

Structural Changes in Training Primary School Teachers in Hungary after Second World War

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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.

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).

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 was 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. (Molnár, 2012)

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 a series of lectures for the group of teachers of the party in February, 1947. Here it was Faragó László who outlined the construction of a training of educators at college level while declaring the training of educators qualifying for the junior and seniors 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, 1991:71-84)

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).

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).

References

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