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MAIN SPECIFICITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFORM PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENT IN HUNGARY: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AFTER 1990

Principalele particularităţi ale dezvoltării mişcării de reformă pedagogică în Ungaria: Şcoli alternative după 1990

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MAIN SPECIFICITIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REFORM PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENT IN HUNGARY: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS AFTER 1990

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Abstract

The study aims to present the current reform and alternative education situation in Hungary. Hungarian reform pedagogy has a long history, and between the two world wars, the reception of European reform trends became a significant part of the pedagogical culture. The New School movement, the Child Study movement and experimental pedagogy became an integral part of Hungarian pedagogy. Reform pedagogical institutions were established mainly in the capital, the most important being Waldorf, Montessori pedagogy, the Family School, the New School, and in the countryside, the most significant were the School of Action and the Garden School (Szeged).

The information sources for the study were the results of research on reform pedagogy and life reform in Hungary, studies about alternative pedagogical schools, and pedagogical websites. The outline and overview analysis cover the conceptual definitions, the historical traditions and the main features of the current situation. The research group of Eötvös University (led by Prof. András Németh), the Jena-Plan working group, has played a prominent role in researching (over 30 years) and promoting the Hungarian reform pedagogical movement.

Keywords: alternative and reform schools, alternative education, reform pedagogy.

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Rezumat

Studiul îşi propune să prezinte situaţia actuală a reformei şi a educaţiei alternative din Ungaria. Pedagogia maghiară a reformei are o istorie îndelungată, iar între cele două războaie mondiale receptarea tendinţelor reformatoare europene a devenit o parte semnificativă a culturii pedagogice. Mişcarea New School, mişcarea Child Study şi pedagogia experimentală au devenit parte integrantă a pedagogiei maghiare. Instituţiile pedagogice care promovau reforma în educaţie au fost înfiinţate în principal în capitală. Cele mai des întâlnite modele pedagogice alternative din mediul urban, cele mai importante au fost Waldorf, pedagogia Montessori, Şcoala Familiei, Şcoala Nouă, iar în mediul rural cele mai importante au fost Şcoala Activă şi Şcoala Grădină (Szeged).

Sursele de informare ale studiului au fost rezultatele cercetărilor privind pedagogia reformei şi reforma vieţii în Ungaria, studii despre şcoli pedagogice alternative şi site-uri pedagogice. Schema şi analiza generală acoperă definiţiile conceptuale, tradiţiile istorice şi principalele caracteristici ale situaţiei actuale. Grupul de cercetare al Universităţii Eötvös (condus de Prof. András Németh), grupul de lucru Jena-Plan, au jucat un rol important în cercetarea (timp de peste 30 de ani) şi promovarea mişcării pedagogice de reformă din Ungaria.

Cuvinte-cheie: *educaie alternativă, pedagogía reformei, şcoli alternative ale reformei.*

1. Introduction

The historical traditions of Hungarian education strongly determine the face of Hungarian education in the 21st century. In the educational field, the reception processes of the 19th and 20th centuries were of particular importance, which endeavoured to create an independent Hungarian school system, with special regard to the German and Austrian reception influences. The period between 1867 and 1920, within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, proved to be decisive in the modernisation of Hungarian citizenship and education. The years between 1920 and 1945 saw the dominance of conservative Christian national ideals, in which the idea of national education was given special attention. The period between 1945 (1948) and 1990 was a period of communist dictatorship, defined by the ideology of Marxism and Leninism. In Hungary, from the 1960s onwards, the soft dictatorship of the Kádár era gave space to attempts at reform in education (Romsics, 1999).

2. Concept and use of reform and alternative pedagogy in Hungarian pedagogy

2.1. Classical understanding of reform pedagogy

Reform pedagogy was born out of a protest and criticism of the Herbartian school (Gudjons, 1994) as a diverse pedagogical movement that integrated the philosophical, cultural and artistic trends of the late 19th century and was closely linked to the life reform movements. In the USA, the European reform movement in education is known as progressive education. The New Education Movement played a decisive role in the beginnings of the European movement. It was given different names in different countries (New School in England, Éducation Nouvelle in France, and Reformpädagogik in Germany). A common characteristic of the reformer educators was their discovery of the child, freeing him from the earlier understanding of the 'guilty child'. They turned back to the great predecessors - Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Nietzsche, and Tolstoy - to create a new image of the child.

The first starting point in defining the concept of reform pedagogy was

Hermann Nohl's classic formulation (1935/2020, p. 50). According to him, the reform pedagogy movement emerged as a movement that was a critique of Herbartian pedagogy: "... it is seen as a unified cultural and social movement spanning a larger historical period, based on a specific internal logic, closely linked to the labour, women's, youth and social movements of the time and to the cultural critique that was unfolding on a national basis" (Németh, 2003, p. 28).

The period of the emergence of the reform pedagogical movement coincided with the crisis phenomena of industrial society at the end of the 19th century: the negative effects of industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation. As a result of pedagogical reflection on these phenomena, reform pedagogy was born, which is summarised as "the pedagogical trends and concepts that sought to renew pedagogical thinking and educational practice in a child-centred way, and which developed mainly in Europe and the USA" (Németh, 2003, p. 14). On the one hand, these pedagogical reforms incorporate a series of innovative efforts, methods and tools in the spirit of progressive, child-centred education, and on the other hand, they often express an anti-modernist critique and emphasise the need to return to nature and the natural.

The exploration and comparative scientific analysis of the reception efforts of the Hungarian reformist pedagogical movement in Hungarian pedagogy began in the 1990s in the works of András Németh and Béla Pukánszky (Németh, 2002a, 2002b; Németh, 2003; Németh & Skiera, 1999; Pukánszky, 2002; Pukánszky & Németh, 1996; Pukánszky & Zsolnai, 1998).

2.2. Reform pedagogy versus alternative schools

At present, Hungarian educational science generally distinguishes between the classical reformist educational trends, which have a defined programme, philosophy and methodology. Alternative pedagogies are generally referred to as the new schools that emerged after the Second World War. Most of the public discourse conflates the two concepts and refers to schools with a different curriculum from state education as alternative schools.

The definition of reform pedagogy in the period between the two world wars in Hungarian educational science was mainly found in pedagogical

journals. In the *Pedagogical Dictionary* published in 1936 (edited by Fináczy, Kornis & Kemény) the authors defined the new phenomenon as reform schools. According to the dictionary item: "reform schools are, in a broad sense, educational and training institutions whose organisation, curricula or methods differ from the official norms. They aim to put new ideas and thoughts at the service of certain pedagogical tasks. For example, Forest Schools, New School, Landerziehungsheim (rural boarding school)" (1936, p. 582). In a narrower sense, schools which deviate from the state educational system (e.g., compulsory Latin teaching). A significant step forward was taken in 1976 with the publication of Volume III of the Pedagogical Dictionary (editor-in-chief S. Nagy), which defines reform pedagogy as a summary term for the trends that developed at the turn of the century within the framework of the New School movement. The "reformers (Claparède, Dewey, Decroly, Montessori, Ferrière) wanted to radically change the educational and pedagogical spirit of the traditional Herbartian school" (Nagy, 1976, p. 35).

In the 1996 *Pedagogical Dictionary* (edited by Dr. Ilona Nanszák) the definition of reform pedagogy is the same as in the 1976 lexicon. However, the list of reform school endeavours highlighted has been expanded: New School, Forest School, Rural School, and so on. The new reform school system has been extended to include Montessori, Decroly, Kerschensteiner, Waldorf pedagogy (Rudolf Steiner), Freinet, Dalton-Plan, Jena-Plan, etc. (Nanszák, 1996, p. 280).

A new component in the lexicon is the definition of alternative schools. These are schools that offer 'a choice between equivalent options', in opposition to restrictive, centralising, anti-liberalising, universalising tendencies - e.g., the Zsolnai programme, the Szentlőrinci model (László Gáspár), the Rogers School, AKG, Freinet, Montessori, Waldorf, etc. (Nanszák, 1996, p. 26). In this work, the author uses the concept of alternative schools in a broader sense. In the 1997 edition of the Pedagogical Dictionary, Volumes I to III (edited by Zoltán Báthory and Iván Falus), reform pedagogy was defined in more detail than in the previous volumes and referred to the periods of reform pedagogy. The authors have described the third era as the period of the survival of reform schools after the Second World War and the birth of alternative schools, which continues to the present day (Báthory & Falus,

1997, pp. 255-256). Alternative schools are defined as "schools, usually established on the initiative of citizens, which offer a special curriculum for all or part of the compulsory schooling period, other than mass education, mostly using non-traditional pedagogical methods" (Báthory & Falus, 1997, pp. 73-74). Under the heading of alternative schools abroad, the authors point out that reformers "are free to develop their own pedagogical view, often significantly different from mass education" (Báthory & Falus, 1997, p. 75).

There were also several initiatives to define alternativity in pedagogy. In his volume *School Alternatives in the Twentieth Century*, László Brezsnyászky emphasises, alongside optionality, "the need for self-awareness and validation" (Brezsnyászky, 2004). According to Tibor Péter Nagy, alternative education is understood as child-centred and usually foundation-run schools, which are related to the ideology of reform pedagogical trends. In a broader sense, it refers to phenomena in the history of schooling that represent a teaching-learning process that is different from the mainstream of education in a given period and that exists in an institutionalised form (including private education) (Nagy, 2004). Alternative schools are also commonly referred to in simplified terms as the opposite pole of the traditional school (Herbart's school) (Dobos, 2017; Langer-Buchwald, 2011).

2.3. New aspects for the understanding of reform and alternative pedagogies

Furthermore, it should be considered that the critique of the reform pedagogy movement and the closely related life reform movement has been a significant part of the discourse in education in recent years. The importance of an objective assessment of the impact of reform education has been stressed by Gudjons (1994), who argues that its importance should neither be underestimated nor exaggerated. Jürgen Oelkers takes a more radical view, arguing that reform pedagogy should not be seen as a single trend, but as a national and international phenomenon that took shape in different trends, but did not become a permanent pedagogical trend (Oelkers, 1992, pp. 113–129). Oelkers believes that reform pedagogy, which grew out of the Enlightenment, did not originally develop new educational practices and did not lead to widespread

reforms in public education. Nevertheless, reform pedagogy did develop a new form of pedagogical reflection and practice, which ultimately greatly facilitated and resulted in a break with modern pedagogical traditions. The main achievement of reform pedagogy was the generalisation of child-centred pedagogy. The educational reforms of the last third of the 20th century have borrowed principles and methods from reform pedagogy, many of which date back more than a century, as an important and defining element. Classical reform pedagogy and the pedagogical programmes of alternative schools have contributed significantly to innovation. The growth in the number of alternative schools reflects the gradual, profound and sustained infiltration of reform pedagogical ideas into the public education sphere (Oelkers 1992, pp. 151–219).

It is important to underline that after the turn of the millennium, some new approaches and critiques have emerged concerning the history and reception of the reform pedagogy movement. Analyses of reception history draw attention to several new aspects. On the one hand, new (different) epochal boundaries are identified: 1890–1910/1920, 1920–1933, 1945–1960 and 1960–1990, periods are considered (Hansen-Schaberg & Schonig, 2007). The authors point out that many new areas remain to be explored: clarifying the role of women, examining the history of schools that continued to operate during the Nazi era, tracing the reform pedagogical history of the GDR and the former socialist countries, exploring new, hitherto little researched areas of the relationship between reform pedagogy and the life reform movement, with a particular focus on the youth movement. In addition to the well-known schools and figures, the authors stress the importance of exploring anonymous heroes and lone reformers, so-called quasi-reform pedagogues, unrealised theories and spontaneous, instinctive actions and their effects (Hansen-Schaberg & Schonig, 2007, pp. 1–12).

2.4. Possible new discourse: common motives for educational and life reform aspirations

The current perception of reform pedagogy is significantly altered by the redefinition of the term and the broadening of its meaning. In this respect, we take the view of R. Koerrenz as relevant, who argues that several criteria should be considered when defining the concept. These are as follows: Is it

necessary to distinguish between reform and non-reform in the internal structure of pedagogy, and thus to decide whether it is an internal, bottom-up reform? From an external perspective, the relationship between reform and cultural change needs to be examined. Reform pedagogy can be understood as a response to the modernisation 'rush' of the Enlightenment (e.g., Herbartism). Reform pedagogy, in the classical sense, can be seen as a reaction to modern industrial change in the first half of the 20th century (the reform pedagogy movement). It is worth paying particular attention to the challenges of the present, which are increasingly affecting the uniformised individual in an increasingly globalised world. Education is increasingly looking for solutions in differentiated responses, i.e. reform pedagogy, nowadays mostly referred to as alternative pedagogies (Koerrenz, 2014, pp. 7–14).

In the spirit of Nohl's interpretation, several monographs have been written since the 1980s that have sought to define more precisely the concepts within reform pedagogy, to detail the school founders and their concept, to typify the movement, to establish periodisation and to identify international reference points. Among the more significant authors, Scheibe (1969), Oelkers (1989) and Skiera (2010) stand out (Keim & Schwerdt, 2013).

The pedagogical discourse of the 1970s and 1980s, which closely linked the reformist pedagogical efforts with the life reform movement that developed in parallel, brought new perspectives to the assessment and interpretation of the history of reform pedagogy. While there are works that ignore this (Keim & Schwerdt, 2013), there have been significant achievements in this area in recent years. Skiera points out (2014) that the works of Krabbe (1974), Kerbs and Reulecke (1998) and Röhrs (1991) can be considered seminal works on the interaction between reform pedagogy and life reform.

The 'Lebensreform movement', demanding lifestyle reforms, emerged in parallel with progressive education and took on international dimensions. It is a social movement that developed mainly in the German-speaking world from the mid-19th century onwards, primarily as a critique of the phenomena of modernisation, including industrialisation, urbanisation and secularisation - as was the case with the reform pedagogy movement. The common feature of the life reform movement is a longing for the natural state, for a new way of life that emerges from its critique of modernity and seeks to overcome

the harms and illnesses caused by civilisation. Emphasis is placed on self-healing, the search for lost harmony, the hope of healing and redemption through cosmic wholeness and a new spirituality. Wolfgang R. Krabbe's definition of the life reform movement is based on a social-historical perspective. In his definition of life reform, he emphasised the efforts to reform the whole way of life, most notably in the areas of nutrition, clothing, housing and health care.

Krabbe distinguishes three groups within the life reform movement: a) Peripheral life reform aims at the creation of a reformed settlement, i.e. a comprehensive new social organisation covering all the central areas of life. b) Specific (in a narrower sense) life reform is both the object and the aim of reforming the individual human body. c) The "outer circle" of the life reform movement includes those various individual endeavours which have some relevant connection or kinship with a particular life reform movement, such as the youth movement and reform pedagogy (Krabbe, 1974, pp. 14–15).

By typologizing the movement, Krabbe reveals the deeper structure of it. One type was the ecological, respective sociogenetic life reforms that were formed to organise a new home, a new house (oikos), and a new community: such as communes, productive settlements, self-sufficient communities, or suburbs. The other type included individual-genetic life reform efforts, which sought to create a new man by redefining and healing the body, the corporeality. By following the principles of vegetarianism, natural medicine and body culture, a man who had been made ill by civilisation could regain his vitality and live a full life in paradise on earth. Krabbe points out that both individual and community-based reforms express a kind of spiritual-violent concept of overcoming alienation (Németh & Skiera, 2018; Skiera, 2006).

The undoubted pedagogical implications of the movement have had a significant impact on the development of both individual and collective existence, cognition and experience (learning), mentality and behaviour. The close link between the life reform movement and reform pedagogy is evident from the fundamental objectives of the life reform movement, but also from the common motives that can be identified between the two movements. It is taken as a basic premise that the essence of life reform is self-reform, which takes both individual and community forms. Education is a fundamental

motif in all the forms of self-government and marginal or specific manifestations. The life reform and the reform pedagogy movement emerged at almost the same time, both movements seeking a cure for the 'degenerative' phenomena caused by modernisation and possible ways of overcoming them (Krabbe, 1974).

A common motif is that of E. Skiera's summary (2006, pp. 44–45): a) the confrontation of the idea of fraternity with the utilitarian and profit-oriented world of capitalism; b) the search for and selection of a charismatic leader who is important for the community; c) the expression of the principles of naturalness and naturalness in the methodology of the image and teaching of the child; d) the emphasis on vitality (with the role of the sensory and physical dimensions in life and learning); e) the incorruptible child as a pledge of a better future; f) the role of the 'Messiah motif'; g) a sense of responsibility for humanity: the 'missionary motif'; h) the need for a new school for the true, the fulfilling (new) human, which is the fulfilment of the 'new paradise on earth'; i) the beginning of a new life possible by saving the individual through education - the motif of salvation.

3. Historical perspective: the main periods of reform pedagogy in Hungary

3.1. Periodisation

To define the era of reform pedagogy in Hungary, we consider the boundaries of the periods indicated by foreign authors as authoritative: the period of genesis (1890–1920), institutionalisation (1920–1933), and then the periods of disintegration and renewal (1945, 1960, 1990). After the Second World War, the student revolts of 1968 were of crucial importance for the European reform movement in education. The educational reforms, which followed loud criticism from young people, gave rise to new educational models, content and forms. Curricula incorporated most of the ideas and methods of reform pedagogy. Practice-oriented activities, creativity, creative imagination, cooperative forms of work, group work, experimental learning and competency-based training are the new developments. In many respects, the tools of reform pedagogy are proving to be a suitable means of renewing

schools and bridging the gap between school education and life. The aim is to shape an active character, an intellectual, receptive individual, subordinate to society, able to find his place in society freely (self-directed) and to satisfy his interests. The learner can acquire practical and social experiences that enable him to transcend the framework of subject education and to find his place in life (Németh, 2003; Németh & Skiera, 1999).

It is a peculiarity of the development of reform education in Hungary (and in the Soviet-influenced region of Eastern Europe in general) that reform schools were not allowed to operate during the communist dictatorship between 1949 and 1989/90. Domestic education, following the Soviet model, did not allow the reopening of bourgeois-style reform schools after the Second World War. Therefore, we can talk about Hungarian reform or alternative schools again from the change of regime, in 1990.

3.2. Traditions of reform pedagogy

From the turn of the 20th century onwards, Hungarian pedagogy was open to the endeavours of the reform educational movement and followed international trends. Its ideas became popular mainly among elementary school teachers and the Hungarian elite. Teachers played an important role in the establishment of reform schools. The academic community appreciated Montessori pedagogy, which was more in line with the Christian national ideal, but also gave place to trends closer to the Folk School, the Work School and Folk and National Education. The late Herbartian school had a decisive influence on the development of the Hungarian pedagogical canon, with the Jena Experimental School playing a prominent role. Hungarian teachers were well acquainted with the ideas of T. Ziller, K. V. Stoy, W. Rein and his successor P. Petersen. It is important to highlight that Mór Kármán, who followed the late Herbartian model, had developed a complete gymnasium education by the end of the 19th century, and almost immediately after its introduction had to contend with internal debates and new reformist pedagogical trends.

In our country, the influences of *Paedology* and the *New School* movement found followers. In 1899, the psychologist László Nagy founded the first

Psychological Laboratory and the *Pedagogical Association* (1903) and was responsible for the foundation of the *Hungarian Society for the Study of Children* (1906), which had experimental psychology, data collection, pedagogy, law and child protection sections. The Society collaborated with the *Laboratory of Experimental Psychology and Medical Education* and the *Pedagogical Seminar* in Budapest. Courses on the New Education were organised for teachers and parents. They promoted the reform ideas in journals (*The Child, On the Way to the Future, The School of Action*).

The founders of the reform schools were mainly primary school teachers, who were able to take the initiative for innovations because of the emancipation of women. The reform schools were centred in the capital, Budapest, but they also operated in rural areas (e.g., Szeged). The reform schools were mainly aimed at the children of the middle class (children of bourgeois families/intellectuals), but they also organised schools for children from poor, working-class or peasant families (Pukánszky, 1999, pp. 219–221). The first reform school was the *New School* in Budapest, which operated from 1915 to 1949. Its founder, Emma Domokos-Löllbach, was based on children's self-improvement. The first Waldorf school, opened by Dr. Maria Nagy-Göllner in her villa (1926–1932), was popular. Erzsébet Bélaváry-Burchard studied Montessori education in Rome and founded the first *Montessori Kindergarten* in 1927, followed by the school a year later (1928–1941). Márta Nemes-Müller's role model was O. Decroly. In her *Family School*, she introduced project-oriented learning between 1915 and 1943. Júlia Vajkai promoted work schools with 13 institutions in the working-class districts of Budapest (Pukánszky, 2019).

In rural areas, the Pedagogical *College of the Szeged Civil School Teacher Training College*, which belonged to the University of Szeged, played a prominent role in the 1930s. The model school for teacher training and research in Szeged, the *Cselekvő Iskola* (School of Action), was run by Prof. Dezső Kratofil between 1929 and 1944. The school favoured student activity, self-activity, group work, and experiential learning. Its journal constantly gave space to the latest reform pedagogical endeavours and the latest debates. The first Department of Psychology was founded in Szeged. Psychological laboratories and a doctoral school made possible a wide range of psychological observations, measurements and studies (following Claparède, Decroly, Freud, and Jung). Under the leadership of Erzsébet

Dolch (Dombrádi), a *Garden School* (1936–40) was opened, which emphasized the importance of nature-oriented education and national education. The educational practices and methods of the school were in many ways related to the pedagogy of the *Family School* (Mészáros et al., 1999; Pukánszky & Németh 1996; Pukánszky, 2019).

3.3. Latent reform aspirations

Moreover, it is important to point out that during the period of so-called 'existing socialism' in Hungary, several domestic innovations (reforms) were tried out during the Kádár era. Some examples show that the reform spirit has been preserved. In the early 1960s, the first important innovation was the experiment of variational and complex mathematics teaching (1963), championed by Ferenc Lénárd.

In the 1970s, social psychology studies played a role in the background of pedagogical experiments. A more popular field was social attitude research. Of particular importance was the work of László Buzás, published in 1974 under the title *Group Work*, which built on the earlier reform pedagogical tradition (Buzás, 1974).

The Szentlőrinci school experiment, led by László Gáspár, began in 1969. Gáspár's school, in which he focused on community education, was influenced by Makarenko. He stressed the importance of production management, public activity in schools and leisure activities. He aimed to develop an 'all-round, harmonious human being' (a fashionable slogan of the time). According to him, the task of education was to prepare people for social practice (through the joint, complex acquisition of production, farming, learning and leisure activities). The experiment included differentiation and the elimination of disadvantage, and activity- and practice-oriented education, as opposed to book schools.

Until today, the upper secondary education system includes optional extra lessons in two subjects in the last two years before the school-leaving examination to help pupils continue their studies. In the 1970s, optional classes to support further higher education began to be tried out.

The great achievement of the 1970s (1973–76) was the programme of values mediation and skills development, which was named after József Zsolnai. The Zsolnai method placed great emphasis on the transmission of culture and values and the preservation of identity. Zsolnai based the teaching of the mother tongue on Vygotsky's concept of language, which he treated as a complex block of subjects, with a special emphasis on communication and speech training. His new methods were global reading and dramatization. The 1980s allowed schools to choose the Zsolnai method, and in-service training for teachers was organised.

Gáspár's experiment was community-based, while Zsolnai's was focused on the development of the individual. His differentiation was much more pronounced. The Work School was primarily aimed at directly developing the community, while the Zsolnai experiment was aimed at developing social competencies. In both models, a complex curriculum is present. It is worth mentioning that the spirit of the curricula they developed had a significant influence on the National Curriculum (1996), which was later developed and introduced. Complexity, the setting of minimum requirements, and the possibility of differentiation in the curriculum are a strong legacy of these experiments. A milestone was the 1985 Education Act, which paved the way for the preparation of the change of system by promoting alternativity and school autonomy.

The two experiments are the most elaborate new school models in the educational theory and philosophy of the period, aiming at the transformation of schools, and still influencing educational reforms today. In 1988, the first Hungarian alternative school opened, a four-form school called Kincskereső Iskola (Treasure Seeking School), headed by Márta Winkler, which focused on mathematics and mother tongue teaching.

Although ideologically it was a bastion of socialism and was intended to express the idea of community (collectivity), it could also implicitly reflect the needs of the individual (Dobos 2017; Kopp, 2002; Lannert, 2002; Langer-Buchwald, 2011; Torgyik, 2004).

4. Alternative education in Hungary after 1990

4.1. Legislative framework

The change of regime marked a turning point in the history of Hungarian education: the monolithic party-state structure of the one-party system was abolished, and ideological influence and compulsory teaching of the Russian language ended. The earlier attempts at reformation and the 1985 Education Act anticipated the establishment of a school system based on the rule of law. The Law on Freedom of Conscience, Religion and Churches was adopted in 1990, allowing churches and other legal entities the right to establish schools.

In 1993, a new education law was adopted, requiring preschool education from the age of five. Compulsory schooling continues from 6 to 16 years of age. The law authorises new types of secondary schools: 4, 6, 8 and possibly 9-form grammar schools. It anticipates the need for a framework National Curriculum (the first one was adopted in 1995). The law provides for church, foundation and private schools, and describes the requirement for public and private schools to be ideologically neutral. Also in 1993, a new law on higher education and a law on nationality were adopted.

In the Act CXC of 2011 on National Public Education, the category of schools with an alternative curriculum was introduced. The alternative framework curriculum can define specific features that differ from the general rules and can be implemented with the approval of the Ministry. Several alternative specificities may include issues, such as the curriculum and requirements taught; the preparation for state examinations; the compulsory weekly hours; the rules on fixed and informal working hours; the tools and equipment used; the methods; the management model; the organisation of education and teaching; and qualifications of the teachers accepted. With the new National Curriculum 2020, the Ministry has tightened up the operation of alternative schools. The framework curricula must reflect the curricular content of the National Core Curriculum broken down into two semesters per school year. In addition, the subject structure of the alternative curriculum may differ by up to 30 per cent from the curriculum issued by the Minister of the Interior responsible for education.

4.2. Eötvös University and Jena-Plan Workgroup

The Jena-Plan working group, for example, has played a prominent role in facilitating innovation processes. This initiative was a direct precursor to the university's specialised college for reform pedagogy founded by András Németh, head of the Department of Education at the Faculty of Teacher Training at Eötvös Loránd University. The participants decided to establish an association, which is now called the Hungarian Reform Pedagogical Association. The members of the association were introduced to the Jena-Plan programme by Prof. Dr. Theodor Klaßen, head of the Jena-Plan Research Centre at Justus Liebig University in Giessen.

The association has grown significantly in membership, with the establishment of rural member groups and the expansion of national and international contacts (e.g., with several Dutch and German national sister organisations). Members have volunteered to patronise school reform initiatives in Budapest and the countryside, working mainly in the peripheral districts of the capital and disadvantaged regions in the countryside. In addition to the meetings of the association, members also organised regular training, courses and study trips to provide a practical and theoretical basis for development work. In May 1995, contact was established with the Dutch Jena-Plan Association. In 1996, at the invitation of the German partner organisation, five members of the association took part in a week-long international conference and exchange of experience in Jena. In March 1996 again Th. Klaßen and Prof. E. Skiera held a one-week seminar and at the end of April, Prof. Dr. Evert Blaauwendraat (Hogeschool de Driestar, Gouda) gave a lecture on the Jena-Plan movement in the Netherlands.

The association has sought to develop active professional relationships with parents, practising teachers, and professional organisations in the school and education administration. The association maintained close links with the Department of Education, which provided the venue for the Association's meetings and training courses. Research on reform pedagogy has been carried out at the department since 1991, and at the same time, the domestic adaptation of the Jena-Plan pedagogy was initiated. The staff of the department have played a significant role in promoting the Jena-Plan concept and in developing its practice in schools. A Hungarian translation of The

Little Jena-Plan was published in 1998. In 2006, the members of the working group produced a teaching aid entitled Alternative and Reform Pedagogy in Practice. The first model schools for internal school developments were the Lenhossék Street School in Budapest IX, Nagykőrös, Zsámbék, Perbál, Keszthely and later Eger. Currently, the Jena-Plan programme is only operating in one school in Eger, but since 2000 the programme has been maintained continuously in one lower-grade class (Hungarian Reform Pedagogical Association, 2024).

4.3. Alternative Schools in Hungary

The pluralism of education has allowed for the emergence of different reform and alternative (foreign) schools in education at home. Alternative pedagogies are being revived in various forms and ways. On the one hand, the reform schools of the interwar period are being revived, the most popular of which are Waldorf and Montessori pedagogy.

Just before the change of regime, the Alternative Secondary School of Economics and the Treasure School of Márta Winkler (1988) opened their doors. The first Waldorf Kindergarten was founded in 1988 and the first School in Solymar in 1989. The revival of Waldorf pedagogy and anthroposophy was in great demand in Hungarian intellectual circles. The Waldorf Association was founded in 1997. Currently, more than 9500 children attend 46 Waldorf schools and 57 kindergartens in the country. Nearly 1000 teachers work in 103 institutions. The professional work is supported by 7 independent Waldorf teacher training courses.

The other more well-known and traditional reform method of education is Montessori. The use of the Montessori name in Hungary is not subject to authorisation, anyone can use it. Although the Hungarian Montessori Association strives to unite Montessori institutions, not all of them are members. Currently, 12 public and 12 private institutions are members of the association. The Hungaro-Dalton Innovation Association lists eight primary schools as partner institutions on its website. Freinet's pedagogy has been widely published and is mainly used in preschool education. Around 20 public kindergartens use Freinet's pedagogy (Dobos, 2017).

The Zsolnai method stands out among the "franchises" that can be adopted on a methodological basis. The most popular is the Values Mediation and Skills Development programme, which is found in the programmes of about 20 primary schools.

The Complex Instruction Programme (KIP), a programme adapted from Stanford University, was introduced to Hungary by Éva B. Nagy, the best-known follower of the Hejőkeresztúr model, and Emese K. Nagy. The model has been used since 2001 to help disadvantaged students to catch up. Further training has been developed to deliver the programme, and according to 2015 data, it is used by more than 21000 students and 1800 teachers.

Step by Step is also an American-developed child-centred programme that works in kindergartens and some schools. It is used by 200-220 teachers in around 40 institutions.

There are currently about 30-40 modern alternative schools in Hungary. Many of these were founded 20-30 years ago (originally as alternative schools) and are still operating as such (with an agreed alternative curriculum). These schools are Alternative Secondary School of Economics (AKG) - Budapest, Belvárosi Tanoda (secondary school) - Budapest, Burattino School (primary and secondary school) - Budapest, House of Children (primary school) - Budapest, Blue Bird (primary school) - Veszprém, Kincskereső School (six-grade primary school) - Budapest, Polytechnic School of Economics (secondary school) - Budapest, Kürt Foundation Secondary School - Budapest, Lauder Javne School (kindergarten, primary and secondary school) - Budapest, Palánta School (primary school) - Pilisvörösvár, Rogers Person-Centred School (kindergarten and primary school) - Budapest, Colour School (kindergarten, primary and secondary school) - Tata, Zöld Kakas Líceum (secondary school) - Budapest. Among the institutions, the Children's House, Blue Bird, and Treasure Seeker are state-run, and the others are private (foundations, associations).

Private alternative schools receive only a part of their budget from public funding (30-60%), with most of the remainder being borne by parents. Thus, some alternative schools are elite, while others are compensatory or "second chance" schools for socially disadvantaged pupils or pupils with learning difficulties.

The cost of schools paid for by parents or maintained with their help ranges from 10000 to 120,000 HUF per month, with the average in the capital being 70000 to 80000 HUF. Families of children who are home-schooled or in a private tutor group also must pay around the same amount. The number of pupils attending alternative schools is difficult to estimate. It is estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 children are attending alternative schools (Dobos, 2017).

5. Conclusion

Hungarian reform pedagogy has a significant tradition, notable for its reception efforts in the period between the two world wars. Official education policy mostly appreciated the conservative, Catholic Montessori pedagogy, but also paid attention to the Folk School and Work School models. Some of the attempts at reform before the change of regime anticipated the opening after 1990. Of the traditional reform models, Waldorf and Montessori pedagogy are the most popular. The Waldorf Association itself provides teacher training, while Montessori training is available at the Eötvös University. Many alternative schools are primary schools, but there are also schools from kindergarten to secondary school. The curricula of the Green Rooster and the Inner-City School are aimed at the narrowest target group, with a particular focus on pupils with special needs and those who have dropped out of the system. The Polytechnic, Rogers, Zsolnai and Green Rooster curricula are fully compatible with the National Curriculum. The biggest difference is with Waldorf: they differ significantly in curricular content, although they do take the National Curriculum into account.

Students in teacher training in higher education are learning, but not sufficiently, about reform and alternative schools. In domestic practice, the operation of alternative schools is severely limited by statutory regulations. They receive little financial support. They are mainly located in the centre of Budapest, in the capital and its agglomerations. They meet a real need, they fill a gap, and a much wider range of people than existing ones would require alternative pedagogical solutions.

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