

Kuno Klebelsberg's Educational Policy

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ABSTRACT: By presenting the main features of Hungary's cultural and educational policy in the 1920s, the government's search for a path and its view of the completely changed economic and political situation in the new country can be vividly described. The government tried to find a way out of the national shock caused by the Treaty of Trianon by trying to improve the quality and quantity of education and culture, but without wanting to give up revenge. This bipolar process of vacillating between past and future was led by Count Klebelsberg, who, as Minister of Education, headed the Ministry for Religion and Popular Education. Klebelsberg consciously took over these responsibilities, having a precise idea and knowledge of the ministry's work. Through his activities and speeches we can learn a lot about the zeitgeist, the most important currents in politics and humanities, most importantly what people thought about the Treaty of Trianon and how they dealt with it. It must also be emphasized that his influence and the spirit of the era can still be felt today.

EET/TEE KEYWORDS: History of Education; Education Policy; Elementary School; Hungary; XIX Century.

1. *Hungary in the monarchy at the end of the 19th century*

Hungary was part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with 18.2 million of a total of 53 million inhabitants, which created a large internal market with common currency, customs union and a common banking sector for the constituting countries, including the Kingdom of Hungary. In the last year of

peace, 1913, the gross domestic product in the dual monarchy was 23 billion gold crowns, of which 8.1% was generated in Hungary. 70-80% of exports from Hungary went to Austria and the Czech Republic¹. The railway and road network, which extended to the entire area of historical Hungary and connected the most important cities and economic centers as well as mining areas, also served to improve mobility and transport. The most important mining areas and also the industrial centers were mostly in the north and south-east of the kingdom.

Half of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Hungary were Hungarians (54.4%), the other half was made up of eight minorities: Romanians: 16.1%; Slovaks: 10.7%; Germans: 10.4%; Rusins: 2.5%; Serbs: 2.5%; Croatians: 1.1%; Roma: 0.6%; Slovenes: 0.4% and other minorities: 1.2% making up the remaining 45.6%². Almost each minority party program called for universal and secret suffrage, a progressive tax system, compulsory and universal social insurance. However, other goals, such as regional local government and turning the country into a federation were dropped from the agenda. No matter how legal the parliamentary struggle was and how politically active the parties may have been, winning a mandate as a representative of a minority was difficult, if not hopeless. Although minorities made up 45.6% of the total population, they were in the majority in only about a quarter of the 413 constituencies. The Prime Minister, István Tisza, allowed the minorities to form social, cultural, artistic, industrial, economic, and charity associations, but he also tried to play the individual minorities off against each other. The different minorities in the country also made different demands on the government. At that time, the Romanians demanded not only the repeal of the Apponyi Law³, but also the establishment of a department for Romanian affairs in the Ministry of Culture, the appointment of a Romanian umpire in the office of the Prime Minister and the free use of the Romanian national colours. Of the South Slavic ethnic groups in Hungary, only the Serbs had a national political

¹ I.T. Berend, Gy. Ránki, *Nemzeti jövedelem és tőkefelhalmozás Magyarországon 1867-1914* [*National income and capital accumulation in Hungary 1867-1914*], «Történelmi Szemle», n. 2, 1966, pp. 187-203.

² M. Lajtai, *Nemzetiségi viszonyok és a statisztikai adatgyűjtés Magyarországon Központi Statisztikai Hivatal* [*Minority situation and statistical data collection in Hungary by the Central Office of Statistics*], «Statisztikai Szemle», n. 4, 2020; see <https://www.ksh.hu/statszemle_archive/all/2020/2020_06/2020_06_547.pdf> (last access: 05.02.2024).

³ Albert Apponyi Minister of Education (1906-1910), tightened the ministry's control over minority schools. The curriculum for minority schools from 1908, based on Article XXVII/1907, focused on the teaching of the Hungarian language. Children were expected to express themselves both in writing and orally in Hungarian at a high level by the end of the fourth grade (curriculum, 1908/12000). The tasks of the teachers were prescribed step by step, with their most important duty being the dissemination of the Hungarian language at school; see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=90700027.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D36>> (last access: 11.02.2024).

movement. Mainly for reasons of foreign policy, Serbian radicals were willing to cooperate with the Hungarian government. Relations between the government and the Romanian and Serbian minorities were not strained by school policies, as the schools of the wealthy Serbian Orthodox Church were hardly affected by the Hungarian school laws⁴, in contrast to the schools of the German and Slovak minorities. The state school system for the minorities was continuously restricted both vertically and horizontally by the government, with regard to the role of the minority languages in the classroom. From 1883, the final exam had to be taken in Hungarian, from 1891, the kindergarten activities were held in Hungarian and from 1884, the future teachers had to take their qualification exams in Hungarian. While the free choice of the language of instruction was still guaranteed in Article 1868 § 38 and § 58 (1868 § 14, 1868 § XLIV.), Hungarian was introduced in 1879 as a compulsory subject in all schools. Paragraph 1907 XVII tightened the ministry's control function over minority schools. It was also determined which subjects could be taught in which language. The theoretical subjects had to be taught in Hungarian and the proportion of subjects taught in the minority languages dropped to 49%. Up to the First World War, 80% of the elementary schools had Hungarian as the language of instruction, and in the teacher training schools the preferred language was also Hungarian⁵.

Language of instruction	Hungarian	German	Slovak	Romanian	Croatian	Serbian
– monolingual						
1869	5818	1232	1822	2569	93	159
1880	7342	867	1716	2756	68	245
1905	11644	272	326	2433	1	155
– bilingual						
1869	1455	856	333	204	27	65
1880	2287	919	597	392	52	79
1905	1598	331	599	413	41	113

Tab. 1. Language of instruction in elementary schools in Hungary (1869-1905)⁶

⁴ Z. Ács, *Nemzetiségek a történelmi Magyarországon* [Minorities in historic Hungary], Budapest, Kossuth, 1996; see <https://www.sulinet.hu/oroksegtar/data/magyarorszagi_nemzetisegek/nemetek/nemzetisegek_a_tortenelmi_magyarorszagon/pages/013_a_hazai_nemzetisegek.htm> (last access: 05.02.2024).

⁵ Á. Klein, *Geschichte der deutschsprachigen LehrerInausbildung in Südtransdanubien*, in Á. Klein, É. Márkus, J. Meier (edd.), *Auf die Lehrenden kommt es an: Konferenz zum 200jährigen Jubiläum der deutschsprachigen Primarschullehrerbildung in Ungarn. (= Beiträge zur Fachdidaktik 5)*, Wien, Praesens, 2019, pp. 60-76, in partic. p. 67.

⁶ G. Seewann, *Geschichte der Deutschen in Ungarn. 1860 bis 2006* [History of Germans in

Figure 1 shows that the decline in mother tongue teaching affected Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Croats and Slovenes the most, while Romanians and Serbs were able to keep their schools precisely because of their other denominations.

The dual monarchy was separated by the language and culture of its people, at the same time connected by economy, transport and administration.

2. *The Effects of the Peace Treaty of 1920*

Although one can assume that the majority of citizens imagined their future within the framework of the monarchy, the First World War by no means reached the peoples of the monarchy as a unit. The social problems became deeper as a result of the ongoing war, caused by the shortage of supplies, in which many people were killed or injured, and dissatisfaction with the administration and politics of the monarchy increased. Foreign policy also seemed to accelerate the process of the dissolution of the monarchy, for the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, wrote the foundations for a new world order after the First World War in his 14-point program on January 8, 1918. The Trianon peace treaty, which ended the First World War for Hungary, dates from the time of the Horthy government. Due to its harsh terms and the way it was formed, the treaty was perceived by the majority of Hungarians as an illegitimate and humiliating diktat. The Hungarian delegation, led by Count Apponyi, tried to negotiate and presented the so-called *Cart Rouge*⁷, created by Pál Teleki⁸ aiming to present the ethnographic settlement structure of Hungary. The delegation tried to reduce the threatening territorial losses and, above all, to prevent the settlements inhabited by Hungarians from being moved into neighboring countries by re-drawing the borders, but without success. The Peace Treaty of Trianon consisted of nine parts. The first part contained the statute of the League of Nations, the second part established Hungary's new borders, the third Hungary's obligations to its neighbors and other countries, the fifth the military restrictions, the sixth dealt with prisoners of war, the seventh with war criminals, the eighth and ninth with repara-

Hungary between 1806-2006], (Studien zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, 24/1), Marburg, Herder-Institut, 2012, p. 103.

⁷ Ethnographic map of Hungary 1910 *Carte Rouge*; see <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ethnographic_map_of_hungary_1910_by_teleki_carte_rouge.jpg> (last access: 11.02.2024).

⁸ Pál Teleki (1879-1941); Hungarian geographer, politician, Member of Parliament, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Hungary (1920), Prime Minister from 1920 until his resignation in 1921, Minister of Culture (1938-39), Prime Minister (1939-41). B. Ablonczy, *Teleki Pál*, Budapest, Osiris, 2005.

tions⁹. Of these points, territorial losses had the worst impact, as Hungary lost a total of 2/3 of its previous territory and 2/5 of its population. In addition, around 3 million Hungarians came under the care of neighboring countries. Most of them lived in Romania (1.7 million) and Czechoslovakia (1.07 million). From then on, Hungary could not be considered as a multi-ethnic state, as 89.6% of its population was Hungarian. Nationality policy shifted from domestic to foreign¹⁰.

3. *The aftermath of the Trianon Treaty*

The monarchy was dissolved by the national principle. At the same time, no “nation states” in the narrower sense emerged, but newer, smaller, multi-national countries. These facts – under the historical conditions of the time – reversed and strained the earlier relations of the Hungarian and neighboring nations¹¹.

The small states were now more economically independent units with their own economic and customs policies and became the sphere of influence of the great powers. As for the Hungarian economic situation, the country lost its main industrial and agricultural markets. This created a torso, because some branches of industry were from the division of labor of the dual monarchy. Textile and paper industries, for example, stopped to exist, arable and mining areas fell to neighboring countries, which meant there were no sources of raw materials. Worse, the loss of industrial cities created shadow economic zones. The war also caused damage, because there was a lack of labor and horses, which drastically reduced production. Hyperinflation ensued, causing real income to fall to 75-80% of 1913 levels¹².

Half of the middle schools and 2/3 of the elementary schools were now in the neighboring countries. About 350,000-400,000 people (mainly teach-

⁹ Trianoni békeszerződés 1921. XXXIII. törvénycikk [Treaty of Trianon] see <https://hu.wikisource.org/wiki/Trianoni_b%C3%A9keszerz%C5%91d%C3%A9s> (last access: 11.02.2024).

¹⁰ G. Hamza, *Grenzfragen von den Pariser Vorortverträgen bis zum Ersten Wiener Schiedsspruch 1938 und seine Folgen*, in G. Hamza, M. Hlavačka, K. Takii (edd.), *Rechtstransfer in der Geschichte. Internationale Festschrift für Wilhelm Brauneder zum 75. Geburtstag*, Berlin – Bern – Bruxelles – New York – Oxford – Warszawa – Wien, Peter Lang, 2019, pp. 139-171.

¹¹ Z. Ács, *Nemzetiségek a történelmi Magyarországon [Minorities in Historic Hungary]*, see <https://www.sulinet.hu/oroksegtar/data/magyarorszag_i_nemzetisegek/nemetek/nemzetisegek_a_tortenelmi_magyarorszagon/pages/013_a_hazai_nemzetisegek.htm> (last access: 05.02.2024).

¹² I.T. Berend, M. Szuhay, *A tőkés gazdaság története Magyarországon 1848–1944 [The history of bourgeois economy in Hungary 1848-1914]*, Budapest, Kossuth, 1975, p. 206.

ers, civil servants, etc.), who made up 80% of the Hungarian intelligentsia in neighboring countries, came to Hungary and initially lived in inhumane conditions¹³.

The desire to revise the peace treaty further aggravated bad relations with neighboring countries (Little Entente) and led to a protectionist (protection of the domestic economy) economic policy, which is why more distant markets and political allies (Italy and later Germany) were sought. Citing historical, cultural, economic, ethnic and geographical arguments, the revision propaganda was steadily intensified without taking into account the new realities: it reclaimed all of the taken territories (including those not inhabited by Hungarians). («Mutilated Hungary is not a country, whole Hungary is paradise»¹⁴). The Horthy era, with its so-called Christian-national (often chauvinistic-irredentistic), authoritarian ideology attempted to further strengthen national consciousness («St. Stephen's state idea», «cultural superiority» in the Carpathian Basin). This is clearly shown by education: «the proportion of young people among students living on the territory of the country belonging to certain ethnic groups and nationalities should reach the national ratio of the respective ethnic groups or nationalities, but at least one ninth». Furthermore, the number of Jewish students was limited in some courses (XXV/1920. Technical and Economic Universities in Budapest, law throughout the country)¹⁵.

4. Education Policy in the Bethlen Era

The responsibility of consolidation of Hungary, which had become independent against its own will, struggling with immense economic, political and social difficulties, fell to István Bethlen. He was able to remain Prime Minister for ten years (1921-1931), which gave the country internal political stability after the constant change of government in the previous years. His situation

¹³ I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században [History of Hungary in the 20th century]*, Budapest, Osiris, 2001, p. 155; F. Glatz, *Konzervatív reform – kultúrpolitika (Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno konzervatív reformeszméi) [Conservative reform – cultural politics. Count Kuno Klebelsberg's conservative reform ideology]*, in F. Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917–1932) [Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932]*, Budapest, Európa, 1990, pp. 5-26, p. 20.

¹⁴ T. Biró-Balogh, *Egyszerű, rövid, populáris ("Csonka Magyarország nem ország": a revíziós propagandagépezet működése) [Simple, short and popular. "Mutilated Hungary is not a country". The operation of the revisionary propaganda machinery]*, «Irodalom-Művészet-Tudomány», vol. 39, n. 7-8, 2007, pp. 86-105; J. Vonyó, *A Magyar Hiszekegy születése [The birth of the Hungarian Creed]*, «História», n. 1, 2002, pp. 14-18.

¹⁵ R. Paksa, *A numerus clausus parlamenti vitája [The discussion of Numerus Clausus in the Hungarian Parliament]*, «Rubicon», n. 4-5, 2010, pp. 70-77.

worsened because he was able to achieve moderate economic growth and lead the country out of the international isolation in the mid-1920s.

Count Kuno Klebelsberg worked between 1922 and 1931 as Minister of Religion and Education in Bethlen's government. Enjoying the Prime Minister's support, he considered culture, education and science in the Central European region as an important aspect of national strategy, which should be based on the «superiority of Hungarian achievements in this field»¹⁶. The most important approach of his cultural policy was the promotion of the «conservative modernization» of society, focusing on the following goals:

1. Knowledge as an investment
2. Eliminating illiteracy
3. Strengthening professional education
4. Offering middle class education at appropriate level¹⁷.

His activity was based on introducing reform ideas for the modernization of Hungary, including the need to modernize Hungarian agriculture, spearheaded by Ignác Darányi¹⁸ and the Hungarian agrarian lobby. The development of industry with state funds was also an important idea, but its realization was prevented by the First World War and its consequences. This was followed by the idea of further education or training and qualification of the population.

In order to put his ideas into practice Klebelsberg used the Christian national ideology of neo-nationalism, which focused on the struggle for the integrity of «Greater Hungary». His program was based on the ideas of his predecessor, Gyula Wlassics¹⁹, who was Minister of Culture between 1895 and 1898 and introduced the slogan of «Cultural Superiority» as a national

¹⁶ K. Klebelsberg, *A középiskolákról szóló törvényjavaslat beterjesztése* [Draft Law on Secondary Schools], 26 März 1924), in F. Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917–1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932], Budapest, Európa, 1990, pp. 292-293; Id., *Konzervatív reform – kultúrpolitika (Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno konzervatív reformeszméi)* [Conservative reform – cultural politics. Count Kuno Klebelsberg's conservative reform ideology], in Id. (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932], Budapest, Európa, 1990, pp. 5-26.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-24.

¹⁸ Ignác Darányi (1849-1927) Minister of Agriculture (1896-1903; 1906-1910). Gy. Fehér, *Darányi Ignác élete (1849-1927)* [The Life of Ignác Darányi], Budapest, Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum és Könyvtár, 2017.

¹⁹ He meant, on the one hand, the much more favorable cultural indicators of the Hungarian population compared to the other minorities – with the exception of the Germans – living in the Carpathian Basin, on the other hand, that among the factors that held the Hungarian state together, the Hungarian culture took precedence.

G. Ujváry, *Kultúrfölény és neonacionalizmus. Klebelsberg Kuno és Tormay Cécile kapcsolata* [Cultural superiority and neonationalism. Kuno Klebelsberg's relationship with Cécile Tormay], see <http://real.mtak.hu/118521/1/13457_Ujvarty.pdf> (last access: 05.02.2024).

strategy. However, Klebelsberg was already using the concept in a partially modified form. Following the then popular principles of Social Darwinism, he too believed that peoples were in competition with each other and that culture and science were one of the most important arenas in this struggle²⁰:

Four cars race through world history. One car picks up speed, but the other three cars follow and are already honking their horns because they want to overtake. These other three cars are: Romania, Serbia and the Czech Republic. And the car that accelerates is: Hungary. I ask, Honorable House, can there be any good patriot who would take responsibility for those three other cars rushing past us, leaving us on one of the deadliest highways of world history and enveloping us in a cloud of dust? If that's what you want, ladies and gentlemen, find another driver for it, because as Minister of Education I will never be considered for a cultural-political Nagymajtény, for laying down of arms like at Világos. I can't protect myself with Trianon. We had to endure the political Trianon, but laying down cultural-political weapons would be voluntary²¹.

Kleberlsberg emphasized that although the First World War was over it had to be continued, however with different means. «Today, the Hungarian homeland cannot primarily be preserved and made great through the sword, but through culture»²², so «the war must be diverted and won at cultural level».

Only an educated and prosperous nation, which is more important, more educated than the surrounding peoples, can win this war. The dangers here include internationalism, because its ideas endanger the unity of the nation, in order to win people over, the nation's politics must be popular, popular. We must show the great nations, the public opinion of the world, that the intrinsic value of the Hungarian nation is greater than that of the peoples around us, who have been made great at our expense. In the eyes of the educated West, education is the measure of that²³.

In his capacity as Minister of Education, he did a great deal to achieve these goals at all levels of education: science, public collections, adult education and higher education.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ G. Ujváry, *Baráti háromszög (Carl Heinrich Becker, Klebelsberg Kuno, Gragger Róbert és a hungarológia megszületése)* [A friendly triangle. Carl Heinrich Becker, Klebelsberg Kuno, Gragger Róbert and the birth of Hungarology], «Hungarológia», n. 23, 2002, pp. 99-120, p. 108.

²² K. Klebelsberg, *Beszédei, cikkei és törvényjavaslatai 1916–1926* [Speeches, essays and bills 1916-1926], Budapest, Atheneum, 1926. p. 604.

²³ K. Klebelsberg, *Az a bizonyos sokat emlegetett kultúrfölény (1929)* [That specific often discussed cultural supremacy], in F. Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917–1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932], Budapest, Európa, 1990, p. 542.

5. Science Policy 1920-1930

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences found itself in a crisis situation after World War I due to a lack of financial support. Even the Regent, Miklós Horthy recognized the problem and addressed it in a letter to Klebelsberg²⁴. As a result, Article I of 1923 on state support for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was enshrined²⁵. From then on, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences received regular state support.

Klebelsberg's science-political ideas were organically intertwined with the development of higher education. Many universities remained in neighboring countries after territorial losses. He regarded the relocation of these universities to Hungary as one of his most important tasks in order to expand the infrastructure in the university sector. Franz Josef University moved from Cluj to Szeged and Elisabeth University from Pressburg to Pécs²⁶. The expansion of university premises – building new classrooms, clinics, faculty apartments, etc. – started mainly in the larger rural cities of Szeged, Debrecen and Pécs. In 1925, the Sport University was founded in Budapest as a new institution, and almost immediately became the stronghold of sport science and physical education teacher training in Hungary²⁷.

The academic training was expanded through study trips abroad for talented students. The institution of Collegium Hungaricum was founded for this purpose. Klebelsberg explained the need for the organization with the following words: «A sufficient number of specialists at European level in each field must be granted, so that we have top talent in all areas»²⁸. In order to

²⁴ K. Klebelsberg, *Indoklás a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia támogatásáról szóló törvényjavaslathoz* (16. November 1922) [*Justification of the draft law on the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*], in *ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

²⁵ A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia állami támogatásáról. 1923. évi I. törvénycikk [Article about the state support for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences]: see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/getpdf?docid=92300001.TV&targetdate=&printTitle=1923.+%C3%A9vi+I.+%C3%B6rv%C3%A9nycikk&referer=1000ev>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

²⁶ 1921. évi XXV. törvénycikk a kolozsvári és pozsonyi m. kir. tudomány egyetem ideiglenes áthelyezéséről [Article about the move of the Hungarian Royal Universities in Cluj-Napoca and Bratislava] see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezet-ev-torveny?docid=92100025.TV>> (last access: 11.02.2024).

²⁷ I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* [*History of Hungary in the 20th century*], Budapest, Osiris, 2001, p. 183.

²⁸ K. Klebelsberg, *Indoklás a külföldi magyar intézetekről és a magyar műveltség célját szolgáló ösztöndíjakról szóló törvényjavaslathoz. 1927* [*Justification for the article about the Hungarian institutes abroad and about the scholarships that serve the Hungarian education*], in F. Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [*Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932*], Budapest, Európa, 1990, pp. 175-187; F. Glatz, *Konzervatív reform – kultúrpolitika (Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno konzervatív reformeszméi)* [*Conservative reform – cultural politics. Count Kuno Klebelsberg's conservative reform ideology*], in Glatz, Ferenc (edd.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [*Science,*

make travel possible for students from humble backgrounds, a scholarship system was established in 1927, coordinated by the National Scholarship Council headed by Klebelsberg's confidant, history professor Sándor Domanovszky²⁹.

Another significant act of the minister was the founding of the Institute of Biology in Tihany, where he wanted to combine scientific research with tourism and higher education at Lake Balaton, «[...] because we consider the combination of education and research to be extremely fruitful»³⁰.

In August 1922, two months after his appointment as Minister, Klebelsberg presented his draft law on the promotion of the most important Hungarian public collections (archives, libraries, museums), which was debated in Parliament in November 1922 and in the form of Article XIX/1922 *On the Management and Staff of Our Large National Public Collections* was adopted³¹. In accordance with the political phraseology of the time, Klebelsberg referred to the Peace of Trianon and the ideology of 'cultural supremacy' he advocated in the introductory remarks of his synopsis of the draft law. «Indeed, among the treasures which remained after the great collapse, the cultural superiority that the Hungarian nation over the surrounding Eastern European peoples takes first place»³² It was determined that the public central collection unit should employ 107 scientific staff who could only be appointed after a high level of professional and scientific achievement (doctorate)³³. The high level of political support meant that two of the staff were given seats in the House of

culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932, Budapest, Európa, 1990, pp. 5-26.

²⁹ I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században [History of Hungary in the 20th century]*, Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 2001, p. 185; 1927. évi XIII. törvénycikk a külföldi magyar intézetekről és a magas műveltség célját szolgáló ösztöndíjakról [Article XIII/1927 on Hungarian institutes abroad and grants for Hungarian education]; see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/getpdf?docid=92700013.TV&targetdate=&printTitle=1927.+%C3%A9vi+XIII.+t%C3%B6rv%C3%A9nycikk&referer=1000ev>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

³⁰ K. Klebelsberg, *A Tihanyi Biológiai Intézet alapkövetétele alkalmából tartott beszéd [Speech at the laying ceremony of the foundation stone of the Biological Institute in Tihany]*, 25 August 1926, in F. Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [*Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932*], Budapest, Európa, 1990, p. 193.

³¹ 1922. évi XIX. törvénycikk, a nemzeti nagy közgyűjteményeink önkormányzatáról és személyzetükről. [Article XIX/1922 on the self-government and personnel of our national public collections]; see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92200019.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D39>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

³² K. Klebelsberg: *Törvényjavaslat a nemzeti nagy közgyűjteményeink önkormányzatáról és személyzetük minősítéséről* [Article on the self-government and staff of our national public collections], 17 August 1922, in Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [*Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932*], cit., p. 117.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-130; K. Klebelsberg, *Elnöki megnyitóbeszéd az Országos Magyar Gyűjteményegyetem alakuló ülésén.* [Opening speech by the chairman at the inaugural meeting of the Hungarian National Collections Committee], 18.11.1922.; *Ibid.*, pp. 131-152.

Lords. «It is desirable – said Klebelsberg – that the professional representatives of our large public collections can get involved in budget negotiations for the benefit of our archives, libraries and museums»³⁴.

6. *In the service of public education*

The educational policy concept of Klebelsberg extended to both grammar schools and elementary schools. The reform program of secondary school education was an integral part of the socio-political and cultural-political vision, which saw the strengthening, expansion and professionalization of the Christian, national middle class as one of the most important tasks to be solved in Hungarian society, so that they could increase productivity and efficiency of the country contribution. The primary goal of public school reform was to drastically reduce illiteracy by making literacy accessible to broad sections of society.

«Culture cannot be passively inherited, but everyone must actively conquer it. Education for serious, diligent, disciplined work, the habitus of strict duty is the first condition of culture», emphasized one of his most important confidants, Gyula Korniss. He studied philosophy and pedagogy in Oxford and Leipzig, taught at the universities in Prussia and Péter Pázmány in Budapest and later worked as State Secretary in the Ministry of Education. In his work *Guidelines of our cultural policy* (1921)³⁵ he acknowledged the most important content of Klebelsberg's cultural policy:

Only educated citizens can use democratic institutions and extended rights for the benefit of the community, otherwise they all represent serious sources of danger. [...] The most important and central aspect of all state activities is cultural policy. By [...] positively cultivating national sentiment [...] In our school curriculum, each national subject must revolve around only one axis: integral Hungary [...] We must create the most effective pedagogy of irredentism [...] The other main task of the national cultural policy is to protect the soul of youth from the spirit of internationalism. [...] The second task is most closely linked to the third: the re-Hungarianization of the nation's intelligentsia, one could say, Hungarianization instead of Judaism, [...] because the Christian morality, which contains the spirit of the mentioned thoughts, is the most effective way of a national political education when it is imbued with a Christian-religious feeling³⁶.

According to the Trianon Peace Treaty, irredentism was linked to these principles in the educational process. The loud advocates of the slogan *Eve-*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

³⁵ Gy. Korniss, *Kultúrfejlényünk kérdése [The issue of our cultural supremacy]*, Budapest, 1921, p. 47.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-28.

rything back! tried to unite the extreme-right groups on the political palette, while the responsible political figures who governed the country at the time – led by Prime Minister István Bethlen – advocated a more moderate revision. The bourgeois and social-democratic opposition in parliament saw fit to emphasize ethnic revision³⁷.

Irredentism, the National-Christian system of thought and their interpretations as well as their practical implementation were very different³⁸, but occurred directly at all levels of education. The *Hungarian Creed*³⁹ is mentioned as an example, the first verse of which had to be recited by students and teachers in every educational institution every day at the start of school. Its text also was placed on the covers of textbooks and exercise books, on school posters and plaques.

One of the most important tasks was the introduction of measures for the cultivation and education of the Hungarian people. The demands for a better qualified workforce appeared as early as during the period of the monarchy and accordingly the laws of 1907, 1908 on public school education arose with this in mind. Its further development and implementation continued into the 1920s⁴⁰.

7. School reforms

«For us Hungarians, the main argument for the Realgymnasium (secondary academic school with emphasis on mathematics and science) is that in our new situation, teaching modern languages is a compelling need», writes Klebelsberg⁴¹. Section 1 of the law of eight-grade boys' middle schools clearly summarized the main characteristics of three types:

³⁷ M. Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában (1914-1945)* [*Hungary between the two world wars 1914-1945*], Debrecen, Csokonai, 1988, p. 118.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-120.

³⁹ E. Papp-Váry, Sz. Sziklay, “*I believe in one God / I believe in homeland / I believe in the eternal divine truth / I believe in the resurrection of Hungary!*”, 1920; T. Bíró-Balogh, *Egyszerű, rövid, populáris* (“*Csonka Magyarország nem ország*”: *a revíziós propagandagépezet működése.*) [*Simple, short and popular. “Mutilated Hungary is not a country”. The operation of the revisionary propaganda machinery*], «*Irodalom-Művészet-Tudomány*», vol. 39, n. 7-8, 2007, pp. 86-105.

⁴⁰ F. Glatz, *Konzervatív reform – kultúrpolitika* (*Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno konzervatív reformeszméi*) [*Conservative reform – cultural politics. Count Kuno Klebelsberg’s conservative reform ideology*], in Id. (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [*Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg’s selected speeches and essays 1917-1932*], Budapest, Európa, 1990, pp. 14-15.

⁴¹ K. Klebelsberg, *A középiskolákról szóló törvényjavaslat betérjesztése* (1924. március 26.) [*Draft Law on Secondary Schools*], 26. March 1924. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

1. § Concept and task of the secondary grammar school

There are three types of secondary schools: secondary grammar school, Realgymnasium (secondary academic school emphasizing mathematics and science) and Realschule (secondary school). The task of the middle schools is to educate the pupils on the basis of religion to become virtuous citizens, to give them a higher general education in a patriotic spirit and to enable them to do the intellectual work necessary for higher studies⁴².

The structure of girls' high school was modernized in 1926. General principles, similar to those of boys' high schools were introduced in Article XXIV of 1926 on the Law of Girls' High Schools and Lyceums⁴³. In the eight-year school system, the following types were distinguished: girls' grammar school and girls' lyceum, the qualification of which was equivalent to the Abitur of middle schools for boys and therefore offered the same prerequisites for studying. In terms of structure, (boys') grammar school corresponded to girls' grammar school and the Realgymnasium to girls' lyceum. The final exams taken by the girls' college entitled them to all higher education courses except for those at the humanities universities and at technical universities.

Secondary school teacher training was also reformed to fit the modernized secondary school system. Only those who attended the courses of the University's Pedagogical Institute parallel to their four-year university studies, followed by a certified one-year teaching internship in a secondary school and then a written and oral aptitude test in addition to their own elective subjects in Hungarian literature, cultural history and psychological, philosophical and pedagogical subjects, earned a diploma. The students had to prove their skills in at least one foreign language (German, French, English or Italian) in writing and orally⁴⁴.

Middle school became the most popular institution of secondary education and training between the two world wars in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants and in county seats. «We must very clearly raise the intellectual level of the broad strata and the great masses of the nation», said Klebelsberg⁴⁵. While

⁴² 1924. évi XI. törvénycikk a középiskoláról. [Article XI/1924 about the secondary schools] see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92400011.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D39>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁴³ 1926. évi XXIV. törvénycikk a leányközépiskoláról és a leánykollégiumról. [Article XXIV/1926 about the secondary schools and dormitories for girls]; see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/getpdf?docid=92600024.TV&targetdate=&printTitle=1926.+%C3%A9vi+XXIV.+%C3%B6rv%C3%A9nycikk&referer=1000ev>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁴⁴ 1924. évi XXVII. törvénycikk a középiskolai tanárok képzéséről és képesítéséről (Article XXVII/1924 on the training and qualification of secondary school teachers); see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92400027.TVI&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D48>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁴⁵ K. Klebelsberg, *A magyar polgári iskola* [The Hungarian secondary civic school], 24 June 1926, in Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917–1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917–1932], cit., pp. 269–270.

middle school was ‘not a high school’, it was «a very special educational institution that offered a greater intellectual journey for a person preparing for work»⁴⁶. It meant an additional 4 school years for students who had already completed the four grades of elementary school. In Hungary, 253 schools remained from the formerly cc. 500 institutions of this type⁴⁷. By 1929, due to the constant development, this number grew by 100. This spectacular growth was supported by Article XII. *from the year 1927 on the secondary schools* supported, because § No. 1 of the law summarized the tasks of the schools as follows:

The task of the school is to give the pupil a general education in the religious, moral and national spirit in a practical direction and thus prepare him directly for practical work or vocational school. The task of the girls’ school is also to educate the cultured Hungarian middle-class housewife⁴⁸.

8. *The elementary school program*

Of the cultural-political developments of the 1920s, the public school building program had the greatest impact in terms of scope, social commitment and budget. The situation of elementary schools in Hungary before the First World War was as follows: in 1913, 35 thousand teachers taught 2.2 million students in 17,000 elementary schools. This meant an average of 130 students and 2 teachers per school and 64 students per teacher. After the Trianon Peace Treaty there were only 5,584 schools, which corresponded to the extent of the territorial decline with 33% of the former schools, but clearly exceeded the population decline. In the early 1920s, a school had an average of 147 students and they were taught by 2.9 male and one female teachers⁴⁹.

Based on data from 1910, 33% of the population could not read or write. Although the illiteracy rate dropped to 15% by 1920, it was high, compared to the Western European countries⁵⁰. An attempt was made to improve the situation with Article XXX/1921, which prescribed compulsory schooling for nine years from the age of 6 (6 years of primary school and 3 years of repeat school

⁴⁶ K. Klebelsberg, *A magyar polgári iskola [The Hungarian secondary civic school]*, 24 June 1926. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

⁴⁷ I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században [History of Hungary in the 20th century]*, Budapest, Osiris, 2001, p. 178.

⁴⁸ 1927. évi XII. törvénycikk a polgári iskoláról [Article XII/1927 on the Hungarian secondary civic school] see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92700012.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev-torvenyei%3Fpagenum%3D40>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁴⁹ I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században [History of Hungary in the 20th century]*, Budapest, Osiris, 2001, p. 175.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

or Sunday school)⁵¹. Essentially, the high illiteracy was due to the significant inequalities in the situation of public schools in the country, e.g. in the great Hungarian plain where the law could not be enforced. Klebelsberg presented the situation of the need to build schools for children in the countryside based on the number of children in the homestead world of Kecskemét (Low Plain): «The brutal fact is that more than half a century after the introduction of compulsory education, more than one million of the eight million remaining Hungarians are illiterate»⁵².

The paramount importance of literacy was explained by Klebelsberg with the following reasons: «Political democracy cannot save a nation unless prepared by cultural democracy. Only the masses of a nation who have the intelligence to do so can consciously decide about their fate»⁵³.

After the financial reorganization of Hungary in 1924, Klebelsberg was able to start implementing the public-school construction program with considerable state support. The construction of elementary schools was urgently needed because there was a lack of buildings, especially in the countryside⁵⁴. 41.2 million *Pengős* (Pengő = Hungarian currency) were used for this as part of the elementary school implementation program introduced in 1926/27. The first centrally organized and state-sponsored folk school construction program in Hungary was approved, organized and administered in 1926 by the National Folk High School Construction Fund established on the basis of Section 2 of Law 1926/VII⁵⁵. The law on the theoretical and practical preparation, organization, financing, provision of teaching staff and equipment, and transportation of schoolchildren was very precise. It required the construction of a public school in each area, where «scattered from a minimum of one and a half to a maximum of four kilometers, based on the average of the last three years, at least 20 families or 30 school-age children live», and there were no other schools in the district that could take all school children⁵⁶.

⁵¹ 1921. évi XXX. törvénycikk az iskoláztatási köteletség teljesítésének biztosításáról. [Article XXX/1921 On Ensuring Compulsory Education]; see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/getpdf?docid=92100030.TV&targetdate=&prinTitle=1921.+%C3%A9vi+XXX.+t%C3%B6rv%C3%A9nycikk&referer=1000ev>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁵² K. Klebelsberg, *Az Alföld egészsége és műveltsége* [Health and education of the Lowland], 3 October 1926, in Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebelsberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebelsberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932], cit., p. 259; K. Klebelsberg, *A nyolcosztályú népiskola* [Eight grade elementary school], 21 March 1926, *Ibid.*, p. 264.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

⁵⁴ VII/1926.törvénycikk a mezőgazdasági népesség érdekeit szolgáló népiskolák létesítéséről és fenntartásáról [Establishment and maintenance of elementary schools for the benefit of the agricultural population] see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92600007.TV>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The preparation of the building program for the elementary schools began in August 1925. The plan was to build 5,000 elementary school facilities (schools and teachers' apartments) in five years. In just 3 years, 1,096 elementary schools (3,500 classrooms and 1,525 teacher apartments)⁵⁷ were built in the lacking areas, e. g. on the great Hungarian plain, or in South-West Hungary. They were built according to the most modern type plans, made of brick, larch floors, with large windows and slate roofs. Next to the teaching facilities, three-room teaching apartments were added using similar techniques with brick outbuildings. All this meant a revolutionary change in the Hungarian peasant world, where at that time half of the houses were made of mud bricks, the roofs of thatch, and in a significant part of the households there were no bathrooms. The five thousandth building handed over in 1930 was the elementary school in Szeged-Rókus. The opponents of *Klebi* (Klebensberg's nickname) remarked maliciously that this was no coincidence, because the *Count* was an M.P. at the time⁵⁸.

As early as 1926, Klebensberg argued for the introduction of the eight-class elementary school because he believed that it could have a positive effect on the country's economic performance. In Austria and Germany, compulsory eight-class elementary school was introduced after the First World War, so that young people were more likely to enter the international labor market competition and had better chances to meet the needs of the era. For this reason, Klebensberg proposed the introduction of the eight-class elementary school in 1929, which should have been completed by 1940, but the state budget could not provide the necessary financial means during the years of the world economic crisis⁵⁹.

In 1927, the Ministry of Religion and Education led by Klebensberg launched a large-scale program to develop the level of education among the adult rural population and supported various forms of entertainment programs (songs,

⁵⁷ K. Klebensberg, *A kultusztárca programja (A VKM költségvetési vitáján elmondott beszéd)* [The program of the Ministry of Education. Speech at the budget discussion of the Ministry of Education], 20 February 1925, in Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebensberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebensberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932], cit., p. 356. 1926. évi VII. törvénycikk a mezőgazdasági népesség érdekeit szolgáló népiskolák létesítéséről és fenntartásáról. [Article VII/1926 on the establishment and maintenance of elementary schools serving the interests of farmers] see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92600007.TV>> (last access: 02.02.2024); M. Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában (1914-1945)* [Hungary between the two world wars 1914-1945], Debrecen, Csokonai, 1988, p. 115.

⁵⁸ K. Klebensberg, *A Tihanyi Biológiai Intézet alapkötetetele alkalmából tartott beszéd* (Pester Lloyd 26. August 1926), in Glatz (ed.), *Tudomány, kultúra, politika. Gróf Klebensberg Kuno válogatott beszédei és írásai (1917-1932)* [Science, culture, politics. Klebensberg's selected speeches and essays 1917-1932], cit., 1990, p. 195.

⁵⁹ I. Mészáros, A. Németh, B. Pukánszky, *Neveléstörténet. Bevezetés a pedagógia és az iskoláztatás történetébe.* [History of education. Introduction into the history of pedagogy and schooling], Budapest, Osiris, 2003, p. 321.

drama groups, etc.). The establishment of folk libraries in the countryside deserves special mention. Modern mass media, such as radio, which began broadcasting in 1927, were powerful tools. From a note in Miklós Kozma's diary, made at the meeting of the Radio Executive Committee on August 3, 1928, we learn:

The Ministry of Education has discovered that there is a radio and wants to control the program. After a long argument, they were given two hours to give whatever they wanted. This was called the community college, which is quite strange as they thought the villagers should be educated⁶⁰.

9. *Minority school system*

After the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920, around 11% of the country's citizens belonged to a minority (Figure 2).

The institutes that provided the minority schools with teachers remained on the former Hungarian territories of the neighboring countries⁶¹. In the schools that remained in Hungary, it was possible to take qualifying exams that entitled the holder to teach in minority schools⁶². Minority education was introduced in state schools at the request of over 40 parents⁶³.

⁶⁰ 1920. évi XXV. törvénycikk a tudományegyetemre, a műegyetemre, a budapesti egyetemi közgazdaságtudományi karra és a jogakadémiákra való beiratkozás szabályozásáról. [Article XXV/1920 on the regulation of enrollment in universities, Technical University, Faculty of Economics in Budapest and Faculty of Law]; see <<https://net.jogtar.hu/ezer-ev-torveny?docid=92000025.TV&searchUrl=/ezer-ev->>> (last access: 02.02.2024).

⁶¹ J. Neszt, *A középfokú elemi iskolai tanítóképzők intézményrendszerének kiépülése és változásai 1828-tól 1945-ig* [The implementation of middle level elementary teacher training institution system and its changes 1828-1945], see <<http://docplayer.hu/14717031-Doktori-ph-d-ertekezes-a-koze-pfoku-elemi-iskolai-tanitokepzok-intezmenyrendszerenek-kiepulese-es-valtozasai-1828-tol-1945-ig.html>> (last access: 01.04.2023).

⁶² S. Rácz-Fodor, *A nemzetiségi tanítóképzés története (1870-1970)* [The history of the minority teacher training 1870-1970], Baja, 1993.

⁶³ B. Bellér, *A nemzetiségi iskolapolitika története Magyarországon 1918-ig* [The political history of ethnic schools in Hungary till 1918], «Magyar Pedagógia», vol. 74. n. 1, 1974, pp. 47-65, see <http://misc.bibl.u-szeged.hu/12632/1/mp_1974_001_5083_047-065.pdf> (last access: 01.04.2023).

Mother tongue	1920	%
Hungarian	7.155.979	89.59
German	550.062	6.89
Slovakian	141.877	1.78
Croatian	58.931	0.74
Romanian	23.695	0.3
Serbian	17.132	0.21
Gipsy	6.989	0.09
Slovenian	6.087	0.08
Other	26.132	0.36
Sum	7.986.884	100%

Tab. 2. Native language in 1920 in the census⁶⁴

Three types were distinguished. Type ‘A’ referred to a minority school with mother-tongue instruction, in which the Hungarian language and literature were taught as compulsory subjects. After the syllabus was published in 1925, music and physical education had to be taught in two languages.

Type ‘B’ represented bilingual schools in which the mother tongue, natural and economic studies, drawing and handicrafts were taught in the relevant minority language, while Hungarian literature and grammar, history, geography, social studies and physical education were taught in Hungarian. Language exercises, reading, writing, arithmetic and music were taught in both languages.

Type ‘C’ was based on language teaching type, in which the language of instruction was Hungarian, the children learned the subjects mother tongue and religion in the minority language⁶⁵. This type dominated elementary school teaching with its share of 62%. A prominent representative of the minorities, Jakob Bleyer⁶⁶ complained in his memorandum entitled *About the elementary school education of Hungarian Germans* that there were hardly any schools of teaching type ‘A’, and type ‘C’ was not suitable for minority education. He

⁶⁴ M. Lajtai, *Nemzetiségi viszonyok és a statisztikai adatgyűjtés Magyarországon Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*. [Minority situation and statistical data collection in Hungary by the Central Office of Statistics], «Statisztikai Szemle», n. 4. 2020; see <https://www.ksh.hu/statszemle_archive/all/2020/2020_06/2020_06_547.pdf> (last access: 01.04.2023).

⁶⁵ Á. Klein, *Kisebbségi tantervek az alapfokú oktatásban a magyar neveléstörténetben. (1869-től napjainkig): Elméleti alapvetésük és vizsgálatuk* [Minority curricula in elementary education in Hungary from 1869 to the present: Theoretical foundations and their analysis], Doctoral Thesis, Graduate School in Linguistics (Supervisor: Zs. Kurtán) University of Pécs, Academic Year 2003/2004, pp. 93-95.

⁶⁶ P.T. Nagy, *Neveléstörténeti előadások* [Lectures on the history of education], Budapest, OKI, 1997, p. 560.

also mentioned that the parents were influenced by the teachers in their choice of school⁶⁷.

Minority	Language of instruction		
	Mother tongue	Bilingual	Hungarian
German	40	139	263
Serbian	15	4	4
Romanian	0	1	10
Slovakian	0	2	51
Croatian	0	4	17
Slovenian	0	3	1
Sum	55 (10%)	153 (28%)	346 (62%)

Tab. 3. Number of school types per minority⁶⁸

This dissatisfaction with the minority school policy remained on the side of the nationalities remaining in Hungary until the end of the Hungarian kingdom, which they regarded as one of the most important causes of assimilation. Indeed, as can be seen from Tab. 4, this increased. Other reasons, such as advantages in professional life or in society, are also crucial in this respect.

Year	Hung.	Slovak.	Rom.	Croat.	Serb.	Sloven.	Germ.	Gipsy	Other
1900	85,9	2,8	0,4	1,0	0,4	0,1	8,8	0,1	0,5
1910	88,4	2,2	0,4	0,8	0,3	0,1	7,3	0,1	0,4
1920	89,6	1,8	0,3	0,7	0,2	0,1	6,9	0,1	0,3
1930	92,1	1,2	0,2	0,5	0,1	0,1	5,5	0,1	0,2
1941	92,9	0,8	0,2	0,4	0,1	0,1	5,1	0,2	0,2

Tab. 4. Distribution of the population in Hungary by language (Hung. = Hungarian, Slovak. = Slovakian, Rom. = Romanian Croat. = Croatian Serb. = Serbianh, Sloven. = Slovenian, Germ. = Deutsch) (%)⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Jakob Bleyer (1874-1933) Germanist, Minister of Nationalities 1920, Chairman and founder of the Hungarian German People's Education Association. P. Pritz, R. Marchut, *Kisebbségpolitikák – nemzetközi erőterben Bleyer Jakab/Jakob Bleyer példáján [Minority Policies – in International Arena. The Example of Jakob Bleyer]*, «Regio», vol. 25. n. 1, 2017, pp. 5-40.

⁶⁸ MNL PML [Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Pest Vármegyei Levéltára / National Archives of Hungary, Pest County Archive] IV. 401. a. 51/1924. 15. Juny 1924; L. Tilkovszky, *Német nemzetiség, magyar hazafiság. Tanulmányok a magyarországi németek történetéből [German nationality, Hungarian patriotism. Studies on the History of Germans in Hungary]*, Pécs, JPTE TK, 1997, pp. 75-76.; P. T. Nagy, *Neveléstörténeti előadások [Lectures on the history of education]*, Budapest, OKI, 1997, p. 560.

⁶⁹ I. Kollega Tarsoly (gen. ed.), *Magyarország a 20. században II/5 [Hungary in the 20th*

Summary

The activities of Kuno Klebelsberg can be evaluated taking professional needs and budget possibilities into account. Following this logic, lower-cost science-political laws and measures were enacted at the beginning of his career (1922-1926) and then parallel to the economic stabilization of the country – after 1925-1926 – a public education program that required large financial resources was launched and implemented⁷⁰. The Ministry of Culture received an unprecedented cultural, educational and scientific policy program possible in Hungary of the 1920s. From 1925 to 1930, the legislature approved a relatively high expenditure item of 9-10% of the state budget for the Ministry of Culture⁷¹. This was two times more than the expenditure for the realization of tasks in the field of culture and education than was available for this purpose between 1900 and 1913⁷².

The public-school policy of Klebelsberg was not easy to accept at a social level and did not impose small financial burdens, and it was popular neither with the notables, nor with the farmers who benefited from it. Nevertheless, the influence of the measures taken was crucial, because the number of illiterates dropped to 7%. The meaning of this statement can be best assessed by looking at similar indicators in some countries in Europe of the 1930s. At that time, national and international statistics registered 45% illiteracy in Yugoslavia, 42% in Romania, 39% in Bulgaria and 23% in Poland. In Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany and Western Europe in general, these numbers were generally below 5%⁷³. It is to Klebelsberg's credit that he attributed an important role to culture and education in promoting a nation. Recognizing the actual problems, he was able to give an adequate answer with the appropriate means. He re-organized the Hungarian education system with a long-lasting impact⁷⁴. However, one must not forget, especially taking other aspects of the historical context of his period into consideration, that the Hungarian nation's support of the concept of 'cultural supremacy' played an essential role in regaining the territorial size of the country. The emotions were kept alive by slogans, posters, curricula and the subject matter, and in some cases were pumped up. His work was also influenced by the idea of revisionism with the help of cultural

century, II/5] Szekszárd, Babits, 1996-2000; see <<http://mek.niif.hu/02100/02185/html/171.html#175>> (last access: 01.04.2023).

⁷⁰ I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században [History of Hungary in the 20th Century]*, Budapest, Osiris, 2001, p. 157-158.

⁷¹ M. Ormos, *Magyarország a két világháború korában (1914-1945) [Hungary between the two world wars 1914-1945]*, Debrecen, Csokonai, 1988, p. 115.

⁷² I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században [History of Hungary in the 20th Century]*, Budapest, Osiris Kiadó, 2001, p. 175.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁷⁴ Today, the Klebelsberg School Center is responsible for the implementation of school policy directives in Hungary.

policy, which on the one hand was supposed to raise the level of education of Hungarian citizens to a European level, whereas, on the other hand to secure their supremacy in the Carpathian Basin. This versatility and bipolarity in Klebelberg's work corresponded to the zeitgeist and politics of the time.