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The fall of Herbartianism in Hungary after the Great War

Introduction

In this paper¹, the reasons and the interpretation possibilities of the early retirement of János Waldapfel, an author and expert of the Herbartianist pedagogical concept in secondary teacher training, will be discussed. János Waldapfel is a lesser-known and less prominent scholar of Herbartianism in Hungary compared to his guardian, Mór Kármán, whose importance was examined both in Hungarian and in international literature (Németh 2004; Németh/Pukánszy 2021, S. 81). Still, in order to understand the elimination of Herbartianism from the professional institutions in Hungary in the early phase of the Horthy-regime, it is crucial to recognize the role that Waldapfel and the circusmtances of his retirement played.

To explore in detail the reasons for Waldapfel's dismissal, the following structure will be pursued. In the first section, the theoretical and philosophical components are to be detailed. More precisely, the critical approach of professionalization theories, the history of Herbartianism and the history of ideas ("Geisteswissenschaft" or *humanities*) as rival scientific concepts in education sciences will be elaborated. In the following part, the aspects of the analysis, the sources and the analytical methods are expounded. In the third section, a general overview of the development of the institutions of secondary teacher training between 1870 and 1924 will be provided for depicting the broader historical and institutional context, in which the forced retirement happened. In the closing parts, Waldapfel's professional career and an interpretation of his expulsion from the teacher training institution are detailed.

Since the removal of Waldapfel from the teacher training institution was a result of a direct state intrusion into the personnel affairs of the professional institution, it can be assumed that his leaving is also an indicator of the exposure of professional entities towards de-professionalization tendencies.

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The theoretical part of the investigation

Concerning the theoretical background of the research, the critical approach of professionalization theories is applied in the current presentation. Compared with the Anglo-Saxon-originated model of delivery, the critical approach gives prominence to the monopolization processes of occupational activities and the power, by which professionals took over and scrutinized all activities including, but not limited to offering and practicing services in a particular area of the labour market (Parsons 1939, S. 45–7). The monopolization could not have been envisaged in the Central and Eastern European region without the contribution of the enlightened state bureaucracy, which established a special bond with professionals in the liberal epoch of national development until the end of World War I. (Hesse 1968; Jeismann 1999). The state bureaucracy and the professional groups established a dynamic framework by means of the theoretical elements institutionalized into university disciplines and the qualification necessary for being licensed as a professional. Through the constant revision of the theoretical elements and the qualification criteria in order to be permitted to practice, the bureaucracy and the professionals were able to adjust their services to the needs of society (Friedson 2001; Jarausch 1990).

However, as the result of the new political order after the Great War, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes came into power across Central and Eastern Europe, which saw professionals through a different lens. Instead of a cooperative relationship, in these countries the state interfered in the internal affairs of professionals either by (1) suspending their licenses, (2) giving the possibility of scrutiny of the whole profession to a minority conforming with the state ideology, (3) transforming the ideology that helped professionals to monopolize their particular field, (4) depriving professionals of the distinguished social positions or (5) transforming unilaterally the training system of the professions. These measurements individually or together could have (possibly) led to the de-professionalization of professions. In other words, the de-professionalization emphasizes the fact that professionalization processes cannot be deemed as a one-way development but rather as a socio-legal proceeding with phases of acceleration and setbacks (Friedson 2001, S. 129; Jarausch 1990, S. 13).

Rivalry between education philosophies in serving nation-building purposes

Aligning the chosen theoretical paradigm with the realm of education-philosophical ideals, the pedagogical theory invented by Friedrich Herbart had a prominent role from two perspectives in Hungary. First and foremost, it offered the standardization of professionalism of the entire secondary teacher profession, thus unifying the professionality of individual teachers (Evetts 2003; Németh 2013, S. 32-33.; Németh/Pukánszky 2021, S. 80-82). Secondly, it offered a secularized pedagogical ideology for the Hungarian society, in which there was a deep division within ethnic and confessional perspectives in the 19th century. For this reason, it fit well into the nation-building ideology of the dualist political elite. Herbartianism offered a standardization of methods by which "scholar-teachers" could fulfill their aims (Németh/ Szabolcs/Vincze 2012, S. 28). Therefore, it performed as an ideology for the professional practical training of secondary teachers in Hungary. The interconnectivity between Herbartianism and the liberal way of nation-building could also be outlined by the fact that Mór Kármán was entrusted with the implementation of the curriculum of the Gymnasia (secondary schools) in 1878 and the conceptualization of the methodological instructions in 1880. Kármán was regarded as a staunch Herbartianist who visited Ziller's pedagogical seminars in the late 1860s and maintained a lifelong relationship with Wilhem Rhein from Jena (Németh/Pukánszky 2021, S. 82).

Nevertheless, due to its secularized nature, Herbartianism and its supporters were regarded with suspicion in the interwar period, which led to a steady decrease in the importance of religious values (Németh 2004, S. 183). According to the advocates of "Geisteswissenschaft" (humanities) as a new paradigmatical turn in the humane disciplines, the secularized lifestyle led to the political turmoil and revolutionary period between 1918 and 1919. One of its most prominent Hungarian representatives, Gyula Kornis, a Piarist monk and a powerful mastermind of the cultural policy in the interwar period expressed the desire to again introduce Christian values in schools, by which the society could expectably be revitalized (Kornis 1921, S. 19-22). Moreover, the application of the hermeneutic method and thus the rediscovery and incorporation of the cultural heritage of previous generations could further strengthen the social structures. In this particular way, not only could a social reform be achieved but a whole new society might also be given rise to with the aim of ensuring the survival

of the nation after the disastrous war. This new philosophical-scientific turn was in line with the official ideology of the subsequent Hungarian governments; i.e., with their Christian-conservative reform initiatives. These inspirations served the transformation of the social and economic structures of the remaining parts of Hungary to ensure the adaptation to the new geopolitical realities in the East-Central European region after the war (Romsics 2005).

Methodological background of the investigation

From a methodological perspective, the research could be characterized as deductive and idiographic, in which the critical approach of professional theories and the philosophical background are taken into account in the interpretation of the examination of archival sources (Babbie 2008, S. 82–86; Szabolcs 2011, S. 84–91). Document analysis of archival sources and secondary literature review were employed as methods (Coffey 2014; Kéri 2001, S. 69–73; Willing 2014).

Three main research questions were examined, the first of which was the role of Herbartianism in teacher training, the second was what led to the dismissal of Waldapfel in 1924, the third being whether his dismissal could be perceived as an indication in the change of nature between professionals and the state bureaucracy. These research questions were examined by incorporating relevant archival sources from the National Archives of Hungary (NAH) and the Archives of the Eötvös Loránd University (AELU) containing data related to the operations of the teacher training institutions and their connections with the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (MRPE).

A short history of the development of secondary teacher training institutions in Hungary

Since the philosophy faculty of Pest became independent in 1849/1850, its main task was changed to training philologists and secondary teachers (Németh 2012). Due to the nature of the neo-humanism-inspired reform and the autonomy of the research and teaching activities, its training remained unsystematic and thus could not systematically prepare candidates for the teacher qualification state examinations. To overcome the problem of training teachers with mediocre theoretical and practical preparedness, the Hungarian Royal Secondary Teacher Training Institute was established in 1870 (Németh/

Szabolcs/Vincze 2012, S. 28). The institution was regarded rather as a conglomerate of seminars under common administration since it lacked its own headquarters and seminars were held in different locations of the university. The training provided teacher candidates with support in preparing for the teacher examinations, thus complementing the theoretical training (Garai 2022, S. 287). As for the method of training by which additional preparedness could be achieved, the model of Heyne and Wolf types of classical philologist seminars was followed (Németh/Pukánszky 2021, S. 81–82).

In order to ensure not only the theoretical preparation of candidates but also improve their practical abilities, a secondary practice school was established in 1872 under the guidance of Mór Kármán. This was the first Gymnasium (grammar school) maintained by the state and it was supervised by the directorate of the teacher training institution since it served the aim of systematizing the practical preparation of teachers. Even though the contemporary pedagogical experts considered the practicing school a true Hungarian investment, it followed the training method of pedagogical seminars and practicing schools of Tuiskon Ziller and Wilhelm Rhein (Németh 2012).

Although the complex institutional system had been evolving for the theoretical and practical preparation of teacher candidates until the Great War, only 17,6% of them participated in the additional training since the membership of these institutions was not mandatory (Garai 2022, S. 25). This issue was solved by the 27th Act of 1924 which made the membership of teacher training institutions mandatory for all candidates who strived for a teacher qualification.

The professional career of János Waldapfel until 1924

János Waldapfel was born in Trencsén county² in 1866. He attended the University of Budapest between 1882 and 1887 and graduated in mathematics, physics and German language and literature as a secondary teacher in 1893. After he visited the University of Jena, he

² This territory now belongs to Slovakia due to the Trianon treaty in 1920, which resulted in the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and thus Hungary suffered significant territorial losses.

obtained a philosophical doctoral degree by passing doctoral comprehensive exams in pedagogy, philosophy and aesthetics.³

He first appeared in the records of the teacher training institute in 1897 when he was granted a deputy position during the time of Mór Kármán's absence in the secondary practicing school. ⁴ The MRPE-minister enabled Kármán to take sick leave due to suffering from a mental illness. Kármán never recovered from his nervous breakdown, which paved the way for Waldapfel to become a temporary substitute for him in 1899.5 After the retirement of Kármán by the 18.891.degree of the MRPE on 6th June 1900, he was appointed as a regular teacher by the president of the teacher training institute, Loránd Eötvös.⁶ Even though Waldapfel progressed in the career ladder, this progression was realized at the expense of the illness of Kármán whom he regarded Kármán as his scientific mentor and as a paternal figure in his life. Following the path of his predecessor, he was granted a scholarship to gain foreign experiences in 1906⁷ and then submitted applications in 1914 to be appointed as a full professor in the newly established universities in Preßburg8 and Debrecen,9 which had Lutheran and

^{3 60.945/1924.} IV. Ministerial report on János Waldapfel's professional career in connection with his planned retirement. Budapest, 18th June 1924. NAH K 636. fond, 183 box, 30 item (1924).

^{4 24/1897.} The 60.297. degree of the MRPE on 6th October 1897, which transfers the honorarium of János Waldapfel for the substitution of Mór Kálmán in the secondary practising school of Budapest. Budapest, 24th October 1897. AELU 15/b. 3. Registry Book, 1883–1906.

^{5 149/1899.} Under the degree of 6301/1899. (II. 20.), the MRPE entrusted János Waldapfel to perform as a temporary substitution until the end of the school year of 1898/1899. Budapest, 1st March 1899. AELU 15/b. 3. Registry Book, 1883–1906.

^{6 205/1900.} Under the degree of 18.891/1900. (VI.6.), the MRPE decided over the retirement of Mór Kármán and set out the prospect of the appointment of János Waldapfel. Budapest, 15th June 1900. AELU 3. Registry Book, 1883–1906.

^{7 43/1906.} The MRPE transferred an aid for the foreign study trip of János Waldapfel under the degree of 82.703/1906 (X.10.). Budapest, October 1906. AELU 4. Registry Book, 1906–1921.

^{8 365/1914.} The proposal of the Director of the Secondary Teacher Training Institution of Budapest to the MRPE in connection with the application of János Waldapfel for the philosophy department of the University of Preßburg. Budapest, 30th March 1914. március 30. AELU 4. Registry Book, 1906–1921.

^{9 366/1914.} The proposal of the Director of the Secondary Teacher Training Institution of Budapest to the MRPE in connection with the application of János Waldapfel for the pedagogy department of the University of Debrecen. Budapest, 30th March 1914. AELU 4. Registry Book, 1906–1921.

Calvinist confessional backgrounds, respectively. It is probable that his Jewish origins prevented him from being appointed as a professor in the new universities.

Nevertheless, the 78.512/1914.V. degree of the MRPE on 14th July 1914 exempted him from the duties of teaching in the practicing secondary school in order to be able to participate in the preparation of the secondary curricular reform. 10 This exemption was extended in the next year. 11 In 1916, he submitted his application to be appointed as a teacher of the secondary teacher training institute. His submission was sent for review to Ernő Fináczy, an advocate of Catholic Herbartianism who supported the appointment.¹² In his motion to the MRPE, the president of the institute suggested appointing Waldapfel as a head teacher of the methodological courses of teaching in secondary schools. 13 These courses were introduced for candidates who did not commence the practicing year or were in the middle of it, in order to enhance their professionality (Evetts 2003). Nevertheless, these seminars were experimental in their character within the curriculum of the teacher training institute and therefore, Waldapfel was completely subordinated to the guidance of the professor of pedagogy, who was Finánczy at that time.

Another proposal to the ministry in 1918 implies that the transitional position of Waldapfel was solidified since the institution wanted to transform his status to permanent, ensuring the practical preparation of the teacher candidates. The MRPE approved the request in

^{10 557/1914.} Under the degree of 78.512.V./1914 (VII. 14.), the MRPE granted exemption János Waldapfel from the duties of teaching activities in the academic year of 1914/1915. Budapest, 3rd August 1914. AELU 4. Registry Book, 1906–1921.

^{11 635/1915.} Under the degree of 56.139V/1915 (VI.04.), the MRPE extended the exemption of János Waldapfel from duties of teacing to the academic year of 1915/1916. Budapest, 14th June 1915. AELU 4. Registry Book, 1906–1921.

^{12 534/1916.} júniua Letter of the Directore of the Secondary Teacher Training Institution of Budapest to Ernő Finácy about reviewing the proposal of János Waldapfel. Budapest, June 1916. AELU 4. Registry Book, 1906–1921.

^{13 556/1916.} Motion of Loránd Eötvös the presient of the Secondary Teacher Training Institution of Budapest to the MRPE about entrusting János Waldapfel with methodological courses. Budapest, 20th June 1916. NAH K 500. fond, 141 box, 8. item (1917).

July 1918, just before the collapse of the Monarchy. ¹⁴ The steady progress of Waldapfel's career did not suffer a setback despite the political turmoil of 1918–1919. Although he was employed as a teacher in the transformed secondary teacher training institute in the short-lived communist regime in 1919, his behavior was later justified and he swore an oath to the new regime in 1920. ¹⁵ Moreover, he was promoted to a higher salary rank in March 1920 and the head of the institute confirmed in a report to the ministry that Waldapfel's political activities were approved in an official interrogation process. ¹⁶

Consequently, he managed to remain in his position during the first wave of dismissal of officials including secondary school teachers and academics who were fired due to political reasons shortly after the fall of the Communist regime (Romsics 2005). Waldapfel appeared in all semesters in the curricula and payroll records as a regular teacher at the institute until 1924.¹⁷ In this year, Lajos Tóth ordered the apparatus of the MRPE to investigate the possibility of Waldapfel's expulsion. In the documentation of the dismissal, it is obvious that the bureaucrats were searching for the exact legal possibility, by which the removal could be justified. It was highlighted in the documents that neither Waldapfel's age nor his service time provided a solid ground for retirement. As a third option, it was suggested that referring to the 4th Act in 1924, which prescribed maintaining a financial balance of the national budget, Waldapfel's contract could be terminated.¹⁸ Finally, the 64.394/1924. (VI. 28.) decree of the MRPE sent Waldapfel in early retirement, claiming that his removal was motivated purely by financial restrictions.

^{14 466/1918.} Motion of Loránd Eötvös the presient of the Secondary Teacher Training Institution of Budapest to the MRPE about appointing János Waldapfel for a permanent position. Budapest, 17th June 1918. NAH K 500. fond, 473 box, 25. item (1918).

^{15 177/1920.} Letter of Gedeon Petz, the Director of the Secondary Teacher Training Institution of Budapest to the MRPE about the results of political interrogation processes in the institution. Budapest, 23rd April 1920. NAH K 592. fond, 143 bunch, 19. item (1920).

^{16 148/1920.} Degree of the MRPE 100.999/1920. B.XI. (II.25.) about the promotion of János Waldapfel to the $6^{\rm th}$ salary rank. Budapest, $7^{\rm th}$ March 1920. AELU 7. Registry Book, 1916–1920.

¹⁷ For instance, Report about the academic year of 1922/1923 in the teacher training institute. Budapest, 30th June 1923. NAH K 636. fond, 164 box, 30. item (1923).

^{18 60.945/1924.} IV. The case of János Wadapfel's retirement. Budapest, 18th June 1924. NAH K 636. fond, 183. box, 30. item (1924).

The interpretation of the removal

From the available archival documentation, three elements can, by inference, be identified as reasons for Waldapfel's dismissal. First, the removal process began as a result of the direct request by the Secretary of State of the MRPE. Therefore, the concept of the forced removal of Waldapfel originated from the highest political levels. ¹⁹

Secondly, the directorate of the teacher training institution was not cognizant of the preparations for his removal, which can be evidenced by the fact that the case was mentioned only in the annual report on the operations of the teacher training institution in the academic year of 1924/1925.²⁰ By mentioning Waldapfel's removal, the head of the institution also pointed out that the directorate was unaware of the intention of the ministry and the institute could barely overcome the absence of its teacher. Consequently, a reversal of the decision was requested by the ministry, but a response was not provided, which was unusual in the practice of communication between the MRPE and professional institutions.

Lastly, the Waldapfel's removalcoincided with the preparation of the bills transforming the institutional structure of secondary school and secondary school teacher training. Gyula Kornis, an influential representative of the new paradigmatical turn of the history of ideas, participated in the preparatory phase of the legislative processes (Szabó/Garai/Németh 2017, S. 910). From 1921, the Piarist monk had been entrusted by the directorate of the institute to hold lessons for teacher candidates, which entailed "child studies", "psychology" and "philosophy". He was not part of the directorate council of the teacher training institute until 1925, and also became Secretary of State of the MRPE between 1927 and 1931 (Sine n. 1930, S. 4). As a scholar and a politician, he held key positions in supervising the newly emerging secondary school system which served the social initiatives

¹⁹ In the documents related to the retirement, a note was made by the 6th department of the MRPE, which suggests that the retirement process was launched by the direct order of Lajos Tóth, who was the Secretary of State of the MRPE. NAH K 636. fond, 183. box, 30. item (1924).

^{20 685/1924–1925.} Annual report of Gedeon Petz, the director of the Secondary Teacher Training Institute of Budapest about the academic year of 1924/1925. Budapest, 20th June 1925. NAH K 636. fond, 198. box, 30. item (1925).

^{21 226/1924.} Annual report of Gedeon Petz, the director of the Secondary Teacher Training Institute of Budapest about the academic year of 1923/1924. Budapest, 19th June 1924. NAH K 636. fond, 198. box, 30. item (1925).

of the government (Romiscs 2005). The elimination of the representatives of the secular pedagogical ideology of Herbartianism promised the possibility of merging the teacher training institutions with the "Christan-conservative" ideology of the state.

Thus, Waldapfel's departure could also be perceived as a unilateral interference of the political sphere into an unfolding professional contest between representatives of rival scientific paradigms. Meddling in this evolving professional competition could be identified as a sign of de-professionalization along with other forced personal changes and attempts at influencing the curriculum of the teacher training institution (Jarausch 1990; Friedson 2001). In the early 1920s, the government systematically tried to alter the curriculum and even influence the personnel-related affairs of professional institutions related to secondary teacher training (Garai 2022). It seems that Waldapfel's dismissal fits into this agenda. When Ernő Fináczy, as the last Herbartianist, retired in 1930, Herbartianism was represented only by the institutional forms in the practical parts of the teacher training, however the professional ideology had shifted towards the representatives of the "Geisteswissenschaft" (humanities).

Summary

In the first parts of this paper, the theoretical, philosophical and methodological frames of the investigation were elaborated, then the focus was shifted towards the evolvement of the structure of the teacher training and Waldapfel's professional career within it. As the result of the analysis, it can be concluded as an answer to the first research question that Herbartianism as a pedagogical concept and a secularized idea played a significant role in the practical training of teacher candidates thanks to offering standardization in their professionality.

Concerning the second research aspect, Herbartianism offered secularized training, which was in line with the cultural aspirations of the governments in the 19th century (Németh/Pukánszy 2021). After World War I., the ideological environment was fundamentally transformed due to the consequences of the war. This transformation coincided with a paradigmatical turn in the education philosophy, which was perceived as offering a sophisticated ideological description of the new situation of Hungarian society after the war (Garai 2022; Németh 2004).

By the time of his forced removal, Waldapfel was regarded as an acknowledged scientific expert of Herbartianism (Imre 1938, S. VII–X). His abrupt and unexpected retirement could be linked to the preparatory phase of the implementation of the new secondary school system and teacher training model, which was influenced by the new education philosophies consistent with the political expectations. As for the third research question, Waldapfel's retirement could be regarded as an indicator of the de-professionalization tendencies that had been strengthened with a fluctuation in their intensity towards professional institutions since the early 1920s. The constant attempts at influencing various aspects of the operation of the professional institutions was an outright expression of the suspicious attitude of the government towards the teaching professionals.

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