

Articles

Péter Tibor Nagy:

The increase in state influence on Hungarian education, 1867–1945

- Chapter 1: The effect of state influence on the participation in schooling and the increase in schooling
- Chapter 2: Expansion of state influence against churches
- Chapter 3: Expansion of state influence against new factors of education
- Chapter 4: A chronological overview
- Chapter 5: Concluding remarks

The first chapter presents a study conducted on the impact of an increase in state power on the development of schooling. By enacting the equality of citizens irrespective of religion and mother tongue, and of nobles and commoners, state legislation motivated studying even for those who were previously denied public office and white-collar jobs. Under the community and qualification law, the state had denied access to most offices by anyone without formal education. In more respects than one, the state integrated the classic grammar school with school types preferred by the new middle class but regarded as unequal by traditional forces: state science schools, state public schools, and trade schools. By so doing, it fundamentally changed the social ratio of categories like graduates of four-year secondary-schools and eight-year secondary-schools. Through its legislative power, the ministry founded state-owned schools, disposing of the limits, represented by the traditional school system and traditional geographic factors, from the way of the new middle-class.

Mandatory schooling was encouraged by the state throughout the country. It made available increased finances for underdeveloped, partly ethnic minority, regions. As a result, literacy figures in ethnic regions increased at a higher rate, even when compared with their own statistics, than in the more developed areas in the

north and west of the country. The enforcement of mandatory education caused a major conflict amongst groups such as Yiddish-speaking orthodox Jews, Romanians and Serbs, whose primary aim was integration with local communities, and who preferred socialization paths outside the school. Moreover, this policy was coupled, from the seventies onward, with the program of teaching Hungarian, and, in the nineties, with the program of establishing Hungarian-instruction state schools – by the 1900s, with the ever wider program of using Hungarian as a medium of instruction in schools previously serving ethnic minorities and religious groups. Steep central funds were to be made available for literacy rates to be raised higher (a precondition for the integration of additional social groups), and such a concentration of resources would not have been possible without the ideological persuasion of the ruling elite of the era – without the vision of a nation of thirty million Hungarians. This vision of thirty million Hungarians appears to be one not only in retrospect. Contemporary evidence, too, supports that it was one. Funds raised in this way made it possible to widen the general scope of education more effectively than would have been possible by relying solely on the program of Hungarianization.

The second chapter discusses the unique Hungarian relationship between the state and the church. Initially, the expansion of state power against churches took place by the preferential treatment of players (such as the courts, professions, and local communities) that were potential allies of the government, rather than by the expansion of the power of educational administration. The expansion of state power against churches did not lessen the plurality of the educational field – quite the opposite: it amplified it. According to several experts, an expansion of state power against churches inevitably leads to the plurality of the system. This assertion is challenged in the chapter. What is more, it aims to provide evidence that state expan-

sion results in power concentration only if the state does so simply by increasing educational administration power, rather than by relying on the participation of additional forces.

Churches, after 1919, compensated for their spontaneous loss of influence (triggered by the secularization of the twentieth century) through an alliance, cemented between the two world wars, with the state, and with further cooperation. Throughout the nineteen-twenties, until the operational mechanisms of the state took shape, this situation may have appeared as absolutely favorable for the churches. However, as soon as the state, from the 1930s onwards, launched its own far-reaching social ideological campaigns, by establishing a new type of government party and a new press policy, the only two choices left for the churches were the following: either protect their differential relationship and the opportunity of opposition against the new ideological mechanism (which would entail a loss of the ideological privileges enjoyed in the twenties) or pay the price of those privileges to the state. They chose the latter option.

The third chapter explores the multifaceted nature of the Hungarian education

policy terrain. The language of Anglo-Saxon education policy research is suitable for the description of the relevant phenomena.

Discussion

Gábor Halász

Opponent's evaluation of Péter Tibor Nagy's dissertation

Elemér Kelemen

Opponent's evaluation

József Kardos

Opponent's evaluation

Péter Tibor Nagy

Response to the opponents' evaluations

Appendix

József Nagy

The breakdown of traditional pedagogical culture