

“Go ye and teach...” [“Elmenvén, tanítatok...”] *Budapesti Hírlap* no. 248 (7 October 1914)

(NB: probably not in direct response to the *Aufruf*, but rather to Wilhelm Wundt's Leipzig speech a couple of weeks earlier)

It is now possible, at the height of the armed conflict, to gauge the forces arrayed against each other in the service of the battling nations. And we can grasp the secret of the amazing success of German weapons, of the lightning-fast attacks and the superhuman endurance of the Germany army. All of Germany is there on the battlefield, heart and soul. It has not only military strength, but social, economic, moral, and intellectual strength as well. The legend of two million volunteers was a legend that came true. The five billion marks [budgeted for the war] sounds like it was thought up by the imagination of a modern mythology flinging about vast numbers. Yet this huge sum was indeed signed, sealed, and paid on the army's account. The fire of magnificent rivalry flared up among all estates, classes, and occupations: who can do more for the homeland, under attack and beset on all sides. And everybody is giving the best that he can, the rich his money, the poor his handiwork, the man his arm, the woman her care, the bandage dresser his hand, the worker his penny, the scholar his scholarship [the scientist his science], and somehow at the same time each gives his heart as well.

The scholar gives his scholarship. The German scientist, whom frivolous, bitter, talentless joke-makers [*viccgyártás*] had distorted into a caricature, who is truly one of the key factors in the nation's greatness, the German scientist has left the quiet of his laboratory, descended from the vantage of his lectern and gone out to teach the peoples according to the Scriptures... [The great philosopher Wundt, the great philologist Wilamowitz, and Eucken, Lamprecht, and Harnack, all these world-renowned scholars are going out to a wider public...]

The Hungarian nation has never shown itself ungrateful toward scientists. The lot afforded to them from our government and our legislation has secured a privileged place for them in our society, and has created on their behalf (because they did not create it themselves, as in many places elsewhere) a powerful Academy, a vigorous institution. Why aren't our scholars reporting for duty like the Germans? Aren't our thinkers thinking? Aren't our teachers teaching? Don't our scholars know something more, better, more beautiful, more useful about the war than we have now? Does not a legal scholar among them see the international legal aspects of a war that has set the world aflame, the sudden, volcanic transformation of legal philosophy, the rapid and repeated effect war relations are having on civil law? How do we explain to our historians, or rather they to us, the historical profundities of war, the sources [*kutfejek*] of national relations, the analogies provided by the past which throw light on the dark and mysterious future? Here we have our excellent medical professors, from whom at times like this the public would be pleased to learn about the kind of knowledge on which the wounded and the infectious diseases of the world at war depend. And they would happily listen to our Hungarian Harnacks, too, who could perhaps descend as well from the vantage of New Testament exegesis and homiletics to the level of popular preaching. And the philosopher could top off one of his works with the most universal viewpoints, the most comprehensive judgment, the surest, intuitive feel of the relationship. So that they would light a torch for us in the darkness of the night in which we are stumbling. And they would illuminate the crowd psychology of the big city, which in its enormous sensitivity and nervous susceptibility is at the mercy of any momentary stimulus, and which thirsts after true edification and left to itself without a leader constantly gets lost in the maze.

There are a fair number of our scholars who have been given the spellbinding power of the living word, the captivating fervor of eloquence, the rare gift of directness and humor, who are at once scholars and orators. We are not seeing them, we are not hearing them anywhere. It will not do to say that the Hungarian public is different from the German one, that it takes no interest and would rather sit in a cafe or a pub and immerse itself in its tabloid [“penny newspaper”]. The ever-growing desire to learn, to progress, and to become enlightened thrives in the Hungarian audience. In peacetime the audience flocks by the hundreds to the productions at which gifted master teachers are holding forth. Where hundreds flock in peacetime, thousands would flock in the current exciting, feverish days.

It is not appropriate to object that we do not yet have the medium for organizing this kind of popular lecture. First of all, if we didn’t have it, it would have to be created. Quickly, smartly, and cheaply. Secondly, there is not one but a whole array of such organizations. We just have to make do with them. Not to speak of the Free University, the Free Lyceum, the Elizabeth People’s Academy, the People’s Cultural Society, the Association for Knowledge Dissemination, the Urania Science Association (and a bunch of others might not immediately come to mind), not to speak of any other: this year I am not working [toward that end]; the public has other concerns now than listening to physics or chemistry lectures, Italian literary history or Greek philosophy. I don’t have any money to pay for lectures. The public can’t pay entry fees.

Well, this year all these wisely and fruitfully functioning institutions and associations should only deal with subjects that have the most direct connection to the main burning issue for all of us, the war. Give it material in abundance. And do not pay the lecturers, so that you do not have to take an entrance fee. We are convinced that there is not a single one of our scholars who would not participate in this beneficial work with the utmost dedication, joy, and self-sacrifice and who would refuse cooperation because he could not expect a material return from it.

Christ parted with his disciples saying: Go ye therefore and teach all nations [Matthew 28:19]. The apostles of the modern era are scholars [scientists!]. It would be sad if the God residing in their hearts, their own conscience did not repeat in these difficult times the admonition with which that Twelve [disciples] went out to conquer the ancient world, to create a new world.

Translation: KH