

LAJOS ESZTERGÁR, THE LAWYER AND SOCIETAL POLITICIAN

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Abstract

This study presents the major achievements of Lajos Esztergár, the professional who arrived from Transylvania and spent the most productive years of his life to work for the city of Pécs. His name is present in a street, a social institution, a conservative association and by commemorative plaques on the City Hall, on his dwelling house, and at the Faculty of Law of the University of Pécs.

„It is not easy to portray someone who is modestly hiding behind his works and is more avoiding than looking for fame; whose ambitions are not aimed at popularity but service (...) whose committed work is beneficial for the society and is devoted to the most wonderful and most difficult type of service; to create a more humane way of life that is worth living. Lajos Esztergár is a man who undertook such a mission.” The above sentences were written about Esztergár in 1941 in German and describe the most important characteristic of his personality.²

Keywords: practical social policy, poverty alleviation, productive social policy, public administration, social law, training social professionals.

Major stages in Lajos Esztergár's life

Lajos Esztergár was born in Abrudfalva (a village in Transylvania, which is a territory that belonged to Hungary, now it is a part of Romania. The Romanian name of the village is Abrud-Sat) in 1894. The family had ten children and though they did not live in poverty they had to lead a modest life. He graduated from secondary school in Gyulafehérvár (a town in Transylvania, its Romanian name is Alba Iulia). He was a fellow student of Áron Márton, the later bishop of Gyulafehérvár who died in martyrdom. He had to join the army in 1915 and was wounded in the Italian front in 1916. Due to his impaired health (hard of hearing and other problems) he was declared a war invalid. He studied Law first in Kolozsvár (city in Transylvania, its Romanian name is Cluj-Napoca) and, after the Treaty of Trianon, he arrived in Budapest as a refugee. He worked in the Office of Transylvanian Asylum Seekers and assisted to take care of refugees arriving from Transylvania. He graduated as a lawyer in Debrecen. He started his career as a police clerk. He became a police officer when the Serb occupation ended in Pécs. He gained his first experiences of social problems as a policeman. In 1924 he qualified as a judge and lawyer. In 1929 he was appointed a Councilor for Social Welfare. He proved to be an innovative officer committed to social issues. He became known as the organizer of social actions to help people in poverty. In the second half of the

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²Szabó: 1989 vol. I. 388.

1930's a new initiative was implemented named productive social policy; and he became one of its most renowned representatives. Attention was paid to him in the whole country and he was offered the opportunity and state support to organize Szatmár County Public Welfare Community that was soon followed by experiments in Pécs and Baranya County. His activities were well-known beyond the borders as he developed the system of modern (non-charity based) national social policy and social care and he implemented it in practice. The National People and Family Protection Fund (Országos Nép- és Családvédelmi Alap, ONCSA) was founded based on this system; and the organization was fostered by Esztergár and other professionals. He was appointed a Commissioner of Ministry by the Home Secretary but he resigned the post in 1941, before the system of ONCSA was established.

In 1936 he became Deputy Mayor of the City of Pécs; in 1940 he was elected the Mayor of the city and held lectures on Social Administration at the local St. Elisabeth University. In 1945 he was appointed ordinary professor of Public Administration Law. In 1949 he was dismissed from his job at the university without receiving a pension and was interned from his home. In the communist dictatorship in the 1950's he was forced to live on ordinary jobs, mostly turnery. He died in Budaörs in 1978.³

Due to his own social background, Lajos Esztergár was familiar with the troubles and joys of large families, the miserable life of refugees, the disadvantages that war invalids had to face and he also had personal experiences in unemployment and poverty. All these experiences helped him face contemporary social problems and challenges of Hungarian social policy. „The Hungarian social policy has been launched recently; only a few years passed (...) in its measures, the Hungarian social policy had to respond to the deep crisis when the country was deprived of its industrial areas, mines and natural resources and population; as a consequence, the country had very limited resources for social political interventions. Under such circumstances major achievements and the establishment of large institutions of social policy were not feasible; the remaining powers and resources had to be rearranged to protect people in poverty from starvation and save their capacities for a better future when they could serve the nation with their full potentials.”⁴

The resulting task was twofold for the professional: the practical realization of a new type of social policy that suits the Hungarian circumstances; and accumulating the professional knowledge that is needed to pursue this goal.

Lajos Esztergár in societal policy

“Service” is a commonly used expression today, but it is obvious that the original meaning of the term does not refer to everyone who claims to “serve” others. However, Esztergár's primary – and probably the only – purpose was service. He was characterized first and foremost by toughness and consistency. The most important characteristics of his attitude was practicality. Many people had to be grateful to him but not all of them recognized him as an important figure in societal policy. He was not interested in theories and even less in utopias. His plans were made on the basis of practice and contemporary possibilities; and his most important endeavor was to carry out these plans. His works are work plans in societal policy rather than sociological analyses. He was not as much interested in societal diagnoses as in the solutions that he wanted to introduce quickly and effectively. He was a man of practice and experience. As the counselor of social policy in Pécs, and subsequently the Mayor of the city, he put the implemented innovative measures in social policy that proved

³ For further details please see: *Szociálpolitikai Értésítő 1990/1. II. Ínséges idők (In Times of Poverty)* 296 p. Vargha: 2002/4. 64-70. p.

⁴ *Esztergár: 1934*, 18

to be models for the whole country. This societal activity was realized by improving the existing institutions and later by introduction of new elements in the system. Institutions for the protection of mothers and infants were established and the number of nurseries and kindergartens were increased; resorts and small flats were built for city dwellers; and housekeeping schools were established for girls. His most important initiations include work communities for unemployed young workers and the employment of people living in poverty in household workshops that were gradually improved to local enterprises. Esztergár realised that relief work (work for public benefit) and social benefits are only a symptomatic and temporary solution that would inevitably teach people how to beg. His aim was to make relief work recognized by the society as a useful activity. Relief work should include society's goals and its results should serve the society. In his system, the amount for social expenditures given by the state is not a benefit but a loan; and the interests serve further societal political aims. The amount given to relieve poverty is not alms distributed by the administration; but a capital for enterprises in the form of state loans. This is the origin of the so-called humanitarian enterprises that spread all over the country. His supportive actions always exceeded the level of temporary relief. The goal was to give the first inspiration towards consolidation. In his view, state support should enable self-help by assisting the beneficiaries overcome the initial difficulties. Societal political help must enable people to help themselves.

He dedicated his life to establish a societal political system that is not bound to bureaucratic burdens and consequently it can work more effectively. The tide of social problems was unexpected by the Hungarian administrative system that needed professionals with a more progressive attitude. In 1934 he wrote an essay about this situation; and this was the leading idea of the National Social Political Assembly in 1939.

Lajos Esztergár's practical social policy

In Lajos Esztergár's career, theoretical and practical work, together with his professional identities of a lawyer and a social politician were inseparable. When following the chronological sequence of his works, the first important achievement was practical social policy. In addition to his everyday work in social policy he wrote his book (he modestly called it a "report") titled "Practical Social Policy".⁵

In the introduction he defined his basic concepts: tasks of public administration and the concept of social policy. „Public administration has probably never faced so difficult challenges as the ones that were brought about by the breakdown and ~~the~~ unemployment caused by the economic crisis; this situation entailed the need to relieve poverty.” (Esztergár: 1933, 3.)

„Social policy today is a field in public administration where tears, bitterness, sufferings and despair meet. Effective public administration is not sufficient; there is a need for city leaders who are prepared to cope with the complexity of problems that influence the peace and order of the city. These leaders should be psychologists, philanthropists, social politicians and economists at the same time. One should not spare one's time and one's nerves; lots of love and solid confidence in a better future is needed if one wants to proceed on one's way, even when encountering with thorns of malevolent critique, slanders and suspicions; and has the strength to help carry the cross of trials of the population.” (Esztergár: 1933, 5.)

„Social Policy is the main activity of the state that is aimed at protecting and improving spiritual, economic and physical well-being of the community. (...) The task of social policy

⁵ Esztergár: 1933

is to force capitalism to serve public interests... and facilitate interclass collaboration, ensuring the survival of capitalism.” Further, he stated: “today, social policy can not devise a higher order economic system than capitalism that is based on private property; the mentality of people should be transformed in order to implement a different system.”

Therefore the most important scene of social policy is public administration. At the same time, Esztergár concluded that “Social policy should rely on citizen initiation in solving the social problems. The civil society should sacrifice some of its wealth if it is needed to relieve poverty.” (Esztergár: 1933, 4.)

In this report – that meets the criteria of scientific papers – he reviewed the different ways to realize goals in social policy in practice in the period between 21st August, 1921 (the termination of Serbian occupation of Pecs) and 1933. The enormous demand for homes between 1921 and 1927 resulted in a boom in building industry. Mines had to produce and transport vast quantities of coal as a result of the Treaty of Trianon requirement of compensation. Mines were reconstructed and huge worker settlements were built in Pecs. The so-called Speyer-loan facilitated the employment of many workers in water- and sewage system development. New roads were built and city spaces were reconstructed to relieve unemployment. At the University of Pecs professionals and clerks were employed. Esztergár’s report reveals that the City of Pecs worked hard to alleviate poverty. In 1932 city authorities ordered to build 32 relief accommodation houses, each with a small garden so that the most important vegetables could be grown. In 1933 city authorities established 7 district offices where all the services related to unemployment and poverty was done by students involved in social courses.

The report contained statistical data on mother- and infant protection and its institutions; on begging; and on the collaboration among civil organizations, citizens and the church. Today’s Hungary, deeply affected by the current economic crisis, is in a similar situation as the state of the country in Esztergár’s era in many aspects. The number of homeless persons and beggars was increasing. It may be useful to quote Esztergár’s theory on begging: “It is either the lack of social policy or the inadequate use of social political means that results begging.” (Esztergár: 1933, 158.) Esztergár assumed that there were five major causes of begging: illness or losing one’s strength prematurely; small children and widows who had lost the breadwinner in the family; and disabilities. Apart from these reasons there were people who were unwilling to work and chose begging to make a living. The idea of “undeserving poor” was not generally known and accepted in that era. „When solving the problem of begging, social policy must consider the issue of human dignity that may be hurt because of one’s miserable conditions. (...) In order to solve poverty issues, it is inevitable that the church and the society collaborate; although saving souls does not belong to the tasks of public administration, relieve spiritual poverty is a fundamental mission.” (Esztergár: 1933, 155-156)

Taking care of beggars is the task of local governments. Initially, traders were involved in the system: every beggar received food coupons and could obtain a fixed amount of food at a local trader. Beggars were given a portion of 7.5 lbs of potato, 4 lbs of flour, 1 lb onion, ½ lb lard, ½ lb salt, ½ lb grits, ½ lb sugar and ½ lb rice a month. In the winter they were given firewood or coal and winter clothing. Beggars who had to pay for the rent received the sum of the rental fee from the municipality. Beggars were not obliged to do anything in return. Esztergár realized that these efforts were not always effective: irresponsible traders sold the beggars alcohol instead of food. Beggars claimed that the food they could get was not enough and continued begging. In order to change this situation a central kitchen was established in September 1930 where beggars were given ready-to-serve meal. They could get in-kind support (three meals a day) in three kitchens: ½ pint of milk for breakfast, 1 pint of soup and 1 pint of noodles or vegetables for lunch and vegetables or noodles for supper. This was supplemented by 1lb bread per day. Establishing a household

rehabilitation work centre in December 1931 was another remarkable example of providing care for able beggars. Beggars lived in different parts of the city, especially in the suburbs, and they argued that their old age and weakness prevented them from walking long distance to work. The municipality responded by establishing rehabilitation work centers in two suburban parts of the city and rent nearby flats for the beggars to make it easier for them to go to work. Esztergár specified the daily routine of the rehabilitation work centers. In the eastern and western parts (so-called “beggars’ zones”) of the city beggars arrived at work at 8 a.m. where they got their breakfast and spent the day with doing some easy work (feather plucking, matting etc.) in a warm room. In the evening they got dinner and returned home. In addition to their meals, they could get other goods such as tobacco, soap, needles and thread proportionately to the amount of work done. Supervision and care was provided by the Sisters of St. Francis who controlled beggars’ work and personal hygiene and ensured that everyone’s basic needs are satisfied and everyone receives the necessary clothes and firewood. The sisters also provided care and food for people who were ill incapable of work. Bathrooms were installed next to the centers. Men and women were allowed to use these every week separately and they also got clean underwear that was woven and sewn in the homecraft rehabilitation work centre. Men were shaved and their hair was cut by a barber who was hired for this particular task. (Esztergár: 1933, 163-164)

From poverty alleviation to productive social policy

The practical social policy proposed by Lajos Esztergár had two distinct levels: one was the poverty care according to the Pécs norm (based on the so-called Egri norm, a specific Hungarian method of poverty alleviation) and the “productive social policy” which was beyond this level. The essence of the first model of poverty care is that the collection and distribution of the benefits was organized in order to stop begging. Care was provided by religious orders who visited the poor and after studying their living conditions, each beneficiary could receive exactly what s/he needed (daily meals or food allowances for families, firewood/coal, clothes or financial aid). They also actively participated in providing care for the single, ill and aged persons. Poverty care according to the “Hungarian norm”, which was shaped between 1927 and 1936, gained recognition at the Social World Congress in London in 1936.⁶

Social care exceeding the level of caritative activities appeared in 1938, when the first cooperative experiments were introduced in Szatmár and Baranya Counties. An essential feature of the new, so-called “productive social policy” is what I call the principle of gradualism. In Esztergár’s view: “where vulnerability is the deepest, assistance must not start with providing the maximum of social benefits. If the vulnerable person does not have the necessary morals and knowledge, help must also include simultaneous education and training on housekeeping. Many years of experience have confirmed that the economic conditions of needy individuals should be improved gradually.”⁷

Based on the principle of gradualism, first goats were given to families, since they are easy to take care of, while keeping poultry and swine requires special knowledge. Those beneficiaries who owned a proper farm building and a parcel to grow fodder on were given a cow. Gradualism was manifested in the different levels of obtainable income; one could gradually acquire more and more. Agricultural products, such as breeding of animals served as a resource to repay the allowance. These were the first “co-operative experiments” in a few Hungarian counties such as Baranya.

⁶ Csizmadia, Andor (1977): *Changes in Social Care in Hungary*. Bp. pp. 90-97.

⁷ Esztergár Lajos (1939): *On the Way of Social Work Pécs* p. 45.

All these activities resulted in another form of assistance: participation in house building projects, named FAKSZ (Falusi Kislakásépítő Szövetkezetek / Village House Building Societies). The precondition to receive this type of assistance was to guarantee the repayment of the loan. The beneficiary had to provide a building lot and the family themselves had to make the loam bricks. The Society gave a loan that covered the wages of craftsmen and the costs of wood, stone, concrete and tile. The beneficiary had to repay the loan in 12 years, with an interest rate of 2%. Usually, the beneficiary was also given other in-kind allowances (e. g., domestic animals) to support repayment.

In addition to institutionalized support to poor village people penniless city dwellers were also assisted so that they could establish their financial autonomy. The Pécs experiment was initiated by Lajos Esztergár. Esztergár assumed that those people who had some real estate property could overcome the economic crisis more easily than ones who did not own any property. His purpose was to help the poor in the city to acquire a little private property. A maximum of 900 square meter building lots were distributed for poor city people. With intensive gardening, a family could grow most of the vegetables they needed.

The municipality of the city determined to build 100 houses (the majority of which contained one room and a kitchen, there were only a few houses with two rooms) for the families with many children and for other people in want. City politicians realized that families with many children usually could not acquire a proper home; and in most cases they lived in unhealthy and expensive rents. They often had rent arrears. The municipality planned to build and allocate houses for the beneficiaries and they had to pay "rents" that actually served as installments of the loan. Tenants were granted 25 years of tax exemption for the houses. They could not dispose of the house and were required to pay the rent as an installment. Although the rent did not make up for the financial deficit of the city that was a result of spending the money on building houses instead of depositing the amount it in a bank, the Hungarian Government gave reimbursement to the county as a contribution to poverty alleviation. As the government supported the program with extra financing, the invested capital of the city was repaid.

Beneficiaries were obliged to form public welfare organizations that gave advice how to grow vegetables in the garden. They were required to breed a number of swine and poultry and take care of winter storage and conservation of crops, vegetables and fruit. Practising homecrafts was another requirement. Beneficiaries had obligations of maintaining personal hygiene including compulsory medical examinations, cleanliness, whitewashing; as well as requirements of educational purpose such as participation in patriotic, social and cultural movements and organizing mutual help among the families.

The bill to establish the National People and Family Protection Fund (ONCSA)

The next stage of institutional social policy is the submission of the bill on National People and Family Protection Fund (ONCSA) in 1938. Lajos Esztergár, Mayor of Pécs was appointed a Commissioner of Ministry to promote the establishment of ONCSA. At the beginning of 1940 the Home Secretary ordered that every municipality should make a detailed work plan in social policy for the following five years (and these plans were made in due time). At the end of 1938 in a preceding decree (December 18th, 1938) the Home Secretary ordered that: „in enforcing the social plan, efforts must be made to improve the social situation of the beneficiaries to an extent that they would not require further community assistance and be able to repay the allowances (in money, in crops or labor) in a relatively short time.”

On one hand, ONCSA was partly an administrative and official organization involving the lower levels, the municipalities and the National Social Inspectorate; on the other hand, it was a procedural order based on the regional and subject division of the cases. Contracted lawyers, engineers, doctors and other professionals collaborated in the frameworks of ONCSA. Public administrators who had special talents and qualifications in social care were appointed social officers. Esztergár organized a three-day discussion for these professionals in Pécs where they elaborated on their complex tasks including data collection and visiting the localities; as well as the administrative tasks to be carried out in the organization.

The program was evolved in the era of Pál Teleki, Prime Minister. Teleki wanted to carry out an organically structured social policy plan with gradual improvements and future prospects. He intended to support the Fund in the next ten years with the amount that equaled to the costs of the re-arming of the Hungarian Army: one billion “pengő” (name of contemporary Hungarian currency), which was an incredibly large sum in the era. Transition to productive social policy started in Transcarpathia and in Northern Transylvania only in 1941. Regional differences and local circumstances greatly influenced the results. In the mountains and forests factories for wood processing were established whereas in the plain regions homecraft industry and the production of agricultural machines were supported. In many cities interest-free loans were obtained for the purposes of work for public utility and urban development. In the rural areas summer daytime centers were organized for children where they could get their meals for free or at a low price. Many settlements in Transcarpathia could be established and developed as a result of the activities of ONCSA. In November 1942, ONCSA houses were inaugurated in Bányú, Munkács and Beregszász.⁸

This type of social policy was productive in two different ways: first, beneficiaries could create values by their own work and they could experience personal growth instead of considering themselves as superfluous persons relying on others’ achievements; and it was productive for the entire community as it worked very effectively until historical conditions changed. We are usually unable to answer ‘what if’ questions such as: What if Hungary had been successful in introducing the new type of social administration and the professionals trained at the universities could have started their work? Hungary might have had the opportunity to join the welfare states.

Lajos Esztergár, a professional in public administration

Tasks in public administration

Lajos Esztergár considered social law as a special area within public administration. His views, together with contemporary social law, are summarized in his 500 page main work, “The Itemized Legal Foundations of Social Policy”. Public administration is a specific task of the government. “It is the task of public administration to ensure adequate conditions for human development and remove obstacles if the person is not able to remove them by oneself.”⁹

Essentially, public administration should establish harmony between the individual and the society. Further, it should work out the measures that can solve the problems of the society and should always strive to promote uninterrupted development and growth. Esztergár quotes Grünwald: „The task of public administration is to eliminate the consequences of general problems endangering the individual, namely, to relieve poverty,

⁸ Fischer: 2007

⁹ Esztergár: 1936, 9-10

the lack of adequate conditions for physical and spiritual development.” Public administration must be able to constantly accommodate to life’s circumstances. This is why elements of public administration are subject to constant change. In order to eliminate the emerging hazards, the symptoms that originate in social problems should be classified and measures should be taken to prevent or reduce the negative effects. These measures can be divided into two groups:

- measures to improve social conditions that troubles of the society originate from and solve the existing social problems,
- rules to prevent the development of social problems caused by changing social conditions.

In more modern terms, these equal to corrective and preventive principles in social policy. However, the task of social policy is more than mere reduction of the inconveniences, it is their causes that should be focused on; therefore the principle of prevention should dominate. Social problems are rooted in the inadequate relationship between the individual and the community. When private interests prevail over common good; or, on the contrary, a community neglects individual interests the effects are equally serious. The primary role of the government is to regulate rights and duties in a way that the individual (or group, or class) would not be confronted too often with the society; furthermore, that problematic segments of the society could be improved as soon as possible.

The concept of social law

Government measures that are introduced to cure the ills of the society and the laws that serve the prevention of social problems make up the concept of social law. These rules and measures together fall under public administration law that regulates human coexistence. Social law is an area of public administration law that includes rules for the prevention of hazards endangering the society; and, by curing social ills, it reduces the existing dangers to a minimum level.

Social law is a specific law regulating extraordinary life circumstances. It organizes laws and regulations into one coherent system and represents them as subjects of scientific criticism by pointing out the mistakes and the needs that emerge so that new, more appropriate laws could be made.

The task of social law

The task of social law is to regulate life circumstances and enable the nation to fulfill its developmental potentials. It is in the interest of the nation that every condition, symptom and manifestation that would endanger either the survival of the individual or risk the life of the state and decrease national potentials should be controlled and harmful impacts be eliminated. This goal is realized by a special field of public administration, namely, social administration. Social administration, a new development within public administration is a recent improvement. Its optimal or poor functioning will affect the living conditions of the nation.

The source of social law

The sources of social law are the *laws* and *decrees*. In social law orders and prohibitions are included. It prescribes forms of behavior that serve public interests and prohibits certain activities to cure the ills of the society. Therefore it has a positive direction (introducing

certain measures that effectively prevent the ills of the society) and a negative direction (prohibiting certain activities the results of which are anticipated as harmful).

Groups of Social Law

Social laws can be divided into two large categories depending on how they represent and treat social ills:

- The first group of laws enables the state as an authority to solve the problems itself;
- The second group of laws demands assistance in solving the problems. The state collaborates with individuals, social associations, and churches; and relies on their benevolence to treat the problems.

Correspondingly, social laws are both specified regulations (orders and prohibitions) and general regulations defining the ills of the society. The laws determine the consequences of specific ills as well as the tasks and obligations of the individuals, social organizations and churches in diminishing the hazards and curing the ills. Social law imposes duties on the individual and the society but eliminates the barriers that make obeying one's duties difficult or impossible. In this context the state either

- performs the task of solving the problems and to that end establishes social institutions and introduces adequate means,
- or assigns the task of healing to the individual, the society or the churches and in these cases the state provides the means and prescribes the activities. It gives the organizations authorization to use social institutions and determines the ways, extent and circumstances of use. In order to meet the criteria the state may force these social agents to fulfill their tasks under pain of sanctions. Finally, social law promotes solidarity. It is a means of abolishing or minimizing opposition between the social classes and fostering the development of the welfare of the nation both in quantitative and qualitative terms.¹⁰

Areas in Social Law

Although Lajos Esztergár considered social law as a special field within public administration, he also placed it in a broader context; we might assume that this was an early Hungarian equivalent of the present-day European Union approach. He published his concise work in Pécs in 1936, which was meant to be a reading material for the social course at the Faculty of Law at the St. Elisabeth University.¹¹ The book contained a concise bibliography in social sciences and also included contemporary Hungarian social law. There has been no other work published in this topic with more complete bibliography.

In his work he outlined the approach of providing care from cradle to grave, more specifically from the conception to the termination of legal capacity. Esztergár considered population policy a fundamental issue, namely he meant to improve the potentials of the nation by the promotion of population growth. The first step is mother and fetus protection. To realize this goal, one's health has to be improved; and one's health depends greatly on housing conditions. If the individual is unable to acquire a proper home then the state must give assistance. For this reason he elaborated on issues of land giving, housing rights, housing policies and the tasks of the Village House Building Societies (FAKSZ).

He paid special attention to social protection in schools. To compare today's regulations with those of the era, let us consider Act XXXVIII in 1868 that declared schooling compulsory

¹⁰ Esztergár: 1936, 12-13

¹¹ Esztergár, Lajos (1936): *The Itemized Legal Foundations For Social Policy*. Pécs.

from the age of 6 until 12 or 15 (depending on the type of school), with the exception of the cases when parents or caregivers were able to provide schooling at a private house or institution in a way that met the criteria. If the child missed enrollment or schooling the parent was fined. The law declared that all these fines should contribute to the financial resources of supporting poor schoolchildren. Further, assistance was in kind (such as books and other learning tools, clothing, shoes, medication for sick children.) Children with learning disabilities were taught in separate auxiliary schools and institutions for children with special educational needs. Children with physical disabilities were also taught in special institutions.

Detailed regulations controlled the tasks of the school doctors in prevention to protect children's health. In the whole schoolyear, the doctor was obliged to visit the school every week and check the classrooms for normal equipment, heating, ventilation, natural and artificial lighting and cleanliness. In every class, based on the information received from the teacher, he observed the children who had special needs because of their behavioral disorder or lack of talent; had a poor posture while writing and drawing; had some speech disorders when reading or speaking, were susceptible to illnesses or were suspected to have some contagious diseases (e.g. permanent coughs). Organizing summer holidays to strengthen physically vulnerable children was part of the same protection system. The system of school nurses was introduced only in Budapest. Its goal was to intervene in the cases when the family and the school together could not ensure undisturbed physical and psychological development of the child. The school nurse acted in behalf of the child and contacted the authorities for help. A school nurse undertook social, charity and ethical tasks. However, no measures were taken to ensure a proper home or peace for child; or to protect the child from parental brutality.

Esztergár reviewed social security regulations related to different jobs and professions, issues of unemployment and poverty relief. These chapters can not be summarized within the framework of this paper; neither the third part of his book in which legal regulations concerning public assistance, begging, war victims and prostitution are described together with the contemporary professional bibliography. In other words, social law is the itemized legal base for social policy: the entirety of social security provisions and benefits, and institutional care.

Training social professionals

Esztergár, being aware of the amount and complexity of tasks to be solved in Hungary and in the city of Pécs, realised that new type of professionals were needed. His views were explicated in his work titled "The Issue of Social Training." „After World War I the mutilation of the country ended the prosperity; and the resulting deep poverty, accompanied by the struggles to preserve Hungary's national existence against strong international pressure led the Hungarian public administration to social political fields. However, the system of public administration was not prepared for the great number of emerging tasks. As a result, measures were characterized by insecurity, hesitance and backwardness. (...) Public officers, entitled to carry out tasks in social policy, lacked the professional knowledge base for the work. Training of professional social workers became an urgent task. (...) The adequate form of social policy is prevention; and the policy can never trespass the boundaries of harmony. (...) These tasks can be carried out only by persons who have the knowledge for identifying the problems and know the applicable means.” (Esztergár: 1934, 4)

Esztergár elaborated on the characteristics of Hungarian social training: „Social trainings should be adapted to the Hungarian relations and to own national and cultural

characteristics. Copying foreign models would lead us astray for most of the time (...) Foreign experiences and lessons should be taken into consideration but slavish copying and applying these models may be harmful as they suit to a different character, to a differing economic, cultural and social establishment; second, the practice that was formed in these countries is the result of a long tradition in social policy. Further, the work was not delimited by serious financial considerations but there was abundant time and money to realize the projects.” (Esztergár: 1934, 18.)

In his work cited above Esztergár has reviewed contemporary social training systems in other European countries (among others, at the University of Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, London, Edinburgh, Bedford, Leeds; as well as Austrian, German and Brussels schools). To illustrate the difficulties in Hungarian social trainings he mentioned that the Hungarian Red Cross Association had an experimental course in 1927-28. In the second semester of the 1933/1934 academic year the first systematic practical course was established at the St. Elisabeth University, Pécs, where students studied Preventive Social Work in City Areas. A special training was organized for general social nurses and for the social nurses of Stefania Association by the National Public Health Institution and the Institution for Social Policy. Social hygiene services were emphasized and social education of the working class was a priority.

Esztergár underlined the need to introduce social trainings in theological high schools and in municipality administrative courses “(...) training in social policy should be mandatory for every officer working in public administration”.

The curriculum of the social course at the Faculty of Law and State (St Elisabeth University, Pecs) included the following:

1. Sociology
2. Social Policy (agrarian social policy, social problems of home and agricultural servants, housing policy, industrial social policy, trade social policy, agricultural policy, home policy, homecraft and folk art cooperatives /as organizations of self-help and of the protection of middle class/, issues of micro-loans, the self-protection of employees, authority and factory protection, international labor protection, unemployment and social security for working class population.)
3. Social Hygiene
4. Itemized Social Law
5. Applied Social Policy (mother, fetus- and infant protection; children in the family and without families, professional youth problems, women’s problems, woman labor, unemployment and poverty, causes and consequences; poverty relief, means and opportunities, allowances, and administration – the institutional system of social policy).
6. Supplementary Lectures (in Social pedagogy, social psychology, social ethics, private law, and penal law)

From the academic year 1940/41 on students studied economics, public welfare administration and applied sociology. A Faculty of Social Policy was planned but after 1944 neither the faculty could be established nor could the training be continued.

Ferenc Vasváry, Ordinary Professor at the University of Pecs held a lecture on Esztergár’s work, documented in the 1942/43 academic year under the title „The Past and Present of Social Trainings in Pécs”. Among others, he lauded Esztergár’s efforts in establishing a school for social professionals.

Lajos Esztergár is not mentioned in the collection book “Classics in Hungarian Public Administration 1874-1947” and one can hardly find any articles about him. He was an infinitely modest person who was aware that he had a mission: to invest the best of his knowledge into his work. Lajos Esztergár has to be remembered and acknowledged by everybody who is concerned about improving life quality in Hungary.

Major works of Lajos Esztergár

1. A háború utáni város. (The Post-War City) Pécs: Dunántúl Ny. 1944. 8 p.
2. A hadigondozás feladatai. (Providing Care for the Victims of War) Pécs: [Dunántúl Ny.] 1943. 12 p.
3. A hadigondozás közigazgatása. (Public Administration in War Victim Care) Pécs: [Dunántúl Ny.] 1943. 18 p.
4. A magyar szociálpolitika feladatai. (Tasks in Hungarian Social Policy) A vármegyei szociális tanácsadók és közjóléti előadók pécsi országos szociálpolitikai értekezletén elhangzott előadások. I-II. köt. (Közléteszi: Esztergár Lajos és Somogyi Ferenc) Pécs: Kultúra Könyvnyomdai Műintézet, 1939. 744 p.
5. A szociális képzés kérdése. (The Issue of Social Training) Pécs: Kultúra Könyvnyomdai Műintézet, 1934. 45 p.
6. A szociális munka útján. (On the Way of Social Work) Pécs: Kultúra Ny. 1939. 137 p. 2 t.
7. A szociális munka vázlata. (The Draft of Social Work) In: A magyar szociálpolitika feladatai. A vármegyei szociális tanácsadók és közjóléti előadók pécsi országos szociálpolitikai értekezletén elhangzott előadások I-II. köt. Pécs: Kultúra Könyvnyomdai Műintézet, 1939. 9-24. p.
8. A szociálpolitika tételes jogi alapja. (The Itemized Legal Foundations for Social Policy) Pécs: Kultúra Könyvnyomdai Műintézet, 1936. 500 p.
9. A városok szociálpolitikája. (Social Policy of Cities) [S. l.] 1942.
10. Gyakorlati szociálpolitika. Pécs sz. kir. város szociálpolitikai beszámolója. (Practical Social Policy in the Free Royal City of Pecs) Pécs: Kultúra Könyvnyomdai Műintézet Ny. 1933. 193 p.
11. Kultúr munka: A pécsi műveltségterjesztő mozgalom tervezete. (Cultural Work: Planning Public Education Movement in Pecs) Pécs: Dunántúl, 1942. 14 p.

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ESZTERGÁR LAJOS AZ ÜGYVÉD ÉS SZOCIÁLPOLITIKUS

MOLNÁR Margit¹

Összefoglaló

A tanulmányban felvázolt produktív szociálpolitika sajátosan magyar útja az új típusú szociálpolitikának. A korszak magyar szociálpolitikusai felismerték, hogy nem elegendő az ínségnyhítás, szegénygondozás, azon túlmenően a szociálpolitika legfőbb céljának a hátrányos helyzetből való kiemelést tekintették. Ebben vállalt oroszánrészt a pécsi közigazgatási jogász és társadalompolitikus, Esztergár Lajos. A produktív szociálpolitika lényege éppen az, hogy az elesettségből a fokozatosság elve alapján adófizető, önálló kisegzisztenciák váljanak. Ehhez nem volt elegendő a helyi önkormányzat anyagi ereje, az állam is nagy szerepet vállalt munkahelyteremtéssel éppúgy, mint pénzbeli támogatással. A szociálpolitika alakítói sorában tehát az állam a fő ágens, nem kevés anyagi eszközöket fordít a szociálpolitikára, ma azt mondanánk, hogy a neoweberi beavatkozó állam típusa jelenik meg válságos időkben. Az állam felismeri, hogy nagyon fontos a család szerepe, anyagi és szellemi életének gyarapítása. Ezen túlmenően az önségítés és a kölcsönös segítségnyújtás is lényeges eleme a korszaknak. A mai modern eszmék tehát már léteztek és benne éltek szokásjogi és közjogi hagyományainkban.

Kulcsszavak: gyakorlati szociálpolitika, szegénység enyhítése, produktív szociálpolitika, közigazgatás, szociális törvény, szociális szakemberek képzése