

A UNIVERSAL CHILDHOOD



A universal childhood refers to the conviction that all children should enjoy an equitable childhood experience irrespective of their social background. However, concrete ideas on what a universal childhood should look like are numerous and varied. Articulating the norms and values according to which children are to be brought up, these ideas are impregnated in supranational, transnational, national and regional contexts, causing the notion of universal childhood to acquire a different understanding in different systems of power, and causing conflicts over interpretations and implementations. This chapter compares how various ideas on universal childhood articulated at supranational, national and local levels interplayed in the policies towards, and experiences of, borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy at a moment in time when a majority of Polish and Belgian policymakers finally supported the idea that a universal childhood in the field of education meant something more than issuing a law on compulsory attendance. Did language learning enable borderland pupils to become more equal to pupils receiving their education elsewhere in Poland or Belgium?

Universal childhood in the interwar years is usually associated with the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a document published by the International Save the Children Union (*l'Union Internationale de Secours aux Enfants*), and adopted by the League of Nations in 1924, which gathered initiatives with the aim of protecting children in need in different countries of Europe after the First World War. This declaration emphasised protection and welfare, stipulating that 'the child that is sick must be nursed', and 'the child must be the first to receive relief in times of distress'.¹ Other sentences went beyond the typical bounds of a charitable organisation, although they remained needs-based: 'The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually', and 'The child must be brought up in the consciousness that

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its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow men.' Even at the time, the declaration was heavily criticised for its limited scope. For example, Janusz Korczak, the famous doctor, pedagogue, writer and director of a Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, deemed it 'only an appeal of good will, a request for more understanding'.²

More influential for borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were changes implemented at a national level. Both in Poland and Belgium, new educational laws and pedagogical reforms were created in order to support children during their language learning process and overcome the contradictions and inconsistencies known at the time in existing systems of power. However, widely diverging interpretations on how a universal childhood related to language learning in primary schools reigned in Poland and Belgium. Whereas a new educational law in Poland provoked conflict over language learning, in Belgium, measures were implemented in order to prevent such conflicts.

The new Polish educational law of 1932 (often referred to as the Jędrzejewicz law after the minister responsible for its drafting and implementation, Janusz Jędrzejewicz) foregrounded Polish as the language of the nation, and established a primary school curriculum without foreign language training. This led to a further decline in the number of primary schools offering teaching in a language other than Polish across the country. Although the idea was to establish a centralised seven-year primary school system throughout Poland, the economic crisis meant that schools in many villages could not offer the entire curriculum, which, as a result, cut children off from further educational opportunities.³ In the case of Polish Upper Silesia, this new law aimed to encourage borderland pupils to be educated in Polish instead of German. However, this did not prevent conflicts over language learning in primary schools, but instead redirected contradictions and inconsistencies in the system of power to new topics. It created other front lines of battles over human territoriality, but the dynamics of the power struggle remained similar to those in the years before (1926–1932).

In a similar spirit to the Jędrzejewicz law in Poland, Flemish nationalists wanted 'their' children to be taught in 'their' language on 'their' lands, although they never had the ambition of establishing a primary school system without foreign language training on offer. The new educational law issued in Belgium in 1932 was a compromise between these Flemish nationalist demands, a majority of the other Belgian statesmen (with differing ideas among themselves), and the reality of language use in the city of Brussels and municipalities along the census-defined linguistic border line. In Wallonia and Flanders, the language of instruction was no lon-

ger to be the mother tongue of a child, but the language of the region. In Brussels and along the linguistic border line, however, the principle that children were to receive their primary education in their mother tongue remained in place.⁴ As we will see, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, these legal changes, generated by a democratic regime entrusting municipalities with their implementation, successfully responded to the needs of borderland inhabitants and relieved the conflict over human territoriality. Guardians in the region of Malmedy, for example, could change the language of instruction in primary schools from French, a language installed during the Baltia regime, to German.

By the middle of the chapter, the reader should be convinced that borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had more beneficial language learning conditions than children living elsewhere in Belgium, or in Polish Upper Silesia. He or she may even consider the solution for these borderland pupils a much more effective alternative than the solution to protect national minorities applicable to Polish Upper Silesia at the time, where the role of supranational control weakened after Germany had left the League of Nations in 1933. However, it is argued that the attitude of Belgian statesmen towards their borderland pupils came at a certain cost. Whereas Belgian authorities chose to create a legal framework that prevented confrontations over language decisions in primary education, Polish authorities put more of their hope in shaping the human behaviour of borderland pupils, parents, teachers and clergymen (and thus working on styles of teaching and learning along the 'fourth face' of power, as defined in the second axis of the framework of comparison).

Polish statesmen and scientists had a greater interest in proliferating reform pedagogy than their Belgian counterparts, because this could align with Sanacja's vision of state upbringing. With the purpose being to make state upbringing (the ideology that was to guarantee a social revolution within the independent Polish state) successful in Polish Upper Silesia, methods of teaching and learning, it was believed, needed to be adjusted to the living conditions of the borderland child, so that the individual child could become the means to consolidate the Polish nation. The conviction that rural children all over Poland, including in Polish Upper Silesia, had the 'right to be a child' became the argument to claim rural children for the Polish nation.⁵ As a result, the Silesian child was problematised and typified by scientists as needing the cure of professional caregivers, such as teachers, pedagogues and psychologists. In the mid-1930s, the borderland of Polish Upper Silesia turned into a space where scientists experimented with new methodologies and discovered new opportunities to approach local children. The borderlands became a resource. Whereas borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia enjoyed the devoted commitment of sci-

entists and teachers wishing to get to know their language learning conditions and improve them, borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were largely ignored. A systematic comparison of the influence of reform pedagogy on language learning in the two case study borderlands enables us to come to see what Robert Musil has called *Möglichkeitssinn* (the sense of the possible).⁶ By situating a certain development alongside an alternative one, we can come to discern how the past could have looked different had another path been taken.⁷

It is not that reform pedagogy was less present in Belgium than in Poland. In fact, the curriculum reform of 1936 put the child, instead of the teaching content, at the centre of the everyday school context as the solution to a pedagogisation of the masses. Inspired by Belgium's most influential reform pedagogue and medical doctor, Ovide Decroly, the programme suggested that since children experience their social environment as a whole, teaching needed to be concentrated on specific topics of interests, instead of being split up into different topics. However, Roman Catholic Church authorities had a decisive say in the organisation of primary education in Belgium, and banned the programme out of fear that ideas of progress would lead to an alienation with tradition and seed revolutionary thoughts in the masses. Such tendencies needed to be cured by means of strong dogmatic Catholic pedagogy aimed at repression and moral reorientation. As was the case in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, all primary schools were Catholic, and it was Catholic pedagogy that set the tone. Locked in a dogmatic form of Christocentrism exalted 'above and outside of time', this pedagogy resisted all attempts to individualise and empower pupils.⁸ Influential Catholic pedagogy very often left unquestioned borderland pupils' styles of learning (as was the case in many other places in Belgium). In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, changing the mentalities and attitudes of teachers and children was the last thing on the minds of Belgian policymakers, teachers and priests. Providing young inhabitants with a universal childhood experience could not serve the purpose of overturning social relations. Despite the introduction of male universal suffrage, the traditional aristocratic elite managed to uphold its privileged social position in Belgium and keep the democratisation of political life under control.⁹ Belgian policymakers and the Catholic Church, moreover, respected the *modus vivendi* they had worked out in 1914, when Catholic schools were state subsidised without having to accept state interference in their functioning. The systematic comparison offered in this chapter will reveal how in the interwar years either pedagogical innovation or its complete rejection were possible paths, and how these paths could even co-exist within one country. Marc Depaepe, Maurits De Vroede and Frank Simon observed of

the 1936 Belgian curriculum reform: 'It seems that there was an inevitable gap between the idealistic context of the innovation on the one hand and the sociohistorical reality in which it had to be implemented on the other. Such a discrepancy is, perhaps, perennial rather than unique in the history of education.'¹⁰

Apart from the differences characterising the language learning conditions of borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, two important similarities stood out. Both the transnational interest of Germany and geopolitics challenged the language learning of pupils in the two case study borderlands. By the mid-1930s, a major aim of their German neighbour was the unification of all the people considered German into one empire.¹¹ As a result, Germany increased material donations to support the German language learning of borderland pupils. Whereas the Geneva Convention facilitated an open flow of material support across the border to Polish Upper Silesia until 1937, the absence of a similar regulation in the case of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy meant that the material support from Germany had to remain hidden to the Belgian public eye (and, until now, also to historians).

Another similarity lay in the fact that the two case study borderlands no longer played a crucial role in international politics themselves. Polish authorities, freed from their supranational obligations towards German speakers in Polish Upper Silesia after 1937, could now deny the right of German-speaking guardians to determine the mother tongue of their children.¹² The fact that the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were treated as potential currency to pay off the security of the Belgian mainland in the near future, on the other hand, meant that the Belgian state had also become as good as indifferent towards the language learning of its borderland pupils. Each of these elements will now be discussed and compared in greater detail.

Geopolitics and the State Border Line

The National Socialists' seizure of power in Germany in 1933 subverted the international mechanism of minority protection on the European continent.¹³ Nazism repudiated the Enlightenment values of freedom and equality, and heralded a dictatorial regime based on violence, racism and antisemitism. Back in Versailles, Germany had been considered a civilised state – in contrast to Eastern European states – and, as a result, had not been put under systematic supranational supervision over the way it treated Jews or non-German-speaking inhabitants on most of its lands,

with the exception of German Upper Silesia.¹⁴ While German statesmen had favoured a more offensive stance in international politics since the late 1920s, it was only in 1933 that Germany left the League of Nations, started to re-militarise, and to aspire explicitly to the re-annexation of the lands outside its state border lines considered to have been lost through the Treaty of Versailles. Within the Weimar Republic, Germanness had been defined through a sharing of appropriate characteristics, such as language and culture (and sometimes also religion), but after 1933 that Germanness became related to physical elements.¹⁵ The German community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) was to be composed exclusively of people with the correct racial identity. Belonging to the *Volk* became more important than holding citizenship of a state.¹⁶ With legislative power being placed in the hands of the government, the executive had more opportunities to proliferate this conviction.¹⁷

Poland

The Sanacja leadership reacted to these developments by annihilating the minority rights Poland had assured the League of Nations it would respect until a uniform European framework for protecting minorities had been developed.¹⁸ Instead, a bilateral Polish-German non-aggression pact was signed in January 1934, which significantly improved not only the economic relations between both countries, but also the treatment of the so-considered German national minority in places such as Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁹ In the same year, a compromise between Polish and German authorities on primary education in Polish Upper Silesia was signed, determining more favourable language learning conditions (a matter that will receive more detailed attention below) until the Geneva Convention was phased out in 1937.²⁰ A Polish state detached from most of its supranational obligations and more inclined towards Germany played into the hands of the National Socialists. Hitler considered a war with Stalin to be inevitable and envisioned Poland as forming a protective buffer zone between the German *Reich* and the Soviet Union. Throughout the 1930s, efforts were put into preparing the *Reich* for a comprehensive solution beyond its eastern border, instead of focusing solely on a possible annexation of the Polish regions that used to be German lands.²¹ Shortly after the German annexation of the Sudetenland in October 1938, Hitler demanded the annexation of the free city of Gdańsk and a connection road to East Prussia through the Polish Corridor, but did not yet intend to interfere with the sovereignty of Polish Upper Silesia.²² Polish politicians acted opportunistically during the reshuffle of international power relations. Once Czechoslovakia was weakened after losing territories to Germany,

the Polish army invaded the Czech part of Silesia, and stayed there until Poland, including Polish Upper Silesia, was attacked by the German army in September 1939.²³

Belgium

On its western borders, Germany's re-militarisation sparked discomfort among Belgian politicians. They feared a repeat of the scenario of 1914: that France and Germany would enter into a military confrontation, and that Belgium would face the consequences. In 1935, France did indeed sign a treaty of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, setting in stone the fact that Germany would face a war on both fronts were it to engage in military expansion.²⁴ One year later, Germany did indeed violate the Locarno Treaties and put German troops on the German side of the Belgian-German border, in the Rhineland. In the spring of 1936, the Belgian Kingdom found itself caught between a leftist French neighbour allied with communist Russia and an expansionist Germany. It was at this unfavourable moment that the quadrennial parliamentary elections were scheduled to be held. These caused a landslide in political power relations, with parties denouncing parliamentary democracy attaining almost a quarter of the votes, some of them condemning Belgium's vassalage towards France.²⁵ Belgian foreign policymakers found in the Polish-German non-aggression pact a source of inspiration.²⁶ Embarking on a neutral course, they buried their promise to offer France military assistance in the case of a German invasion and started bilateral negotiations with Germany.²⁷ In 1937, Germany declared that it would respect Belgium's neutrality and guarantee the Belgian state border lines, a promise it repeated as late as August 1939, after Germany had swallowed up Czechoslovakia and found itself on the verge of war with Poland, but broke in May 1940.²⁸

Interestingly, the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were systematically kept out of the bilateral talks in the late 1930s. The Belgian Ambassador in Germany, Viscount Jacques Davignon, for example, had suggested to the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that a mixed commission modelled on the Geneva Convention would enable the Belgian government to exert more control over cultural activities in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, but his idea never made it to the Belgian-German negotiation table.²⁹ Both German and Belgian state representatives considered the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy as currency to pay off an upcoming geopolitical deal. Within Germany, the thought of buying these regions started to circulate again, whereas among Belgian diplomats the idea of giving these up if that could save the political independence of the kingdom gained ground.³⁰

During the negotiations, Germany displayed a double strategy towards the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Officially, it held back its claim to sovereignty, but, unofficially, it increased financial and material sponsoring of political and cultural activities in these borderlands. Whereas Flemish pro-German cultural organisations could openly count on financial support from Germany, organisations in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy received money in secret.³¹ Financial support for German-minded organisations in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy had already amounted to 60,000 German marks yearly at the end of the 1920s, but by the end of the 1930s, this yearly sum had increased to 113,200 DM, the equivalent of 765,000 USD in 2015.³² The coordinator of most of that aid was the German civil servant Franz Thedieck, who cooperated closely with the VDA, but also coordinated the work of other German organisations.³³ In 1934, he formulated his mission as ‘a politics in the service of Germanisation, calm and cautious, working in the long term, as that is essential in the region of Eupen-Malmedy’.³⁴ German aid was eagerly consumed by those borderland inhabitants who had become disillusioned after it had been revealed that Belgian statesmen covertly considered the Belgian-German state border line negotiable while openly demanding that the borderland population be loyal to the Belgian state. When more than 90 per cent of the population of Saarland (then under a League of Nations mandate) opted for inclusion in Nazi Germany instead of France in a 1935 referendum (which had been scheduled in the Treaty of Versailles), the Belgian Ambassador in Germany predicted that the significant majority in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy would be willing to declare in favour of Hitler’s Germany in the near future.³⁵ But he turned out to be wrong; in 1939, revisionists failed to achieve their goal of achieving the absolute majority in the parliamentary elections.³⁶

New Educational Laws

The situation of borderland schools in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy changed not only under the influence of geopolitical power reshufflings, but also as a result of long-awaited educational reforms meant to guarantee children a universal, modern childhood.

Poland

In Poland, the Sanacja regime tackled primary education policy after it had ensured a complete takeover of power. In 1932, the Polish Minister

responsible for education, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, introduced a major reform.³⁷ Most significantly, it established a centralised system of secular primary schooling all over Poland, consisting of seven years of education. Owing to limited financial means, only the first four years were on offer in village schools, and the later three years only in municipality or city schools. Because many pupils switched after the first four years to Polish-speaking evening classes for working pupils instead of having to commute, the educational law limited the social advance of rural children and caused a further reduction in the number of minority schools offering teaching in a language other than Polish.³⁸ In addition, placing public and private schools under the same law caused private schools – which were more numerous among minority schools – to face more legal regulations, regulations they often could not fulfil, and which led to their closure.³⁹ All teachers employed in state and private schools, for example, needed to hold Polish citizenship.⁴⁰

Another important characteristic of the Jędrzejewicz law was that from 1932 onwards, primary school children following the Polish-speaking curriculum in Poland were not obliged to receive foreign language training (although a foreign language could be taught as a supplementary course in the two highest classes).⁴¹ Meanwhile, children all over Poland receiving education in a language other than Polish, such as those following the German-speaking curriculum in Polish Upper Silesia, needed to learn Polish from the third class onwards,⁴² but a specific number of hours was not prescribed; the law required 'a precise knowledge of the state language' to be acquired.⁴³

The final important element of the law was the dominance of the Polish state over religious practices in schools, prescribing, for example, the right of school principals to intervene in all religious activities taking place in their schools. It was Jędrzejewicz's conviction that religion should not influence the functioning of public institutions or sit in moral judgement on citizens.⁴⁴ The Catholic Church in Poland continued to battle areligious education, based on a statement made by Pope Pius XI in 1929 against pedagogical neutrality.⁴⁵

Polish Upper Silesia

Although Polish Upper Silesia enjoyed autonomy in educational measures, and Sanacja supporters never achieved a majority in the Silesian Parliament, the Jędrzejewicz reform was implemented here in 1932.⁴⁶ Despite the protests of Silesian parliamentarians and the Catholic Church, Voivode Michał Grażyński was able to introduce this Polish law in the autonomous border region by making use of a careless formulation in

the Organic Statute of the Silesian Voivodeship of 1920.⁴⁷ His decision annulled the voivodeship's autonomy in most domains related to education and bypassed the decision-making capacity of the Silesian Parliament. Instead of the Silesian Parliament, the Polish Parliament became more involved, but national minorities here held little sway. The political party that had defended their interests, the Union of National Minorities (Blok Mniejszości Narodowych), had ceased to play a political role in 1930, when the elections gave the Sanacja regime the majority of the votes.⁴⁸ Moreover, after the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935, the elected assembly saw its influence reduced and Poland began to be run autocratically by a small group of people who had closely cooperated with the former marshal and who endorsed the ex-combatant myth of those whose military effort had brought about the resurrection of the state in 1918.⁴⁹

The new legal framework could not prevent the re-emergence of a power struggle over language learning between supranational, national and regional historical actors, but merely redirected such struggles. A repetition of the power struggle over human territoriality from earlier years was the result. These battles were often won by the historical actor who could afford the highest financial injection; money continued to play a crucial role in the spatialisation of power.⁵⁰

The first inconsistency in the new system of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia concerned the bilateral Polish-German compromise of 1934, which failed in its attempts to resolve the issue of competition among pupils for access to specific schools, which had escalated between 1926 and 1932. As part of this compromise, the need for parents to fill in language declarations was abandoned, and language exams were re-established and made compulsory for every child wanting to receive teaching in German. A joint examining committee staffed by representatives of the Silesian Voivodeship Office and the Volksbund tested whether a child knew enough German to benefit from taking its courses in German. In reality, however, inconsistencies were simply duplicated. Among the pupils taking the language exam in 1936, for example, were thirteen-year-old Wilhelm Papon and nine-year-old Alfred Stanko. Their parents wanted them to change from the public Polish-speaking school in Koszęcin to the private German-speaking school in the same village.⁵¹ The joint examining committee could not come to a decision as to whether the boys knew German well enough to benefit from education in German, and therefore repeated the solution developed at the end of the 1920s. It brought in an impartial examiner, this time from Austria, whose function was similar to the one Wilhelm Maurer had held before.⁵² When Wilhelm Papon and Alfred Stanko retook the exam in front of the Austrian pedagogue, they failed.⁵³ Between 1933 and 1937, the percentage of pupils passing the tests fell by

7 per cent each year.⁵⁴ Interestingly, however, the private German-speaking school of Koszęcin did not experience a decline in the number of pupils. Smaller German minority schools in the Lubliniec district needed to close their doors, but their pupils could commute to the Koszęcin private school in a school bus paid for by the owner of the school, the Prince of Hohenlohe.⁵⁵ As a result, the number of children attending his school doubled in 1934 from 63 to 137, steadily increased to 142 in 1935, and remained at that level until 1937.⁵⁶ German-speaking schools were able to resist a significant reduction in the number of private schools owing to the material welfare of pupils' parents and the financial and material support sent from Germany.⁵⁷ In Polish Upper Silesia, moreover, the Geneva Convention remained in force until 1937, thanks to which the number of German-speaking schools declined more slowly than those in Greater Poland and Pomerania.⁵⁸

The second inconsistency in the new system of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia was noticeable in the school curriculum. The standardisation of the school curriculum throughout Poland meant that the primary school curriculum in Polish Upper Silesia was reduced from eight to seven years. In the Lubliniec bilingual school, a seven-year and an eight-year curriculum were introduced within the Polish learning branch – the eight-year one being paid for by Silesian authorities. Within the German-speaking branch, however, only a seven-year curriculum remained.⁵⁹ As there was no longer a law applicable to the eight-year curriculum of primary schooling, neither the Volksbund nor pupils' parents could demand from the voivodeship permission to organise the eighth year of schooling.

The third inconsistency arose when the Polish government's budget for education shrank as a result of the economic recession, merely a year after the Jędrzejewicz law had come into force.⁶⁰ As a result, from early on Polish policymakers needed to lower their ambitions when it came to attracting pupils in Polish Upper Silesia to Polish-speaking schools. It was decided that these children were to start primary school at the age of seven, as was the case in the rest of Poland, instead of continuing to start at the age of six.⁶¹ The budget cuts happened precisely at the moment when the children of the postwar demographic boom started to fill the schools. In the Lubliniec school, for example, 720 pupils had attended the school in 1925–1926, but by 1932–1933 their number had already increased to 1,287.⁶² As many parents were used to sending their children to school at the age of six, this decision caused an exponential rise in the number of kindergartens, greater than elsewhere in Poland, which were paid for with regional public money from the Silesian Voivodeship, city councils, and private donors.⁶³

These are three examples of how money could considerably counter-balance the universalisation of primary education understood as privileging the Polish language over other languages spoken in interwar Poland. Two other factors that could turn an inconsistency into a benefit for borderland children were Polish policymakers' concerns regarding their country's international relations and local protest. After the position of the League of Nations had been weakened, school inspectors throughout Polish Upper Silesia started to force teachers in German-speaking curricula to adhere to the Grabski law of 1924. This resulted in a reduction of the number of pupils receiving their entire school curriculum in a language other than Polish in schools not covered by Article 9 in the Minority Treaty (and hence *de jure* not in Polish Upper Silesia). School inspectors concluded, for example, that the content of history classes provided in the German language was unsatisfactory and suggested that these classes be taught in Polish instead; however, the Polish government later allowed for these courses to be taught in German again, in order not to endanger Polish-German bilateral relations.⁶⁴ In addition, the loudest criticisms of the Jędrzejewicz reform in Polish Upper Silesia did not concern language learning regulations, but rather the threat to reduce religious instruction from four to two hours a week, which eventually did not happen.⁶⁵ The dominance of the Polish state over religious practices in schools was not as great in Polish Upper Silesia as elsewhere in Poland, one of the few exceptions being that after the implementation of the 1932 law schools could retain their Catholic status.⁶⁶

Belgium

In Belgium, the universalisation of childhood by means of primary education was understood differently than in Poland. The new educational law of 1932 standardising primary education was pushed for by Flemish nationalists with intentions similar to those of Polish nationalists, but the law came about during a democratic decision-making procedure in which these Flemish nationalists were a minority. The law stated, first, that the language spoken in a child's social environment, whether that be in Wallonia or Flanders, would now be the language of instruction in primary schools, and not the child's mother tongue. Second, foreign language training would now start from the fifth year onwards.⁶⁷ With the aim of creating two large monolingual regions within Belgium, the 1932 education law in Belgium annulled the permanent status of French-speaking schools in Flanders. If at least 30 per cent of the population in a municipality claimed to speak the non-dominant language, temporary (and not permanent, as had previously been the case) so-called trans-

mutation classes could host their children from then on. In these classes, foreign language training was introduced from the third year onwards and the number of hours devoted to it increased over the years.

However, the introduction of these transmutation classes went against the idea of offering similar conditions of language learning in Wallonia and in Flanders, as there was a lack of transmutation classes for Dutch-speaking children in Wallonia. The requirement to set up such classes had been expressed by the Flemish socialist politician Camille Huysmans in the discussions preceding the law's passage, when the Liberal Party had defended the existence of permanent French-speaking schools in Flanders. However, afraid to 'introduce bilingualism in Wallonia', as the socialist Walloonian politician Jules Destrée formulated it, he conceded that transforming the French-speaking schools outside of Wallonia with a permanent status into transmutation schools was a compromise that was preferable to the establishment of Dutch-speaking schools in Wallonia.⁶⁸

Schools in Brussels and in municipalities along the language border (a mobile border established on the basis of the outcome of censuses organised every ten years in order to detect the mother tongue of inhabitants) maintained the principle of mother tongue recruitment and offered a more bilingual regime. Whereas the previous educational law of 1914 had mentioned only that the language of instruction could differ from the dominant language spoken in the children's social environment, the new law stipulated that where 30 per cent of guardians wished their children to be educated in a language different from the dominant language indicated in the latest census, such education was required to be provided. Foreign language training was to start in the third year, with the option to apply for earlier foreign language training, which could be permitted by means of a Royal Decree. Although guardians were supposed to indicate the mother tongue of their children, they often declared the language in which they wanted their children to receive instruction. The language inspectors controlling the implementation of the law observed countless violations in this respect, but out of respect for the freedom of guardians in choosing a school for their children, no sanctions followed. Moreover, school buildings could often be made available for newly established French-speaking, but not Dutch-speaking, classes, because the parents interested in the former were well represented in local politics.⁶⁹ The building of schools in Belgium remained the sole responsibility of municipalities until 1937, when it was entrusted to the state in order to ensure uniform standards.⁷⁰ Belgian statesmen did not have the intention of creating a nationalised landscape by erecting school buildings. As a consequence, schools in Brussels and in municipalities along language borders continued to play an important role in enabling Dutch-speaking children

to speak French fluently – as opposed to enabling French-speaking children to speak Dutch fluently.⁷¹

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

The law did not convert the German-speaking zone earlier established by Herman Baltia into a third language region. However, it did include a clause specifying that in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy the government could allow for conditions departing from the rules outlined for children in Brussels and municipalities along the language border.⁷² Interestingly, nobody made use of that specific clause throughout the 1930s.⁷³ Although not specifically designed for the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the law did resolve the public tensions over language learning from before and put an end to regional battles over language learning. It even allowed municipality schools in the French-speaking zone of former Eupen-Malmedy, encompassing inhabitants who had declared themselves either French speakers or bilingual in Baltia's language survey of 1920, to conduct the most consistent action against Francisation in the whole of Belgium. Baltia had dictated here that all pupils start their education in French, and this continued after the region lost its autonomous status in 1925.⁷⁴ Municipalities could convert these French-speaking schools into schools offering education in German, with French added as a foreign language in the third year of the school curriculum. A report composed by students from Germany during their scientific field trip to the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy stated that in 1938 a majority of schools (thirteen out of twenty-one) had done so.⁷⁵ A critical interpretation of that report is necessary, as, following Hitler's assumption to power, pedagogical academies in Germany had been purified of people hostile to the new regime.⁷⁶ New pedagogical academies, established in German peripheral rural areas near state border lines, were engaged in gathering scientific proof that the inhabitants on the other side also belonged to the German *Volk*.⁷⁷ In the absence of other sources, it is impossible to verify the report, but the simple fact remains that the Belgian state provided a legal framework in which this phenomenon was made possible.

The German-speaking children in the French-speaking zone of former Eupen-Malmedy appeared to be the true beneficiaries of the Belgian Education Act of 1932. These inhabitants could group together to change their education from French, a language Baltia imposed on them with a clear nationalising aim in mind, to German, a language they preferred. No supranational institution was needed to enable borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy to enjoy all the language learning conditions they wished for. Belgian policymakers themselves

went through a democratic decision-making procedure and provided borderland inhabitants with the legal framework to make such a change. An additional legal clause even stipulated that borderland inhabitants could have proposed yet another solution. These German-speaking pupils found themselves in a more advantageous situation than Dutch-speaking pupils in Brussels, for example, who had the right to open classes in Dutch for their children, but lacked the necessary school buildings.⁷⁸ Indeed, in the villages around the city of Malmedy, Prussian authorities had already erected a sufficient number of school buildings.

Pedagogical Reforms

The new educational laws introduced in Poland and Belgium in 1932 were not only different, they also worked out differently in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, the Jędrzejewicz law merely redirected the battle over human territoriality to other topics, in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, the new law unintentionally put an end to such battles. Along with the introduction of new educational laws, the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were influenced by long awaited pedagogical reforms that were to enable children to enjoy a universal childhood. The idea that the language learning of pupils needed to be understood more broadly and encompass the social environment of the child, along with the belief that styles of teaching and learning could guide human behaviour in a desired direction, notions already well developed in the German Empire, now took hold in Poland and Belgium, but in ways that worked out more beneficially for children in Polish Upper Silesia than in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

Polish Upper Silesia

In the 1930s, reform pedagogy was of pivotal importance to Polish statesmen. During his visit to Poland in 1935, even the Head of the International Office of Education in Geneva, the Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget, was impressed by their eagerness to proliferate reform pedagogy.⁷⁹ Reform pedagogy served their aim of moulding children into citizens who would endorse the Sanacja ideology. The Sanacja-supporting Minister of Education, Janusz Jędrzejewicz, for example, aimed to educate every child to become 'a person capable of consciously taking part in collective social life'.⁸⁰ The demographic boom predicted that social life could no longer be

dominated by the aristocratic elite. Sacrificing oneself for the state was to become the gateway to social advancement.⁸¹

In order to win the masses over to that vision, regional values were integrated into the teaching of the Polish language and culture.⁸² Regionalism was not a tool to claim that Polish Upper Silesia was different from, for instance, Mazovia or Pomerania, but to display how similar Polish Upper Silesia and its destiny were to the rest of the country. In Poland, scientists were convinced that state upbringing could come about only if it were grounded in the traditions of the various national minorities inhabiting Poland.⁸³ They urged for research to be carried out on rural children because of what the influential Polish pedagogue Zygmunt Mysłakowski called their 'pivotal importance' for the 'future' of the Polish nation.⁸⁴ Some of them started to research the living conditions of rural children in Polish Upper Silesia because they believed their findings could help to improve the children's school results and future professional careers within Poland. Many of these scientists engaged local teachers in carrying out their experiments.⁸⁵ Their enthusiasm led to a sprawl of initiatives both inside and outside research institutes, initiatives that shed some light on styles of teaching and learning in Polish Upper Silesia, but did not come to any broader conclusions.⁸⁶ However, some of these studies deserve to be looked at in greater detail because they used scientific methodologies that were truly innovative in Europe at the time. In what follows, I shall show how styles of teaching and learning were discovered in the Polish Upper Silesia of the 1930s, and seek to establish reasons why these groundbreaking scientific studies failed to generate societal change.

The first group of studies was generated by scientists from Warsaw, who spent little time in Polish Upper Silesia, used research techniques they felt familiar with, and published their results in general Polish scientific journals or Varsovian publishing houses. A Polish sociologist, Zygmunt Gryń, sent out questionnaires for pupils to teachers in Polish-speaking schools. His analysis revealed that a majority of the children did not do their homework or preferred to do it at school, because they considered the conditions at home inadequate, they needed to perform physical labour, they were hungry, or they did not have anything to write with.⁸⁷

Dr Konstanty Sobolski, a teacher at a Polish-speaking state seminary for boys south of Katowice, composed a typology of a Silesian rural child and submitted it to a writing competition for teachers organised by Stanisław Mariusz Studencki and Maria Librachowa. The latter was a leading child psychologist who had received her training in pedagogy in Brussels in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁸⁸ Inspired by German psychological research, the psychologists believed that the natural environment in which rural children grew up had an influence on their minds and could

explain why their school results were worse than those of children growing up in cities.⁸⁹ They aimed at generating a ‘psychological characteristic of a rural child’:

If you want to get into the mind of a rural child, you need to take into consideration his defining characteristics. However, this indication is only the starting point, the moment of approaching the child’s mind. Further roads may divide into two opposite directions, depending on what we intend to achieve. Therefore, it will either be deemed necessary to maintain and nurture these characteristics as individualizing characteristics, and therefore both the programme and teaching method should be oriented towards concretism and practicism, avoiding abstraction and theorisation; or, alternatively, we should seek to stimulate and strengthen the weakened functions of the mind, as long as we recognize their value and importance for the development of the individual. . . . From the standpoint of the rights of the individual and the principle of social justice, and even from the standpoint of a deeply understood social utility, only the principle of individualisation, consisting in the strengthening and stimulation of weakened psychological dispositions, seems justified, as long as they belong to those that are needed to reach a higher level of spiritual development.⁹⁰

Sobolski’s essay reads like a public cry for a universal childhood. A Silesian rural child, Sobolski wrote, enjoyed better hygienic conditions than elsewhere in Poland, but from the age of five needed to perform physical work, which ‘restricted normal physical development’ and made the child ‘less joyful and at times depressive’.⁹¹ Sobolski pointed to the importance of the family during the formation of the child’s personality. Sobolski said Silesian children did not have the courage to develop their own opinions, as they were expected to serve on the family farm. More than elsewhere in Poland, he added, Silesian children were not supposed to reflect on moral categories, as religion offered a set of dominant guidelines for life practices.⁹² As a result, Silesian children were practical and energetic: ‘very few slow and thoughtful types here’.⁹³ Just like Librachowa, Sobolski was firmly convinced that Silesian children possessed creative potential.⁹⁴ We need, Sobolski concluded, to ‘extract these values and strengths flourishing in the child, which can be of invaluable benefit to the nation and the state’.⁹⁵

On the basis of the collected essays containing regional typologies of rural children throughout Poland, the psychologists published their psychological characteristic of the rural child. The innovative insight provided by the book was a causal relation between the deplorable hygienic conditions at home and the weakened health and hampered development of children growing up in the countryside.⁹⁶ Librachowa therefore recommended a pedagogical strategy to support these rural children during their development. The societal ‘disease’ of rural children’s poor school

results, Librachowa suggested, 'needed to be cured at its source, in the living conditions of rural children at home'.⁹⁷ Children, she pleaded, needed to be given the right to be children. Books, games and 'as many toys as possible' were needed to stimulate children's imagination.⁹⁸

The work of Jan Szczepański (discussed in chapter three) can also be situated within this group. The Varsovian sociologist organised a writing contest in Polish and discovered that parents in Polish Upper Silesia gave their children the message that schools were something foreign to them, an 'unavoidable necessity' they simply had to bear, leading to the children valuing their classmates more than their teachers.⁹⁹

A second group of research publications emerged at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice, which, as we saw in the previous chapter, had been set up in 1928 and was financed by the Polish government. The director, the Cracovian pedagogue Zygmunt Mysłakowski, trained local teachers to select and observe families on the way in which they educated their children. Andrzej Michna was among the first teachers to attend a workshop at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice.¹⁰⁰ He was born in Upper Silesia and ran the only primary school in Wikowyje, a village of 720 people situated south of Katowice.¹⁰¹ Mysłakowski developed a research methodology based on the works of two French scientists from the famous social science school (*la science sociale*). He was inspired by the French social engineer and politician Frédéric le Play, who conducted a survey among worker families throughout France and developed a programme of social reforms on the basis of his analysis, as well as by Paul Descamps, who put forward a programme of dynamic education aiming to bring up individuals capable of adapting their practices to an ever-changing social environment.¹⁰² Mysłakowski sent out his teachers to conduct empirical fieldwork with a scheme of open questions related to the lifeworlds of rural children.¹⁰³ Within that scheme, Andrzej Michna included his own methodology.¹⁰⁴ Michna developed five questions for children attending school:

- Who do you want to be?
- Which hero do you like the most?
- Who in the village would you like to be similar to?
- Which books do you read most often?
- Who do you play with?¹⁰⁵

Michna discovered that rural children were often less able than children growing up in cities to express their experiences verbally, because they concentrated more on developing an intuitive understanding of the weather and the land.¹⁰⁶ He therefore praised all the more the efforts of parents to talk to their children:

The father is usually taciturn, but becomes talkative when he is alone with the children. Little Stefek can walk with his father for half a day next to the plough, and keeps on talking to him. When he came back from school, I heard a fragment of their conversation. Stefek: Dad, if we kept on ploughing through the teacher's garden, through the mayor's lake, through Podlesie and further and further, where would we end up? Father: Well, we would probably come to the sea. Stefek: What is that, the sea? Father: It is a big lake, even bigger than the one at Spyra's place. Stefek: Even bigger, as big as the one at Mikołów?¹⁰⁷

To Zygmunt Mysłakowski, this scene looked like 'a painting of the Flemish school, full of passion for realism and with a love for facts'.¹⁰⁸ It justified to him how scientists and teachers could contribute to the consolidation of a Polish nation based on cultural and linguistic diversity.¹⁰⁹ In the wealthiest family of his village, children answered Michna's self-developed questions as follows:

Otylja: 1. I want to marry a nice boy, a boy I choose myself. 2. Duke Michorowski. 3. I want to be like my mother because she does not do any wrong to people. 4. I prefer reading about love. 5. I consider H. Sp. my friend, because she will not reveal a secret entrusted to her.

Clara: 1. I want to be a teacher. 2. Andrzej Kmicić [hero of Sienkiewicz's novel *The Deluge*]. 3. I want to be like the school principal, because he teaches well. 4. I read about love, but not stupid stories like Tila. 5. I am friends with B.K. because she is a decent girl.

Helena: 1. I want to be a publican, in order to run the pub differently from my aunt. 2. I like everybody who is decent. 3. I do not want to be like anyone in the village. 4. I read fairy tales in which somebody finds a lot of money. 5. I am friends with anybody.¹¹⁰

Michna praised the children for having a realistic plan for their future. The answers provided by some of the children in the poorest family, now headed by an unemployed father, were as follows:

Lucja: 1. I want to be a merchant because they make a lot of money and live well. 2. I like Casimir the Great the most because he reigned well. 3. I want to be like M.B. because she is sitting in the store all day selling things. 4. I love reading about kings and rich people. 5. I hang out with M.B., but she does not really want to.

Pawel: 1. I want to be a locksmith because he is capable of doing everything and has a lot of money. 2. I like that one who flew from America over the sea, because he was not afraid. 3. I want to be like S.P., a wheeler, because he is a foreman and has pupils. 4. I read nothing because my eyes hurt. 5. I am friends with A. R., because he is smart and can clown around.

Gertrude: 1. I would like to be a teacher, in order to make money and pay back my parents what they are now investing in raising me. 2. I like Casimir the

Great because he built up Poland after the wars. 3. I want to be like Juta [a nine-month-old baby] because she is happy and she does not know about anything. 4. I prefer reading fairy tales because there are different jokes to laugh at. 5. I do not have friends because I have no time.

Michna blamed the parents for their lack of authority, which caused the children to develop escape strategies that exceeded their physical and financial possibilities.¹¹¹ He did not, however, blame the parents for the difficulties their offspring had following the lessons in class because they were hungry. Michna's interpretation shows that his primary concern was for families to be responsible for ensuring the stability of the village community, not to educate imaginative adults. Mysłakowski did not comment on these findings. Did he remain silent because he had once believed Michna could become the kind of creative teacher capable of generating social change, but who turned out to be too conservative to bring about social reform?¹¹²

Another study conducted at the Pedagogical Institute in Katowice tested the veracity of a widely held opinion among teachers in Polish Upper Silesia, that Silesian children were themselves to blame for the fact their school results were worse than those of pupils in the Krakow region, given the fact that Silesian children were taught in the best school buildings the country possessed.¹¹³ Children were asked to fill in the most common intelligence test at the time, the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale adapted by Lewis M. Terman in 1916, as well as the first Polish intelligence test developed by Maria Grzywak-Kaczyńska, who had received part of her education in Switzerland and was Poland's first school psychologist.¹¹⁴ However, when Józef Pieter realised that pupils in Polish Upper Silesia experienced problems understanding the Polish words in the tests, he developed his own questionnaire to accompany the tests. The questionnaire was to be filled in by local teachers and quantified the extent to which predefined elements in the pupils' environment correlated to the formation of their intelligence.¹¹⁵ It evaluated, for example, the profession of the children's parents, from 'extremely diverse ways of earning money (+10)' to 'an unemployed environment (-10)'; the family of the children: 'father and mother (0), father or mother (-5), orphan (-15)'; access to alcohol: 'very easy access (-15), occasional access (-5), rare access (0)'; and occasional factors, such as 'the strong influence of a person or book on children living in bad conditions (+50)'.¹¹⁶ Pieter concluded that there was a significant statistical correlation between the living environment of the children in Polish Upper Silesia and their intelligence.¹¹⁷

The final group of sources took the form of pedagogical experiments developed by teachers in Polish Upper Silesia. The work of Gustaw Morcinek, probably Silesia's most famous teacher, offers us a splendid exam-

ple of the kind of civic education Sanacja ideologists wanted to generate.¹¹⁸ Morcinek received his teacher training in Galicia before the First World War and became a teacher in 1922 in the part of Polish Upper Silesia that had belonged to Galicia. He combined his job as a primary school teacher in Skoczów, a village in the vicinity of Bielsko-Biała, with a career as a writer of columns and children's books.¹¹⁹ In his famous fictional trilogy for children set in his own village, he described how his heroes, representing different social groups, learned Polish in school.¹²⁰ The heroes spoke with each other in Silesian or Polish, made language mistakes in their Polish essays and corrected these later spontaneously by themselves or following the advice of a classmate.¹²¹ The trilogy had a scope reaching well beyond Polish Upper Silesia, as the author included selected extracts of letters he had received from children from all over Poland commenting on his columns. He presented these extracts as they had been written, with all the spelling mistakes that entailed, and added comments of his own. Interested in the spontaneity of the child-writer, Morcinek especially criticised the influence of teachers and parents on how children wrote. He encouraged children to talk to and help each other, as well as to send letters and little gifts to children elsewhere in Poland.¹²²

Looking at the school journal *The Young Citizen* (*Młody Obywatel*), an initiative launched in 1934 in the primary school of Lubliniec by the Polish language teacher Stanisław Owczarek, we come to understand why Morcinek's fictional world could not match up with reality.¹²³ Owczarek responded to a circular of the Polish Ministry of Religious Denominations and Public Enlightenment (Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia – hereinafter MWRiOP) encouraging school teachers to submit school journals for a competition.¹²⁴ In *The Young Citizen*, Owczarek presented Piłsudski's Polish Legions (operating within the Habsburg army) as the army responsible for bringing about Polish independence, despite the limited role it had played during the First World War.¹²⁵ Being a young citizen, pupils learned, meant bringing about the kind of social relationships Józef Piłsudski had established and supervised within the Legions.¹²⁶ Fifth-grade pupil Krysia Gotzówna proved she had understood that lesson well. On the occasion of the anniversary of Polish independence, she wrote: 'Independence, do you know who fought for it? Grandfather Józef Piłsudski, popularly called Ziuk. In his younger years, he was hard and tenacious.' Krysia described how Ziuk had secretly read Polish books when he was young, and had loved his soldiers during the First World War, many of whom had not even been fifteen years old. These soldiers, Krysia informed her classmates, gave their lives for him and helped to establish a free Poland 'for us'. Krysia encouraged her readers to behave like these soldiers: 'Let us learn diligently and let us be courteous, because Grandfa-

ther loves children, but diligent and good ones.¹²⁷ During the First World War, a propaganda machinery had already begun to create the image of Józef Piłsudski as a grandfather who took good care of his troops, paying visits to young wounded soldiers in field hospitals.¹²⁸ By 1934, the heroification of Józef Piłsudski had proliferated widely, and this process would only accelerate after his death one year later.¹²⁹

The school journal ran for only a year and a half. Many causes can be given for its failure. Owczarek appeared unable to resolve the question of linguistic diversity.¹³⁰ Printed only in Polish, *The Young Citizen* failed to appeal to the pupils attending the German-speaking branch within the same school. In all the volumes of the school journal that remain, the latter did not feature once. Stanisław Owczarek also visibly struggled with the regionalism even Voivode Michał Grażynski had come to stand for.

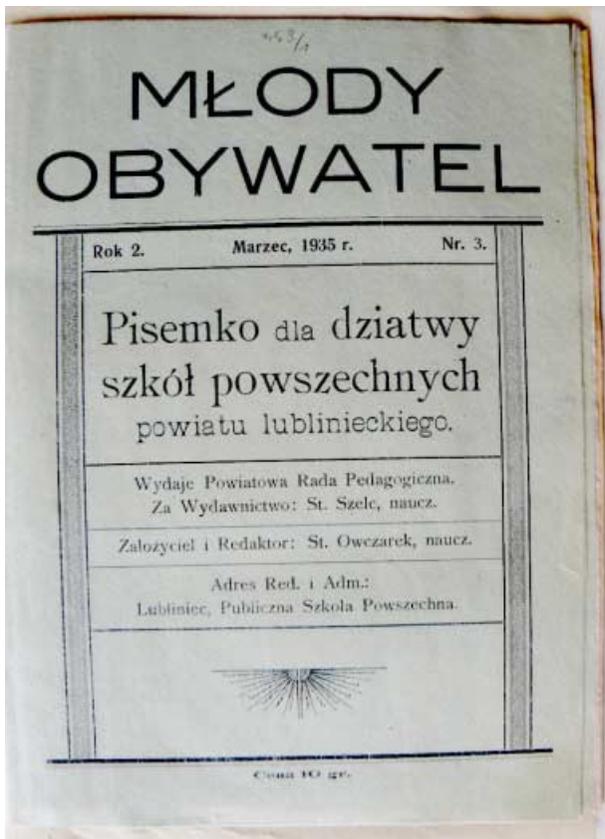


FIGURE 5.1. The school journal *The Young Citizen*, produced by the bilingual primary school in Lubliniec, was printed only in Polish. *Młody Obywatel*, 1935, vol. 2, 3, front cover (copyright: Public Primary School in Lubliniec Nr. 1).

Whereas in the 1920s Grażyński had ordered the systematic replacement of Silesian by Polish in education (as exemplified most clearly by Jan Żebrok's textbooks, discussed in chapter four, which were employed to curb the use of Silesian), by the early 1930s, he had come to consider Silesian a regional tradition that could enrich the Polish language.¹³¹ Instead, Owczarek, while still not encouraging his pupils to use Silesian expressions, did encourage them to make connections between the origins of the land they called home and the re-emergence of the Polish state, including in the journal their essays about mediaeval Silesian Church chapels.¹³² His attempt to include religious elements in the journal was doomed to fail, as the teaching personnel in the bilingual school of Lubliniec remained deeply divided between two groups. On the one hand, there were teachers like Owczarek, who had migrated to Lubliniec and who was a member of the Association of Polish Teachers (Związek Nauczycieli Polskich – hereinafter ZNP), an organisation supporting Sanacja ideology and running summer courses in reform pedagogy.¹³³ A significant part of the teaching personnel, including most of the locally recruited teachers, however, belonged to a religiously oriented labour organisation.¹³⁴ Another reason for *The Young Citizen's* failure can be found in its lack of appeal to pupils. The children who wrote readers' letters to the journal revealed they liked the crosswords the most.¹³⁵

What emerges most clearly from the rich descriptions of the lifeworlds of children in the writings of scientists and teachers is the Silesian rural child's struggle to learn languages, despite being taught in Poland's best school buildings. Child labour, hunger, their religious conviction and pragmatic approach to life were considered obstacles to the transformation of these borderland children into creative future citizens of the Polish state. The fictional heroes in Morcinek's children's books succeeded in learning languages through working together, but the children making the school journal *The Young Citizen* in the Lubliniec primary school did not. The sources reveal a corps of teachers concerned with bringing about a universal childhood, but differing in their interpretation of what that had to entail. Whereas Dr Sobolski contributed to the generation of new scientific findings in order to bring about a social revolution, and Gustaw Morcinek used fiction to instil in young readers a sense of civic responsibility, a teacher like Stanisław Owczarek was at best only a modest reformer. Andrzej Michna's publication offers the most in-depth portrait of a teacher whose traditionalist conceptions hindered his ability to generate social change. In sum, a number of factors impeded the publications' chances of generating social change: the fragmentation of the Polish scientific landscape, the weak affinity of some of the scientists with life in Polish Upper Silesia, the different opinions among scientists and teachers on what lan-

guage learning should look like, and the hostile attitude of the Catholic Church towards reform pedagogy.

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

In Belgium, an educational programme deeply influenced by the scientific insights of Belgium's most famous reform pedagogue Ovide Decroly (1871–1932) was introduced, with the aim of spreading reform pedagogy among the masses. The educational task of teachers was to talk with pupils in a way which resembled familial conversations, to allow each individual child to speak his or her own language, and to let them play, since it was believed, somewhat unrealistically, that this would help them to speak with greater grammatical accuracy. Whereas textbooks had previously constituted the bedrock of the simultaneous teaching method, they were now merely a reservoir wherein pupils could find information.¹³⁶ Children's interest in disciplines other than mathematics, reading and writing was to be triggered by interest centres to be chosen from the regional lifeworlds of children, starting from 'the school, the church, the parental home, the garden, or the pond with their countless associations'.¹³⁷ Thus, in Belgium regional elements were also to be included in teaching, but there was no indication on how the regional and national were related. The strength of the reform programme clearly needs to be situated more in the pedagogical ideals it propagated than in the way these ideals were to be realised. It was left up to the creativity of individual teachers to make the programme's ideas intelligible to their pupils.

Since the reform programme was not legally binding, school principals had the freedom of choosing whether or not to implement it. In 1938, only 467 schools in Flanders had included the programme in its school curriculum, whereas 2,043 had not.¹³⁸ Catholic school principals were especially fierce in denouncing a reform they believed would reduce discipline, promote individualism, and which was deprived of transcendentalism.¹³⁹ The training offered in teaching seminars, moreover, did not change as a result of the reform programme. Teachers continued to be taught to act like shepherds, to 'intervene, punish and reward' rather than to listen, accept and converse. 'Adult's logic' was to set the tone, not 'the culture of the inner child'.¹⁴⁰

The Belgian Kingdom was a socially stable but politically unstable entity, as a result of which it was hard to find politicians or scientists eager to generate social upheaval. In contrast to what happened in Polish Upper Silesia, rural children in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were not called upon to be empowered and join the nation-state's elite.¹⁴¹ Rural children were simply not considered important enough. In addition, the re-

gions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy did not have the same economic and strategic weight for the Belgian nation-state that Polish Upper Silesia did for Poland. Whereas the Polish government established a Pedagogical Institute in Katowice in order to educate a suitable new labour force for the country's most important industrial centre, Belgian statesmen did not come up with a similar idea precisely because they did not care enough about the future of the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy within Belgium. Moreover, because the Catholic Church had a free hand over the pedagogical approach in Catholic schools and was, on the whole, rather negatively disposed towards reform pedagogy, and all schools in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy at the time were Catholic, it was more difficult for reform pedagogues to get a foot on the ground than in Poland.

The cases of two local teachers will serve to illustrate the differences between the styles of teaching and learning in Polish Upper Silesia and in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. Like a majority of the teachers in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy at the time, they were trained at Belgian seminars to be German-speaking teachers. The first teacher taught the ten-year-old boy Karl Pitz in Eupen. One afternoon in June 1936, Karl returned home from school with his homework, as he had not been able to finish his exercises in school. Karl sat down and, together with his father Heinrich, continued to work until 7.30 pm.¹⁴² Heinrich Pitz sent a letter to Karl's teacher, asking whether the exercises his son needed to do were in accordance with the teaching programme. Perhaps he had heard of the Belgian educational reform, which had been printed in a Ministerial Order on 13 May 1936. When he did not receive a reply, Heinrich went to see the mayor of Eupen. The mayor asked school principal Léon Wintgens, a local inhabitant who had received a Belgian teaching education and had been appointed by Herman Baltia, for his and Karl's teacher's opinion.¹⁴³

The dispute about Karl's mathematics homework took place at a time when only one of the special measures for education that Baltia had implemented in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy was still in force. Children attending the two highest years of the German language curriculum were advised to repeat their mathematics exercises in French at the end of the school year.¹⁴⁴ Karl's father sent his letter at the end of the school year, when pupils were repeating the school material. A crucial question the letter hinted at was whether Karl was repeating these exercises in French or German: as Karl was attending the fourth grade, he should have been receiving them in German. To that purpose, at the behest of the Eupen city council, a mathematics book had been translated from French into German in 1931, but by the time Karl was in fourth grade, it had already sold out and no reprints had been ordered.¹⁴⁵

The mayor knew Wintgens was responsible for allocating the mathematics content of the Belgian teaching programme over the course of the school year. Issued in 1922, that programme had already been criticised for being especially demanding in the third and fourth grades. Only a few years earlier, teachers from the other primary school in Eupen had presented the fourth-grade mathematics test questions to the mayor: 'A hall which is 6.85 m long, 5.35 m wide and 3.80 m high is to be paved. How expensive is the work when the cost of detergent for 1 m² is 0.85 Belgian francs and that for the ceiling 1.70 Belgian francs?'¹⁴⁶ Wintgens replied to Heinrich Pilz that all the tasks his son Karl was being asked to perform conformed to the teaching programme. There should be no doubt that when a pupil had 'bad habits', school teachers had to react. Karl was simply a 'dawdler'.¹⁴⁷ The problem was Karl's attitude, not the learning content or pedagogical approach. Wintgens' answer illustrates that ideas from reform pedagogy could not be agreed upon. The individualism Heinrich Pilz asked for, and which the Belgian 1936 curriculum reform programme also proposed, was perceived to impede collective education.¹⁴⁸ Wintgens believed that feelings of duty could only be triggered by the belief in God as the highest supernatural personal legislator.¹⁴⁹ This was so important that Wintgens did not even feel the need to mention whether Karl was taught his mathematics in German or French. Because it was felt that styles of teaching and learning ought not to be questioned, we know so little about the language learning practices of borderland pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

The Catholic interpretation of childhood that Wintgens displayed in his letter enjoyed considerable support in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy. When in 1932 tribute was paid to the old rhetoric of Belgium's nineteenth-century School Wars (namely, that the 'soul of the child' needed to be saved because the Socialist and Liberal parties did not want to extend state subsidies to Catholic schools), voters were for the first time receptive to an internal Belgian political problem. Beforehand, the main topic during election campaigns had always been the contested switch of sovereignty, but now voters' priorities were finally starting to widen. Supporting the electoral campaign of the local Catholic political party, the Katholische Union, the local newspaper *Grenz-Echo* hooted: 'Show the men in order that they are, first and foremost, a shield and protection of the Catholic religion and customs, of Catholic schools and a Catholic education, the protection of youth.'¹⁵⁰ The result was electoral success for the local Catholic party and a drop in support for revisionist parties to 63 per cent.

Nevertheless, teaching in a Catholic borderland school in Belgium could look different. Klara Kirch, a local teacher from the village of Büllingen

(in the region of Malmedy), taught the highest class for girls in a Catholic primary school. In the 1933–1934 school year, she collected pupils' essays in a 'special booklet for the highest class'.¹⁵¹ Published transcripts from the booklet are the only remaining source in which borderland pupils described what their everyday lives looked like. In 'At the Railway Station', Anni was excited to take a local train ride with her sister to the neighbouring village of Weywertz without their parents. In 'The Knife-grinder', Regina watched how a man visiting her village sharpened her mother's scissors. And in 'Herding Cattle', Maria described losing some of her aunt's cows she had been asked to watch because she hadn't been paying enough attention.¹⁵² Describing their authors' individual experiences and their relationship with their close social environment, these texts are imbued with the spirit of the future Belgian educational reform of 1936, despite that reform being dismissed as secular in Catholic circles. To conclude, the vagueness with which pedagogical reforms had been formulated in order to guarantee a separation of church and state created a social environment in which both Catholic dogmatism and Klara Kirch's regionalist initiative were possible. Depending on the ethos of the school, a child's individuality could be either negated or centralised.

German Transnationalism

Throughout the chapter, it has been demonstrated how being a borderland pupil in the 1930s continued to be different from growing up in the mainland, despite the initiatives of Polish and Belgian policymakers to establish universal language learning conditions in primary education. However, people living in Germany found in both Polish Upper Silesia and in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy a similarly successful strategy to support borderland pupils in their language learning process. State officials and citizens in Germany offered material support to children living on the other side of the border, because they considered them to be part of the same German nation. This German (trans)nationalism influenced the systems of power applicable to Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy in the 1930s in similar ways. By providing the best educational support Germany had to offer, it managed to seriously challenge its Polish and Belgian competitors.

Polish Upper Silesia

In Polish Upper Silesia, German and Polish nationalists competed to put up landmarks that would demonstrate their progressive beliefs. They

both used child policy as a weapon in the symbolic battle of modernity. In the early 1930s, for example, the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin received a new school building paid for with German taxpayers' money.¹⁵³ Owing to the German Empire's failure to build a sufficient number of schools in Silesia, and the demographic boom in Polish Upper Silesia in the interwar years, there was an urgent need for school buildings.¹⁵⁴ German authorities explained their ambitious project to build sixty-three schools in Polish Upper Silesia as 'a preparation for a future recovery of the territory'.¹⁵⁵ Developed by progressive Berlin architects, school buildings were to function as the pulsing heart of social life:¹⁵⁶

The private school should not only serve school teaching. The building is at the same time a home for institutions for young people who are not yet obliged to attend school, as well as for those who have left school, as well as for all other institutions of free education and training. It is therefore necessary to create rooms for kindergartens and household courses, and to make room for gymnastics and sporting activities.¹⁵⁷

In the end, eleven school buildings were built in Polish Upper Silesia, including the building for the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin. That new building became a thorn in the side of some local inhabitants, who 'demolished' the windows of the apartment of the school principal and decorated the walls 'with hostile inscriptions'.¹⁵⁸ Silesian authorities reacted to the furore by erecting their own school buildings.¹⁵⁹ In Katowice, the process of leaving a national signature on the landscape had already begun with the erection of a megalomaniacal Voivodeship Government Building (Gmach Urzędu Wojewódzkiego), a humanities academy (Dom Oświaty), and an Administration Office Building (Gmach Urzędów Niezespólnych). Building schools in the countryside was the primary means of giving the more remote districts in the Voivodeship a Polish face.¹⁶⁰ In Koszęcin, a new building for the state-funded Polish-speaking primary school was finished one year after the private German-speaking school had been built, and was situated one street farther away.¹⁶¹ Polish nationalists considered their schools spaces of wider social and national relevance. In 1929, for example, a father enrolling his son at the Polish language branch of the Lubliniec school was fined for writing Stefan instead of Szczepań.¹⁶² He did that at the very moment when the Lubliniec district's bulletin called upon people to change the spelling of their Christian and family names from German to Polish: 'In our own country we should write as we are really called . . . Whoever has no time to apply can ask the teacher of his child for an application form to change his name. Children will be grateful to him, and Poland will as well.'¹⁶³

The Regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy

In the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, German material support found another way to cross the border. These regions had no need for school buildings, demographic growth in the interwar years was more moderate than in Polish Upper Silesia, and no school institutions without Belgian state subsidies were operative during the interwar period. In 1933, however, an action was launched that had a similar logic to the school building initiative in Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁶⁴ Aiming to outdo Lousberg's locally produced alphabet book, Wilhelm Benker, a German citizen born in Malmedy who had migrated to Germany in the aftermath of the First World War, and a member of the VDA, asked German publishing houses to donate fairy-tale books, with lots of beautiful coloured pictures, which he then sent in packages over the border.¹⁶⁵ Teachers offered these books as prizes to their pupils during German language courses.¹⁶⁶ In other cases, the books were distributed at Saint Nicholas parties. Such children's parties belonged to the rare social spaces where people with different political opinions came together: 'There was joy and jubilation. There was no shortage of humour either, with both the youngsters and their parents participating. I must say, we, the old, felt young again. It was a family festival in the true sense of the word. Even the Unionists [people in favour of the integration of the borderlands within Belgium], our "friends", came with their children.'¹⁶⁷

The transports of fairy-tale books ended in 1937, when border guards demanded that the donated books be sent with a receipt. Over the course of five years, approximately 3,000 books had been provided; on average, every family in the regions of Sankt Vith and Malmedy had received at least one.¹⁶⁸ As well as the material and cultural benefits German citizens contributed beyond their state border lines, however, children in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy also experienced National Socialism in a more extreme way than children in Germany. Roman Catholic priests condemned for paedophilia started to cross the state border line from Germany to the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith in the second half of the 1930s, and these men became involved in providing religious services and teaching religion in local primary schools. It is impossible today to find decisive empirical evidence for their paedophilic activities, as the German regime at the time was hostile towards religion and may not have worried unduly about giving these priests a fair trial. Sources in the regions of Eupen and Sankt Vith did not clearly report paedophilia either, although some hinted at it.¹⁶⁹ There was no such trend of migration in Polish Upper Silesia, because the priests held German citizenship and were therefore not allowed to teach.

Radicalisation on the Brink of the Second World War

The borderlands under study experienced a subsequent change in systems of power in the late 1930s. In Polish Upper Silesia, the Geneva Convention was phased out in 1937 and replaced by a Polish-German agreement pledging 'mutual respect'.¹⁷⁰ However, the ex-colonels that had come to rule Poland after the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935 removed the last autonomy Polish Upper Silesia had enjoyed in education.¹⁷¹ In 1939, all Catholic schools were renamed public primary schools, while Protestant believers and Jews were also restricted in their opportunities to develop religious educational activities.¹⁷² Polish authorities no longer gave the guardians of children the right to choose a school, but made it the decision of 'the will of Polish society, which will condemn once and for all those who are traitors of the national cause'.¹⁷³ Language exams continued to be organised, but German-speaking representatives no longer had the right to take part in the evaluation process.¹⁷⁴ Representatives of the German national minority raised the issue in the Polish Senate and with Polish Prime Minister Felicjan Sławoj-Składkowski, but were unable to widen the composition of the exam committee to include members of the German national minority.¹⁷⁵ As a consequence, the success rate dropped considerably. During the first round, only 62 per cent of the children passed their exam.¹⁷⁶ The language test of seven-year-old Anna Kowalska was as follows:

Erzähle was von deinen Geschwistern. uśmiecha się.	Tell us about your siblings. She laughs.
Erzähle was von deinen Eltern.	Tell us about your parents.
Was hast du Morgen gegessen? odpowiada wyrazami.	What did you eat this morning? She answers only with single words.
Erzähle uns was von Bilde. odpowiada błędnym zdaniem.	Tell us about this drawing. She answers with an incorrect sentence. ¹⁷⁷

The girl failed the exam. But perhaps Anna was confused because one of the questions asked to test her knowledge of German contained a language mistake. 'Was hast du Morgen gegessen?' is not standard German, and should have been 'Was hast du heute gegessen?' or 'Was isst du morgens?' Or perhaps Anna failed because she felt uncomfortable? Clearly, the examiners did not organise the exam according to a child-centred approach. The exam protocol shows how little influence the scientific studies on the language learning conditions of borderland pupils had under an authoritarian regime when state institutions and social life were becoming increasingly militarised.¹⁷⁸ With no supranational organ to appeal to,

a majority of the guardians of pupils who had failed their exams either approached Silesian authorities, who allowed 370 children to retake the exam, upon which the examiners let 61 children pass, or knocked on the door of the Highest Administrative Court (Najwyższy Trybunał Administracyjny) to question the legitimacy of the exams, where they were left in the cold. A year later, the children who had failed the exams were not allowed to retake them.¹⁷⁹ According to eyewitness Jan Myrcik, language tests remained an inadequate means of separating children in Polish Upper Silesia according to their language abilities. He remembered how in 1938 he and his friends from the public Polish-speaking school in Koszęcin and from the private German-speaking school situated one street further away used to play together in the streets: 'those who went to the minority school did not speak better German than we did, not at all'.¹⁸⁰

All these measures, as well as the new regulation that forbade pupils to attend German-speaking primary schools further than three kilometres from their homes, caused the number of pupils in the German-speaking private school of Koszęcin to fall for the first time in the interwar period.¹⁸¹ The school's functioning also became increasingly hampered by the Polish authorities' decision to forbid a further import of German textbooks, out of a concern that they were proliferating National Socialist ideology, and their demand that teachers sign an oath of loyalty at the beginning of the 1938–1939 school year.¹⁸² However, the school continued to be attractive, not least because of the financial support parents received from its owner, the Prince of Hohenlohe. Jan Popielas's appeal to the School Inspectorate of Lubliniec reveals how he considered sending his daughter to the school as an alternative source of welfare: '[I will be left] in an impossible situation because I and my children want to eat, and please answer me promptly, because, if I am refused, I will have to ask the Ministry of Social Welfare to settle the case.'¹⁸³

In the same vein, it has been argued that a prevailing motive behind the school boycott in Polish Upper Silesia, when up to 500 children stopped attending primary school in September 1938 after being denied admittance to a German-speaking school, was their unemployed parents' desire to receive financial compensation through a court case.¹⁸⁴ Although the striking children in Polish Upper Silesia never became a mass phenomenon in the years 1937–1939, their cases were meticulously documented in the local German-speaking press as clear signs of the increasing authoritarianism of Polish politics.¹⁸⁵

Whereas in Polish Upper Silesia, Polish statesmen put their efforts into diminishing the number of pupils receiving teaching in German, in Eupen, it was the parents who for the first time indicated that teaching in German was losing some of its appeal. A few months after Hitler had

come to power, Josef Dehottay, a leader in the local Heimatbund in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, spoke with him and agreed to found an organisation with the same structure as the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei – hereinafter NSDAP): the Heimattreue Front (HF).¹⁸⁶ His activities provoked Belgian parliamentarians into voting for a law that allowed for the revocation of a person's Belgian citizenship in 1934. Josef Dehottay's forced exile to Germany a year later caused a great uproar in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.¹⁸⁷ The activities of revisionist organisations became more politicised when in 1936 the VDA was put under the control of the NSDAP.¹⁸⁸ In order to allay the concerns of borderland inhabitants, Belgian authorities did not do much more than increase the number of troops patrolling the state border line, heighten surveillance, and threaten the revocation of citizenship.¹⁸⁹ Politicians in Brussels had their hands full trying to keep the democratic regime operative after a quarter of the electorate had rejected it in the elections of 1936, and embarking upon a neutral course in international affairs.

In contrast to Polish Upper Silesia, the language learning regulations for pupils in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy did not change. The Belgian state never ceased to give the guardians of borderland pupils the freedom to change schools independently. However, under the influence of, *inter alia*, German war propaganda, borderland inhabitants came to feel a growing need by the late 1930s to bring their practices in line with one of the two juxtaposing nationalist camps. In 1937, nineteen of the 455 pupils attending German-speaking primary schools in Eupen changed to a school in neighbouring Wallonia where more French was on offer.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion

In this chapter, it has been argued that children growing up in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy continued to face language learning conditions which were different from those offered to children growing up elsewhere in, respectively, Poland and Belgium. However, these conditions showed fewer similarities between the two case study borderlands under study than had previously been the case. Whereas chapter four showed major similarities in the dynamics of human territorialities in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy, in this chapter, it was mainly the differences that came to the fore. Owing to the diminished role of supranational control over the treatment of national minorities, decisions made at a national

level proved most important for the conditions of language learning of borderland pupils. Although they intended to offer children a universal childhood, the new educational laws and initiatives in reform pedagogy launched in Poland and Belgium were different, and worked out differently, in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

While Polish national authorities chose the power strategy of control over the organisation of primary education, thereby provoking a repeat of the battle over human territoriality in Polish Upper Silesia, they also decided to work along the fourth face of power in order to steer the behaviour of children in Poland, which transformed Polish Upper Silesia into a laboratory of reform pedagogical experiments and studies. Since Silesian children were characterised as being hindered from playing a constructive role in the new Polish nation-state, they were encouraged to work together at school, which, as the school journal *The Young Citizen* showed, did not lead to significant results. Desirous of bringing about a universal childhood for Silesian children, local teachers, moreover, remained divided in their opinions on how progressive that childhood needed to be. Belgian statesmen, on the other hand, issued legislation that, albeit unintentionally, prevented a repeat of the language learning conflicts over social space that had taken place in Eupen at the end of the 1920s. However, the new legislation also continued to give the Roman Catholic Church, which opposed reform pedagogy, a free hand in styles of teaching and learning, and respected the freedom of guardians to choose in which language their children were to receive primary education.

What borderland pupils in Polish Upper Silesia and the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy did have in common in the 1930s was that they became an object of interest for people in Germany, who were convinced they belonged to the same *Volk*. Given Germany's rich history in pedagogy and its size, it required no great effort to assemble the manpower needed to detect the weak points in the Polish and Belgian educational policies. Strategies were developed to outdo their neighbours by means of material support: mainly school buildings, in the case of Polish Upper Silesia, and fairy-tale books, in the case of the regions of Sankt Vith and Malmedy.

The borderlands also became increasingly caught up in geopolitical strategies regarding the future re-division of the European continent, which significantly relativised the importance of educational laws and reform pedagogical initiatives. By the end of the 1930s, scientific publications on styles of teaching and learning had no chance of kindling the social revolution Sanacja supporters had envisaged in the early 1930s, when, after the phasing out of the Geneva Convention, it was decided that

the 'will of the Polish society',¹⁹¹ instead of a borderland child's guardian, would determine language learning conditions in primary schools (which Polish statesmen could get away with largely owing to the burgeoning fear of German aggression). Similarly, the fact that the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy were treated as potential currency to pay off the security of the Belgian mainland meant that Belgian authorities had also become as good as indifferent towards the language learning of its borderland pupils.

Notes

1. *Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child*.
2. Janusz Korczak, as quoted in Eichsteller, 'Janus Korczak', 385–86.
3. Brzoza and Sowa, *Historia Polski*, 375.
4. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 125.
5. Librachowa, 'Cechy umysłowości', 98.
6. Musil, *Der Mann*, 16.
7. Kocka and Haupt, 'Introduction', 4.
8. Depaepe and Simon, 'De Vlaamse jeugd', 311.
9. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 957.
10. Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 371.
11. Fink, *Defending*, 334.
12. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 187–88.
13. Cull, 'Anti-Semitism', 14.
14. Michalczyk, *Heimat*, 55.
15. Luther, *Volkstumspolitik*, 241.
16. Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 241.
17. Allinson, *Germany and Austria*, 89.
18. Claude, *National Minorities*, 30.
19. Lentz, *Nazi Foreign Policy*, 67.
20. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 436.
21. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 186.
22. *Ibid.*, 187.
23. Brzoza and Sowa, *Historia Polski*, 487.
24. Duroselle, *France*, 100–4.
25. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 436; Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1030.
26. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 130–31 and 434.
27. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1040–42; Hyde, 'Belgium and Neutrality', 82.
28. Gerard, 'De democratie gedroomd', 1085.
29. Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 114.
30. *Ibid.*, 126.
31. Dolderer, 'Der flämische Nationalismus', 109–36.
32. Kartheuser, *Les années 30 à Eupen-Malmedy*, 108; Marcuse, 'Dollar-to-Marks'.
33. Brüll, 'Eupen-Malmedy 1918–1945', 7–38.
34. BAK, NL, 174, 24, unpaginated (April 1934).

35. AD, 11.047, 574, unpagged (Légation belge, Count de Kerckhove de Denterghem to Paul Hymans, 14 January 1935).
36. Lentz, *Wahlverhalten*, 333–34.
37. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz*.
38. Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 296.
39. Heike, *Die deutsche Minderheit in Polen*, 318–19.
40. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 529; Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 353.
41. APK, 27/200F, 30 (Instrukcja dotycząca programu nauki w oddziale I publicznych szkół powszechnych i zmian w programach nauki w oddziale V i VI publicznych szkół powszechnych, 14 September 1932).
42. *Ibid.*, 30.
43. *Ibid.*, 20 (Okólnik Nr. 17 w sprawie zmian w okólniku Nr. 6 z dnia 25. V. 1932 r., Katowice, 29 August 1932); *ibid.*, 30 (Instrukcja programu nauki w oddziale I publicznych szkół powszechnych i zmian w programach nauki w oddziale V i VI publicznych szkół powszechnych, 14 September 1932).
44. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz*, 197.
45. Jędrzejczak, 'Recepcja', 452.
46. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 112; Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływową*, 245.
47. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 112; Górski, 'Organizacja', 75; APK 27, 200F, 354 ('Śląsk złączony z Macierzą musi mieć jednolity z Polską ustrój szkolny', *Polska Zachodnia*, 12 March 1933); 'Niebezpieczne objawy w szkolnictwie slaskiem', *Gość Niedzielny*, 1933, vol. 11, 1, 3–5.
48. Borodziej, *Geschichte Polens*, 174.
49. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 124.
50. Raffestin, 'Space', 136–38.
51. APK, 1363/412, 42 (Inspektorat Szkolny w Lublińcu do Starostwa, Lubliniec, 20 May 1936); *ibid.*, 59 (Starostwo lublinieckie do Urzędu Gminnego w Cieszowej, Lubliniec, 27 May 1936); *ibid.*, 61 (Starostwo lublinieckie do Urzędu Gminnego w Boronowie, Lubliniec, 27 May 1936); Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), MSZ, 2325, 270 (Wyniki egzaminów dzieci przeniesionych do szkół mniejszościowych w roku 1936).
52. Korowicz, *Górnośląska ochrona Mniejszości*, 185.
53. AAN, MSZ, 2325, 268 (Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski Wydż. Oświec. Publ. do Pana Prezydenta Komisji Mieszanej dla Spraw Górnego Śląska w Katowicach, Katowice 19 September 1936); *ibid.*, 275 (Inspektorat szkolny Lubliniec, Egzamininy językowe, September 1936).
54. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 109 and 161.
55. BABL, R 8043/642, unpagged (Deutsche Stiftung an den Herrn Reichsminister der Finanzen Berlin, 2 November 1934); DSHI, Sammlung Jendrike, 10_080, fol. 80r–81v (Franz Chmiel Formular, Gleidingen 12 May 1957); ASPL, *School Chronicle*, vol. 1, 277 (Polonia, *O szkołach mniejszości w Lublinieckiem*).
56. BABL, R 8043/642 (Deutsche Stiftung an den Herrn Reichsminister der Finanzen Berlin, 2 November 1934); APK, 1363/406, 1 (Spis szkół powszechnych okręgu szkolnego Lubliniec, 1935); APK, 1363/413, 8 (Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygasania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzenia, 1937).
57. Statistical data from 1934/35 shows that 84 per cent of primary schools offered teaching in Polish, 11.28 per cent in Ukrainian, 1.64 per cent in German and 0.3 per cent in Hebrew or Yiddish (*Mały Rocznik Statystyczny*, 1936, 228–29); Tomiak, 'Education', 205.
58. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 268 and 274.
59. In the public primary school of Lubliniec, in the 1934–1935 school year, 710 pupils attended the eight-year curriculum, and 663 the seven-year curriculum (APK, 1363/406,

- 1; ASPL, School Chronicle, vol. 2, 5–6 [Szkoly i przedszkola w Lublińcu, Lubliniec, 16 August 1936].
60. Pabst, 'Eupen-Malmedy', 349. See also SE, 666/55/216, unpagued (*Die Unterrichtssprache in den Volksschulen, Eupener Zeitung*, 104, 32, 07/02/1930).
61. *Dziennik Ustaw*, 1932, Pozycja, 389, 640; *Gość Niedzielny*, 'O zaufanie do szkoły polskiej na Śląsku', 1936, vol. 14, 15, 202.
62. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 63.
63. Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 254–59.
64. AAN, MSZ, 2330, 185 (Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski do Alojzego Kloze, Katowice, 14 December 1927); Iwanicki, *Polityka oświatowa*, 164ff.; Eser, 'Volk, Staat, Gott!', 560.
65. APK, 27, 200F, 354 ('Śląsk złączony z Macierzą musi mieć jednolity z Polską ustrój szkolny', *Polska Zachodnia*, 12 March 1933); polemical articles 'Niebezpieczne objawy w szkolnictwie slaskiem', *Gość Niedzielny*, 1933, vol. 11, 1, 3–5.
66. Osiński, *Janusz Jędrzejewicz*, 197.
67. Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving, KU Leuven (KADOC), BE, 942855/1595/310, 1–20 (Dossier betreffende de wet van 14 juli houdende taalregeling in het lager en middelbaar onderwijs, 1929–33).
68. Schmidt, 'Sprachnationale Konflikte', 407; *De Volksgazet*, Craeybeckx, F.F.L., 'Waarom zijn er geen Vlaamsche scholen in het Walenland? - Of de ouders er vragen', 16 October 1929, 1.
69. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 128.
70. Mallinson, *Power*, 131.
71. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 128.
72. Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 234.
73. Primary schools in the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy continued to enjoy the right to start foreign language training in either the third or fifth year of the school curriculum (Lejeune, 'Abtretung', 234. See also Timmermann, *Zur nationalen Integration*, 234).
74. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 29.
75. Landesverband Rheinland (LVR), 4745, unpagued (Zusammenstellung ueber die derzeitige Lage im Volksschulwesen der drei Kantone Eupen, Malmedy und Sankt Vith, 1938).
76. Ewert, 'Eric Stern', 200.
77. *Ibid.*, 207; Burgdörfer, *Volk ohne Jugend*.
78. de Vroede, 'Language in Education', 128.
79. Piaget, 'Polska reforma'. See Sobczak, *Nowe wychowanie*, 75.
80. Jędrzejewicz, 'Współczesne zagadnienia wychowawcze', 10.
81. Seweryn, 'Zagadnienia', vol. 7, 9; Drynda, 'Niektóre koncepcje', 27; Jaxa-Bykowski, 'Zagadnienia', 3–43.
82. Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, *Program*. For the popularity of regionalism in interwar Europe, see Storm, *The Culture of Regionalism*, 11.
83. Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 64–67.
84. Mysłakowski, *Państwo*; the quotations are from Mysłakowski, 'Przedmowa', X.
85. These research publications do not systematically indicate which children of the Voivodeship were investigated. Only one source clearly covers the Lubliniec district (Młody Obywatel, 1934/35). Some of the studies on Polish Upper Silesia do not specify whether teachers and children in the Lubliniec district were involved (Morcinek, *Miasteczko*), and three explicitly mention not having included the Lubliniec district (Pieter, *Poziom inteligencji*; Michna, 'Obserwacje'; Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*), of which two argue their findings are representative for the whole of Polish Upper Silesia (Pieter,

- Poziom inteligencji*; Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*). While the first study appeared in 1931 and the last one in 1938, I discuss them both in this section because they belong together thematically.
86. This phenomenon was also characteristic of scientific initiatives on childhood elsewhere in Poland (Wnęk, *Dziecko w polskiej literaturze naukowej*, 359).
 87. Z. Gryń, 'Stosunek dziecka do nauki w świetle ankiety', *Miesięcznik Pedagogiczny*, vol. 44, 3, 1935, 73.
 88. Librachowa and Studencki, *Dziecko wsi polskiej*.
 89. Bode and Fuchs, *Psychologie*; Scheufgen, *Seelenleben*; Librachowa and Studencki, 'Słowo', 7.
 90. Librachowa and Studencki, 'Słowo', 14–15.
 91. Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*, 5; Librachowa and Studencki's edited volume included one other characterisation of a Silesian child, but it spoke solely of children growing up in urbanised mining areas, and is therefore not applicable to the living conditions in the Lubliniec district (Chmielewski, 'Dziecko śląskie').
 92. Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*, 6.
 93. *Ibid.*
 94. Librachowa, 'Cechy umysłowości', 90.
 95. Sobolski, *Dziecko wsi śląskiej*, 8.
 96. Librachowa, 'Charakterystyka', 24–25.
 97. Librachowa, 'Cechy umysłowości', 98.
 98. *Ibid.*, 99.
 99. Szczepański, 'Przejście', 297–307.
 100. Kojkoł, *Polska*, 134.
 101. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 187.
 102. Le Play, *Instruction*; Descamps, *Les trois formes*.
 103. Mysłakowski, 'Rodzina', 14.
 104. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 112.
 105. *Ibid.*, 104.
 106. Płatek, 'Wieś jako środowisko wychowawcze', 54.
 107. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 144.
 108. Mysłakowski, 'Przedmowa', IX.
 109. Kojkoł, *Polska*, 142.
 110. Michna, 'Obserwacje', 187.
 111. *Ibid.*, 122.
 112. Mysłakowski's edited volume contains one other essay written by a Silesian teacher, mostly speaking about his experiences as a Polish teacher in German Upper Silesia (Siwoń, 'Rodzina wiejska').
 113. Pieter, *Poziom inteligencji*, 3.
 114. Grzywak-Kaczyńska, *Testy i normy*; Terman, *The Measurement of Intelligence*.
 115. Pieter, *Poziom inteligencji*, 4.
 116. *Ibid.*, 70–76.
 117. *Ibid.*, 48.
 118. *Ibid.*, 78.
 119. Szczęśniak, 'Z zapisków', 74.
 120. Morcinek, *Gołbie na dachu*; Morcinek, *W najmłodszym lesie*; Morcinek, *Miasteczko*.
 121. Szczęśniak, 'Z zapisków', 77.
 122. *Ibid.*, 78.
 123. In Polish Upper Silesia, forty-seven school journals were published throughout the interwar period, of which four came from primary schools. *The Young Citizen* is one of

- them (Synowiec, *Śląskie czasopisma szkolne*, 11). In 1934, seven booklets, each containing between fourteen and eighteen pages, were published. In 1935, at least six booklets were printed (Przywecka-Samecka and Reiter, *Bibliografia*, 75; Paczkowski, *Prasa polska*, 299).
124. 'Okólnik Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego do kuratorów Okegów Szkolnych w sprawie wydawnictw szkolnych', *Dziennik Urzędowy Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego*, 1927, 10, 13 (191), 484–85.
 125. *Młody Obywatel*, 1934, vol. 1, 1, 2; Prażmowska, *Poland*, 65 and 86.
 126. 'Czego żąda Pan Minister Oświaty od dziatwy szkół powszechnych?', *Młody Obywatel*, 1934, vol. 1, 5/6, 13.
 127. K. Gotzówna, 'W 16-lecie odzyskania niepodległości', *Młody Obywatel*, 1934, vol. 1, 5/6, 6–7. Primary school textbooks also described Piłsudski's childhood at great length and referred to him as *Ziuk* (Wojtas, 'Learning to Become Polish', 230).
 128. Chwałba, *Legiony*, 252–53.
 129. Hein, *Pilsudski-Kult*.
 130. See also Zloch, *Polnischer Nationalismus*, vol. 78, 357.
 131. Linek, 'Zmiany', 42ff.; Kaczmarek, 'Zwischen Regionalismus', 174. Textbook writer Jan Żebrok followed suit. He explained that his Polish language textbooks had, in fact, a regional character (J. Żebrok, 'Znowu zapowiada się bałagan czytankowy', *Ogniskowiec*, 1932, 12, 14). For a critique on Żebrok's handbook, see J. Paszenda, 'O miejsce piewców śląskich w śląskiej szkole', *Szkoła Śląska*, 10, 1929, 12.
 132. *Młody Obywatel*, 1935, vol. 2, 4, 7. See also J. Jakubowski, 'Uwagi o celach pracy krakoznawczej w szkole śląskiej', *Młody krajoznawca Śląski*, vol. 3, 19, 9–11; P. Karol, 'Kościół parafalny w Sadowie', *Młody Obywatel*, vol. 2, 4, 7; Novikov, *Shades*, 118.
 133. 'Teraz chodzi o czyny!', *Gość Niedzielny*, 1936, vol. 14, 21, 289; 'Czerwony "Płomyk": Gość Niedzielny, Niebezpieczna propaganda w szkole', 1936, vol. 14, 12, 153–54.
 134. In the Lubliniec district, 50 per cent of the teachers belonged to the Polish Teachers Association, compared to an average 55 per cent in the Silesian Voivodeship, 39 per cent of the teachers belonged to the Association of Christian-National Teachers of General Schools (Stowarzyszenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe Nauczycielstwa Szkół Powszechnych – SCNNSP), compared to an average of only 20 per cent in the Silesian Voivodeship, and 11 per cent of teachers did not belong to any teachers' organisation, compared to 25 per cent in the Silesian Voivodeship (Dziwoki, *Kościół katolicki*, 49).
 135. See for example *Młody Obywatel*, 1935, vol. 2, 4, 17.
 136. Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform'.
 137. Ministerieele orderichting van 15 juni 1935, *Leerplan*, 24.
 138. Depaepe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 372.
 139. *Ibid.*, 379–80.
 140. Depaepe, *Order in Progress*, 105.
 141. Lejeune, 'Von Tafel', 27–38.
 142. SE, 661/55/168, unpagged (An Herrn Lehrer Gerken, Eupen, 18 June 1936).
 143. Massenau, 'Blick auf das Schulwesen', 11.
 144. Fittbogen, *Schulrecht*, 146.
 145. SE, 657/55/147, unpagged (Arel/Arlon. An die Gemeindeverwaltung, Eupen, 15 May 1929); Braçonnier, *Cours d'arithmétique théorique et pratique*; SE, 657/55/147, unpagged (Der Stadtsekretär und der Bürgermeister an Schulinspektor Lousberg, Eupen, 14 April 1932); SE, 655/55/138, unpagged (Aufstellung der Bestellungen für das Schuljahr 1935–36).
 146. SE, 55/122, unpagged (Anlage, 1924).
 147. SE, 661/55/168, unpagged (Wintgens an Herrn Bürgermeister, Eupen, 2 July 1936).

148. Depaeppe, de Vroede and Simon, '1936 Curriculum Reform', 373.
149. See also *Sankt Vither Zeitung*, 30 July 1924.
150. 'In den Kampf', *Grenz-Echo*, 1932, vol. 29/30, 10, 2. See also Tyssens, *Om de schone ziel*, 113; Havenith, *Belgienbild*, 133; Lejeune, *Die Säuberung*, 37.
151. Lehrpersonen und Elternrat der Gemeindeschule Büllingen, *145 Jahre*, 77–78.
152. *Ibid.*
153. APK, 1363/410, 9 (Koncesja, Katowice, 25 January 1934).
154. Rimmele, *Sprachenpolitik*, 104–5.
155. PAAAB, R 60610, 104 (Schreiben des Rechnungshofes des Deutschen Reiches an das Auswärtige Amt, 15 March 1937); BABL, DS, 643, unpagged (Krahmer-Möllenbergs an Steinacher 4 December 1934).
156. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 97.
157. BABL, DS, 651, 188 (Ulitz, Sroka, Bauprogramm für Polnisch-Oberschlesien, February 1930).
158. DSHI, Sammlung Jendrike, 10_080, fol. 80v (Franz Chmiel Formular, Gleidingen 12 May 1957).
159. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 44–45 and 52.
160. Polak-Springer, *Recovered*, 95.
161. Olszówka, 'Szkolnictwo polskie', 21.
162. APK 1376/1269, 365 (W sprawie ucznia Szczepana Jana Wicharego /'Kandzi'/ do Miejskiego Urzędu Policynego w Lublińcu, Lubliniec, 11 April 1929).
163. A. Jesionowski, 'W ważnej sprawie narodowej. (O odniemczaniu nazwisk polskich)', *Tygodnik powiatowy na powiat lubliniecki*, 1930, 2, 3.
164. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 1 (Vereingte Buchbindereien an Oberbürgermeister Aachen, Altona Elbe, January 1932).
165. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 5 (Deutscher Schutzbund an Herrn Stadtsinspektor W. Benker, Berlin, 8 February 1932); *ibid.*, 6 (Deutscher Schutzbund an die Malmedy-Sankt Vither Landmannschaft zu Aachen, Herrn W. Benker, Berlin, 11 February 1932); *ibid.*, 7 (Hans Steinacher an Benker, Berlin, 12 February 1932); *ibid.*, 11 (Henkel Düsseldorf Chemische Produkte an Stadtsinspektor W. Benker, Düsseldorf, 7 June 1932); BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 22 (Fatzau an Benker, Eupen, 8 August 1932).
166. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 190 (Speditionsfirma 'Carl&Scheins' an Benker, 2 January 1937).
167. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 76 (Böhlau aus dem Heimatbund Eupen-Malmedy-Sankt Vith an Benker, 28 January 1933).
168. BAK, ZSG, 104-9, 45 (Grenzbücherdienst schickt ein Paket mit 70 Büchern an Benker, 14 October 1932); *ibid.*, 50 (Benker an Regierungspräsident, 28 October 1932); *ibid.*, 81 and 85 (Vereingte Buchbindereien an Benker, 14 February 1933); *ibid.*, 99 (Vereingte Buchbindereien an Benker, 29 September 1933).
169. For a detailed discussion, see Lejeune, 'Der ostbelgische Klerus', 135.
170. 'Deklaracje polsko-niemieckie w sprawach mniejszościowych', *Front Zachodni. Pismo poświęcone sprawom wzajemnego stosunku Polski i Niemiec*, vol. 5, 9, November 1937, 1.
171. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 124.
172. Glimos-Nadgórska, *Polskie szkolnictwo*, 106; Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 206–7.
173. APK, 1363/413, 8–9 (Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygasania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzenia, 1937).
174. AAN, MWRiOP, 164, 90–91 (Wojewoda Śląski do Inspektorów Szkolnych w górnośląskiej części województwa Śląskiego, Katowice, 30 August 1937).
175. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 149–50.
176. In total, 1,268 children took the exam, and 731 passed (AAN, MWRiOP, 164, 14, 18 [Ergebnisse der ersten Sprachprüfungen im September 1937]).

177. Most of the documents of the Polish state administration were lost during the Second World War. Among the few documents that are left, we find AAN, MWRiOP, 164, 25 (Urząd Wojewódzki Śląski, Wydział Oświecenia Publicznego do Ministerstwa Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego w Warszawie, Katowice, 3 November 1937, 26).
178. Prażmowska, *Poland*, 124.
179. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 136–38.
180. Private Archive of Machteld Venken, Meeting with eyewitnesses in Koszęcin, 7 July 2014, Transcription, [J.M.].
181. BABL, R 8043, 647 (Übersicht über die Kindergärten in Lubliniec, 1939); APK, D. Schulverein 78/24, 46 (Vorläufige Ergebnisse über Einschreibungen und Ueberweisungen in der Zeit von 10–15 May 1937 für das Schuljahr 1937/38 für die privaten Volksschulen des Deutschen Schulvereins).
182. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 151–52.
183. APK, Star. Lubl. 1363, t. 413, k. 29. Jan Popielas to Inspektorat Szkolny w Lublińcu, Psary, 26 October 1937.
184. Fałęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe*, 155–56.
185. 'Es hagelt Schulstrafen, weil deutsche Eltern ihre Kinder nicht in die polnische Schule schicken wollen', *Der Aufbruch*, 63, 1938; 'Schärfere Straffen im Friedenshütten Schulstreit', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, 62, 17 March 1938. Polish authorities at times confiscated journals for what they saw as their politically inflammatory content. See, for example, *Polska Zachodnia*, 278, 9 October 1937; 'Bezczelne prowokacje germanizatorów. Konfiskata', *Kattowitzer Zeitung*.
186. Cremer, 'Annexion', 9.
187. Cremer and Meißer, *Spuren*, 13; Klefisch, *Dritte Reich*, 101.
188. Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 129–32.
189. O'Connell, 'Left to Their Own Devices', 36; Lejeune, *Die Deutsch-Belgischen Kulturbeziehungen*, 128.
190. SE, 654/55/131, unpagged (Schülerzahl, Schuljahr 1937–38, Eupen, 27 September 1937). The same phenomenon was noticeable within the Belgian army, where inhabitants from the regions of Eupen, Sankt Vith and Malmedy could choose between joining a French-speaking or German-speaking war unit. In the late 1930s, they increasingly preferred a French-speaking one (Beck, Brüll and Quadflieg, 'Weltkriege', 150).
191. APK, 1363/413, 8–9 (Znaczenie wpisów wobec wygasania Konwencji Genewskiej i sposoby ich przeprowadzenia, 1937).