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## **STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN TRAINING PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN HUNGARY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

### **Abstract:**

Besides recognizing the facts mentioned in former publications (according to which training time was reduced to four years from 1949 and there was a withdrawal in training teachers of primary schools instead of developing it), it is necessary to point out that training teachers of primary schools could also show results between 1945 and 1959.

It is the subject of the thesis to explore the changes in the structure of the training of primary school teachers in Hungary in the last 15 years of the training at secondary level. Among the objectives it was formulated where the training of primary school teachers was situated in the system of teachers' training and what intentions presented themselves in connection with the modernization of the training.

The changes occurring in the system of education entailed the change of training primary school teachers. The formation of training primary school teachers was in connection with extending public education. When re-organizing schools at secondary level, the training cycle of training primary school teachers was reduced.

In 1944/45 the dual structure of five years created in 1941 survived, in this system the students of the third year of a lycée could go on for higher education at the 4th then the 5th year of a training institute of primary school teachers.

In November 1947, two pedagogical colleges began to function in Budapest and Szeged where class teachers were trained for primary schools and so were trained specialized teachers for teaching certain groups of subjects at the senior section of primary school. Training time comprised 6 semesters at the college. In 1948 ecclesiastical schools were nationalized then the Minister stopped the training of primary school teachers at secondary level. Pedagogical colleges functioned on the grounds of their original objectives until 1949 then the training of primary school teachers was made a task of colleges.

In 1949 a system of general and specialized secondary grammar schools was built up. Pedagogical secondary grammar school became a formation that lasted four years adapting itself to the system of secondary schools. Pedagogical secondary grammar school prepared for studies at higher level, on the other hand, it offered a specialized qualification of primary school and kindergarten teacher. In 1950 a decree with legal force created institutes of training primary school teachers.

### **Keywords:**

History of education, training primary school teachers, Hungary, teacher training college, pedagogical secondary grammar school

**JEL Classification:** I29

## Introduction

The study presents the history of the intermediate teachers' training schools working in Hungary in the middle of the 20th century. The aim of the short paper is to write about the fast and perplexing changes in the structure of the Hungarian teachers' training which took place only in 15 years.

' The aftermath of the consecutive alterations was that our teacher training system relapsed onto the 4-year intermediate level that developed in our country as early as 1881. This fact also proves that despite all kind of any 'good intentions', you cannot always refer to improvement, sometimes the fact of stagnation or regression must be stated also.' (Dráviczki, 2002: 29)

Besides recognizing the facts mentioned in former publications (according to which training time was reduced to four years from 1949 and there was a withdrawal in training teachers of primary schools instead of developing it), it is necessary to point out that training teachers of primary schools could also show results between 1945 and 1959. The teachers and students of the training institutes were able to keep the values that have been forming and becoming richer for centuries and they were capable of bequeathing them for the next generation.

Training primary school teachers was at secondary level in the overwhelming majority of the countries after the Second World War, it was based on a qualification of basic-primary school and lower secondary school with different duration. In the case of the countries under Soviet influence, re-organizations of training cycles, the reduction of training frameworks and the withdrawal from university, high level to a secondary level frequently occurred. (Molnár, 2012)

### Periodization of the history of training primary school teachers

History is a science about people moving in time that is why periodization is important in history. Creating periods is a substantial question when investigating the history of training primary school teachers as well. The most important periods of training teachers of primary schools are as follows:

1. Performing a practice of primary school teachers with general training without being trained as a primary school teacher (from the 11th century till 1775).
2. Training primary school teachers at norm schools regulated by royal decrees (1775-1819).
3. Period of training primary school teachers at secondary level in secondary schools based on general studies at basic level (1819-1959).
  - 3.1. Formation and development of independent training institutes of primary school teachers (1819-1868).
  - 3.2. Organization and development of training primary school teachers at secondary level regulated by laws (1868-1958).
  - 3.3. Training primary school teachers in three years (1868-1881).
  - 3.4. Training primary school teachers in four years (1881-1923).
  - 3.5. Dual training primary school teachers in five years (1938-1948).
  - 3.6. Training primary school teachers at teacher training college, pause in training primary school teachers at secondary level (1947-1949; 1948-1949).
  - 3.7. Pedagogical secondary grammar school (1949-1950).
  - 3.8. Training primary school teachers at institutes of four years (1950-1959).
4. Training primary school teachers at high level (1959-till our days).
  - 4.1. Training primary school teachers at specialized schools of high level (1959-1974).

4.2. Training primary school teachers at teacher training college (1974-2006).

4.3. Training primary school teachers at teacher training college (baccalaureus, bachelor, BA, 2006-till our days).

## **Hypotheses**

Basing on the national specialized literature in educational history, the hypotheses of the current research were as follows:

- The formation of the national training of primary school teachers cannot be investigated irrespective of Hungary's political and social situation. The structure, content and the perspectives of development of the training were determined by social processes. In spite of the professional interests, interests of power became determinant.
- The changes occurring in the system of education entailed the change of training primary school teachers. The formation of training primary school teachers was in connection with extending public education. When re-organizing schools at secondary level, the training cycle of training primary school teachers was reduced.

## **Research of analytic character**

First of all, it was a research strategy of analytic character which seemed to be appropriate for the investigation in the course of which sources, documents were analysed.

## **Structural changes in training primary school teachers (from 1945 until its becoming of high level)**

Between 1945 and 1948, a hardly limited pluralism prevailed in politics and cultural life. As a result of the military situation formed by the end of the Second World War, Hungary became a part of the Soviet interest sphere. In 1949 a one-party state was organized in which power was concentrated in the hands of one single party.

Training primary school teachers was at secondary level in the overwhelming majority of the countries after the Second World War, it was based on a qualification of basic-primary school and lower secondary school with different duration. A training of primary school teachers at teacher training college of high grade based on a qualification at secondary level developed in England, some German states and from the 1950s onwards in the countries of the Soviet bloc. The International Conference on Public Education organized by the UNESCO in 1953 suggested that a training of primary school teachers at high grade should be realized in every country as soon as possible. A training of university level was functioning in England and the USA, from 1946 until 1953 different training institutes at secondary and high grade were parallelly functioning in Czechoslovakia, France, Switzerland and Poland. In the one and a half decades after the war there were several ways of training primary school teachers. In the case of the countries under Soviet influence, re-organizations of training cycles, the reduction of training frameworks and the withdrawal from university, high level to a secondary level frequently occurred. (Molnár, 2012)

## **Dual training primary school teachers in five years (1938-1948)**

' In 1944/45, the work of the Ministry of Public Education guiding education, the functioning of regional superintendence of schools, existence of denominational schools in the Hungarian school system all meant continuity. There was a continuity

too, in the training of teachers of primary schools. The dual structure of five years, created in 1941, survived in this system the students of the third year of a lycée could go on for higher education at the 4th then the 5th year of a training institute of primary school teachers. The experts of training primary school teachers would have liked to make clean sweep of this dual character, this 'marriage of schools', that is why they participated very actively in the professional dispute concerning the future of training educators.

Besides continuity, the period after the war brought changes as well. The change concerning the school system was caused by the creation of a primary school consisting of eight classes. Setting out from the right basic principles of the democratization of education and giving equal chances to everyone, the National Caretaker Government created the institution of primary school on the 16 of August, 1945. In these new primary schools, the different special subjects were taught by specialized teachers from the 5th to 8th grade instead of the class educator teaching everything. The change in the role of primary school teachers swept away the traditions of 80 years'. (Molnár, 2013, p.268)

' Amplifying the elementary education in 1945 did not coexist with developing the teacher training, instead, drawing back followed'. (Bollókné and Hunyadiné, 2003, p.6)

### **Training primary school teachers at teacher training college, pause in training primary school teachers at secondary level (1947-1949; 1948-1949)**

In order to ensure the educational staff of primary schools, a series of dispute was started which urged broad professional circles to give their opinion about how to train educators. The Hungarian Communist Party organized series of lectures for the group of teachers of the party in February, 1947. Here it was László Faragó who outlined the construction of a training of educators at college level while declaring the training of educators qualifying for the junior and senior sections of primary school alike as a task of the state. The creation of pedagogical colleges was the first step of the political fight against the ecclesiastical form of training primary school teachers. In November 1947, two pedagogical colleges began to function in Budapest and Szeged where class teachers were trained for primary schools and so were trained specialized teachers for teaching certain groups of subjects at the senior section of primary school. Training time comprised 6 semesters at the college. In 1948 ecclesiastical schools were nationalized, then the Minister stopped the training of primary school teachers at secondary level. (Molnár, 2012)

' During the years of uncertainty (1938-1959)' 'reorganizing the country's teacher training institutes into grammar schools proved to be an impetuous decision.' (Panyik, 1991, p.71-84)

The system of pedagogical subjects, the amount of the lessons provided for them offered a good basis for a quality training of primary school teachers as regards pedagogy. Besides giving training in several subjects it was impossible to offer suitable preparation for primary school teachers. Teaching practice could only take place in the 3rd year. Pedagogical colleges could not practically carry out their accepted mission that was rather excessive. Presumably, the preparation for the role of a primary school teacher was the most insufficient. Pedagogical colleges functioned on the grounds of their original objectives until 1949 then the training of primary school teachers was made a task of colleges.

### **Pedagogical secondary grammar school (1949-1950)**

A comprehensive form of secondary schools took place in Hungary in 1949. It settled the situation of educational institutes of secondary schools in the system of education as well as the relation between the aims of professional training and general education. A system of general and specialized secondary grammar schools was built up. Pedagogical secondary grammar school became a formation that lasted four years adapting itself to the system of secondary schools. Pedagogical secondary grammar school prepared for studies at higher level, on the other hand, it offered a specialized qualification of primary school and kindergarten teacher. (Molnár, 2012)

### **Training primary school teachers at institutes of four years (1950-1959)**

'In 1950 a decree with legal force created institutes of training primary school teachers. The task of the institutes training primary school teachers was to offer theoretical and practical formation for educators who are suitably qualified for the junior section (1st to 4th classes) of primary school and who are generally educated capable of going on for higher studies. After attending the institutes of training primary school teachers, students sat for a final exam. After the final exam they were employed in schools as paid practising primary school teachers for a year. At the end of the probationary year training was accomplished by sitting for a successful qualifying exam for primary school teachers. Institutes of training primary school teachers kept on lasting four years but the duration of training primary school teachers became a five-year period by inserting a probationary year'. (Molnár and Járny, 2014, p.101)

From 1949, the training period ' was reduced to four years, respectively reaching the five years only with the practice year spent in an outer school – which five years meant only the minimum program even at the end of the last century and was effectively carried through in 1923.' (Kelemen, 1999, p.57)

In the system of the curricular aims of the teachers' training institutes, outstanding roles were given to elements, e.g. ' to spot profoundly the progressive pedagogical traditions and the top-ranking Soviet pedagogy' or 'to educate conscious socialist teachers who love their profession'. (Gombos, 2011, p.71)

### **Summary**

During the history of training primary school teachers between 1945 and 1959, the structure of training (5, 4 years, college), its content (syllabus, teaching material), the perspective of its development were determined by political power interests. In 1949 the formation cycle of training primary school teachers was reduced while re-organizing secondary schools. The qualification of primary school teachers was only limited to teaching in the 1st to the 4th classes, primary school teachers' competence line was drawn at the age of ten years. Professional values, with the exception of the feature of being centred on children, kept on working guaranteeing the successfulness of training. (Molnár, 2012)

In the 'intermediate teachers' training schools, preparation for the complex role of a primary-school teacher' was the task of the students being educated there. ' Improving the students' multi-sided personal development was implemented with an exceedingly lavish system of activities and – let us use a modern word – with vivid extracurricular programs, whilst keeping track of making the students acquire the necessary theoretical information.' (Vincze, 2014, p.96)

Between 1945-1959, ' in the period being very much complex in itself and to be divided into some more periods, the primary-school teachers made efforts to insist on teaching writing-reading-counting, that is to meet in all circumstances their basic commitments towards the school pupils and parents. That is why, we may well say that in that period the most important specific feature from the point of view of the primary-school teachers was to be engaged in the observance of the nation.' (Mikonya, 2014, p.43)

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