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INCOMPLETE INTELLIGENTSIA: EFFORTS OF FOLK TEACHERS TO IMPROVE THEIR SOCIAL STATUS WITHIN THE HABSBURG MONARCHY*

Abstract

As part of the modernisation process, the authorities of major European countries ascribed to teachers of people's schools the role of educating the lower strata of society (inhabitants of villages, manual workers, etc.). Similarly, they put this professional group in charge of the realisation of the hidden purpose of state education: shaping subjects so that they would accept the social and political order. Given their required education and the social tasks they undertook, it was assumed folk teachers would be associated with opinion-forming groups and the intelligentsia. However, in fact, for a long time, they were denied belonging to either of these groups. During the long nineteenth century, they had to struggle with a negative reception of their efforts in those circles in which the school and the teacher were perceived as unnecessary institutions. In most regions of Central Europe, for example in Austrian Silesia, thanks to the improvements of the professional competencies of the teachers and their dedication in fulfilling their obligations, both at school and outside it, the teachers and their organisations were successful in changing this perception of them. They were also actively involved in the political activities of various national camps. Nevertheless, in most official institutions, they were not the ones making the most important decisions concerning elementary education. At the same time, however, without their cooperation, none of the educational and social plans would have been implemented in practice.

Thanks to their participation in the public life of local communities, especially rural ones, over time they became the new opinion-formers, playing the role of an intelligentsia that works among the people. They were not only elementary education specialists, but also pedagogues, activity-inspirers for the adult inhabitants, and experts in dealing with all kinds of situations and emergency issues.

Keywords: teachers of people's schools, intelligentsia, Austrian Silesia, Cieszyn Silesia, teachers' associations, the process of social modernisation

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I INTRODUCTION

The expression 'a member of an incomplete intelligentsia' does not necessarily have to be pejorative. It may be used to refer to a person whose due status is not readily accepted by other groups, e.g. by people who believe that their value would be diminished if they socialised with the economically, socially, or culturally 'inferior' social strata.¹ For example, the majority of the members of the Polish intelligentsia came from the nobility, and it was hard for them to accept the fact that this elite group could be joined by individuals from the lower social strata and with a non-academic educational background, even if they performed socially important roles. The situation was similar in many regions, e.g. in Hungary. In others, however, such as the Austrian countries Bohemia and Moravia, at the end of the nineteenth century the social perception of 'local elites', less prestigious but with much influence, was changing at a faster pace. An example of this can be found in another region ruled by the Habsburg monarchy before 1918. It was known as Cieszyn Silesia and was a region dominated by people speaking the local dialect of the Polish language. Here the intelligentsia, including the lower clergy, was entirely of plebeian origin. At that time, it was formally the eastern part of the crown land of Austrian Silesia.²

In Austrian Silesia, before undertaking liberal school reforms teachers of folk schools were treated as poorly educated contractors of government programs, generally supposed to implement the curricula contained in textbooks. Gradually, by raising their competences, undertaking unanimous actions, as well as their involvement in various projects outside of school, teachers won recognition of their place among the intelligentsia. The article demonstrates this based on the example of Austrian Silesia, and the central thesis of the article is that at the turn of the century, without the active participation of folk teachers, the ambitious projects to modernise European society that were taking place at that time would not have been possible. In English and German scholarship this is occasionally mentioned, but in the Polish literature, this topic is ignored.

¹ Michał Arct, *Słownik ilustrowany języka polskiego*, i (Warszawa, 1916), 178.

² Krzysztof Nowak and Idzi Panic (eds), *Śląsk Cieszyński od Wiosny Ludów do I wojny światowej 1848–1918* (Cieszyn, 2013); Dan Gawrecki (ed.), *Dějiny Českého Slezska 1740–2000*, i–ii (Opava, 2003).

II

THE SITUATION OF FOLK TEACHERS BEFORE 1869

For the present article, I understand 'intelligentsia' as a social layer composed of various professional groups, living not from physical labour but from 'work of the mind'. These groups could also fulfil social and cultural tasks which were treated as a vocation and/or mission. Due to the blurry definition and the lack of easy classifications of the internal divisions, the aspirations of various groups aspiring to the intelligentsia were often negated.

This state of affairs applied to, among others, elementary school teachers. Unlike university professors and secondary school teachers, they were not included in decision-making bodies such as ministerial boards of experts, even though they played a major role in the process of social modernisation, tasked with preparing children and teenagers to live in a rapidly-changing world.³ Universal access to education in the Habsburg monarchy was first introduced by Maria Theresa's reforms in 1774, which introduced state control over the education system, replaced Catholic and Protestant parish schools⁴ with minor primary schools, called 'trivial schools' (Ger. *Trivialschulen*), which taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and made education compulsory for children between the ages of six and twelve.⁵ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Austrian Silesia's elementary education network was comprised of five leading schools and approximately 180 trivial schools, including seventy in the Cieszyn district. There were about two hundred folk teachers.⁶ In 1804, the control over the schools reverted to the clergy, and all aspects of the school activity

³ Karl-Ernst Jeismann (ed.), *Bildung, Staat, Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert. Mobilisierung und Disziplinierung* (Stuttgart, 1989).

⁴ Adam Kubacz, 'Szkołnictwo na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w pierwszej połowie XVIII w.', *Śląski Kwartalnik Historyczny. Sobótka*, lx (2005), 295–315.

⁵ Helmut Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens. Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs*, iii (Wien, 1984); Marzena Bogus, *Nauczyciele szkół ludowych Śląska Cieszyńskiego w XIX i na początku XX wieku. Uwarunkowania prawne i zawodowe* (Czeski Cieszyn–Częstochowa, 2013), 71–8.

⁶ Adam Kubacz, 'Wpływ reform terezańskich i józefińskich na rozwój szkolnictwa na Śląsku Cieszyńskim', in Janusz Spyra (ed.), *Książka – biblioteka – szkoła w kulturze Śląska Cieszyńskiego* (Cieszyn, 2001), 133–53; Janusz Spyra, 'Główne kierunki rozwoju szkolnictwa na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w XIX w. i na początku XX w. w świetle ustawodawstwa i statystyk', *ibid.*, 167–216.

were regulated by what was known as the Political School Regulations. As noted, the trivial schools were to teach the skills of reading and writing, as well as arithmetic. However, their predominant role was to teach religion and loyalty to the monarch.⁷

While tasking the teachers with educating members of the lower social classes and working towards some hidden objectives (the acceptance of the social and political order), the state authorities were not interested in spending more than the absolute minimum on such activities. Parishes and local governments were made responsible for the financial side of the operation of folk schools. As a result, the teachers employed at these schools were financially strapped. The majority of them earned less per day than blue-collar workers, and the economic hardship of the teachers meant they were only focused on meeting their daily needs. This resulted in the teachers' low social status. Furthermore, they were not officially represented by any association or similar organisation that could speak for them. However, in the 1830s attempts were made in Germany by Friedrich Adolf Diesterweg (1790–1866) to establish an association of teachers.⁸ In the Austrian monarchy, the environment of folk teachers was atomised and religiously diverse (while the Catholic religion predominated in certain regions, there were many Orthodox or Protestant communities, e.g. in Cieszyn Silesia with a significant Protestant minority (around 25–30 per cent) and a small (2–2.5 per cent) but influential group of followers of Judaism.

The main weakness of folk teachers was their lack of professional qualifications. Although this may sound like a paradox, they remained an undereducated group. In consequence, teachers were generally denied access to membership in the milieus of people who work 'using the mind'.⁹ The situation changed during the Spring of Nations when teachers began to meet up to express their expectations and frustrations. In Vienna, Lower Austria, the Czech Kingdom and Moravia, associations

⁷ Edwin Dillmann, 'Volksschule und kultureller Wandel. Zur Problematik von Disziplinierung und Modernisierung im 18./19. Jahrhundert', *Beiträge zur historische Sozialkunde*, xxviii, 3 (1998), 113.

⁸ Horst F. Rupp, *Fr. A. W. Diesterweg. Pädagogik und Politik* (Göttingen–Zürich 1989); Marianna Krupa, *Fryderyk Adolf Diesterweg i jego wpływ na polską pedagogikę w XIX wieku* (Wrocław, 1976).

⁹ Marzena Bogus, 'Nędza z bidą w parze idą. O sytuacji nauczycieli w XIX wieku', in Marzena Bogus (ed.), *Język – szkoła – przestrzeń jako determinanty rozwoju kultury Śląska Cieszyńskiego* (Czeski Cieszyn, 2012), 57–101.

of teachers were established. A draft version of the July 1848 rules that the then newly-formed ministry of education intended to rely on as the foundation of education defined folk schools as the main segment of the public education system. These schools were to provide people with the necessary knowledge and practical skills. The rules also proposed making the state responsible for providing every person with basic education.¹⁰ In the autumn of that year, national conventions of teachers were held, including one in Moravia (between 10 and 12 October 1848). They were also attended by teachers from Austrian Silesia.¹¹ After the collapse of the Spring of Nations, teachers' associations were disbanded, or their role was reduced to official conferences controlled by the Catholic and Protestant clergy, whose position was strengthened by a concordat of 1855.

III SCHOOL REFORMS, TEACHERS' ACTIVITIES AND THEIR STATUS

The political reforms that began in 1859 gave power in Vienna (from 1861 to 1879, with a break from 1869 to 1870) to German liberals, whose aim was to modernise the state and to restrict the role of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as eliminate the concordat and religious schools. Teachers perceived these attempts as an opportunity to become liberated from the clergy's control. They resumed their consultations and meetings, following the example of Germany, where the teaching community organised itself at a faster pace. In 1863, the First Vienna Society of Folk School Teachers (*Erster Wiener Lehrerverein 'Die Volksschule'*) came into existence.¹² This gave impetus to similar initiatives in the provinces¹³ and to a general convention of teachers, which took place in Vienna between 5 and 7 November 1867, and

¹⁰ Richard Meister, *Entwicklung und Reformen des österreichischen Studienwesens*, ii: *Dokumente* (Vienna, 1963), 241–61; Engelbrecht, *Geschichte*, iv, 517–30.

¹¹ Josef Soukal, 'První sjezd učitelstva moravského a slezského r. 1848 ve Slavkově', *Sborník Ústředního spolku učitelských jednot na Moravě*, ii (1904), 486–90.

¹² Elisabeth Angerler, *Der erste Wiener Lehrerverein 'Die Volksschule' 1863–1896, Von den Anfängen der Lehrervereinbewegungen im Pflichtschulbereich* (Wien, 1983).

¹³ Already on 30 November 1863, a meeting of teachers in Cieszyn took place at the initiative of Jan Śliwka, but the formation of the Teachers' Society in Cieszyn took place only in 1869.

which was also attended by representatives of Silesian teachers, including, among other things, Jan Śliwka and Hermann Beschnitt of Cieszyn. The demands they made at that time would remain relevant for many years to come: folk schools should be independent and supervised by competent people; teachers should be protected by law and have the right to vote in elections and the right to participate in the management of schools, and teacher training colleges should be reformed to reflect the requirements of the day.¹⁴

The convention also emphasised the need to set up teachers' associations and to hold annual teachers' conventions.¹⁵ It was made possible by further reforms within the Habsburg monarchy, including the Act on Associations of 15 November 1867 and the Constitutional Act of December 1867.¹⁶ Moreover, the liberals succeeded in introducing an act on the relationship between schools and churches, dated 15 May 1868, which put the state in control of the schools, replacing the churches in this role. All subjects, except for religious education, were to be taught regardless of religious beliefs; access to public schools was to be given to students and teachers of all denominations; and the church-appointed school supervisors were to be replaced by a network of national, district and local educational boards.¹⁷ This process of changes culminated in the passing of an act on the foundations of education at folk schools, on 14 May 1869. The act contained provisions that were important to teachers, particularly section 48, which recognised that teaching at a public school was a public function, access to which should be granted to all citizens meeting the criteria in terms of competence. Section 55 of the act stipulated that the salaries paid to teachers should be such as to allow them to focus entirely on teaching. They gained the right to receive retirement pensions in the same way as civil servants.¹⁸

¹⁴ Johann Max Schreiber, *Die I. österreichische Lehrerversammlung zu Wien* (Wien, 1867).

¹⁵ Further congresses took place in 1868 in Brno, 1869 in Graz, 1871 in Linz, 1872 in Klagenfurt, 1874 and 1879 in Vienna, and in 1882 in Liberec.

¹⁶ Reichsgesetzblatt für die im Reichsrath vertretenen Königreiche und Länder (hereinafter: RGBL) (1867), no. 134, 377–81; no. 141–6, 389–408.

¹⁷ RGBL 1868, no. 48, 97–9; see Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (eds), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, ii (Wien, 1975), 214–305; vii, 1 (Wien, 2000), 169–236.

¹⁸ RGBL 1869, Nr 62, 277–88. Engelbrecht, *Geschichte*, iv, 111–8; Bogus, *Nauczyciele*, 78–87.

After 1869, in the majority of the Habsburg monarchy's crown lands spending on elementary education increased, the quality of education improved significantly, and illiteracy was eliminated entirely in the Austrian and Czech lands and in Austrian Silesia. A high standard of general education was a prerequisite for the gradual democratisation of the legal relations and the massification of the social processes. In the areas in question, things were made easier by the fact that the nobility was non-existent, which opened up the way for other social groups, predominantly the intelligentsia of entirely plebeian origin, to engage in public activities.¹⁹

The act of 1869 introduced the model of an interdenominational folk school, where students were required to learn far more than under the previous folk school model, and where much emphasis was put on the teachers' pedagogical and didactical training. Most teachers and activists considered the new model as a major step forward. It allowed for the emergence of a teaching profession with similar requirements and the same problems, which encouraged teachers to organise themselves to defend their common interests. This was the main task of national teachers' associations, which first emerged in the Austrian lands (initially in Upper Austria in 1867) and the Czech lands,²⁰ with other regions gradually joining them. In Galicia, in 1868, a Pedagogical Society (*Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne*) was established in Lemberg. A decade later, it operated through 75 branches and had as many as 2,269 members. The majority of the members were folk teachers, but they were not represented in the management of the society.²¹ Moreover, the demands of the teaching profession were considered insignificant compared to the need for defending Polishness. In other lands, the national organisations were initially focused on

¹⁹ Janusz Gruchała and Krzysztof Nowak, 'Dzieje polityczne', in Krzysztof Nowak and Idzi Panic (eds), *Śląsk Cieszyński od Wiosny Ludów do I wojny światowej 1848–1918* (Cieszyn, 2013), 60–164.

²⁰ In Moravia, the Czech national association was founded in 1870, the German in 1871. In the Kingdom of Bohemia German associations were founded in 1874, and Czech ones in 1879; see Martin Vrbický, 'Německý zemský učitelský spolek v Čechách v letech 1874–1918', *Fontes Nisae – Prameny Nisy. Regionální historický sborník*, i (2000), 71–91.

²¹ Eugenia Karcz-Taranowicz, 'Geneza stowarzyszeń nauczycielskich na ziemiach polskich', *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy*, iii–iv (2015), 2–40. See Renata Dutkova, *Polityka szkolna w Galicji między autonomią a centralizmem 1861–1875* (Kraków, 1995).

exchanging experiences and formulating demands in order to be able to make their pay-related demands more confidently.

The changing laws also encouraged teachers of elementary schools in Austrian Silesia to act. At their meeting in Opava on 23 April 1868, a District Teachers' Society was established. In June 1868, the charter of the society was approved. It was soon followed by more associations: in Benešov, in the district of Frývaldov,²² and a Teachers' Society in Cieszyn, although its charter was approved in the following year. The plan was that the Cieszyn Teachers Society would cover the entire area of Cieszyn Silesia. However, by the end of the same year, a Pedagogical Society was established in Bielsko and Biała (in the nineteenth century they were separate cities lying on the two sides of the Biała River. Bielsko constituted a part of Cieszyn Silesia, while Biała was a part of Galicia. They were merged into the single city of Bielsko-Biała after the Second World War).

As early as 9 July 1868, the first Silesian convention of teachers was held, attracting 175 teachers and hundreds of 'friends of schools' from all parts of Silesia. The demands sent to the Silesian Parliament in Opava included calls for teachers' rights concerning wages, pensions, and training opportunities as well as for improvements in education.²³

Furthermore, the Silesian teachers prevented the new organisations from being dominated by representatives of the better-educated classes of the society (officials and professionals). In fact, in the majority of the crown lands the teachers wanted to make their own decisions. They also supported the new educational laws, even though the Catholic Church strongly opposed the changes, arguing that the standards introduced in 1869 were devoid of religion, which made them godless. The teachers participated in organising the network of schools based on the new standards, reorganised their own schools, took over as school inspectors, and joined the educational boards that supervised the activities of schools.²⁴ At the same time, more associations emerged.

²² Zemský archiv w Opavě, Zemská vláda slezská v Opavě, ref. no. 1330, box 1359, 1378, 1399; *Jahresbericht des Troppauer Bezirks-Lehrer-Vereines* (Troppau, 1868).

²³ *Stenographisches Protokoll der in Troppau abgehaltenen Lehrerversammlung am 9. Juli 1868* (Teschen, 1868).

²⁴ For example, Franz Bobies, president of the Volksschule Association and the National Teachers Association of Lower Austria became a regional inspector, and he was also elected to the City Council in Vienna. For more on the specific example of Cieszyn Silesia, see Marzena Bogus, 'Nadzór szkolny i jego rola w budowaniu

In the region under analysis, there were six in 1871, including two in Cieszyn Silesia. At the second convention of Silesian teachers, on 21 and 22 August 1871, the Austrian-Silesian National Teachers' Association (*Österreichisch-schlesische Landes-Lehrerverein*, ÖSLLV) was established.²⁵ It was joined by the hitherto existing associations as well as those established later. By 1880, the number of such organisations had increased to 18, with a total of 678 members. At that time, the elementary schools of Austrian Silesia employed 813 people.

IV TEACHER ORGANISATIONS' EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE STATUS OF THE PROFESSION

The majority of folk school teachers reacted to the new school act with approval, sometimes even with enthusiasm. However, the new regulations did not actually improve the situation of the teachers significantly.²⁶ They continued to be 'executors' of instructions from people above them in the hierarchy, and regulations were still in place that prevented them from exercising even the most basic civil rights. The Municipal Act of 1849, re-enacted after 1860, gave the right to vote in municipal elections only to 'school managers', as it was believed that full political rights should only be enjoyed by independent individuals.²⁷ In many municipalities, teachers were banned from voting in elections because – as it was argued – they were 'municipal servants'. In the region under analysis, electoral registers for the 1876 election still ignored folk teachers in, e.g., the city of Cieszyn and the village Ustróż.²⁸ Appeals to courts or authorities against such decisions were expensive, and only those persons with the full rights of residence in a particular

i zarządzaniu systemem oświaty na Śląsku Cieszyńskim w czasach austriackich', *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy*, lv, 1–2 (2012), 5–17.

²⁵ *Fest-Schrift (1871–1896) zum Jubiläums-Lehrertage des österr.-schles. Landes-Lehrervereines: Troppau, 3., 4. und 5. August 1896* (Troppau, 1896), 7.

²⁶ Marzena Bogus and Janusz Spyra, *Nauczyciele oraz ich stowarzyszenia na tle dyskursu społecznego w modernizującej się Europie* (Toruń, 2019).

²⁷ In Austrian Silesia as the Act of 15 Nov. 1863. See Gesetz- und Verordnungsblatt für das Kronland Herzogthum Ober- und Nieder-Schlesien (hereinafter: GVBl), 17 (1863), 31–60.

²⁸ Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach, oddział w Cieszynie, Akta Miasta Cieszyna, ref. no. 89.

municipality were allowed to stand as candidates for the Council of State or the respective national parliaments. The management of ÖSLV intervened many times concerning these issues, but it was not until 1883 that the Opava parliament passed a law giving voting rights to all permanent teachers.²⁹

Furthermore, it was not readily accepted by the authorities at various levels that teachers should be allowed to express their views, and even liberal authorities were not interested in losing the influence they had through religious education, which was regulated by the act of 20 June 1872. Minister Karl Stremayr used that act to require the teachers of Vienna to take their pupils to church services on a daily basis, to take part in religious processions, and to make sure that their pupils went to confession. The teachers protested, but their protests changed nothing, and Franz Bobies, the leader of the Austrian teachers' association, was removed from the role of an inspector.³⁰ On 11 June 1873, the minister decided that it was the teachers' professional, not religious, duty to take care of the pupils during religious services. Religious beliefs were thus reduced to a matter of discipline, and teachers to officers responsible for keeping it.³¹ In addition, the authorities tried to prevent teachers from engaging in political activities for the reason that teachers, in the same way as civil servants bound by their official oaths, should be subject to certain restrictions due to the nature of their profession. These restrictions affected, for example, the right to talk about their employment conditions or to criticise the instructions or orders issued by their superiors. Teachers were ostentatiously banned from exercising their voting rights, not to mention the right to engage in electioneering activities.³² On 10 August 1895, the ministry stated that although teachers were not civil servants,

²⁹ GVBl, 36 (1883), 89–90.

³⁰ *Freie Pädagogische Blätter* (26 Apr. 1873), 237–8; *Neue Freie Presse* (3 Jun. 1873), 2.

³¹ Jiří Pokorný, 'Sekularizace a školství', in Lukáš Fasora *et al.* (eds), *Sekularizace venkovského prostoru v 19. století* (Brno, 2009), 86–7.

³² The minister already on 28 June 1885 stated that teachers should take into account the limitation of their civil rights, which was perceived as a ban on their participation in election campaigning. A similar ban was issued by the National School Council in Opava on 4 July 1885. See Leopold Schedlbauer, *Handbuch der Reichsgesetze und der Ministerial-Verordnungen über das Volksschulwesen mit Benützung amtlicher Quellen*, ii (Wien, 1911), 106; Josef Kasprzykiewicz, *Handbuch schles. Gesetze und Verordnungen*, iv (Freiwalddau, 1891), 242.

due to the nature of their service to the public, they should be subject to the same restrictions.³³

The Act of 1869 recognised the work of public general education school teachers as 'public service', but this did not mean that they would be granted the status of public civil servants themselves. A certain paradox emerged: when the authorities wanted to enforce specific behaviours on the part of teachers, they were treated as civil servants (obliged to carry out orders under pain of disciplinary penalties); yet they were consistently denied the status of public officials whenever there was a risk that teachers with this status might demand more rights for themselves or salaries not lower than those paid to civil servants. Activists in teachers' associations drew public attention to this paradox, but without success. It was not even clear who was the employer of the staff of folk schools. The terms of employment, including salaries, were determined by the national parliaments of crownlands on the basis of the implementing provisions under the 1869 Act (except for Galicia). Nonetheless, they were not regarded as civil servants of the Crownland. In terms of their professional performance, teachers were evaluated by school inspectors as well as regional and national educational boards, which had the status of state institutions. However, these inspectors were on the payroll of local governments, which most often regarded the teachers as municipal 'servants'. Thus teachers had three employers, and each of them had the right to evaluate their performance, while none wanted to give them the full rights. As late as in 1906, the Administrative Court held that teachers were not state officials, nor Crownland officials, nor municipal ones.³⁴

The role of the educational authorities was reduced to providing support to make the teaching profession more professional. This involved setting up modern, four-year teacher training colleges based on the Prussian model. A qualification from such a college was a prerequisite for obtaining a teaching post at a school, as was the requirement for candidates to demonstrate their practical skills in a compulsory examination. Thus teaching at folk schools became a full-time job that

³³ Schedlbauer, *Handbuch*, i, 62–5, ii, 123–4, 493–5.

³⁴ Adam Budwiński (ed.), *Erkenntnisse des Verwaltungsgerichtshofes*, xxx, 4608 (Wien, 1906), 945; Wanda Smakulska, 'Sytuacja prawna nauczyciela szkoły ludowej pospolitej w Galicji w latach 1873–1914', *Rozprawy z Dziejów Oświaty*, xxi (1978), 55–83.

required specialist training, certified by the educational authorities and performed in accordance with defined rules.³⁵ This, however, does not mean that the teaching profession was fully professionalised. Unlike qualified lawyers or doctors, teachers did not have a self-regulatory organisation.³⁶ After all, teacher training colleges were the highest level of education available to the lower social classes, and passing the final examination at that level was considered insufficient for admission to higher education institutions. Only at the end of the nineteenth century did advocates for the teaching profession demand that teacher training colleges be linked with higher education courses.³⁷ In addition to calls for better working conditions and higher pay, both the teachers and the teachers' associations made other demands, regarding, for example, the scope of the teachers' qualifications, rights, and powers to influence the educational processes. This can be exemplified by the numerous petitions filed by the teachers' associations, particularly the ÖSLLV, to the National Parliament in Opava almost every year.

V COOPERATION AND CONFLICT IN A PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The price for the reliance on state posts was reducing the teachers to the role of lowest-ranking bureaucrats,³⁸ but the vast majority of teachers did not wish for the return of denominational schools.³⁹

³⁵ Gerald Grimm, 'Aspekte der Professionalisierung der österreichischer Volksschullehrerschaft in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhundert', in Tomáš Kasper *et al.* (eds), *Úloha osobností a institucí v rozvoji vzdělanosti v evropském kontextu* (Praha, 2013), 47–60.

³⁶ Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, 'Professionen und Professionalisierung. Ein Bezugsrahmen zur historischen Analyse des "Lehrers und seiner Organisationen"', in Manfred Heinemann (ed.), *Lehrers und seiner Organisationen* (Stuttgart, 1977), 457–75.

³⁷ For example František Drtina, *K reformě učitelského vzdělání* (Praha, 1905). See Werner Sacher, 'Lehrerfortbildung im Spannungsfeld zwischen Staat und Lehrerorganisation', in Heinemann (ed.), *Der Lehrer*, 105–120.

³⁸ Edwin Keiner and Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, 'Schulmänner-Volkslehrer-Unterrichtsbeamte. Ergebnisse und Probleme neuerer Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des Lehrers in Deutschland', *Internationales Archiv für Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, vi (1981), 203–4.

³⁹ Some of the school staff belonged to the Catholic Teachers' Union in Austria [Katholischer Lehrerbund für Österreich] established in 1893. In 1908, it included

Therefore, out of necessity, they sided with the liberals when they lost power, and Eduard Taaffe's government was formed (1879–93), supported by German Catholic conservatives from the Alpine states, Slovenian and Croatian politicians, the Young Czech Party and the Polish Club. The school act was amended on 2 May 1883, but the attempts to further limit the liberal school laws failed – among other reasons due to the firm opposition of the majority of the teachers' associations. This led to an intensification of the efforts to create an organisation bringing together all the national associations. It was established in 1884 at a convention in Opava. However, due to the increase of nationalist sentiment among German teachers, the German-Austrian Teachers' Alliance (*Deutsch-österreichischer Lehrerbund*, DÖLB) was German from the beginning. As regards the area of Austrian Silesia, the German associations from Troppau Silesia and the surroundings of Bielsko joined the alliance, whereas the so-called 'general' ones, admitting members regardless of their nationality, did not join.⁴⁰ This gave rise to the process of disintegration of the teachers' movement into national blocks. Czech, and later Polish, teachers started to form their own associations, and subsequently their national alliances: in 1894, the Central Alliance of Czech Teachers in Silesia (*Ústřední spolek českých učitelů ve Slezsku*, ÚSČUS) was established in Opava, and in 1896 the Polish Pedagogical Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne*, PTP) was formed in Cieszyn. They pushed for the implementation of state demands, simultaneously calling for the linguistic and political rights of their nations. The majority of their members were devoted activists of their national camps. The merits of the PTP in raising Polish national consciousness have already found reflection in the existing literature.⁴¹

While the fragmentation of the teaching community had a number of negative consequences, in matters of utmost importance to the profession, the various national organisations were able to cooperate.

25 teachers' associations, 19 of them German. Neither one was created in the Austrian Silesia.

⁴⁰ *Festschrift zur V Hauptversammlung des Deutsch-österreich. Lehrbundes in Innsbruck am 23., 24. und 25. Juli 1894* (Innsbruck, 1894), 7–9. The ÖSLLV as a whole joined the DÖLB only in 1905.

⁴¹ Alojzy Waszek, 'Polskie Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne na Śląsku Cieszyńskim', *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy*, i (1963), 71–87; Antoni Zajac, 'Polskie Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne na Śląsku Cieszyńskim', *Zaranie Śląskie*, xxvii (1964), 290–305.

This cooperation concerned the exchange of experiences related to the best possible pursuit of the profession, and above all, the struggle for better wages and the improvement of the teachers' legal and social status. The demands submitted by the activists were largely ignored by the authorities, so the efforts of the ÖSLLV, and later the ÚSČUS and PTP activists, were effective only in less important matters. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, all national associations in Silesia joined forces in the struggle for changes in the Silesian school laws and an increase in wages. They were successful in their struggle, which resulted in the act of 6 November 1901. The teachers' wages were taken over by the national budget, and their amount was calculated based on job seniority, and not on the category to which a given school was assigned.⁴² This was an element of the general battle for pay increases at the turn of the twentieth century, when the teachers' associations sought new means of pressure, such as mass rallies in the capital city. For example, on 1 November 1899, there was a rally of over 3,000 teachers from all the crown countries. The next stage in the fight for pay increases and the change of teachers' legal status started after 1906 when the teachers' organisations demanded that section 55 of the school act should include the equalisation of teachers' wages with the lower categories of civil servants. The authorities of the respective countries were ready to discuss pay raises, and in some cases, they were granted – as well as the right to receive a retirement pension after 35 years of work.⁴³ The Slavic teachers were represented in that struggle by the Association of Slavic Teachers of Cisleithania (*Związek Słowiańskiego Nauczycielstwa Przedlitawii*), founded in 1908 thanks to the initiative of Czech activists. A significant role in the association was played by Stanisław Nowak, the president of the National Association of Folk Teachers (*Krajowy Związek Nauczycieli Ludowych*), the first unambiguously teachers' state organisation at the national level in Galicia.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the efforts to equalise the teacher's status and wages with those of civil servants were unsuccessful.

⁴² For example, in Austrian Silesia in the Act of 4 Apr. 1914, GVBl, 41 (1901), 83–90.

⁴³ GVBl, 16 (1914), 25–36.

⁴⁴ Janusz Spyra, 'Zapoznane dziecko neoslawizmu. Związek słowiańskiego nauczycielstwa w Austrii w latach 1909–1914', in Piotr Gołdyn (ed.), *Działalność związków i organizacji nauczycielskich w XIX i pierwszej połowie XX wieku* (Poznań–Kalisz, 2017), 57–71.

The advocates for the teaching profession also made every effort to enhance the status and social standing of their profession. Publishing activities had an inestimable value – especially the pedagogical and specialist magazines published by each national alliance. In Austrian Silesia, each of the national teachers' organisations published their own journal. The Austrian-Silesian National Teachers' Association in Opava published the *Schlesisches Schulblatt* from 1872 until the Second World War without interruption; the Polish Pedagogical Society published the *Miesięcznik Pedagogiczny* from 1892, and the Central Alliance of Czech Teachers published the *Školský věstník* from 1904.

However, even mass demonstrations were failing to bring about the desired outcomes (another all-Austrian demonstration took place on 2 November 1907). What turned out to be more effective was to engage in direct political activities; as members of political parties⁴⁵ and theoretically apolitical school associations, as well as pro-national patriotic societies (*Schutzvereine*).⁴⁶ The teachers did not play a leading role in these organisations, but they were indispensable as mediators between the politicians and the voters. This was especially important in the case of small nations that did not have a broader intelligentsia of their own and were dominated by the ruling powers.⁴⁷ Until the end of the nineteenth century, folk school teachers were only sporadically elected for the Council of State or the national parliaments, whereas in the period just before the First World War a large number of teachers were being elected. In the elections for the national parliaments in 1909, folk teachers won several seats.⁴⁸ Three of them were elected as members of the Silesian Parliament in Opava: Richard Andraschke, representing the Germans; Rudolf Gudrich, an activist of Czech associations; and Józef Koźdoń from Skoczów, who opted for ties

⁴⁵ For example, one of the leaders of the Austrian teachers, Karl Seitz (1869–1950), was associated with social democracy. His speeches were also translated into Polish.

⁴⁶ Pieter M. Judson, 'Die Schutzvereine und das Grenzland. Strategien zur Verwirklichung von "Imagined Borderlands"', in Peter Haslinger (ed.), *Schutzvereine in Ostmitteleuropa, Vereinswesen, Sprachenkonflikte und Dynamiken nationaler Mobilisierung 1860–1939* (Marburg, 2009), 11.

⁴⁷ Anna M. Drábek, 'Matice Česká und Matice Moravská. Ihre Bedeutung für die kulturelle und nationale Entwicklung der tschechischen Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert', in Ferdinand Seibt (ed.), *Vereinswesen und Geschichtspflege in den böhmischen Ländern* (München, 1986), 71–96; Judson, *Die Schutzvereine*, 15.

⁴⁸ Wandruszka and Urbanitsch (eds), *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, vii, 2 (Wien, 2000), 1662, 1675, 1707, 1742, 2113, 2181.

with German culture and became the face of the so-called Silesian (*Ślązakowski*) movement.⁴⁹ The activities of the teachers' associations also gained momentum. Just before the First World War, the ÖSLLV had 1,479 members; the ÚSČUS had 436, and the PTP had 508 (at that time, there were about 2,500 male and female public school teachers).

A factor that was possibly even more important in the process of changes in the perception of folk teachers was their activity outside the school. Even before the Spring of Nations, many of them popularised the principles of rational farming. In the later period, they were active members of educational reading rooms, agricultural clubs, firefighting units, and the Raiffeisen-system benefit and loan funds that were being established in the villages. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, not only did the school become an indispensable and accepted institution for everyone but also the consequences of the massification of all public processes were fully manifested. Apart from political parties, various institutions and associations were being established in almost every municipality. The teachers, together with clergymen and municipality heads, were usually the initiators of their establishment and their activists. This translated into the increasingly better social standing of teachers. In 1900, in the municipalities of Austrian Silesia, the function of members of municipal departments was performed by 272 teachers (3.6 per cent); and at least a couple of teachers were village mayors in Cieszyn Silesia.⁵⁰

VI CONCLUSIONS

All things considered, through their educational programs and social tasks folk teachers became associated with opinion-forming groups and the intelligentsia, even though their task was to 'enlighten' the lower social classes – both in terms of preparing them for life in the changing world and impacting their consciousness in directions desired by the elites. In the former of these tasks, they found substantiation for

⁴⁹ Milan Myška (ed.), *Biografický slovník Slezska a severní Moravy, Nová řada*, viii (20), Supplementum (Ostrava, 2006), 19 (Andraschke), 40–1 (Gudrich), 59–60 (Koždoň).

⁵⁰ Michael Morys-Twarowski, *Wójtowie na Śląsku Cieszyńskim 1848–1918. Studium prozopograficzne*, i (Kraków, 2018), 55.

their own social calling. For a long time they had to struggle with a negative reception of their efforts in those circles in which the school and the teacher were perceived as not only unnecessary but also costly institutions (e.g. among villagers). In most regions of Central Europe, thanks to improvements of the professional competences of the teachers and their dedication in fulfilling their obligations – both at school and outside it – the teachers and their organisations were successful in changing this attitude. In rural areas the school became a chance for the social advancement of subsequent generations and teachers began to be regarded as uncontested experts in teaching, and when it came to activities outside the school, as indispensable specialists involved in all the vital problems of the inhabitants. This is clearly exemplified by the dynamically-changing society of Austrian Silesia. Between the mid-nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, significant economic, civilisational and social progress was noted – especially if measured by the level of exercising civil rights by the majority of the inhabitants and their participation in public life. This was determined in part by their growing wealth, but above all by their level of education.⁵¹

The participation of folk teachers in these processes is unquestionable. This is why some researchers do not hesitate to include them in the regional intelligentsia class.⁵² The reality, however, was a little more varied. In cities, even though in some of them teachers constituted a significant group and although they were permitted to participate in prestigious bourgeois assemblies, they were unable to compete with other authorities (members of the intelligentsia, secondary school professors). The situation was different in rural areas where, by participating in the public life of the local communities and initiating undertakings that were useful to the inhabitants, the folk teachers began to be seen as local leaders, often esteemed as highly as the clergyman (priest, pastor) or the municipality head.⁵³

⁵¹ Helmut Rumpler, 'Von der "Bürgerlichen Öffentlichkeit" zur Massendemokratie. Zivilgesellschaft und politische Partizipation im Vielvölkerstaats der Habsburgermonarchie', in Helmut Rumpler, and Peter Urbanitsch (eds), *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*, viii, 1 (Wien, 2006), 1–14.

⁵² For example Andrea Pokludová, *Formování inteligence na Moravě a ve Slezsku 1857–1910* (Opava, 2008), 208–15.

⁵³ Andrea Pokludová, 'Vesnický učitel na přelomu 19. a 20. století. Významný aktér modernizace venkovské společnosti', *Časopis Matice moravské*, cxxxvii (2018), 295–319.

They were also actively involved in political activities and supported various national camps. In Austrian Silesia, this was true for most of the teachers involved in the ÖSLLV, PTP, and ÚSČUS. While they did not play a decisive role in national institutions (e.g. political parties) and did not have a say on the most important decisions and directions of actions, nevertheless without their cooperation, no plans could be put into practice on the lower levels.

Thanks to their constant development and dedicated work, as well as through their participation in the public life of local communities, they were becoming the new opinion-formers, playing the role of an intelligentsia that works among the people.⁵⁴ They were not only elementary education specialists, but also pedagogues, activity-inspirers for the adult inhabitants, and experts dealing with all kinds of situations and emergency issues. Without them, it was impossible to carry out any broad political or social action effectively. Without the participation of folk teachers, the great transformation of the European (including the Central European) society – which took place in the latter half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century – would not have been possible.

trans. Dawid Mnich

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⁵⁴ Scott J. Seregny, 'Teachers', in Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of European Social History from 1350 to 2000*, v (Detroit–New York, 2001), 365–9.

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