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JÓZSEF EÖTVÖS

(1813–71)

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Nowadays people want to assign to the State the prerogative to educate its citizens, deeming education to be the best means of influencing the views of the population. I, for one, dispute this right because—at least in a free country—one cannot vest in the State (or in those entrusted with exercising its authority) a power that would not only put paid to the freedom of the individual, but would also wreck all chances of progress, a power which those exercising the authority of the State will always use, things being what they are, to consolidate their own position. The advantage of a free Constitution lies precisely in the fact that under it the *views of its citizens determine the policies of their government*. And whosoever seeks to reverse this relationship, postulating that it is the government's job to define what the citizen should think, is fundamentally opposed to the idea of a free State.

The author of these lines was obviously a resolute opponent of the forceful, intrusive, almost dictatorial, centralized and all-pervading exercise of power by the State. It was in the early 1850s that József Eötvös, the eminent Hungarian politician and statesman, committed his philosophy to paper, to be published later in the Hungarian language in two volumes entitled *The Influence of the Nineteenth Century's Dominant Ideas on the State*. The first tome appeared in Vienna in 1851, the second in Pest in 1854. The above quotation comes from the latter, where the author examines the chances and prospects of a highly centralized State education system.

In this analysis he deliberately left out of account the fact that, with frequent changes of government, the persons involved in and the principles underlying educational policy are also liable to be replaced. In the case of a centrally controlled education system, this can mean tuition according to widely differing—sometimes even mutually contradictory—educational principles. The result will be that in the end pupils are left with 'no firm opinions at all'.

In Eötvös's view, the main reason why a centralized and absolutist State education system should be rejected lies in the fundamental difference between instruction and education. In truth, instruction constitutes but a tiny part of education, hence 'it can never exert a decisive influence on the minds of the citizens, especially in regard to the type of constitution really wanted'. Several historical examples supported this view, he claimed.

Over the centuries the Roman Catholic Church possessed a strongly centralized system of education, yet this did not prevent the Reformation. There followed the Jesuits' system of education, organized along the strict lines of military discipline. But were the Jesuit schools in the end:

capable of preventing the revolution in men's minds, something they were actually designed for? And never mind the quip about Voltaire just being a disciple of the Jesuits! Many Economists and Encyclopaedists were the same, as was indeed a whole generation which, driven by its hostility to the Church and the established order—that Grand Order—plunged almost into madness: all of them had grown up under Jesuit influence.

Another example is that of Napoleon, who, 'with tremendous administrative talent and iron-willed consistency', completely centralized the French system of education, totally subordinating it to State control. No one knew better than he the fundamental prerequisites upon which the systematic, deliberate and well-planned State control of public education rested.

Napoleon modelled his professional body of teachers partly on the army and partly on the structure of the Church, creating a strict and close-knit hierarchical system for the different ranks of educationists. 'If it were at all possible to channel the views and opinions of a great nation in a certain direction, one must admit that the State system of instruction as devised and partly set up by Napoleon would be the one most likely to succeed.'

This Napoleonic experiment, was it then a success? 'I think,' says Eötvös, 'that anyone who is familiar with French history since the system has been in force could not say that it has been a success.' Contrary to what was hoped, 'the influence of the school system has not enabled the citizens views to be mobilized in support of the Constitution.'

The main reason for the failure was that instruction represented but a minute part of education. Hence, although all citizens might acquire the same ideas and absorb the same facts at school, it does not necessarily follow that the views and beliefs formed from these acquired notions would be identical.

Actually, the areas from which the citizens receive the impressions that will decisively shape their individual opinions on the established order, form of government and personal circumstances were far wider and more comprehensive. (Eötvös emphasized here the effects of the press.) Within this wide framework of influential and formative factors, instruction takes up but a minute area.

Furthermore, and also the second prong of his argument, the official power of the State will never be able to influence completely the field of teaching as a whole. 'No government will ever have it within its power to organize teaching in such a way as to ensure its partiality for the Constitution.' Because, argues Eötvös, if every social stratum acquires the right to a free intellectual development, and going by the example of most European States, this development has become every citizen's duty, then the State will no longer be in a position precisely to anticipate the consequences of every one of its actions.

Indeed, who could ever hope to predict the mental impressions and ideas created in a hundred different pupils by one and the same lecture? Irrespective of the explanations proffered, every listener's view of the subject will vary according to his personality and status. Instead of imparting ready-made opinions, the school should rather provide an opportunity to acquire insights, a personal insight not dependent on what one was told, but on life's experience.

Even supposing that the schools' entire faculties were all fervent supporters of the government and the existing social order, and that 'they had no other objective but to din into the young views favourable to the existing Constitution,' the influence thus exerted by the State to mould its citizens' political opinions would only be trivial, according to the author. The principal reason being the mistaken belief by the supporters of a centralized, absolutist education policy that thousands of teachers, sharing a common profession and tightly-knit in a hierarchical organization, would feel and act as would 'a single person,' and would be capable of being manipulated in the same way. In fact, it is impossible to create a professional body of educators in which every member will relinquish his individuality and completely submerge his personality in the group.

Every teacher is bound by numerous separate ties to his or her own environment, to different social strata, to other people and other activities. Nor is there any reason to suppose that teachers are free from private, personal interests which differ from those of the State (or, to put it more precisely, 'differ from the interest of the regime that has appointed them to their office),' and it is hardly conceivable that they should all place their jobs—even if it depended on the government—above their private convictions.

Eötvös was thinking here of the fate of the teachers in Europe's State-run primary schools whose circumstances at the time were not exactly flourishing. 'Seeing the conditions the State is capable of inflicting upon its teachers, we must confess that this is indeed unlikely,' i.e. that the teachers would sacrifice their own interests to those of the State.

In Eötvös's opinion, the experiences of recent years rendered all hypothetical and theoretical disputes in this matter superfluous. 'In 1848, when society burst its banks, it was generally the teachers of State-run schools who, as a body, showed the greatest hostility towards the State,' in other words, towards the regime under which and in whose service they had hitherto carried out their profession.

Concluding his reflections on this theme, the author cites post-1848 revolutionary France as an example: following the restoration of the monarchy in 1852, many teachers were dismissed 'because they had propagated communist ideas among youth'. This just went to show, according to Eötvös, that although the State might wield some power over the teachers it had appointed, 'this writ does not run to the teaching process itself, since the State's prerogative of appointment was unable to prevent ideas obviously hostile to the government from being taught in so many French State-controlled schools.'

Eötvös therefore rejects the dictatorial, absolutist and centralized form of State power as not being conducive to progress either in education or anywhere else. Nonetheless, in the modern bourgeois State, the controlling role of central government does have crucial importance, always providing that it is closely supervised by the self-governing organs of local communities. The latter are capable of influencing those holding the reins of central government power, and in this way—via the independent self-governing communities—the political views of the population can provide effective checks and balances to any possible excesses on the part of the central government.

Equally important, however, is the fact that under such a system the citizen's personal liberty has the best chance to develop, that individual views and opinions can most effectively be expressed and disseminated, and that they can be made to prevail even against the central power of the State.

In a modern bourgeois State—Eötvös finally concludes—it is the sober, realistic balance between the State's central power and the citizens' self-governing organs that creates the essential prerequisites for the well-being of the individual citizen and the welfare of the community as a whole, as well as for the establishment of a modern, middle-class system of education.

Eötvös was enunciating these ideas on constitutional theory and educational policy when in April 1848—that is, even before his aforementioned book was published—he accepted his post of Minister of Religious and General Education in the Hungarian Government. His work in office was to be short-lived because of the outbreak in September 1848 of Hungary's freedom struggle against the Hapsburgs.

Some two decades later however, between 1867 and 1871, during his second period in office as minister, he again founded his educational policy upon the principle of a well-balanced relationship between the powers of central government and the self-governing organs of local communities, with a view to creating in Hungary a sound and modern middle-class education system.

József Eötvös was born in 1813 into a family of the Hungarian nobility. His immediate forebears had all been high-ranking members of the civil service, loyal to the House of Hapsburg. Having received his general education at the Piarist Fathers' College in Buda, he attended lectures on philosophy at Pest University. From his very first visits to Western Europe in the 1830s he learnt about social and economic conditions in Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom, and made the acquaintance of politicians, writers and other public figures. He was thus able to deepen his understanding of contemporary middle-class social ideas, a knowledge solidly founded upon his extensive earlier studies.

Eötvös was profoundly influenced—both through books and his personal experience—by the ideas of middle-class liberalism which came to form the foundations of his literary thought, political writings and work on educational policy.

It is well known that the source of liberalism was the Enlightenment, the ideology of the French bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century. Organized as a separate class, the bourgeoisie joined battle for the seizure of political and economic power, attacking the old order and its ideas, constitutions and representatives, as well as the monarchy and nobility as its bastions of power, armed primarily with the hope and the promise of individual liberty, equality and fraternity. The goal was the destruction of the existing feudal socio-economic system with its fetters on the emerging middle class, and its replacement with a system of power representing the interests of the bourgeoisie. After the middle class had attained power, and with the same objective in view, free competition was encouraged in the economic sphere, the freedoms of speech, the press and assembly were ensured in public life, and under the reorganization of the country's internal social structure, measures were introduced to abolish serfdom, provide fair taxation, to set up a representative National Assembly, and to safeguard equality before the law and equal rights to religious communities. The evolution of Eötvös's liberalism was significantly influenced by the ideas and actions of French bourgeois thinkers and statesmen. They underpinned his political philosophy with its rejection of the State's dictatorial centralized power in favour of independent self-governing local communities.

This political philosophy emerged very distinctly during the Napoleonic era, which followed the French revolutionary events, and also from the writings of the social philosophers of the Restoration period. Benjamin Constant, the author of the Napoleonic Constitution, for instance, demanded the curtailment of the power of the State in order to safeguard the freedom of the individual, urging the establishment of comprehensive local self-governments. Another eminent thinker, Alexis de Tocqueville, also opposed the all-powerful State with its unrestricted centralized legal powers, advocating instead freedom of the individual and local self-government. Similar views were expressed by Guizot and Thiers.

With his open-minded outlook, Eötvös found these political ideas attractive and congenial, and they were substantially to influence his own independent, Hungarian-related concepts and views on educational policy and organization.

In the 1830s and 1840s, Hungarian public life was in a state of ferment. Although society was still subject to the old feudal system, there existed already a sizeable and ever-growing body of opinion, composed of intellectuals of aristocratic and middle-class origin, clamouring for bourgeois reforms. In pursuit of the ideas of liberalism, they sought by means of reforms to sweep away feudal conditions and transform Hungarian society along bourgeois lines.

The Kingdom of Hungary existed in those days within the confines of the Hapsburg Empire, because traditionally the latter's ruler was also King of Hungary. In the above-mentioned period, the 1830s and 1840s, relations between Hungary and its king, the Hapsburg ruler, were none too harmonious. Considerable sections of Hungarian society struggled for Hungarian independence, that is, for the loosening or even severance of all ties with the Hapsburg monarchy.

The principal aspiration of the supporters of the Hungarian bourgeois reform movement was the same as that of their French exemplars. Their main demands for social change were: a National Assembly based on full popular representation; a fully accountable government; the freeing of the serfs; universal extension of citizens' rights; equality before the law; and freedom of the press. In short, they called for the establishment of a bourgeois parliamentary State.

Soon after his debut on Hungary's political scene, Eötvös made his mark as a leading figure of the reform movement. In his first major political work, published in 1841, he examined the close connection between the emancipation of the serfs and general, public education.

Important as it was to abolish the privileges of the nobility, he contended, it was as vital to grant equal civic rights to all the country's inhabitants, while at the same time giving them every opportunity to acquire a basic education. The two requirements and their fulfilment were closely linked: in his view only a properly educated citizen could fully live up to his rights and

not abuse them.

Throughout his lifetime, Eötvös's abiding concern was the fate of the serfs for whose freedom he so strenuously fought (and whose emancipation was finally achieved in the spring of 1848). In his view, without suitable education the granting of civic rights to them might constitute a danger to society as a whole; a comprehensive extension of general public education, though, might contain any revolutionary stirrings by the lower social strata. It was Eötvös's firm conviction that the proper organization of the institutions of basic education for the lower classes was essential for social progress, both from the point of view of economic prosperity of these strata and the development of society as a whole.

Eötvös, with his wide-ranging European outlook, was chiefly interested in the education of the lower social strata, and in the scope and depth of this education. His other interests lay in many fields: an excellent organizer, political writer, poet, novelist, public controversialist, successful statesman—he was all of these, but essentially the one interest that dominated his preoccupations and pervaded all his other efforts was his wish to raise cultural levels in general. He staunchly upheld the view that for the future welfare of the nation it was crucially important that culture should spread its roots as widely and as deeply as possible.

He declared that a nation must provide for every social stratum its own up-to-date cultural and educational system of institutions and, alongside it, the chance of access to culture's manifold and alluring attractions. Only through culture can individuals and society better themselves and enhance their moral stature, and only thus can both the individual and the nation as a whole attain the loftiest of ideals—liberty.

In all this he considered the cultural advancement of the lower social strata to be particularly important. For in Eötvös's view, as stated in 1847, the principal cause of the existing tension between the social strata 'is neither a social matter nor a question of wealth, but one of cultural differences.' According to him, conflict between individuals, social strata and classes arises not because of their different origins or economic positions, but because of the lack of cultural depth and penetration in their make-up.

Ultimately, that is why education for the general public was so necessary, namely to enable the lower strata of society to acquire the benefits of civilization, to permit the development among them of a cultured, broad and informed outlook, and to give them the ability to take the correct actions. In Eötvös's opinion, the best guarantee of the Hungarian nation's future welfare lay in peaceful and tranquil social progress.

The time for the implementation of these ideas on general education came in 1848 with the Ides of March. When the first fully responsible, independent Hungarian government was formed in the wake of the March revolution, József Eötvös was entrusted with the portfolio of Minister of Religious and General Education. Thus, after years of gestation, the spring of 1848 witnessed at last the birth of the foundations of the middle-class transformation of Hungarian society and the launching of a comprehensive Hungarian system of public education.

The new minister set about his task of turning his plans into reality with a will. He expanded the scope of his ministry, started the statistical evaluation of Hungarian education, began the modernization of secondary and higher education, and encouraged teachers to organize themselves into a professional body, at the same time initiating significant measures to enhance their financial and social status.

His most significant action, however, was on behalf of education for the general public. On 24 July 1848 he introduced the new National Diet, his bill on the Organization of General Education. Unfortunately, at that particular time, political conditions were unfavourable to any plans to reorganize and modernize Hungarian education: instead of peace, the future increasingly held the prospect of a protracted national struggle for freedom. So the bill that was designed to create a unified and up-to-date bourgeois system of education instead slipped off the agenda.

Soon the whole topic of education and schooling was relegated to the background of

Hungarian public life in the face of Vienna's armed intervention against the attainments of the Hungarian bourgeois revolution. The short-lived Hungarian government wavered, and ultimately resigned in September 1848. Eötvös's ministerial work had come to an end, and all hopes of reforming the system of education faded.

The outbreak of hostilities in Hungary during the autumn of 1848 swept away all major reform plans and initiatives: the Hungarian people were now locked in a desperate battle for their independence. Eötvös, not a partisan of armed struggle or revolution, retired for a time from public life.

After the defeat of Hungary's fight for freedom, Eötvös plunged into a busy literary life, producing new novels and poetic works, but also addressing himself to political problems. The most important of these political writings was his above-mentioned *The Influence of the Nineteenth Century's Dominant Ideas on the State*.

The consolidation of Hungarian political life during the 1860s produced the so-called Compromise. Under it, the Hungarian Diet enacted all the measures agreed upon under a compromise solution with Austria, and, in the summer of 1867, Francis Joseph was crowned King of Hungary. Thus the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was born, consisting of two independent states, though continuing to share the same sovereignty and the services of joint Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Finance. The Compromise marked the end of the Hungarian bourgeois revolution of 1848 by an imposed conciliatory solution. Vienna had to abandon its plans for a unitary, centralized Hapsburg Empire, while Hungary's political leaders, by accepting the three shared ministries, had renounced their country's complete independence. There can be no doubt, however, that this *modus vivendi*—although not without its own problems—did enable capitalism to develop in Hungary and the bourgeois education system to progress.

In the new Hungarian Cabinet of 1867, József Eötvös returned to office as Minister of Religious and General Education. Now, after a twenty-year gap, elaboration and implementation of his earlier plans could commence in more settled circumstances. His reform plans again aimed at the renewal of Hungary's entire education set-up, with a view to establishing a school system that would fully meet the requirements of a modern bourgeois society. He now put in hand the vast undertaking of modernizing the country's teaching institutions from nursery school to university levels. Yet, of all his initiatives, his plans for the introduction of general public education would prove to be the most important and most successful.

The first public primary schools came into existence in Hungary in the second half of the sixteenth century at a time when the storms of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation were at their height. Their network spread in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so that by the nineteenth century it had become properly organized, working to a well-differentiated syllabus. Training for teachers had begun as well.

Initially maintained by the Church authorities, from 1777 these schools were beginning to come under the aegis of the State. The great era of Hungarian educational reform, both in content and organization, began in the 1860s. The objective was to introduce a comprehensive system of primary public education suited to a modern, bourgeois society.

In July 1868, Eötvös, as Minister of Religious and General Education, submitted to the National Assembly a new Education Act, which, after a stormy debate, was passed by both the Chamber of Representatives and the Upper House. Its principle provisions were as follows:

1. Compulsory school attendance: daily attendance of public elementary school is obligatory to all children aged 6 to 12 years; daily attendance at public secondary school is obligatory to all those aged 12 to 15.
2. The setting-up of public primary schools is unrestricted:
 - (a) The Act enjoins in the first instance local communities to establish schools for the public, authorizing them to levy for this purpose a school tax amounting to no

- more than five per cent of the general tax; if insufficient, this sum will be augmented by a State grant;
- (b) The different religious and denominational communities are entitled to maintain public primary schools 'with their own resources', provided they comply with the provisions of the Act (prescribed subjects, dimensions and equipment of school premises, teachers' qualifications and prescribed salaries, maximum of eighty pupils, hours of attendance, etc.); if a religious community so wishes, a school maintained by a religious community may become a general public primary school without religious or denominational character.
3. The direction and supervision of public primary schools is the duty and responsibility of the State, irrespective of the financial responsibility for its maintenance; an inspector of public primary education, appointed by the Minister, is responsible for the supervision of all public schools in his district, including those maintained by religious communities.
 4. Twenty new State training schools for schoolmasters and ten for schoolmistresses, providing three-year courses, are to be set up.
 5. Types of public schools:
 - (a) Elementary public school (six forms, daily attendance);
 - (b) Upper elementary school (five hours a week for five months per school year);
 - (c) Secondary public school (originally six forms, subsequently reduced to four; attendance possible after four years of elementary public school; the curriculum adapted to the needs of the urban middle-class);
 - (d) Higher public school (three forms for boys and two for girls after six years of elementary public school education; curriculum similar to that of secondary public school, but without a foreign language).
 6. Subjects to be taught at elementary public school: speech and comprehension exercises; reading/writing; religious knowledge; arithmetic/geometry; geography/history/civics; natural history/physics; singing/drawing/physical culture; practical farming and gardening experience.
 7. Pupils at elementary public schools are fee-paying, although those from poor families may be exempt.
 8. The language of tuition is the pupils' mother tongue.
 9. The Act lays down precise details for the duration of lessons, school equipment, school buildings, dimensions of classrooms and their furniture.
 10. Boards of Public Education are to be set up in towns and villages from members of the population to superintend the running of public schools.

In his speech introducing the Bill, Eötvös said:

It is by now an acknowledged fact that of all the factors determining the well-being of a people and thus the vigour of a country as a whole, none is of greater importance than the nation's state of education. Hence, no country can claim to be properly run unless it pays closest attention to its education system.

This applied particularly to bourgeois parliamentary States, he said, where the people had a direct say in legislation and thereby in government. The population's standard of education would therefore decisively affect the quality of this influence.

At the same time, the educational situation of a country would also significantly affect its people's material condition and general well-being. Hence, a properly organized public education system will play a vital part in the welfare of the State as a whole, as well as in its economic progress.

Eötvös reminded the House that he had drawn up his bill according to the educational principles he had enunciated two decades earlier, convinced that he would only discharge his duty—which he deemed to be the implementation and consolidation of the principles laid down

in 1848—if he succeeded by the proper organization of public education in underpinning the foundations of the stability of every democratic constitution and thereby ensuring that the principles the nation had espoused in 1848 would finally come to fruition.

Eötvös explained in great detail why he thought the Bill was needed. To start with, he argued, in a modern bourgeois society it was the State's business to safeguard the prime assets of its subjects, and since the medium of public education enabled the citizens to acquire such assets, it was the State's duty to sustain public education. There were three consequences:

- No citizen had the right to prevent the State from discharging this duty. Hence, the State was entitled to force a parent to send his child to school and could insist on obligatory public education.
- The State had the right to obtain the resources necessary for the discharge of this duty. In other words, it was entitled to levy a school tax.
- It was the State's duty, if others, too, were engaged in general public education, to check how these other parties carried out the task they had assumed. Consequently, the State had a right of supervision not only of its own public schools, but also of the public schools maintained by others, including the religious communities.

In Eötvös's opinion, the State's central authority of control, direction and supervision had a proper place in general public education. But so had its opposite—the local efforts by the autonomous communities.

'I firmly believe,' he declared in his speech, 'that if we wish to have a good public education system, we must not exclude the major influence of the parents on educational matters, especially the collective influence which parents, i.e. the communities, can bring to bear on the public schools.' Again he posed the question as to 'whether the community should have any say in the management of public schools.' His categorical reply was:

I refuse to engage in a theoretical argument on this matter, for as examples throughout the world show, the public schools will prove their worth most convincingly where the community exerts a large measure of influence, as is the case, for instance, in America, Switzerland, and in those parts of Germany where the communities are allowed to have their say. An example of the opposite case, i.e. of the government's monopoly of power, can be found in France where, despite every effort, the level of general public education is far below the average, or at any rate far lower than it ought to be judging by the cultural level of its upper classes.

He summed up his views on this matter in these words: 'The essence of self-government is but the exercise of personal liberty by individuals imbued with moral principles.' The individual's freedom of opinion can be exercised in local matters of public education, e.g. how school tax revenue is used, the composition of teaching staff, choice of headmaster, and on-the-spot supervision, through Boards of Public Education, set up under the Education Act.

Eschewing a centralized administration as it exists in some countries, the proposed Act would entrust first-level management of the general public schools directly to the local community by setting up school management committees, composed of representatives of the local population together with the teacher and local clergyman. At county level the Act provides for the setting-up of school councils, thereby also giving the better educated sections of the population a chance to have their say on the educational scene.

As well as the creation of these official bodies, Eötvös recommended the setting-up of 'public education associations' in towns and in the provinces where members of the public interested in public education, headed by the leading personages of the area, could discuss local educational issues of topical interest, for example, their schools' financial problems. Membership of these associations would be voluntary.

While introducing novel features and new objectives and methods into the Hungarian education system—central State direction combined with local community management—Eötvös at the same time wished to retain the closest co-operation with those responsible for the

running of religious public schools, and in particular with the body responsible for the most respected and widespread network of public schools, the Roman Catholic Church. He enjoined these organizations to keep their schools up-to-date, to set up new ones, and to compete continuously with the State's public schools.

He concluded his speech with the words: 'In adopting this Act we shall be laying the foundations not only of a better public education system, but also of a brighter future for our nation.'

Eötvös's Public Education Act, recorded in the Statute Book as Law 38 of 1868, is a landmark in the history of Hungarian education. Full implementation of its provisions took, of course, several decades; thus, a host of problems needed to be solved in the procurement of financial resources, in the school building programme, in the provision of school books and teaching aids, in teachers' training, and in countless other matters. Undeniably, however, as a consequence public school attendance of 6- to 12-year-olds kept rising, literacy increased by leaps and bounds, and the number of those without elementary education among the lower social strata diminished rapidly.

Nor was this confined to the Hungarian population, that is, to those with Hungarian as their mother tongue. The level of public instruction and elementary education of all nationalities living within Hungary's historic boundaries in the Carpathian basin also rose significantly following the enactment of the Public Education Act of 1868.

But this Public Education Act represents not just a notable step in Hungary's own history of education; nor did it remain merely a powerful educational stimulus to the other nationalities living in the Carpathian basin; it was much rather a document of European significance. Eötvös's Act was in fact one of the first pieces of public education legislation to be passed by a European bourgeois State, making it a milestone in the history of European public education and thus of European cultural history as a whole.

In a progress report published in 1870—just one year before his death—Eötvös was even able to visualize the way ahead. He advocated, briefly speaking, that in the organization of public education 'all existing barriers between public education in the narrow sense of the word and so-called higher education be removed, and that both life and school be ordered in such a way as to render transition from the lowest to the highest levels of instruction and upward mobility from one level of education to the next as easy as possible.' This demand encapsulates the fundamental principle of a democratic public education policy as formulated by József Eötvös, eminent reformer, modernizer and developer of Hungarian public education, and potent promoter of his country's social progress. It compressed into a few words a programme that would remain valid for several decades and even during the century ahead, anticipating even the endeavours of contemporary public education and instruction policy.

Note

1. *István Mészáros (hungary)*. Lecturer in the history of teaching and education from the tenth to the twentieth centuries at the University Loránd Eötvös (1968-88). Previously a researcher at the Hungarian Institute of Education. Author of several works and articles, a bibliography of which has been created and published by his students: Dr Mészáros István Apáczai-dijas neveléztörténész szakirodalmi tevékenységének bibliográfiája [Bibliography of the professional writings of Dr István Mészáros, winner of the Apáczai Prize], Budapest, 1992.

Works by József Eötvös

As a writer and politician, József Eötvös was the author of numerous poems, novels and plays. In the field of political philosophy, his major work is *A XIX. század uralkodó eszméinek befolyása az álladalomra* [The Influence of the Nineteenth Century's Dominant Ideas on the State], Vol. I, Vienna, 1851; Vol. II, Pest, 1854.

His political speeches have been collected and published in several volumes. He dealt with his draft laws on public education submitted to Parliament in 1848 and 1868. He spoke on subjects as diverse as mixed marriages, the freedom of the Jews, the influence of science on life, national minorities and the projects of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

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