Hungary's Assimilation Policy in the Fields of Culture and Education during the Horthy Era

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I. Ideological Background of the Cultural Policy during the Horthy Era (1920–1944)

We can discover stability and continuity in the cultural policy of the Horthy era in a sense that, during the quarter of a century covering the era[1], there were only two defining Ministers of Religion and Public Education: Kunó Klebelsberg between 1922 and 1931[2], and Bálint Hóman[3] between 1932 and 1942[4]. The personalities of these two ministers largely determined the main direction; their cultural policies were also not far from each other as Hóman consciously built on the framework laid down by Klebelsberg, of course supplementing it with his own line of thinking, also in response to the fast-changing social order. The situation was not easy for any of them, since Klebelsberg had to rebuild the school network in the infrastructural and social chaos caused by Trianon, while in the case of Hóman, the alliance with the 'Third Reich' and the World War provided the framework for his activity. Of course, these circumstances do not exempt them from disapproval of the ideological background of their politics.

When examining the foundations of the Hungarian assimilation policy, we must begin with the Christian-national ideology. This already appeared in the 19th century, and then defined more strongly the political thinking there during the first half of the 20th century. After the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, the country's territorial and population losses gave grounds for reorganising the institutional system of education as well as the concept of Hungarian cultural supremacy as ideological background. The essence of the idea of cultural supremacy was that Hungary could strengthen its position towards the surrounding nations by raising the standard of culture. According to this, the revision goals were the preservation of the Hungarians who lived outside of the country borders in the separated territories and the other nationalities living within the borders. In this logic, the strengthening of the Hungarians in general would be achieved if Hungary could prove to Europe that it

[1] The Horthy era is the period between 1920 and 1944 in Hungary, named after the governor and head of state, Miklós Horthy.

[2] Klebelsberg was Minister of Religion and Public Education between 16 June 1922 and 24 July 1931. See József Bölöny, Magyarország kormányai 1848–1975 [Governments of Hungary 1848–1975], Budapest 1978, 65 f.

[3] Bálint Hóman: Budapest, 29 Dec. 1885. – Vác, 2 June 1951; CV of Hóman see: István Haeffler, Országgyűlési Almanach az 1939–44. évi Országgyűlésről [Parliamentary Almanac on the National Assembly of 1939–44], Budapest 1940, 196–200.

[4] Hóman was Minister of Religion and Public Education between 1 Oct. 1932 and 14 May 1938 as well as between 16 Feb. 1939 and 3 July 1942. See Bölöny (note 2), 67–70.

is on a higher cultural and intellectual level than its neighbour countries.[5] The idea of cultural supremacy, manifested against the surrounding nations, proclaimed the intellectual superiority of the Hungarians against them, which can be criticised from an ideological point of view. But at the same time it is important to see that the losses of Trianon caused a huge trauma in the population, so Klebelsberg had to deal with this situation. Arguing with the intellectual supremacy despite of the territorial losses could have been seen as a consolation.

The concept of cultural supremacy was accepted by the Horthy system. The fact that the patriotic, revisionist and national education of children played an important role in strengthening the ideology mainly contributed to this. Ideological education began at school, this is also shown by the circumstance that teaching began and ended with the recitation of the Hungarian Creed[6]. So, the purpose of education was also to serve the goals of revision which were founded on the idea of cultural supremacy. In accordance with this, the curriculum published in 1925 stated that

> "the purpose of elementary schools is to educate religiously and self-consciously patriotic citizens for the country, who have the basic elements of general education and are able to utilise their knowledge in practical life."[7]

The Christian-national ideology and the national education relied on the results of language policy, since the strong 'Hungarianisation' at the turn of the century could provide a sufficient basis for the realisation of the ideology of cultural supremacy. At the end of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, this manifested itself in the acceptance and learning of the Hungarian language, so the population of different nationalities and denominations in the country could assimilate, regardless of their origin or religion. Education played a very important role in this as the learning of the Hungarian language was also connected to it, which could facilitate integration on the one hand and acceptance on the other, so the awareness of the language, culture, and the identification with it contributed to integration. Siklós can be shown as an example of this respective role of schools, one of the few settlements in Baranya where an Israelite school survived during the Second World War. The

[5] Ignác Romsics, Ellenforradalom és konszolidáció [Counter-Revolution and Consolidation], Budapest 1982, 224 f.

[6] The Hungarian Creed was written by Szeréna Sziklay (Elemérné Papp-Váry). This short poem became an unofficial national creed of Hungary in the Horthy era, it emphasised the mood of the nation after the losses of Trianon. Its text was the following: "I believe in one God, I believe in one homeland, I believe in one divine eternal truth, I believe in the rise of Hungary, amen."

[7] Katalin Fehér, Oktatásügy [Education], Szekszárd 2000, 461.

reason for this can be found, among other things, in the attitude of the population: According to contemporaries, the coexistence of the people was "not disturbed by anti-Semitic interludes" there. The local Jews became Hungarians very quickly, within two generations, both culturally and linguistically, and in this process the influence of the school was considerable:

> "The school not only taught the language of the ruling elite, but also communicated the values of the Hungarian nation state, introduced Hungarian culture, and all of this helped to develop Jewish-Hungarian, Hungarian-Jewish identity."[8]

The ideology was also reflected in the expectations placed on teachers. After Trianon the teachers moved from the detached Hungarian areas to the motherland, so this career path (also) became overcrowded, the selection became sharper, for instance by investigating whether the teachers met their duty to fulfil the requirements of Christian education. Examining this criterion, they also looked back to the previous years when the expectation itself had not been specified.[9] As a consequence, nursing had become more accented in schools than teaching. The expectations towards the teachers also pervaded the text of the oath they were to take, which is especially evident at the end of the oath: "I will raise the youth entrusted to my care in the love of the Hungarian homeland and in the spirit of religious moral."[10]

II. Cultural Policy of Minister Kunó Klebelsberg (1922–1931)

Klebelsberg's cultural policy supported the stability of the government system, but for its implementation it was also necessary to settle the country's economic situation, so in practice it could be implemented after that, in the second half of the 1920s. In his first years as a minister, he focused on higher education and science – based on German models[11] –, and later on public education. Klebelsberg initiated

[8] Ilona Radnóti, Siklós zsidósága a 18–20. században [The Jews of Siklós from the 18th until the 20th Century], in: Imre Gábor Nagy (ed.), Baranyai történelmi közlemények 2. A Baranya Megyei Levéltár Évkönyve 2006–2007 [Historical Publications of Baranya. 2nd Yearbook of the Baranya County Archives 2006–2007], Pécs 2007, 265, 289.

[9] Péter Tibor Nagy, A növekvő állam árnyékában [In the Shadow of the Growing State], Budapest 2011, 249.

[10] Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Baranya Megyei Levéltára [National Archives of Hungary Baranya County Archives] (MNL BML) VI. 502. 1496/1942, 1614/1942, 1940/1942, 2017/1942, 2090/1942, 2254/1942, 2802/1942, 3753/1942, 3241/1943.

[11] See Gábor Ujváry, Klebelsberg Kuno tudománypolitikája [Kuno Klebelsberg's Science Policy], http://real.mtak.hu/118355/1/31111-ArticleText-31599-1-10-20181030.pdf.

the establishment of elementary schools based on the concept of cultural supremacy to deal with the uneducated crowds and to improve the Hungarian economy through the people's knowledge. He kept in mind that "all healthy public education system must be based on the everyday elementary school and all further education and similar issues are only secondary questions."[12] He had initiated enormous improvements, such as the construction of thousands of new school classrooms and teachers' apartments in just a few years.[13]

In addition to the ideological background, the infrastructural situation also created a basis for these developments, however, these two issues were connected as the effects of Trianon influenced both of them. Hungary's territorial losses after the First World War not only strengthened the Hungarian national consciousness and thus the concept of cultural supremacy, but also had the consequence that a significant part of the school network got outside of the Hungarian borders. Klebelsberg highlighted this in the justification of the Act VII of 1926 on the Establishment and Maintenance of Village Schools, adding that this unfortunate situation of the schools' location was already justified by the national policy before the First World War:

> "Before the war, the government primarily wanted to achieve national goals with the elementary schools, and therefore the state elementary schools in particular were predominantly organised in the now separated area."[14]

The quoted lines appear after the Trianon decision as a criticism of the earlier education policy, since it led to the fact that the institutional system within the Hungarian borders after 1920 showed significant deficiencies. Klebelsberg focused on the Hungarian population, so the emphasis during his ministry was not on the assimilation and 'Hungarianisation' of nationalities, but on strengthening the Hungarian population by enhancing its intellectual level. The assimilation policy was more pronounced in the second half of the Horthy era.

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[12] Quote from Klebelsberg in: József Huszti, Gróf Klebelsberg Kunó életműve [The Lifework of Count Kunó Klebelsberg], Budapest 1942, 242.
[13] Romsics (note 5), 211; Fehér (note 7), 460.
[14] 1926. évi VII. törvénycikk indokolása a mezőgazdasági népesség érdekeit szolgáló népiskolák létesítéséről és fenntartásáról [Justification of Act VII of 1926 on the establishment and maintenance of public schools for the interests of the agricultural population], https://uj.jogtar.hu/#doc/db/77/id/92600007.TVI/.

Regarding public education institutions, the system set up by the Public Education Act of 1868 was primal at the beginning of Klebelsberg's ministry, so the state, municipalities, associations, and private individuals could maintain schools, but at the same time, the right of denominations to establish and maintain schools was not revoked. In the academic year of 1924/25, just before the school building program, there were a total of 6.241 public schools, of which 1.724 were maintained by state and municipalities, and 4.517 by denominations (including 2.814 Roman Catholic schools).[15] The state's contribution to school expenses reached a turning point during the Horthy era: Not only were state and municipal schools supported, but denominational ones as well, so regardless of the nature of the school, the state supported public education institutions. The churches supported the Christian-national education that formed the basis of the cultural policy of the era, therefore their role in schools increased through religious-moral education. Regarding the relationship towards denominations, it is worth mentioning that Klebelsberg specifically emphasised that he did not insist on the state school type, but explained: "Where there is sufficient willingness to sacrifice, I am ready to support our historical churches in establishing new denominational schools."[16]

Regarding maintenance costs, the *Ministry of Religion and Public Education* covered part of the teachers' salaries as well as a significant part of the building costs of schools and teachers' accommodations, including denominational schools. According to Klebelsberg, the ideological justification for this was that "the nurturing of the religious and moral powers of the nation is primarily entrusted to the hands of our historic churches."[17] By the end of the 1920s, support for these denominational schools exceeded the amount spent on other types of schools, for example, in 1927/28 the state spent 13.889.620 pengős on state schools and 15.872.889 pengős on denominational schools.[18] In 1942, József Huszti noted – according to Klebelsberg's activity – that "he also gave state aid to the national school fund of the Israelite denomination, which was not a politically sound gesture even in that time."[19]

[15] Andor Csizmadia, A magyar állam és az egyházak jogi kapcsolatainak kialakulása és gyakorlata a Horthy-korszakban [The Development and Practice of Legal Relations between the Hungarian State and the Churches in the Horthy Era], Budapest 1966, 125 f.
[16] Kunó Klebelsberg, Falusi népiskoláink kiépítése [Building our Rural Folk Schools], Néptanítók Lapja 1925, 1, 2.
[17] Csizmadia (note 15), 125.
[18] Csizmadia (note 15), 125 f.
[19] Huszti (note 12), 252.

III. Cultural Policy of Bálint Hóman (1932–1942)

In the 1930s, – based on the concept of cultural supremacy and language aspects – the idea of national education played a central role in the policy of Bálint Hóman as Minister of Religion and Public Education. The opinion about him in this age was quite positive[20], however, the opinions about him today are still divided.[21] Nevertheless, there is no doubt that he made permanent achievements as a Minister of Culture: Additionally to the reorganisation of higher and secondary education, the focus on public education policy, the introduction of an eight-grade primary education, the reform of curriculum and the development of the institutional system of public education are also linked to his name.[22]

In the period of Hóman, especially during World War II, cultural policy – as well as other areas of state – was strongly influenced by the nationalist ideology of the Horthy regime, therefore the examination of these aspects is not negligible. In particular the so-called Jewish Laws and the relationship with nationalities determined the direction of the regulation of public education as well. The question of assimilation and integration in the context of national education should be examined and understood along these aspects. Hóman stated that

> "the oldcomers were still somewhat aligned with the Hungarian public spirit, the newcomers were completely isolated, and therefore the Hungarians considered them as foreigners. The role played by these newcomers in subversive movements, in the development of destructive currents of ideas, the spirit of the Jewish intellectuals, who were opposed to the traditions of the Hungarian past and our Hungarian ideals, to the thinking of our society and to the ideals of Christianity, their excessive economic assertiveness and the power aspirations based on it, have also today given rise to the anti-Jewish sentiment prevailing throughout Europe. Like other peoples, Hungarians do not wish to

[20] See for example: Gyula Drozdy, Gróf Teleky Pál – Hóman Bálint [Count Pál Teleky – Bálint Hóman], Néptanítók Lapja 1939, 149–151, 150.

[21] See Miklós Mann, Oktatáspolitikusok és koncepciók a két világháború között [Education Policies and Concepts between the Two World Wars], Budapest 1997; Gábor Ujváry, Hóman Bálint és népbírósági pere [Bálint Hóman and his Trial at the People's Court], Budapest 2019; Gábor Ujváry, Történeti átértékelés: Hóman Bálint, a történész és a politikus [Reassessing History: Bálint Hóman, the Historian and the Politician], Budapest 2011.

[22] See Bálint Hóman, Magyar sors – magyar hivatás [Hungarian Destiny – Hungarian Vocation], Budapest 1942; Bálint Hóman, Művelődéspolitika [Education Policy], Budapest 1938; Mann (note 21), 79–126.

> assimilate, but rather exclude the Jews, who are trapped in there like a foreign body, from their national life."[23]

Conversely, the archival documents prove that, in contrast to nationalities in Hungary, the Jews had already become Hungarian within a generation or two, spoke Hungarian, and declared themselves Hungarian in terms of their identity. However, according to the leading political trend, even before Trianon, the assimilated Jews formed part of the basis of the Hungarian majority against the national minorities. After that, they were "no longer needed", since the nationalities' territories were annexed and a Hungarian majority could have allegedly been established in the country even without the Jews. Still, practical examples show that this was nowhere near the case: On the one hand, the Hungarian majority had not been established in many places in the country. For example, in Baranya county there were a larger number of Germans, Croatians and Serbs in many settlements. On the other hand, regarding denominational schools, it should be noted that in the 1940s, the Israelite denomination was the only one in Baranya whose children, without exception, had Hungarian as their mother language.[24]

To further illustrate the attitude of Hóman, in 1935, in the House of Representatives, he said the following, accompanied by cheers, applause and approval from all sides:

> "Allow me to deviate from my subject for a moment and to warn, very briefly but quite firmly, and with full awareness of my responsibility, all members of this Parliament and all members of the nation through the Parliament, that the encouragement, continuation and further development of denominational discord, which is unfortunately not unusual in our times, will lead to the destruction of this nation. As a historian and as the Minister responsible for religious affairs, I ask my fellow Members of Parliament to take efforts throughout the country to avoid this issue, because with religious thought

[23] Bálint Hóman, Magyar sors – magyar hivatás [Hungarian Destiny – Hungarian Vocation], quoted by: Magda Jóború, Köznevelés a Horthy-korszakban [Public Education in the Horthy Era], Budapest 1972, 172.

[24] This is clear based on archival data for the year 1943: János Laki, A népiskolák fejlődése, illetve stagnálása a két világháború közötti Baranyában [The Development and Stagnation of Schools in Baranya between the Two World Wars], in: János Szita (ed.), Baranyai helytörténetírás [Local History of Baranya], Pécs 1983, 213, 220.

> falls national thought, and whoever undermines religious thought in others, undermines the religious life of his own denomination."[25]

1. Reorganisation of Public Education Administration and the Effect of the 'Jewish Laws' on Schools

The concept of national education brought with it centralisation and the growing need for supervision. The implementation of the ideas of national education, as well as the 'Jewish Laws', required the constant control of teachers; the question of reorganisation of the educational administration was thus linked to the achievement of ideological aims. The Act VI of 1935 on the Administration of Public Education by Hóman was created in this spirit, whose purpose was

> "[…] ensuring the unity of national culture and education, enforcing comprehensive and universal principles of national education in all types of schools, so that the development of national life can be governed in the right direction and the nation can emerge from the now unfortunate economic, social, political and the underlying spiritual crisis."[26]

According to this act the country was divided into eight district directorates (for example, the district directorate of Pécs included Baranya, Bács-Bodrog and Somogy counties, and the cities of Baja and Pécs).[27] The royal district directors were directly under the Minister of Religion and Public Education,[28] thus responded and reported to him, knowing the local conditions. The competence of the school district directors extended to all educational institutions belonging to their district, regardless of the type and maintainer of the school.[29] Hóman emphasised that "the idea of nursing in education needs to be more highlighted than it has been in recent decades, especially in our youth."[30] Accordingly, the foundations of national education had to be guarded by controlling the teachers' work, so the most appropriate tool for creating an ideology was to reorganise the education administration so that the system could be centralised through the district directors, who were directly

[25] Képviselőházi napló 1935. I., 1935. április 29. – 1935. május 25. [Protocol of the House of Representatives, 1935. vol. I., 29. April 1936 – 25 May 1935], 112.
[26] Jóború (note 23), 203.
[27] Act VI of 1935, 1. §. https://net.jogtar.hu/getpdf?docid=93500006.TV&targetdate=&printTitle=&referer=1000ev.
[28] Act VI of 1935, 3. § (1).
[29] Act VI of 1935, 3. § (2); Elemér Kelemen, Hagyomány és korszerűség. Oktatáspolitika a 19–20. századi Magyarországon [Tradition and Modernity. Educational Policy in the 19th until the 20th Century Hungary], Budapest 2002, 50 f.
[30] Jóború (note 23), 204–206.

under the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. Since then, the professional work of the teachers was closely monitored and subjected to continuous qualifications.[31] By controlling the teaching activity, the state gained the opportunity to ideologically influence the daily life of education; the denominational schools were also under state control in this aspect.[32]

This mentioned connection between national and religious-moral education and the reorganisation of the educational administration provided an opportunity for the more effective implementation of the provisions of the so-called Second Jewish Act (Act IV of 1939 on the Restriction of the Public and Economic Progression of Jews). It concerned schools, since the school district director – as the extension of the authority of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education – was able to gain the necessary declarations and documents of origin from the teachers faster. § 1 of the Act defined in detail who were to be considered as Jews,[33] based on race and not religion anymore. § 5 described regulations on schools:

> "Jewish teachers in elementary and secondary schools shall be made to retire by 1 January 1943 […] or shall be dismissed with dismissal pay in accordance with the relevant rules […]. These rules are not to be applied for Israelite denominational teachers and employees of the organisations, institutions and institutes of the Israelite denomination. The Minister of Religion and Public Education is entitled to regulate by decree the number, the organisation, the operation, the supervision of the Israelite schools and seminars of religious teaching, and the teaching of Hebrew subjects in general."[34]

According to the documents of the School Inspectorate of Pécs and Baranya County in the National Archives of Hungary Baranya County Archives, under the jurisdiction of the School Inspectorate of Baranya, details about Israelite schools in this period can be found in two cases certainly, in Mohács and Siklós. In addition to these, an archive-based data gathering indicates that in 1943, there were schools maintained by the Israelite denomination also in Pécs and Pécsvárad. The Israelite school of Pécs had 6 classrooms in 1922, 4 male and 2 female teachers, 258 students, from which there were 250 Israelites, 1 Roman Catholic, 7 Lutherans, and all of them were Hungarian by nationality. Although smaller, the school still existed in

[31] Kelemen (note 29), 50–54.
[32] See Act VI of 1935, 8. § (1)–(2).
[33] Act IV of 1939, 1. §. https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=93900004.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D42.
[34] Act IV of 1939, 5. §.

1943: 4 classrooms, 2 male and 3 female teachers, 103 students (102 Israelites and 1 Roman Catholic). However, that year the teaching was likely paused since teachers were recorded as doing labour service. In Pécsvárad, an Israelite school still functioned in 1943, although only with 3 students and 1 teacher, while in 1922 there were 10 Israelites and 20 Roman Catholic children in that school.[35] An Israelite school with 1 classroom stood in Baranya County in 1922, but it had been closed early on because it was noted that "on 1. IX. 1922 the teacher has left" – the circumstances remain unknown.[36] In 1944, – as it is clear from the letter sent to the Ministry of Religion and Public Education by the school inspector of Pécs and Baranya – all Israelite schools were registered in the jurisdiction of the school inspector as schools that did not function, including the institutions of Pécs, Pécsvárad, Mohács and Siklós.[37]

The change in the size of the Israelite school of Mohács can be well observed based on archival documents. In 1922, it had 4 classrooms, 70 students (52 Israelites, 11 Roman Catholics, 2 Calvinists, 5 Greek Orthodox, according to nationality 59 Hungarians, 5 Germans, 1 Croatian, 5 Serbians), 2 male and 1 female teacher; the language of teaching was Hungarian.[38] This number decreased by the early 1940s. It is known from a letter dated August 26, 1941 that in Mohács – in addition to the Roman Catholic, the Calvinist and the Serbian Greek Orthodox – there was another Israelite school with 1 classroom and 29 children. The number of compulsory school children in the city was 1290, most of whom attended the Roman Catholic school – with 28 teachers it was quite large –, 78 students visited the Calvinist, 1 the Greek Orthodox school.[39] In 1943, the Israelite school still existed with 1 classroom and 31 students, from which all of them were Israelites and Hungarians by nationality. The teacher was doing labour service,[40] thus, like in Pécs, the children probably did not receive education here at that time.

Correspondence between ecclesiastical and secular authorities regarding the vacancy of the teaching position provides insight into the affairs of the Israelite school in Siklós.[41] Based on a contemporary handbook about the County of Baranya

[35] Laki (note 24), 244 f.
[36] Laki (note 24), 236.
[37] MNL BML VI. 502. 2773/1944.
[38] Laki (note 24), 240.
[39] MNL BML VI. 502. 1675/1942.
[40] Laki (note 24), 240.
[41] MNL BML VI. 502. 2899/1933.

published ten years after Trianon – regarding only the elementary school level – a Roman Catholic school existed in Siklós in 1929. The date of founding is unknown, its director was Vilmos Schmidt. A Calvinist school operated since 1860, under the leading of Gyula Toók; and an Israelite school, since 1853, with Lilly Schwelb as the director.[42] By the end of the 1800s, more than 100 children were taught at this school, however, in the 1920s, the number of pupils in the school decreased, leading to the withdrawal of state support. Nevertheless, the denominational community continued maintaining the school, making financial sacrifices itself.[43] The decline continued: In 1922, the school functioned with 2 classrooms, 1 male and 1 female teacher, 37 Hungarian students (25 Israelites, 6 Roman Catholics, 2 Calvinists, 4 Greek Orthodoxes)[44], and in 1931, there were 16 students, and ultimately between 1943 and 1944 only 11.[45] At that time, only 1 teacher was holding the lessons, though the teacher himself was absent – attending labour service – provable since 1943, maybe even earlier. The language of teaching had been Hungarian through the years[46], which could be important from the point of view of national education; nevertheless, there were other considerations in this era as well. László Jakobovics, who was elected to the Israelite elementary school in Siklós as a teacher in 1933, was dismissed in 1936, not because of his origin – also given that this could not have been done in connection with an Israelite-maintained school anyway – but because of tuberculosis, which he was diagnosed with in 1935 and because of which, contrary to expectations, he was unable to return even the following year.[47]

Where there were no Israelite denominational schools in the early 1940s, Israelite pupils attended schools maintained by the state, associations, municipalities or other denominations (mainly Roman Catholic or Calvinist).[48] In 1943 in Baranya County, there were 208 pupils of the Israelite denomination, 147 of whom attended their own denominational schools in Pécs, Pécsvárad, Mohács or Siklós, and 61 attended other schools scattered around. Compared to the data available from 1922,[49] the

[42] Károly Matolay/ Oszkár Zsadányi, Baranya vármegye Trianon után tíz évvel [Baranya County Ten Years after Trianon], Mohács 1930, 46.
[43] Radnóti (note 8), 317–319.
[44] Laki (note 24), 248.
[45] Radnóti (note 8), 317–319.
[46] Laki (note 24), 248.
[47] MNL BML VI. 502. 908/1936.
[48] Laki (note 24), 221–253.
[49] See Laki (note 24), 221–253.

number of children enrolled in schools decreased during these twenty years, but the reasons for this decline are beyond the scope of this research.

According to the 11.172/1940 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the implementation of 5 § (1) from the Act IV of 1939 on the Restriction of the Public and Economic Progression of Jews in the denominational schools, the restriction had to be applied to the teaching staff of the educational institutions maintained by the Christian denominations as well, so that Jews were not only kept from applying to schools of the state or the municipality, but also from the schools of other denominations. The regulations made it clear that a Jew could not enter the service of the state, borough, municipality, any other public body, public institution or public utility. In order to enter the service, the applicant had to prove that he or she could not be considered a Jew based on the Act IV of 1939 and did not fall under the restrictive provisions of the 1 § (6) of the Act.[50] There are numerous examples verifying this in the archival records. The text of the statement was as follows:

> "With the burden of criminal law requirements, I declare that I am not considered Jewish based on the 1 § of the Act IV of 1939, and I am not subject to the restriction contained in 1 § (6) of the quoted Act."[51]

This declaration was usually requested along with the taking of the teacher's oath, as the regulation stipulated that the proving must take place before entering the public service in any case of hiring; the election, contract, assignment, or enrolment of an employee notwithstanding this provision, was to be annulled. Therefore, the applicant's origin had to be proven in advance. Accordingly, in addition to the declaration, it was required to send a birth certificate of the teachers concerned to the Minister of Religion and Public Education, proving that they were born before October 1, 1895, as a member of a Christian denomination. If they were born after that, they had to prove with birth certificates that both of their parents were born

[50] A m. kir vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter 1940. évi 1.172. Eln. számú rendelete, a zsidók közéleti és gazdasági térfoglalásának korlátozásáról szóló 1939: IV. t.-c. 5. §. (1) bekezdésében foglalt rendelkezésnek az egyházi hatóság alatt álló tanintézeteknél való végrehajtásáról. [11.172/1940 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the Implementation of 5 § (1) from the Act IV of 1939 on the Restriction of the Public and Economic Progression of Jews in the Denominational Schools].

[51] MNL BML VI. 502. 2032/1940, 1313/1942, 3001/1942, 3241/1943.

as members of the Christian denomination.[52] Based on the practice of Baranya, in addition to submitting the birth certificate and documents certifying Christianity,[53] the birth and marriage certificates of teachers' parents and sometimes grandparents were regularly requested to prove their origin.[54]

Mention of a proof of origin could be found, for example, in the letter stating that the teacher's parents' marriage certificate could be accepted in such an "irregular form and content", from which it can be inferred without the full knowledge of the circumstances that the document did not have to be formally filed but that the content was likely enough to prove their origin.[55] Similarly, there was a problem with proving the origin of a particular teacher in Pécs, as she was unable to submit a Christian letter of her grandfather on her mother's branch despite repeated urgings, but given that her grandfather's place of birth was in a territory annexed to Romania, this part of the certificate was waived and the marriage certificate declared as sufficient evidence. When submitting the teacher's documents to the Public Education Committee of the Administrative Committee of Pécs, the school inspector also confirmed that "it can be established from the documents of origin presented by the applicant that no remark can be made against the application of the mentioned person based on the prohibitions contained in 5 § of the Act IV of 1939". Additionally, he also asked the competent authorities to refrain from presenting the grandfather's document.[56]

The Act IV of 1939 on the Restriction of the Public and Economic Progression of Jews contained restrictions on schools, though Israelite denominational schools were not under the effect of these provisions. Based on the documents of the Baranya County Archives of the Hungarian National Archives, this exception concerned four Israelite schools within the jurisdiction of the Baranya School Inspectorate: Mohács, Siklós, Pécs and Pécsvárad. However, the restriction extended to schools of other denominations (especially Roman Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran

[52] A m. kir vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter 1940. évi 1.172. Eln. számú rendelete, a zsidók közéleti és gazdasági térfoglalásának korlátozásáról szóló 1939: IV. t.-c. 5. §. (1) bekezdésében foglalt rendelkezésnek az egyházi hatóság alatt álló tanintézeteknél való végrehajtásáról. [11.172/1940 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the Implementation of 5 § (1) from the Act IV of 1939 on the Restriction of the Public and Economic Progression of Jews in the Denominational Schools].
[53] MNL BML VI. 502. 564/1943, 3241/1943, 3539/1943.
[54] MNL BML VI. 502. 3001/1942, 2143/1942, 3753/1942, 564/1943, 3241/1943, 3539/1943.
[55] MNL BML VI. 502. 618/1942.
[56] MNL BML VI. 502. 3539/1943.

and Greek Orthodox), as well as municipal, community and public schools, in which Jews could not be employed. Therefore, these teachers had to prove their (not Jewish) origin, and countless examples can be found in the archives about which documents were necessary. According to the practice in Baranya County, these documents had been regularly requested, as the origin of the teacher had to be verified by the educational authorities before being employed. Yet, no example can be found of a teacher not being employed if his or her origin was not properly verified, nor was he or she later deprived of his or her job for such a reason. Based on the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the educational authorities of Baranya tried to act fairly in the given circumstances, and sometimes they were satisfied with less evidence of the teacher's origin than the rules officially required.

2. Impacts of Hungarian-German Cooperation on Cultural and Nationality Policy

During the Horthy era, the representatives of Hungarian cultural policy – the Minister of Culture, politicians and teachers – emphasised the importance of sharing their thoughts with the allied countries on national education, Hungarian cultural supremacy and the German influence on these. Between 1933 and 1943, they regularly published in the German language and in various German newspapers. These included the *Zeitschrift für Osteuropäisches Recht, Zeitschrift der Akademie für Deutsches Recht* and the *Ungarische Jahrbücher*, but writings on education and cultural policy were mainly published in the *Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest* (hereinafter *Monatschrift*). In their essays, the authors emphasised the benefits and importance of the relationship with the German nation, and tried to formulate their ideology in a German-friendly spirit.

The Hungarian-German Society (*Ungarisch-Deutsche Gesellschaft*) was founded in 1939 under the leadership of Prime Minister Kálmán Darányi. The Society's activities focused on German-Hungarian cultural and friendly cooperation, in the spirit of which it organised scientific lectures, book presentations and patronaged musical as well as theatrical cultural programmes. The *Monatschrift* was directed to the German readership in order to introduce them to the "uniqueness and values of Hungarian culture". The journal was being published between August 1940 and September 1944; until 1941 under the shorter title *Monatschrift der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft*

in Budapest. The journal was edited by Béla Pukánszky (1895–1950), a well-known literary historian and member of the *Hungarian Academy of Sciences*.[57]

The analysis of the studies published in the *Monatschrift* should begin with an article by Hóman, the Minister of Religion and Public Education himself, entitled "Deutsch-Ungarische Schicksalsgemeinschaft" (German-Hungarian common fate) (1941).[58] As a historian, he began his argumentation with the history of the appearance of the German and Hungarian peoples in Europe:

> "Two fundamentally different, so far hostilely separated species of people came into a neighbourly relationship [...]. According to the classical principle of diplomacy in the ancient Mediterranean empire, the neighbour is always considered an enemy, while his neighbour is considered a friend. Hungarian history contradicts this principle, because wedged between three or four powers, the Hungarians naturally had to make friends with one of these powers, and they also found the trusted friend they were looking for in the neighbouring nation to the west."

And this western neighbouring nation meant nothing other than the Germans. According to Hóman, "if the common interests in politics and economy are recognised, if cultural interrelations are added, the neighbourly relations can change to friendship."[59] Hóman detailed the common development of both nations and noted that it was an indisputable fact "that German-Hungarian relations have developed for a thousand years under the sign of political common fate, reciprocity in culture and economy."[60] Hóman summarised the significance of the German-Hungarian community of destiny in a very pathetic tone:

> "The German-Hungarian friendship is a historical necessity, a century-long course, a meaningful fact. It may perhaps be marred at times by misunderstandings, annoying external interferences, artificially fed or tactlessly drawn antagonisms, but its strings cannot be cut, for friendly cooperation is in the

[57] Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon 1000–1990, http://mek.niif.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC11587/12479.htm.

[58] Bálint Hóman, Deutsch-Ungarische Schicksalsgemeinschaft, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 65.

[59] Hóman, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 65, 71 f.

[60] Hóman, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 73–75.

> high interest of both peoples. The German Empire, which is the aggregate of German power, is the natural backup of Hungary; the strong and unified Hungary, on the other hand, is the outpost and rampart of Germanism toward the East. Germans and Hungarians, however different these peoples may be in number and power, are natural companions in the Western cultural community. To cherish and cultivate their friendship, to deepen the ties, to promote mutual understanding, and to keep away any disturbing influence, is one of the noblest duties for every conscious German and for every good Hungarian, for the society of both peoples and for their state leadership."[61]

Géza Paikert (1902–1990) was a lawyer, historian, university professor and judge. From 1933, he worked in the *Ministry of Religion and Public Education*, and in 1936 he became Deputy Chief of the *Foreign Cultural Relations Department* of the Ministry. When he got the position, Hungary had several cultural institutions abroad: the *Collegium Hungaricum* in Berlin, Hungarian departments in Vienna, Berlin and Rome, Hungarian lectorates in Vienna, Munich, Leipzig, Berlin, Stockholm, Paris, Nijmegen, Amsterdam, Warsaw, Poznan, Krakow and Vilnius. Paikert established Hungarian lectorates in Stuttgart, Tübingen, Bologna, Florence, Milan, Pisa, Venice, Padua, Fiume, Trieste, Naples, Basel, Uppsala, Lund, London, New York as well as Lisbon and has organised Hungarian institutes in Geneva, Stockholm and Lisbon. After the German troops invaded the country in 1944, he worked with the Swedish Red Cross to save Hungarian Jews. In 1946, he emigrated to England, then to the United States, where he was a lecturer at Le Moyne College and later at Lemyne University. Paikert assisted in the settlement of Hungarians in New York State after the revolution in 1956.[62]

Paikert wrote an article in the *Monatschrift* which was of particular relevance to the subject: As a senior officer in the competent department of the Ministry, he was the one who analysed in detail the 1936 cultural convention between Germany and Hungary ("Das Deutsch-Ungarische Kulturabkommen" [The German-Hungarian Cultural Convention], 1941).[63] In addition, in his writing published in the same journal, he introduced the German readership to other cultural conventions concluded

[61] Hóman, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 83.
[62] Alajos Paikert, Életem és korom [My Life and my Age], in: Sándor Oroszi (ed.), A Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum Közleményei 1998–2000 [Publications of the Hungarian Agricultural Museum 1998–2000], Budapest 2001, 159, 207 f.
[63] Géza Paikert, Das deutsch-ungarische Kulturabkommen, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 27.

by the Hungarian state, such as the Japanese-Hungarian Cultural Convention.[64] During his term of office, cultural agreements with Finland, Estonia and Bulgaria were also signed.[65]

The signatories of the Hungarian-German cultural pact were on one side Hóman as Hungarian Minister of Culture, on the other side Bernhard Rust, Reich Minister of Education and Joseph Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda. The Hungarian-German Convention on Intellectual and Cultural Cooperation, as the pact was called officially, signed in Berlin on 28 May 1936, was enacted by the Hungarian legislature in Act V of 1937.[66] "But what is the purpose of such cultural agreements?", Paikert asked and answered as follows: "summary and organisation of all cultural relations existing between two friendly states in science, education and art." Although this was the fourth in a series of similar agreements after the Polish, Italian and Austrian ones, Paikert said that "this agreement is ahead of all similar conventions".

He explained the importance of the German-Hungarian convention – in line with what the Minister of Culture had said – by pointing out that "lasting mutual relations and German cultural influences can be observed in Hungarian cultural history". He also gave historical examples:

> "Since the foundation of the first German universities in the 14th century, the German influence became more and more prominent. [...] Catholic students, up to the time of Peter Pázmány and even beyond, frequently attended the German Catholic universities in addition to Rome, while the German Protestant universities participated in the education of Protestant intellectuals. [...] These traditional relations have been maintained until the latest times, and although Maria Theresa forbade the Protestant youth to study abroad, the German universities had numerous Hungarian students also in the 18th

[64] Géza Paikert, Das japanisch-ungarische Kulturabkommen, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 159, 159–162.

[65] Paikert (note 62), 207 f.

[66] 1937. évi V. törvénycikk a szellemi és kulturális együttműködés tárgyában Berlinben 1936. évi május hó 28. napján kelt magyar-német egyezmény becikkelyezéséről [Act V of 1937 on the Enactment of the Hungarian-German Convention on Intellectual and Cultural Cooperation, signed in Berlin on 28 May 1936].

> and 19th centuries, and even today our youth is drawn to the German cultural centres by the tremendous rise of German science."[67]

According to Article I of the Convention, both governments should care for and maintain cultural and scientific institutions serving the development of Hungarian-German cultural relations.[68] These institutions were mentioned by the Convention and Paikert, too: In the academic year 1934/1935, the *Collegium Hungaricum* opened in Berlin, "where since then about 500 scholarship holders – Hungarian scientists and young researchers – have been working." In this context, he mentioned the *Department of Hungarian Language and Literature* established by the Prussian government in 1916 in Berlin, which along with the Hungarian Institute attached to it, became the centre of German-Hungarian academic relations in a short time. Similarly, Germany had a number of cultural institutions in Hungary, among which Paikert pointed out the five German language and literature departments in Hungarian universities, which were chaired by Hungarian citizens, the visiting lecturer in Budapest Dr. Hans Freyer, Professor of History and Sociology at the University of Leipzig, and the *German Cultural Institute*, which had just opened in Budapest.[69]

Pursuant to Article II, governments had agreed to employ lecturers to teach the language of the other state in their universities and colleges.[70]

> "The ever-increasing interest in Hungarian language and literature led to the appointment of a Hungarian language lecturer at the University of Berlin and at the University of Munich 10 years ago, and in the fall of 1935, Hungarian language lectures were also offered at the University of Leipzig."[71]

On the Hungarian side, "there are German lectorates at the Universities of Budapest, Szeged, Debrecen, Pécs and the Eötvös College in Budapest" – Paikert confirmed in his article, explaining the measures taken to implement the convention.

Articles III–XII were about exchange programmes open to professors, students and researchers. Article VII was of particular significance as it described the

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[67] Paikert, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 27 f.
[68] Act V of 1937, Article I.
[69] Paikert, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 28 f.
[70] Act V of 1937, Article II.
[71] Paikert, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 29.

Alexander von Humboldt Foundation,[72] which is still active today. Paikert did not elaborate on the Foundation's activities, but added:

> "The number of German scholars, scientists and researchers working in Hungary is between 10 and 15 per year, their management is taken care of by the Budapest Office of the German Academic Exchange Service, which always provides a considerable number of German scholarships to Hungarian students as well."

Other articles of the convention included provisions on the bilateral exchange and translation of scientific and literary works, publications, official reports and communications, and on the promotion of the work of Hungarian and German writers and artists in accordance with the convention.[73] The *Monatschrift* itself also served this purpose, as it published – in addition to scientific and official articles – poems by well-known Hungarian writers and poets, such as Sándor Petőfi, Mihály Vörösmarty, Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi, Gyula Krúdy, Sándor Márai, Ferenc Móra, Endre Ady, Attila József, Gyula Illyés, Gyula Juhász and Árpád Tóth. In the period between the two world wars, it was common for law journals, but even more so for poets and writers, to give their first names in German in their articles in the *Monatschrift*. Paikert defined the object of the cultural convention as follows:

> "cooperation in the subfields of cultural institutions, professors, university institutes, lectorates, exchanges of professors, scholars, researchers and fellows, study trips, summer courses, events of art exhibitions, relations between libraries and archives, management of scientific research, music, theatre, film, radio, tourism and sports."[74]

After the historical and ideological justification of the German-Hungarian cultural relations and the resulting cultural cooperation laid down in the convention, it is worth examining one other article from the *Monatschrift*, which deals with Hungarian cultural policy and the narrower topic of this study, i.e. the education policy and assimilation attempts. József Willer (1884–1972) worked as a choirmaster and clerk before the First World War, and after 1919, he became vice-mayor of Lugos in

[72] Act V of 1937, Article VII.
[73] Act V of 1937, Article XIV–XVII.
[74] Paikert, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1941, 32.

Transylvania.[75] He was one of the founders and publishers of the Romanian-Hungarian journal *Magyar Kisebbség* (Hungarian minority), which aimed to, among other things, promote democracy and the protection of minority rights. He also published speeches from Hungarian MPs in German, French and Romanian, which he considered important for German readers. It was partly published as a press product of the *Hungarian Party of Romania*, whose office was also headed by Willer in Bucharest from 1926.[76] With his perfect knowledge of Romanian, he represented the interests of the Hungarian minority in the Romanian parliament until his retirement in 1938.[77]

Willer wrote about the relationship between national thinking and the Hungarian school ["Der nationale Gedanke und die ungarische Schule" (The National Thought and the Hungarian School), 1943][78]. According to him, "the concept of the national idea is so closely bound up with the Hungarian school that they are almost synonyms". Willer discussed the dichotomy between the concepts of 'nation' and 'people', which do not have the same meaning everywhere. He argued that in some states, such as France or Germany, the two could be synonymous, since these countries are inhabited by "a linguistically and historically united people", thus "the concept of cultural-social nation and the concept of political-historical nation overlap." However, the situation was different in countries with mixed populations such as Hungary:

> "It is easy to understand, therefore, that Hungary has always sought to reconcile the great national differences, and has always tried to point out the unifying bonds, the similarities and commonalities, in short, to build a nation, i.e. a people ethnically and linguistically different but historically, politically, economically and culturally united." In his view, "the humane character of Hungarian nationalism (in addition to the natural inclinations of the Hungarian character) is mainly thanks to a strong factor: the Hungarian school."[79]

[75] Sz. Ferenc Horváth, Elutasítás és alkalmazkodás között – A romániai magyar kisebbségi elit politikai stratégiái (1931–1940) [Between Rejection and Accommodation – Political Strategies of the Hungarian Minority Elite in Romania (1931–1940)], Csíkszereda 2007, 289.
[76] Horváth (note 75), 61.
[77] Horváth (note 75), 289.
[78] József Willer, Der nationale Gedanke und die ungarische Schule, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 376.
[79] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 376 f.

Establishing the essence of the Hungarian school and its national work, Willer quoted the thoughts of Gyula Kornis, university lecturer and cultural politician of the time, on the Hungarian form of nationalism:

> "The nation is essentially a community of values, and the national spirit is the most effective community of the conception of values. A proper culture has never been able to develop without a national community, since culture, historically speaking, is precisely the independent and unified spirit of the nation; conversely, however, no national community can develop without culture, since a large group of people becomes a nation by the fact that in its culture a certain traditional community of values and spirit becomes conscious. Culture and nation therefore form an inseparable unity, and the nation is primarily a spiritual product."[80]

In connection with national education, Willer quoted a curriculum from 1887, according to which

> "the aim of Hungarian language teaching is primarily to transmit national feeling and thought to the next generation, in the noble and morally refined manner that is always recognizable in the precious pages of our literature."

It is important, though, not to influence young minds in a one-sided way, so he adds that

> "on the other hand, the real value of teaching any foreign language is to introduce young people to the representatives of a culturally valuable foreign spirit, to express their proper appreciation and thereby to develop a consciousness of the common interests of humanity."[81]

To further illustrate this point, he quoted the thoughts of a school principal who underlined the importance of learning about other nations as well as one's own country in order to identify, by comparison, the qualities of which one can be proud, but also the shortcomings that need to be improved. At the same time,

[80] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 378.
[81] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 378 f.

> "patriotic feelings can never go so far as to ignore what is human in general, because that would mean losing its moral justification. The one-sided, exaggerated nationalism which errs on this path is called chauvinism."[82]

In the field of national education and Hungarian schools, Willer spoke about "oblivious and often reluctant, ungrateful fellow peoples" as internal enemies of the Hungarian nation, and emphasised that:

> "These fellow peoples based their complaints precisely on the Hungarian school policy, which in similar circumstances may be called unique and remarkably generous in a national sense, especially if we take into account that in the second half of the 19th century, after many and great constitutional struggles, Hungarians gained a free hand in controlling their own destiny and yet did not follow the example of the dynastic policy of absolutely destroying the character of the fellow peoples."[83]

In the second half of his article, Willer summarised the history of Hungarian schooling from the time of St. Stephen onwards. In this context he examined the question regarding the language of education. After Latin, the Ratio Educationis of 1777 – the first systematic regulation of education in the Habsburg Empire – introduced teaching in the mother language and German, and then Joseph II made German the official language throughout his empire.

> "His provisions naturally provoked the most intense protests from all the peoples of his empire – especially the Hungarians – and the Latin language maintained its position until the time of the European wars of independence [...]. After the Compromise, the Hungarian school system [...] was built up along national lines and the act of 1868 regulated the cultural freedom and educational opportunities of the peoples of Hungary so generously that this act has not been excelled in its prudence and humanity to this day."[84]

He then described the educational reforms of his own time, praising the work of Klebelsberg and Hóman and drawing the attention of German readers to its importance. With regard to the former, the establishment of the so-called type A, B and C schools should be highlighted, which played a role in terms of language of

[82] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 379.
[83] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 379.
[84] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 380 f.

education: In type A schools, teaching was carried out in a minority language, in type B schools in a mix of different languages, and in type C schools in Hungarian. The reorganisation of this system took place under Hóman, when the so-called unified system and then the full mother language education were introduced – the practical implementation of which is the subject of the next chapter. Among Hóman's reforms, Willer mentioned the changes introduced in the education administration, in particular the role of the royal district directors[85], which was described in an earlier chapter of this paper.

3. Assimilation Efforts Involving Nationalities in the Field of Public Education

As the writings on cultural policy and their publication in German, especially Willer's reflections, showed that the assimilation policy was also manifested towards the nationalities that remained in the country after Trianon. Practical examples illustrate the central education policy through the work of Ferenc Balázs, rapporteur of minority education. Due to the situation of the schools he reviewed, the local development of nationalities' education and the difficulties of implementation, especially with regard to the so-called unified education system and then the full native language education, can be more comprehensively understood.

Ferenc Balázs[86] served as a rapporteur of minority education directly under the administration of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education between 1938 and 1944. Processing the archival documents, the work of Ferenc Balázs clearly emerged from a person with firm moral convictions and who consistently represented them, which can also be seen by dint of the characterisation of him:

> "He was very careful to always demonstrate an objective attitude even in sensitive matters. In his statements, he was far from any magnified – and back then sometimes indeed fashionable – nationalism, and he advocated the right to education in the mother language. Of course, this right also applied to native Hungarian speakers where the Hungarians were in the minority [...] Balázs understood the right to learn in the mother language to extend to all

[85] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 381 f.
[86] Rezsőháza, 17. 1. 1887 – Pécs, 15. 9. 1971. MNL BML XIV. 70., Ifj. Balázs Ferenc 1983. június 21-én kelt életrajzi vázlata Balázs Ferencről [Biographical Sketch of Ferenc Balázs, dated 21 June 1983, by Ferenc Balázs Jr.].

> nationalities, although at that time the nationality question was mainly a German issue, due to the growing organisation of the Volksbund."[87]

The following examples are going to provide concrete evidence that each of the aforementioned statements are correct. It is important to highlight this since, when examining the practice, we cannot forget the human factor either: The legal policy intention and the local practice are not necessarily in line; due to the lack of voluntary legal compliance by the population and partly also due to the resistance of local authorities, the idea coming from above can appear with significant distortions, which are only revealed if an honest and practical person like Balázs captures these moments.

Balázs worked in public education before his appointment, therefore he already had an insight into local conditions; with his assignment, he was released from his previous position as head of class and school inspector so that he could perform his new duties more effectively. The ministry designated the schools he was obliged to inspect. The reports addressed to the ministry – without the contents being made known to anybody outside the ministry – had to be forwarded through the Pécs school district directorate. Apart from the fact that he had to submit his reports through them, he could not disclose their contents to them "even if the report, case or work relates to the Pécs school district".[88] He had to announce his visits to the school district directors in advance, but he did not have this obligation towards the directors of the schools. Accordingly, he carried out his visits for the most part unannounced in order to get an authentic picture of the situation.[89] Considering his status in the organisational system of public education, Balázs served directly under the ministry, where he submitted his reports with the exclusion of all intermediate authorities and from where he directly received his instructions.[90] According to his role, he essentially was a direct connection between the local organisational system, especially teachers and parents, and the ministry.

Almost the whole area of Transdanubia (so-called Dunántúl) belonged to his competence. He was responsible for minority schools, so he visited various areas over the years in most of Baranya, Somogy, Tolna, Bács-Bodrog, and sometimes Zala,

[87] MNL BML XIV. 70. Dr. Rajczi Péter 1983. június 21-én kelt levele Balázs Ferencről [Letter of Péter Rajczi dated 21 June 1983 about Ferenc Balázs].
[88] MNL BML XIV. 70. 112.027/1938 VKM IX.ü.o.
[89] See MNL BML XIV. 70. 136/1939, 11/1940, 96/1940, 6/1941, 105/1941, 16/1942, 55/1943, 6/1944, 34/1944.
[90] MNL BML XIV. 70. 137/1941.

Pest, Fejér and Veszprém (during territorial revisions).[91] In his work, Balázs dealt with minority schools in general, and it should be emphasised that he considered Hungarians to be a minority if the Hungarian population, compared to another, had a smaller number in a given settlement. Hence, his work can be divided into two main parts: the schools for nationalities and the schools for dispersed Hungarians. Among the minorities, the Germans made up the largest part, but in Baranya and Bács-Bodrog, for example, there was also a large number of Serbs and Sokac (Croats). His work can be further differentiated accordingly, but this paper only deals with the German minority.

He had to report every half year on the results of the inspection of the schools; in these, he explained the relations between nationalities and the situation of the schools visited during the given period. Detailed work plans were also attached to them[92], whose implementation required the approval of the ministry.[93]

a. *The Unified Education System (since 1935)*

Balázs' task in the first half of his office was to monitor the implementation of the unified education system introduced in 1935. At that time, the former A, B, and C type schools, which had been established in 1923 during Klebelsberg's ministry to promote national minority education, were abolished with the 11.000/1935 Prime Ministerial Decree. In the schools following the unified system, the Hungarian language and national studies subjects (Hungarian speaking and comprehension, reading and literacy, writing, expression, grammar and spelling, geography, history, citizens' rights and duties, singing), as well as physical education, were taught in Hungarian, the other subjects, i.e. the so-called mother language and geography subjects (speaking and writing in the mother language, geography, reading, writing, expression, spelling and grammar, singing), as well as mathematics, nature and economics (counting and measurement, natural history, nature and chemistry, economics and household, health, drawing and needlework), were taught in the children's mother language.[94] As a result, the teaching of the mother language had been given more

[91] MNL BML XIV. 70. 112.011/1938 IX.ü.o.
[92] MNL BML XIV. 70. 112.027/1938 VKM IX.ü.o.
[93] See MNL BML XIV. 70. 115/1941, 10/1941, 43/1941, 42/1941, 32.389/1941 Eln.E., 63/1941, 114/1941.
[94] A m. kir. minisztérium 1935. évi 11.000. M. E. számú rendelete, a 4.800/1923. M. E. számú kormányrendelet 18. §-ában a népiskolákra vonatkozóan foglalt rendelkezések végrehajtásáról [11.000/1935 Prime Ministerial Decree on the Implementation of the Provisions on Public Schools of Article 18 of 4.800/1923 Prime Ministerial Decree], § 1.

emphasis than before. Since 1914 (according to the Religion and Public Educational Ministerial Decree 1.797/1914.), religious and moral education had to be provided to students in their mother language.[95]

Although the decree clearly stated that the process of reorganisation of the schools into the unified system must be completed before the start of the academic year 1938/1939,[96] the process was not smooth in most places, as Balázs reported it, starting from his first report.

In the course of reviewing minority schools and inspecting the unified education system, Balázs visited 55 schools in Bács-Bodrog, Baranya, Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun, Somogy, Tolna and Zala Counties between March 1st and June 15th of the 1938/1939 school year, paying special attention to "explaining the methods and tools of national education and the correct, parallel use of the two languages in minority schools" – he highlighted these aspects later as well and expanded them with further details. He usually concluded his reports with the political attitude of the German population:

> "In the minority issue, the elements professing extreme or even impermissible principles [...] are multiplying. In their eyes, the issue of minority education, which was so important before, has now shrunk significantly in importance, because they are already much further in their desires. [...] The Hungarian intellectuals of the village and town, in addition to the implicit recognition of the official foreign policy line, in the depths of their souls are losing the sympathy they had for the German nation before and very often express this openly in their private opinion. As unpleasant as it sounds, this is the true picture of the situation. [...] I consider the teaching staff in minority schools to be unconditionally trustworthy from the point of view of national loyalty, and I have not experienced a phenomenon that gives cause for definite concern anywhere in a concrete form. Yet – exceptionally – in one or another member of the youngest age group – perhaps due to the domestic

[95] A m. kir. vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter 1914. évi 1.797. eln. számú megkeresése valamennyi főtisztelendő egyházi főhatósághoz, a hitoktatás nyelvéről a népoktatási tanintézetekben [1.797/1914. Religion and Public Educational Ministerial Decree on the Language of Religious Education in Public Schools].

[96] A m. kir. minisztérium 1935. évi 11.000. M. E. számú rendelete, a 4.800/1923. M. E. számú kormányrendelet 18. §-ában a népiskolákra vonatkozóan foglalt rendelkezések végrehajtásáról [11.000/1935 Prime Ministerial Decree on the Implementation of the Provisions on Public Schools of Article 18 of 4.800/1923 Prime Ministerial Decree], § 2.

> Arrow Cross movement – I felt an almost overflowing admiration for the system and the leader of the Third Reich, which phenomenon deserves at least quiet attention."[97]

It can be felt in his lines that he was always careful not to show a biased attitude, he expressed himself cautiously, his reports were not characterised by extremities – neither in the German National Socialist nor in the Hungarian patriotic direction.

Based on his next summary report of the 1939/1940 school year up to January 31, 1940, Balázs visited 42 schools in the counties of Baranya, Somogy and Tolna during the examined period. He mentioned the German population, whose

> "mood has essentially calmed down compared to the agitated state experienced during the summer and they are now quiet in their minority demands, the reason for which is the ever-present resettlement rumours."[98]

He saw the reason for this in the fact that the financial situation and living conditions of the German population were appropriate, which they would not have been willing to give up through their resettlement.

In the period from February 1 to June 15, 1940, 63 schools were inspected by him in the counties of Baranya, Bács-Bodrog, Fejér, Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun, Somogy, Tolna, Veszprém and Zala, taking into account similar aspects as before. During the transition to the unified system, the resistance of local authorities and teachers against implementing measures of the central educational policy continued to be a problem, which supports the previous assumption that national and local ideas did not necessarily meet:

> "In the narrow perspective of their local relations, they do not see the actual significance of the issue, but, as more patriotic than anyone else and seeing everything better than the government, by forming and voicing the local public opinion according to their own ideas, they prevent the implementation of the government's well-conceived moderate plan, which so comfortingly and harmoniously serves the national feeling and language as well as minority's mother language needs."[99]

[97] MNL BML XIV. 70. 136/1939.
[98] MNL BML XIV. 70. 11/1940.
[99] MNL BML XIV. 70. 96/1940.

Based on his further reasoning, it is clear that the local vision in most settlements did not agree with the government's ideas, which significantly complicates the implementation of any legislation.

Based on the report on the first semester of the 1940/1941 school year, Balázs visited 33 schools until January 31, 1941, exceptionally all of them in Baranya County. As in the previous semester, he began his report on unified schools by saying that the transition is hindered by the attitude of local leaders and teachers, that they think of the system as temporary, to which they must adapt for a short time but do not believe in its long-term survival. He wrote: "Many of them only see it as a function of daily foreign policy."[100]

During the 1940/1941 academic year, between February 1 and June 30, 1941, he inspected 64 schools in the counties of Baranya, Fejér, Somogy, Tolna, Veszprém and Zala. Regarding the fact that most of the schools that had been visited at that time were in villages with a German majority, Balázs explained in relation to them that the "intimate spiritual meeting" between the people and the teachers were missing in most places due to the activity of the *Volksbund*; the situation was getting worse, which could have been improved by mutual compromise. He analysed the possibilities of this further, including the role of Hungarian language education in the local Hungarian-German relationship, however, still looking at the situation impartially and objectively:

> "I do not consider this impossible, if the Germans within the Volksbund organisation do not confuse the people's spirit with the patriotic spirit, the intelligence of our village leader can get rid of the deeply rooted and yet false belief that the teaching and learning of the Hungarian language is the only guarantee of national loyalty and patriotism among our fellow citizens who speak other languages, that we have done everything with it, and nothing without it."[101]

This attitude was not general at that time, when a nationalist approach characterized the expressions both at higher political levels and in the leading personalities of local communities, such as teachers. Contrary to the general view, this case – similar to every quotation from Balázs – also shows that Balázs tried to distance himself from

[100] MNL BML XIV. 70. 6/1941.
[101] MNL BML XIV. 70. 105/1941.

this, while at the same time expressing his opinion diplomatically, avoiding any direct opposition to the nationalist orientation.

The following case is an example of the symbolic manifestation of national and patriotic education in the relationship between the Hungarian and German population: In every room in the school in Ujfutak, in addition to the picture of Governor Miklós Horthy, the picture of Adolf Hitler was placed in the same size and in a same kind of frame. It is important to emphasise that this had taken place at a Hungarian state school, which shades the issue a bit, because in another school, which was a German school maintained by the *Volksbund*, this attitude could be justified with the stronger connection to the German leader. But in this state school it appeared against the Hungarian national ideology – in addition to the fact that even in the case of the *Volksbund*-school the symbolism was not welcomed either. Balázs expressed his respect for the *Führer* in accordance with the actual policy, and then added that

> "it is impossible not to see the protestive intention and the attitude of the residents of the village, which cannot be indifferent to our Hungarian national thinking and feelings, even less reassuring".

In his view, it would have been easier to justify the situation if a framed picture of the other great ally, the *Duce*, had been there as well. He discussed the issue with the school director, who was unaware of the display of the picture, only realising afterwards that the *Volksbund* had placed it in the classrooms in his absence. The fact that the director felt that he could not even remove the pictures because the population would drive him out of the village greatly symbolised the public mood at the time. Regarding the political alliance, Balázs acted carefully; he did not give instructions to take down the picture but reported the situation to the minister and asked him for a decision. His problem had apparently not been with the picture itself, since it was also found in other schools (though on a smaller scale and less prominently), but rather that he saw the Hungarian patriotic spirit diminished by such an image of the German leader in contrast to the Hungarian governor.[102] According to a note on the school's inspection report, the display of the picture was in line with the attitude of the local population, as "the teachers, together with the inhabitants

[102] MNL BML XIV. 70. 104/1942.

of the village, profess and represent the German National Socialist attitude within the *Volksbund*."[103]

b. The Full Native Language Education (since 1941)

Balázs's task was to observe the introduction of the unified education system, then to monitor the transition to a full native language education starting from 1941. Apart from the fact that the implementation was incomplete, the introduction of the uniform system did not prove to be sufficient from the minorities' point of view, so it was necessary to introduce a full (in this case German) native language education. The Ministry had already informed Balázs of the plan of introduction on January 3, 1941, when he noted in a letter of review of the Roman Catholic denominational school in Németbóly that the teaching in the school "neither corresponds to a pure Hungarian language school nor to the unified educational system."[104] In response to this, the minister informed that he did not consider it necessary to take any measures to settle the situation for the time being, "because a new educational system is expected to be introduced on the basis of the Vienna Agreement between the German Reich Government and the Hungarian Royal Government."[105] The agreement mentioned was the Hungarian-German *Volksgruppen* Agreement of 30 August 1940 (which was concluded on the same day as the so-called Second Vienna Decision),[106] which contained a relevant provision in point I.4. regarding school affairs. In this norm, Hungary made a commitment to Germany that

> "All children of the minority group should have the opportunity to receive an education at ethnic German schools under the same conditions that apply to Hungarian schools, namely at secondary, middle and elementary school, as well as at technical schools."

As already described, the fulfilment of this obligation constituted nothing new, since the possibility of German-language education existed before, but its exact imple-

[103] MNL BML XIV. 70. 104/1942.
[104] MNL BML XIV. 70. 141/1940.
[105] MNL BML XIV. 70. 173.307/1940 Eln.E.
[106] A m. kir. minisztérium 1940. évi 8.490. M.E. számú rendelete, a Bécsben, 1940. évi augusztus hó 30-án kelt magyar-német kisebbségi megállapodást tartalmazó jegyzőkönyv közzétételéről [8.490/1940 Prime Ministerial Decree on the Publication of the Protocol containing the Hungarian-German *Volksgruppen* Agreement signed in Vienna on 30 August 1940]. See the German and Hungarian text here: https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/OGYK_RT_1940/?pg=3388&layout=s&query=8.490.

mentation required the regulations,[107] which will be described in this chapter. The ministry also informed Balázs of the same[108] in the case of the Roman Catholic denominational school in Gyód, where there were only 7 Hungarian mother tongued students and 56 German, but all of them spoke Hungarian. Balázs reported that the school chairman and the teachers wanted to replace the unified system with a pure Hungarian language teaching, but the children, although they spoke Hungarian, used German to communicate with their parents and with each other, and therefore "pure Hungarian teaching is not justified, but some form of German mother language teaching is necessary".[109]

The introduction of the full native language education will only be briefly mentioned as an end result, since it was no longer about assimilating the non-Hungarian population (as was the case with the previous language education policy), but a response to the demands of minorities, especially the German nationality, in line with foreign policy relations.

The introduction of mother language education was based on the unified education system, and the schools operating under it had to be transformed into a full native language education system. Based on the Prime Ministerial Decree 700/1941, in these schools, the subjects that were previously taught in Hungarian had to be taught in the native language of the children belonging to the concerned minorities. However, it was also possible to maintain the former unified system if parents requested so; the Minister of Religion and Public Education, in agreement with the Prime Minister, was entitled to decide on this, taking local conditions into account.[110] Examples of the maintenance of the unified system as opposed to full mother language education can be seen in the archival documents, and Balázs' work was particularly important in this sense, since it was thanks to him that the "local conditions" could be taken into account.

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[107] Imre Mikó, Nemzetiségi jog és nemzetiségi politika [Nationality Law and Nationality Policy], Budapest 1944, 465–467; Stefan Stelzer, Ungarns Verwaltungsentwicklung seit dem Abschluß des Wiener deutsch-ungarischen Volksgruppenabkommen [Hungary's Administrative Development since the Conclusion of the Vienna German-Hungarian *Volksgruppen* Agreement], Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte 1941, 348, 349 f.

[108] MNL BML XIV. 70. 173.024/1940 Eln.E.

[109] MNL BML XIV. 70. 131/1940.

[110] A m. kir. minisztérium 1941. évi 700. M. E. számú rendelete, a nyelvi kisebbségekhez tartozó gyermekek népiskolai oktatásáról [700/1941 Prime Ministerial Decree on the Education of Children belonging to a Language Minority in Public Schools].

This decree was supplemented and clarified by the 25.370/1941 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the education of non-Hungarian mother language children in public schools, which introduced full mother language education in certain schools. The decree specified the schools where full native language education was to be introduced, and a list of these schools was attached to the decree. In total, 372 schools had been converted to a full native language education system. The number of such schools visited by Balázs was a significant amount of the national total, as most of the schools were in the Transdanubian region. Balázs' reports can be considered highly representative also in a national context based on all these data. Among the counties, Baranya stood out with 108 schools named in the regulation. Tolna was in second place with 62 schools, followed by Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun county with 45 schools, then Veszprém with 24, Sopron 24, Győr, Moson, Bratislava 20, Fejér 17, Somogy 14, Bács-Bodrog 13, Vas 13, Komárom 12, Csanád, Arad, Torontál 6, Esztergom 6, Nógrád 3, Bars and Hont 2, Zala 2 and Bihar 1 school. Regarding the maintenance of the schools, most of those that had to continue operating with full native language education were denominational schools; this meant that in Baranya, besides 81 Roman Catholic, 15 Evangelical and 1 Reformed (97 denominational schools in total), only 9 municipal and 2 state schools were affected by the reorganisation.[111]

According to 2 § (1) of the decree – also in line with the Prime Ministerial Decree 700/1941 – it was possible to maintain the unified system (i.e. a mixed minority mother language and Hungarian language education) instead of introducing full mother language education for the schools included in the list attached to the decree. This was possible on the basis of a request from the parents of at least twenty compulsory school children concerned, which had to be submitted to the Minister of Religion and Public Education by August 25, 1941, through the competent school inspector.[112] Pursuant to (2) of the same paragraph, the minister could, on the basis of the mentioned application, order a secret ballot with the participation of the parents of children whose mother language is not Hungarian in order to

[111] A m. kir. vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter 1941. év 25.370. számú rendelete, a nem magyar anyanyelvű gyermekek népiskolai oktatásáról [25.370/1941 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the Education of non-Hungarian Mother Language Children in Public Schools].

[112] A m. kir. vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter 1941. év 25.370. számú rendelete, a nem magyar anyanyelvű gyermekek népiskolai oktatásáról [25.370/1941 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the Education of non-Hungarian Mother Language Children in Public Schools], 2. § (1).

determine the school's educational system.[113] It is important to note that this case of secret ballot, which could be ordered on the basis of an application, concerned the parents of non-Hungarian mother tongue children who had the discretion to decide whether they wished to provide their children with a full native language education, thus strengthening their connection to their nationality and their identity, or whether they felt the need to maintain a unified system in which their children could continue to learn certain subjects in Hungarian, thus potentially facilitating their future life in Hungary. There were pros and cons to both options, which is why leaving the decision up to parents was an important step, giving them a freedom of choice. Based on the archival documents, this freedom of choice was exercised in practice, with parents deciding on the language of education in schools through local votes. Of course, they could have been influenced by the Hungarianisation or the minority, but these influences were equally present on both sides. Stronger was the activity of the *Volksbund*, that could put pressure on parents to choose the full (German) mother language schools.

In the case of the Roman Catholic denominational school in Hercegszentmárton, we see an example where the minimum number (i.e. the request of the parents of at least 20 compulsory school children) laid down in the regulation had not been exceeded. In 1941, the *Volksbund*, which was quite active in keeping an eye on schools that had to convert to full German mother language education, complained about the school, stating that

> "despite the fact that the relevant legal provisions stipulated that pure German teaching should be introduced, or at least that a temporary education should be introduced, everything remained as it was."

In response, the ministry urged a transition to German education, adding that the application to maintain the mixed teaching system, although a request had been submitted in accordance with the decree, had been signed by only 19 parents of school children in Hercegszentmárton, and could therefore not be taken into account.[114]

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[113] A m. kir. vallás- és közoktatásügyi miniszter 1941. év 25.370. számú rendelete, a nem magyar anyanyelvű gyermekek népiskolai oktatásáról [25.370/1941 Religion and Public Education Ministerial Decree on the Education of non-Hungarian Mother Language Children in Public Schools], 2. § (2).

[114] MNL BML XIV. 70. 2886/1941, 1618/1941.

A related issue to the votes in Baranya is the examination of reports on the behaviour of the teacher in Gorica. In December 1941, a complaint was made about this teacher because of his violent Germanisation intentions. The cautious political attitude is shown by the fact that there were several letters exchanged between the ministry, the school district directorate and the school inspectorate, in which they tactfully tried to clarify the case. The local notary gave a detailed report on the teacher's behaviour: He had repeatedly tried to persuade the children to join the *Volksbund*; he had told the people and the children to only greet him in German ("Sieg, Heil"). Despite the mixed teaching, he taught Hungarian reading and writing only once a week in school and everything else in German. When a population census was held in the village, he tried to influence it by explaining how to fill in the nationality section, stressing that "no one should be ashamed to write in German, they are the first nation in the world and should be proud of it". He banned Hungarian speech in school and made the children take a German song book. During the secret ballot on the language of teaching, he had earlier called on the *Volksbund* representative and together they tried to influence parents to vote for German; despite this, 16 out of 20 votes were for Hungarian, but he still decided to teach in German – although it turned out that, when the votes were examined, there should not have been a ballot at all in Gorica, as it had been removed from the list of designated municipalities. It is possible that the teacher had a role in this, as this report indicates that after the vote he "travelled to Budapest and appealed the voting procedure". Following the complaint, there were reports stating that at the beginning of the next school year, the school was left without a teacher because he had left his job "without resigning from it."[115]

To provide mother language education, it was necessary to have teachers who were linguistically competent. In order to ensure this, the ministry required the school inspectorates to report on each teacher by name: those who were unable to provide mother language education and could not be employed to run the Hungarian section of the school and those who were unable to provide minority language education due to a lack of adequate language skills and should therefore be reassigned to another station. Taking these into account, it was organised how many state assistant teachers should be assigned to which public state schools, and how many assistant teachers in the case of non-state schools, so that mother language education can be provided without disruption.[116] Balázs had taken the same aspects into

[115] MNL BML XIV. 70. 2807/1942.
[116] MNL BML XIV. 70. 134.910/1939 IX.ü.o., 171.684/1940 Eln.D.ü.o., 33.357/1941 Eln.E.

account in both his summary and ad hoc reports. The reports provide a mixed picture: In several places the necessary language skills were available, and in some cases, teachers had promised to improve their skills but there were also schools where the teacher was unable to teach in the minority language, so that a relocation had to be carried out and a new teacher needed to be hired.[117]

As far as language skills are concerned – from the Hungarian side – it is interesting to mention the schools maintained by the *Volksbund*, where the problem was not the lack of German language skills but the lack of Hungarian language skills, which teachers were expected to have even in a full German-language education system. In his report on the inspection of the *Volksbund* school in Kercseliget on 11 March 1943, Balázs reported that the students were studying in two groups, one lower and one upper, with two teachers, one of whom only had a poor level of Hungarian and was only planning to obtain his teaching qualification at the end of the current school year. He found the German mother language teaching to be satisfactory, but the Hungarian language skills of the children were declining rapidly. In accordance with this, he stated that

> "the Hungarian language and the Hungarian national idea, in my opinion, do not receive the kind of warmth that can be expected and demanded from any kind of public school in our sweet homeland."

In detailing this, he explained that there was no Hungarian coat of arms on the school building or in the classrooms, the picture of Adolf Hitler in the classroom was much more prominent than that of Governor Miklós Horthy, and the map of the German Empire was also conspicuous. There was no Hungarian reading at all in upper classes, there was no Hungarian reading book at all. In contrast, in addition to the German textbooks used in Hungary, there was also a German reading book and a mathematics book. He warned the teachers and the head of the school about the deficiencies, but added:

> "Nevertheless, I see the need for a thorough and consistent monitoring of the further operation of the school by the controlling authorities, firstly, to see whether the aforementioned deficiencies are eliminated, and secondly, whether in their further educational work the teachers show greater readiness

[117] See MNL BML XIV. 70. 1463/1939, 1896/1940, 1097/1941, 292/1942, 1855/1943, 1605/1944 tanf.

> for integration into Hungarian national life and thus their overall operation meets the requirements of patriotic education."[118]

In addition to the language obstacles, the teachers also had difficulties because of the fact that they had repeatedly clashed with the local *Volksbund*. Activities on both sides that negatively affected the German-Hungarian relations with the local population were encountered. The teacher from Mecsekfalu was so confronted with the organisation that the *Volksbund* lodged a complaint against him, stating that the teacher was "a well-known enemy of the *Volksbund* and does not spare its leaders, defaming and verbally abusing our association wherever and whenever he has the opportunity. He even raises his voice against the leaders of the 'Großdeutsches Reich', calling them liars and peace-breakers."[119] In contrast, 345 of the 429 pupils in the Veprőd state school were native speakers of German (as well as 76 Hungarians, 2 Serbs, 1 Croatians, 5 Ruthenians). The high number of German children was linked to the fact, as Balázs commented on the results of patriotic education in December 1942, that "in the Hungarian section the education was faultless, while in the German section the teachers had to contend with the often undesirable statements of the parents and the *Volksbund*."[120]

As a result of the *Volksbund*'s activities, a strong German orientation was noticeable in several settlements. There were cases of Hungarian parents sending their children to German schools, claiming to be German when they were certifiably not. The pressure of the *Volksbund* was quite effective on them. Since parents were entitled to determine the mother language of their children, they decided accordingly to enrol them in German classes. The *Volksbund* members took advantage of this to target parents with their activities, trying to germanise not only Germans but also Hungarians. It should be mentioned that a part of the German population, despite the *Volksbund*'s activities, wanted to learn Hungarian, given that it was in their interest to do so for economic reasons and for their way of life in Hungary. This is best exemplified by the case of Bonyhád, where the justification for not converting to full mother language education was, according to the unanimous statement of the school chairman, the director and the teachers, the expressed wish of both the German and the Hungarian population to maintain the unified system. The local

[118] MNL BML XIV. 70. 22/1943.
[119] MNL BML XIV. 70. 34/1941.
[120] MNL BML XIV. 70. 169/1942.

industrial and commercial conditions required the rising generation to know both languages, and it also increased their chances of further education in the region.[121]

IV. Summary

The issue of developing the institutional system of public education significantly determined the area of Hungarian cultural policy in the period following the First World War. As a result of the territorial losses, the reorganisation of the public education system became necessary from an administrative position. Besides this, the country did not have an acceptable number of public education institutions, and even the condition of the existing schools was not satisfactory in several cases. All of this could not serve the idea of national education appropriate to the era. An identifying politician of the era was Kunó Klebelsberg, who started the building of elementary schools based on the concept of Hungarian cultural supremacy to deal with the uneducated crowds and to improve the Hungarian economy through the people's knowledge. He initiated enormous improvements, such as the construction of thousands of new school classrooms and teachers' apartments in just a few years, based on Act VII of 1926 on the Establishment and Maintenance of Village Schools. The development certainly has to be appreciated but it must be added that establishing cultural supremacy as a cultural policy goal is more debatable, since it proclaimed the superiority of the Hungarian nation over both the surrounding peoples and the minorities living in the country, towards whom the assimilation policy could be manifested.

During Bálint Hóman's ministership, the emphasis was placed even more strongly on national education, which brought to the fore the need for state supervision. In order to implement the ideas of national education, it was necessary to constantly supervise the teachers. This was performed by school district directors, who knew the local background, who had to report to the Minister for Religion and Education and were directly responsible to him. Thus, they played an important role in the centralisation of education and also the implementation of the 'Jewish Laws' regarding schools. Due to legal restrictions on public and economic life, Jews could not be employed in any type of school. Therefore, these teachers had to prove their (not Jewish) origin, and in the archives there can be found countless examples where documents were necessary (for example a statement that the teacher was not

[121] MNL BML XIV. 70. 46/1942.

considered Jewish by law, his or her own birth certificate, Christianity certificate, his or her parents' and rarely grandparents' birth and marriage certificate). According to the practice in Baranya County, these documents were regularly requested, as the origin of the teacher had to be verified by the educational authorities before being employed. Yet, no example can be found of a teacher not being employed if his or her origin was not properly verified, nor was he or she later deprived of his or her job for such a reason. Based on the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the educational authorities of Baranya tried to act fairly in the given circumstances, and sometimes they were satisfied with less evidence of the teacher's origin. This procedure applies to the authorities of Baranya County, especially the in the field of education among them, since the research of local practice focused on this area based on archival documents. However, the author has no sources on whether this was also the case in other counties of the country and whether the Hungarian authorities in general restricted the exclusion of Jews.

The Hungarian-German cultural convention of 1936 provided a framework for the expansion of cultural policy. Hungarian authors such as Hóman, Paikert and Willer published their thoughts in German on the relationship between the two countries, on common roots, on forms of cultural cooperation and on the issues of national education and minority and assimilation policy. The orientation of Hungarian education policy in the Horthy era can be illustrated by Willer's thoughts he published in German: "In the efforts to raise the Hungarian school system, the national idea is once again the generating force that inspires our schools and constantly encourages us to new efforts in the tireless cultural struggle of the European peoples."[122]

At the end of Ferenc Balázs's activity as rapporteur of minority education, the political situation had already become more acute, and he asked for the ministry's agreement to suspend the school visits, pointing out that "in the course of the political change that has taken place, this issue may require further consideration and assessment". The end of Balázs's work as a rapporteur of minority education was not particularly dignifiedly. In 1944, "while carrying out his activities, he was taken into custody by invading German SS soldiers in a village in Baranya and released only after lengthy telephone information." By this time, his health had become worse, and he applied for retirement on a combination of these reasons. Following Balázs's resignation, the ministry wrote to him the following: "I understand the

[122] Willer, Ungarn. Monatschrift für Deutsch-Ungarischen Kulturaustausch der Ungarisch-Deutschen Gesellschaft in Budapest 1943, 382.

reasons for your decision, and I am not surprised that you are no longer taking on this role under the present circumstances."[123] Balázs not only dealt with the effectiveness of the national education system in a narrow sense, but also with issues related to public education in general: the condition of school buildings, deficiencies in equipment, the social and health status of children and the training of teachers. Moreover, he had been involved in major events affecting the day-to-day running of schools, such as secret ballots prior to the introduction of full native language education, inspection of the language skills of teachers, supervising the preparation of curriculum and syllabus, but, for example, he also translated the text of the prayer used in teaching to German. These circumstances also show that his work was highly appreciated nationwide. Balázs reviewed hundreds of public schools and regularly reported to the ministry on the results. According to the documents, the ministry expected his opinion and, if the national circumstances allowed it, actually acted accordingly. In their actions, the German organisations in Hungary also discussed the school issue, which was accompanied by transnational relations and political pressure from the 'Third Reich' in the same direction. In this situation, Balázs' work was quite important as his reports to the ministry were used in the intergovernmental negotiations[124]. Reports based on local experience allowed them to make objective statements on issues such as the employment of German teachers, the German language skills of teachers and children, the spread of German National Socialism in schools, and the relationship between the Hungarian and German populations. Summing up the local practice – while the extreme part of the German population was increasingly demanding – many of the Hungarian local leaders, as Balázs described, were rather unwilling to implement the new, minority-friendly – but among all minorities, mostly German-friendly – provisions. They could not identify with these provisions and considered them as temporary measures, as a result of current foreign policy and as a transfer of German demands into law, to which they would not have to adapt in the long run.

[123] MNL BML XIV. 70. A vallás- és közoktatásügyi minisztérium 1944. szeptember 5-én kelt levele Balázs Ferencnek [Letter from the Ministry of Religion and Public Education to Ferenc Balázs dated 5 September 1944].

[124] See László Szita, A magyarországi németség iskolaügyének alakulása a Délkelet-Dunántúlon 1938–1944 [Schooling of the German Minority in Hungary in the Southeastern Transdanubian Region 1938–1944], in: László Szita (ed.), Baranyai helytörténetírás [Local History of Baranya], Pécs 1983, 441, 443.

Summaries

Dieter Pohl, A 'Völkisch'-Fascist Europe

The article discusses the rise of fascism and *völkisch* ethnonationalism in Europe, particularly during the 1930s, leading up to and including World War II. It highlights how various European countries experienced a rightward political shift, with fascist and ethnonationalist movements growing out of the post-World War I environment. These movements were characterized by ultranationalism, anti-communism, and a high propensity for violence. The text argues that the political landscape of the era was shaped not just by fascism but by a blend of fascist and ethnonationalist tendencies, which varied across different political systems. It also emphasizes the role of anti-Semitism as a unifying factor among ethnonationalist groups and describes the transformation of traditional authoritarian regimes into ones that embraced these new ideologies. Lastly, the text examines specific countries like Hungary and Romania, detailing how local political dynamics and international influences led to the rise of extreme right-wing movements, culminating in the cooperation or conflict with Nazi Germany's expansionist policies.

Dan Sato, The 'New European Order' in Japanese Legal History Research

Since 1933, National Socialist jurisprudence had been the subject of much interest and controversy among Japanese legal scholars. Even the Japanese Ministry of Justice examined and translated a series of National Socialist legislation and literature for reference purposes. During the National Socialist era, a young Japanese professor of law named Satoshi Nishimoto visited Germany. While studying in Munich, this scholar witnessed unprecedented activity in the field of Germanic legal history, which at that time was combined with geopolitics. After returning to Japan, he attempted to apply this method of legal history to his own country. However, these efforts ended in failure.

Eva Schumann, 'International Co-operation of the Rechtswahrer' – Transfer Processes and Interactions between Jurists of the Nazi Regime and Hungary

The article deals with the transnational interactions, co-operations and discourses between German and Hungarian jurists during the 'Third Reich', especially from a German perspective. It ranges from visiting professorships on the basis of the German-Hungarian Cultural Agreement (1936) to publications by Hungarian jurists in

German journals to the foreign relations of the *Akademie für Deutsches Recht* (Academy for German Law) as well as to the work of two internationally oriented German institutions at the beginning of the 1940s, namely the *Internationale Rechtskammer* (International Chamber of Law) and the *Internationale Akademie für Staats- und Verwaltungswissenschaften* (International Academy of Political and Administrative Sciences), which both focused primarily on the European '*Großraum*'. The article traces the German efforts to promote Nazi law abroad and discusses the legal harmonisation (especially in the areas of commercial and administrative law) within the '*Großraum*', which was pursued under German leadership after the beginning of the Second World War. Overall, it is shown that all activities on the German side did not focus on academic exchange, but primarily on implementing the political interests of the Nazi regime.

***Eszter Cs. Herger*, National Socialist Law Transfer from a Hungarian Perspective – Reasons, Forms and Effects of Transfer in Private Law**

The academic relations between Hungarian and German law scholars between 1920 and 1944 (especially since 1933) have not yet been comprehensively analysed by either German or Hungarian legal historians. This article focuses on the reactions of Hungarian private law scholars to the National Socialist intention to transfer law, be it enthusiastic, reserved, rejecting or even silently accepting, as well as the presentation of the development of contemporary jurisprudence on the basis of archival sources, especially in the areas of family, inheritance, commercial and civil procedural law. The question of the extent to which German legal influence played a role in shaping (legal) theory and practice in Hungary and where – despite the similarities – nationally specific legal solutions can be found is investigated.

***Gerrit Hamann*, Legal Assistance Treaties in the Light of War and Expansion – Process, Motives and Protagonists of the German-Hungarian Legal Assistance Negotiations 1939–1942**

Cross-border legal assistance is an important indicator of close interstate relations. Remarkably, in the first years of the Second World War, a noticeable intensification of legal assistance between National Socialist Germany and the Kingdom of Hungary occurred. The reason for this was the common border that came into being with the *'Anschluss'* of Austria. But the expansion of the legal assistance system was also due to the National Socialist expansion and hegemonic ambitions in Eastern Europe. Between 1939 and 1942, more than ten bilateral legal assistance treaties were negotiated. On the German side, notorious Nazi lawyers such as the later State

Secretary in the Federal Chancellor's Office Hans Globke and the war criminal Max Merten were involved.

***Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz*, Veneration – Indifference – Disapproval? Nazi State Law in the Austrian Legal Discourse**

Based on the legal developments and leading constitutional experts in the late 19th century, the article shows how (Viennese) law professors dealt with questions of German law in academia and studies. Against the backdrop of the Austrian authoritarian era from 1933 to 1938, it examines how politically opposed university lecturers were dealt with in Austria and raises the question of whether and how critical opinions on Austrian and German state law were expressed by law professors. In this context, some leading legal journals from the years 1933 to 1938 are analysed. Initially, Austrian legal scholars concentrated primarily on developments in their own constitutional law and legal practice. It is striking that under Austrofascism, Austrian studies on German law declined and critical analyses of National Socialist law were very rare.

***Gábor Schweitzer*, The New Direction of Public Law – The Echo of German National Socialist Constitutional Law in Hungary's Legal Discourses**

In 1933, Germany's constitutional system was reformed based on the principles of National Socialism. The representatives of Hungarian constitutional law at the time showed an intense interest in the new totalitarian state systems, including Nazi Germany's so-called new direction of public law. In the examined period, the studies of István Egyed, professor of public law at the Technical University of Budapest, István Csekey, professor of public law at the University of Szeged, and Béla Török, clerk of the royal court, mainly presented the public law institutions of National Socialist Germany. Their objective went beyond the description and characterization of the constitutional solutions of totalitarian state systems, as they also sought an answer to the question of what the relationship is between the historically based Hungarian constitution and the public law solutions of totalitarian systems. The closer Hungary got to Nazi Germany in a political sense, the more pressing these questions arose. This also included questions about an overlap between Hungary's historical constitution and the new direction of public law as well as the possible adoption of certain institutions as part of a reform of the Hungarian constitution.

Péter Techet, Carl Schmitt's Travels to Hungary and into Hungarian Legal Thought

The article explores Carl Schmitt's influence on Hungarian legal science and political public opinion, especially before 1945. On the one hand, it analyses which elements of Schmitt's theories were discussed in Hungary and why the *'Großraumlehre'*, in particular, attracted significant interest. On the other hand, Schmitt's two visits to Budapest (1942 and 1943) are briefly described, especially regarding his lecture on 'The State of European Legal Science', which was first published in Hungarian and contained connections with conservative-traditionalist Hungarian legal theory.

Miloslav Szabó, Anti-Semitism in Central Europe between the World Wars – Semantics, Social Practice, Political Programme in Austria and Slovakia (with Consideration of Hungarian Connections)

This article analyses the most important trends in the history of anti-Semitism in Central Europe in the interwar period, with a focus on Austria and Czechoslovakia (until 1938), supplemented by Hungarian connections and an excursus into the period of the Slovakian state (1939–1945). The focus is on the areas of semantics ('Judeo-Bolshevism' and ambiguities of racism), social practice (Numerus Clausus and cultural 'Judaization') as well as political and legal programmes ('solution to the Jewish question' in the context of Catholicism). Additionally, the relationship between autochthonous forms of anti-Semitism and the role model function of Nazi Germany are analysed.

Iván Halász, The Anti-Jewish Legislation in Slovakia – Lawyers and Political System during the Second World War

The article deals with the background of the legislation on Jews in Slovakia since 1939. Although Slovakia was still part of a democratic state in 1938, the atmosphere in the country changed very quickly with the founding of the Slovak Republic in 1939. As in other Central European countries, there was religious, economic and social anti-Semitism in Slovakia. The anti-Jewish measures in Slovakia were initially aimed at discriminating against Jews as economic and social competitors, but with the intensification of German political pressure on Slovakia and German propaganda, the character of Slovakian policy changed. This was followed by further measures of deprivation of rights of Jews. From 1940/1941, the state's anti-Jewish policy was already strongly influenced by Nazi Germany. The anti-Semitic policy became completely racist and a large number of Jews were deported. From 1942,

the situation gradually changed, but only to a limited extent, before further deportations took place in 1944.

Helen Ahlke Abram, Anti-Semitic Legislation in a German-Hungarian Comparison

Legislation in the 1930s and 1940s in both Germany and Hungary was characterised by anti-Semitic ideas of 'racial protection'. Against this background, the underlying thought patterns and the mutual influence of the two countries' legislation are discussed in research literature. Nevertheless, no detailed comparison of the relevant German and Hungarian regulations exists to date. This article therefore looks for parallels that existed between German and Hungarian anti-Jewish laws. To this end, an overview of the relevant German 'racial legislation' is first given, before the Hungarian anti-Jewish laws, which are the focus of the analysis, are presented. Finally, a comparison is made between the German and Hungarian legislation.

Veronika Lehotay, The Deprivation of Rights of Jews in Hungarian Criminal Law Practice

This article examines how the newly introduced criminal law norms were applied by the courts, in particular how proceedings were initiated and conducted at the Royal Court of Miskolc on the basis of the anti-Jewish laws (1938 to 1944). This confirms Sándor Nagy's thesis that there were only a few court cases against Jews in rural areas. It is also shown that most cases were dropped at the investigation stage and that the courts were often reluctant to discriminate against Jews. In addition to the offences under the anti-Jewish laws, other 'typical' criminal offences of the time are also examined. The analysis of the court case files from Miskolc shows a significant increase in the number of prosecutions for offences against the honour of the Hungarian state and the Hungarian nation, spreading false news, incitement against national defence, and abortion.

Timo Marcel Albrecht, German Volksgruppenrecht in East-Central and Southeastern Europe – Transnational Comparison of a National Socialist Legal Transfer

This article addresses the transfer of the jurisprudentially developed National Socialist *Volksgruppenrecht* (ethnic group law) into the legislation of east-central and southeastern European states from 1939 onwards. For the first time and using a systematic comparative and transnational perspective, the main legal consequences

of the '*völkisch* New Order of Europe' for the German minorities in most of the 'Greater German Reich's' eastern allies are presented, analysed and contextualised. After localising the contemporary concept of '*Donaueuropa*' (Danube Europe), which was charged with Nazi spatial plans and included Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Croatia as well as Serbia, and outlining the jurisprudential foundations of the Nazi *Volksgruppenrecht*, the study focuses predominantly on the respective domestic legislations. Thereby, a clear connection to the *völkisch*-imperialist goals of the 'Third Reich' and its hegemony in the southeast of the proclaimed *Großraum* becomes apparent – for example in the transnational expansion of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* as well as in the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* of German ethnic groups on the basis of the new *Volksgruppenrecht*, but also in the replacement of the liberal minority protection system of the League of Nations era and the mass recruitment of ethnic Germans for the *Waffen-SS*.

***Zsolt Vitári*, National Socialist Volksgruppenrecht as a Challenge for Hungarian Minority Policy**

After the First World War, the international system of minority protection offered a welcome opportunity for Hungarian governments to demand the rights of numerically significant Hungarian minority groups from neighbouring states beyond the new borders, while at the same time applying a different standard to the domestic nationalities, which were less significant in number but still considered to be assimilated, including the Germans in the first place. Hungarian ethnopolitics was therefore faced with an extraordinary challenge from the collective approach to the so-called *Volksgruppenrecht* that was becoming increasingly established in Germany, which denied equality between minority and majority members and thus the ability to integrate, since this was considered impossible in view of the marked ethnic differences. The *Volksgruppenrecht* aroused keen interest and reaction from Hungarian minority rights theorists, who saw it as a threat to Hungarian ethnopolitics and sought to emphasise its inapplicability and invalidity in Hungary. This discourse was significantly linked to the Institute for Minority Research at the University of Pécs and to its director, Ferenc Faluhelyi, who had extensive German connections. This network of contacts not only provided an opportunity to make the Hungarian perspective known in Germany, but also to follow and react to all the developments of the discourse in Germany.

***Norbert Spannenberger*, The so-called First Basch Trial in 1934 – Legal Prosecution of Political Commitment**

At the beginning of the 1930s, the Ethnic German Movement (*'Volksdeutsche Bewegung'*) in Hungary became radicalised. The reasons for that were on the one hand the lacking organisation of the nationalities movement and on the other hand the exerted pressure on members of the *Volksdeutsche* Movement through the Gömbös government. The most significant incident was the first Basch trial in 1934, in which Franz Basch, an active member of the movement and later *Volksgruppenführer* of the Germans in Hungary on the initiative of Berlin authorities, was put on trial for a statement on the Magyarization of names. The charge in the (secret) trial and later reason for conviction was the alleged 'insult to the Hungarian nation'. Overall, the trial and its context (including Basch's pardon 1937 and his acquittal 1941) show the high degree of politicisation of the minority question in German-Hungarian relations during the second half of the Horthy era.

***Patrícia Dominika Niklai*, Hungary's Assimilation Policy in the Fields of Culture and Education during the Horthy Era**

During the term of office of Minister of Culture Bálint Hóman (1932–1942), special emphasis was placed on national education within the public education system. State supervision of teachers was carried out by school district directors, who played an important role in the centralisation of education, but also in the implementation of the 'Jewish Laws' in schools, especially in the dismissal of Jewish teachers. The centralised education policy is illustrated by the work of Ferenc Balázs, the rapporteur for the minority school system, who was directly under the administration of the Ministry of Religion and Education between 1938 and 1944. The situation of the schools he inspected allows us to understand the local development of nationality education and the difficulties involved in its implementation. It also discusses publications by Hungarian authors such as Bálint Hóman, Géza Paikert and József Willer, who also wrote in German on issues of cultural co-operation, national education, and minority and assimilation policy towards the minorities living in Hungary.