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A Prehistory to the Success of Modernization

Differences between Denominations in the Shaping of Hungarian Public Education during the Enlightenment Period

Abstract: The paper discusses the background to the publication of the 1868 Public Education Act in Hungary. A number of measures aimed at extending public education had been introduced since the 1770s. Most of these efforts, however, were fragmentary and often unsuccessful, perhaps as a result of the multi-denominational nature of the country. In addition to the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran and the Reformed churches also had a relatively comprehensive network of primary schools. Indeed, as a result of the Patent of Toleration of 1781, Protestants had almost full autonomy. They could, for instance, manage their educational affairs autonomously, with both the Lutheran and Reformed churches developing their own distinctive approaches. Yet, the Protestants' 'golden freedom' came at a price. So, while Catholics adjusted to the modernization efforts of Habsburg educational policies, Protestants found themselves a step behind. This was a disadvantage that was not only growing, but one that was only latterly understood. It consequently took many decades for Protestants to start modernizing and standardizing their school network in the 1830s and 1840s.

Keywords: Hungary; school system; public Education; multi-denominationalism; Enlightenment

Zusammenfassung: Die Studie beschäftigt sich mit der Vorgeschichte des ungarischen Volksgesetzes (1868). Seit den 1770er Jahren gab es zahlreiche Konzeptionen und bedeutsame Bestrebungen zur Verbreitung der Volksbildung in Ungarn. Diese Anstrengungen blieben jedoch sporadisch und oft ergebnislos. Die Multikonfessionalität des Landes hatte dabei eine große Bedeutung. Neben den Katholiken hatten auch die Lutheraner und Reformierten ein relativ dichtes Schulnetz. Die Protestanten formten und gestalteten ihr Schulwesen nach dem Toleranzpatent von 1781 *de iure* selbstständig. Sie genossen nicht nur den Katholiken und dem Staat gegenüber Autonomie, sondern gestalteten auch ihr Schulwesen auf unterschiedliche Weise. Diese ‚goldene Freiheit‘ der Protestanten hatte jedoch ihren Preis: Indem sich die Katholiken nämlich eng den modernisierenden Habsburger Bildungsmaßnahmen anschlossen, konnten sie sich einen Wettbewerbsvorteil gegenüber den Protestanten verschaffen. Die Protestanten wiederum erkannten ihren Rückstand nur langsam und brauchten Jahrzehnte dafür, ihre unterschiedlichen Schulsysteme zu vereinheitlichen und zu modernisieren.

Schlagwörter: Ungarn; Schulwesen; Volksbildung; Multikonfessionalität; Aufklärung

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Introduction

Compulsory education was introduced in Hungary in 1868, one year after the Austro-Hungarian compromise.¹ Article 38 of the Public Education Act of 1868 was an unparalleled success in the history of Hungarian modernization. It encountered little opposition, was implemented quickly and successfully, and later amendments and additions did little to alter the essential nature of the Act.² Consequently, the Public Education Act, which was associated with the then Minister of Education József Eötvös, served as a reference point for public education until nationalization in the communist era (1948). The Act is a unique phenomenon in the history of education legislation in Hungary, as no other large-scale legislation was anywhere near as successful.³ The Act notably declared that six years of compulsory education was to be universal, affecting all Hungarians, dramatically changing the lives of families unaccustomed to formal education in a manner that proved to be permanent. Moreover, compulsory education also affected multicultural relations in areas that were ethnically and denominationally diverse, and redefined the roles assigned to the state and the churches, as well as to the state and local governments (communities).⁴

Although the changes set out in the Public Education Act were immediately successful, it is fair to say that its pivotal sections could already have been in force for

1 The study was written within two projects: EFOP-3.6.1–16–2016–00001: Kutatási kapacitások és szolgáltatások komplex fejlesztése az Eszterházy Károly Egyetemen [A Complex Development of Research Capacities and Service at Eszterházy Károly University]; NKFI FK 132451: (A professzionalizáció története Magyarországon a 19–20 században európai kontextusban [A History of Professionalization in Hungary in the Context of 19th–20th-century Europe].

2 It took the system about thirty years to achieve a rate of more than 95% enrolment among school-age children. Additional rules facilitated this process. Laws that were introduced in the schooling of ethnic groups in Hungary and which were contrary to the national, liberal and basically tolerant spirit of article 38 of the Public Education Act of 1868 first appeared at around the turn of the century. Cf Péter Tibor Nagy: *The Social and Political History of Hungarian Education*. Pécs-Budapest 2006, 14–17.

3 A conference to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the act was organized in Budapest in autumn 2018, with the participation of almost the entire community of historians of education in Hungary. The participants both unequivocally accepted the success of modernization of the Act, and agreed on its unique significance in Hungarian history.

4 Some of the main points of the act were as follows: obligation to attend school regularly for children aged 6 to 12; obligatory state supervision of schools; obligatory professional training for teachers, the establishment of state institutions of teacher training; obligatory curricular regulations; the establishment of schools of certain denominations and languages, according to the religious affiliation and ethnicity of the majority of the inhabitants in each town and community; state-maintained faith schools in the case of minimum 30 children of the same denomination. Public schools could be established and maintained by churches, the state, communities, private individuals and ‘societies’. Cf. Article 38 of the Public Education Act of 1868. In: Dezső Márkus: *Corpus Iuris Hungarici. Magyar Törvénytár 8: 1838–1869* [Corpus Iuris Hungarici. Body of Hungarian Laws 8: 1838–1869]. Budapest 1896, 449–469.

nearly a century. These were set out in the reforms of Johann Ignaz Felbiger, which failed because the Kingdom of Hungary sought to defend its feudal autonomy.⁵ In 1777 Empress Maria Theresa issued *Ratio Educationis*, a modified version of an education policy introduced in the hereditary provinces of the monarchy, was tailored to Hungary. This, however, could not prevail in the long run. This is because, as many historians of education in Hungary believe, these enlightened absolutist regulations of public education foundered due to the lack of infrastructure such as buildings, fixed assets and qualified teachers.⁶ This is patently true since it would have taken decades to turn education that was previously organized in barns, the teacher's one and only living room, or in dilapidated and unheated classrooms into a cultured network of schools.

On the other hand, this could only have occurred if the time that passed between the issuing of *Ratio Educationis* and the Public Education Act had been shorter and more balanced – but that was not the case. In fact that period, spanning almost three generations, was characterized by a number of odd changes. These may be best explained because the churches tried to avoid the influence of the state, and the fact that the different denominations competed with one another.⁷ As a result, the relationship between various denominations needs to be explored in order to reveal both the dynamics of pedagogical discourse on public education, and the educational practices that characterised Hungary during the Late Enlightenment Period. In order to do this I shall briefly outline the religious nature of Hungary at that time, then discuss the respective efforts of the three denominations (Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed) with regard to public education.

5 Cf. Rudolf Gönner: Die österreichische Lehrerbildung von der Normalschule bis zur Pädagogischen Akademie. Wien 1967, 35–41; Josef Stanzel: Die Schulaufsicht im Reformwerk von J. I. Felbiger (1724–1788). Schule, Kirche und Staat in Recht und Praxis des aufgeklärten Absolutismus. Paderborn 1976, 257–274; Lajos Hajdu: Népiskolai szerződéses Magyarország a felvilágosult abszolútizmus időszakában (1770–1795) [Public School Contracts in Hungary in the Period of Enlightened Absolutism]. In: Somogy megye múltjából 17 (1977), 163–166.

6 Cf. András Németh: Die ungarischen Bildungsreformen. Von der theresianisch-josephinischen Reichsreform zur nationalstaatlichen Bildungspolitik (1777–1867). In: Flavian Imlig, Lukas Lehmann, Karin Manz (Ed.): Schule und Reform. Veränderungsabsichten, Wandel und Folgeprobleme. Wiesbaden 2018, 105–116.

7 Because of this the law proposed by the national diet in 1843, which was quite similar to the Public Education Act of 1868 in terms of its content, did not have enough support from society. This despite the fact that it would have been able to provide more space for certain churches and intended to establish separate school authorities for the denominations. Sensing the polarized opinion of the counties and churches about the proposal drawn up by liberal reformers, the monarch simply took it off the agenda. After the revolution of March 1848, József Eötvös was appointed Minister of Education in the new Hungarian government. He tried to initiate an act on public education, but it was soon overtaken by the chaos of the revolution. In addition, the reaction of the churches, worried about losing their autonomy, foreshadowed a prolonged tug of war. Cf. Miklós Bényei: Oktatáspolitikai törekvések a reformkori Magyarországon [Education Policy Efforts in the Hungarian Reform Era]. Debrecen 1994.

Multiconfessional Hungary

Habsburg absolutism consolidated its power in the Kingdom of Hungary in the early 18th century without fully overcoming Protestantism. On several occasions, between 1681 and 1731, the monarch guaranteed Protestants the right to religious freedom at two locations in each county, and in all the settlements inhabited by Protestants in every county. This enabled these communities to persist, albeit within strict limits: including a ban on geographical expansion and a series of discriminative rules that favoured Catholics in any debates which took place within society. Scholarship on the history of education in Hungary is still polarized in its evaluation of the religious-political phenomena of the mid-18th century, however.

In 1790, 55% of the population was Roman Catholic, while about 7% was Greek Catholic, 11% Greek Orthodox, 1.2% Jews, 9.3% Lutheran and approximately 16% Reformed.⁸ Catholic scholars claim that Protestants could generally live in peace; the worst they experienced was smaller or greater 'pin pricks'. In contrast, Protestant scholars conceive the period leading up to Joseph II's Patent of Toleration in 1781 as a bloodless part of the Counter-Reformation, a continuation of tyranny in other words.

Both of these approaches have an element of truth to them. Protestants were not persecuted in 18th-century Hungary, unlike Czech Protestants; nor did they have to fear the direct termination of their congregations. Moreover, certain educational-cultural centres, especially the Reformed College of Debrecen and the Lutheran Lyceum in Bratislava, achieved outstanding scientific results. Nevertheless, from time to time, Protestants could no doubt feel limited in terms of their rights, and perhaps even feel excluded in some situations. Violent measures by some Catholic bishops in some regions of Hungary ruined the Protestants' faith for decades afterwards. In the mid-1770s, some six or eight years before emperor Joseph II's Patent of Toleration, the oppression of Protestants intensified once again. In other words those 'pin pricks' got deeper and more frequent.⁹

The Patent of Toleration, however, brought about a turn of events that resulted in rapid changes to the lives of Protestants. What is more, while keeping with feudal autonomy, Emperor Leopold II legitimized these changes through Article 26 of the Act of 1791. These ensured Protestants' religious freedom, as well as their right to self-determination in religious and public education issues. Protestants could then live in a way that was largely undisturbed, and were allowed almost full autonomy until the fall of the revolution and the beginning of neoabsolutism in 1849. This came at a price, however, since they had to fund their own activities. This limited the roles

⁸ By 1846 this rate changed slightly: 52% Roman Catholic, 9% Greek Catholic, 11% Greek Orthodox, 2.5% Jews, 8.1% Lutheran, 17.5% Reformed. Cf. Margit Balogh, Jenő Gergely: *Egyházak az újkori Magyarországon* [Churches in Modern Age Hungary]. Budapest 1992, 149–153.

⁹ Cf. Elemér Mályusz: *A türelmi rendelet. II. József és a magyarországi protestantizmus* [Patent of Toleration. Joseph II and Protestantism in Hungary]. Budapest 1939.

they could undertake in education and culture, and also restricted the spread of their faith. Protestants did not depend on any central government during the period of ‘golden freedom’, only the general laws of the country. They did not even complete and send the official reports on their institutions that were required by the authorities. Despite this one could not say that there was complete religious equality, even at this time of the Protestants’ ‘golden freedom’. There were certain laws that distinguished and favoured Catholics, such as those determining the religious affiliation of children born in mixed marriages and those that impeded conversion to any other religion. This is important because these laws, the severity of which were greatly exaggerated, contributed to Protestants’ distrust of the central government.¹⁰

The general rights that Protestants were finally granted did not help them to the extent that the Lutheran and Reformed churches united. This is something which had been considered time and again in the period between 1781 and 1850, as some leaders contemplated joining forces to create a shared platform, but the idea was never realized. These attempts could even lead to further fragmentation, such as in the 1840s when plans for a Lutheran-Reformed union fell through. This led to stark differences developing between Reformed superintendents, even over the most basic of issues. Consequently, we cannot really speak about a single Reformed Church in Hungary as such. Rather there were four Reformed superintendencies, which very rarely coordinated their actions against the monarch, a situation which did not really change during the Reform Period.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that the main thrust of the public education strategies for the three leading churches in Hungary differed considerably in the decades of the Late Enlightenment. The next three sections provide an overview of these differing strategies, followed by an exploration of how, and for what reasons, these three parallel but contrasting efforts could nevertheless come together in the Reform Period; and serve as direct antecedents to the Public Education Act of 1868.

Adjusting to Habsburg modernization – the Catholic strategy

The most homogeneous strategy for organizing public education and teacher training was designed by Roman Catholics. Catholic schools adjusted to the reforms initiated by Maria Theresa, conforming to the regulations of *Ratio Educationis* of 1777 and of 1806. In the spirit of Felbiger, the two acts regulated primary schools according to

¹⁰ Cf. János Ugrai: Zusammenleben und Konflikte der Konfessionen vor dem Toleranzpatent. Das nordostungarische Beispiel. In: András Forgó, Krisztina Kulcsár (Ed.): “Die Habsburgische Variante des aufgeklärten Absolutismus”. Beiträge zur Mitregenschaft Josephs II., 1765 – 1780. Wien 2018 (Publikationen der Ungarischen Geschichtsforschung in Wien 16), 295 – 310.

classes, grades and types; which also included the standardization of the content and tools of education. The Catholic Church started to build the required system of school inspectorates and was also instrumental in state inspectorate supervision. Normal schools were established and operated continuously for the next nearly fifty years, albeit with low efficiency and a poor quality of pedagogy.¹¹ They did go against some of Joseph II's regulations, though, as the schools they operated jointly with Protestants were thought to impair their own interests and traditions. This led to a form of confessional isolation which Catholics engendered through these exceptions.

Catholics soon broke away from the normal method that seemed impossible to reform, and established their own teacher training institutions.¹² Archbishop László Pyrker created a German- and Slovakian-language teacher training seminar in Szepeskáptalan (today Spíšská kapitula in Slovakia) in 1818, then founded the first Hungarian-language teacher training institute in Eger in 1828. The two-year scheme included a practical training period at a primary school.¹³ The study programme was thus much longer and more complex than that of contemporary normal schools, focusing more on the balance of theory and practice.¹⁴

The decision by the Catholic Church to deliver teacher training through the medium of Hungarian was a significant one, since Latin was prioritized in secondary and higher education up until the end of the Reform era, and teaching in Hungarian was only agreed implicitly in primary schools. Introducing teacher training in Slovakian, and then in Hungarian, indicated an institutionalized acceptance of that transition; and from this point onwards the number of textbooks, articles on pedagogy, and publications in Hungarian or Slovakian grew considerably. The teacher training institute in Eger was soon followed by new state-supported schools, but many of them disappeared rather quickly. The Council of the Governor-General passed a uni-

11 1777: Buda (Ofen), Zágráb (Zagreb), 1778: Pécs (Fünfkirchen), Kassa (Košice, Kaschau), Besztercebánya (Banská Bystrica, Neusohl), Győr (Raab), 1779: Nagykároly (Carei, Groß-Karol), 1783: Ungvár (Uzhhorod, Ungwar).

12 The establishment of teacher training institutes and the development of a network of such institutions were most recently discussed in Judit Neszt's PhD dissertation, which, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been published. For the period in question, compare with Judit Neszt: *A középfokú elemi iskolai tanítóképzők intézményrendszerének kiépülése és változásai 1828-tól 1945-ig* [The Development and Transformation of the Institutional System of Secondary Teacher Training for Elementary Schools]. PhD manuscript. Debrecen 2014. URL: https://dea.lib.unideb.hu/dea/bitstream/handle/2437/213836/Neszt_Judit_Ertekezes.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, 28–41 (20.02.2020).

13 Cf. Emil Benkóczy: *Pyrker első magyar tanítóképzője. Az Egri Érseki R. K. Tanítóképző centenáriumára* [Pyrker's First Hungarian Teacher Training Institute. For the Centenary of the Archbishop Roman Catholic Teacher Training Institute in Eger]. Eger 1928, 21–23.

14 Cf. János Szakál: *A magyar tanítóképzés története* [A History of Teacher Training in Hungary]. Budapest 1934, 34–36.

form compulsory curriculum in 1845 for the two-year teacher training schools that took the place of normal schools.¹⁵

It is difficult to assess what impact Catholic Enlightenment had on local (or rural) society in Hungary. This is because the period encompassing the turn of 19th century, and the years following are blind spots in scholarship of the history of both the Catholic and the Protestant churches. Few scholars have researched the educational and world views of the lower clergy during this time. Historians of the Catholic Church, for example, consider the turn of the 19th century to be a period of decline in terms of the history of homiletics. Historians consider there to be no exceptionally talented preachers in this era when compared to previous ones, and sermons moved away from a theological focus towards a mission to popularize science. This, of course, is a direct consequence of the Enlightenment; but by no means a new, stable, paradigm that would proportionally reconsider the tenets of the Enlightenment. It may be interpreted as a sudden stop, an unsteadiness, a reaction of defiance against secularization.¹⁶

From this we can see that Catholic priests were not entirely unfamiliar with the teachings of the Enlightenment. The tenet of religious tolerance must have resonated with a thin stratum of the lower clergy and monks who advocated the peaceful cohabitation of people with different religious affiliations. However, sermons which interpreted the concepts of the Enlightenment as a concerted attack on religiousness were surely much more prevalent. Furthermore, as people could generally not get hold of any books or journals propagating the ideas of the Enlightenment, they predominantly learnt about them from sermons which amplified the antitheses of the Enlightenment.¹⁷

There is little research data available on how Catholic priests and teachers participated in the discourse on public education in the Late Enlightenment period. Katalin Fehér, an expert on the subject, has been able to summarize sermons by mainly Protestant ministers, with only a few Catholic texts, revealing that some priests took firm action for the sake of widespread public education.¹⁸

15 Royal Catholic teacher training institutes were opened in Pécs, Esztergom (Gran), Zágráb, Rozsnyó (Rožňava, Rosenau), Brassó (Braşov, Kronstadt) and Csíksomlyó (Şumuleu, Schomlenberg) in the 1830s, as well as in Miskolc (Mischkolz), Érsekújvár (Nové Zámky, Neuhäus), Nagykanizsa (Großkirchen), Pest, Szeged (Szegedin) and Győr in the 1840s. Cf. Benkóczy, Pyrker (cf. n. 13), 42–43; Szakál, *A magyar* (cf. n. 14), 38–42.

16 Cf. Zoltán Lukácsi: Sombori József egyházi beszédei. A katolikus prédikáció útkeresése a felvilágosodás korában [József Sombori's Sermons. Catholic Preachment Seeking its Path in the Age of Enlightenment]. In: *Egyháztörténeti Szemle* 9/1 (2008), 3–24.

17 Cf. Lukácsi, Sombori (cf. n. 16), 20–21.

18 Cf. Katalin Fehér: A felvilágosodás pedagógiai eszméi korabeli egyházi beszédekben [Pedagogical Concepts of the Enlightenment in Contemporary Sermons]. In: *Magyar Pedagógia* 98/2 (1998), 85–86; Eadem: Népfelvilágosító törekvések Magyarországon 1777–1849 [Efforts for the Enlightenment of People in Hungary 1777–1849]. Budapest 2009, 52–53.

Catholic discourse on public education was stimulated by the journal *Religio és Nevelés* [*Religion and Education*], first published in 1841: initially once – then later twice – a week. In addition to religio-political issues, the journal also focussed on pedagogical questions. Contemporary reports and reviews welcomed the launch of the new journal, as they believed that Catholics had ‘largely neglected’ the education of the people, an omission that needed to be remedied. Authors publishing in the journal were mainly drawn from teachers at teacher training institutes and secondary schools (such as István Majer, Fidél Beély, Adolf Szabóky and István Rendek). Here they wrote numerous articles criticizing the practice of contemporary schools and the scant preliminary knowledge of students; as well as teachers’ lack of education, the conditions of the school buildings and the lack of equipment.

One of the key authors in *Religio és Nevelés*, Fidél Beély, had published several important papers before. His 1837 study *Public Education* discussed the backwardness of public schools; a problem he identified as the joint responsibility of the landowners, the counties, the local parsons and the teachers. The latter, he claimed, were not educated or sophisticated enough, the parsons were not dedicated enough, while the landowners and the counties had no interest in the education of the common people. Beély’s vision of an ideal people’s school was not much different from schools back in the 1770s. Here the village children’s main subject was religion; they also studied reading, writing, arithmetic, geometry, art, music and agriculture. The ideal and primary educational goal was to educate useful obedient citizens.

One further development of note within Catholic pedagogical culture in Hungary in the Late Enlightenment, more specifically between 1814 and 1825, was the introduction of the theories of Kant, Rousseau and Pestalozzi to theological and art students studying to become teachers by the first Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Budapest, János Krobot. His successors then lectured on Milde’s pedagogy, which was common practice at universities in the Habsburg era.¹⁹

Diversity in union – the Lutheran strategy

Lutherans chose a different path to Catholics when their autonomy was granted in 1781, and consolidated in 1791. They had two considerable advantages: their communities were concentrated in towns and they had close links to German culture. Neither Protestants nor Catholics isolated themselves on a linguistic-ethnic basis since both denominations had notable German, Hungarian and Slovakian communities among its members. Yet Lutherans were predominantly German, and even those who did not belong to this ethnic group could speak German well. Most Lutherans were weal-

¹⁹ Cf. András Németh: A pedagógia egyetemi tudomány jellegének kialakulása és intézményesülése a pesti egyetemen [The Development and Institutionalization of Pedagogy as an Academic Discipline at the University of Pest]. In: *Magyar Pedagógia* 101/2 (2001), 218–219.

thy citizens, leading the lifestyle of a ‘burgher’ in old towns. This concentration of the Lutheran population made it relatively easy for Lutherans to avoid the problem of the inadequate education of teachers that paralysed Catholic and Reformed schooling. In the north of Hungary, such as in the towns of Szepes County (Spiš, Zips), Lutherans only had a few primary schools to manage, but they were relatively large. As a result, they only needed a few headteachers (*rector*) and teachers (*praeceptor*), which enabled them to select the most qualified ones. The income from tuition fees provided teachers with a good salary, and so they valued their jobs. This meant that the teaching profession could become a separate career from other occupations (e. g. additionally working as a cantor or a clerk) in the Lutheran community, and offered a stable social status. This also meant that Lutheran primary schools could soon be taken to a higher level and there were hardly any schools where Latin was not taught. ‘Proper’ primary schools were girls’ schools and the schools of very small village congregations.

Starting off from this advantageous position, primary schools started to develop independently relatively early on, at the turn of the 19th century, owing to the so-called Schedius curriculum (1806). This separated town secondary modern schools (*Realschulen*), secondary technical schools (*Bürgerschulen*) and elementary schools (*Volksschulen*). Latin was omitted from the curriculum of the *Volksschulen* while subjects of practical knowledge (natural history, geography and national law) were retained. The Schedius curriculum made the impact of the second *Ratio Educationis* felt since it showed fragments of compliance with the monarch’s decree and the Catholic sector. Nonetheless, certain schools only followed the curriculum voluntarily. Real standardization was only achieved with the Zayugróc (Uhrovec) curriculum (1842), which also drew on Schedius’s concept and developed it further. The Zayugróc curriculum included collective compulsory passages for all Lutheran schools. It made four-grade curricula common in village schools, with the widespread use of two additional grades for secondary technical schools in towns. As a result, a standardized set of content rules were finally created, though parishes still had autonomy in terms of the financing of schools and the selection of teachers.

The quality of Lutheran primary schools was much higher than that of Catholic ones, as the former were more strongly influenced by Western pedagogical concepts and information. Learning about new cultural achievements or ideas was made easier because German was the mother tongue of Lutherans in Upper Hungary, and by their traditionally close relationship with German universities. They also maintained close contact with the German Philanthropist school of thought, and reflected on their activities and views early on in the reform process. By publishing and translating books, in addition to their compilations of philanthropist ideas and news articles on philanthropist schools, Lutherans contributed to the development of pedagogical discourse in newer fields of public education and teacher training.²⁰ Mátyás

20 Cf. András Németh: Die Philanthropismus- und Rochowrezeption in Ungarn. In: Hanno Schmitt,

Korabinszky from Pozsony (Bratislava, Pressburg) regularly published on writings by Rochow and Resewitz, as well as Basedow's school in *Pressburger Zeitung*.²¹ Johann Genersich, a teacher from Késmárk (Kežmarok, Käsmark), produced the first synthesis of pedagogy in Hungary, in the spirit of philanthropy.²² The pedagogical views of another Lutheran teacher, Dávid Perlaki from Komárom (Komorn), was greatly influenced by Locke, Rousseau and Georg Rosenmüller from Leipzig.²³

Although Lutherans were attributed with introducing philanthropical ideas in Hungary, its impact was not primarily felt in elementary education. Indeed, this was not the area of public education where Lutherans thought to have achieved most of their successes,²⁴ with one important exception. As a result of 18th-century Habsburg attempts to increase the population, significant enclaves of Hungarian- and Slovakian-speaking Lutherans developed in South-Eastern and North-Eastern Hungary, alongside the existing communities of German and (to a lesser degree) Hungarian Lutherans in Upper Hungary. The town of Szarvas (Hirschfeld) in the South-Eastern region served as the location for a famous school experiment carried out by Sámuel Tessedik. Tessedik had studied in Bratislava and visited the universities of Erlangen, Leipzig, Halle and Berlin before he moved to Szarvas as a minister. Upon arriving, he discovered a huge cultural gap between his past and current experiences. He was shocked by the poverty of the people and their lack of education, and launched a comprehensive educational-cultural programme to counter this. The People's School of Economics in

Rebekka Horlacher, Daniel Tröhler (Ed.): *Pädagogische Volksaufklärung im 18. Jahrhundert im europäischen Kontext: Rochow und Pestalozzi im Vergleich*. Bern 2007, 198–217.

21 Cf. Eva Kowalská: Pozsony – a tanügyi innováció helyszíne a 18–19. század fordulóján [Bratislava, the Location of Innovation in Public Education at the Turn of the 18th–19th Century]. In: *Iskolakultúra* 12/9 (2012), 80–90.

22 Cf. János Ugrai: Im Zeichen des Philantropismus. Die pädagogische Konzeption von Johann Genersich. In: István Fazekas, Karl Schwarz, Csaba Szabó (Ed.): *Die Zips – Eine kulturgeschichtliche Region im 19. Jahrhundert. Leben und Werk von Johann Genersich (1761–1823)*. Wien 2012, 55–78. Genersich provides reference to Trapp's works on several occasions: Johann Genersich: *Beyträge zur Schulpädagogik*. Wien 1792, 78–80, 91, 134–144, 198–212. Other references also highlight his close relationship with the German Enlightenment, for instance his use of ideas from and quotes by Gedike, Klopstock, Lessing and Schläözer. See *ibid.*, 150–152, 171–176, 232. It is also known that during his travels he visited Schnepfenthal. See *ibid.*, 41–43, 51–53, 81–84, 113–115. Cf. Edmund von Szelényi: *Johannes Genersich (1761–1823). Das Lebensbild eines ev. Pädagogen und Theologen der Toleranzzeit*. Manuskript. Wien 1916, 13–18; Irén Virág: A filantropizmus jelenléte a magyarországi nőnevelő intézetekben [The Presence of Philanthropism in Girls' Boarding Schools in Hungary]. In: Bárdos Jenő, Kis-Tóth Lajos, Racsko Réka (Ed.): *Új kutatások a neveléstudományokban 2013. Változó életformák, régi és új tanulási környezetek* [New Research in Pedagogy 2013. Changing Lifestyles, Old and New Learning Environments]. Budapest 2014, 299–310.

23 Cf. Dávid Perlaki: *A gyermekek jó neveléséről való rövid oktatás* [A Brief Lecture on the Good Education of Children]. Komárom 1791.

24 Cf. Ödön Szelényi: *A magyar ev. iskolák története a reformációtól napjainkig. Különös tekintettel a középiskolákra* (A reformáció négy százados jubileumára) [A History of Evangelical-Lutheran Schools in Hungary from the Age of Reformation to the Present Day. With a Special Focus on Secondary Schools (Commemorating the 400th Anniversary of Reformation)]. Pozsony 1917, 79–111.

Szarvas, for instance, integrated elementary education for children, the education of adult villagers, teaching practical knowledge on agriculture and – to ensure the future of this complex pedagogical-educational activity – teacher training. It is well-known that the German-speaking pedagogue Tessedik, who discussed his pedagogical ideas and practice in several works, knew of the philanthropists and of the concepts behind German industrial schools (*Industrieschulen*). His experiment in Szarvas was somewhat different from those of the philanthropists. In many ways his economic approach was similar to that of Ferdinand Kindermann of Bohemia. One significant difference between the two, however, was that while Kindermann influenced Habsburg educational policies, and could thus test his ideas directly on the educational system, Tessedik was left alone with his program. Consequently, the People's School of Economics in Szarvas eventually stopped operating.²⁵

One year after the Catholic *Religio és Nevelés* [*Religion and Education*] was launched, Protestants also started to publish a similar-themed journal. In the 1840s *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap* [*Journal of the Protestant Church and Education*] became the primary forum for members of the Lutheran and Reformed churches to debate their views on education and, more importantly, that they were able to do this collectively. The journal has not yet been properly researched by scholars of the history of education. However, although the two churches produced and read the journal jointly there were effectively two distinct denominational strands within it. This was the limit of their cooperation either within the journal or elsewhere. Furthermore, almost all the pedagogical articles within the journal suggested a strong sense of dissatisfaction with current conditions, and how they lagged behind other denominations.

Lutherans, who had been joining forces since the early 19th century, predominantly perceived this sense of lag in the field of teacher training. This meant that, by the end of the Reform Period, they had developed a uniform curriculum and also set in train the foundation of an institute that would basically follow the model of Catholic teacher training centres. This new type of teacher training institute was founded in Nyíregyháza (Birkenkirchen) in North-Eastern Hungary, with a focus on linguistic and ethical issues. The aim was to have an indirect and gradually developing impact on their traditional school centres in Upper Hungary. The work started

²⁵ Cf. Samuel Tessedik: Der Landmann in Ungarn, was er ist und was er sein könnte; nebst einem Plane von einem regulirten Dorfe. Pest 1784; Idem: Ökonomisch-physikalisch-statistische Bemerkungen über den gegenwärtigen Zustand des Landwesens in Ungarn, besonders in der Gegend an der Theiss, zur Aufklärung und Beruhigung der so nützlichen Klasse von Menschen auf dem Lande, nebst gemeinnützigen Vorschlägen zur Landwirthschaft, von einem Menschenfreunde. Pressburg 1787; Lajos Tóth: Tessedik Sámuel pedagógiai reformtevékenysége [Sámuel Tessedik's Reform]. Budapest 1980; János Ugrai: A cseh Tessedik, avagy a cseh és a magyar elmaradottság különbségei [The Czech Tessedik: Differences in Czech and Hungarian Underdevelopment]. In: Tamás Kozma, István Perjés (Ed.): Új kutatások a neveléstudományokban 2008 [New Research in Pedagogy 2008]. Budapest 2009, 234–241.

in Nyíregyháza in 1847 but was halted by the outbreak of the revolution, and education was suspended for ten years.

Wide-ranging diversity – the Reformed strategy

The Reformed found it difficult to harmonize their individual ideas and practices. While their two main school centres, in Debrecen (Debrezin) and Sárospatak (Patak am Bodrog), were geographically close to each other; they offered markedly different approaches in terms of their mentality. Almost every aspect of their operation (geographical environment, conditions of the county seat, economic basis, traditions, etc.) propelled the two colleges to develop in divergent directions. The other Reformed institutes (such as the ones in Pápa [Poppa], Kecskemét [Ketschkemet], Nagykőrös and Pest) could at best reach the level of secondary school centres, but their daily impact on primary schools was much more intense. For instance, in the absence of uniform curricular regulations, they could make decisions on crucial issues concerning the primary schools closest to them.

The only common feature of Reformed village schools was that they had all held onto the traditional methods of organization for a long time. This meant that the students graduating from the teacher training colleges were the heads of the primary schools for two or three years, after which they went on a study trip abroad or applied for a job as a minister. The positions of headteachers (*rector*) and teachers (*praeceptor*) were therefore considered to be transitory stages in the careers of young men consciously preparing to become ministers. At the turn of the 19th century the Reformed tried to change this pattern by having permanent teachers in more and more schools. However, while these attempts sought to professionalize the role of teachers they only led to those least fit for the job being selected. What happened was that teachers got stuck in small schools, which attracted the lowest salary, for five to ten years, then found a new job in similarly weak congregations. These teachers were well known for their lack of education. Moreover, the legacy of the traditional structure was also palpable in the way that permanent teachers were entirely dependent on their pastors.

The colleges in Debrecen and Sárospatak tried to prepare their students for the years to be spent teaching through a series of measures that can be seen as the beginning of a more structured process to establish teacher training. At the college of Sárospatak, the school teacher Mihály Tóthpápay wrote a simple handbook in 1797, the first pedagogical textbook in Hungarian. The Reformed in Hungary were almost exclusively Hungarians. The language used in primary schools was Hungarian, while secondary and higher education in Debrecen was taught through the medium of Latin until the 1840s. In Sárospatak, on the other hand, teaching in Hungarian was introduced at the Grammar School in 1796, and at the Academy in 1818. The book was largely written in the spirit of Felbiger, but was somewhat more liberal in its approach. Tóthpápay also delivered the first pedagogical course at Sárospatak, but it

was cancelled after a few years. Pedagogy was only taught regularly from the 1830s, based on a textbook by Gábor Szeremley, a professor at Sárospatak. This was a work of early 19th-century standard depicting certain philanthropist and Pestalozzian ideas.²⁶

At Debrecen, the largest Reformed college in Hungary, pedagogical studies were introduced by Ferenc Kerekes, a classic polymath also working in the fields of Mathematics, Chemistry and Agriculture. During his travels in Germany in 1817, Kerekes sent home several letters and partial concepts, thus joining in the work of the public education *deputatio* (deputation) set up by the Church District. These letters, as well as his later writings, clearly demonstrated that he knew the theories of Rousseau and Pestalozzi, and particularly favoured the latter. Kerekes was not so concerned with elementary education, but nevertheless thought it important to establish free Hungarian-speaking schools in as many locations as possible. His plans put more emphasis on the institutionalization of teacher training and the need to set up a pedagogical department at the college in Debrecen. His draft of 1837 proposed that seminars be held in several semesters, with separate training for elementary and secondary school teachers. The Department of Pedagogy at Debrecen started operating in 1825 under its first professor, József Zákány. He was an advocate of philanthropy, but left few theoretical writings behind.²⁷

The *deputatio* set up to determine the system of public education at primary schools by the Transdanubian (*Dunántúl*) District of the Reformed Church in Hungary, in 1815, was excitingly original, with no background in theoretical literature. The final document, entitled *Norma Docendi*, broadly reflects the concepts of public education found in the two *Ratio Educationis*. This means that the Reformed Church in Western Hungary adhered to the regulations of the Catholic sector at the elementary level, and to the Lutherans' Schedius curriculum at a relatively early stage. On the other hand, they did not have enough power to implement the rules. As a result village primary schools had the option to decide the extent to which they would follow curricular regulations.²⁸

In another characteristic development, this time in the Tiszáninnen District, two intensive discourses on the reform of public education took place with the direct and active participation of deans. In the 1810s three out of seven deans working in parallel dealt extensively with pedagogical issues: one wrote a coursebook, another summarized the tasks of primary school teachers, while a third dean produced a

26 Cf. Dénes Dienes, János Ugrai: History of the Reformed Church College in Sárospatak. Sárospatak 2013, 103–117; Dávid Csorba: The Educational Model of the Calvinist Colleges. In: Hungarian Educational Research Journal 7 (2017), 114–127.

27 Cf. Gábor Varga: Tanítóképzés a debreceni kollégiumban (1825–1848) [The Training of Primary-School Teachers in the College of Debrecen (1825–1848)]. In: Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve 15 (1988), 5–15.

28 Cf. Dunántúli Református Egyházkerület Levéltára [Archive of the Dunántúl District of the Reformed Church], Pápa. I. 1a. 1–49: Norma Docendi. Pápa 1815.

compilation after researching foreign ideas. The most valuable contribution from these interventions were two schemes concerning the education of village children. These were developed by Ábrahám Komjáthy, Dean of Upper Borsodcounty, who was educated in Utrecht. These writings reveal that Komjáthy had the most comprehensive knowledge among the deans. His pedagogical concepts are rational, practical and tolerant; but at the same time distinctively learning-centred, with little regard for children's interests. Komjáthy's ideas are characterized by utilitarian pedagogy and a certain professional paternalism, thus displaying more similarities with Felbigger's views than those of the philanthropists.²⁹

While in the 1810s church leaders focussed predominantly on tangible issues of content, in the 1830s and 1840s they tried to reform the whole of public education in primary schools. At this time both village teachers and the condition of schools were frequently criticized, most systematically by the Dean of Abaúj (Abov, Abau), István Garas, and his successor, Sámuel Futó. They introduced regular school visits and built a multi-level system of school inspectorates within their remits. As a result, Abaúj became the first diocese in the District to have a properly organised system of public education.³⁰

The active involvement in public education by the deans of the Tiszáninnen District may be explained by a rather odd power struggle within this part of the Reformed Church. Bishops only became part of the District's hierarchy in the 1730s, and the real influence of superintendents was only established by the first quarter of the 19th century. As deans were gradually pushed into the background they found that the management of primary schools was a task that could help reposition their office. They took the task particularly seriously because they felt that this was the way they could restore their permanent daily influence over the congregations in their parishes. Consequently, public education at primary schools became the main field of a complex internal rivalry for power. Furthermore, the reform of primary school education became a top priority in the 1840s for both the Catholic and Protestant press.

The Reformed Church did not miss out on the spirit of reform generated by *Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap [Journal of the Protestant Church and Education]*, and their plans concerning the institutionalization of teacher training at the end of the Reform Period (*Vormärz*) can clearly be demonstrated. The resolution of these plans, however, fell considerably short of those of the Catholic and of Lutheran churches. This was because the two principal intellectual centres, the colleges in Debrecen and Sárospatak, had opposing interests. As a result the growing independ-

29 Cf. Tiszáninnen Református Egyházkerület Kézirattára [Manuscripts of the Tiszáninnen District of the Reformed Church], Sárospatak. Kt. 824/3: Ábrahám Komjáthy: A falusi gyermek logicája. Kézirat. [The *Logica* of Village Children. Manuscript]; idem. Kt. 824: Ábrahám Komjáthy: A gyermek neveléséről és tanításáról. [On the Education and Teaching of Children].

30 Cf. Tiszáninnen Református Egyházkerület Levéltára [Archive of the Tiszáninnen District of the Reformed Church], Sárospatak. B. LXXVI. 35.993.

ence of village and small-town primary schools led by educated teachers would have upset the top-down, college-centred, school structure that had been developing since the Reform Period. This meant that the Reformed Church could not get very far with its plans for teacher training. This despite the fact that open-minded Reformed intellectuals – who were not dependent on certain colleges – could already clearly see the deficiencies and shortcomings of the traditional organizational system of primary schools, and regularly gave voice to their objection in national forums.

The results and consequences of the Late Enlightenment

The modernization of education during the period of Habsburg enlightened absolutism only had a fragmentary effect in Hungary; even though, at least theoretically, everyone agreed on the need for urgent and comprehensive measures. The principal aims of Felbiger's successful Imperial public education reforms, *Ratio Educationis* of 1777, were broadly followed. However, they were not successful in Hungary over a number of decades. This was because the different churches had different, rather entangled and rarely intersecting, paths of development. The denominational diversity of the Kingdom of Hungary, and the relatively significant social importance of Protestant churches, intensified the issue of the autonomy of the churches as granted by emperor Joseph II's Patent of Toleration, and fully legitimized by Article 26 of the 1791 Act of Religion.

As discussed above, the three dominant denominations implemented diverse public education strategies. The poor condition of primary schools, the lack of education of teachers, the ignorance of the people and, in particular, an urgent need for change were recurring, if not permanent, sources of debate in the Roman Catholic, Evangelical-Lutheran and Reformed churches. By the 1840s all three denominations got to the point where previous, relatively frequent, publications (such as sermons, plans, polemical essays and coursebooks) were complemented by publications in periodicals discussing public education in their own forums. It would be no exaggeration to state that, for all three denominations, the reform and restructuring of public education was one of the central discourses of contemporary church life. This was closely connected to the work of others who were at least partially independent from the churches: such as opposition politicians at reform national assemblies, members of the Academy of Sciences, Reform Period authors and the editors of newspapers and periodicals in Pest.

The difference between the Catholic and the Protestant Churches in terms of their attitude to the teachings of the Enlightenment is, however, clear to see. Protestants were particularly interested in the ideas of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and the philanthropists; as well as in diverse concepts of industrial schools in Germany. They tried to adapt these teachings to the Hungarian context in a number of ways; such as pub-

lishing compilations, translating original works to Hungarian, school visits (and subsequent articles), and school experiments.

In the first half of the 19th century both Protestant denominations also put a special emphasis on peripatetic scholars gaining experience in pedagogical issues and through this the results of pedagogical Enlightenment in Western Europe spread continuously into Hungary. Lutherans' linguistic and cultural integration involved a closer relationship with German pedagogical culture. In contrast, the Reformed went to study in Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany, they visited several academies and universities; but these contacts were contingent, rare and fragmented. Thus, the reception of pedagogical ideas also remained inadvertent or arbitrary.

The Roman Catholic attitude to the Enlightenment was considerably more reserved and cautious so, for the most part, decidedly negative. Although professors of pedagogy at the university of Pest, as well as some other authors of pedagogical works, did know of and consider the tenets of Enlightenment; a much greater cultural difference may be detected between the intellectual elite engaged in pedagogy and the lower clergy on the Catholic side. This meant that the teachings of the Enlightenment could hardly percolate into daily life.

There is, however, a strange contradiction here. It seems that Catholic schools which were generally a step behind Protestants in the field of public education at primary schools, could in fact catch up with them and, in certain respects, even surpass them. In accordance with state efforts, by the mid-Reform Period they had established a uniform schools system with a number of the same institutions using the same textbooks and the same curriculum, something which could be expected to improve the quality of public education in the long term. Lutherans got to the same point by the eve of the Revolution of 1848, although the harmonization of the curriculum had been on their agenda since the second *Ratio Educationis*. In contrast, while the Reformed Church recognized the difficulties arising from the teachers' lack of proper education, and introduced pedagogical seminars as a solution; their dioceses and intellectual centres did not try to harmonize their practice either with the (somewhat Catholic) state reforms or among themselves.

The illusion of full autonomy was instantly shattered by neoabsolutism after 1849. The Habsburg government used drastic measures to put an end to the divergence of the estates, especially those of Protestants. Rigorous reporting obligations for the Protestant churches, the prohibition of electing bishops, the quick and authoritarian integration of Protestant schools into the national system (as a result of the *Organisationsentwurf* of 1850 and its supplementary regulations) and, eventually, the Protestant Patent of 1859; forced Protestants – in just a few years – to recognise that their separatist policies were in deadlock.

The 'patent battle' ended with the seemingly quick victory for the Protestants, the dictates of neoabsolutism being annulled by 1860. Still, the bitter experience of the previous years accelerated processes which saw the reconciliation of interests within some churches; and between the Evangelical-Lutheran and Reformed Church, which made the strategy of Protestants' 'golden freedom' untimely. From 1859 on-

wards, a different approach became dominant among leaders of the Protestant Church. A new serious threat ended the broad and diverse practices which had characterized church and educational issues, and gave way to coordination, alliance and – last but not least – a carefully considered alignment with the state’s principles. For various reasons this new approach was first outlined, rather clearly, in the area of primary schools and the organization of teacher training.³¹

Given that we were unaware of what happened before the decades of the Late Enlightenment, subsequent developments seem to have happened miraculously fast. In 1857–58 the Reformed Church opened its first teacher training college in Sárospatak, and Lutheran Church established theirs in Nyíregyháza and Szarvas. More importantly, after a few months’ preparation in 1858, Reformed dioceses passed their collective and central curriculum for the people’s schools. The curriculum, compiled by Pál Gönczy – the founder of the Reformed Grammar School in Budapest in 1859 – is considered to be the direct model for the Public Education Act of 1868 and the People’s School Curriculum of 1869.³² The task of elaborating and disseminating the collective curriculum was coordinated by the Danube (*Dunamellék*) District of the Reformed Church, which did not have a college dating back several hundred years. The educational capacities of the Reformed in Pest had been rather insignificant, their Academy of Theology was only opened in 1855 – under Leo von Thun Hohenstein’s (the Minister of Education and Religion between 1849–1860) regulations of modernization. It is of symbolic significance that it was a newly opened teaching centre in the new capital of the country that marked the starting point for the first successful attempt of uniformity at a national level; rather than the century-old rivals of Debrecen and Sárospatak (and, to a lesser extent, Pápa in Transdanubia).

In summary, we can argue that every key element of the Public Education Act of 1868 in Hungary, passed one year after the birth of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, had been under development for decades. Different parts of the 1869 curriculum had been tried out in various ways and, in part, used for decades by the experts working in primary schools. Stages of this developmental process may clearly be identified between 1777 and 1848, during the Enlightenment, Late Enlightenment and Reform Period in Hungary. The fact that the synthetization of divergent concepts and the consolidation of a system of people’s schools only took place in 1868 may be explained by the separatist attitude of the denominations playing a leading role in education. As soon as Protestant autonomy was endangered after 1849 the church leaders, who

31 Cf. Tamás Lendvai: A magyarországi protestáns egyházak népiskolai ügyeinek fejlesztése (1857–1867) [The Development of Public Education Issues by Protestant Churches in Hungary (1857–1867)]. Doctoral dissertation, manuscript. Pécs 2018, URL: <https://pea.lib.pte.hu/bitstream/handle/pea/18021/lendvai-tamas-phd-2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (20.02.2020).

32 Cf. Kelemen Elemér: Tantervpolitika, tantervkészítés a 19–20. században [Curriculum Policies and Design in the 19th and 20th Century]. In: *Educatio* 3/3 (1994), 390f. Pál Gönczy (1817–1892) was one of the most significant figures in Reformed history of education in the period, who established a number of private schools.

had previously rejected cooperation at a national level, were now willing to harmonize their actions, which made the process of compromise with the state easier and quicker.