

The political parties in post-World-War-II Hungary aimed at such reforms in higher education by which our university and college system would meet the challenges of the democratic transition and international standards. The coalition parties therefore wished to put into practice their modernization ideas with reference to their ideological values, their political view-points and scientist-professional requirements. Since one of the major objectives of cultural policy after the end of the war was the democratization of education, the major concepts of reform focused mainly on the

that appeared indifferent from academic and political point of view and therefore no urgent expectations were formulated either from a political or an academic view-point. In certain areas of higher education, however, no reforms were proposed because of strong ideological-political determination.

One of the most advanced areas in Hungarian higher education was medical training; therefore no basic professional modernization was needed. Similar was the situation in higher engineering. The modernization of agricultural higher education was necessitated both by political and

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The Policy of Higher Education and Science

at the Time of Nascent Political Pluralism

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training of teachers. It is not by chance that all coalition parties emphasized the reform of teacher-training as the greatest challenge was faced by the teacher-training sector of all sectors of higher education. That is why it was around this question that the most essential concepts concerning the transformation of the university and college system were best articulated. Owing to the essentiality similar interpretation of the reform, there were no remarkable differences between the proposals.

The parties had a clear understanding of the timeliness and the necessity of the reform affecting the majority of educational sectors, but they remained passive. I find the explanation for this passive attitude in the fact that the relatively high standards in certain sectors did not require urgent professional reform. There were areas

academic aspects, nevertheless, reforms were not initiated in higher agricultural training. I find its cause in the fact that the end of the large latifundia and after the birth of small peasant holdings the parties found neither political nor academic activity for the reform of higher agricultural education. The intellectual reconstruction rendered the reform in higher economics education timely. The reform, however, had to be waited for because at the time of undecided power conditions there was no possibility for structural reform in economics training where the ideological-political element had a decisive role besides professional training. In the area of training in law, the parties' reform activity was understandably the lowest owing to the ideological-political determination of legal training.

* The paper is a summary of a ten-year long research.

Most of the proposed reforms did not materialize after the war. Apart from the lack of financial-political conditions, a significant role was played in putting of the reforms by groups of educators who insisted on preserving the traditional structure of the universities. The development of higher education is also one of the factors in economic development which was as yet not emphasized by those who urged modernization. The reason for this is that the needs for more highly trained experts did not manifest themselves on the part of the economy. Pressure was exerted on higher education only in the field of teacher-training, but transformation did not take place there either.

At the time of power-struggle the propositions aiming at the transformation of higher education did not have a direct political character, thus reform proposals for university reform did not become a source of conflict and this area was excluded from the arena of power-struggle. Since the reform ideas had not materialized so far, the two peasant parties did not put forth any new proposals. The reform ideas of the labour-parties were formulated in relation to teacher-training, the area under the heaviest public pressure. The Hungarian Communist Party (MKP) and Social Democratic Party (SzDP) wanted to lay down the foundations of a teacher-training that would match a public education system devised primarily along political lines. They intended to carry out their plans concerning the transformation of teacher-training with reference to professional requirements. These arguments were, however, supportive of important political viewpoints.

Each participant in the coalition basically agreed on the democratization of higher education. Differences in view appeared only over the divergent interpretation of university autonomy, but it did not lead to con-

flicts between the parties. There was no essential difference between the members of the coalition concerning the political screening of university professors. At the time of screenings, the politically most active professors or professors thought to have been active were removed from their jobs. At the time of power-struggle the view of the parties concerning university screening diversified. The two peasant parties did not recommend any further proceedings, while the labour parties urged stricter measures. The Hungarian Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party wished to improve their positions at the Universities by supporting black-listing.

An important stage in the transformation of higher education was the changing of the faculty at universities. At the time of political black-listing such persons were also under attack who could have played a significant role in prospective academic modernization. A condition of reforms was the strengthening of the universities with progressive-minded professors. The parties first considered changes in the leadership of universities as the internal affairs of those institutions and that is why they did not interfere with events there. In some cases, they tried to influence university professors' promotions "in a peaceful way". The majority of the professors appointed after the war represented high professional standards and were committed to democracy. The labour parties having weak positions at the universities were for political intervention at the time of power struggle. The independent Small Holders' Party, which intended to stem the expansion of the political left, defended autonomy. The divergent interpretation of autonomy led to conflicts between parties and universities.

The abolition of discriminative legislation passed before the war was an important part of the democratization of higher education as was the opening of the gates of universities and colleges for the entry of youths of working-class or peasant background and the abolition of decrees limiting the number of women admitted to university. Due to the democratic ideological values and the intention of the parties to broaden their political bases, all coalition parties supported the above goals. For the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP)—which articulated the need for creating a new

organic intelligentsia—the changing of the social composition of university populations became one of the most important objectives in higher educational policy.

The planned reform of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences for the modernization of life in science and scholarship gave rise to problems that the parties had in most cases no ready concepts to address. Since modernization was present in the program of the parties, their representative and their respective press organs supported the attempt for renewal. At first, scientists urging reforms took into account the autonomy and freedom of higher learning when carrying out the reforms. The drive for modernization had, at the same time, a political character, thus those behind reforms got into conflict with groups that obtained their positions in the previous system.

The reform group that initially stuck with the autonomy of science showed readiness to apply political means in the field of science after initiatives deemed to be unsuccessful.

Since the Hungarian Communist Party (MKP) did not accept the full autonomy of the arts and sciences, the supporters of the reforms in Hungarian scientific and scholarly life received backing primarily from the communists. In this way the Hungarian Communist Party dealt with the problems of the Hungarian Academy of Arts and Sciences more than any other party.

It was very important from the point of view of the development of the country and its scientific life that Hungarian researchers should get acquainted with international scientific activity. The coalition parties accepted and supported international scientific and scholarly contacts. Hungarian policy-makers in higher learning realized that catching up with the advanced world and the international recognition of Hungarian culture is not possible without many-sided relationships. They clearly understood that the above objective rests on realistic foundations if Hungary established contacts with countries repre-

senting the highest professional level. The concept that emphasized the establishment of contacts with the neighbouring countries had mainly political significance.

The present monograph offers answers to the question how the various coalition parties taking part in the creation of democratic Hungary at the time of the post-World-War-II change of political systems addressed the problems of higher education and scientific research with their reform proposals and modernization concepts and how to transform them according to contemporary standards in the service of modernization and political objectives.

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