

# **Theses of doctoral (Ph.D.) dissertation**

## **Béla Jausz, the Teacher Professor**

The analysis of the professional career between 1919 - 1959

Anikó Vargáné Nagy

Advisor: Dr. László Brezsnyánszky



UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN

Doctoral School of Humanities

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## **1. The Goals of the Thesis, the Circumscription of the Theme**

During the past few decades a momentum of researches has come back, which aim to reveal and redefine history of higher education in the field of educational science. Institutions, traditions, oeuvres, which were once renowned yet have sunk into oblivion, are getting into the horizon of researchers again. Reinterpreted studies are written about school founding characters and their work that represent the educational science of the Hungarian universities. A comprehensive study of the education history on the first sixty years of the University of Debrecen, founded in 1912, was written by scholars, instructors and PhD students at the responsible departments, under the 'Debrecen School' project. The project, which was supported by OTKA (The Hungarian Scientific Research Fund), considered the workshop establishing work of the first four professors (Gyula Mitrovics, Sándor Karácsony, Béla Jausz and László Kelemen) after the foundation, and also the pedagogical traditions of the Debrecen Reformed College as its object. This present dissertation has been carried out in the framework of the research.

The timeliness of our topic comes from the deserved place of introduction of professors' portraits that played a significant role in the centennial history of the university. It is the duty of the posterity to explore the traditions, workshop establishing work and the intellectuality represented of a given institution. Drawing portraits of educators contribute to the knowledge and interpretation of the history of the university, and it can also serve as guidance for the new generations.

In the sequence of the above mentioned professors, Béla Jausz (1895-1974) is the one who has a less processed account of his walk of life in the special literature. The reason we see for this is that he did not stand in the spotlight so much as the educational science professors from other universities. Representatives of educational science from Debrecen fell under a different judgment. Béla Jausz's career and pedagogical work were processed only schematically; events, places, activities which would be worth detailing to get to know and understand his personality and the turns of his career stayed in obscurity. His life was attached to more towns, places and institutions. He often had parallelisms with parallelisms with adjacent and consecutive professional roles which had been slightly neglected by earlier special literature. In our opinion, we can talk about a great paradox of the walk of life and career that can be experienced in professional careers that are rich in political twists and turns, changes and in tragedies lived and survived. Béla Jausz, who was raised in the civil era, found his way during the years prior and after the war without much discontinuity in a way that he was able to keep his pride and basic values that came from his upbringing.

The subject-matter of our research was the investigation of Béla Jausz's roles as secondary school teacher, school organizer, principal, ministerial officer, professor and rector, as well as his activities in these positions between 1919 and 1959. The examined period of the research is the 40 years that cover the years from Béla Jausz's entrance into the profession to the height of his university career, which is the end of his rectorship. Our research has explored the four decades of Béla Jausz's personal life story in the frames of his professional career. In the examined period Béla Jausz, in his different roles and positions, counted as a significant factor in teacher training and scientific life at the university in Debrecen.

Béla Jausz's pedagogical career began with the years spent in the Reformed Grammar School in Kisújszállás. He continued with organizing the university's first training grammar school in Debrecen and forming it to be a real teacher training workshop, and he reached his full potential during the period as the head of department and rector. Béla Jausz's school-founding work, his humanistic attitude towards students, his pedagogical view and commitment to teacher training, his leader habit and education management made him the core of our interest and research. Looking at the wholeness of his professional career, we believe that his pedagogical motivations were the strongest. In the span of his career it was not the scholar but the role of the pedagogically experienced and knowledgeable teacher that was more determining. Due to his large-scale practice in secondary school and view, he remained a knower of the secondary school system in his whole professional life – whether he led a school, a department or a university. Béla Jausz did not deny his commitment to secondary school teachership. When defining the object and the title of this thesis, we had Béla Jausz, the teacher and professor in the centre of our theme.

The goal of our thesis was to carry out an analysis by studying the available written documents and processing the oral narratives of those remembering Béla Jausz, whose life between 1919 and 1959 is chosen to be the object of the research. We were looking for answers to several detailed questions in five extensive categories:

1. What socialization environment and personal impacts surrounded Béla Jausz during his time of studies, preparation for the pedagogical career and entering the field?
2. A less revealed area of Béla Jausz's time as an educational leader and principal in the training grammar school in Debrecen.
3. Where and how did he spend his life and career in Budapest?
4. What circumstances were there in another phase in his career in Debrecen as the head of a department and as the rector, and what disputes occurred in connection with his assignment.

5. On the whole, what personal and relational forces enabled Béla Jausz to accomplish his professional commitments without major self-sacrifice and preserve the respect of his academic company and students?

## **2. Applied Research Methods**

The source base of the research is composed of the records and archived documents about the certain stages of his career: administrative documents, reports, yearbooks and all those thoughtful oral reminiscences (24 interviews) where his colleagues and students remember Béla Jausz. On the basis of the analysis of the written and oral sources, we completed and tried to show the different shades of the educator and professor portrait which had been established in the previous literature. We wished to justify that narratives of remembrance still available offered a more subtle opportunity for understanding to unfold the subject in educational history writing and served as an appropriate context to better understand the correlations and interpret the same topic from different points of view.

## **3. The Results of the Research**

We view as a result that we were able to explore Béla Jausz's rich walk of life in detail.

Béla Jausz started his career in Kisújszállás. He had a roommate in the Eötvös Collegium and later soldier mate, Tibor Török from Kisújszállás, who, due to his family relations, got Jausz a Hungarian–German literature and grammar teacher position in the Reformed Major Grammar School after Jausz returned from the war. Finishing his university studies as a deputy grammar school teacher, Béla Jausz gained his secondary school teacher degree in 1920, and he lived an active pedagogical and social life in Kisújszállás, which was a significant place at the start of his pedagogical career. The young Jausz – as it was common at the time – was active in more fields, not only in the school but outside it as well. His researcher interest was focused mainly on teaching German and German literature at this time. The content of his presentations showed that he was well-informed, and that he was open to new psychological findings, new teaching methods and language teaching reforms. He became doctor of arts in Debrecen in German Literature in 1925, and from that year on, he taught as a lector in German at the university. The fact that he was both a secondary and university teacher was present in his professional life from this time until 1945. Besides teaching, Kisújszállás gave place to Béla Jausz's other passion, that is the appearance of scouting. Behind the faith in the educating power of scouting, stands the Béla Jausz who loved nature, soldierly discipline and respected order. Scouting played an important role in

establishing his pedagogical concepts. By introducing scouting in the school system, he consummated his educational system.

During his years in Kisújszállás he took part in a study trip abroad as a state scholar of the Collegium Hungaricum. He got to know the German boarding-school system in Wien, Berlin and Hamburg – about all he had seen he wrote a study published in the school report, which gave a base for the long-planned establishment of a boarding school besides the grammar school. By presenting his experiences and unbiasedly analysing the foreign example, Béla Jausz accomplished everlasting merits in launching and executing local boarding schools.

Jausz's widespread relationships with his students, his varied and expansive pedagogical practice and rich pedagogical experience in grammar school served as sources for his later lectures, and ensured a vivid, descriptive and lifelike pedagogical example for him. Béla Jausz was a young, ambitious and active secondary school teacher in Kisújszállás, who played a significant role in the life of the grammar school. With his value-setting work, he contributed to a novel way of strengthening relationship between the school and the parents. Béla Jausz laid a foundation for his lectures given from the university pulpit during his 16 active and productive years in Kisújszállás. Valid and lifelike examples made his words authentic. His teaching practice in Kisújszállás meant an advantage to him not only in teaching at the university but in the 1950s as well, at the judging of his proposal to the position of head of the Educational Science Department, and also when his work as a lecturer was evaluated. His personal connections, friendships and relational network in Kisújszállás impacted his later career a lot.

We explored and completed Jausz's relation to the Teacher Training Institution and the training grammar school with several details. With a classical culture, Jausz was a dynamic teacher, open to pedagogical, methodological and educational problems and situations and with his pedagogical practice, he continued his career at the Grammar School Teacher Training Institution. We believe that he wished to leave Kisújszállás with time. He wanted to get into the Teacher Training Institution, being the only teacher on staff who had a doctoral title. This intention of his is revealed by his father-in-law, a reformed pastor, Imre Török's letter to Miklós Horthy. We give an account in our dissertation of the content of the personal letter written in 1925. The request was directed to the VKM (Ministry of Religion and Public Education) and Béla Jausz was appointed by the ministry to the Teacher Training Institution in 1935. We came to the conclusion that his person got the attention by his supporters from this point, which helped him later as well, for instance when he was assigned to be the head of the grammar school.

It is an important result that we have revealed not yet known details of the assignment of Béla Jausz to be the head of the training grammar school. In our dissertation we presented the circumstances which contributed to the fact that in September, 1936, Béla Jausz was appointed head of the Hungarian Royal Secondary Teacher Training School in Debrecen by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. The decision was made in the ministry and there were relations of different nature besides his connections in Kisújszállás. We claim it justified that at the judging of the assignment his past in the elite of the Eötvös Collegium and his networks meant an advantage. Jausz stayed in contact with eleven people from the Collegium who were his former colleagues or his lecturers at the university and also with other acquaintances from the ministry.

During the short years of the training grammar school it became successful and prestigious. The grammar school is seen as an example and can be listed among those iconic places that had a great role in their days. We think that this place of remembrance played a influential role in Jausz's life and the judgment of his work. We examined what schemes gave the establishment of the institution a pedagogical culture, how students succeeded in passing down the spirituality of the institution, and what symbols can be identified for this practical place of teacher training.

According to our evaluation, Béla Jausz, as a principal, regarded the establishment of basic conditions for the successful work in a grammar school with a special calling as one of his most important tasks. He saw this goal secured by choosing the appropriate and most accurate teacher staff that met the requirements of the training school with multilayer functions. Therefore, he went in person to find teachers with good reputation in secondary institutions all over the town and the country. In the forming and completing of the teacher staff he chose consciously, overly regarding professional aspects the teacher personalities who were fit to the spirituality of the training grammar school. In the training grammar school established for secondary teacher training he strived to have teachers who are professionally and methodologically prepared and open-minded.

The institution with excellent teacher staff had real workshop work going on in the field of teacher training. The institution was also able to fulfill the particular tasks that came from its classical training grammar school mission. The school fulfilling a threefold function was simultaneously an educating-teaching institution, a place of practice for teacher training, and a 'grammar schoolish' pedagogical workshop which was organized after the country's first training grammar school in Budapest. The various tasks demanded various and widespread work from the teachers. We suppose that the successful synchronization of the different claims was due to Béla Jausz's leadership abilities. His name is a hallmark of the

excellent period in the institution's history. His role required the administration work first and foremost, which seems to be his primary task compared to teaching, as proven in the documents. In these years he taught fewer lessons as the principal of the grammar school, besides that he was also teaching in the teacher training program, and he was a head teacher at the same time. Jausz ensured the professional help and pedagogical background for the work in the institution, so that the institution, which had got great social reputation in such a short time, could fulfill the intention of the founders, namely, that it would be an example for teacher training. The requirements for the institution were transmitted by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education and the chairmen of the Teacher Training Institution – their patronage lifted the social status of the school. Due to his personality, Jausz wanted to meet the expectations and he wanted to prove that he was worth being the head of the school. Jausz's requests and advice as principal got through the pre-examination of the Teacher Training Institution before they were petitioned to the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. The ministry provided the financial conditions for the institution the best as it could during the years of war. Jausz had an independent decision making right to find the appropriate teachers, but their employment was first examined and then petitioned to the ministry. Jausz's decision making covered the following internal tasks of the school: discipline issues of the students, establishment of the life of the teacher staff, task rendering and evaluation of the teacher trainees, and the yearly subject planning.

On Béla Jausz's initiative – following the Kisújszállás pattern – there was a scouts' team established in Debrecen as well, since according to Jausz, the teacher staff could not refrain from the educating opportunities found in the spirituality of scouting. The school made the professional work open in order to have a direct relationship with the parents and a successful education of the students. Jausz was also following his initiation from Kisújszállás when they invited the parents to get to know the pedagogical work in the school and had presentations on issues related to education at the parents' meetings. The school had begun in a provisionally chosen building that was refurbished continuously by the increasing number of students and school needs. The school had to function fully as a training school but without the previously promised school building. Béla Jausz rightly described this school to be the school coming to existence among the most difficult circumstances. The humane atmosphere of the school gave valuable pedagogical approach, ensured modern knowledge, and resulted in success for the students studying there.

The wartime conditions led Béla Jausz to leave Debrecen in the fall of 1944; he resigned from his position as the head of the grammar school and moved to Budapest. Jausz asked for and was given a job from the ministry. From 10 August, 1945, he gave lectures in



educational science and psychology to teacher trainees as a lecturer in the Secondary School Teacher Training Institution in Budapest. The institution ceased in September, 1949, and Béla Jausz got to the Registrars Department of the Arts Faculty in Budapest as a deputy main lecturer. Till September, 1951, he gave educational theory and educational history lectures, till 1954 he taught and conducted exams for the correspondent students, and students majoring in educational science listened to his lectures until 1957.

In our dissertation we have explored Béla Jausz's activity in the ministry, which facts were unknown in previously published documents about him. He led the Department of Methodology at the Division of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education from July, 1954 to 31 August, 1955. The work itself demanded the bureaucrat rather than the teacher attitude. He had work relationship with three former students of the Eötvös Collegium. We can rightly suppose that his work at the ministry supported the further widening of Béla Jausz's social relations. In our opinion, his latter assignment as rector was due to his work in the ministry, his gained contacts and acquaintances as well.

From the fall of 1951, the Ministry of Education commissioned Béla Jausz to lead the Department of Educational Science at the Arts Faculty of the Lajos Kossuth University of Debrecen. Next year, he became head of department associate professor by tender. By his earlier relations, his work connected to Debrecen, and his contacts – even if they were from another era, Béla Jausz had local knowledge. He knew the place and he met many of his past colleagues at the university. He organized the theoretical, practical tasks and teacher staff of the department that had had no head for two years. He adjusted the role of the teacher training program and tried to launch the academic activity of the department. The first year it was the ministry, then in the spring of 1952 the university leadership that asked for the revision and evaluation of Béla Jausz's work as head of department and lecturer. The board of enquiry admitted the adequate content required by the current time, his culture of lecture-giving, as well as his theoretical and methodological knowledge. When examining his university lectures they referred many times to his rich pedagogical exemplar that was based on his practical experience in Kisújszállás and Debrecen as secondary school teacher. This pedagogical practice, practical teaching method became Béla Jausz's 'trade-mark'. In his later career, this was always mentioned in his characterization, and his students also confirmed that Jausz's lectures were characterized by theoretical knowledge supported by practical pedagogical examples.

At the university he was constantly under attack because of his residency and duties in Budapest. 'The commuter lecturer' name stayed with him for a long time while he worked in Debrecen. Until 1957 he worked as a lecturer at the university in Budapest and at the ministry

as well. Even after his work ended in Budapest, he did not move to Debrecen, which can be due to the fact that his apartment in Debrecen had been bombed and the family moved to Budapest.

The lack of his academic activity was criticized in several forums. He was constantly condemned for his moderate publishing capacity, which was a hindrance to achieve the title of professor. Compared to his professional career, he became a holder of candidate only later in 1961. His belated commission of university teacher was also a result of his less significant academic work. There were supporters of the idea to give Jausz the title of professor from the university and also from the colleagues, who claimed the right of commission with his practical experience and pedagogical expertise. Yet he did not get the title in this way. It was in 1957, in connection with his rectorship that his academic advancement got urgent. The decision was made independent from his academic work, his not yet ready thesis, and the earlier petitions from the university. As a rector, he was regarded neither an academic professor, nor a scholar. In his recollection, Jausz himself mentioned the incompleteness of his academic publication.

His commission and assignment as head of department came from a conservative teacher who was brought up in the previous era. He was serving the university for almost 20 years (1925-1944), he was tied to the civic town and the traditions of the university. The recognition of his pedagogical work showed first when he applied for the position as head of department, and his former colleagues commented about him with praise.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, 1957, Béla Jausz was appointed rector of the Lajos Kossuth University. The commissioning documents and interviews made with the people present at the time make it justified that it was a personal and superior political decision in the background of the commission. We concluded that Béla Jausz got to the front in a well-prepared progress. In the history of the university, it was the first rector commission in the 1950s which was given without asking the University Committee. We think that the professor title given to him in the spring of 1957 could be seen as the preparation of his assignment as rector, and it was based on political interests and intentions. In 1958, his commission was prolonged in a way that the report made by the political leadership of the university on Jausz's leadership abilities did not mention his leadership virtues.

To be a rector it was necessary to have a personality of a coordinator, leader personality and a resolver of conflicts. Jausz was not guilty of an indiscretion politically – he had the ability to cooperate, he was trustworthy. He was manageable. He was politically useful in a way that the cautious and earnest Béla Jausz did not put a word in political questions. The political system of the 1950s regarded Jausz politically useful because his

person was seen as adoptable besides his professional adequacy. Nevertheless, this system supported the Béla Jausz who did not really fit in it. He was present in the ministry, in the academic life, at the university, but he did not become committed to the system. He took part in the tasks given to him, but he always stayed true to himself. In his whole appearance, outward look, in the milieu of his home, he showed the old civic values – as all the reminiscent remember so. His commitment to the former system showed in his contacts in the Eötvös Collegium, and in his relations which came back from time to time in his career. As a rector, he was in work relations with many former members of the Collegium. His devotion to civic values, traditions was highly displayed in the way he insisted on introducing the making and wearing of the robes of the university. He made a compromise with the system besides reserving professionalism and values. Giving up his personality and principles was not and could not be the object of compromise. With this attitude he could avoid political attacks, which could be seen as Béla Jausz's survival strategy. His personality ensured the continuity of the university; he became rector due to his former leadership experience. He was characterized as a teacher, even as a professor or rector.

It was during Béla Jausz's rectorship when the terminated departments, the Summer University were reorganized, and the university symbols were repositioned. The University Council worked out the new regulations of the doctorate procedure. In 1957-58, the propositional long-term plan for the development of the Lajos Kossuth University got ready. As a rector his fate intertwined again with teacher training and the reestablished training place besides the university in 1958. Jausz played a significant role in the preparation of ministerial orders and in the wording of proposals. Teacher training at the university became five years long and education in the dormitories got an important role while he was rector. It is also to Béla Jausz's merit and is in connection with his countenance that a full-time educational science and cultural manager program could be organized and started. He strived to reestablish the autonomy of the university and reorganize the activity of academic qualification.

In his exceptionally intellectual personality, westernized thinking and worldview we can see the intellectual heritage inherited from his family. He got to the Eötvös Collegium in 1913. The quality teaching and high level of education had made its members committed to the institution of the Eötvös Collegium for ever. The inheritance to one school, a theoretical workshop ensured the feeling of belonging for the members. Independent of the fact when they attended the Collegium, the members could count on each other and keep contact even after 1950, when the Collegium closed. The students knew about their peers and followed their professional career. We reckon that Béla Jausz was defined and accompanied by his

relationships made there. Factors that were moving on his professional advancement can also be characterized by the contacts between the members of the Collegium in Béla Jausz's life.

Further relationships can be mentioned from Béla Jausz's life from the 1940's, who had been his colleagues in the practice school and got to educational politics. Namely Árpád Kiss, who became the manager of the National Education Council (later named Public Education Council) in 1944, and a collaborator at the National Institute of Sciences; József Molnár, who got a place in the National Public Education Council; Máté Kovács, who also started his work at the National Public Education Council and later worked as an under-secretary at the Ministry of Religion and Public Education; László Simon was an under-secretary of culture from 1945; György Szondi got to the Ministry of Public Education after 1945; György Barna was a senator at the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. Through old colleagues and friends, Jausz had connections in the ministry.

The above mentioned social capital can be seen as helping factors in Béla Jausz's professional career. In his advancement, we can see how his own character was present; the fact that he was able to accomplish his professional commitments without major self-sacrifice, and he preserved the respect of his surroundings and students.

#### **4. Conclusion**

All in all, we can conclude that it was characteristic of Béla Jausz's professional career, just as it was true to several of his colleagues and associates, that he proved his capability first as a teacher and then rose till the university pulpit. He bears the marks of an ambitious student, the teacher with much experience, and his prominence from the pedagogical field. The adjective 'educator' in the title of the thesis means that Béla Jausz always defined himself as an educator in his whole life. He started as a secondary school teacher and he remained a knower of the secondary school system in his whole professional life. Béla Jausz started as a practising secondary school teacher, after that he first became the head of a practice school, then he was a university lecturer, leader of department, and finally in the height of his career he reached the position of a university rector. The reason of lucky combination of his teacher talents he was the knower of the practice of pedagogy however, he did not reach the same level in scientific work as his colleagues, he did not publish much.

His middle-class intellectual heritage, and relational networks, his gained pedagogical practice, the ability of professional innovation, his ambition and will for compromise made him fitting for his roles that he took.

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