

THE STATE AND THE TEACHERS.
The years when teachers' associations were founding.

I. Preface

The founding of associations as being a feature of professionalization goes undisputed in scientific literature. It describes the phase in which the practitioners of an occupation, who for long were separated geographically, financially and by prestige, define their mutual interests and based on those get organized. Studying the processes amongst Hungarian and Prussian teachers in higher education offers the possibility to examine the identity, the self-image of teachers and the transformations thereof. Which events have evoked the desire for an organisation? Which goals were formulated and which tactics were chosen to accomplish them? Was the state considered as a partner or as an enemy? Which inherent problems had to be resolved in advance to founding an association?

Sources and Period of the Comparison

The comparison starts at the beginning of the 1870-ies. The reason for this is the fact that the Hungarian teachers' association was only allowed to expand after 1867 and thus the founding of the national association only took place on the 3rd of November 1867. In Prussia, at the beginning of March some associations have already been founded, but these were either academic or school type associations. The first professional associations that are relevant for our enquiry have been founded only in 1872 as regional associations.¹ For Hungary, the official newspaper of the teachers' association, the resolution of the associations and the archives were used as sources. For Prussia, the numerous pedagogical newspapers and periodicals - in unison with the scientific literature - the weekly newspaper "Zeitung für das höhere Unterrichtswesen" ("Newspaper for the Higher Schooling", founded in 1872) was chosen. First of all on the ground of the editors' explicit statement in the first issue of the newspaper in which to distinguish themselves from other periodicals they clearly stated that they had not intended "to mediate exchange of academic knowledge between the higher schools or to serve specialized scientific research" like the other newspapers had done to that date. Rather, they would focus on high schools and the junior high schools to discuss the educational problems and conditions of teachers, thus they wanted to support policies representing special professional interests.² Secondly, the editor and the newspaper have put themselves as a platform at the disposal of the mentioned regional associations, for organisation and for preparation and have covered extensively the different meetings of teachers and related debates.

II. Motives and Aims of the Association Founders

Hungary

In Hungary, the first attempt to establish a teachers' association was made in 1861. The teaching staff of the Royal Catholic High School of Pest has announced the idea of an association. History gives an account of multiple motives for the association. The teachers wanted: one, to take care of elderly and sick colleagues, two, to enhance the Hungarian pedagogy and educational system with the workings of the association

¹ See for instance: Sebastian Müller-Rolli: Der höhere Lehrerstand im 19. Jahrhundert, Köln-Weimar-Wien, 1992, P. 157-58. and 208.

² Zeitung für das höhere Unterrichtswesen 1872/1. Programm P. 1.

and finally, three, to represent the interests of teachers.³ If the goals were clearly worked out as such from the start or if only the author of the “*historia domus*” wanted later to see it that way we cannot know. The fact remains that the statutes submitted to the authorities only contain charitable and academically aimed issues.⁴

Even with “softened” goals the authorization of the association was not easy. From the state’s point of view the association was problematic on two accounts. One: the association wanted to expand countrywide and not just to Pest and Buda. Two: - representing a bigger problem - the association had declared itself neutral toward religions and did not want to differentiate between its members on that ground. The neutrality issue has met strong rejection from the side of the Catholic Church. A deviation from neutrality was unacceptable for the teachers, despite the fact that there were priests and mostly Catholics amongst them. Although state authorities had declared themselves to be in favour of religious neutrality and against the veto of the church, the association however was not given authorization with these statutes.⁵

The first fiasco when the self-drawn-up statutes were declined has not discouraged the organizers; they looked for an already functioning association as an example. They found one in the “*Wiener Mittelschule Verein*” (Viennese Junior High School Association). The statutes of which had been authorized in Vienna once before, so as such there was no serious difficulty either at the founding of an association in Buda. The formerly decisive religious neutrality was not discussed at all. The organization of the association nonetheless was restricted. They were only allowed to enlist high school teachers from Buda and Pest as regular members. However, there was the provision to enlist teachers and persons involved in the profession from outside of Buda and Pest as “irregular members”. With this instrument the association has expanded to a national association. After one year, the association had already more irregular members than regular ones. That the demand for a national association was strong amongst teachers shows in that, that given the first opportunity, on the 6th of April 1867 - during the Conciliation (the period when the Habsburg Empire turned into the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.) - the Budapest Association (actually Pest-Buda Association) has dissolved itself, and immediately a new association - this time an officially national association - has been founded by the same members.

If one compares the aims declared in the statutes of association then one discerns a visible pattern of professionalization. The early academic (such as school book edition) and charitable aims became first special professional interests and charitable endeavours and transformed later into special professional interests and specialised scientific goals. As a result representation of interests and expertise remain the main aims of associations’ work until the end of our era. A comparison of the different associations’ admission criteria further strengthens the image of the development of high school teacherdom’s identity. The first association was kept open for practically everyone who was involved in teaching, so elementary school teachers were welcome as well. The managing board consisted of 6 elementary school teachers and 6 high school teachers on equal grounds. In the second association, the elementary school teachers had no place anymore (also as an outcome of the accepted statutes) and this has not changed even later when the members, themselves, could freely determine the statutes of association. This is also interesting, because the

³ Szerelemhegyi 1891, 21

⁴ Vö. Szerelemhegyi 1891, 22 és Riedl 1862, 319.

⁵ Szerelemhegyi 1891, 26; *A Budapesti Tanári Egylet elnökének évi jelentése...* 1867, 38; Szamosi 1882, 52–54., MOL D 216. Magyar királyi Helytartótanács Közigazgatási II. kútfő 4360. alapszám.

members of the board actually remained the same during those six years. (The same that is if we don't take into account the elementary school teachers.)

Prussia

Before 1872, there were already associations in Prussia of teachers or of those who have attended the philology faculty at universities. In 1837, "Der Verein deutscher Philologen" (The Association of German Philologists) had been founded with the aim to promote the scientific character of the profession of higher educational teachers through connection with universities. In 1843, the junior high school teachers founded their association too. These associations mainly enlisted members from the teachers from higher schools, but for a long time, understood themselves as organisations for scholars and thought representing the material interests of teachers unworthy. The first professional association in the German speaking world was the above-mentioned association "Die Mittelschule". The regional associations of Prussia have only been formed in 1872.⁶ These new professional interest organizations meant not only new goals and a restructuring of the character of association, but were a direct criticism of the old associations.⁷ Subsequently I will look at the motivations and targets of the founders of these associations.

Instead of the up to this point usual focus on academic questions and teacherdom's fragmentation not only expected teachers from the new association to represent their interests in financial questions but to promote solidarity and collegiality. This can be seen as the first sign of the gradual development of a general professional teacher consciousness. The intention was to strengthen the "esprit de corps" and the devotion for the occupation of teachers as well. The scientific questions were certainly not ignored, but new methods of treatment and themes were hoped for. So instead of the mediation "between academic knowledge and the higher education" pedagogical interest, educational scientific questions, and their exchange took to the centre of attention. New policies representing special professional interests were suggested too. The teachers should not only write petitions but also jointly refuse underpaid jobs. It seems that a hitherto unknown activism was building up at least with some teachers. To accomplish these goals all involved in the discussion considered a new association to be necessary. They stressed that individuals should enlist in the new association independently and out of their own free will and not as representatives of institutions. The importance of the experts (i.e. the teachers) was emphasized, because without their "expert opinion" no adequate educational law was imaginable.⁸ The methods to accomplish the teachers' aims were being worked out as well: agitation, propaganda and collecting intelligence to inform the delegates were the keywords of those tactics.⁹

On the 7th of October 1872, following the debate, the first meeting of the teachers of the higher educational institutes of the State of Prussia was held. Where, the motion was put forward for founding a provincial association as well. The motion was accepted without objection. As declared by the statutes "the purpose of the association is: to examine questions of pedagogical and educational scientific nature, to watch over of the teacherdom's and the school's interests as well to promote collegiality."¹⁰ Any teacher, who pays 1 Thlr. yearly contribution, of a higher educational institute (or its affiliated branch too if it is recognized as a higher school) in the state can become a member of the association.

⁶ Bölling, Führ, Müller

⁷ Titze (Handbuch) S. 352.

⁸ ZUW 1872/2 Eine höchst wünschenswerthe Vorbereitung des neuen Unterrichtsgesetzes S. 9.

⁹ ZUW 1872/1 Bericht über eine Petition an das Abgeordnetenhaus in Sachsen der Realschullehrer, S. 11-12.

¹⁰ ZUW 1872/31 Bericht über die erste Versammlung... S. 241.

It is clear that by means of collegiality the doors of the association have been opened quite wide. The proposal at the meeting, that high schools and junior high schools should unite, was regarded as premature and was not debated. The members themselves turned away from the opening up of the topic and the effort for such unification.

III. The Expectations. What should the state do?

The state has always played a large role of societal modernizer in Eastern and Central Europe. Therefore the following questions are interesting – just at a moment when we experience a dichotomy between civil society and the state - what role have the teachers declared for the state, what have they expected from it and in what way have they operated with the state. The study of these questions and the evaluation of the results help us in the first place to draw and to understand the views of society held by teachers. In the second, to verify the thesis that in Eastern Europe civil societies were simply rather weak and modernization had to be conducted primarily by the state.

A. Hungary

„S itt lehetetlen meg nem emlékezmem azon kettős minőségi viszonyról, melyben nagyméltóságod irányában állunk: mint tanárok és mint egyesület. A vezérkedés és vezéreltetés elve oly régi, mint maga a patriarchalis család. De a szabad egyesülés, az önálló vélemény szabad nyilatkozhatása, – ez az újabb kor dicsőségei közé tartozik. A tanár, mint egyén, hódolattal teljesíti vezére szavát; de a vezér a tanárokat, mint együletet, szabad versenyre bocsátja a vélemények mérhetetlen tengerén.”¹¹

(“And here it is impossible for me not to mind the double quality relationship, in which we stand towards your lordship: as teachers and as association. The principle of commanding and controlling is as ancient as the patriarchal family itself. But the free gathering, the possibility of free speech belongs to the excellences of this newest age. Teachers as individuals deferentially execute their leader’s voice; but the leader launches the teachers as an association in free competition on the immense sea of opinions.”)

The teachers’ association, respectively the presidium, has very soon understood that their relationship with the state was of the foremost importance if they wanted to be successful at achieving their goals. Due to the delayed progress of the middle class, weak civil society and poorly performing clubs and associations could not survive without the financial and political support of the state. This fact was in conflict with the Hungarian leading ideology of the time, liberalism and its vision of the state. Teachers perceived this contradiction too and early on in the starting years they formulated a practical solution for everyday use as well as a theoretical one for “holidays”.

After the national association’s foundation the teachers had to face the problem of financing their newspaper. It rather soon became obvious that even with the utmost scrutiny on planning the finances the newspaper’s costs exceeded by far the

¹¹ Ney Ferenc elnök beszéde a Pauler Tivadar vallás- és közoktatási miniszternél tett tisztelegő látogatás alkalmából. (Közlöny, 1871. 7. füzet 444.)

association's means. Although the editors and authors worked for free the newspaper was unsustainable without additional sources. The main source of income would have been the contribution fee paid by the members. But there was hardly any managing board meeting where the poor fee paying attitude had not been lamented and where long lists of defaulters had not been published. Strategically however, the newspaper was very important for the association. Only the newspaper made it possible to keep in contact with its members living outside of Buda or Pest and it was the main instrument with which the association was able to contribute to the pedagogical and educational politics discussions in the country.

A solution was quickly found. The presidium decided to offer the newspaper to be an agent for the Ministry of Education.¹² The offer, which the Ministry of Education has accepted, was subject to the condition that the newspaper would remain independent and that the Ministry would only publish its directives and nominations in it. Thus the independence of the newspaper and the support of the state were taken care of at the same time. Subsequently, the state directives and the critical essays dealing with those directives were published in the same issues.

The support of the state as a solution is not bound to this example only. The need for state support resurfaces again and again in the association's documents and newspapers in connection with all kinds of themes.¹³ Alongside independence and the relationship with the state were being addressed as well. The association wanted to present itself as the centre for society-educational politics movement and at the same time to be an advisory body to the government.¹⁴ To accomplish this they were critical of the government and its actions of educational politics (such as compulsory school books for the elementary school, bill for the higher schools) and at the same time they were defending the minister if his person was under attack.¹⁵ The first official proclamation of the association, in this matter, is the answer to a newspaper article that (because of the agreement on the question of the newspaper with the ministry) accuses the association to prostitute itself and thus to have lost its independence. The association rejects the allegation of the account and emphasizes that independence (which they want to preserve) for them means the freedom of opinion in questions of scientific nature and educational politics and it is not about an oppositional attitude towards the government.¹⁶

This concept is being further unfolded in the welcoming speech of the association's president for Tivadar Pauler, the new minister. In that, the association's president demands freedom in scientific research and in expression of opinion, and promises unity in return to help with the concrete tasks of the educational system's reorganization.¹⁷ The aim of the association was not only to function as an advisor for the minister but also to be indispensable. Sooner or later, they wanted the minister and the government to have to turn to them in every school related issue because of their specific knowledge.¹⁸

¹² Közlöny, 1870. 1. füzet 44.

¹³ A tanáregylet folyamodványa a magyar országgyűlés képviselőházához a középtanodai tanárok anyagi helyzetének javítása ügyében. (Közlöny 1870. 3. füzet, 152–155.); Szamosi János: Visszhang. (Közlöny 1870. 5–6. füzet 235–236.)

¹³ Bartl Antal: Indítvány. (Közlöny, 1870. 5–6. füzet 232.)

¹⁴ Bartl Antal: Indítvány. (Közlöny, 1870. 5–6. füzet 232.)

¹⁵ Vö. Közlöny, 1869. 5. füzet 220; Közlöny, 1869. 7. füzet 317. A középiskolai törvényjavaslattal kapcsolatban lásd Az Országos Középtanodai Tanáregylet Emlékirata... 1869, 23.

¹⁶ Közlöny, 1870. 8. füzet 446.

¹⁷ Ney Ferenc elnök beszéde a Pauler Tivadar vallás- és közoktatási miniszternél tett tisztelegő látogatás alkalmából. (Közlöny, 1871. 7. füzet 445.)

¹⁸ Közlöny, 1870. 5–6. füzet 232.

Probably it is due to the aims formulated at the earliest beginning that the “association for the teachers of higher schools” had a leading role in the education reform movement and could play the role of advisor for the ministry. (The association had the privilege to delegate five representatives out of a total of fifteen to the council for education. Their opinion was called upon on a regular basis by the ministry. Ferenc Deák presented one of their petitions in parliament, who was one of the most influential politicians of that time in Hungary.)¹⁹

B. Prussia

The main subject along what the role of the state and the expectations in Prussia were debated was the subject of subsidy. Teachers - after the relative prosperity of the years of 1850-60 - were confronted with an increasingly worsening financial situation, especially if compared with other academic professions. Their ever-increasing financial dilemma forced the teachers to act and thus the previously discussed professional associations came in to being. On the other hand a debate developed (evidently tightly joined with the issue of the association) about the role and task of the state in the solution of teachers’ problems. The question wasn’t always put forward explicitly, but was nevertheless always present.

Why should the state help at all? This, the first of questions, the teachers have answered quickly and consistently. On this issue, the otherwise differing views were in unison. For the very reason, that teachers and schools played an important and big role in the reorganization of the German fatherland, in the “victorious restoration of the German empire”, the state simply had the obligation to help.²⁰ The same reasoning emerges almost in all the teachers’ accounts. School and education are being presented in the debates actually as a task of the state. That, at the time, only one third of the higher educational institutes was being financed by the state is seen as a result of erroneous development, because the municipalities (who were the main backers of the higher schools) have only jumped in because of the state’s lacking engagement. And now - voiced most of the participants in the debate –the time has come and the financial means have reached the point that the state settles its old debt and increases the salary of the teachers and with it the subsidy for schools. The raise of the wages by the state however introduces a big problem concurrently as well. Because the majority of the schools are under supervision of the municipalities this raise only affects a (smaller) fraction of the teachers. Therefore some pleaded right away for that the budget norm brought forward by the Ministry of Education in 1872 should apply to teachers teaching in non-state schools as well. That in turn raised the question of the communal autonomy. Is the state authorized to dictate what wages the municipalities should pay? With the raise of their budget norm municipalities were often pushed to the limit of their financial possibilities. However, if the state co-finances then it gains rights as well and the autonomy of the municipalities suffers for it. How should the teachers behave in this situation? According to secondary literature, opinions were not as uniform as one would think. The majority of the written reports have welcomed the broadened state influence. Mostly two arguments were used. Firstly, most were of the opinion (and justly so) that the state is more able to secure the long desired salary raise than the municipalities, although many a city had schools with above average allowance. Secondly, teachers - in the non-state schools - had to endure that important personnel and financial decisions were made by predominantly city councillors who were no academics. They experienced it as humiliating and were convinced that the prestige of the teachers suffered substantially because of it. For these reasons a petition

¹⁹ Közlöny, 1870. 10. füzet 577.

²⁰ ZUW 1872/1. Programm P. 1.

to nationalize schools was actually welcomed. But many (notwithstanding the minority) voiced the fear “that the new branch of self-government will be subjected to external and tempting advantages, to a too large patronage”.²¹ And so at the founding meeting of the regional association of Prussia attention was also called to the fact that although the government of the day seemed liberal, but till recently the municipal schools were the refuges for teachers who due to their political opinion were not able to find jobs at state schools.²²

As such the state has been called upon in every important professionally oriented issue (salary, employment at the lowest teacher posts, credit of service period, the question of the contributors) and dismissed as “liberal enthusiast”²³ and “unjust and acting with no solidarity”²⁴ those that have pleaded for the autonomy of the municipalities and for the “self-aide” of the teachers. The state’s view of the teachers who were organizing themselves by their profession was by no means markedly one sidedly paternalistic, the initiative of the individual played a mayor role in it: “but we should perform on our side whatever we can perform - and then our efforts will not remain without success”²⁵.

²¹ 1872/23

²² 1872/32 Bericht über die erste Versammlung der Lehrer...P. 250.

²³ 1872/31

²⁴ 1872/5

²⁵ ZUW 1872/6 Zur Dotationsfrage, P. 43.