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Joachim von Puttkamer. *Schulalltag und nationale Integration in Ungarn: Slowaken, RumÖ¤nen und SiebenbÖ¼rger Sachsen in der Auseinandersetzung mit der ungarischen Staatsidee 1867-1914.* Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003. 532 pp. EUR 64.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-486-56741-0.

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Teaching Cultural Uniformity in Hungary

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This book is about the various school systems in the Kingdom of Hungary during the Compromise Era. It is a serious attempt to comprehend the goals and aims of the various Hungarian governments during that period, the reality in the schools and the response of the three major ethnic minorities (Slovaks, Romanians and Transylvanian Saxons) to the challenges put forward by the goal of creating a culturally homogenous Hungarian nation.

The main questions that Puttkamer tackles are: How did teaching in all these languages proceed after the shift from Austrian to Hungarian rule following the Compromise of 1867 and which position did the Hungarian language have? Which national goals and perspectives were followed by the Hungarian governments? Did the other ethnic groups in the kingdom have a chance to maintain their national identity? If yes, how did they proceed? One has to bear in mind that Hungary was a multinational state during the Compromise with Austria in which the Hungarians up to 1867 consisted of about 48% of the population and hence were only one of the multitude of ethnic groups. Only after Croatia-Slavonia received an autonomous status in 1868 and the Jews of Hungary were declared to be ethnic Hungarians of Jewish religion did the Hungarians barely surpass half of the country's population.

Puttkamer starts out with a few preliminary remarks concerning the various theories of nationalism and sets forth with a general overview of the different ethnic groups that lived within the borders of Hungary of that time. In this overview he also refers to the Serbs and the Ruthenians. Although the author does not mention it explicitly, his reference is Hungary after the agreement with Croatia-Slavonia. Hence, the Croats are not listed as an ethnic group and are not analysed.

The second and the third chapters concentrate on the triangular relationship between the state, the manifold churches and the miscellaneous schools. Puttkamer demonstrates the wide range of ecclesiastical autonomy policy, which was one of the corner stones of the Hungarian government's policy set up through the Educational Law of 1868. The government's policy had different goals, which it tried to achieve. The primary goal was to spread literacy among the people in the rural areas. In a country where more than 80% of the population were illiterate (1867), it was indeed a very big task to tackle. The Education Law provided the basis for this endeavour. This law gave the different churches, also those which were rooted in a specific ethnic group, the right to found grammar schools and a free hand to teach in the children's native tongue. Most grammar schools of that time were run by the churches, which explains their massive influence in these matters.

The practical implications of this law were quite different in Upper Hungary and Transylvania, the two main

areas of research in this book. The author analyses the two major groups of Upper Hungary: the Slovaks and the Zips Saxons. The majority of the former were split between the Catholic Church and the Protestant-Evangelic Church while the Zips Saxons were mainly Protestants. Since these churches were not only specific to the Slovaks but also encompassed Hungarians and Germans the representative ecclesiastical bodies were usually dominated by the two latter ethnic groups. This meant, practically, that the Slovaks were not able to have a solid ethnic representation within these bodies, although they consisted up to 50% of the delegates. Consequently, the Hungarian governments were able to close all Slovak speaking grammar schools between 1874 and 1876 without stirring up much anti-Hungarian sentiments in Upper Hungary, since neither the Protestant representation nor the Catholic one have entered a protest.

The Transylvanian case was different. The Romanians, who were divided between the Greek-Catholic Church and the Romanian-Orthodox Church, had one of the lowest literacy rates in the country (less than 20%). Their advantage in comparison to the situation in Upper Hungary lay in the fact that Romanians had the absolute majority in both churches and hence were able to form a united front, which took up the fight against the magyarisation strategies from Budapest. This meant that the two Romanian churches were able to continue their educational schemes concerning teaching in Romanian.

The Transylvanian Saxons, on the other hand, had the advantage of a very well structured and qualitatively much more efficient educational system than the rest of Hungary. This meant that the teachers received better training (usually in Austria or Germany), the financial basis was far more solid, and the facilities (such as school buildings and books) were all at a very high standard. Consequently, the literacy rate was one of the highest in Hungary (over 90%). This big difference in literacy rates is due mainly to the population's infrastructure. While the Saxons were mostly town dwellers and were able to send their children to the school around the block, Romanians were village dwellers. Therefore the school was usually far away, and during the harvest or other times children were needed on the farm and the school was neglected.

Budapest's second goal was less an educational and more a nationalistic one. The government wanted every pupil to learn Hungarian to an extent in which he or she would be able to articulate and communicate fluently. The idea behind this scheme was to create a Hungarian speaking, multiethnic elite to overcome the dichotomy of the Hungarian state. This dichotomy was based on the declaration made in the Minorities' Law of 1868, which stated that the Hungarian State is the home of the Hungarian nation but also declared that the Hungarian nation consists of different nationalities. The term nation is therefore ambiguous since it is used to describe two different ideas. This ambitious law was impeded by the fact that the ethnic non-Hungarians consisted of about half of the population. In other words, the government was trying to teach the state's only official language (with some minor exceptions in the judiciary system) to about half of its subjects whose native tongue was not Hungarian.

During the 1880s and 1890s, government policy towards the ecclesiastical grammar schools has changed substantially. Since the schools were usually ill equipped and the standard of training low, the government came to the conclusion that it must play a more decisive role in education. Consequently, the state obliged the churches to pay teachers a minimum wage, which was set by the government and enforced stricter training standards for teachers and tutors. This also included obligatory knowledge of Hungarian. Most of these grammar schools were funded either by the community or by the church. In cases where neither was able to cope with the increasing expenses, the government stepped in with aides and grants. The increasingly difficult financial situation was abused by the government to enforce magyarisation by establishing a state school in Hungarian in communities, which could not afford the increasing expenses for running local schools. The financial subsidies were also used for blackmailing communities and churches to force a stronger emphasis on teaching Hungarian.

Yet another objective of state policy was to change the school curriculum (Chapter Four). The efforts of the Hungarian Government were concentrated on two main subjects: civics and history. While civics was seen as a necessity to understand how the state functions, history was manipulated by the government and the minorities alike to pursue their own individual goals. Puttkamer describes the national myths of the ethnic groups mentioned above and how they were used and misused in the context of school curricula.

The Hungarian side was mainly concerned with the Hungarian Conquest and the implications of the dichotomy mentioned above. The official version of the Hungarian Conquest suggested that the incoming Hungarians have not found any states in the Carpathian Basin. Hence, the Magyars claimed the privilege and the

historic right of being the ruling group in the area. The Slovaks on the other hand argued that they had a state in the Carpathian Mountains before the arrival of the Hungarians. They considered the Kingdom of Greater Moravia to be a Slovak Kingdom and a predecessor of the Kingdom of Saint Stephen. However, the Slovaks were not capable of creating an influential elite that could have supported this idea successfully.

The Transylvanian Saxons did not challenge Hungarian supremacy and embedded their version of history in the Hungarian one. It was obvious that they settled in Transylvania after the Hungarians and their own achievements were less in the political sphere and more in the cultural, organisational and economical domains. But the greatest challenge to the Hungarian official view of history laid in the Romanian theory of continuity. It suggests that the Romanians are the descendants of the Dacian people and the Roman colonisers from the second and third centuries AD. This meant that the Romanians have inhabited the area continuously for two millennia. This very controversial and contested theory nevertheless became the basis of Romanian resistance to Hungarian hegemony in school curricula and a strong unifying force in political life.

The book concludes with an analysis of the celebrations and jubilees held on special occasions (Chapters Five and Six). These festivities were a chance for the state to bind the pupils' attention and concentration to a specific image of Hungary created and designed by the government. Puttkamer argues that these occasions have deteriorated through the years to a set monotony, which lacked any enthusiasm and joy. The pupils were reduced to puppets, which had to perform without any emotional participation. Unfortunately, the author is not very clear about it: on the one hand he says that the pupils were quite enthusiastic about the various celebrations and were happy to organise them, and on the other hand he suggests that these celebrations have become ritualised and lead to stagnation.

This very well-funded and extensive habilitation thesis does have a few points that perhaps could have been discussed differently. One of them is the notion and the meaning of language as one of the basic ideas of Hungarian nationalism during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is IstvÃ¡n SzÃ©chenyi's 'nyelvÃ©ben Ã©l a Nemzet' (the nation lives in its language). This was the basis for school policies concerning magyarisation and it only appears in chapter three (p. 208). Although Puttkamer writes about the vital meaning of language to the nation-building processes that were going on in Hungary, he does not mention the correlation between language and ethnic identity. Unlike today, where sociologists, cultural anthropologists, and other scientists assume identity to be constructed and not primordial, Hungarian civil servants during the Compromise Era equalled language to ethnicity. Hence the strong emphasis on teaching the Hungarian language, which Puttkamer does mention: he who speaks Hungarian as a native speaker, according to their logic, is bound "to feel" Hungarian and become one as well.

Another deficit regards gender and family. Puttkamer hardly mentions any girls' schools and does not give any further indication in this matter. There were definitely more boys' schools before coeducation was introduced and the country's elite was male dominated. Nonetheless, the gender issue is of great importance because of another question concerning women and family: Can only the schools impart a national identity? The author suggests that the school was the main driving force behind national identity (p. 325). As he explains in other chapters, the Slovaks hardly had any national movement during those years but have gained considerable momentum during the war years. This does hold evidence of the fact that the identification with one's ethnic group is not subdued completely to school policy or curricula. It is the environment either at home or in the residence hall that had a significant influence over the youth.

The book also contains a series of minor inconsistencies, which at times make it somewhat difficult to understand. The author gives quite a few indications about average salaries. Alas, he gives the information in different currencies, which make it difficult for the reader to estimate the purchasing power of every currency (crowns, forints). Further, a few more statistics would have made the book at certain points perhaps more comprehensible. Other points are orthography and spelling mistakes. There have been just a handful of spelling mistakes in the languages which I could check. The quotation of the Romanian texts, however, requires a further note due to the different spellings. The Romanian language has experienced quite a few orthographic reforms in the last 150 years and it was not standardised for a long time. Consequently, the sources, which the author quotes, have different spellings. A remark on this topic perhaps could have eliminated some misunderstandings.

Another important aspect concerning languages is the naming of places. Puttkamer chose the German names for a more simple and uniform appellation free

of connotations (at least for the regions he examined). He gives the German name, then the name in the official language of the state, e.g. Slovakia or Romania, and then the Hungarian name, which was officially used in the old days. This might not sound that important to readers who have not been confronted by the continuous discussions going on between Hungarians and Romanians, Poles and Germans, Slovaks and Hungarians or Germans and Czechs. But it has been a form of domination for the last two centuries: first by the Austrians, then by the Hungarians and finally by today's nation states. Especially to those people who form a minority in Central and Eastern Europe it is a sign of acceptance and tolerance when for example at the borders of their respective town or village the name of the town is also written in their language. Hence Puttkamer's attitude is a positive and constructive one when discussing appellations.

There is also one small deficit that I was not able to understand: why does a study of more than 500 pages in the domain of history about an educational system not quote experts in teaching? Puttkamer does quote teachers, headmasters and former pupils, but not one who is an expert in the modern theory of teaching and pedagogy.

All in all, Puttkamer's book delivers the basic knowledge to comprehend the school system in Hungary between 1867 and 1914. It is written in a fluent way, which enables a thorough reading and a good understanding of the subject. The multitude of languages used for this work is in itself impressive. Starting of with the book's language (German), going on to Slovak and Romanian, continuing by using literature in Serbian and Ruthenian and finally utilising secondary sources in English and French. It is also impressive, since most of the sources are in their original language. This book also enables a deep look into the very difficult subject of minorities in Hungary during the second half of the nineteenth century. It is a book that, except for the high price, can be recommended to laymen and experts alike for a good understanding of some of the most interesting aspects of Hungarian history.

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