

Trends and theories in Hungarian educational philosophy, with special emphasis on Béla Bernstein's work

As we know, departments of pedagogic science were established at several Hungarian universities after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Professors of pedagogy were appointed by the minister of the time to head these departments one after the other. I devoted a separate chapter to each pedagogic scholar who outlined some independent philosophy of education. I have divided them into four groups as follows.

- The first group is made up by the committed believers of the Herbartian pedagogy, who did not only promote Herbartian pedagogy but also wished to make it official in Hungary. A good example for this is *Mór Kármán*.

- The second group consists of what we call the anti-Herbartians, who were not only unaffected by Herbart but who actually judged and criticized the Herbartian pedagogy. This direction was represented by *Ágost Lubrich* and *Lajos Felméri* as well.

- The third group comprises those scholars of pedagogy who were influenced by the Herbartian pedagogy but it was merely one of their sources. Besides this, the findings of *child studies* and *value theoretical idealism*, also called value philosophy, or axiology, which was then becoming increasingly popular in Germany, were also their sources to rely on. We should stop here for a minute, to mention how axiology was developed, as it came to exist from the mixture of three factors. One of these was what we call the *neo-Hegelian* influence, which was not so substantial.

What was more significant was what we call the *neo-Kantian* influence, i. e. Kant's modern age followers, who had two schools. One of them was the Marburg school established by H. Cohen /1842-1918/, the other one was the Baden school, whose key representatives were W. Windelband /1845-1915/ and H. Rickert /1863-1936/.

The third component is the school of *cultural philosophy* developed by *Wilhelm Dilthey* /1833-1911/.

The representatives of the third group, who were already significantly influenced by the value theoretical idealism outlined above, were *Ernő Fináczy* and *Ödön Weszely*.

- Finally, I have listed those in the fourth group who were not affected by the Herbartian pedagogy, who did not deal with it at all but created something new and very unique. Each of these scholars used a different source but neither of them started out from the Herbartian pedagogy. Good examples for this group include *Sándor Karácsony*, *Sándor Imre*, *Lajos Prohászka*, or *Béla Bernstein*, *Ede Neumann* and *Ármin Frisch*.

All in all, the educational philosophy of the Hungarian pedagogic scholars was strongly defined by two factors: *religion* on the one hand /in the case of Béla Bernstein, Ede Neumann and Ármin Frisch of course, the Jewish religion/ and *nation* and *national education* on the other hand. An exception to this was Sándor Imre, whose curriculum did not include religious education, since, as he said, "religion is a private affair". However, national education received all the more attention in his case, since he even wrote a book under this title, in which he elaborated a complete concept of national education.

However, the school education practices between the two world wars were not significantly affected by the above-mentioned pedagogical theoreticians, in spite of the fact that they had a high number of constructive and progressive ideas and proposals. The reason for all this was that in Hungary, the so-called Comenius-Herbartian model was still in use and the educational ministry did not support any major modernization of contents or structure. It was especially negative towards the trends of reform pedagogy, thus these had no impact on state education at all.

After the Second World War, there was a rupture and both factors disappeared from Hungarian pedagogy, to be replaced by socialist ideology. For example, the place of national education was taken by *internationalism*. However, the *Comenius-Herbartian model* lived on at schools and continued to determine school education practices. The related philosophy and ideology, however, were simply replaced by a leftist one. As a result, a kind of "double education" developed, which meant that the school intermediated totally different values than those taught by the parents, as the latter were still brought up to believe in conservative-Christian values in the period between the two World Wars.

Finally, after the political changes of 1989 had come down, *value pluralism* appeared, which means an ideological diversity which assumes the co-existence

of different values and in which the “market”, i.e. the needs of the citizens play a key role.

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