not be surprised by the fact that serious research into the relationship between these two phenomena did not enjoy official support at the time.¹² For this reason, the teacher must always draw students' attention to a possible subjective vision of reality or introduction in the discussion of a documentary film from this problematic period. For example, they should consider whether the commentary on it is objective at all and if it is only one-sided, in what way.¹³

In the subsequent comparison and analysis of the two documentaries, we will take into account the principle of multi-perspectivity and thus looking at historical events from several perspectives.¹⁴ Both films deal with the same issue and the same historical period, but they were made in different eras and therefore present very disparate contents. This process depends on the gradual realization that the record of the past can be interpreted in different ways, and it is necessary to be able to evaluate and analyse these multiple interpretations. It is the multi-perspective approach that allows us not to perceive history as something static and unchanging.¹⁵ Good historians should not even be satisfied with just one perspective of a historical problem, but they have to combine many (sometimes competing) versions of the story in order to compile the most objective interpretation possible. The value of multi-perspectivity lies in the understanding that there is no single interpretation of a historical event and the truth about it can only be reconstructed on the basis of the contradiction of these ways of looking at it. The application of such a complex approach also increases the probability of weakening prejudices or stereotypes, which are still found in didactic-historical texts. At the same time, they are closer to generally accepted scientific practices in historiography.¹⁶

¹¹ Stradling, R. (2002). *Vyučovanie európskej histórie 20. storočia*. Bratislava: Metodické centrum mesta Bratislavy, p. 187.

¹² Kopal, P. (2004). Úvod. In P. Kopal (Ed.), *Film a dejiny*, Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, p. 9

¹³ Stradling, R. (2002). *Vyučovanie európskej histórie 20. storočia*. Bratislava: Metodické centrum mesta Bratislavy, p. 187.

¹⁴ Stradling, R. (2007). *Multiperspektíva v dejepisnom vzdelávaní. Príručka pre učiteľov*. Bratislava: Metodicko-pedagogické centrum, p. 9.

¹⁵ Labishová, D. – Gracová, B. (2008). *Príručka ke štúdiu didaktiky dejepisu*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, p. 28.

¹⁶ Kratochvíl, V. (2019). *Metafora stromu ako model didaktiky dejepisu k predpokladom výučby*. Bratislava: Raabe, pp. 106–110.

We chose the personality of Klement Gottwald due to his controversial life and above all, political career, which had two sides. His rise was primarily due to the political abilities he fatefully connected with the communist movement, his own party, at first acting only as an admirer of the Soviet Union, but then turning into an obedient, zealous and unconditional advocate or executor of his power interests. Gottwald's authority in the party gradually grew, until it finally turned into its unbreakable symbol, worshiped even after his death throughout the communist regime, with an effort to artificially keep it in society. On the other hand, his path and especially his position at the height of power, was accompanied by human suffering, cruel treatment of opponents, unjust and fabricated trials associated with political assassinations, loss of hope, ideals, or the collapse of many life plans. This was caused by the state apparatus, in the construction of which Klement Gottwald clearly participated, as he was its highest representative and leader. Only after the fall of this system did it turn into a condemned and damned symbol of horror, while rightly taking the leading position among the culprits and the main constructors of the regime. He strongly intervened in the development of Czech and Slovak society and determined its forty-year future with long-term negative consequences.¹⁷

There were several documentaries about Klement Gottwald in Czechoslovak production before 1989. For example, we will present a short documentary from 1953 called *Klement Gottwald*, which was a memorial portrait of his life and work.¹⁸ *Klement Gottwald died* from 1953 was reaction to the president's death.¹⁹ In 1986, a Slovak film about Gottwald's relationship with Slovakia and his contribution to solving questions about the mutual coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks was made, entitled *Klement Gottwald and Slovakia*.²⁰

A major breakthrough in 1989 also brought an end to the building of the cult of personality in the case of Klement Gottwald and therefore the disproportionate exaggeration of his qualities or merits. This enabled the documentary *Klement Gottwald – an attempt at a portrait* to be made in 1991. It could already mention things that the general public did not even know about the president.²¹

¹⁷ Kaplan, K. (2009). *Kronika komunistického Československa. Klement Gottwald a Rudolf Slánský*. Brno: Barrister & Principal, p. 7.

¹⁸ <https://www.csfd.cz/film/814352-klement-gottwald/komentare/> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

¹⁹ <https://www.csfd.cz/film/330306-zemrel-klement-gottwald/komentare/> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

²⁰ Růžička, D. (2012). Gottwald byl pro nás zkouškou dospělosti. In K. Feigelson – P. Kopal (Eds.), *Film a dějiny* 3. Praha: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 537.

²¹ <https://www.csfd.cz/film/296348-klement-g-pokus-o-portret/komentare/> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

As for the period before 1989, for the purposes of the study, we chose a documentary about Klement Gottwald, which was broadcast live by Czechoslovak television on November 20, 1986 at a ceremonial meeting at the National Theatre. It was presented on the occasion of the celebrations of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia concerning the 90th anniversary of the birth of their “*great revolutionary leader and leading statesman*” Klement Gottwald, with the participation of the then President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic Gustav Husák.²²

The image comes from the series *Descendants and Ancestors*. It was a free cycle of feature-length documentaries from the 1970s and 1980s, which had twenty parts. Behind him was the Czech production company Krátký film Praha, capturing Czechoslovak history from 1918 until the end of the 1980s. As Ján Jirka, the program director of the Czechoslovak Film Society, rightly stated, the given cycle is *remarkable both thematically and with its zigzagging before the ideological control at the time and, conversely, the later effort to adapt to changing political conditions in 1989. It is a document in itself: it describes not only state-building and alternating regimes, but at the same time testifies to censorship, authorial self-control and, last but not least, changes in the social perspective of history, where one cliché often alternates with another.*²³

The screenplay for the documentary film about Klement Gottwald was written by its directors – Drahošlav Holub and Karel Maršálek, who also worked on other films from this series. Of course, they approached the topic as expected at the time of its creation.²⁴ After looking at it, we can really confirm that it is a tendentious document, supporting the mentioned cult of personality, which we will demonstrate on certain examples below.

For comparison, we chose a documentary about Gottwald, which was broadcast on *Czech Television* on February 23, 2018. It is the latest work of its kind, which concerns a given personality, while also coming from a series of several documentaries. *The Red Presidents* series represents five Czechoslovak presidents from Klement Gottwald, through Antonín Zápotocký, Antonín Novotný, Ludvík Svoboda to Gustav Husák, gradually ruling during the hegemony of one party in the years 1948–1989. Their personal as well as political story is presented exclusively by shots. This stems from the fact that the director Roman Vávra aimed to evoke

²² Růžička, D. (2012). Gottwald byl pro nás zkouškou dospělosti. In K. Feigelson, P. Kopal (Eds.), *Film a dějiny 3*. Praha : Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 536.

²³ Potomci a předkové (2014). <https://www.mediar.cz/kinosvet-vraci-na-obrazovku-serial-potomci-a-predkove/> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

²⁴ <https://www.csfd.cz/film/286144-klement-gottwald/komentare/> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

the most authentic feeling of the time that the individual parts deal with.²⁵ In 2019, Petr Buchta and his team won the *Ferdinand Vaňek Award* for Contribution to the Development of Civil Society for the awarding of the annual Trilobit Awards from the Czech Film and Television Association for this documentary series. The jury was impressed that they proved the existence of the importance of serious documentary production, as well as independent public service media.²⁶

There is only a slight difference in footage between *Klement Gottwald* and *The Unified in Fear – Klement Gottwald*, which allows us to make a more accurate comparison. While the former has 61 minutes, the latter lasts only 9 minutes less. In both cases, these are documentaries that rely entirely on available archival material. Apart from photographs, these are mainly audio and video recordings. The statements of witnesses or historians or other experts are completely absent. Last but not least, the comments accompanying the two documentaries have always been very closely linked to the image.

Klement Gottwald's documentary begins with a quote from the president and a look at his portrait: "My body, the machine that works, dies, dissolves into atoms, but the value of my work remains here. All I need to know is that I, an insignificant, nameless worker, helped build the magnificent building of truth that humanity has built since prehistoric times. And every stone I have helped with my work to bring to this building is immortal." In the first part (1896–1921), the film reveals Gottwald's childhood in Moravian countryside, with an emphasis on his hard-working mother, who worked in the field "from sun to sun." The following are mentions of a strike by workers from 1905, as well as a preview of a T-shirt with the slogan *Proletarians of all countries, unite!*²⁷

According to the filmmakers, a turning point in Gottwald's life was his departure to Vienna, where a numerous Czech minority lived, whose pillar was the proletariat. Klement Gottwald himself also became a carpenter here. At that time, he was already fully interested in socialist literature, the history of revolutionary struggles, he read the works of Tolstoy, later Marx or Lenin.²⁸

The first world war, in which Gottwald also took part, is also shown here. The film condemns the conflict as a "struggle for imperialist interests" and the "most revolutionary event" associated with it is the Great October Revolution, which "heralds new emerging certainties."²⁹

²⁵ Rudí prezidenti. <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/11687481655-rudi-prezidenti/> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

²⁶ <https://www.omeiach.com/filmy/14811-hlavnu-cenu-trilobit-ziskal-dokument-cechoslovaci-v-gulagu-video> [on-line] [cit. 2020-05-06].

²⁷ Holub, D. – Maršálek, K. (1986). *Potomci a předkové: Klement Gottwald*. 0–3 min.

²⁸ *Ibidem.*, 3–4 min.

²⁹ *Ibidem.*, 5–7 min.

In this part, we also follow Gottwald's career growth, when he gradually profiled himself as a member of the Marxist wing of the Social Democrats. The documentary highlights how devotedly he travelled around the country, in an effort to gain as many party members as possible for the idea of joining the Communist International, and consequently became an active spokesman for the labour movement. There is also a description of the disputes between the left and right wing within the social democracy, which culminated in the end of the establishment of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The commentator clearly condemned the subsequent attack by the right-wingers, when the police occupied the Prague People's House, the seat of the left-wingers and the Red Law editorial office. This provoked a general strike of workers, which resulted in several casualties. However, Gottwald's dream of joining the Communist International eventually became a reality, and the documentary demonstrated this fact with shots of the first Spartakiad, naming it a demonstration of the strength of the communist movement.³⁰

In the second part (1921–1932) the film continues the description of Gottwald's revolutionary struggle. After the 1925 elections, when the Communists won "*extraordinary second place*" as the "*only party fighting for the interests of the workers*", it began to form its Bolshevik core, which reached the point that after the fifth Congress of the Communist Party he became the party's general secretary and member of parliament. In all this came the well-known economic crisis, which showed only the "*temporary stabilization of capitalism*". It resulted in enormous unemployment and strikes by the proletariat, subject to terror by the bourgeois state apparatus. Gottwald, on the other hand, is perceived here as a selfless hero standing with the ordinary people, who, despite all his merits, is persecuted by his opponents, he is even imprisoned in Pankrác for nineteen days.³¹

In both sequences, we do not find any resemblance from the content page to the newer documentary film *The United in Fear – Klement Gottwald*. This is because the stories of Gottwald's beginnings based on work and learning a craft or the "singing" of his original activities in the struggle for the working class in the spirit of Bolshevism belong to the mass product of a certain period, environment and ideology.

On the other hand, the documentary *United in Fear – Klement Gottwald* initially skips the forty years of the president's life and begins to present events only in 1936, when Gottwald was in Moscow with his family for two years, where he went after being arrested at home. Unlike the second film, the viewer will also

³⁰ Ibidem., 8–12 min.

³¹ Ibidem., 15–21 min.

get to know his loved ones, his wife Marta and daughter (also Marta) or his close friend, Rudolf Slánský. In the first minutes, a significant change can be seen compared to the silence of unpleasant facts in the previous film, as the commentator speaks openly about the great political purges and trials under Stalin in the Soviet capital, as well as the atmosphere of fear spreading from there to Czechoslovakia.³²

Both documentaries intersect at the theme of Gottwald's escape to Moscow. However, in the 1986 film, the USSR is described only in a positive sense as the only state not affected by the economic crisis. The Soviet Union became a mighty industrial power fighting for democracy, with communism already widespread in one-sixth of the world.³³

The Unified One in Fear – Klement Gottwald completely omits the theme of the Second World War, which is an important part of the film *Klement Gottwald*. In it, we meet the efforts of the creators to portray Gottwald as a great fighter against Nazism, oppressed by his opponents, who gave way to Hitler. He was the one who took the risk when he made dangerous trips to the border areas of Czechoslovakia and Germany, where he agitated against fascism. In addition, the authors pointed out the “retreat, weakness, indecision and anti-communism of the Western powers” or their inability to stand up to Hitler. On the contrary, the Soviet Union was praised for recognizing Beneš's Czechoslovak government in exile in London and never taking into account the Munich Agreement.³⁴

While the documentary from the 1980s focuses primarily on Gottwald, *the Unified in Fear – Klement Gottwald* provides much more space for his wife and closest collaborators or other personalities. We also learn about the marriage of Gottwald's daughter to the Minister of Justice, Alexei Čepiček, who is described as “a ruthless careerist, self-proclaimed authoritarian and architect of the new judiciary”. The commentator notes on Václav Kopecký in a similarly unflattering way. He is called a fanatic, contributing to personal tragedies by providing the NKVD with reports of uncomfortable people. He is similar to Ján Masaryk, and as a democratic politician and a symbol of the First Czechoslovakia, he condemns him for helping to legalize totalitarian practices.³⁵ The only close colleague who was mentioned in more detail in both films is Ján Šverma.

Among other things, the claims about Gottwald as an international authority with regard to his relations with Stalin are disproved. In fact, he was not a favourite leader of USSR, only he himself created such an impression of importance in society,

³² Vávra, R. (2018). *Rudí prezidenti: Sjednotitel ve strachu – Klement Gottwald*. 0–1 min.

³³ Holub, D. – Maršálek, K. (1986). *Potomci a předkové: Klement Gottwald*. 23–24 min.

³⁴ Ibidem., 29–45 min.

³⁵ Vávra, R. (2018). *Rudí prezidenti: Sjednotitel ve strachu – Klement Gottwald*. 4–34 min.

since Stalin argued about more important matters only with Edvard Beneš. He even described the Czechoslovak communists as “*simple, without a view and straightforward*”, which allegedly Gottwald must have known about.³⁶ According to the authors of the second film, however, he was an important authority (an example of this is that he led a Communist Party delegation to the 7th Congress of the Comintern). He had high political qualities, talent and mastered the art of a mature politician.³⁷

In any case, after the Second World War, Gottwald managed to negotiate a new government in Moscow, in which the Communists gained important positions. The agreement was enshrined in the Košice government program, but the opposition was expelled from the National Front, only four political parties could operate in Slovakia, and social policy, nationalization and foreign policy aimed at Moscow were promised. The prime minister was Zdeněk Fierlinger, whom the commentator described as “*an obedient puppet in the hands of the communists*”, Slánský became secretary general and Gottwald chairman of the party. This is followed by a shot of Gottwald “*happily and possessively smiling*” after returning to Prague, when he managed what he wanted.³⁸

On the contrary, the documentary *Klement Gottwald* Košice celebrates the government program with enthusiasm. The Communist Party and the workers, who will play a leading role in the state, should have the decisive say. According to the commentator, only the Communist Party can be the leader of the nation. It is “*popular, has a clean slate and active or sacrificial fighters*”.³⁹

After the elections in 1946, Gottwald was given the task of forming a government by Beneš. As soon as he succeeded, he began to occupy the people’s courts with his supporters, removing Democrats from the police and the army, and establishing workers’ militias under the party. Emphasis is placed on one of the main problems of Gottwald’s rule, namely his “butler-like” obedience to the USSR. This was also shown in the Marshall Plan, in which Czechoslovakia was initially interested, but after meeting Stalin, everything was different and the help was refused.⁴⁰

However, for obvious reasons, the second film did not devote a second of time to this Gottwald governmental behaviour, vassal approach to the Soviets or the European Recovery Plan. Rather, only the negative factors of otherwise favourable development were mentioned here, namely the Truman doctrine, which was

³⁶ Ibidem., 5–6 min.

³⁷ Holub, D. – Maršálek, K. (1986). *Potomci a předkové: Klement Gottwald*. 6–28 min.

³⁸ Vávra, R. (2018). *Rudí prezidenti: Sjednotitel ve strachu – Klement Gottwald*. 1–3 min.

³⁹ Holub, D. – Maršálek, K. (1986). *Potomci a předkové: Klement Gottwald*. 48–50 min.

⁴⁰ Vávra, R. (2018): *Rudí prezidenti: Sjednotitel ve strachu – Klement Gottwald*. 9–13 min.

directed against communism. According to the film, it was an “*American nuclear blackmail*” that encouraged the domestic right to seek the return of property to industrialists.⁴¹

However, on the topic of February 1948, the two documents intersect again. The 2018 film approaches these events in the sense that it asks itself whether it was a coup or a take-over. Obviously, it was a clear consequence of post-war developments and weak democratic politicians. Overall, it was not a constitutional procedure, and Beneš did not even have to sign the known resignations of fourteen (originally twelve) ministers, but he could rather call early elections, appoint a new prime minister or a caretaker government. In the end, however, he resigned, thus enabling the monopoly power of the communists, their total domination of society and the firm inclusion of the state in the Soviet bloc. However, it is also true that he was under unconstitutional pressure from working and armed militias in the streets, while the army was also on the side of the Communists.⁴² Overall, Beneš gets more space in this document than in *Klement Gottwald*, where it is mentioned only very marginally. Here we also learn about his rejection of the new constitution and after giving a farewell speech in 1948, he died a few months later.⁴³

Of course, a documentary from the 1980s described the February events from a different perspective. It saw them as an important part of the class struggle between socialism and capitalism, which led to the transition of the national and democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. The vitality and validity of Leninism and Marxism were thus shown. At the beginning there was a conspiracy (today we know that it is fictitious), taking place in Slovakia, after which the ministers of non-communist parties resigned. The Democratic Party has lost a majority in the Board of Commissioners exercising executive power. The Communists subsequently organized a manifesto in Prague, at which Gottwald made a speech based on Lenin's words. They demanded that the government be supplemented with new people, trade unions also sided with them, and finally the determination of the communists or the pressure of the streets of the workers led to the acceptance of the resignation of “*treacherous ministers*”. The onslaught of the bourgeoisie was consequently repulsed and the path to socialism opened.⁴⁴

Klement Gottwald is slowly coming to an end since the February coup and he completely ignores the events of the 1950s. In the end, only the foreshadowing of Gottwald's speech after he became president and power definitely fell into the hands

⁴¹ Holub, D. – Maršálek, K. (1986). *Potomci a předkové: Klement Gottwald*. 53–54 min.

⁴² Vávra, R. (2018): *Rudí prezidenti: Sjednotitel ve strachu – Klement Gottwald*. 9–13 min.

⁴³ Ibidem., 25–26 min.

⁴⁴ Holub, D. – Maršálek, K. (1986). *Potomci a předkové: Klement Gottwald*. 26–28 min.

of the working class. In the last minutes, we also see footage from his funeral in 1953, accompanied by the words that Gottwald's death meant "*an enormous loss for the Czechoslovak people*". The commentary also includes a summary of its contribution to the republic. According to him, the image of the then socialist Czechoslovakia was the fulfilment of the presidential ideas, for which he fought all the time. He forever made a significant contribution to the party's history by helping to form the Communist Party, fighting the bourgeoisie and fascism, creating a people's democratic state, "*taking care*" of the victorious February, standing at the beginning of building socialism or establishing a solid foundation of friendship with the USSR.⁴⁵

So, we can say that where the first document ends, the second begins. The film *The United in Fear – Klement Gottwald* pays the greatest attention to the events after the February coup. Initially, he draws attention to the growing cult of personality, when streets or squares began to be named after Gottwald. Gradually, the commentator gets to the point of the 1980s documentary and, among other things, the purges, when uncomfortable people were fired, democratic politicians ended up in prison and many soldiers also ended up because of their experience of serving their homeland in the West. We also see footage from the funeral of the already mentioned Ján Masaryk, which is marked as a symbolic peak, proving "*the helplessness of democracy and communist expansion*". The result of the above repression was an increase in the number of emigrants. In this context, the authors of the documentary provide Gottwald's statement, which is to say that he did not even deal with the problem: "*They are old grandfathers, we would have to pay them pensions, what are they good for? Let them go, for example, to Tramtaría.*"⁴⁶

An interesting fact is the depiction of Klement Gottwald as an alcoholic, which is again information that the viewer does not find out from the previously analysed documentary. So, for the first time, we learn that the president barely stood on his feet even in public meetings, and we even hear quotes from witnesses to such incidents. In addition, there are other information from his privacy and from living with his wife, who did not always find it easy due to his aggressive behaviour.⁴⁷

Unlike *Klement Gottwald*, the documentary does not avoid describing the problems that the president had with himself. Although he received servants, high salaries, luxury housing or bodyguards in the new office, he gradually fell into political and personal isolation, began to appear less in public, closed in on himself and made decisions only on the basis of Slánský and Soviet advisers. He even suffered from anxiety over fears that the leadership of the USSR did not trust him,

⁴⁵ Ibidem., 26–28 min.

⁴⁶ Vávra, R. (2018): *Rudí prezidenti: Sjednotitel ve strachu – Klement Gottwald*. 19–20 min.

⁴⁷ Ibidem., 22–27 min.

and his condition worsened after he discovered wiretapping in his apartment. Because of this, he was reluctant to travel to the Soviet Union, so he met only twice with Stalin during his presidency.⁴⁸

The Unifier in Fear – Klement Gottwald also reveals Gottwald's deliberate lies and shifts of opinion in the 1950s, whether in terms of a change of opinion on the kolkhozes, when, despite promises not to introduce them, we were collectivized according to the Soviet model. He also "turned" in his attitude to freedom of religion and began to initiate persecution in this area. In connection with this, the story of the priest Josef Toufar, who was supposed to become a victim of the first ecclesiastical trial, but died before the consequences of brutal torture, is presented in more detail, to which Gottwald reacted with anger. Instead, the confiscation of monasteries, the arrest of priests and the severance of diplomatic relations with the Vatican began in full swing.⁴⁹

An important part of this documentary are the processes with Milada Horáková et al. or Rudolf Slánský, which are not even mentioned in the film *Klement Gottwald*. The film presents archival footage directly from the court, as well as the confessions of both accused. As for the trial of the opposition politician and her group, the commentator calls it "*farce and massive propaganda with Russian advisers behind the scenes*". It resulted in four death sentences. Unfortunately, despite protests from abroad, the president did not pardon Milada Horáková.⁵⁰

Despite his relationship with Rudolf Slánský, Gottwald did what the Soviet advisers told him in this case, even after initial hesitation, and was convinced that the allegations were adequate. At that time, about fifty communist officials were arrested, and the president defended this by an anti-state conspiracy within the party. Slánský thus found out first-hand how ŠTB produces criminals – they charged him, for example, with the murder of Šverma or treason.⁵¹

Apart from these two important processes, others are no longer mentioned in the slide. As the documentary draws to a close, it deals with the death of Stalin, whom Gottwald mourned and also attended his funeral in March 1953. He died a few days later, unlike the film from the eighties, in addition to footage of a massive and ostentatious farewell to the president, we will also get acquainted with the cause of his death. He died at the age of fifty-seven of a heart attack and liver cirrhosis. The spies allegedly said at the time that "*he was faithful to Stalin beyond the grave*". The analysed film *Klement Gottwald* itself is a clear proof of this.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibidem., 31–42 min.

⁴⁹ Ibidem., 35–40 min.

⁵⁰ Ibidem., 40–41 min.

⁵¹ Ibidem., 43–46 min.

⁵² Ibidem., 47–50 min.

Shortly afterwards, Marta Gottwald, who succumbed to uterine cancer, suffered the same fate. The documentary *The Unity in Fear – Klement Gottwald* ends with a shot of a laughing Gottwald on the train, accompanied by a quote from his wife: “Our grandchildren and their children will be cursed by people one day”.⁵³

Overall, we can say that the selected documentaries had common features, especially in terms of formalities (for example, the use of only archival footage, in some cases the same, such as Gottwald’s speech after the adoption of the Košice government program or after gaining the office of president). As for the content, we generally found quite a number of differences in terms of script. We managed to mention the most important ones of them in this study.

Whereas, for example, many events in connection with the union of Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were taken by the creators of *the United in fear – Klement Gottwald* as one of the phenomena that negatively affected our history, on the other hand in *Klement Gottwald* they indicated that it was a significant success. The reason for this is that after the Communist Party finally seized power in February 1948, the documentary film came under the control of state administration and the relevant ideology. Double censorship was introduced, the preventive one, which checked the suitability of the themes and screenplays and finally, deciding on the permission of already finished films.⁵⁴ The 1986 documentary was thus apparently purposefully created in the spirit of propaganda and was determined by the opinions of the author and the institution that created it.

Klement Gottwald was created for the purpose of popularizing one person, so the commentary on it contained a large number of celebratory pathos, without mentioning a single weakness, negative feature, mistake or shortcoming of this Czechoslovak president or the regime itself. On the contrary, the film from the Red Presidents series managed to look at this personality and the political system of that time almost thirty years after the loosening of conditions, with a clear view and without concealing unfavourable facts. It consequently offers the viewer a much more comprehensive and holistic look at either Klement Gottwald or the time.

The practical use of comparison in the analysis of documentary films directly in the teaching of history can be made through various engaging exercises. Such an activity requires training and precision to make it more efficient and automated. The teacher can use various auxiliary tools, especially in the form of worksheets.

⁵³ Ibidem., 50–51 min.

⁵⁴ Slivka, M. (2003). „Podvratná kamera“ slovenských dokumentárnych filmov. In H. J. Schlegel (Ed.), *Podvratná kamera. Jiná realita v dokumentárním filmu střední a východní Evropy*. Praha: Malá skála, p. 237.

One way is for teachers to prepare comparison tables, in which students write information while watching the document, followed by a discussion. Another possibility is that after watching the sequences from the films, they will independently create a mind map recording the development in them. An interesting idea is also the creation of a film poster, in which students summarize the essence of both documentaries graphically, which also compares them. Similarly, creating a comic book from a particular scene in both films could be a useful creative tool. The teacher can add a cameraman to the scheme to emphasize the perspective of the creators. For the time being, students would add conversations, thoughts or feelings of the characters to the bubbles and clouds near them, and thus space would also be given to display the differences between the images.⁵⁵

More specifically, we can illustrate the comparative analysis that can be used to teach history in the case of *Klement Gottwald* (1986) and *The United in Fear – Klement Gottwald* (2018). After watching the two documentaries, the teacher selects suitable passages for comparison and then cuts them into one video (maximum length 20 minutes), which he plays in class. The aim is for students to be able to point out the facts that testify to the ideological manipulation in the film *Klement Gottwald*. The shots from the second film, in which propaganda is no longer present, will help them in this. The demonstrations will focus on students recognizing how different individual images depict the same phenomena, such as the February coup in 1948, relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, Gottwald's contribution to Czechoslovakia, and so on. It is the search for these differences that will be the initial analytical step, which should later lead to further findings. While watching the video, students will use the tool for comparison, the already mentioned comparison table, which will be created by the teacher. In the first column, they will make notes on the film, which was made before 1989, and in the second, what was made after 1989. At the same time, they will have listed in the lines events that they should notice when watching the edited material. After the video, it is didactically important for the teacher to give the students enough time to write in the table what they did not manage to catch. Subsequently, during the discussion, the teacher will follow up on this analysis with questions focusing students' attention on how the image of the perfect Gottwald in the film *Klement Gottwald* was constructed and what was the basis of his criticism in the next film, *The Unifier in Fear – Klement Gottwald*. For example, he might ask: Why was the 1986 monster trial, which took place in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, omitted?

⁵⁵ ČinátI, K. – Pinkas, J. (2014). *Dějiny ve filmu. Film ve výuce dějepisu*. Praha: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, p. 55.

Who is the greatest enemy of socialism in a given documentary and why? What was the purpose of the film at that time and how does it affect the viewer today? Which personalities were presented positively or negatively in the 2018 film, and why? What was Gottwald's greatest criticism of The Unified in Fear – Klement Gottwald? In the context of these and similar questions, comparative analysis will reach a deeper meaning and students will gradually move from description to interpretation of facts.

In addition, it would be appropriate for students to compare the comments of the documentaries about Klement Gottwald. In the 1986 film, we observed a characteristic bias and subjectivity, while in the 21st century documentary we perceived the predominance of a neutral commentary with elements of criticism. After giving the pupils appropriate excerpts from the two films in order for them to realize this difference, the teacher could further develop the discussion on propaganda or the comparison of regimes. Alternatively, the students are divided into groups as part of the didactic game, each of which draws a different event in connection with Gottwald (his childhood, election as president, relationship with Stalin, etc.). The task of each team will be to come up with two own comments on the event, which must correspond to the atmosphere of the films Klement Gottwald and The Unified in Fear – Klement Gottwald, and then present it in class. They practically try out the role of a commentator living in the time of communism and vice versa, at present, the deeper they are immersed in the issue the better they understand the difference between regimes.

Based on the above facts, we can argue that the comparison of documentary films before and after 1989 is a promise of effective work with a variety of perspectives, while introducing students to the communist regime more illustratively than just a strict explanation in the textbook. The use of documentaries then reflects the current orientation of history and thus the need to work with multimedia technologies in teaching.