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Vilma Glücklich (1872–1927) and Rózsa Schwimmer (1877–1948) in adult education for working women in Hungary

ABSTRACT: The development of modern forms of adult education entered into the phase of organised and institutionalised forms from the 1890s when, simultaneously, the political movement of women in Budapest was established.

The two leading characteristic figures of Hungarian feminist movement were Rózsa Schwimmer and Vilma Glücklich who, between 1889 and 1919, worked and fought for the rights of women, especially for working women.

The 1907 Hungarian National Congress on Free Education, was a forum to articulate a need for the improvement of and public recognition of education of working women. Glücklich and Schwimmer participated in the Congress. The paper discusses how both women argued that the education of working women should receive more attention as part of adult education provision so as to develop a more democratic and liberal society with equal rights and opportunities.

KEYWORDS: Working women education, Free Education – Hungary, women’s movement – Hungary.

The education of adults in Hungary in the era of ‘Free Education’

One has to be rather accurate when analysing the development of adult education in the era of ‘Free Education’ as it is rather easy to mistakenly generalise and indicate that ‘Free Education’ would cover the complete period of 1868–1918 period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as one single era. But the reality is that ‘Free Education’ (*Szabad Tanítás*) has to be broken into three inner phases:

- Phase one for the 1868–1890 period;
- Phase two for the 1890–1907 period;
- Phase three for the 1907–1918 period.

The activity of Rózsa Schwimmer and Vilma Glücklich was precisely embedded into phase two and three of 'Free Education' (Bajusz – Filó – Németh, 2004) as those particular periods clearly influenced the success of their struggle for the education of adult women workers from industrialised cities of Hungary. Although the work of those two distinguished Hungarian fighters for womens' rights in the Suffragette Movement was concentrated mainly to Budapest, their efforts on education of working women became rather influential across the country by the end of phase two and became an element of mainstream claims upon democratizations in education, especially to realise equal access to education for adult women for the first time. Those claims were mainly articulated as part of workers' movements and demonstrated by Social Democrats in their party actions and through trade union actions as ally groups. (Felkai, 2002)

However, the works of Schwimmer and Glücklich, in the context of adult education, have remained rather unknown as the focus of the impact of their efforts were reduced to pedagogical and gender studies, but it is necessary to underline their impact upon modern Hungarian adult education by highlighting the claims to open up adult education for working women by better provision and access.

The impact of the life and works of Vilma Glücklich (1872–1927)

Vilma Glücklich is known as the first woman in Hungary to get a degree from the Faculty of Philosophy at Budapest State University. She was born in Vágújhely (Nové Mesto, today Slovakia) in August 1872 into a Jewish family and had two other sisters and one brother. Her father worked as a high-school teacher and her mother was also from an educated family. Vilma was brought up in Budapest and made her final certificate to finish her secondary education to combine high-school with teacher training. Beyond Hungarian, She also spoke German, Italian, English, and French fluently. From 1893 onwards, Glücklich worked for three years in Fiume (Rijeka, today in Croatia) as an upper-level secondary school teacher.

She left her position and enrolled to Budapest State University in 1896 when Hungarian universities were partially opened to women and completed a course of study in physics and mathematics and became the first woman to graduate at the Faculty of Philosophy when after she completed her studies. At

the turn of the century, she worked as a lower-level secondary school teacher of girls for a municipal school in Budapest until 1914 when she was recommended to teach at a secondary school, but soon after she returned back to a lower-level secondary school for her conviction that real schoolwork with pedagogical inspirations would be better realised with girls at younger age and by 1917 she became a headmistress too.

In the meantime, Glücklich also became influential and rather active in several professional bodies of pedagogical work, she was elected as officer of National Association of Lower-Level Secondary School Teachers in between 1913 and 1917. She was appointed by the National Council, a special transitional representative political body of the short lived elected democratic regime in Hungary, as one of the two female members of the Supervision Committee for the municipal administration of Budapest. Those positions indicated that Glücklich was, on the one hand, a devoted advocate of the professional development of school education and the incorporation of modern pedagogical reforms in schools so as to turn methodologies towards better performance of girls and their support of stepping towards higher levels of schools, moreover, to help them reach for higher education (Zimmermann, 2006).

Referring to the topic of turning the attention of adult education towards working women, both Glücklich and Schwimmer needed particular positions and directions in order to gain momentum and, accordingly, connect the emerging feminist and left-wing social democratic movements with their apparent ideas to raise the life-chances of women, especially working women and incorporate claims on welfare reforms on working conditions, family conditions, educational conditions and access, etc. Their political credo implied better education for women, working women amongst them.

In this regard, Glücklich, coming from a family of intellectuals, represented a specific dimension of political since she tried to work for better recognition of teachers working in public education both at elementary and secondary levels and supporting equal opportunities to be given to girls and women with vulnerable social background. Also, she connected her mission and life aspirations to her community goals and made use of platforms of feminist movements in order to realise the democratisation of the society she was living in.

One should also underline that phase two of 'Free Education' went along with a certain level of revival, or rather to say, a second rise of adult education after 1868. Namely, it was in 1890 and afterwards when a changing political climate of so-called neoliberal era created better environment for the education of adults both in political and in economic focus. Even the feminist movement took advantages of this period and got strengthened by the tur of

the century and gained strength, public attention and wider recognition by becoming a social and political platform in Hungary in parallel with international trends and changes across Europe and the developed world.

For Glücklich, this period was considered as a chance and she grabbed the wave of change, whereby she was elected, as a leading figure in Hungarian women's movement based in her strong positions in campaigning for schooling of young girls and women across Hungary through a democratized system of education, as Board Member of National Association of Women Employees (*Nőtisztviselők Országos Egyesülete* – abbreviated as NOE) in May 1902 (Zimmermann, 1999).

Two important drivers of modernisation of adult education and its linkages to women's movement were the roles of industrialisation and urban developments since the success of both adult education and feminist struggles depended on those two emerging dimensions in a twofold way.

In Hungary, the lack of a strong Hungarian middle class created a rather particular environment where middle class and workers groups with German and Jewish background played a significant role to modernise Hungary. This generated the birth of a new Hungarian speaking middle-class and working class with identity and responsibilities under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with strong, but natural assimilation (Gerő, 1993; Swanson, 2008). The relatively free liberalised political environment gave way to new ideas which very much depended on industrial and social modernisation to have been concentrated dominantly to cities. It was industrialisation which helped the rise of modern working class in cities and it was urbanisation and its impact of new social environment of mass society to accelerate welfare developments and forms in education, health care/medication, organised production and modern forms of consumption, leisure and cultural activities. Cities became the grounds of adult education of emerging middle class, working class and the aspiration of their members to participate decent forms of non-formal ways of knowledge transfer and, moreover, to establish special schools for their adult members (Koltai and Németh, 2002).

Even women's movement and the claims for a more democratised and accessible education were channelled into the rising liberal and social-democratic political struggles. Glücklich was also affected by those political movements and, together with Schwimmer, made use of women's movement in Budapest to take action and integrate the claim for education of adult working women into their campaign.

While Zimmermann has described the evolution of Hungarian Women's Movement accurately (Zimmermann, 1999), Kereszty has elaborated up-

on the role of Hungarian Feminists at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in the development of access to public education for girls with background of vulnerable communities of poor, labour class, peasantry, etc. Those authors connected women's movement and adult education in a specific cultural dimension, namely, in order to highlight the rather 'self-help forms' of the development of cultural platforms developed for/by adult women in Budapest (Kereszty, 2010; 2011). We have to indicate, however, that the roles of Glücklich and Schwimmer were not signalled in the context of fighting for better provision and access for adult working women from the turn of the century and in the years to come after.

Together with NOE president, Rózsa Schwimmer, Glücklich got involved in establishing a women workers' organisation and she worked with Schwimmer as colleague and friend for over a decade in a position to turn Hungarian and international women's movements into exchange and collaboration for better relations. In this regard, Glücklich's rather effective speech at the Constitutional General Assembly of the national Feminist Association (*Feministák Egyesülete* – FE) in the process of becoming the Executive President of the Association reached for wide attention in the press across Hungary in December 1904. Two years later, Glücklich started to edit the 'Feminist bulletin' (*Feminista Értesítő*), the first Journal of Feminist Association and wrote several articles into the this Journal and later into two other journals, 'Women and Society' (*A Nő és a Társadalom*) and into 'Woman, a feminist journal' (*A Nő. Feminista Folyóirat*) to focus on pedagogical issues and challenges of her times, for example, school reforms, child protection, coeducation and equal opportunities, access.

Glücklich tried to take advantage of the '1907 Hungarian National Congress on Free Education in Pécs' (*A Szabad Tanítás Pécssett 1907-ben tartott Magyar Országos Kongresszusa*) and, together with Schwimmer, participated Class4 of Commission I. to deal with the Dissemination of Sciences, of Theoretical and Practical Knowledge. This occasion was a rather appropriate forum for her to discuss the importance of organisation of adult and further education for working women. (The Diary of the Congress, 1908, reprinted in 1997).

These works indicated that her role and position was mainly an intellectual one as beyond her educational focus, her orientation was helping girls and their parents with counselling on finding a relevant profession in the collaborative actions in between the Feminist Association and the Municipal Department for Education of Budapest (Hungarian State Archive – MOL, P999 on *Feministák Egyesülete*). Another significant input of hers was an excellent capacity and skills in using several foreign languages in translation and inter-

pretation activities for the Feminist Association. Consequently, this even raised her acceptance and recognition as a qualified and prepared feminist politician and as an advocate of modern school education for girls and women.

Unfortunately, the radical shift from a liberal position to a more conservative one in Hungarian governmental policies in 1907 resulted in the fall of progressive developments in phase three of Hungarian adult education. This also blocked the realisation of the claims of Glücklich and her fellow feminist and left-wing colleagues and comrades. Soon after, the escalation of politics in Hungary and in Central-East Europe around 1912–1914 and the outbreak of World War directly faded away the goals and most of educational aspirations of Glücklich.

Although, it became rather difficult to cope with those emerging negative trends and situations both in political and in educational structures and forms, Glücklich continued to work for the women's movement and for the pacifist conviction with enthusiasm and active engagement in Hungarian and in international actions through which she was recognised as a deliberate agent of peace and education to be supported by human rights and peace. This short, but rather energetic time took a lot of her time and efforts through she could build stronger ties with international partners and colleagues in women's movement and educational development. She formally retired in 1924, when after having worked in Geneva as Headquarters Secretary in Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) for two decent years. In 1924, she became Secretary General of WILPF to turn into an Executive Committee member another two years later. Fellow colleagues reported that Glücklich was a rather modest, balanced, but still convicted intellectual, but still an 'ideal counterpart' (Zimmermann, 2013) to a more controversial and passionate Rózsa Schwimmer, her comrade and friend in Hungarian feminist movement.

The influence of Rózsa Schwimmer, an advocate of rights and education of women in Hungary and beyond

Rózsa Schwimmer was another leading figure and representative of the so-called 'progressive-liberal wing' of Hungarian women's movement. Schwimmer was rather committed to political and economic equality, accessible welfare, suffrage and pacifism. She was devoted to peace-work and international collaboration instead of conflict and xenophobic concerns. At the very first years of the 20th century, Schwimmer became a leading figure of Hungarian women's movement by expanding its political relations and structuring its organisational frames with both in national and international contexts. She was

a founding member and later Vice-President of the newly founded National Association of Women Employees (*Nőtisztviselők Országos Egyesülete* – abbreviated as NOE) where Schwimmer was elected as President in 1900 for almost a decade. Later she continued as NOE-board member. From 1902, she worked closely with social-democratic women to establish a women workers' association, later founded as National Association of Women Workers in Hungary (*Magyarországi Munkásnők Országos Egyesülete*) in 1904 which she also became a first President of. In this era, Schwimmer developed her connections towards international groups and formations in women's movement through journals, networking, contacting the International Council of Women (ICW) and creating good ties with the International Women Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) and get those organisations representation be established into the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Zimmermann, 2011).

Still in 1904, she worked together with Vilma Glücklich to establish the Alliance of women's Associations in Hungary (*Magyarországi Nőegyesületek Szövetsége*) which became an ICW member in the same year. Also, she and Glücklich attended the gatherings of ICW and IWSA in Berlin. As a consequence, the two leading feminists initiated the formation of the Feminist Association (*Feministák Egyesülete* – FE). This Association decided in 1905 to include suffrage on its agenda in order to get women's suffrage as part of its programme. Schwimmer became the leader of the political committee of this Association until 1918. This role of hers was helpful to organise IWSA's 7th international congress to Budapest in 1913. Schwimmer was rather active in IWSA and, finally, she became the press secretary of the organisation in London to be recognised as a peak in her career in international women's movement. Before world War I broke out, Schwimmer could make a strong impact on agendas and policies of the Feminist Association and the wider Hungarian women's movement. Her credo was not at all restricted to the issue of equality, but was closely tied up to matters of class and democracy by fighting for democratic rights to be extended to all classes (Kereszty, 2011).

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Schwimmer turned most of her intellectual and political capacities into professional writings, both in German and in Hungarian. She wrote studies in analysing key feminist issues such as motherhood and child protection, sexual matters, household reform, education and suffrage. She also translated the writings of leading figures of international women's movement, like Charlotte Perkins Gilman. From 1907, she was the editor, later responsible editor of feminist Journals of 'Women and Society' (*A Nő és a Társadalom*), later 'Woman, A feminist Journal' (*A Nő. Feminista folyóirat*) as official journal of Feminist Association.

For Schwimmer, the 1907 Hungarian National Congress of Free Education in Pécs was also a very influential and relevant gathering to make some leading intellectuals, mostly male, to be affected by feminist left-wing thinkers in order to be constrained to relate those upcoming thought to the official narratives of the changing policies of those times turning official educational approaches into conservative dimensions. In this regard, Schwimmer and Glücklich used the opportunity of a free platform to speak loudly, but consciously about the importance of further education for working women. Each and all occasions like this were constantly used by feminist leaders to demonstrate how and in what forms education, adult education amongst them, should be democratised, to be made accessible with better and more humanistic methods, implications to develop participation.

After World War I, Rózsa Schwimmer would never continue those public engagements with those high levels of engagement and participation. Schwimmer turned most of her attention to peace work with consequently important issues of the pacifist agenda of her time. To get it even harder, she found herself as an enemy alien in London, therefore, she resigned from her position as Press Secretary of IWSA, and left for the USA with intention to promote peace and searching for dialogue and mediation for neutral nations. In 1915, she devoted most of her time to work for Women's Peace Party and participated the famous International Congress of Women at The Hague. Soon she became impatient of slow process and progress in peace work, which resulted in tensions and the broken friendships with distinguished figures of feminist movement, like Aletta Jacobs. Schwimmer's positions and status were questioned and weakened in those international organisations she had been working in for many years and resulted in conflicts in her work and linkages to several international partners (Kereszty, 2011).

The impact of the 1907 Hungarian National Congress on Free Education in Pécs upon the development of modern Hungarian adult education

On behalf of the Feminist Association, both Vilma Glücklich and Rózsa Schwimmer participated the Hungarian National Congress on Free Education in Pécs in October 1907. The organisation of the Congress had been thoroughly planned through a systemic procedure and was administered by a special Executive Commission in order to incorporate the claims of each and all relevant institutions and organisations having dealt with the transfer of knowledge, educations, skills development, scientific activities from research to development.

The scientific literature on Hungarian adult education considers this event a very important momentum to discuss the role and function of ‘Free Education’ (Szabad Tanítás/Szabadoktatás) as non-formal ways of education and its impact on the development of adult education (Felkai, 2002; Németh, 2009).

The Congress, beyond its activities in its five Commission, provided plenary keynotes from its convention on 2 October 1907 to 5 October 1907 in Pécs. The detailed diary of the Congress was published in 1908 to imply each and all reports and documentation of the Congress with written forms of plenary keynotes with questions and comments and Commission/Class lectures, speeches, and related questions, answers and comments (The Diary of the Congress, 1908).

The lecture of Vilma Glücklich had been nominated to Commission I. with the title ‘On the Further Education of Working Women’ (*A munkásnők továbbképzéséről*) and was rendered into its 4th Class. to discuss the role of educators and educatees. Glücklich was listed into the preannounced programme as last speaker of her Class and was given equal opportunity to speak as executive leader of the Feminist Association (The lecture of Glücklich in the Diary of the Congress, 1908).

Commission I. on lectures and course to disseminate sciences, theoretical and practical knowledge with four classes to be represented:

Class 1: Philosophy; history; sociology; geography; linguistics and literature; classical philology;

Class 2: Mathematics; natural sciences; health science

Class 3: Trade; technics, industry and technology; economic vocational training for women; rural cultural associations;

Class 4: Who should teach? Should students receive a certificate?

Further education of working women

It is also very important to underline that this unique gathering of leading intellectuals of education, natural and social sciences, arts, religion, sports, industry (the Congress had been proposed as a distinguished programmes of a national industrial and trade exhibition and fair by Miklós Zsolnay, a leading industrialist and owner of porcelain manufacturing firm in 1906). This provided a ground and platform to discuss contemporary challenges to education, culture, arts, mass media, health and several other challenging issues of a modernising society facing difficulties of access, welfare, equality, equity, ethic, values at the beginning of the 20th century to become globally influenced and locally constrained.

Glücklich enrolled to the Congress with her Feminist Association president, Rózsa Schwimmer, and had selected her topic so as to be able to high-

light the growing claims for the education and further trainings of working women, moreover, to demonstrate the challenges of social and professional constraints of traditions educational approach to limit the success of the realisation of such demands and upcoming pioneer works and struggles of organised forms for women's education. The dominantly masculine environment of education could hardly react to the changing needs of the public and, in this regard, the topic of Glücklich reflected some particular difficulties around prejudices upon the potential benefits and success of working women's education and training.

In adult education, however, the year of 1907 was a division line in between neoliberal, more open and flexible educational policy focuses and a re-emerging right-wing conservative, but clearly nationalist policy to replace integration and democratisation with hegemonic actions of power and to change from collaboration to conflict. Still in 1907, the climate seemed peaceful and tolerant to topics like the one represented by Glücklich and her narrative received attention and reflection. The Congress itself was considered by these two distinguished feminists as an appropriate platform to challenge traditional views around education with some emerging issues of women's education to underline the realities of poverty, deprivation, marginalisation, lack of support and care, limited accessible funds and resources and the constraints of traditional school. All those represented outdated methodologies in teaching, teaching materials, lack of proper learning materials like books and readers, lack of well-prepared teachers to be able to effectively teach and train, based on practical skills and knowledge, working women both in general subject and in vocations they would select to work in.

The lecture of Glücklich was built up on the reflection on the changing nature and environment of education and on the choices and limitations of the field how to respond to the needs of new generations, namely, of young working women wanting to meet the conditions of a dramatically changing labour market with industries and service sector to rapidly grow and to influence their working conditions. Therefore, she claimed that education should serve the needs of potential employers, likewise, to respond to relevant claims of both educators and educatees:

[...] especially, when the education of the education of working men and women is put to the focus of discourse, they are not provided with useful knowledge to help them to live a better life, but which knowledge and skills can be utilised by the employer. On the contrary, we must clearly state that workers, as individuals, have to be brought to a higher level and, thereby, be provided with better choices for self-fulfilment.

The more harmonised life individuals may live, the more harmonised the whole society will be; this is how personal and common interests can be combined in order to form a good ground for mutual requirements. (Ferenc Vörösváry (ed.) *The diary of the 1907 Congress of Free Education/Az 1907. évi Szabadtanítási Kongresszus Naplója.* (1908) Budapest: Franklin Assoc. Vilma Glücklich on Further Education of Working Women. p. 343).

In this regard, Glücklich was providing her lecture on 4th of October in Class4 of Commission I. so as to highlight the realities of the education of working women in Hungary. She claimed that the education and vocational trainings of girls was rather lagging behind the average quality of educations and vocational trainings for boys of the same age, while girls lacked any decent opportunities to enter into apprenticeship as there were almost nothing provided for them opposite to available forms offered to boys with the purpose of to collect practical experience. This is one reason why working women would have to work for lower salaries and may, therefore, constrained not to dare joining strikes of labour movements to demonstrate for better social and working conditions (The lecture of Glücklich in the Diary of the Congress, 1908):

The training of working women is even more underdeveloped than that of working men. The education of school-aged and non school-aged girls are not as developed as that for boys, but while these boy have to be allowed by their masters to join apprenticeship trainings, girls, opposite to this, cannot participate such activities. A consequence of this is that working women have to accept lower wages and serve their employers as a kind of strike-breaker. (Vilma Glücklich on Further Education of Working Women. *ibid*, p. 343).

Glücklich was arguing that it would be very difficult to orientate women to specific household trainings (*háztartási tanfolyam*) as they would have limited time to manage their household activities apart from their daily work which were rather tiring for them. This situation clearly reflected the overloaded daily life of most working women of this era by their not receiving a decent support from their communities either in social or in financial terms. This circumstance was the exact reason to deter them as adult learners from participating those limited educational and training programmes offered to them in their localities.

Even if we may be able to organise specific trainings for working women to raise their knowledge and skills to the levels of working men; if lectures of trade unions

and of institutions of folk-education will be accessible for them: they (working women!) are unable to make use of those opportunities, since most of their time is captured by household activities. (Vilma Glücklich on Further Education of Working Women. ibid, p. 344).

Glücklich openly and clearly called for more help for working women in sharing their burdens since such load of tasks and duties block them to participate those few available courses available for them to reach up to the required skills of average working men. Household duties, Glücklich argued, were the reason why working women may have limited leisure/free time to be turned into learning. She recommended, in her lecture, a better share of work-load and duties amongst family members in order to develop the welfare of a workers' family:

In case we sincerely want trainings for working women to be realised, we have to promote household to be centralised, household duties and activities to be shared and professionalised. (Vilma Glücklich on Further Education of Working Women. ibid, p. 344).

Also, she claimed a for a caring support of the state in this regard and, thereby, making the education of women compulsory in the process of apprenticeship through accessible programmes. Likewise, she argued that the state should imply female special supervisors at industrial firms in order to save women workers and guarantee decent working conditions. Finally, Glücklich proposed that the durations of girls' apprenticeship should last as long as the same apprenticeship would last for boys. Trade unions and all relevant organisations of 'Free Education', she shared her vision, should provide basic second chance education for working women through which those enrolled women would be able to complete their studies and develop their skills. Finally, Glücklich claimed that those organisations and institution of 'Free Education' should help working women to get access to available learning opportunities by helping better household conditions to be reached for:

The state, opposite to those missing conditions, must provide compulsory education for young girls in initial apprenticeships; must use female labour-inspectors at industrial sites to provide safety control of employment for working women; institutions of recruitment must strictly monitor that girls and boys in apprenticeships are trained with equal length. Trade Unions and other organisations of Free Education must provide basic skills programmes to allow working women to collect their missing skills having been gathered by their fellow male workers, they must

also organise special trainings in the subjects of female and child health; they must open all of their courses to working women and must promote the centralisation of household activities in order to enable working women get access to each and all learning opportunities (Vilma Glücklich on Further Education of Working Women. *ibid.*, p. 344).

The Feminist Association, Glücklich signalled, had represented relevant claims and interests of working women and supported the education and training of such women despite of the lack of funds and growing attacks. Through the initiation of special courses in social-pedagogy the Association provided good grounds for the establishment of the School of Mothers and promoted several programmes in health-prevention based on the needs of women (The lecture of Glücklich in the Diary of the Congress, 1908). The lecture was followed by a short discussion in which the problem of a general societal prejudice was referred to in the contexts of equality and equity. The current revision of the Industrial Law could, according one of the comments, initiate a better outlined apprenticeship system to imply equal opportunities.

At the same discussion and debate over the lecture, Rózsa Schwimmer argued that another matter to block the participation of working women in adult and continuing education and training was organisational difficulties referring to the conditions and requirements when one would like to establish a training organisations/institution. Local municipalities and their offices detested or delayed to register the claims of such organisations to undermine their goals with such direct interventions. The lack of freedom of establishing organisations was another clear block in the development of education for working women. In her closing remarks, Glücklich argued that the feminist approach did not mean to tear the woman away from her family environment, but instead, she claimed that a stable and healthy family background would be needed for a balanced community in which a mother is not a second class person, but an equal partner to represent a responsible human being with full care and devotion to her beloved family members and to be able to pay enough attention to her own individual goals too:

Feminists do not want to tear away women from the 'Family Sanctuary', but enable them to become a conscious, thinking and full person as a complete mother, like other average women in society. (Vilma Glücklich on Further Education of Working Women. *ibid.*, p. 347).

Conclusion

This paper tried to analyse the impact of the thoughts of two leading feminists of early 20th Century Hungary on the development of adult and continuing education for working women. Vilma Glücklich and Rózsa Schwimmer played a significant role in the promotion of adult continuing education and training for working women across Hungary, mainly in industrial cities and towns. Their struggle, however, was rather difficult and constrained by limited modernisation of a dominantly agrarian society in mostly rural environments of Hungary. Modernisation was again relative, although there had been several pioneering efforts to develop adult education much earlier than in the UK or in the Scandinavian region, but significantly large parts of the Hungarian society remained poor and stayed dependant on social care and voluntary help. That was the impact of a weak or even lately emerging middle-class before World War I broke out. Tom Steele took a right title for his book when writing about the emergence of popular education in between 1848 and 1918: 'Knowledge is power'. (Steele, 2007) And yes, knowledge became power, since it was mobile and could allow mobility for those who had access to it. Glücklich and Schwimmer, representatives of Jewish middle-class families, had experienced how one could become free to make use of opportunities in life and work. That was their overall message which they wanted to share with working women in order to recognise that they could change their lives through education and learning so as to reach for pride and dignity both in their careers and personal lives. And that is what Hungarian adult education owes to these two intellectuals who considered knowledge, curiosity and dignity as more important values than intolerance, hatred and xenophobia.

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