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Papers of the Seventeenth György Ránki Hungarian Chair Conference
"Religions and Churches in Modern Hungary" – Indiana University, Bloomington, April 23–25, 1993

Jolanta Jastrzębska: Idyllic Family Life in Péter Esterházy's Novels (A Semiotic Approach from a Feminist Point of View)

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CONTENTS

NUMBER 1

Papers of the Seventeenth György Ránki Hungarian Chair Conference
"Religions and Churches in Modern Hungary" – Indiana University,
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<i>László Péter</i> : Church-State Relations and Civil Society in Hungary: A Historical Perspective	3
<i>Moses M. Nagy</i> : The Spiritual and Pedagogical Impact of the Cistercian Order in Hungary	35
<i>James P. Niessen</i> : Transylvanian Catholics and the Papacy in the Era of the <i>Syllabus Errorum</i>	45
<i>Mihály Szegedy-Maszák</i> : <i>The Protestant Review</i> : Its Past and Present	55
<i>Tibor Fabiny, Jr.</i> : Bishop Lajos Ordass and the Hungarian Lutheran Church	65
<i>Raphael Vago</i> : Jews, Judaism and Zionism in Hungary 1945–1953	99
<i>László Csorba</i> : Political Dilemmas of the Religious Jews in the 1960–70s	109
<i>Thomas Szendrey</i> : Re-emergence of Christian Democracy in Hungary	115
<i>István Kamarás</i> : Tendencies of Religious Changes in Modern Hungary	121
<i>Tilor Horvath S. J.</i> : Religions, Churches in Modern Hungary and <i>Metem</i> Research ...	131
<i>Ivan Varga</i> : Post-Communist Dilemmas of Hungarian Churches	139
*	
<i>Jolanta Jastrzębska</i> : Idyllic Family Life in Péter Esterházy's Novels (A Semiotic Approach from a Feminist Point of View)	149

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CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN HUNGARY: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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The need for an historical perspective

The past offers perspectives on what is permanent and what has changed. If political analysis confines itself to the present it will breed a myopic view of society and its prospects. In the history of modern Hungary the past and the present are brought together by the endeavour to create a west European type of civil society. Nineteenth-century Hungarian politicians and intellectuals strived to attain that social order and a century later their successors are still groping for it.

The reform of church-state relations in the nineteenth century was just as important a part of the endeavour to create a civil society as it is now after the collapse of Communism. It would be wrong to assume that the Communist system of church-state relations was entirely the product of the post-war regime. The system had a good deal less to do with the Communist form of government and ideology and a good deal more affinity with the legal and political traditions of eastern Europe than is generally assumed. Before the Second World War most of the Churches in Hungary had enjoyed privileges, legal rights and internal autonomy on a far wider scale than that to which they were reduced after 1948. The ideological conflict between nineteenth-century liberalism and religion was trifling compared with that between Marxism–Leninism and religion. Living under the barrage of fierce anti-religious propaganda, the Churches were subject to the sternest restrictions even after the 1956 revolution when the regime had become more tolerant towards its ideological enemies. Differences in the treatment of the Churches before and after the Communist takeover, though fundamental, should not obscure the fact that important principles on which church-state relations rested after 1948 were similar to those on which they had rested in the past.

The turning point came with the collapse of the Communist system. In 1989–1990 church-state relations were not restored to what they had been before 1949. The significance of Law IV of 1990 “On the Freedom of

Conscience and Religion and On the Churches” can be established only by looking at how church-state relations have evolved to become what they are today. We need not move back further than the nineteenth century, the age in which liberal politicians regulated the position of the Churches. It provides a most instructive historical perspective.

A historical perspective sheds light on the similarities between the aspirations of nineteenth-century Hungarian liberals and the country’s recent liberal transformation. Politicians today, as in the last century, aspire to create a west European type of civil society in which the individuals, endowed with the same rights and duties, are equal and are subject to a single system of statute laws. Politicians today insist, as they did in the nineteenth century, that the law should treat all religions equally. Today the chances of accomplishing equality in church-state relations are better than they were a century ago. For, as we shall presently see, there were great differences in the position of the Churches and religions towards the state in Hungary as there were elsewhere. Until quite recently differences between the eastern and the western half of the Continent in this, as in many other respects, were considerable.¹

In west European civil society relationships between the state authorities and organised social groups were largely governed by statute laws and other legal norms, which applied equally to all. In Hungary and other east European countries customary laws predominated. Here the motley of government ordinances, instructions, prohibitions, licences as well as agreements and *ad hoc* arrangements – the product of bargaining between the civil authorities and individual Churches – generated a diversity of administrative practices and insecurely held privileges. These permitted each Church to function within its own circumscribed area of religious life. In order to explain church-state relations, first a general feature of the legal system, the autocratic principle of the law should be examined.

The autocratic principle of the law

The right of the government to issue decrees on its own authority (*motu et potestate proprio*), which I call the autocratic principle, informed the relationship between the subject (later citizen), on the one hand, and the political authorities in Germany and the Habsburg Monarchy, on the other, before and during the nineteenth century. As we shall presently see, the autocratic principle, which rested on a presumption of the law, obstructed the freedom of the subject. Liberals in central Europe, however, found an effective remedy to counteract the consequences of the autocratic principle. A convenient way

to examine the autocratic principle is to contrast the presumption of the law as regards the citizen's rights in western Europe with the presumption of the law on the eastern side of the Rhine.

In the law of evidence, the rebuttable presumption of law (*presumptio juris*) is either on the side of the citizen (and the group of citizens) or on that of the state authority. In the liberal states of western Europe, where the enforcement of civil rights was concerned, the presumption was on the side of the citizen. In conflicts between state officials, on the one hand, and the citizen and the group, on the other, the onus rested on the official to demonstrate that his action was authorised by statute law.² In the Habsburg Monarchy, in Imperial Germany and elsewhere, the presumption of the law was on the side of the state authorities: in case of conflict, the burden of proof did not rest with the official but with the opposite side. The citizen (or the group), seeking legal redress against an alleged wrong done by the state official, had to produce evidence that the law expressly protected his interests on the point at issue. This difference in the presumption of the law between the two parts of Europe had momentous consequences.

In western Europe, where the law was silent, the citizen was said to be free. In the legal systems beyond the Rhine, the opposite prevailed: where the law was silent, the individual and the social group were not expressly protected by laws, it was the state authorities who were 'free'.³ We have now reached the heart of the matter. The state authorities in central and eastern Europe could *lawfully* issue decrees and act at their own discretion in matters which interfered with the individual and the group. Enacted statute law restricted the area in which the authorities could lawfully act. And beyond the restrictions which statute law imposed on the official lay the sphere in which the authorities were either free from any legal restrictions in their dealings with the citizen (*freie Verwaltung*) or the government reduced the discretionary powers of the subordinate official by issuing a decree or order, an action to which it had a *prima facie* right.⁴

This right, the autocratic principle of the law, recognised by jurists before as well as after 1848,⁵ was an accepted part of the Hungarian legal system. In Art. XII of 1790 the monarch promised to issue edicts only when the law was otherwise unaffected⁶ and to exercise 'executive power' *in sensu legum*. Law III of 1848 enacted that the executive power was to be exercised by the monarch through an 'independent Hungarian ministry in the sense of the law'.⁷ The wording allowed the survival of the autocratic principle. Para. 19 Law IV of 1869 ordained that judges had to proceed on the basis of statute law, *rendelet* (government decree), 'based on statute law',⁸ and lawful custom. The debate in the House over the paragraph was instructive in that it clearly revealed that

the phrase 'based on statute law' merely required that the decree should not contravene statute law.⁹ The judge, before application, had to establish whether or not the *rendelet* was lawful and he invariably applied government *rendelet* whenever in his view it did not conflict with *consuetudo*,¹⁰ the enactments of *decreta*, or statute law. Under this legal system, based on the autocratic principle, individual rights were in essence 'concessions' from the state made either through independent executive action or by legislation. Thus the old question of *sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes* acquired special significance.

The German and Austrian liberals' remedy against the consequences of the autocratic principle was the *Rechtsstaat*, the State based on the rule of law. Liberals demanded formal declarations and entrenched civil rights as constitutional guarantees. They also insisted on detailed and comprehensive statutory provisions that covered every conceivable situation in order to establish freedom for the individual. Local self-government, participation in the administration of the commune, was another guarantee, and liberals were especially eager to institute administrative courts – effective instruments of redress for the individual and the group against state interference. These were the liberal remedies in central Europe whose realisation in the late nineteenth century mitigated the dangers to liberal freedom inherent in the autocratic presumption of the law.

Hungarian constitutionalists applied some of the liberal remedies to counterbalance the effects of the autocratic principle. They introduced equality before the law. Also, they passed a few short laws which protected the right to private property, freedom of movement, work and contract, and other personal freedoms. Their record on civil rights, however, turned out to be patchy. Above all, they failed to create a statutory framework and provide sufficient institutional guarantees to protect civil rights in order to mitigate the effects both of the autocratic presumption of the law and of the overwhelming social power of the landowners over the rest of the population.

The legal position of the Churches

The autocratic principle obtained a powerful, although by no means exclusive, influence on the legal position of the Churches. The liberal objective was the creation of a legal order which safeguarded liberty of conscience and equality of religions. Yet liberal efforts led to unexpected results. As regards religion the customary rights of society interacted with the customary laws of the state: the enforced ministerial and local *rendelets*. In addition, statute laws

protected religious rights as they had done for centuries under the ancient constitution. The interaction of these three legal sources after 1867, paradoxically in the liberal age, did not create equality but a hierarchy of religious classes.

In multidenominational¹¹ and polyglot Hungary religion, nationality and social class sometimes coincided. The coincidence reinforced cultural differences and created in parts of the country what J. S. Furnivall described as 'plural society'.¹² The coexistence of religions was regulated by the crown and by statute law. The monarch's powers in religious matters were wide, were partly outside parliament's control and, being largely customary, were undefined. The Roman Catholic Church was firmly tied to the crown through the *ius patronatus*, the monarch's claim to make church appointments.¹³ The Church enjoyed the full protection of the monarch at the expense of its independence which was eroded in the late eighteenth century through the Erastian, Josephist, as they were called, policies of the civil government. The Protestant Churches, though in the past hemmed in by restrictions, were self-governing communities, whose pastors and elders were elected by the congregations. The Calvinist Church was as closely associated with the national cause as the Roman Catholic Church was held to be a promoter of Habsburg interests.¹⁴

The degree of autonomy the various Churches attained differed widely, although their ultimate control by the crown and their supervision by the civil authorities invariably set limits to their self-government. For the monarch had, since the eighteenth century, claimed *ius supremæ inspectionis* and for a much longer time, *iura circa sacra* which, like the *ius supremæ patronatus*, exercised over the Roman Catholic Church, amounted to a collection of autocratic practices.¹⁵ Most of the Church synods and congresses deliberated in the presence of a royal commissar or an inspector and their more important decisions were implemented only after they had been approved by the monarch or his minister. The crown approved the appointments of the prelates in the Orthodox Church¹⁶ and 'confirmed' the appointment of Transylvania's Calvinist bishop.¹⁷ No Church was ever separated from the state. The Churches themselves did not want separation. They wished to be legally recognised, to be endowed with church statutes, to be entitled to legal and administrative protection by the state, including the right to seek help from the civil authorities to enforce their own regulations and to maintain internal discipline.¹⁸ Above all, Churches expected subsidies from the government to pay their clergy and support their schools. The system, which liberals were set to reform, with its highly fragmented and *ad hoc* arrangements, was the product of the Churches' evolving customary rights combined with direct ministerial intervention based on the autocratic principle.

Equality of religion in legislation

Liberty of conscience and the protection of free worship by statute law were indispensable parts of the liberal agenda. Furthermore, a distinguishing mark of Hungarian constitutionalism was the belief in the legal equality of religions. In contrast to nationality, this principle included the granting of autonomy by law equally to all the established Churches of multidenominational Hungary. Two attitudes, anticlericalism and the equality of Jews, were most closely associated with what liberals stood for. Anticlericals – particularly of the Protestant liberal opposition – demanded after 1867 that the Roman Catholic Church be stripped of its privileges, that its property be secularized or, at least, the Roman Catholic funds¹⁹ be absorbed into state revenues and be shared out equally among the other Churches. But there were Roman Catholic liberals – mostly on the government side – who, instead of antagonising their Church, hoped to reform it from the inside. Their aim was Church autonomy: the introduction of lay participation in the Catholic Church which would then administer Church funds. Jewish equality in 1867 had a more general appeal to the literate public and to parliament than anticlericalism. It concerned first the demand that Jews' civil and political disabilities be removed and in these respects Jews were emancipated in 1867 by Law XVII. The two short paragraphs declared that the Jews 'in respect of civil and political rights are equal' to Christians and that 'all contrary law, custom and *rendelet* are thereby abolished'.²⁰ Hungarian liberals also understood by the equality of the Jews that their religion should be recognised by law and that antisemitism in politics should be resisted.

These attitudes came naturally to politicians in Hungary where Protestants had demanded freedom for their religion for well over two centuries before the liberal age. The Diet of 1790 reaffirmed the Protestants' 'liberties'; it also established the civil and political rights of the Orthodox Christians and recognised the privileges of their Church.²¹ These and other measures had been antecedents to the introduction of the liberal principle of religious freedom which was proclaimed (if, for the moment, one disregards the small print) by Law XX of 1848:

Complete equality and reciprocity without any discrimination are hereby declared among all the lawfully received religious denominations of the fatherland (para. 2).

Nineteen years later the minister in charge of religion (the so-called *kultusz*) and public education was, as he had been in 1848, József Eötvös. The minister and parliament were as committed to religious freedom and equality after 1867

as they had been in 1848. As we find from the Journal, the slogan which invariably won 'general approval' in the House – perhaps because it was hardly ever used in any specific sense – was 'free church in a free state'.²² The House on all sides expected the government to act 'in the spirit of 1848' and Eötvös needed no urging. He had been a champion of the liberty of conscience and of the equality of all religions for decades, insisting that these principles should be realised through generally applicable enacted statute law.²³ In June 1868 Eötvös, speaking in the House for the Cabinet, gave a commitment to bring in legislation to implement what Law XX of 1848 had already promulgated. But the reform of the Roman Catholic Church had to come first, comprehensive legislation should come only afterwards. Meanwhile temporary measures would be introduced.²⁴ The Preamble of Eötvös's bill (Law LIII of 1868) On Reciprocity Between the Lawfully Received Christian Religions declared that:

Until the equal rights of religions²⁵ are regulated in general, as regards the reciprocity between the Christian religions, by virtue of Law XX of 1848, the following are enacted.

The Law provided a few regulations dealing with the conversions normally attending mixed marriages between Christians.²⁶ The measure was small beer after the bold principles pronounced in 1848 and the House accepted the Central Committee's plea to instruct the ministry to bring in legislation during the following parliament in order to 'establish the equal rights of religious denominations in general' and to 'remove all the [legal] obstacles' to the realisation of the principle.²⁷ The Andrassy Cabinet and its successors, however, dodged this obligation²⁸ partly because the attempt to reform the Catholic Church ran into the sand.²⁹ After a long interval Law XXXI of 1894, then, established civil marriage and Law XLIII of 1895, On the Free Exercise of Religion, enacted general principles and tacitly allowed the citizen to adhere to no religious denomination. The first paragraph clearly proclaimed the liberty of conscience with great aplomb: everyone was free to profess and follow any creed or religion, and practise it within the limits of the law and of public morality: no one was to be obstructed in practising his religion as long as it did not contravene the law, or public morality. And no one was to be compelled to perform religious acts against his beliefs. The rest of the law, however, as we shall presently see, did not establish the statutory framework of church-state relations. Instead it whittled away at the very principles the first paragraph had been at pains to establish: it systematised the hierarchy of religions – the motley of privileges based on customary law, royal decree and ministerial ordinance.

Thus the law after 1867 was, in some respects, moving towards the ideal of confessional *egyenjogság* (equality of rights). But Hungarian liberals at no

time established either liberty of conscience or the equality of religions. Moreover, unwittingly, for it was not quite understood at the time, liberals created a discriminatory class system for religion which was an affront to the very principles they professed. A striking fact which characterised the system was the limited role that legislation played in shaping church-state relations except in the mid-1890s. Instead, the customary rights of the Church and of the civil authorities appear to be the decisive factors. The growing importance of ministerial *rendelets* – the customary law of the ministry – was a significant part of this pattern.³⁰ By the end of the century, the Roman Catholic Church was more dependent on the government than it had been in the 1860s;³¹ its dependence grew through episcopal appointments.³² Church funds were handled by the officials of the *kultusz* ministry, a tutelage which diminished the Church's ability to resist the government's intervention in its affairs.

Eötvös and his successors, as the crown's *kultusz* ministers, were more successful with the Protestant and the Eastern Orthodox Churches in setting them on the course towards internal self-government. The powers were there in 1867 for Eötvös to turn to liberal purposes: they were vested in the crown by custom and exercised through the *kultusz* minister who either countersigned the royal enactments or acted with the monarch's prior approval.³³ Only exceptionally did Eötvös turn to parliament in order to enact measures. Parliament never saw most of the enactments and even the Cabinet did not discuss many of them. Some measures had been countersigned by the minister after consultations with the Churches and promulgated by the monarch as royal decrees. A royal decree – a kind of contract between the crown and a Church as distinct from statute law or ministerial *rendelet* – guaranteed security to the Church. Other measures appeared as ministerial ordinances or rescripts, with express reference to the monarch's authorisation in the Preamble. But frequently the *kultusz* minister introduced measures through ministerial ordinance after consultation with religious leaders and normally with the king's prior approval.

The three classes of religion

With one hand, the law began to remove the legal disabilities of the Lutheran, the Calvinist and the Orthodox Christian Churches in 1790 and later, of the Unitarians in 1848, and of the Jews in 1867, and again in 1895. This was a process of equalisation: it did not establish equality and reciprocity among the Churches; it did, however, point in that direction. With the other hand, however, the law introduced a graduated system of privileges. Inequal-

ities in the civil and political rights of Churches were created by *kultusz* ministry *rendelets* and statute laws as well as by royal rescripts and by social custom – which remained a potent source of law.

The state offered the Churches protection, recognised their old rights, conferred new rights on them, including that of self-government, and brought them under control by extending the scope of ministerial tutelage. Liberals justified ministerial tutelage over the Churches on the grounds that they received subsidies in order to carry out 'state tasks'. Churches kept the birth, death and marriage registers after 1867, some of the Churches administered marriage law in their own courts and Churches ran most of the elementary and grammar schools in the country. Yet church-state relations were not brought within a common statutory framework after 1867 except in a sense so broad as to be meaningless. In fact, the Churches fell, perforce, into a hierarchy of three legal classes as a consequence of the evolution of customary law and of independent executive action – the customary law of the state. Subsequently, this process was, in part, recognised by statute law. By the end of the nineteenth century, under the auspices of the Liberal governments, an extraordinary system had come into existence which was founded on rigid legal classes of 'received', 'recognised' and 'tolerated' religions.³⁴ Statutes nowhere defined these classes but merely recognised them as products of customary law.

Received religions

The class of received religions was generated by nineteenth-century customary law; statute law took cognizance of it, and used it for its own purposes. Article XXVI of 1790 referred to the Lutheran and the Calvinist Churches as *in sensu pacificationum receptis*.³⁵ 'Received religion' was, then, used by the legislator in the nineteenth century. Law IV of 1844 declared that non-nobles of 'any of the lawfully received religions' could possess 'noble property' (i.e. land) and Law V established the principle that non-nobles of 'any of the lawfully received religions' were capable of holding public office. Significantly, the law did not say which religions belonged to the class of received religions.³⁶ Para. 2, Law V of 1848 established parliamentary franchise for (male) persons of 'the lawfully received religions without restriction', yet again, the law did not say which Churches.

The above cases speak loudly of the prominent place that received religion, as a legal class, acquired in the Hungarian social order. Yet a search through the *Corpus Juris Hungarici* would fail to disclose either the meaning of the term, or the rights that belonging to a received religion conferred on a person, or provide a list of the Churches to which the class applied. There were only

two cases in which statute law 'received' a particular religion: the Unitarians were received by Law XX of 1848, and the Jewish religion by Law XLII of 1895. The Orthodox Church was habitually accorded the status of received religion in the nineteenth century on the strength of the autonomous rights recognised by statute law in 1790 and 1792,³⁷ without ever being declared by statute law to be 'received'. Again, Law XX of 1848 declared 'complete equality' among the 'lawfully received religious denominations' without any explanation as to which religions were to be included.³⁸ Nor did Eötvös feel any need to enlighten the House in this regard when in the autumn of 1868 he submitted the bill which became Law LIII of 1868 'On Reciprocity Between the Lawfully Received Christian Religions'. It was common knowledge that at the time the Catholics of all rites, Orthodox Christians, the two large Protestant Churches, and the Unitarians qualified; it was not quite (or not yet) *communis opinio*. For the Catholic Church never expressly abandoned its claim to be the *avita* and *haereditaria religio* rather than just one of the received religions.³⁹ *Communis opinio*, court rulings, and the *kultusz* ministry together, as makers of customary law, shaped the views on received religion. In a long-forgotten yet illuminating ministerial *rendelet* to the town of Pest as regards the status of the Nazarenes, Eötvös pointed out that the Nazarenes had not been lawfully received, and that 'our laws concede [engednek] rights only to received religions and only with them can the government communicate officially'.⁴⁰ Eötvös's successor, Trefort, in 1887, insisting that the Roman Catholic Church *was* a received religion, explained that

The term 'received religion' in public law means that the religion is placed under the protection of the law:⁴¹ it receives legal protection and guarantee of its rights; furthermore it means that those professing that religion are endowed with certain religious and political rights.⁴²

This definition was too loose and it had to be; any other stipulative definition would have run into difficulties. A typical product of custom law, the position of each of the received religions differed from the rest.⁴³ We might well say that a religion was 'received' if the public and the authorities regarded it as such – something that the minister obviously would not state.

For constitutional lawyers and historians, the discrepancies – so far as they noticed them at all – appeared as anomalies which were sooner or later rectified. But far from being the anomalies of a statutory system, they were the haphazard arrangements which one would expect to see in a partly customary legal order in which the effects of the autocratic presumption of the law were not mitigated by general yet detailed statutory provisions.

Tolerated religions

Religions which customary law in 1867 did not treat as being received were merely tolerated by the authorities, largely at their discretion. This was the obverse of the Hungarian liberal record, which Eötvös' ordinance on the Nazarenes exposed. This course followed from the autocratic principle of the law towards which the liberals' attitude was ambivalent. Eötvös and Deák sometimes clearly asserted the liberal principle that an executive order was lawful only if it was expressly authorised by statute law;⁴⁴ at other times, at least implicitly, they endorsed the autocratic principle. In office, the liberals were flexible: they tried to circumvent the autocratic principle by conferring 'recognition' on non-received religions as a 'concession' by the State.

But the class of recognised religion did not yet exist in 1867. Nor did any general statutory enactment, like fundamental laws, secure personal freedom in Hungary. There was not even a law of association that might have been applied to Churches. The local authorities and the *kultusz* ministry issued, without statutory authorisation on the basis of established administrative practice, the so-called *úzus, rendelets* which regulated and controlled associations, including religious groups. A different treatment was meted out to each of the various confessions. When the Nazarenes approached the town of Pest in 1868 to ask for their own registers, Eötvös issued the *rendelet* already quoted:⁴⁵ as 'our laws concede rights only to received religions' of which the Nazarene was not one, wrote Eötvös, the government could not recognise their actions as authoritative;⁴⁶ and they could not, therefore, keep their own registers 'as yet'. The government did not wish, however, to compel anybody to register with one of the received religions against his conviction. Eötvös instructed the Nazarenes to report births and deaths to the civil authorities who would arrange registration on their behalf with the office of the received religion 'to which the Nazarene had formerly belonged'. Furthermore, until legislation was introduced, 'the government and the authorities would be compelled' to treat children born into Nazarene marriages as illegitimate, with all the consequences of such treatment for the inheritance of property.

Legislation was not, however, forthcoming from the government. Instead, the *úzus* towards the Nazarenes and other 'sects' was developed further by the authorities. Minister Trefort drew the anti-liberal conclusions implicit in Eötvös' 1868 order: there was a need, the minister declared in a *rendelet* issued in 1875,⁴⁷ to extend 'police supervision' to confessions 'which are not regularly organised'. The Nazarenes, 'and other similar sects not lawfully received, whatever they called themselves' were to fulfil their legal obligations towards the received religions. Trefort's ordinance took the 'concessionary' view of

religious rights to extreme lengths in order to argue that members of the Nazarene Church and other sects were in law still members of the lawfully received religion from which they (or their parents) had defected. They were to pay all the church taxes due to the received religion that they had left.

Recognised religions

Because the presumption of the law was on the side of state authority, conferring privileges on particular Churches could, arguably, secure freedom of worship more effectively than statutory declarations of general principles (unless, of course, the declaration was supported by detailed provisions). The monarch's approval was also easier to obtain for conferring particular privileges than for blanket legislation of freedom of worship. But in 1867, the government could not arrange the legislative 'reception' of particular religions without opening the door to sectarian strife. It possessed, however, the customary right to 'recognise' particular Churches by *rendelet*. Just as the class of received religion was a product of society's customary law, the class of recognised religion was generated by the *kultusz* ministry after 1867 to fill the gap between the received churches and the tolerated sects.

There was growing political support in parliament for some form of recognition for the Jewish religion, which in law was still 'merely tolerated'.⁴⁸ From the early nineteenth century immigration from Galicia was swelling the country's Jewish population. Jews fought in Kossuth's army in 1848–49, were rapidly 'Magyarising' and accepted the gentry's leadership of society, as well as the programme of building a Hungarian civil society, more easily than did the intelligentsia of the nationalities.⁴⁹ A growing proportion of the professions had become Jewish, especially in the capital. Eötvös held discussions with Jewish leaders and a congress convened by royal rescript drafted statutes which the monarch approved in June 1869. The Statutes of the 'orthodox' Jewish congregations were issued as a *kultusz* ministry *rendelet* by Eötvös's successor in 1871.⁵⁰

The position of the Jewish religion still differed from that of the received Christian confessions: there was no reciprocity in matters of marriage and conversions, for instance. But Jewish registration of births, deaths and marriages was recognised by civil law, while such recognition was denied 'the sects', and the Jewish religion acquired security and limited protection by the authorities.⁵¹ Statute law soon took cognisance of this change. Whenever a statutory provision was meant to apply to the Jewish as well as to the received religions, the term 'recognised religion' was used.⁵² Two other religions attained recognition during the Dualist era: the Baptist Church was recognised

by ministerial *rendelet* in 1905⁵³ and the Muslim religion was, unconventionally, recognised by statute law in 1916.⁵⁴

Recognition of religions by ministerial *rendelet* was standardised by Law XLIII of 1895 On the Free Exercise of Religion. This law should have been the crowning achievement of liberal legislation. Instead, in its second chapter it established the standard rules 'On Religious Denominations To Be Lawfully Recognised in the Future'. Applicants wishing to form a recognised religion were to submit all the regulations of their proposed Church to the *kultusz* minister for approval.⁵⁵ The minister would have to refuse approval if the applicants represented 'anti-state or anti-national tendencies', if the doctrines submitted contravened either civil laws or public morality, if the applicants had seceded from a 'lawfully received or recognised religion' only because they wished to use a different language, and also if the name of the proposed Church was either 'racial or national'⁵⁶ in character, or 'damaged a religion which has already been received or lawfully recognised'.⁵⁷ The grounds on which the minister could refuse recognition were so vague that the Law might as well have left the matter entirely to the discretion of the minister. Recognised Churches, under the protection of the state, were to enjoy limited autonomy. In contrast with the received Churches, they were not entitled to administrative help in collecting church taxes which they did, however, have the right to impose. They were under the administrative tutelage of the local authorities, to whom they had to submit the minutes of all Church meetings and whose permission they had to obtain to acquire property.⁵⁸ The civil authorities approved the appointments of their Church officials 'if their moral conduct and attitude as citizens of the state did not give rise to objections'.⁵⁹ Should their conduct be 'hostile to the state',⁶⁰ the *kultusz* minister could demand their removal from office. These stern stipulations protected the discretionary powers of the civil authorities rather than the rights of dissenting minorities.

The balance sheet of church-state relations

Notwithstanding the egalitarian liberal rhetoric of statute law, the two agencies of the crown's and of society's customary laws generated a motley of privileges and practices within a hierarchy of three broad classes of religions. In fact one could not find two Churches in Hungary whose position with respect to civil law and the state authorities was identical.⁶¹ Statute law all too frequently merely recognised the diverse changes that had already come about in the legal position of the individual Churches and had acquired social

acceptance. Custom proved stronger than parliament-made law when the latter tried to settle contentious points of the sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants. This is demonstrated by the long saga of para. 12, Law LIII of 1868 on the religion of children born to parents in mixed marriages.⁶²

Short of a statutory system, what in fact evolved might still have been the best remedy available against the direct intervention by the executive branch of the state in church affairs. It was a considerable achievement that the overwhelming majority of the citizens belonged to received Churches most of which enjoyed either influence or self-government and, occasionally, both. Furthermore, the individual was able to surmount the difficulties he faced in changing religion and after 1895 even to be without any.

But the system as such had little in common with the ideals that liberals cherished. Quite plainly, it was not based on the conception of civil society in which every member had basic rights. The faults of a graduated system of privileges, as opposed to a system based on common statutory rights to all, were obvious.⁶³ Under a system in which customary rights, backed by *communis opinio*, could progress within a hierarchy, rights could also regress. The Jewish religion, merely tolerated before 1869, became recognised in 1871. The Tiszaeszlár case in 1883, a Jewish ritual murder trial, was (notwithstanding the bad press which Hungary incurred abroad) a triumph of the liberal principle of the rule of law.⁶⁴ The Jewish religion, moving up in the hierarchy, was declared to have been received in 1895 by statute law. It could, and was, however demoted a few decades later in 1942 to the rank of a recognised religion by another statute law.⁶⁵ The system of graded privileges turned the Churches on each other rather than induced them to co-operate, and society's sense of justice was not violated when the state withdrew some privileges.⁶⁶ Under a liberal statutory system, a right taken away from one is an attack on all; under a hierarchy of privileges, it is not.

The system made all religions more dependent on the goodwill of the civil authorities than they would have been under a liberal statutory system. Churches coexisted on the basis of a variety of different, insufficiently defined, rights. Imbued with envious sectarian spirit, they were competing with each other for government favours. They queued up for 'state benefits',⁶⁷ financial help, and for administrative support from the civil authorities. The mentality such a system encouraged was not conducive to the growth of independent, critical social attitudes that one would expect to find in civil society.⁶⁸ Further, the system could not cope with social change. The hallmark of a Western liberal system is its ability to tolerate dissent and secession from established social institutions. The Hungarian system never developed that ability. Religious freedoms were confined to a 'closed shop', a rigid set of received religions.

The class of recognised religion, a product of ministerial *úzus*, turned out to be a failure. The security it offered was insufficient. Created by ordinance, a recognised Church could lose its status by another ordinance.⁶⁹ A recognised Church's dependence on the local authorities, without any compensating 'state benefits', was nearly complete. Apart from the Jewish and the Muslim religions, both special cases, only the Baptist religion ever attained legal recognition.

All in all, it was the government which turned out to be the true beneficiary of the system of privileges and of the sectarian strife that the system exacerbated. The spectacular increase in the discretionary powers of the ministry shifted the balance of power further towards the overweening authority of the state at the expense of the received and non-received Churches, whose ability to act as foci of independent social centres of power had diminished by the end of the nineteenth century.

In the first four decades of the twentieth century the system of church-state relations did not substantially change. Institutional continuity was ruptured during and after the Second World War.

Church-state relations under the Communist system

The Communists rejected the principles of civil society, and their rejection was complete. They abolished private property as well as civil rights and did not tolerate the existence of autonomous social institutions. Political power was to be undivided.⁷⁰ The new rulers preached 'democratic centralism'. It meant the arbitrary power of the single autocratic party and its state officials in the name of the 'working class'.

All the Churches were placed under the strict administrative control of the civil authorities. Marxists professed the principle of the 'separation of Church and State' which they understood to mean the separation of the State from the Church but not vice versa.⁷¹ Church autonomy was uniformly denied. Appointments and even daily pastoral work came under the control of the government and of the State Office for Church Affairs created in 1951.⁷² Associations under church patronage were disbanded, religious publishing houses closed down, and the population subjected to harsh anti-religious propaganda. Furthermore, the clergy were for many years ordered to participate in political campaigns. Nevertheless, the regime disingenuously claimed that it realised the principles of the liberty of conscience and of the free exercise of religion, both being enshrined in the country's constitution.⁷³

Oddly enough, the regime also made another claim which takes us back to the subject of the Churches' legal position during the pre-Communist era. It

was held that Law XXXIII of 1947, which had abolished the division between the so-called 'received' and the 'lawfully recognised' religions,⁷⁴ had established equality among the country's religions.⁷⁵

A cursory glance at the legal and institutional arrangements of the regime, however, reveals a surprising degree of diversity in acquired rights and duties and even in the legal status of the different Churches. This is not surprising; there were no general regulations which set out the rights and obligations to be applied to all the Churches. In order to exist lawfully a Church needed *permission* from the state authorities to function. This was the so-called recognition that the State Office for Church Affairs had the right to grant to each Church community. The most common form of permission was the agreement drawn up between the church leaders and the civil authorities acting as two unequal parties. The Calvinist (Reformed) Church was the first of the larger denominations to sign an agreement, under pressure and intimidation, with the government, and did so on 7 October 1948.⁷⁶ The small Unitarian Church followed suit on the same day. The Jewish leaders signed an agreement on 7 December and the Lutheran bishops on 14 December in the same year. The Roman Catholic and Uniate Church, to which well over half of the country's population adhered, held out longer and signed a *megállapodás* (agreement) on 30 August 1950 – after protracted crises, intimidation, arrests and imprisonments.⁷⁷

Most of these agreements were confiscatory in character: religious orders were dispersed, property taken away and the vast majority of church schools closed, in return for the 'recognition' of the Church by the state, the right of worship (largely confined to church buildings) and some financial subsidy to pay the salaries of church personnel and building maintenance.⁷⁸ The treatment meted out to one recognised Church differed from the next. The Catholic Church was, for example, allowed to keep only eight of its grammar schools – a considerable restriction on its earlier endowments. The Calvinists ended up, however, with keeping a single grammar school while the Lutheran Church had none.

Moreover, the position of the smaller religious communities, the so-called sects, differed from that of the larger, so-called historic, Churches and it showed particularly great diversity. Of the smaller religions only the Baptist Church attained 'lawful recognition' before 1945. Some of the communities, notably the Baptists, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Methodists, the Free Christian Brethren and the Salvation Army, formed the Free Church Alliance in 1944. All had grievances against the *ancien régime*, the 'historic Churches' as well as the government, and co-operated with the post-war regime. The government gave permission (*engedély*) to the Alliance to function in July

1945⁷⁹ and recognised its member-churches by ministerial *rendelet* in 1947 without any formal agreement.⁸⁰ In the following year the Alliance was reorganised to become the Free Church Council which was eventually placed under the authority of the State Office for Church Affairs.

Not even the smaller Churches escaped the confiscation and persecution which affected all religions throughout the 1950s.⁸¹ Furthermore, government policy maintained many of the disadvantages under which most of the pacifist 'sects' had earlier existed. For example, while the Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran and Unitarian Churches received regular state subsidies, the member-churches of the Free Church Council (also the Orthodox Church) did not receive any regular aid.⁸² Again, the 'historic' Churches were allowed to keep a few seminaries in the 1950s while the smaller Churches were not allowed to have access to any. An arrangement was finally worked out in 1966.⁸³ Nor could the Council protect its member-churches before 1956: the Salvation Army was dissolved by a ministerial *rendelet* in 1949 and the Adventists left the Council in 1950, thus losing their recognised status, which they regained only in 1958.⁸⁴ On the other hand, the Council, authorised by the State Office, exercised supervision over those small Churches that had not yet attained recognition.⁸⁵ Among others, the Pentecostals, the Nazarenes and the Methodist Community of Evangelical Brethren had been in this position before they secured recognition in 1958, 1971 and 1981 respectively.⁸⁶ But several unrecognised sects functioned 'unregulated' even in the 1980s. The largest was the Jehovah's Witnesses.⁸⁷ Independent Pentecostal groups and unofficial Adventists also existed unlawfully, that is without permission secured from the State Office for Church Affairs. Refusal to do military service was the intractable problem. A further source of diversity was that individual preachers of some unrecognised sects were from time to time granted a licence (*engedély*) to operate.

The diversity was clearly recognised by József Szakács, president of the Free Church Council, who declared a couple of years before the collapse of the regime that as regards their legal status there were three classes of religious communities in Hungary:

1. legally regulated communities
2. communities whose status was under review and
3. legally unregulated communities.⁸⁸

As the regime settled down, it became less repressive; the worst forms of discrimination against believers diminished.⁸⁹ Churches, still expected to support government policy in general, were no longer forced to participate in political campaigns. They acquired a few concessions in their pastoral work. In church-state relations co-operation largely replaced antagonism and suspicion although the process did not lessen the Churches' dependence on the state

authorities.⁹⁰ The Catholic hierarchy did the bidding for the regime in October 1986 by reprimanding members of the 'basis communities' for refusal of military service.⁹¹

As church-state relations improved, the legal inequality grew among the Churches, which the system of permission-recognition had necessarily generated. The Catholic Church and the other 'historic Churches', through the policy of 'small steps forward', acquired minor concessions and secured more advantageous *megállapodások*⁹² concerning religious instruction in schools, seminaries and publishing.⁹³ Likewise the smaller communities, most of which operated on the basis of their own recognised Church Statutes. The Free Church Council consolidated its position as a *quasi* governmental body. As a unique privilege, it had since 1971 taken over the authority of the State Office to approve all Church appointments of the smaller religious communities. The election of the Council's president, though, required the prior approval of the head of the State Office.⁹⁴

Church-state relations in crisis

It is a paradox of history that the Communists, who had pushed the autocratic principle of law to extremes when they acquired power in the 1940s, started the dismantling of the very system of church-state relations based on the traditional autocratic principle forty years later, when their regime entered into terminal decline. The growing economic crisis, Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost*, the influence of the reform Communists and pressure from the democratic Opposition brought political reform to the fore.

After 1987 the regime could no longer count on the automatic co-operation of the bishops and leaders of the recognised Churches. The lower clergy of the Catholic Church and Protestant ministers, dissatisfied with the policy of 'small steps', put pressure on their superiors to be bolder. By the influx of new bishops in the Catholic Church and the appointment of a new Archbishop of Esztergom, László Paskai, in April 1987,⁹⁵ the regime had to face a less elderly and ineffective Catholic hierarchy.⁹⁶ The process of change was increased when János Kádár was replaced by a new party leader, Károly Grósz, in May 1988. Soon the Bishop's Conference, largely bypassing the State Office for Church Affairs, began a dialogue with the government which from the autumn of 1988 was in the hands of reform Communists headed by Miklós Németh.⁹⁷ The Catholic Church now demanded a 'new contemporary agreement' to replace the one imposed on it in 1950.⁹⁸

The development of church-state relations, however, took a different turn. Instead of new agreements with individual Churches, the comprehensive

reform of church-state relations emerged as the new political agenda. This was a part of the process to reform the country's political system by the revision of Hungary's 1949 (ineffective) Constitution. Even before Kádár was replaced in March 1988 the government had announced in parliament that legislation concerning church-state relations was being prepared.⁹⁹ In July the Central Committee of the party approved a plan to establish the rights of association and of assembly, and in August two draft Bills were published in the press for public discussion.¹⁰⁰ The Bill on associations was to make the courts, rather than the administrative authorities, competent in disputes concerning the exercise of the right.¹⁰¹ This was a significant shift in policy towards the *Rechtsstaat*, the establishment of the rule of law, which by then had become an accepted part of political discourse, and contained obvious implications for the position of the Churches.

The working out of the general principles of legislation for church-state relations was, however, left in the hands of the State Office for Church Affairs. (Herod was entrusted with the protection of small children.) The first draft of the 'Guidelines'¹⁰² prepared in the State Office on the legal position of the Churches accepted the principle that the exercise of religious rights should be limited only by statute law.¹⁰³ Undoubtedly a breach in the autocratic principle of law as regards church-state relations,¹⁰⁴ the significance of this shift was nevertheless limited; the authoritarian State was not to lie down or not just yet. The 'Guidelines' underlying principle was the traditional 'concessionary view' of rights. It treated religious freedom as 'self-limitation' on the part of the State¹⁰⁵, which was to 'permit' (*megengedi*) the profession of religious faith as a right.¹⁰⁶ The State was to 'recognise' (*elismeri*) the legal personality, independence and autonomy of the Churches¹⁰⁷, which were to possess equal rights (*egyenjogúság*).¹⁰⁸ The 'Guidelines' maintained the system of 'central and local offices of Church administration' which the law was now to identify (*nevesít*), define and place under constitutional authority.¹⁰⁹ Thus state supervision was not to be abandoned. The 'recognition' of the Churches was, however, to be administered by the Constitutional Court through a system of registration.¹¹⁰ With the Catholic Church in mind the 'Guidelines' stipulated that church leaders could be appointed by their foreign superior authority only after the approval of the head of the Hungarian State. All elected and appointed leaders of the recognised Churches had to take a 'State oath'.¹¹¹ A revised draft of the 'Guidelines', prepared in the spring of 1989,¹¹² weeded out some of the authoritarian terms of the text.¹¹³ The State was still to confer 'recognition' on religious groups, but the necessity of establishing 'legal guarantees' for the Churches appeared as a new principle.¹¹⁴

The critical question at this stage was the future of the State Office. And the Office, supported by the party headquarters, put up a vigorous fight for

its survival in some form.¹¹⁵ At a press conference on 5 April 1989 Sarkadi Nagy announced that the Office would be replaced by a new one which would be without the right to issue *rendelet* and would work under the supervision of a new consultative council that was to include church leaders.¹¹⁶

The Németh government had different ideas: it was prepared to dispense with the generally hated State Office altogether. Kálmán Kulcsár, Minister of Justice, interviewed by John Eibner of Keston College in January 1989, plainly stated that he did not see the need for a special institution for church-state affairs. 'If there is any such business', he went on, the Ministry for Culture and Education could handle it.¹¹⁷ The Council of Ministers, largely disregarding the revised 'Guidelines' prepared by the State Office, drafted its own 'Principles' of legislation on the 'Freedom of Conscience and Religion'¹¹⁸ and published it for debate in June.¹¹⁹

An impeccably Western liberal statement of 14 sections, the 'Principles' abandoned the authoritarian view of church-state relations. It did not 'recognise' the Churches as a 'concession' by the State. The starting point of the 'Principles' was the liberty of conscience as a basic human right, set out under eight clearly drafted principles. The rest of the document was also clear, specific and contained procedural rules. The ordinary courts were to register Churches and religious associations if they wished to become legal persons. Section 14 stipulated that it should be declared illegal to impose special duties on Churches by the civil authorities and likewise to 'maintain or create institutions, other than specified in statute law, in order to administer and supervise church affairs'. Shortly after the publication of the 'Principles' the Presidential Council abolished the State Office for Church Affairs¹²⁰ and the Council of Ministers decided to create the National Council for Religious Affairs – a consultative body for negotiations between the government and the Churches.¹²¹

The reconstruction of church-state relations

Meanwhile the Churches were in turmoil. They now understood (along with everybody else in the country) that a regime change, rather than mere reform, was about to take place. Church leaders who had hitherto co-operated with the outgoing regime lost much of their authority. The public letter from József Szendi, the Bishop of Veszprém, to Cardinal Primate Páskai amounted to an unprecedented rebuke of the head of the Catholic hierarchy by an ordinary.¹²² The establishment of the National Council for Religious Affairs on 20 October in the parliament building marked a public reconciliation between Church and

State.¹²³ Prime Minister Németh led the government side.¹²⁴ The leaders of the larger Churches and most of the smaller communities were present.¹²⁵ Németh described the previous forty years' government policy toward the Churches as wicked. The task at hand, he explained, was not the 'recognition' of religious rights but the protection of religion by legal guarantees. Then Kálmán Kulcsár, Minister of Justice, spoke of the Bill which his ministry had meanwhile prepared. He was well received: Church leaders welcomed the legal guarantees offered by the draft. A notable upshot of the debate concerned the system of appointment of Catholic bishops which the draft Bill left open. Primate Páskai observed that the Vatican would never accept that the appointment of bishops should require the approval of the head of the state. There and then Németh and Kulcsár accepted the Catholic Church's position. The renunciation by the civil authority of the claim, which used to be called *ius patronatus*, put an end to a centuries' old source of conflict.

On the anniversary day of the 1956 revolution, the country's revised Constitution was promulgated.¹²⁶ Its paragraph 60 defined the liberty of conscience as an individual right and declared that 'the Church functions in separation from the State'. The Bill, prepared by the Németh government with the consent of the Churches, 'On the Liberty of Conscience and of Religion and the Churches', passed by parliament on 24 January and promulgated as Law IV of 1990, is a basic law whose revision requires a two-thirds parliamentary majority.¹²⁷

Law IV does not entirely separate State and Church from each other. In Hungary the Churches have never demanded that in Hungary. It is undoubtedly with the history of church-state relations in mind that paragraph 16 (1-2) of the Law stipulates that although the Churches operate under the law, 'the State cannot set up offices to guide or supervise the Churches'. Also, the State is not to help the Church to enforce internal regulations (paragraph 15, 2). With this rule the practice called *brachium* in the Middle Ages came to an end. The courts can register a religious association if it is to become a legal person.¹²⁸ As such, the Church can apply for state subsidies to carry out educational, charitable and other tasks. The funds are shared out by parliament in the course of the annual budget debate.¹²⁹

Law IV of 1990 rescinded the Laws of XLIII 1895 and XXXIII of 1947 as well as the *rendelets* issued during the Communist regime, including even No. 14 of 1989 by the Presidential Council.¹³⁰ Also, upon the enactment of the Law, the 'agreements' imposed on the Churches after 1947 were by common consent declared void.¹³¹ Since 1990, for the first time in Hungarian history, church-state relations have been governed by parliament-made laws which apply equally to all religions. The Communists were wont to boast that they

took power in order to accomplish, together with the socialist transformation of society, 'bourgeois democratic' tasks. Nothing was further from the truth. Communists in power stretched the inherited autocratic principle of law as far as it could possibly go. It is true, however, that when the world was about to collapse around them, under pressure from their opponents, the reform Communists were prepared to introduce laws, like Law IV 1990 on church-state relations, which laid the foundations of civil society and established basic institutions of the *Rechtsstaat*. Today freedom of conscience is guaranteed by adequate statutory provisions which include procedural rules for judicial review by independent courts and by the democratic control of a freely elected parliament.

To sum up, as long as the autocratic principle of the law operates without the mitigating effects of *Rechtsstaat* institutions it tends to generate diversity and growing inequality in the legal position of the Churches – as it undoubtedly did after 1867 and again after 1956. In contrast, the principle of civil society and the institutions of the *Rechtsstaat*, partly realized after 1867 and more extensively after 1989, help to reduce the diversity between and increase the equality in the treatment of the Churches by the law. This contrast is likely to be seen in other spheres of social life.

Notes

1. Only the western parts of eastern Europe have so far demonstrably moved away from the traditional patterns of church-state relations although the aspiration to do so exists in the whole region.
2. This was common ground among West European natural-law school philosophers. The principle went into the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen: 'All that is not forbidden by law cannot be prevented, and no one can be forced to do what the law does not prescribe', *Western Liberalism*, E. K. Bramsted and K. J. Melhuish (eds), London, 1978, p. 228. This was the presumption of the law on which justice was administered in the liberal states of western Europe in the nineteenth century.
3. The widely-known *bon mot*, which originated among German law students in the nineteenth century, had more than an element of truth in it: 'In England ist alles erlaubt, was nicht verboten ist. In Deutschland ist alles verboten, was nicht erlaubt ist.' The intellectual setting of the authoritarian state in Germany and the corresponding social attitudes associated with the 'ostelbische Mentalität' were discussed by Hans-Ulrich Wahler, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich (1871–1918)*, Göttingen, 1973, esp. pp. 105–07 and 133–34.
4. Georg Jellinek, *Gesetz und Verordnung*, Freiburg, 1887, pp. 255–56. Jellinek discussed the right in the context of the distinction between formal and substantive law, Pt. II, Section ii, ch. 1, pp. 226 ff.
5. Anton Virozsil, like others, argued that the *praesumptio juris* (*die rechtliche Vermuthung*) was, in doubtful cases, on the side of the king and that the monarch's government possessed the right to issue decrees as long as it did not conflict with statute law, *Das Staats-Recht des*

Königreichs Ungarn, Pest, 1865, II, paras 36 (esp. p. 5) and 46; Antal Cziráky, less clear on the question of *presumptio juris*, stoutly endorsed the monarch's right to issue decrees, *Juris publici regni Hungariae*, Buda, 1851, Tom II, paras 323 and 442. Pál Szlemenics listed some ordinances enacted under 'special royal powers' which, 'without ever being accepted by the diet have become a part of judicial practice and have been continuously in force', *Törvényeink története*, Buda, 1860, p. 136. On the attitudes of jurists after 1867 see below note 10.

6. *in rebus legi conformibus*
7. Paras. 2 and 3.
8. *a törvény alapján keletkezett*
9. The Central Committee of the House replaced the ministerial draft with the requirement that the *rendelet* was 'issued on the basis of specific authorisation by the legislature'. The House, however, restored the ministerial draft, *Képviselőházi irományok*, I, pp. 59, 121 and *Napló*, 9 July 1869, II, pp. 486–91.
10. *Consuetudo*, as Béni Grosschmid argued, in addition to statute law set limits to the enforceability of a royal ordinance but where those limits lay was left entirely unclear. *Magánjogi előadások*, Budapest, 1905, pp. 125–29. Győző Concha considered even the government decree which had been challenged by an adverse resolution of parliament to be valid law for the law courts, *Hatvan év tudományos mozgalmi között*, Budapest, 1928, I, pp. 405 and 416f, and see Kálmán Molnár, *Kormányrendeletek*, Eger, 1911, esp. 34–43.
11. Half of the kingdom's population belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. The rest were Uniate, Eastern Orthodox, Calvinist, Lutheran and Jewish. There were also Unitarians and a large number of small religious communities, the so-called 'sects', see statistics in Moritz Csáky 'Die römisch-katholische Kirche in Ungarn' in Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918*. IV, p. 302 and 282–83.
12. In many districts elements of a 'plural society' existed in J. S. Furnivall's sense of the term. For instance, in parts of the Highland Slovak Roman Catholic peasants, German Lutheran burghers and Hungarian Calvinist gentry lived together; cf. J. S. Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, Cambridge, 1948, pp. 117–18 and esp. 303–06.
13. According to Werbőczy the pope had the right only to confirm the appointment made by the king, *Tripartitum*, para. 1, Tit. XI, Pt. I; Ferenc Eckhart, *Magyar alkotmány- és jogtörténet*, pp. 166–67, 297f; Andor Csizmadia, *Rechtliche Beziehungen von Staat und Kirche in Ungarn vor 1944*, Budapest, 1971, pp. 48–50. After 1867, next to foreign policy and army affairs, it was in regard to the Roman Catholic Church that the monarch's autocratic rights were best preserved. The appointment of prelates was the very first item on the list of subjects compiled in 1867 which required the monarch's 'preliminary sanction' so called. See Emma Iványi, *Magyar minisztertanácsai jegyzőkönyvek az első világháború korából 1914–1918*, Budapest, 1960, pp. 531–32.
14. The stereotype of the Catholic Church being indifferent to the national cause was largely false; see László Péter, 'Hungarian Liberals and Church-State Relations (1867–1900)' in *Hungary and European Civilisation*, ed. György Ránki, Bloomington, 1989, pp. 85–86.
15. Sándor Konek, *Egyházjogtan kézikönyve*, Pest, 1867, pp. 141–47; Andor Csizmadia, *A magyar állam és az egyházak jogi kapcsolatainak kialakulása és gyakorlata a Horthy-korszakban*, Budapest, 1968, pp. 93–94.
16. Maria Theresa's *Systema consistoriale* (1779), summary by János Prodán, 'Az államfő legfelsőbb felügyeleti joga a magyarországi autokefális görögkeleti egyházban', in *Notter Antal emlékkönyv*, Budapest, 1941, pp. 949f. The approval of appointments did not become a mere formality after 1867. When the monarch, on the advice of the government, refused to approve the elected prelate, Congress was forced to select another instead. See László Katus in *Magyarország története 1848–1890*, ed. Endre Kovács *et al*, Budapest, 1979, VI, p. 1339.

17. Also, the Bishop of the Calvinist Church in Transylvania had to take an oath of allegiance to the crown: Church Statutes, para. 178, Sándor Dárday, *Közigazgatási törvénytár*, Budapest, 1893, II, p. 174 (30).
18. The *ius advocatiae*, applied to the Protestant Churches, was comparable to the *brachium* granted to the Catholic (and to the Eastern Orthodox?) Church; see para. 4 of the Statutes of the Calvinist Church, *ibid.*, p. 174 (1).
19. The 'funds' accrued from *intercalaris* revenues, private donations, as well as from the confiscated properties of former religious orders, were administered under *ius patronatus* by the government as a trustee, so to speak, for the purposes of paying the clergy and the maintenance of Church schools. After 1867, the funds were managed, in co-operation with the hierarchy, by the Ministry of Religion (the *kultusz*) and Public Education; Moritz Csáky, *Die röm.-kath. Kirche*, pp. 272–75; László Csorba, 'A katolikus autonómia és a közalapok problémája a századforduló Magyarországon', *Protestáns Szemle*, 1992 April–June, pp. 116–36.
20. The Bill, passed by the House *egyhangúlag* (nem. con.), on 20 Dec. 1867 (*Képv. jkv.*, III, no. 1524), after the proposal of the House's Senior Chairman, the Protestant Zsigmond Bernáth (21 June 1867, *Képv. irom*, II, p. 230) had been approved by the House. Deák had urged the ministers to act on 26 June 1867; Manó Kónyi, ed., *Deák Ferencz beszédei*, V, pp. 114–15. On the significance and the limits of Law XVII of 1867 see László Gonda, *A zsidóság Magyarországon 1526–1945* (hereafter *A zsidóság*), Budapest 1992, pp. 116–19.
21. Arts. XXVI and XXVII of 1790.
22. The liberal slogan, which appeared in Hungary in the 1840s, was equivocal; some understood by it the Church's freedom from the State, others the State's freedom from the Church.
23. In 1843; Eötvös was already an ardent promoter of a *general* enactment on religious freedom and equality in his speech in the Upper House on 11 July 1843; József Eötvös, *Kultúra és nevelés*, Budapest, 1976, pp. 85–86 and 512.
24. Eötvös's answer to a question set out government policy on 24 June 1868, *Képv. napló*, VIII, pp. 137–39.
25. *a vallásfelekezetek egyenjogúsága*
26. Christians had the obligation to be members of a received Church (para. 20).
27. *Képv. irom*, VII, pp. 3–7.
28. Eötvös himself never abandoned the plan to secure the equality of all religions by the enactment of a comprehensive statute law. He said so repeatedly in the House in November 1869. *Képv. napló*, III, pp. 181–82, 187–88, and 198, and on 7 April 1870 he brought in a new Bill which, however, never got further, *ibid.*, VII, p. 388; see also his letter to Prince Primate Simor on 19 December 1869 in József Eötvös, *Levelek*, Budapest, 1976, esp. p. 634; also Andor Csizmadia, *A m. állam és egyh.*, p. 84. Eötvös's efforts to bring in legislation on the freedom of religion was carried on in the House by the '48er leader Dániel Irányi who submitted a 12-paragraph bill (6 July 1869), *Képv. irom*, I, pp. 292–93, and subsequently demanded the introduction of civil marriage and the enactment of the freedom of worship at the beginning of each parliament. A most articulate promoter of religious toleration, Irányi spoke up in the House for the so-called sects, see László Kardos and Jenő Szigeti, *Boldog emberek közössége, A magyarországi nazarénusok*, Budapest, 1988, p. 203 and *passim*.
29. László Péter, *Hung. Liberals*, pp. 85–91; on the other political obstacles of comprehensive liberal church reform, pp. 82–85.
30. After the proclamation of papal infallibility in July 1870 Eötvös, as *kultusz* minister, in order to ban the promulgation of the papal bull in Hungary, bypassed parliament and declared by *rendelet* that the *ius placetum* (a legal dinosaur) was in force; László Péter, *Hung. Liberals*, pp. 90–91. Another example was the *elkeresztelés* (coined on *wegtaufen*) crisis which grew out of

the interpretation of Eötvös's law on mixed marriages in the 1880s. Eötvös's successor Ágoston Trefort issued a *rendelet* which gave a new, widening, interpretation of para. 12 of the Law concerning sanctions against *elkeresztelés* which conflicted with court rulings. And when the courts did not heed the ministerial pronouncement another *kultusz rendelet* transferred all *elkeresztelés* cases to the administrative authorities. The minister of the Interior then fined and sent to prison Catholic priests for *elkeresztelés*, *ibid.*, pp. 93–102.

31. While the anticlericals – noted a Catholic historian – hoped to ‘separate the State from the Church, they would not allow the Church to separate from the State but wished to make it more subordinate to it than ever’. Gábor Salacz, *Egyház és állam Magyarországon a dualizmus korában 1867–1918*, München, 1974, pp. 53–54.
32. Minister Trefort used political muscle in the 1880s to hoist government supporters into episcopal sees especially for dioceses in the nationalities' districts; cases discussed by Ferenc Eckhardt, *A püspöki székek és a káptalani javadalmak betöltése Mária Terézia korától 1918ig*, Budapest, 1935, pp. 55–63. *Episcopi hungarici sunt magis politici quam catholici* was apparently a general view in the Curia of the Hungarian prelates in the late 19th century, quoted by Gábor Salacz, *Egyház*, p. 75; see also Gyula Szekfű, *Magyar tört.*, V, pp. 522–23 (similar points).
33. Eötvös, in responding to a question, frankly admitted in the House on 23 February 1869 that, authorised by the monarch, he had settled a large number of important matters without any instruction from parliament on the sole authority of the monarch: József Eötvös, *Kultúra*, pp. 229–36. On the background of the distinction between those enactments which were signed by the king (rescripts) and those which were not (decrees), see Antal Czirák, *op. cit.*, para. 656.
34. *bevett (recepta religio), elismert and megtúrt*.
35. Para. 13, the context implies the Lutheran and the Calvinist Churches which are contrasted with the Catholic Church. The paragraph alludes to the Vienna Peace of 1606. (*Ad primum art.*), Art. 1. of 1608 *ante cor.* and to para. 5 Art of 1647. The influence of the Transylvanian legal term *recepta religio* is very probable.
36. The Roman Catholic Church claimed to be *avita* rather than *recepta religio*, yet the Law did not, of course, mean to leave out Catholics.
37. Art. 27 of 1790 and Art. 10 of 1792.
38. Opposition to the emancipation of the Jews (the *Judenkrawalle* in the larger towns) was probably the chief reason why *egyenjóság* was confined to the received religions; see Lajos Venetianer, *A magyar zsidóság története*, Budapest, 1986, pp. 166f.
39. Sándor Konek, a leading jurist on Church Law, claimed in 1867 that the Roman Catholic Church ‘could be described as the state church’, which he distinguished from the ‘received religions’; *op. cit.*, para. 52. A decanal meeting in Veszprém County passed a resolution in October 1887 to the effect that the Catholic Church was still *avita religio* rather than *recepta religio*, and other districts expressed support for the resolution. Trefort then issued an ordinance on 28 December 1887 in which the minister insisted that the Catholic Church was a received religion, Ernő Nagy, *Közjog*, 1891, pp. 100–01.
40. On 13 August 1868, Sándor Dárday, *op. cit.*, II, p. 27.
41. *törvényes oltalom*
42. See note 39 above.
43. Jewish religion between 1871 and 1895 and the Muslim religion after 1916 were protected by the law without being received. Recognition by statute law rather than by *rendelet* does not work as a criterion, nor does the possession of self-government (some non-received Churches had it while the Catholic Church did not). Nor did a necessary link ever exist between

received status and political representation. The law never received the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Churches yet they possessed political representation in the Upper House, whereas the three Protestant Churches before 1885 did not (although the Unitarian Church had been received for centuries in Transylvania). Jewish church leaders had been personally appointed members of the Upper House after 1895. The Jewish religion was given representation by Law XXII of 1926 when the Upper House was restored. Law XXVII of 1940 rescinded the provision of Jewish representation, though the Jewish religion was deprived of its received status two years later by Law VIII of 1942. Received religions were given administrative assistance by the state authorities in the collection of church taxes (frequently lumped together with the state tax) and in enforcing internal discipline in the Church. These rights and practices developed out of the ancient *brachium saeculare* and the *ius advocatiae* and were, to a different extent in each case, extended to the received Churches in the nineteenth century. The government supplemented the salaries of the clergy, where this seemed necessary, and provided subsidies to maintain schools. The *kultusz* ministry handled all the disputes arising out of these arrangements, without the participation of the courts. These privileges and practices were the consequences of a Church's received status rather than the reasons for a particular religion being included in the class.

44. Eötvös used liberal statutory argument in the House on 9 December 1869 in his answer to the Serbian member Miletić, who had complained that the government had allowed the Patriarch to dissolve the Congress of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The government, Eötvös said, had proceeded on the basis of Law IX of 1868 and had refrained from interfering in the matter 'because it is not called upon and authorised to do so by law', *Képv. napló*, IV, pp. 63–65. For another example, see Eötvös's letter to Primate Simor on 19 December 1869 in Eötvös, *Levelek*, p. 630. Moreover, Eötvös was a firm adherent of the liberal principle that the minister could not lawfully impose a legal obligation on the citizen without being authorised by statute law; e.g. his attitude to compulsory education: speech in the House on 23 June 1868, *Képv. napló*, VIII, p. 128. As regards the property of the subject Eötvös unequivocally rejected the idea that the minister had administrative power at his disposal without statute law, although he himself had to arbitrate sometimes between the rival claims of townships and Churches over school property; see his answers to questions in the House on 28 October 1869 and on 14 March 1870. József Eötvös, *Kultúra*, pp. 418–24.
45. Cf. note 40 above. The VKM *rendelet*, No. 12548, was issued on 13 August 1868. The Nazarenes appeared in Hungary in 1840 and spread among the Calvinist Hungarian peasants and urban poor. Eötvös sent the *rendelet* to Pest, which had passed on to the *kultusz* ministry an application of József Sollársch, a cobbler. He had asked whether the Nazarene Church would be permitted to run its own register of births, etc. or whether the authorities would administer it. See László Kardos, et al, *op. cit.*, pp. 196f, 201f.
46. The word used was *hiteleseknek*. Sándor Dárday, *op. cit.*, II, p. 27.
47. On 13 June 1875, see Sándor Dárday, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 27–28. Trefort expressly invoked Eötvös' authority in his 1875 and also in his 1891 *rendelet*.
48. 'Blos tolerirt, oder geduldet', wrote Anton Virozsil in 1865, *Staats-Recht*, I, p. 225.
49. Liberals in all political parties resisted popular pressure to restrict the advance of Jews in public life. The government, in contrast with Austria, could stem the spilling over of the antisemitic tide into parliamentary politics. Győző Istóczy's Antisemitic party, established in 1883, was driven out of parliament by government pressure within a decade. On the Antisemitic party see Gyula Mérei, *Magyar politikai pártprogrammok, 1867–1914*, Budapest, 1934, pp. 149–55.

50. 15 November 1871, VKM *rendelet*, No. 26915 in Sándor Dárday, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 298–303. On the complex issues concerning the position of the Jewish religion towards the government see László Gonda, *A zsidóság*, pp. 120–46. Internal divisions among the congregations allowed the civil authorities to exercise power over many aspects of Jewish relations even after the Jewish religion was declared received in 1895. The creation of administrative courts in 1896 did not help: they were given hardly any competence in civil rights.
51. A leading jurist of the period argued in 1907, however, that the recognised status of a religion could be cancelled by ministerial *rendelet* because recognition was attained by *rendelet* in the first place. Ernő Nagy, *Közjog*, 1907, p. 148.
52. *elismert vallás*, coined on the German *anerkannte Religion*.
53. VKM *rendelet*: 77092/1905. Ernő Nagy, *op. cit.*, 1907, p. 141.
54. Law XVII of 1916. See Andor Csizmadia on possible reasons for the statutory rather than ministerial recognition, *A m. állam és egyh.*, p. 90 n33.
55. Para. 7.
56. *faji vagy nemzetiségi*.
57. Para. 8.
58. Paragraphs 9–12 and 19.
59. Para. 13, *erkölcsi és állampolgári magatartása kifogás alá nem esik*.
60. Para. 15, *államellenes magatartást tanúsít*.
61. In October 1905, the Fejérváry government promised, with qualifications, that ‘complete equality and reciprocity among the received religions would be made effective in every respect’; Bertalan Lányi, *A Fejérvári-kormány*, Budapest, 1909, p. 118.
62. The so-called *elkeresztelés* crisis, following the attempt by the legislator in 1868 (Law LIII) to determine the religion of children from mixed marriages which opened the Pandora’s box of sectarian strife between Protestants and Catholics, Gábor Salacz, *A magyar kultúrharc története 1890–1895*, Vienna, 1938, chs. 1 and 2; and see note 30 above.
63. However, leading jurists like Győző Concha supported the system of ‘constitutional privileges’, *Politika*, Budapest, 1905, II, p. 344.
64. The court procedure in a small town in eastern Hungary, including the state attorney’s, was impeccable; all defendants were acquitted. Meanwhile the authorities, using vigorously their discretionary powers, suppressed the antisemitic movement.
65. Law VIII of 1942 On the Regulation of the Legal Status of the Jewish Religion. Paragraph 1 rescinded Law XLII of 1895 and accorded ‘recognition’ to the Jewish religion. On the reception of the Jewish religion in 1895 and its demotion in the 1940s, see László Gonda, *A zsidóság*, pp. 158–62 and 209–20.
66. In order to justify the demotion of the Jewish religion in 1942, a leading jurist pointed out that even after 1895 the rights of the Jewish religion had remained less extensive than those of the Christian received religions. István Egyed, *A mi alkotmányunk*, Budapest, 1943, p. 158; see also Andor Csizmadia, *Rechtl. Beziehungen*, pp. 24–25.
67. A key term in modern Hungarian social history which would deserve a separate study, *állami juttatások* is mentioned occasionally in the literature. E.g. Andor Csizmadia, *A m. állam és egyh.*, p. 93.
68. Gyula Szekfű, himself a pious Roman Catholic, criticised his Church for lack of interest in social questions and even in pastoral work; Catholic prelates opposed social reforms of any kind. *Magyar tört.*, V, pp. 521–26.
69. See note 51 above.
70. See László Péter, Montesquieu’s Paradox on Freedom and Hungary’s Constitutions, 1790–1900, *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, vol. XXXII, No. 123, 1991, p. 10.

71. Although the Constitution declared the opposite, para. 54 (2) Law XX of 1949, see *A Magyar Népköztársaság Alkotmánya* (hereafter Law XX of 1949), Budapest, 1959 edn.
72. A *rendelet* issued in 1951 stipulated, with retrospective force, that all Church appointments required the prior approval of the State authorities. See Sándor Orbán, 'Az állam és a katolikus egyház megállapodása', *Történelmi Szemle* (hereafter *Az állam és egyh.*), 1960, p. 307. Law V of 1953 had rescinded the requirement which, however, was restored by ministerial *rendelet* in 1957, József Éliás, 'Az egyházak és az egyháziak szabadsága', *Magyar Füzetek*, 14–15, (hereafter *Az egyházak*), Paris 1984, pp. 208–09; Pál Fónyad, 'A magyarországi protestántizmus rövid története, 1948–1978', in *Magyar változások 1948–1978* (hereafter *A magy. prot.*), Vienna, 1979, pp. 116–17; on the breaking of the spirit of the Lutheran Church's resistance see John Eibner 'Lajos Ordass: Prophet, Patriot or Reactionary', *Religion in Communist Lands* (hereafter RCL), Keston College, England, Summer 1983, pp. 178–87; Imre András, 'A II. világháború utáni magyar katolikus egyház', in *Magyar változások 1948–1978*, ed. Ernő Deák (hereafter *A kat. egyház*), Vienna, 1979, p. 131. On the unsavoury methods of the State Office see Konrád Szabó OFM, *Az egyházügyi hivatal titkai*, Budapest, 1990.
73. Paragraph 54 (1), Law XX, 1949.
74. The badly phrased nine-paragraph Law rescinded all the differences between the two classes which were disadvantageous to the recognised religions (para. 1). Para. 2 maintained, however, the very stiff stipulations of paragraphs 7, 8 and 18 of XLIII, 1895, concerning the recognition of new religions, see above note 55 and after.
75. As late as 1987 (!) József Lukács, who had prepared his work with the help of the State Office for Church Affairs, made this claim, *Vallás és vallásosság a mai Magyarországon* (hereafter *Vallás*), Budapest, 1987. p. 104, cf. p. 8. See also László Kardos et al. *Boldog emberek*, pp. 309–10 and 321.
76. Pál Fónyad, *A magy. prot.*, pp. 113–16. Catholics were critical of the Protestants for rushing into agreements with the Communist government. The regime did not keep the agreements; see on the Calvinist Church, József Éliás, *Az egyházak*, pp. 207–08.
77. On the *megállapodás* – a 'partial agreement' – see detailed but distorted accounts by Sándor Orbán, *Az állam és egyh.*, pp. 280–308, and Jenő Gergely, *A katolikus egyház Magyarországon, 1944–1971* (hereafter *A kat. egyh.*), Budapest, 1985, pp. 97f, 111; *Idem*, *Katolikus egyház, magyar társadalom 1890–1986* (hereafter *Kat. egyh. m. társ.*), Budapest, 1989, pp. 124–46 (better than the earlier work but still biased against the Church). The Vatican never approved the agreement; Imre András, *A kat. egyház*, p. 132; John Eibner, 'Hungary: overview', in: Philip Walters (ed.) *World Christianity: Eastern Europe* (hereafter *Hungary*), Eastbourne, 1988, p. 152. On the showtrial of Cardinal József Mindszenty see his *Memoirs*, 1974, N. Y., p. 83, his *Emlékirataim*, 1974, Toronto, p. 223; *A Mindszenty-per*, intr. Gellért Békés (republishing of the 'Fekete Könyv', the official record of the show-trial), I.U.S., 1986, Paris. Béla Szász, 'A Mindszenty-per', *Irodalmi Újság*, 1986, 4, pp. 3–4. Gyula Havasi's *A magyar katolikusok szenvedései 1944–1989*, Budapest, 1990, is a substantial collection of documents concerning the suppression of the Roman Catholic Church for the whole period.
78. Sándor Orbán, *Az állam és egyh.*, pp. 291–92 and 304f. Over the last twenty years the value of the regular state subsidies has considerably diminished, József Lukács, *Vallás*, pp. 62–3. Jenő Gergely, *A kat. egyh.*, pp. 99f, 164.
79. Ministry of the Interior ordinance of 30 July 1945. József Fodor, *Vallási kisközösségek Magyarországon* (hereafter *Vallási*), Budapest [1987], p. 106, and see a critical review of Fodor's Marxist work by John Eibner in *RCL*, 1988, No. 1, pp. 57–59.
80. 1200/1947. II VKM *rendelet*, József Fodor, *Vallási*, pp. 52, 113 and esp. 125.

81. Examples given by József Fodor, *Vallási*, p. 112. The pejorative term 'sect' survived in official language. Barna Sarkadi Nagy, vice chairman of the State Office for Church Affairs, declared in 1988 that sects were those religious groups which operated without permission from the state authorities. Éva Árokszallási, 'Az állam és az egyházak', *Magyar Hírek*, 8 April 1988, p. 11.
82. John Eibner, *Hungary*, pp. 147–48.
83. József Fodor, *Vallási*, p. 130, cf. József Lukács, *Vallás*, p. 80.
84. József Fodor, *Vallási*, p. 46; though József Lukács gives 1957 as the year of recognition, *Vallás*, p. 92.
85. József Fodor, *Vallási*, p. 116.
86. *Tájékoztató a Magyarországon működő egyházakról és felekezeteikről*, State Office for Church Affairs (hereafter *Tájékoztató*), Budapest, 1987, pp. 70, 78–79. The persecution of Methodist groups in 1977 is described in 'A 12 metodista lelkész nyilatkozatának háttere', in: *Magyar Füzetek*, Paris, 1978 (hereafter *A 12 metodista*), pp. 109f. On the Nazarenes see László Kardos et al. *Boldog emberek*, pp. 324ff and 481ff.
87. In April 1988, 146 Jehova's Witnesses were in prison for refusing to perform military service, wrote John Eibner, the most knowledgeable foreign expert on the position of the Churches in Hungary, *Hungary*, p. 163. See also József Fodor, *Vallási*, pp. 84f, and József Lukács, *Vallás*, p. 95. 'Recognition' by the state authorities of a Church frequently involved the suppression of a dissenting group within that Church; see esp. *A 12 metodista*, p. 114.
88. Postscript to József Fodor's *Vallási*, p. 145, also pp. 10 and 36. A confidential *rendelet* in 1976 allowed members of some of the small communities to do unarmed military service. This privilege did not apply to the historical religions. On 22 April 1988 a government spokesman announced that 158 men were in prison for refusal of military service. Tamás Csapody '«Békés békétlenek» – Magyarországon', *Századvég* (hereafter *Békés*) 6–7, Budapest, 1988, p. 234.
89. But for many a year after the 1956 revolution the Kádár regime, only slightly less intolerant towards religion than its predecessor, carried out fierce propaganda against 'the clerical reaction' and 'the religious world view'. The politbureau's resolution of 22 July 1958, published in English, makes instructive reading. *RCL*, Summer 1988, pp. 180–86; see also Jenő Gergely, *A kat. egyh.*; pp. 161f; *Idem, Kat. egyh. m. társ.*, p. 160 (terror methods in 1959–1961); József Lukács, *Vallás*, pp. 106f.
90. The state authorities claimed that they did not interfere with the internal matters of the Church but, complained a Roman Catholic priest, they reserved the right to define what counted as 'internal'; Mihály János (pseud.) 'Egyház és totalitárius állam', *Magyar Füzetek* (hereafter *Egyház*), Paris, 1984, pp. 169 and 173. See also -tl-, 'Magyar egyház, merre tartasz?' *Magyar Füzetek*, 18, Paris, 1987, esp. p. 44.
91. Tamás Csapody, *Békés*, p. 234. The Catholic hierarchy and the state co-operated against the 'basis communities', especially against a Piarist group led by Father Bulányi. János Wildmann, 'A magyar katolikus hierarchia és a báziscsoportok', *Magyar Füzetek*, 14–15, Paris, 1984, pp. 175f; Imre András, 'Kompromisszumos javaslat a bázisközösségek ügyében', *Katolikus Szemle*, 1983, 3 pp. 288f; László Kasza, 'A Bulányi-ügy', *Irodalmi Újság*, 1982, 3, pp. 1–2; Lajos Szokolczay, *Páter Bulányi*, Debrecen, 1989: a long interview with Páter Bulányi and documents concerning his conflicts with the hierarchy between 1976 and 1987. In contrast with the 1960s, wrote a former member of a monastic order in 1984, there were no priests in prison but many former monks were still without state licence to work; Mihály János (pseud.), 'Egyház és totalitárius állam', *Magyar Füzetek*, 14–15, (hereafter *Egyház*), Paris, 1984, p. 171. The best short account in English: 'Controversy in the Hungarian Church: Fr. Bulányi on trial', *The Month*, April 1987, pp. 150–54.

92. John Eibner, *Hungary*, pp. 152 (the 1964 'partial agreement' with the Vatican), 164f, 169, 171; *RCL*, Summer 1988, p. 166; József Lukács, *Vallás*, pp. 63–65, 94; Pál Főnyad, *A magy. prot.*, pp. 117–18; Imre András, *A kat. egyház*, pp. 133–35.
93. The publications were still meagre. There were approximately 20 Catholic publishing houses in 1946. In 1988 there were only two (John Eibner, *Hungary*, p. 166) which in the 1970s published 15–18 books annually. Imre András, *A kat. egyház*, p. 136; and about 20–25 books annually in the 1980s, *Tájékoztató*, p. 31.
94. József Fodor, *Vallási*, pp. 92, 127, 131–32.
95. Seven dioceses received their new heads at one go. A very old custom, appointments were made in a cluster to help the civil authorities and the Vatican to come to compromises (although the Holy See never recognised the *ius patronatus* which monarchs and later the Hungarian State had claimed).
96. See John Eibner, 'A New Primate: A New Policy', *RCL* (hereafter *A New Primate*), *RCL*, Summer 1988, pp. 164–68.
97. The new government, appointed on 23 November 1988, gradually distanced itself from the party.
98. Károly Grósz, Party leader, proposed to the Roman Catholic bishops in August 1988 'that the Church and state should sign a provisional "Protocol" which would lay down the rights and responsibilities of the Church until the Hungarian parliament enacts a new law on religious affairs'. *Keston News Service* (hereafter *KNS*), 6 October 1988, p. 9; and see John Eibner, 'A New Deal in Hungary', *The Tablet*, London, 11 March 1989, pp. 272–73.
99. See John Eibner, *A New Primate*, p. 167. After Károly Grósz had become General Secretary, in a letter to Primate Paskai in August 1988, he promised legislation on religious affairs in 1990. *KNS*, 6 October 1988, p. 9.
100. *Népszabadság* and *Magyar Nemzet*, 27 August 1988.
101. Para. 22 of the draft Bill in *Ibid.*
102. The first draft of the *Irányelvek*, 'Guidelines', was prepared in late 1988. I am grateful to John Eibner for passing a copy of this document to me.
103. Pt. I of the Guidelines.
104. Barna Sarkadi Nagy, deputy chairman of the State Office (soon to become its chairman) stated in a lecture in Keston College (England) that the principle of religious freedom in the new Law will be 'whatever is not forbidden [by statute Law] will be permitted'; *KNS*, 6 October 1988, p. 9.
105. Pt. II.
106. Pt. III, 1.
107. Pt. III, 2, 5.
108. Pt. III, 3.
109. Pt. IV, 1. The State Office was never regulated by statute law. The Guidelines maintained the State Office in a new form. A 'Church Policy Council' and an independently organised Secretariat were to work either under the Head of State or under the prime minister.
110. Pt. IV, 2. The principles of the procedural rules concerning the refusal of 'recognition' were vague.
111. Pt. IV, 3.
112. No. 27–1 (d) 1989, State Office for Church affairs.
113. The Church Policy Secretariat, a 'co-ordinating body', was to be placed under the prime minister.
114. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3.
115. See interview with Ernő Andics, Director of the Central Committee's Social Policy Department, summarised in *KNS*, 13 April 1989, p. 14.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
117. Kulcsár did not like the idea of a separate office because 'every organisation is ready to enlarge its own competence'. If the Churches wanted subsidies for schools, the ministry would deal with it. His aim was the establishment of the rule of law: 'I have never been able to understand the concept of «socialist legality». Legality either exists, or it does not ... [and further] whatever is not explicitly forbidden by the law is legal'; John Eibner, 'The Rule of Law in Hungary', *RCL*, Summer, 1989, pp. 140–47, esp. 141 and 146; *KNS*, 16 February 1989, pp. 13–14.
118. Notably 'and Church Affairs' was dropped from the title.
119. Decision of the Ministerial Council, No. 1072, 15 June 1989, *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 39, pp. 724–25.
120. Paragraph 2, 1989, No. 14. The *rendelet* also regulated Church appointments in so far as the appointing authority was foreign (para. 1) and authorised the government to determine the 'state tasks' concerning religion; *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 43, p. 771. although the State Office was disbanded in 1989, in some counties the secretaries for church affairs were functioning even a year later; see *Magyar Nemzet*, 12 July 1990.
121. 1092/1989 (June 30). In order to service the new National Council a Church Policy Secretariat was organised as a part of the Cabinet Office (*Magyar Közlöny*, No. 43, p. 779). Another decision transferred the administration of church-state relations to the ministry of Culture by *rendelet* (*ibid.*). The Opposition (Free Democrats) attacked these moves as attempts preempting the task of parliament, *Felhívás* (leaflet), 5 July 1989. See also Miklós Tomka, 'Vallás és közelet 1989-ben', *Magyarország politikai évkönyve* (hereafter *MPÉ*), 1990, p. 115. (Were these changes transitory? – the Opposition wanted to know.)
122. Bishop Szendi's demand that the Bishops Conference should be chaired by an *ordinarius*, elected for five years rather than automatically by the Primate, was a direct challenge to Paskai's authority. On 26 May 1989, see *Hírlevél*, 1989, No. 8, pp. 6–7 (and elsewhere in the press).
123. Detailed report in the *Magyar Kurír*, 23 October 1989, 79, No. 242, pp. 1–4. The proceedings were public. Four annual meetings were planned.
124. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister as president of the Council; Ferenc Glatz, Minister for Culture became vice president and Barna Sarkadi Nagy its secretary.
125. The Nazarenes and the Jehova's Witnesses, for religious reasons, stayed away.
126. *Magyar Közlöny*, 23 October 1989, No. 74, pp. 1219f.
127. The main subject of the 24 paragraph Law (further subdivided) was registration of the Churches; the text together with the ministerial motivation in *Magyar Közlöny*, No. 12, 12 February 1990, pp. 205–14.
128. Paragraphs 9–13 and the ministerial motivation contain basic procedural rules. By 1993 over fifty Churches and religious communities registered with the courts.
129. Paragraph 19 (1–2). In 1993 thirty-five Churches received subsidies. The resolution of parliament (14/1993, 19 March) with the allocation of funds in *Magyar Közlöny*, 1993, No. 31, pp. 1614–16.
130. See above note 120.
131. Miklós Tomka, 'Vallás és politikai szerkezet: 1990. évi változások', *MPÉ*, 1991, p. 250.

THE SPIRITUAL AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT OF THE CISTERCIAN ORDER IN HUNGARY

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Origins of the Hungarian Cistercians

Hungary was a century old when in 1098 the Cistercian order came to be: it owes, therefore, neither her historic existence nor Christianity to the Cistercians. Unlike the Benedictines who witnessed the birth of the nation and were first to bring the pagan Hungarians to the baptismal font, the Cistercian stepped into the stream of the spiritual and intellectual life of the young nation in order to respond to the call King Béla III extended to the Order in the second half of the twelfth century. Béla III, anxious to renew the profession of faith in his kingdom, wanted to reaffirm the allegiance of Hungary to the West. If, however, on the day of his coronation he had taken the whole country into the orbit of Byzantium where he had been raised and educated, he would have surprised no one. But against all odds, once he became a king, without betraying his former masters, he made an unexpected move and turned to France for moral and political support. He underlined his determination, first of all, with his marriages: after the death of his first wife, Anne de Chatillon, he married Princess Margaret, the sister of King Philippe II Augustus. Both marriages of Béla III, without doubt, were motivated by politics; history, however, when serving political interests, also promotes cultural causes. The second marriage of Béla III created between France and Hungary political, cultural, and economic relations in which the cultural impact of the political move proved to be the longest lasting. By pure coincidence, therefore, France shared, with Hungary the first phase of her cultural and spiritual splendor. In 1172, when Béla III was crowned king of Hungary, France was under the spell of her Cistercian enthusiasm; Béla III became king just nineteen years after the death of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. At the end of the twelfth century, French spirituality, civilization, culture were essentially Cistercian: Cistercians were heard even at the University of Paris. And that was the face of the "West" that the French Cistercians were going to make known to Hungary.

Cistercians in France

The Cistercian Order was born out of a spiritual reform intended as a return to the purity and discipline of the Rule of Saint Benedict. The reformers were to implement the "Ora et Labora" in a Christ-like spirit. They intended to put an end to the trend that Cluny established, which was characterized by complacency and a general worldly spirit of the members. After some initial difficulties, Citeaux (and soon after, Clairvaux, Morimond, La Ferté, and Pontigny) began to attract the best of the youth of France, and so the Order in France assumed a spiritual leadership, which transformed the intellectual, political, and even economic life of the country. Beginning with the last decades of the twelfth century, France and the Cistercian Order constituted an intimate union. The genius of Saint Bernard dominated the political, theological, social scene of the West: he preached the second Crusade, challenged Abélard in public debates at the University of Paris, promoted the liberation of the serfs, defended the freedom of the Church at large and, when signs of anti-semitism arose the cause of the Jews. The Cistercians were among the first to establish a "Collegium" (Bernardinum) next to the University of Paris to foster the higher education of their members. The "Marian Theology" of Saint Bernard greatly influenced the spirit of the court literature. It should also be recalled that in the great century of the French Classicism, all roads of France ran through Port-Royal, a Cistercian convent which was strong enough later to shelter Jansenism and Jansenists, to influence great geniuses like Pascal and Racine, to involve Kings and Ministers in the long-lasting quarrel, and to keep the religious conscience of the whole country attached to Christian values. But the movement – one might remark parenthetically – had also caused an immense spiritual crisis, a burden for the conscience of official politics. To end this struggle, in 1711 Louis XIV ordered the whole convent to be demolished. At the same time, however, thanks to the courage and enthusiasm of Abbé Rancé, another Cistercian reform in 1700 gave birth to the Trappist Order. The Jansenism which was born outside of the orthodox Christian Theology vanished with time, while the "Strict Observance" of the Trappists remained faithful to the contemplative spirit of the Church. It was this aspect of the contemplative life that attracted the heart of Chateaubriand to Abbé Rancé.¹ This long battle around Port-Royal involved the whole of France. Royer-Collard, a nineteenth century politician used to say, "Qui ne connaît pas Port-Royal, ne connaît pas l'humanité" ("He who does not know Port-Royal does not know humanity").² Taking into account all the possible major ramifications of the story of Port-Royal, one cannot help stating that the convent stood for the microcosm of the universe in one of the most splendid centuries of French history.

The tragic past of the Cistercian Order in Hungary

The history of the Cistercians in Hungary never reached the heights and depths exercised by the influence of the Cistercians in France. While France had, at one time, over four hundred Cistercian monasteries – it sounds almost unbelievable! – the highest number of Abbeys in Hungary only reached twenty.³ The cynics might add that there was no Hungarian Saint Bernard, but one must always remember that people like Saint Bernard are not of everyday occurrence.

In spite of the obvious differences between Cistercians in France and in Hungary, the Hungarian Cistercians symbolize in many ways the tragic destiny of the country. The Tartar invasion in the early thirteenth century devastated the country and wiped out the Cistercians; the Turkish occupation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries left the country in ruins and the Cistercian abbeys empty. In 1950, Communism suppressed once more the whole Order. The success of its restoration, which has recently begun, will follow the rhythm of the renewal of the country. “Renaissance” being the mutual aim of the country as well as of the Order, they seem to share both the joy of the present renewal and the hope in which they savor an even more prosperous future which will be built on sound moral principles.

Facing a difficult future

What could, what should, and what will Cistercians contribute to the new moral order of Hungary? Just a few years after the fall of Communism, crossing the country from west to east and from south to north, one cannot help hearing the voices of the demon of pessimism: a generation of forty-five years lost faith both in God and man. Indeed, the greatest damage Communism inflicted on Hungary was not its “Socialism,” nor, for that matter, “Communism,” but the fruits thereof, a “practical materialism” that a whole generation had first to swallow, then practice because it was the only thing they had learned. One can suspect that “practical materialism” was not quite the dream of the Party – or was it? – but “ideological materialism,” when it reached the level of the everyday life tended to lose its ideological impact and settled down with a stupefying materialism. Whatever the case may have been, ideological materialism left people empty-handed.

Being aware of some of the problems resulting from the spiritual and moral decadence of a substantial part of today's Hungarian society, one cannot help having mixed emotions. Ultimately, the question is not one of pessimism or

optimism – these are just words. To change the course of things and events, people in all walks of life will have to unite their strengths and dare to face the future, which fortunately looks much more promising than one might have thought ten or fifteen years ago. If things have been dismantled in the recent past, there must be a way to rebuild them. For beyond the disgrace of these past years, some values survived, and they live on in a dormant state, waiting for encouragement to return in full strength in order to make life meaningful again. Obviously, one cannot dream of anything like returning to the past: things of the past are dead, but the spirit of a nation is not a thing. It is – according to the meaning of the Latin word – its breath, its soul. The redemption by Christ, as always, starts anew with every single soul that comes into this world.

All Cistercians remember, some with a blush, the famous little essay of Bishop Ottokár Prohászka, called *A Pilis hegyén* (“On the Mount of Pilis,” 1927).⁴ It will not be without interest to recall some of the major ideas which constitute the heart of the study. Prohászka was stunned that, while Cistercian historians at the beginning of the twentieth century were eager to uncover a part of their long and glorious past—insisting perhaps too much on fights, court citations, business transactions, financial quarrels – they seldom thought of what Pilis used to be, for what its ruins speak. At first, one has the impression that Prohászka lets his poetic inspiration lead him astray and turns him into a sentimental preacher whose soul is haunted by the silence, which replaced the antiphons, that the Cistercians sung so beautifully under the humble arches of their primitive gothic church. That is only a part of the truth. Prohászka the poet allows himself the delight of dreaming and visualizing the attitude of the monks of Clairvaux. And here Prohászka cites the story of the memorable visit of Pope Innocent II to Clairvaux in France. The simplicity and humility of the monks who passed in front of the visiting Pope without noticing his presence in the monastery made him shed sincere tears. Here in Pilis, Prohászka says, things happened in the same sublime manner: the supernatural and the natural coexisted here, too. He further reminds his readers that Pilis had become the permanent home for people like Gertrude of Meran who was buried in Pilis; Saint Elizabeth, while visiting Hungary with her husband in 1222, came to visit her mother’s tomb in Pilis, as so many other people of blessed memory: Blessed Margit, Kinga, Jolánta, and King Louis the Great. Beyond all that, Prohászka is anxious that we become aware of another dimension of the Cistercian tradition; the tradition of mysticism. The silent region – the forest, the valleys, the meadows, the mountains – witnessed the passing through of “the lights and shadows of thirteenth century mysticism,” that form of divine love in which the monks explicated and interpreted the

redemption of the human race by Christ. Ultimately, what the Cistercians brought into the Hungary of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was what Prohászka calls, "the great unconscious realism" the desire of which had no other ambition than "to live," "to believe," "to love," "to walk toward eternal happiness," and "to know". What we like to consider in history as the first "Renaissance" in the West, turned out to be a second birth for Hungary: everything that was great in this Renaissance of the West was introduced into Hungary by the Cistercians.

The role of the Cistercians in the rebirth

What role then could history assign to the Cistercians in this new Renaissance at the end of the twentieth century? Or what role should Cistercians assume? In the "Ancien Régime," Cistercians prospered as most of the other religious Orders, but the Cistercian Order was different from the Jesuits, as were the Jesuits from the Benedictines. Orders are different by the very nature of their traditions and constitutions, each responding to a particular expectation or need of a particular segment of the society or epoch. Without wanting to make value judgements or comparisons between life-styles and methods in teaching of different teaching Orders, I will try to list some of those characteristics which made Cistercian education unique and "Cistercian." These qualities, I believe, if rediscovered and implemented, will greatly enhance the spiritual and moral rebirth of Hungary.

Let us first recall that the real impact the Cistercians had on Hungarian society was pedagogical and educational, without their ever having sacrificed the nature of their Order or denying the place of the soul in their adventure. I would, therefore, state, first of all, that the most eminent quality of Cistercian education was its "Frenchness," its orderliness. One can feel from the very inception of the Order how much Cistercian monks cultivated the idea of orderliness. In the language of religious spirituality, the opposite of orderliness is what we call "riches," "idleness," "inactivity," "the excessive cult of the self." The foundation of the Cistercian Order resembles a revolution that a group of monks mounted against Cluny where the religious led a life of peaceful apathy. The French mentality which animates the Cistercians appears in many ways. It created Classicism, and highlighted its spirit in the creation of Versailles, Classical literature; then Jansenism, Pascal, and his concept of "Three Orders," "Trappistism"; it had also inspired Calvinism and the philosophy of Descartes, together with the Rationalism of the eighteenth century.

The relevance of the Cistercian teaching

The hearty words and sincere concern of Bishop Prohászka, notwithstanding, the spiritual and intellectual life of the Cistercians in Hungary reached heights in our century that no other historical age would surpass. Although the split of the Order into "Strict" and "Common" Observances – which finally created two independent Orders ("Trappists" and "Cistercians") – gave an edge to the "contemplative" Trappists, and thus made it possible for them to enjoy recognition and prestige for some time; the "active" Cistercians, being involved in teaching and ministry, honored both monastic discipline and "contemplation". In assuming "modern" activities, the Cistercians have essentially translated the concept of "Labora" (Work) to a ministry in which they explicated the message of Christ and the beauty of knowing and art to several generations of young people.

Most Hungarians agree today that the nation has to be re-educated in many ways, without implying that the country is uneducated, or that its education was neglected during the decades of Communist rule. As a matter of fact, many disciplines had been taught with outstanding results; there are in Hungary certainly many well-filled ("stuffed") heads ("des têtes bien pleines"), but could we say in good conscience that those heads are also well made ("bien faites")?⁵ At this point I will return to Pascal who received his education at the school of Port-Royal. His teaching about the "Three Orders" also explains the essence of Cistercian pedagogy. What we had practiced in our schools for two centuries may yet prove to be the right thing for our future teaching. In the "Three Orders" of values, respect for the body, love for the spirit (l'esprit), and absolute dedication to the Order of Charity was taught. All schools and teachers can reach the first two orders, that of the body and of the spirit: they only require time and knowing. The third "Order," the Order of the Supernatural can only be taught by living in it. The real problem is not a question of academics, we can teach any subject with great success. In the very name of academic freedom, we should let the soul speak of its own life, existence, and yearnings. And that is a question of Charity: the totality of the human being cannot be waived. "Practical materialism" may be counterbalanced by poverty; misery by generosity and justice; anxiety, hopelessness and despair call for joy, confidence and the open skies of the Charity of God. Being and life, although constantly under threat of time and death, may be savored and enjoyed only when they have been promoted into the high regions of Charity, the order of God.

A few years back, a historian, specializing in Cistercian history, stated that the Cistercians were the first "capitalists" of the West. His statement greatly

surprises; however, one could respond, not without a certain sense of humor, that, "Yes, but *the first successful capitalists*": long before the Cistercians came to be the Benedictines had already practiced the same economic system. The Cistercians, however, followed orderliness which lasted for centuries. And even when the economic system perished, the consciousness of the orderliness survived.

"The heart has its reasons..."

After this parenthetical remark I should dwell briefly on a somewhat different matter, which pertains to the essence of our Cistercian teaching. If implemented, it will enhance our endeavor in building a brighter future for Hungary. It has already been pointed out how much the affective life of the country has suffered during the past decades, and how much its decayed state is evidenced in the society of the post-Communist regime.⁶ The remark of Saint Augustine, that "Non movetur anima pedibus sed affectibus" ("The soul does not walk on feet but on affections")⁷ sums up the state of the matter; for if the social life of the whole country was programmed in such a way that the voice of the soul was not honored, the programming also meant silencing the voice of sentiments and affections. (With its thesis of "class struggle," Marxism, when reaching the individual, preaches hatred.) Liberation, therefore, should be extended also to affections. Love lives on affections, and so does justice. And I would even venture to state that knowledge, research, and science live on enthusiasm and affections which lend meaning to all human endeavors. What saves the world from the philosophy of "WHAT'S THE USE OF IT?" is the affective dimension of our heart and love. In the vein of the same thought, and in order to challenge our intelligence that it should listen to the voice of the heart, we might recall Pascal's well known sentence, i.e., "Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît point" ("The heart has its reasons that the reason does not know at all").⁸

One of the great values that we Cistercians inherited from Saint Bernard and which shaped and keeps on shaping our lives is the prominent role of the Virgin Mary in the life of the Church and the spiritual growth of the individual Christian. By sensitizing the world about this matter, Saint Bernard transformed the cult of the woman which had become a fashion in court literature just about the time he began his public career. The sublime femininity became the source of salvation both in a religious sense and in its social connotation. By upgrading the affective life of his century, Saint Bernard was able to turn the excesses of court literature toward a more aesthetically oriented art, while,

at the same time, he also slowed down the advancement of Abélard's rationalism. It seems that the Cistercian alumni in Hungary, after having experienced the "other life-style," remember what they had received with their education, and they deplore what they see now in the life of their own children and grand-children. The spiritual and affective needs of Hungary may not differ very much from the needs of the rest of the world, but if Hungary was able to hold high the mirror in which the world contemplates the heroism of freedom, she may also take a leading role in matters pertaining to our affective life. It would be a mistake to let people think that the damage done is limited to religion; everyone should understand that a whole generation has been washed out (Egy egész nemzedéket kilúgoztak. – On a lessivé toute une génération.) There is no time to be cynical about this. We should perhaps re-invent the language of the heart: COR LOQUITUR AD COR ("The heart speaks to the heart").

Conclusion

The Cistercian Order is not the microcosm of Hungary; it does not hold the key to the secrets of the moral, spiritual, or intellectual problems of the country, but it does symbolize whatever the country can and should do in order to assure its survival. The members of the Order would like to be optimistic; they embrace new programs; re-establish "gimnáziums" in Eger, Budapest, Baja, Pécs, Székesfehérvár. But they cannot help raising the question: With whom can we implement all these ideas of renewal? The number of vocations does not disappoint the optimist; however, no one dares call it an abundance. Yet, the future is not going to be built with purely human efforts. Everything is grace, the Scripture says (Rom. IV, 16). Everything is grace, Bernanos repeats in his novel, called *The Diary of a Country Priest*.⁹ To conclude then, let us recall the words of Father Teilhard de Chardin. He put his prayer and future confidence into the frame of his scientific "formula"; he says: "For having gone to heaven, after you descended all the way to hell, you have so much filled the Universe in all directions, Jesus, that from now on, we find ourselves in the blessed impossibility of escaping from you."¹⁰

Notes

1. Cf. Chateaubriand, René-François de, *Vie de Rancé*, édition critique avec une introduction, des notices, des variantes et des notes par Fernand Letessier, 2 vols (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1955).
2. Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*, "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade". 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1952) I, 105.
3. Cf. Lékai, Louis, *The Cistercians. Ideals and Reality* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, [1989]), in chapters XIV, XV, and XVI.
4. Prohászka, Ottokár, "A Pilis hegyén," in *Modern Katolicizmus. Válogatás Prohászka műveiből*. Szerkesztette: Koncz Lajos (Budapest: Az Apostoli Szentszék Könyvkiadója, 1990) 228–238.
5. Montaigne, Michel Eyquem de, *Essais*, Livre I, Essai XXVI.
6. Andrásfalvi, Bertalan, "Európaiság, mint művelődési forma," in *Keresztények és a szabadság*, 34. Magyar Pax romana Kongresszus. 1992. április 20–26. Lillafüred (Róma: Katolikus Szemle, 1992) 15–18.
7. S. Augustinus, *Tract. 48 in Joannem*.
8. Blaise, Pascal, *Pensées*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, "Bibliothèque de la Pléiade" (Paris: Gallimard, 1954) 1221.
9. Bernanos, Georges, *Journal d'un Curé de campagne* (Paris: Plon, 1936) 366.
10. Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre, *Le milieu divin* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957) 156.

TRANSYLVANIAN CATHOLICS AND THE PAPACY IN THE ERA OF THE *SYLLABUS ERRORUM*

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During the Revolution of 1848, Lajos Kossuth wrote optimistically that "Hungarians and Wallachians [i.e. Romanians] alike shall find their bright future only in fraternal union one with the other."¹ A half century later, another Protestant statesman of Hungary, István Tisza, asserted that Hungarians and Romanians, surrounded by Slavs, ought to join hands for their mutual survival.² Catholic compatriots of both nationalities, of course, shared a vision of Europe that had Rome at its center. For Roman and Greek Catholic nationalists of Transylvania, Hungarians and Romanians, this "fraternal union" offered both the benefits and the dangers of a foreign alliance: powerful support, but also the need to defend oneself against Protestant or Eastern Orthodox accusations of alienation from the true national interest. This theme was particularly strong during the heyday of ultramontanism, symbolized for citizens of Hungary by the Austrian Concordat of 1855, the list of doctrinal errors known as the *Syllabus Errorum* promulgated by Pius IX in 1864, and the definition of papal infallibility by the Vatican Council in 1871.

For Transylvanian Catholics, the crucial instruments of this relationship with Rome were their bishops, the Hungarian Lajos Haynald (1816–91) and the Romanian Alexandru Sterca-Șuluțiu (1794–1867). These striking personalities were similar in their social origin in the minor nobility and in their profession of faith, but different in most other respects. Haynald, a native of Nógrád County in northern Hungary, was a well-travelled and erudite theologian and botanist before becoming secretary of the Hungarian Primate at 30; Șuluțiu, on the other hand, was a long-time village priest and rural vicar who first visited Vienna from his native Transylvania in 1856. The two took possession of their episcopal sees only two years apart, Șuluțiu in 1850 and Haynald in 1852.³

Șuluțiu's first pastoral letter as spiritual leader of half of Transylvania's 1.2 million Romanians was addressed "to his clergy and the Roman [or Romanian] people" ("ad clerum suum, Populumque romanum"), asserting: "We are united not only by the communion of faith with the head of the Holy Roman

Apostolic Church, but also through ties of blood and nationality... The August Austrian House and the House of God, that is, the Roman Mother Church, are our only refuge and salvation!"⁴ Interpreting in a Roman sense the Romanian 1848ers' demand for the ecclesiastic autonomy and unity of the Romanians, he secured the approval of the Hungarian episcopate, the state, and finally the Holy See for the elevation of his see to a Metropolitanate with two new suffragan bishoprics in 1855, removing it from the authority of the Hungarian Primate. All parties were united, for the moment, in the desire to weaken the Romanians' gravitation toward the Orthodox Church and its coreligionists across the Carpathians. The Primate, János Scitovszky, later came to see this act, like the Concordat, as an Austrian attempt to weaken his own authority, but he could not openly oppose a measure he had endorsed repeatedly in 1850-2.⁵

Șulțiu's Romanizing fervor did not extend to matters of church discipline, where he represented the orientalist wing of his church, rejecting all intrusions of western practices in matrimonial jurisdiction and synodal practices after 1855.⁶ Rome's misgivings about the deficient theological training of the new Romanian Metropolitan deepened as the canonical dispute sharpened. After travelling to Blaj (Balázsfalva) for the investment of Șulțiu, the Apostolic Nuncio Michele Viale-Prelá reported that Bishop Haynald was his constant companion enroute. Haynald probably colored the Nuncio's description of the impoverished peasantry, in whom he found "not the smallest trace of civilization."⁷ When Viale's successor, Antonio De Luca, visited Blaj in 1858 for extended consultations on the canonical controversy (once again spending considerable time with Haynald), he reported that Șulțiu repeatedly confused matters of doctrine with those of discipline, and was completely under the influence of his militant canon, Timotei Cipariu.⁸

Șulțiu "the ultramontane" (as he was labelled indignantly by the Orthodox Bishop Andreiu Șaguna⁹) was certainly aware of the greater rapport that the more polished and sophisticated Bishop Haynald enjoyed with the Pope's envoys. The Uniate's unease in this regard is reflected in the private appeal he sent Haynald in March 1859, on the eve of the first of Haynald's two *ad limina* visits to the Holy See as bishop. Șulțiu urged him to defend their "mutual Catholic interests" and take account of the oriental traditions that he, in his position, had a duty to defend.¹⁰ Șulțiu, for his part, never made an *ad limina* visit, a fact lamented by the Papal curia.¹¹

Haynald's portrayal of their "mutual Catholic interests" was indeed at stake. His unusually detailed report on the state of his diocese, presented on May 2, 1859, culminated in the plea that his see be raised to the rank of an archdiocese. He supported this request in terms of the diocese's unique

historical role and its achievements in fighting Protestant heresy, the secessionist tendencies of the Romanians (despite the "faith, prudence, and moderation" of the members of the "Wallachian hierarchy"), and the interest of strengthening the Latin church and Hungarian population as the Habsburg monarchy's most loyal subjects. Furthermore, he added, "Transylvania is in reality separate from Hungary and its church, constituting a distinct body with regard to politics, nationalities, and religions."¹²

No action was taken on the request, despite a favorable response by both the Holy See and the Austrian government, in part because Haynald's archbishop opposed it, but even more because Hungary's political crisis and the role Haynald played in it soon overshadowed his proposal. At issue was the *de jure* (rather than *de facto*!) status of Transylvania. Baron József Eötvös wrote Haynald in November 1860 to ask that he give public support, as a councillor *ex officio* of the provincial government, to the Hungarian opposition's view that the union of Hungary and Transylvania, enacted in 1848, was still valid. Haynald's response was cautious: he agreed in principle, but added that in Transylvania "– the land of Protestant intolerance – the most justified Catholic activity will always be unpopular. The Reformed [i.e. Calvinists] are powerful, the Catholics willingly follow their lead."¹³

Only weeks later Haynald abandoned this caution, taking the public lead of the opposition in Transylvania in speeches at a conference of the provincial government, in the House of Magnates in Pest, and finally in a memorandum he delivered to the leading Habsburg official of Transylvania, Count Ferenc Nádasdy. Nádasdy appealed to Haynald's sentiments as a fellow Catholic and loyal subject, but the bishop responded with a clever allusion to the common French and Italian adversaries of Austria and the Pope: "The egotistical gentlemen of the *Umsturzpartei* on the Seine and the Dora fight against the gilded parchments and extant treaties; Austria was renowned for always seeking to protect them, and this [is] the duty of the government as well."¹⁴

Nuncio De Luca energetically supported the Austrian government's position in his increasingly indignant reports on Haynald's opposition to Austrian policy. Far from accepting the arguments in Haynald's memorandum to Nádasdy, he recommended to Rome that it seek the dismissal of Haynald from his civil functions. Although Papal Secretary of State Giacomo Antonelli conceded that Haynald's political activity might interfere with his religious responsibilities, he rejected De Luca's proposal.¹⁵

Neatly disregarding the Papal States' dispute with Piedmont concerning the Italian *risorgimento*, Cardinal Antonelli remarked loftily that "the Holy See, for whom all political troubles are naturally foreign, cannot intervene."¹⁶ Under the circumstances, either the ecclesiastic elevation or the public

reprimand of Haynald would have drawn the Holy See into a conflict whose outcome was uncertain. Haynald's representations were also having their effect in Rome.

Haynald set out to counter the unfavorable light in which the Nuncio and the government were placing him by filing a series of unfavorable reports on the "rude and uncultured" Greek Catholics' susceptibility to Orthodoxy. Without mentioning Şuluţiu by name, Haynald stated that the Romanian clergy were agitating against his own, raising illegitimate canonical issues, and exploiting appointments to the Cathedral Chapter for political ends. This line of attack was a fruitful one. Already in January, 1861, Antonelli instructed De Luca to transmit the Pope's dissatisfaction with Şuluţiu's repeated and unjustified complaints of "Latinization."¹⁷

Şuluţiu had meanwhile emerged as a key Romanian supporter of the new Austrian regime in Transylvania. He applauded the renewed Austrian guarantees of Transylvanian autonomy, and sought to mobilize his clergy against the Hungarian nobility. Within the church, he repeatedly presented the views of his more radical clergy concerning matrimony, the appointment of married clergy to canonries, and especially the holding of synods with a broad representative character. In the summer of 1861, Şuluţiu attended an Orthodox liturgy celebrated by Bishop Şaguna at the resort town of Vîlcele (Előpaták) in southern Transylvania. One of Haynald's clergy reported the incident to his bishop, and the report soon found its way into the press and as far as Rome. Forced to defend himself, Şuluţiu wrote in a Hungarian newspaper that the Orthodox clergy and sacraments were "good and valid," and common prayer could not be a sin.¹⁸ He complained to the Transylvanian Governor in 1862 that Haynald treated him as if he were his suffragan bishop, and asserted to another Romanian that Haynald was "the greatest enemy of my person and of our nation."¹⁹ The upshot of the affair was the decision of a Roman consistory to reprimand Şuluţiu for *communicatio in divinis cum haereticis et schismaticis* and various doctrinal errors.²⁰

Şuluţiu's politically motivated ecumenism was premature by a century. Several papal encyclicals had confirmed the Holy See's determination to preserve the peculiarities of the eastern rite, while denouncing irregularities practiced by the Orthodox and calling upon them to unite with Rome,²¹ but the centralizing tendencies of the current pontiff worked against any broad definition of the inviolable eastern church discipline. Rome not only rejected the canonical programme of Şuluţiu, but appointed as his suffragan in Oradea (Nagyvárad), and consecrated in Rome itself in 1863, a thoroughly ultramontane bishop, Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, who opposed Şuluţiu publicly.²²

The Pope's centralizing policy was most evident in his efforts to assemble his bishops in Rome and establish their personal loyalty to himself. From 1854

to 1867, the bishops in attendance at such periodic meetings rose steadily from 206 to 500.²³ The same purpose was served by the Pope's frequent condemnations of doctrinal error and political liberalism, both of which weakened the ties of the people to the source of correct teaching on the faith in Rome. The unpublicized agenda of the bishops' meeting in Rome in May, 1862 – formally meant to canonize a number of Japanese martyrs – was to debate a compilation of contemporary errors, the future *Syllabus of Errors*.

While the Romanian bishops declined their invitations to Rome, Haynald was one of those who assembled there. He utilized the occasion to continue the presentation of his report of 1859, which had been interrupted by the outbreak of war. He also played a prominent role in the meeting's official activities. When the bishops' debate on the draft *Syllabus* ended in deadlock, the two sides chose Haynald, who impressed them with his oratorical skill and the favor he had won in the Curia since 1859, as the head of the editorial commission that composed their address to the Pope. Haynald influenced the adoption of a more moderate version of the response to the Pope's allocution of June 9, *Maxima quidem*, that condemned liberalism and the subjection of bishops to the civil power in Italy.²⁴

Future historians may be able to shed more light on the role Haynald played in the formulation of this address and in the debate on the *Syllabus*. Fully half of the *Syllabus*, it should be noted, concerns philosophical and theological questions only indirectly related to politics. Overall, it is likely that Italian and West European events exercised the greatest impact on the evolution of the document released in December, 1864 from the variants of 1852 and 1862, but its repeated references to the interference of secular politics with the religious sphere also apply to the disputes concerning Haynald and Șulutiu that reached their height at the same time. The list of 61 errors submitted to the bishops in 1862, and the eighty contained in the *Syllabus* of 1864, both contained variants of the notion that bishops should be subject to the civil authorities. The chief difference between the earlier and the later list is the abandonment in 1864 of specific references to Italian politics, stressing instead fundamental principles. The *Syllabus* cites earlier papal statements where Pius IX had condemned the respective theses; and most of these documents were in fact commentaries on Italian events. But the relevance of Hungarian events is particularly evident in the condemnation of proposition 51, that "the secular government had the right of deposing bishops from their pastoral functions."²⁵ The most relevant documents, records for answering this question are preserved in the archives of the Holy Office, which are almost the last records of the Pontificate of Pius IX still closed to historical research.²⁶

After Haynald returned to Transylvania, his conflict with the Austrian authorities reached its height. 1863 was the year of political triumph for

Șuluțiu and Șaguna – leading the Romanians into the Transylvanian Diet and the central parliament – and defeat for Haynald, who after encouraging the Hungarians' decision to boycott the Diet was pressured to resign from his see, and finally did so in December 1863. The Holy See waited an extraordinarily long time to accept the resignation, until September 1864. This reluctance was both a reflection of the Pope's personal regard for Haynald, and a matter of principle felt strongly in light of the assault on ecclesiastic authority in Italy. When the matter was finally resolved, Haynald took up a post in one of the Vatican congregations.²⁷

Transylvania's experience of the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) provides a surprising epilogue upon which to conclude this story. Ultramontanism had provided opportunities for both Bishops Haynald and Șuluțiu to enhance their ecclesiastic autonomy, and indeed their political authority. Șuluțiu ultimately had a more satisfactory relationship with the state than with the Holy See, while for Haynald the situation was the reverse. In 1864 Austria nominated, and the Holy See eventually confirmed, the more politically reliable Mihály Fogarasy as Haynald's successor. Following the restoration of constitutionalism in Hungary in 1867, Haynald returned as an archbishop, while Șuluțiu's successor after his death was Ioan Vancea, a churchman he had earlier passed over with the remark that he was "too Roman."²⁸

The ultramontane past of Haynald, Papp-Szilágyi, and Vancea appeared to guarantee their support of Pius IX at the Vatican Council. In fact, Haynald had already incurred the Pope's displeasure by conveying the liberal Dualist governments' renunciation of the concordat. Haynald, Papp-Szilágyi, Vancea, and Fogarasy proceeded to provide most of the leadership in the Hungarian episcopate's opposition to Papal infallibility, arguing that it was contrary to oriental church law and that it would arouse an unfavorable response among Hungary's non-Catholics, both Protestants and Orthodox. Papp-Szilágyi had taken over his see only seven years earlier as an agent of ultramontane retrenchment, but in his condemnation of the papal draft on infallibility he went even further than Haynald and Fogarasy, asserting the document "would make a return of the oriental church to the holy union impossible for all time."²⁹ Thus it can be seen that while ultramontanism had divided Hungarian and Romanian churchmen between 1855 and 1864, it served to unite them in 1870. Vancea and Fogarasy would be among the very last bishops of Hungary to publish the Council's decree on Papal infallibility, in 1872 and 1874.³⁰

Notes

1. Quoted in Béla Borsi-Kálmán, *Hungarian Exiles and the Romanian National Movement, 1849–1867* (Highland Lakes, New Jersey: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1991), 153. One of the principal themes of this work is the evolution of Kossuth's thinking on Hungarian–Romanian confederation.
2. Gabor Vermes, *István Tisza. The Liberal Vision and Conservative Statecraft of a Magyar Nationalist* (New York: Columbia University Press; Boulder: East European Monographs, 1985), 66–67, 138–139.
3. Haynald has received more substantial biographical treatment: see József Kőhalmi-Klimstein, ed., *Vázlatok Haynald Lajos bibornok érsek életéből 1816–1889* (Pozsony: Stempfel, 1889), and Dénes Szittyay, *Haynald Lajos bíboros érsek élete* (Kalocsa: Jurcsó, 1915). On Şuluţiu, see James Niessen, "Metropolitan Alexandru Sterca-Şuluţiu in the National Movement," *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, Historia* 32,2 (1987), 25–32. Many of the themes in this paper are presented in greater detail in my *Batling Bishops: Religion and Politics in Transylvania on the Eve of the Ausgleich* (Indiana University Ph. D. Dissertation, 1989).
4. The text of the Latin edition of the letter *Sermo pastoralis quem Illustrissimus ac Reverendissimus Dominus Alexander Sterka Sulutz de Kerpenyes... materno idiomate habuit anno 1851* (Blasii: Typis Seminarii Dioecesanii, 1852), is published with a partial Romanian and German translation in *Perspective* (Munich), Volume 6, Number 2(26), October–December 1984, 2–23.
5. Austrian records attach considerable importance to Scitovszky's early endorsement of the proposal; see "Protocoll der Conferenzen bezüglich der griechisch katolischen Dioecesen in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen rücksichtlich Errichtung zweier neuer Dioecesen und Reactionierung der bestandenen Metropolie von Alba Iulia (Karlsburg)," Wien, 18. November 1850, in Budapest, Hungarian National Archives, D4, bundle 63: Kath. C., folder 1854/6047. On this point, at least, the leading Hungarian and Romanian accounts are in agreement: Gabriel Adrianyi, *Die Stellung der ungarischen Kirche zum österreichischen Konkordate von 1855* (Roma: s.n., 1963), and Octavian Bârlea, *Metropolia Bisericii Române Unite proclamată în 1855 la Blaj*, published in book form as Volume 10, Numbers 37–38 (July–December 1987) of *Perspective*.
6. For an analysis of the dichotomy of easterners and westerners in the Romanian church, see my "Relatiile interconfesionale și procesul formării națiunii române în Transilvania", *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca* 31 (1992), 79–92, and "The Greek Catholic Church and the Romanian Nation in Transylvania," forthcoming in Niessen, ed., *Religious compromise, Political Salvation: the Greek Catholic Church and Nation-building in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh: Center for Russian and East European Studies/University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993; Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies, 1003), 47–64.
7. The reports of Cardinal Viale-Prelà, November 28, 1855 and undated, are published in Bârlea, pp. 390–400, 405–408, and the shorter of these in Lajos Lukács, *The Vatican and Hungary 1848–1878. Reports and Correspondence on Hungary of the Apostolic Nuncios in Vienna* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1981), 480–484.
8. For an extensive account of the consultations, and many relevant documents, see John T. Filip, "La missione apostolica in Transilvania," *Societas Academica Dacoromania, Acta Historica* (Romae), Volume 8 (1968), 263–319.
9. Andreiu Şaguna, *Memorii din anii 1846–1871* (Sibiu: Tipografia Archidiecezană, 1923), 53, cited by Bârlea, 243.

10. Șuluțiu to Haynald, March 3, 1859, in Alba Iulia, Roman Catholic Diocesan Archives. 1859/1603 (Cat. 3). The letter is written in Șuluțiu's own hand, and lacks a chancery number.
11. Cardinal Ludovico Jacobini (Secretary of the Oriental Section of the Congregazione dei Propaganda Fide, later Nuncio in Vienna) to Mgr. Marino Marini, May 15, 1873, in the Vatican, Archivio degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Pos. 411, Fasc. 204.
12. The Latin text of the report, with revisions included in a new version submitted in 1862, is published with the editor's translation into French of the part referring to the archdiocese, in Ion Dumitriu-Snagov, *Le Saint-Siège et la Roumanie Moderne 1850-1866* (Roma: Universită Gregoriana Editrice, 1982), 402-464.
13. The correspondence is published in Szittyay, 68-70, and the letter of Haynald also in László Tóth, "Politika és egyházpolitika Haynald Lajos kiadatlan leveleiben," *Katolikus Szemle* 49, (1935), 476-477.
14. The signed and dated German text of Haynald's declaration of November 24, 1861 (the day he met with Nádasdy) is preserved in Budapest, Széchényi National Library. Ms 882, where it is mistakenly identified as a letter of Haynald to Eötvös. The letter's content, language, and form of address ("Euer Excellenz") support my judgement that this is Haynald's address to Nádasdy.
15. De Luca to Cardinal Antonelli, November 29, 1861, in Lukács, 548-551. As the Nuncio correctly noted in his letter, the Austrian Foreign Minister expressed a similar proposal in his letter to his ambassador. See Count Johann Bernhard von Rechberg to Alexander von Bach, November 29, in Adriányi, *Ungarn und as I. Vaticanum* (Köln/Wien: Böhlau, 1975), 391-292.
16. Antonelli's reply to De Luca of December 14 is in Lukács, 552-553.
17. Haynald to De Luca, January 4, 1861 (the longest of several published here), and Antonelli to De Luca, January 24, in Dumitriu-Snagov, 522-524, 525-530.
18. Șuluțiu, "Nyílttér," *Korunk*, September 17, 1862.
19. Șuluțiu, to Ludwig Folliot de Crenneville, March 1, 1862, in Alba Iulia, State Archives. Romanian Uniate Metropolitanate; General Papers, Protocol book. 1862/137; Șuluțiu to Dimitrie Moldovan, April 23, 1862, in Cluj, State Archives. Dimitrie Moldovan Papers, 314.
20. On this and many instances of Șuluțiu's difficulties with the Holy See: Ioan Filip, "II metropolită Alessandro Sterca Suluziu. Contribuție biografică," *Societas Academica Dacoromana, Acta Historica* 1 (1959), 83-99.
21. *Allatae sunt* (1755), *Ex Quo Primum* (1756), and *Amantissimus* (1862) are published in *The Papal Encyclicals 1740-1878*, ed. Claudia Carlen, I.H.M. (N.p.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 51-102, 363-367.
22. The new bishop, Iosif Papp-Szilágyi, was granted special "faculties" [not defined here], like his predecessor as bishop in Oradea, Vasile Erdeli; Cardinal Simeoni (of the Oriental Section of the Propaganda) to Alessandro Franchi, March 28, 1863. Vatican, Archivio degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari. Pos. 310, Fasc. 159.
23. Friedrich Heyer, *The Catholic Church from 1648 to 1870* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 185.
24. Ferenc Lönhart, "Olasz-úti jegyzetek," *Gyulafehérvári füzetek* 2 (1862), 189-255, especially 222. Lönhart was Haynald's *canonicus a latere*, who accompanied him on the journey to Rome. The text includes a Hungarian translation of *Maxima quidem* (a frequently cited source in the later Syllabus) and the bishops' address.
25. Haynald's personal papers include a printed copy of the 1862 version of the Syllabus, sent him in November, 1862: Budapest, Széchényi National Library, Fol. Hung. 1722. ff. 101-109. The authoritative Latin text of the *Syllabus Errorum* is available in Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (many editions), number

- 2901–2980. For an analysis that downplays the political significance of the *Syllabus*, see W. F. Hogan, "Syllabus of Errors," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 13:854–856.
26. Giacomo Martina S. J. is the author of the outstanding history of the *Syllabus*: "Osservazioni sulle varie redazioni del Sillabo," *Chiesa e Stato nell'Ottocento. Miscellanea in onore di P. Pirri*, ed. Aubert, Ghisalberti, Passerin d'Entrèves (Padua, 1962), II, 419–523. He reported that even he was denied access to the most important papers; personal communication, November, 1991.
27. The large dossier on Haynald's abdication in Vienna's Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Administrative Registratur, F26 Bischöfe 1861–1869. Faszikel 26: Bischof Haynald, Abdankung als Bischof von Siebenbürgen) reveals the long and difficult negotiations between Vienna and Rome, which contributed significantly to the cooling of their relations in this period.
28. Nuncio Mariano Falcinelli-Mariacci to Antonelli, March 5, 1864, in Adriányi, *Ungarn und des I. Vaticanum*, 399.
29. *Ibid.*, 249–250; the paraphrase is by Adriányi.
30. *Ibid.*, 268, 381.



THE PROTESTANT REVIEW: ITS PAST AND PRESENT

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In 1888 a Literary Association of Hungarian Protestants was created in Budapest. The following year *The Protestant Review* was launched as the main organ of this Association. In 1889 it was published biannually, between 1890 and 1894 on a quarterly basis, and between 1895 and 1919 it appeared ten times a year. In 1930 the journal became a monthly. After the end of World War II *The Protestant Review* ceased to appear. In 1989, the year of the collapse of Communism in Hungary, a Protestant Association of Public Education was organized. One of its aims was to reestablish continuity with the past and publish *The Protestant Review* as a quarterly. In 1991 I was invited to edit *The Review* and we published our first four issues the following year.

Four periods can be distinguished in the history of this prestigious journal. The first lasted until the end of 1913. In the early years its editor was Béla Kenessey, a professor of theology in Kolozsvár. When he became the director of the theological faculty in Kolozsvár, he was replaced by Farkas Szóts (1851–1918). Born in Maros-Torda county, Szóts studied at the universities of Budapest, Marburg, and Utrecht. In 1879 he was appointed professor of theology in Budapest. Although he published relatively few articles of his own in *The Review*, he was largely responsible for the general character of the journal from the sixth issue of 1895 until the end of 1913.¹

Szóts was a follower of Liberal theology and decided to make his review cover a wide range of topics. Each issue contained longer essays as well as review articles on intellectual trends in Hungary and in other countries, in addition to shorter reviews. Since the editor's intention was to make the journal the organ of all Hungarian Protestants, particular attention was afforded to American congregations. For example in 1912, Sándor Harsányi, a clergyman in Homestead (Pennsylvania), summarized the principles underlying the presidential election in the U.S., and drew a portrait of Woodrow Wilson.

Although religion was the subject of most of the essays, and the majority of the books reviewed were published in German, several contributors focused

on the philosophy, science, literature, and history of all the important cultures of the Western world. In 1913, for instance, the philosophical journal *A Szellem* (The Spirit), edited by Lajos Fülep, and the first Hungarian translation of Dewey were among the publications analysed.

While during the first decades the main principles of Positivism were respected by most of the contributors, around 1910 a new orientation made its influence felt. Philological articles about the history of Protestantism were replaced by essays on philosophical subjects. In 1911 József Nagy, one of the most important historians of Western philosophy in Hungary, examined the fundamental questions asked by Pascal, and others described the role of Christianity in the works of Madách, Károly Böhm, Lev Tolstoy, and Gerhart Hauptmann.

Undoubtedly, *The Protestant Review* supported the Neoconservatism of István Tisza, who was the Prime Minister of Hungary between 1913 and 1916. In November 1911 Tisza gave a lecture at a meeting of the Association of Social Sciences. The text, entitled *Nation and Society*, was published in *The Protestant Review*.

While the majority of the contributors were members of the Hungarian Reformed Church, they often had no ecclesiastical affiliation. Catholics and Socialists were frequently criticized from the perspective of bourgeois Liberalism, but the legitimacy of science was never questioned. Knowledge and belief were regarded as two autonomous spheres of intellectual life. It should come as no surprise that Calvinist authors preferred to comment on social conflicts, whereas Lutherans were less reluctant to examine ethnic tensions. State and church were viewed as independent institutions. Most of the essayists agreed that the gap was widening between secular and religious life and preferred to see education as independent of the churches.

There was only one Catholic leader who was praised in the pages of the main journal of the Hungarian Protestants. Ottokár Prohászka (1858–1927), who became bishop of Székesfehérvár in 1905, was undoubtedly the most controversial figure in the history of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church. Although he was a harsh critic of Marxism, he called for some kind of Christian Socialism. The short article summarizing the lecture he gave at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is marked by an inferiority complex. Drawing on the philosophical works of Nietzsche and Bergson, the author of the article argued, Prohászka set an example for Protestants on how to reinterpret Christianity in the light of contemporary thinking.

Unlike some Hungarian journals of the period, in this first phase of its history *The Protestant Review* never published any anti-Semitic material. In 1913 one of the longest essays contained a historical analysis of anti-Jewish

attitudes. Its author, István Hamar, asked all Protestants to reject anti-Semitism and urged them to enlighten uneducated people who were inclined to make "unfounded and unjust charges" against Jews.² The editor's position was unambiguous: he considered anti-Semitism a superstition, and condemned it in any form.

After the resignation of Szóts, László Ravasz became the editor of *The Review*. Like his predecessor, Ravasz was a Transylvanian. Born in 1882, he studied at the universities of Kolozsvár and Berlin. In Kolozsvár he studied under Húgó Meltzl, an outstanding early scholar of Comparative Literature, and the philosopher Károly Böhm (1846–1911). In 1905–1906 he had such illustrious professors as the philosopher Georg Simmel, the classical philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, and the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin. In 1907, after his return to Kolozsvár, he received a doctorate for his book *The Aesthetics of Schopenhauer*. At the age of 25 he became a professor at the theological faculty in Kolozsvár.

Although he never aspired to become a professional philosopher, the impact of Böhm was so strong on him that he never lost his interest in such fields as ethics, aesthetics, and even ontology. Böhm, a Lutheran who had studied in Göttingen, Tübingen, and Berlin, became the most influential Hungarian philosopher at the end of the 19th century. He urged his students to take a serious interest in axiology. Under his influence Ravasz focused on the theory of moral and aesthetic values. Without a doubt, this education prepared Ravasz for the important role he played in the intellectual life of Hungary between the two wars.

I am not in the position to assess the significance of Ravasz in Hungarian culture. Let it suffice to say that no other Hungarian religious leader had a more far-reaching influence on intellectual life in the 20th century. Although since his death in 1975 and especially since the end of Communism several of the works he wrote after World War II have appeared, some texts still remain unpublished.

In his early years Ravasz was a Freemason and sympathized with social Radicalism. When it became clear that the Radicals could not tolerate any kind of Christianity and their intention was not to transform but to demolish the edifice of the Dual Monarchy, he felt compelled to change his orientation. The goal he set himself as editor of *The Review* was to transform Protestantism. Since he lived in Kolozsvár, the editorial office moved to that city, but *The Review* itself was printed in Budapest.

The second stage in the history of the journal started with the introduction Ravasz wrote for the first issue to appear under his editorship. What was the meaning of Protestantism in the past? he asked. In the 16th and 17th centuries

Protestantism stood for a belief in the letter of the Bible, whereas in the 18th and 19th centuries it became synonymous with the legacy of the Enlightenment and the cult of tolerance which characterized Liberalism. Rejecting the tradition of Liberal theology, Ravasz urged his readers to adjust their interpretation of Protestantism. Opposed to both Conservatism and revolutionary utopia, he refused to view Protestantism in ecclesiastical terms and harshly criticized those for whom Protestantism was comparable to a political party. Although he insisted that "in the 20th century Protestantism was the only way of being Christian without any reservation", he criticized any form of fanaticism. "When the representatives of one theological trend regard those of another trend as non-Christian, it is very likely that those who are attacked are still Christian, while those who condemn others in the name of Christ have nothing to do with his teaching."³

From January 1914 every issue of *The Protestant Review* had a clearcut structure, which Ravasz described in the following way: "The first item was a meditation on one of the fundamental principles of personal Christianity. This was followed by articles dealing with the widest possible range of subjects. (Before my editorship *The Review* had focused on ecclesiastical history.) In the next section topical issues and recent publications were discussed both in an international and in a national context. 'Signs and Interpretations' was my invention. This part contained short polemical notes. In later years my students, Imre Révész, József Vásárhelyi, and Sándor Makkai became its authors. At the beginning I was responsible for this section."⁴

It was mainly due to the short polemical notes that *The Protestant Review* drew the attention of the general public. In the first year of World War I it contained articles on Fichte, Kierkegaard, and Zsigmond Kemény, the 19th-century novelist and essayist, whose current unpopularity Ravasz interpreted as a sign of the cultural decadence of Hungary. A few months later there was another provocative statement in the same section about anti-Semitism. Three possible definitions of Jewishness were mentioned. The author dismissed racist and religious anti-Semitism but criticized "a spiritual trend, the mixture of hedonism and utilitarianism".⁵ Since there is every reason to believe that these words were written by the editor, this short article may have been the first sign of what some commentators later called the anti-Semitism of Ravasz. This is not the appropriate place to discuss this thorny issue. Let it suffice to say that under his editorship the attitude of *The Protestant Review* towards Jews had changed.

Ravasz was on friendly terms with Prohászka and came to redefine the concept of predestination in harmony with the theology of Karl Barth. He dismissed fatalism as a simplified and even distorted form of Calvinism, and

insisted on the significance of a belief in a merciful God. This starting-point had far-reaching consequences. Even a superficial reading of the first issues edited by Ravasz indicates that his editorial policy was meant to combine a scholarly interest in ecclesiastical history with a critical analysis of contemporary intellectual life. One of his students, Imre Révész (1889–1967) started publishing a long series of studies on the history of Christianity which later made him the most important Hungarian specialist of this field in the 20th century. Sándor Makkai (1890–1951), another student of Ravasz, focused on a synchronic analysis of religion, drawing on German hermeneutics, American pragmatism, as well as French and Hungarian sociology. Both contributors helped the editor transform *The Review* into one of the most exciting journals in the country.

During the war years several Hungarian periodicals competed with each other. *The Protestant Review* proved to be well-informed about contemporary trends in Western and Hungarian culture. Such controversial works as *L'Action Française et la Religion Catholique* (1913) by Charles Maurras and *A száműzött Rákóczi* (Rákóczi in Exile, 1913) by Gyula Szekfű were analysed in long review articles by Révész, and Ravasz himself took issue with the interpretation of Protestantism made by the most famous poet of the new generation, Endre Ady.

The Commune and the Peace Treaty of Trianon shocked Ravasz. Béla Kun's totalitarian régime was openly anti-religious, so *The Protestant Review* was not published in the first half of 1919. The ten issues appeared in one volume at the end of that year. Since Ravasz was cut off from the Hungarian capital, Géza Lencz was responsible for the editorial work. The next year Gyula Madai, a secondary-school teacher was appointed editor, but he could not save *The Review*, which was discontinued at the end of 1920.

In 1921 Ravasz became the bishop of the Danube region of the Reformed Church. Having settled in Budapest, he set himself the task of reorganizing the activities of Hungarian Protestants. In 1924 *The Protestant Review* was renewed under his editorship. Because of his many ecclesiastical obligations, the Literary Association of Hungarian Protestants decided to appoint a Managing Editor. Ferenc Zsinka, a librarian, was nominated at the beginning of April. He took full responsibility for the administrative work and continued to help Ravasz until his death in 1930. His successor was Lajos Áprily (1887–1967), a well-known Transylvanian poet, who decided to leave Romania in 1929.

In the 1920s Hungarian cultural life was dominated by two journals. *Nyugat*, founded in 1908, continued to represent the values of the bourgeois Liberals who had been forced to be on the defensive since they were blamed

for their failure to resist the Communist dictatorship of 1919. In 1923 *Napkelet* was started with the idea of supporting the Neoconservative régime of István Bethlen and the policy of his Minister of Culture, Kúnó Klebelsberg. Since most of the contributors of *The Protestant Review* sympathized with the ideology of *Napkelet*, they felt a compulsion to devote serious attention to the activity of the Liberals.

Great emphasis was put on the analysis of the international scene. In 1924 Imre Révész gave a critical analysis of works about religious minorities. Two years later a book on the Soviet Union by a Scottish professor was reviewed. The article confirms the view that the attitude of *The Review* towards the Jews had changed partly because of the prominent role some Jews played in the Bolshevik Party and the Hungarian Communist movement. In 1930 Ravasz published a long essay on the Hungarian Reformed Church in North America. Important translations of outstanding Christian texts were given a close reading. Sándor Karácsony (1891–1952), a man of letters who was familiar with the most advanced trends in linguistics and semiotics, put forward ideas on educational reform. Among the new contributors were members of the new generation. Tibor Joó (1901–1945), a prominent representative of the *Geistesgeschichte* school, started a long series of penetrating investigations of the main ideas of Liberalism and nationalism; the literary historian Dezső Kerecsényi (1898–1945) set himself the task of reinterpreting the Hungarian literature of the 16th and 17th centuries; and László Németh (1901–1975), one of the most influential Hungarian writers of the 20th century, sought to revise the national canon. Zsigmond Ritoók (1870–1938), a medical expert and Kálmán d'Isoz (1878–1956), the Director of the Music Department of the National Museum, extended the range of topics discussed. Theatrical performances, musical events, and exhibitions were analysed by professional critics. In February 1938, for instance, concerts given by such artists as the American black singer Marian Anderson, the Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia, and the great German conductor Wilhelm Furtwaengler were reviewed.

In the interwar period the reputation of *The Protestant Review* was so high that Roman Catholics were pleased to publish in it. In 1938 a book on the great 19th-century poet János Arany by Dezső Keresztury, a prominent Catholic Liberal essayist, was given a scholarly critical assessment by János Barta, the leading Catholic literary historian of the new generation.

The change between the second and third stages in the history of *The Protestant Review* was less decisive than the one between the first two phases. In March 1938 Ravasz was replaced by Sándor Makkai and Áprily by Dezső Kerecsényi. Born at Szentgotthárd, Kerecsényi came from the small Lutheran community of southern Transdanubia. The years he spent as a student at the

Eötvös College brought him into contact with Liberal intellectuals. As Managing Editor he modified the orientation of *The Protestant Review* in the sense that he asked authors of different political convictions to contribute, focused on the history of Hungarian culture and contemporary literature rather than on ecclesiastical issues, and made *The Review* one of the chief organs of Geistesgeschichte essay writing. Two eminent historians, Elemér Mályusz and László Makkai, the son of Sándor Makkai, discussed the role of Joseph II in the history of Protestantism, and Tibor Joó reviewed the important collection of essays *What Is Hungarian?* (1939), edited by Gyula Szekfű, which had both Ravasz and Kerecsényi among its contributors. Gábor Halász, who was later to perish in the holocaust, was given a chance to comment on any important publication, irrespective of religious affiliation. He published an essay on Kölcsey, a Protestant, and praised a monograph on Péter Pázmány, the leader of the Hungarian Counter-Reformation, written by Sándor Sík, a well-known Catholic.

In 1940 the Northern half of Transylvania was returned to Hungary. Understandably, several articles were devoted to the past and present of the region. László Makkai examined the urban culture of Transylvanian Hungarians, while his father made an inquiry into the historical reasons for the loss of Transylvania after World War I. Different conceptions of Central Europe were discussed. Panslavism was investigated by Tibor Joó, and the life of the Hungarians living beyond the Carpathians by László Mikecs, an expert on the subject. From Nazism to Masaryk's bourgeois democracy the political movements of other countries were analysed.

Although Ravasz and Révész continued to appear in *The Review*, and Makkai wrote longer essays on such important subjects as the interpretation of the story of Cain, the significance of Calvin's theology for the 20th century, or the meaning of the tragic suicide of István Széchenyi in 1860, members of the young generation represented the majority of both the authors discussed and the contributors. The first books of Sándor Joó, László Vatai, and László Mátrai were reviewed. It is instructive to remember the later careers of these three talented intellectuals. Joó would become one of the most influential pastors to be persecuted by the Communists, Vatai was forced to leave Hungary altogether, whereas Mátrai went on to become an official philosopher of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. One or two minor figures seemed to flirt with nationalism, but the intellectual integrity of the journal was preserved by the editors and by most of the authors. In the early 1940s, when most Hungarian periodicals sided either with the bourgeois Liberals or with the Populists, *The Protestant Review* tried to keep a balance, occupy an intermediate position, and keep a distance from the ideological tension caused

by World War II. The various articles on the posthumous works of Babits and on the essays and dramas of László Németh had one common denominator: they criticized Hungarian intellectuals for their resistance to serious meditation on the possible role Hungarians could play in Europe. In December 1940 the works of the Populist poet Gyula Illyés were highly praised side by side with *The Breviary of St. Orpheus*, a work in progress by Miklós Szentkuthy, one of the most emphatically urban writers. The first issue of 1941 contained a favourable review of a book by József Darvas, a Populist who was member of the illegal Communist Party, and an appreciative essay on Sándor Márai by László Bóka. Both Márai and Bóka were among the harshest critics of Nazi Germany and the strongest opponents to the Populist movement. The next issue devoted much space to a summary of the posthumous works of Dezső Kosztolányi, one of the major figures of the first Nyugat generation, but it also gave a favourable interpretation of the overtly political message of *Mit ér az ember, ha magyar?* (What is a man's life worth if he is Hungarian?) by Péter Veres, one of the leading Populists. In contrast to other Hungarian journals, which were affected by the growing German influence, *The Protestant Review* insisted on the importance of French culture and the works of writers who were opposed to the political right (Márai, Illyés, the historian Szekfű, the translator Marcell Benedek, the Catholic poet Sándor Sík, the Socialist writer Kassák, the Anglophile essayist László Cs. Szabó, the pro-Communist sociologist Ferenc Erdei) and/or were of Jewish origin (Antal Szerb, György Rónay, György Sárközi, Jenő Mohácsi, Imre Waldapfel).

Was *The Review* affected by the German occupation? At the beginning continuity seemed to be almost unbroken. In May Gábor Gönczy spoke about intellectual decline and praised Kassák for his moral and artistic integrity. In June Endre Vajda made a comparative analysis of three verse collections, calling Sándor Weöres a great, Zoltán Jékely a fine, and Géza Képes a craftsmanlike poet. The influence of the growing political pressure was felt in the quantity rather than in the quality of the articles published. The January issue had 32, whereas the August issue had only 16 pages. In the latter Kerecsényi published a short article. Its title – *Why are Hungarian writers silent?* – had obvious political implications. The Managing Editor has to be given credit for the honesty of his conclusion. If a writer has a moral standard, Kerecsényi argued, he cannot be forced to make any statement that is in conflict with his beliefs.

Although the names of Makkai, Kerecsényi, and Révész appeared on the title page until the last issue came out, they all stopped contributing after August. The November issue contained only one longer essay. Early in 1945 Kerecsényi died. As far as I know, he was shot in southwestern Transdanubia.

For almost a half century *The Protestant Review* seemed to be dead. The reasons for this are too complex to discuss here. Ravasz was forced to retire from public life, whereas others made compromises with the Communists. In some cases the compromise was justifiable, in others it helped to undermine the traditional churches of Hungary. Since 1945 the world has seen radical changes. Our first priority must be to find a place for *The Protestant Review* in a largely secularized age. It is by no means easy to know what sort of audience such a journal may have at the end of the 20th century. There are some who ask for a highly intellectual publication that would make religion meaningful for a sophisticated public. Others insist on the mission such a journal can have for the Hungarian minorities of the neighbouring countries.

The present editor has no ecclesiastical function. Not only the Reformed Church and Lutherans, but also Unitarians and Adventists are represented in the Editorial Board. One of our goals is to make important theological texts available in Hungarian translation. I cannot see any reason for fundamental disagreement with Catholicism and Orthodoxy. No Hungarian Protestant can live without the tradition represented by Pázmány, Széchenyi, Babits, and Pilinszky. Our attention cannot be limited to Christianity; we intend to pay attention to other religions. The legacy of *The Protestant Review* is so distinguished that it will not be easy to achieve our goals. As T. S. Eliot wrote in *East Coker*, "For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

Notes

1. László Tőkéczy claims that the first period in the history of *The Protestant Review* lasted until 1919. See his article "Az első Protestáns Szemle (1889–1919)" *Protestáns Szemle* 54 (1992): 12–18.
2. István Hamar, "A rituális vérvád kérdéséhez" *Protestáns Szemle* 25 (1913): 610.
3. Ravasz László, "Beköszöntő" *Protestáns Szemle* 26 (1914): 5–6.
4. László Ravasz, *Emlékezéseim* (Budapest: A Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának Sajtóosztálya, 1992), 116–117.
5. "Mikor a zsidó antiszemita" *Protestáns Szemle* 26 (1914): 386.



BISHOP LAJOS ORDASS AND THE HUNGARIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

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1. Ordass's Image in the United States

Strangely enough, in the English-speaking world not much scholarly work has been done on the Hungarian Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordass (1901–1978). The most exhaustive study was a review-essay by John Eibner ten years ago¹ when Ordass's Selected Writings were published in Switzerland.² Since that time, however, the Bishop's two-volume autobiography was published by István Szépfalusi,³ and a biography by László Terray, originally written in Norwegian,⁴ came out both in German⁵ and in Hungarian.⁶ In the preface to the Hungarian edition Terray writes: "Today, the Ordass-theme is more up-to-date than ever."⁷

It seems to be imperative for us to bring the significance of the Bishop to the attention of the English-speaking church-historians and theologians, especially because during his lifetime his image was indeed in the limelight of the American church-related media. This was perhaps due to the fact that both his imprisonment in 1948 and his second removal in 1958 were in each case preceded by his visits to the USA in 1947 and 1957 respectively. His first visit coincided with the beginning of Stalinism in Eastern Europe, and his second visit with the failure of the Hungarian revolution in 1956. In both cases the impact he left on the American Lutherans was enormous. Perhaps the most conspicuous sign of the Americans' reverence for Ordass is the Vinje Lutheran church in Willmar, Minnesota, in which there is an oak frieze encircling the sanctuary with names of "clouds of witnesses" from the Bible and the history of the church. The list begins with Enoch and ends with the name of Ordass following the names of Bonhoeffer and Berggrav. When the oak frieze was carved, Ordass was the only person in the group who was alive.⁸

During his lifetime his enemies labelled him as "reactionary", and as "unbendingly stubborn",⁹ but for those who respected him, he was a man of "courageous sufferings", "a symbol of the kind of churchmen the world needs... a valiant man of God",¹⁰ a "typical Lutheran... loath to meddle in

politics",¹¹ "a symbol of indomitable belief",¹² a "man of indomitable belief",¹³ "an undaunted and persistent church-leader";¹⁴ "tall, gaunt, ascetic Hungarian [of] ... tremendous spiritual force",¹⁵ "the chief obstacle of the subjugation of the Church as an instrument of the State",¹⁶ "the martyr of Hungary",¹⁷ "hero of faith",¹⁸ a "saint of our time" ... a man who stood fast victoriously".¹⁹ In the secular Western press he appeared as "one of Hungary's staunchest anti-Communist religious leaders".²⁰ When he died in 1978, American church-leaders, his old friends, also paid tribute to him, saying that he was a man "who took orders from no one other than his Lord" (Schioz),²¹ and that he was "unmovable when he believed vital principles were at stake ... [whose] timeless legacy is his unflinching determination to place loyalty to the gospel above personal considerations, regardless of the cost." (Empie)²² However, this was a tribute already in retrospect. As a matter of fact, throughout the sixties and the seventies he seemed to have been forgotten, or as a recent reviewer put it: "After a period of lionization in the West, Ordass came to be regarded as an embarrassment for many."²³

2. The Dramatic Nature of a Life

First I shall argue that Ordass's life was inherently *dramatic*, then I shall attempt to draw the portrait of this dramatic life in a "double mirror": by reading his autobiography on the one hand; and also by following how his activity was reflected in the contemporary American church-related press.

Lajos Ordass was the Bishop of the Hungarian Lutheran Church from 1945 until his death in 1978, i.e., for thirty-three years, but he could exercise his office for altogether less than five years, which was evenly divided into two different periods: first between 1945–1948, and for the second time between 1956–1958.

If one carefully reads Ordass's autobiography it is simply impossible not to be impressed by the successive heights and depths, namely, the *dramatic quality* of this life. Being a Shakespearean scholar rather than a church historian, I cannot help but find many Shakespearean "themes" in this unique and breathtaking life-story. For example the topic of the "world turned upside down" becomes the story of "the church turned upside down"; the Shakespearean theme of "appearance versus reality" becomes the theme of "careerists or the fake versus the faithful or the real"; the "unlawful usurper versus the lawful banished ruler" topic comes to us here as the *de facto* Bishop imposed upon the church versus the *de jure* Bishop removed from office and sent into early retirement. Another obvious Shakespearean device is "dis-

guise”, which we get to know here as “undercover state-agents within the church”. And we could continue almost *ad eternum*: totalitarianism, dictatorship, deception, manipulation, fears, taboos, betrayals, on the one hand, and the faithfulness of a little minority (remnants, who stood fast in the tempests of history), on the other. Indeed, these are themes strikingly common in *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, and the past four decades of Hungarian church history.

But not only the themes are common. I find that Ordass’s life has a dramatic shape, reminiscent of the pyramidal shape of the rising and falling actions of the great tragedies, in this particular case with two pinnacles like the “M” of a MacDonalds-emblem. After I had envisaged this structure I came to see that Ordass himself must have been unconsciously aware of it as he structured his four-part autobiography: *Nagy idők kis tükré* (A Little Mirror of Great Times) dramatically, in a way similar to what I am proposing here. So this recognition of the dramatic quality of Ordass’s life encourages me to introduce it as a five-act drama rather than as a linear narrative. In Act I I will depict his life in pre-World War II Hungary from his birth to his elevation to the Bishop’s seat in 1945. The action gradually intensifies. In Act II I will discuss his episcopal activity between 1945–1948 at home and abroad. The climax of this gathering tension is, undoubtedly, his visit to the United States in 1947, which in Act III will be followed by his struggle, arrest and imprisonment in 1948, a sudden fall after the climax. This period of tragic depth covers almost two-years of imprisonment and the six years of enforced silence, the years between 1948–1956. In Act IV a new plot develops: he is rehabilitated before the Hungarian revolution, assumes office in the midst of the uprising, and remains in power even after its failure. The new zenith or climax is undoubtedly his visit to the third assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Minneapolis during the summer of 1957, where he is hailed as a hero of faith and elected to be the first Vice President of the World Federation. In Act V we shall see that soon after his return, despite his “new-found flexibility”,²⁴ he is gradually isolated, until he is officially removed by the state and the church in June 1958. The new *de profundis* period of silence and loneliness lasts for twenty years until his death in August 1978. In brief, the dramatic structure appears as follows:²⁵

ACT I. The Making of a Bishop (1901–1945)

ACT II. Episcopal Duties Home and Abroad (1945–1948)

ACT III. In Prison and in Silence (1948–1956)

ACT IV. Bishop Restored (1956–1958)

ACT V. Isolated and Silenced Again (1958–1978)

ACT I. The Making of a Bishop (1901–1945)

He was born as Lajos Wolf on February 6, 1901, in Torzsa in the Batschka district (known as Voivodina, an autonomous part of the former Yugoslavia) as the third son of a Lutheran German-speaking country-school teacher. His father came from the northern part of Hungary, but on his mother's side his family belonged to those Germans who were settled in the southern part of Austro-Hungary during the reign of Joseph II. He began his elementary education in his home village and continued his secondary education in the Lutheran *Gimnázium* of Bonyhád, in southern Hungary. Due to the Trianon-Treaty after World War I, he became separated from his home, which now became a part of Yugoslavia. In September 1920 he began his studies at the Lutheran Theological Academy, which had been temporarily based in Budapest. Cut off from any support from his home, he had to earn his livelihood while studying theology, now already in Sopron, Western Hungary. He was awarded a scholarship to study in the University of Halle in 1922–23, but the sudden inflation made his scholarship almost worthless. Therefore he had to work in the coal-mines in order to maintain himself. Having been ordained in October 1924, he served in various congregations as an assistant pastor for two years. With the financial help of his father, he managed to travel to Sweden in September 1927. He studied at Lund for a term, where he attended the lectures of Gustav Aulen and Anders Nygren. With regard to religious movements he was most impressed by the Lutheran piety of Henrik Schartau and his followers. In Uppsala, where he spent the Spring semester of the academic year, he was a frequent guest in the home of Archbishop Nathan Soderblom who even took him for his visitation tours in his archdiocese. During this year he made friends and lasting fellowships with Martin Lindstrom, Gunnar Hultgren, Ivan Hylander and, last but not least, Bo Giertz, who later became the well-known Bishop of Guthenburg and whose works Ordass translated during the 1940s into Hungarian.

After his return he continued as assistant pastor in various congregations. Already married, at the age of thirty he became a pastor of the Lutheran congregation of Cegléd, in central Hungary. He served there for ten years. The congregation was reported to have grown and flourished during this time. In 1941 he was invited to be the minister of the Kelenföld congregation in Budapest. Four years later, immediately after the war, at the age of forty-four he was elected as the Bishop of the Montana Diocese, the largest diocese of the Lutheran Church in Hungary.

What are the most important features of Ordass's pre-1945 activity? The historian Eibner, focusing mainly on the social dimensions of the Bishop's

activity, finds that there are two prominent features.²⁶ The first is Ordass's (at that time his name was still Wolf) effort to regenerate Hungarian society. His sermons, speeches and articles reveal his deep concern for social justice, his sensitivity to such issues as poverty, class-division, urbanization, breakdown of family-life, growing materialism, and so on. In this respect his model was the 19th century Danish poet Grundtvig, who introduced the democratic system of "People's Schools".²⁷ The other principle of his mission, according to Eibner, was Ordass's "dedication to the principles of national unity and independence".²⁸ Here Eibner refers to two contemporary articles by Ordass, the first one was on Hungary's regaining some southern territories after the 1941 invasion of Yugoslavia. The other one was a theological reflection on "Jesus Christ and the war".²⁹ Eibner finds that some passages of these articles reveal Ordass's "identification with anti-Trianon Treaty sentiment". He even suggests that the latter article "implicitly sanctioned the action of the Hungarian Government... [of declaring war on the Soviet Union] by supporting the just war doctrine".³⁰ According to László Terray, the passages taken out of context and slightly misunderstood by Eibner were further distorted in a recent Swedish book that used only Eibner as a source. Thus a false image was created that Ordass was briefly supportive of Hitler's war. Terray pointed out to Eibner in a letter that in the first quoted article Ordass was not speaking about the invasion of Yugoslavia but about the Lutherans reunited with their mother-church; in the second case Ordass theologically meditated on the evident contradiction between war and the Gospel and raised simultaneously the occasional necessity of a "defensive war" (which is, in my view, in accordance with Luther's doctrine of the "two kingdoms"). But, as Terray concludes, that was something different from supporting the just war doctrine.³¹

However, it is obvious both from Ordass's writings and actions that the political dimensions of Ordass's activity as a churchman (and always as churchman and never as politician!), during the Second World War, were undoubtedly anti-Nazi. But we are mistaken if we one-sidedly concentrate upon the socio-political aspects of Ordass's pastoral activity and disregard his less visible daily involvement with congregations living in diaspora and his commitment to translating books on religious education. Nevertheless by becoming a pastor in Budapest he was immediately confronted with some church-related social or political problems. By 1942 Ordass became aware of the extensive Nazi influence in Hungary. The wind of Nazi Germany had also touched the Lutheran Church in Hungary. One-third of the Hungarian Lutherans were of German origin. Some ministers of German origin compiled a *Memorandum* in which they not only sought remedy for their offences but

also declared their effort to form a church-organization that would break with the Hungarian church and would be linked administratively with the church in Germany. Ordass, who always believed in the integration rather than the division of the Church, wrote a long *Response to the Memorandum* in which he strongly condemned this effort and defended the interests of the Church in Hungary. In February 1942 he published it at his own expense and sent it to many church leaders.³² As a sign of personal protest against Hungary's occupation by the Germans on March 19, 1944, Ordass "magyarized" his surname from the German "Wolf" into the Hungarian "Ordass".

When Ordass read a Swedish Bishop's (Gustaf Aulen) account of the Norwegian Lutheran Church's purely defensive struggle under Bishop Berggrav against Hitler in 1943, he was so much impressed that he immediately translated it and distributed it to the leaders of the Church. Moreover, he openly lectured on this theme at an assembly of pastors and teachers in Békéscsaba, in the southeastern part of Hungary. Such an act was not without risk in the Hungary of 1943.³³

A new church-related issue was the Jewish-question. Many Jews were keen on formally joining the Christian church in order to save their lives. Among the members of the clergy there were some severe abuses: some clergymen were willing to issue certificates of baptism only at the expense of considerable payment. Ordass protested at such abuses. He tried to protect the Jews with the help of the Swedish Red Cross and he was even able to obtain a Swedish passport in one case. In 1944 there was a Swedish initiative that the three Hungarian historical churches (Roman Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran) should openly and concomitantly protest against the pro-Nazi Szálasi government's deportation of the Jews. Thus Ordass, on behalf of the sick Bishop Sándor Raffay, paid an official visit to the residence of the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Esztergom. He travelled together with the Swedish Embassy Councilor, Valdemar Langlet. The Primate's response to this initiative was negative: the Catholic Church, said he, had already expressed her protest. During the siege of Budapest Ordass found shelter with some members of his congregation in the cellar beneath the building of his congregation. While living underground for many weeks he translated the dramas of the Danish poet Kaj Munk (who himself was executed by the Gestapo), into Hungarian. The devastating war eventually came to an end. Throughout the spring Ordass was busy with burying the dead, sometimes digging the graves himself.

In the summer of 1945 the 79-year-old Bishop Raffay resigned. Ordass was elected (with an absolute majority) to be the Bishop of the Montana District.

ACT II. Episcopal Duties Home and Abroad (1945-1948)

Lajos Ordass became a new bishop in an entirely new historical period. In 1945 Hungary was a country that had experienced both Nazi invasion and Soviet occupation. It had suffered great devastation but was still a democratic country. The Communists' totalitarian takeover took place only three years later.

The Protestant churches responded to the new political situation in different ways. Pastor Albert Bereczky, later Bishop of The Reformed Church, for example, proposed a theology of contrition which stressed that the churches are responsible for the social evils of the past as they were beneficiaries. Now, therefore, God punishes his people just as he punished the people of Israel. If the state wants to nationalize their historical institutions they should interpret it as a judgement from God. The Lutherans did not see the church's task in such prophetic terms and, they "did not abandon the historic tradition of the church".³⁴ In an advent pledge Ordass wrote: "We shall not allow anything to be deleted from our Hungarian past that God has given with his manifest blessing, and thus judges worthy of life."³⁵

In letters written to the ministers of his diocese, Ordass frequently discussed the theological relationship of the church to the state. It is important for us to understand that the basis of all his action was *Lutheran theology*. It was only his enemies that tried to create an image of him as a political reactionary. He was simply defending his church on theological, though not always explicit, principles. The following sentence, for example, undoubtedly reflects Luther's famous idea of the "two kingdoms", "our church knows her duties with regard to the state and democracy, and she wants to accomplish them faithfully. But the church also expects from the state that her preaching and teaching activity will not be hindered..."³⁶ So Ordass's purpose was to work out a fair, theologically justified, relationship to the state. He offered to support the state, but *not unconditionally*, like some of his followers for whom the church became totally subservient to the state. In Ordass's theology the church and the state were meant to mutually recognize their spheres of interest and activity. He found that the church, by virtue of her cultural and social activity (schools, hospitals, charity institutions and so on) contributes to the welfare of the state and society. Therefore she could accept financial support from the state; and she should count on the state's guarantee of her established rights to enjoy autonomy, to preach the gospel, and to provide Christian education. The image Ordass frequently used was that "the church is the conscience of the state".³⁷ The church should never have a political programme. Neither should she directly meddle in politics because that is not her mission. However, when

political events or measures touch either the body or the members of the church, it is the church's duty to speak out publicly on those issues.

Before the great debate over the nationalization of church-schools in 1948, there were at least two political issues on which Ordass felt that the church could not be silent. The first was the Hungarian-Czechoslovak repartition agreement in 1946, which he found incorrect in principle and immoral in practice.³⁸ He also felt it was dangerously weakening the power of the Lutheran Church in Hungary.³⁹ Another issue was the arbitrary deportation of the members of Hungary's German community. Since this practice also affected the Lutheran church, Ordass repeatedly protested officially against the deportations.⁴⁰ While a couple of years before he had attacked the nationalism of the German minority in a country under German influence, now he defended this minority in a country hostile to the Germans.

The political situation became gradually more and more severe as the government began its centralizing programme. The Ministry of Religious and Public Education began to interfere with the administration of church schools, and state censors were appointed to control the radio-broadcasts of church services. Ordass never failed to protest.

In early 1947 he was given official permission to travel to Western Europe and the United States. His primary mission was to discuss the Western churches' financial support of their Hungarian brethren. He was invited to take part in a session of a post-war relief agency in Geneva (Department of Reconstruction of the World Council of Churches in Process of Formation) and also received an invitation to take part at the first assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (still in the process of formation) in Lund, July 1947. It was decided that between the Geneva meeting in March and the Lund Assembly in July he should visit the Lutherans in the United States. Several years later he described how he met Dr Franklin Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church:

Thus in April I traveled to the United States. I felt I was in a rather difficult situation. For many years we had had no connection with our brothers of the faith in America. This meant that I would be meeting strangers. Most difficult, however, was the realization that I would appear as a beggar from a totally impoverished church. I met Dr Fry... I related how I conceived of my visit to America... I wanted to visit all the Hungarian Lutheran congregations... I mentioned that... I would like to visit the Swedish settlements... Then Dr Fry spoke. I learned that the Lutheran churches of America intended to raise ten million dollars in two years, to help the damaged churches in Europe. He assured me that the Hungarian church would not be forgotten. He then proposed that I should indeed visit the Hungarian and Swedish churches, according to

my plan, but that I should also help promote our common campaign with addresses. I should explain the European situation at several synod conventions. In this way I could make a contribution to the success of the campaign... Dr Fry's words greatly eased my mind. Now I had the feeling that I was not in America as a beggar, but that I could regard myself as a co-worker in the relief-work for all Europe.⁴¹

In Norway he met, for the first time, Eivind Berggrav, the Bishop of Oslo. He had been familiar with the Bishop's confrontation with the Nazis; now he became even more impressed by the personal encounter. Upon his return to Hungary Ordass was interviewed about his visit and he also quoted Berggrav's advice to him:

On the basis of our Confessional Writings and the Holy Scripture our fight was purely a defence of the church... If you have to fight for the spiritual freedom of the church, be careful not to mix it up with political aspects.⁴²

Ordass's enemies frequently accused him of ambition to become a "Hungarian Berggrav". But as Terray points out, Ordass knew that Berggrav was the Bishop of a national church while he was the Bishop of a minority denomination. Moreover, he was aware that churchstructure and spirituality were basically different in these two countries.⁴³ Nevertheless, as Terray had observed as early as 1956, the basic difference between the Roman Catholic attitude, led by Cardinal Mindszenty, and the Lutheran conduct of Bishop Ordass is that between "resistance" and "defence". "Bishop Ordass has not become a symbol of the Hungarian people's struggle against Communism, as Cardinal Mindszenty has. Ordass's attitude should be characterized by the word 'defence' rather than the word 'resistance'. His spiritual mentor was Gandhi not Gregory VII."⁴⁴

In Lund Ordass was elected to the Vice Presidency of the Lutheran World Federation. In Terray's words: "There he gave one of his memorable sermons, short, simple words, expressing profound truth with great force and beauty. He called upon his hearers to 'Work while it is day'. Everyone knew how short Lajos Ordass's day might be. Many begged him not to return to communist-dominated Hungary but he refused to desert his post... 'You pray,' he said, 'we'll do the suffering.'⁴⁵

Having returned to his home-country from the heights, the fortunes of Bishop Ordass were speedily beginning to decline. That takes us to the third act.

ACT III. In Prison and in Silence (1948-1956)

When Ordass returned to Hungary from his five-month-visit to Western Europe and North America he found that the political climate was gradually hardening, becoming more and more totalitarian. The tensions between the churches and the state began to grow, especially in connection with the nationalization of church schools. The historical churches were divided in their policies towards the state. The Roman Catholics led by Cardinal Mindszenty launched the programme of political resistance, while the Reformed churches following the advice of Karl Barth, went along with the nationalization programme. For the Lutheran church a severe conflict was about to develop with the state. But the Lutheran church was also divided internally. The majority, following the leadership of Bishop Ordass, found that giving up the schools would mean giving up a historical mission of the church. In order to impose its will upon the church the state turned to the strategy of using some laymen such as Iván Reök, MP and an active member of the Deák-tér congregation, and a government minister Ernő Mihályfi (a Lutheran clergyman's self-proclaimed atheist son) to split, manipulate and frighten the leadership and believers. Their task was to create an image of Ordass as reactionary. Moreover, they insisted that the lay-leaders of the Lutheran church, such as Baron Albert Radvánszky, the General Inspector, or Gábor Vladár, the former minister of justice and Inspector of Ordass's diocese, should resign. But Ordass was unwilling to dismiss these leaders, just as he was unwilling to give up the schools. Government newspapers launched heavy attacks on him: they wanted to discredit the Bishop's person in front of the members of the church. By May 1948 the state prepared an "Agreement" in which the desire of the nationalization of all church-related schools was expressed. It guaranteed, however, the free exercise of church life and that the state subsidy to the churches would terminate after twenty years. The government made undoubtedly clear "that if the Church refused to agree, nationalization would still go ahead, but other established rights, financial assistance in particular, would be in jeopardy".⁴⁶

In June 1948 the Bishops of the four diocese (Lajos Ordass, Zoltán Turóczy, József Szabó and the Deputy Bishop Károly Németh) issued an episcopal letter to the congregations in which they informed them about the state's nationalization programme and proposed "Agreement". In the letter they also suggested that congregations would have to make financial sacrifices if they wanted to maintain the schools that they had fought for in the past.⁴⁷

Though the episcopal letter was signed by all the bishops, it soon became obvious that for Bishops Turóczy and Szabó the schools of the church were

less important than for Ordass. They were supported by some younger clergymen like Imre Veöreös and Gyula Groó. Their conviction was similar to Barth's suggestion that the churches' primary task was the proclamation of the Word and not the defence of a church's structure.⁴⁸ The "Turóczy-line" found that the schools did not belong to the body of the church. "No martyr-blood should be shed for the schools" – wrote Imre Veöreös, the editor of a Lutheran weekly *Új Harangszó*,⁴⁹ a few days before the Parliament was to vote for the confiscation of the schools. Ordass wanted to be informed how the congregations felt about the tense situation. At various meetings he informed the members of his diocese about the alternatives facing the church. The first alternative was to keep the schools and the legally elected leaders, and, as a consequence, possibly lose the state subsidy. The other alternative was to "offer" the schools and dismiss the church leadership but consequently to keep the state subsidy. There was a dramatic moment at a conference arranged by the Lutheran evangelistic association "Friends' Movement" in Fót, outside Budapest. All the Bishops were invited to this conference but only Szabó and Turóczy could attend. The participants (though in their theology they were undoubtedly closer to the visiting Turóczy than to Ordass) all knelt down to pray in support of the "Ordass-line".⁵⁰ As it was described those days, the "Turóczy-line" was characterized as a "two-sentence church politics" while the "Ordass-line" as a "one-sentence view". According to the two-sentence view the church acknowledged the secular power ("Render unto Caesar which be Caesar's") in the first statement, while affirming faith in the second statement ("[Render] unto God the things which be God's").⁵¹ Here the great theological-ethical question of compromise is at stake: how far should we go in our compromise? Should we give everything a Caesar demands from us? Or is there a limit where we should *stop*? But what if a Caesar cunningly, in disguise does nothing but demand our *soul*?⁵² That was the real issue, or the controversy, between the "Turóczy-line" and the "Ordass-line". The "Turóczy-line" was more inclined to compromise because it wanted to protect the proclamation of the word (undoubtedly, even if implicitly a Barthian influence) but Ordass's view (probably also explicitly) was more in accordance with the teaching of Luther and of the Confessional Writings of the Church, namely, that during the time of persecution the otherwise secondary issues should be taken as primary.⁵³

Since Ordass's consequent and persistent defence of the church's autonomy and historical rights could not be broken, the Communist state turned to some new means to discredit him and to remove him from his office as an obstacle to "normal church-state relations". First, on August 24, 1948, he was briefly detained without charge. On September 7 he was given 24 hours to resign as

Bishop. Having refused to do that, he was rearrested. This was followed by the typical Stalinist show-trial where he was charged with violating the country's currency laws. That is, he had failed to report receipt of relief funds which the Church had received from the American Lutherans. He was sentenced to two years in prison. Albert Radvánszky, the Supervisor General, and Sándor Vargha, the Secretary-General, were also imprisoned. At the trial Ordass, according to a contemporary shorthand record, maintained his innocence saying:

During these five weeks I have asked myself and God many times if I am guilty. I have had plenty of time to ponder the question... I must state that I ...have never lived with such a peace in my heart as I have received during this time... As I now stand here I carry a wound... If the judge sets me free, then the wound will not hurt so much that I could not work and serve my fatherland. But in any event, the blessed will of God will be done.⁵⁴

In this *Autobiography* Ordass later recorded as follows: "It has become my conviction that God has called me for the episcopal service because he wanted to use me to utter the word which he thought the Lutheran church was meant to utter."⁵⁵ The state achieved its purpose to break the spirit of resistance within the Lutheran church: while Ordass was in prison, Bishop Zoltán Turóczy and the lay Supervisor-General Zoltán Mády signed the "Agreement" in December 1948. Eibner is probably right in perceiving that, "although the concordat enshrined most of the principles of religious freedom that Ordass thought fundamental to the mission of the Church, it implicitly annulled the Church's claim to autonomy, upon which all its other freedoms ultimately depended. The government thus gained control of the Church's governing apparatus..."⁵⁶

The world was outraged. It is interesting to observe how well and accurately informed the contemporary American press was. *The Christian Century*, for example, wrote:

The arrests in Hungary charged that Bishop Ordass and his lay companions had engaged in black market transactions with \$ 500,000 they received from America. Lutheran officials in this country call this a lie out of whole cloth, since Bishop Ordass never received any such sum, and all money sent from this country has been forwarded through the National Bank of Hungary. Newspaper reports from Budapest state that no one in Hungary believes the financial charges. But the Lutherans in Hungary have refused to go along with the Reformed Church in approving the nationalization of all schools. Arresting the Primate is the government's retaliation.⁵⁷

The World Council of Churches immediately protested:

The World Council replies that it has assurances from American Lutheran headquarters that the black market allegations are false, that it has reason to believe that the imprisonment was actuated by political motives, and that it is forced to bring the case to the attention of the world as an example of the denial of religious liberty.⁵⁸

There was also Bishop Berggrav, among others, who immediately wrote a letter of protest to the Hungarian Prime Minister.⁵⁹

What is perhaps most shocking is that the Hungarian authorities could arrange that their version of the bishop's story should also appear in the American press. The man responsible was a Reformed theologian Alexis Mathé who wrote an article for *The Christian Century* with the title: "Are Hungary's Churches Persecuted?" He argued that the Hungarian Protestants, unlike the Catholics, had always been progressive in throughout their history. Bishop Ordass and Bishop Ladislas Ravasz, however, were following the Roman Catholic lead to oppose the present regime. On Ordass's "personal tragedy", he said, "The Bishop unfortunately allowed his political convictions to influence his duties and activities as a church leader... Secretary Varga kept the books in a confused and inexperienced manner ... large sums cannot be accounted for ... the court gave Bishop Ordass the mildest possible sentence..."⁶⁰

It was Paul Empie of the National Lutheran Council, whom Ordass had met two years before and who denied Mathé's false allegations in an article "The Case of Bishop Ordass". He said that the allegations that Ordass joined Roman Catholics in opposing the present regime "is not true... Bishop Ordass not only held no sympathy whatever for with the Roman Catholic position in the matter, but as a typical Continental Lutheran he was loath to meddle in politics..."⁶¹ He demonstrated that the funds in question were cabled from New York directly to the National Bank of Hungary, and pointed out that the real issue was the nationalization of the parochial schools. Empie confirmed that "Bishop Ordass saw his fate well in advance... He felt that ... the Church in Germany had blundered by failing to resist immediately when Nazi ideologies crowded in upon Christian principles. The lesson was clear – the church cannot do business with a police state. For that reason, and for that reason alone, he now lies in prison. That's the tragedy of the Mathés, the Mihályfis and the Reöks."⁶²

So much for the unsuccessful protest of the West. In the meantime Ordass at the "Star-Prison" of Szeged shared his cell with fifteen Roman Catholic priests. One day Bishop Turóczy visited him and conveyed to him a message

from the state: if he resigned, he would be freed immediately. Ordass was given an hour and a half to think about this offer. He asked for a Bible that he wanted to read during this time. He went through the Acts of the apostles. At first he stopped at the fifth chapter, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (v.29). Then he came to chapter sixteen, which is about the imprisoned Silas. Having read this, Ordass gained peace and confirmation that he should stay in prison. He told Turóczy. When Turóczy had left, Ordass returned to his cell. The Catholic priests were curious about what had happened. When he had related everything to them, they were relieved. They admitted that in the meantime they were praying that Ordass should be able to stand firm and protect his soul from damage or injury.⁶³ On Christmas 1949 he preached for the Catholic priests. In prison he worked out a ten-point daily agenda for himself including devotions in English and in Swedish, as well as imaginary visits to members of his congregation; a recollection of the faces whom he had met; proverbs, hymns, jokes and folksongs. On April 1, 1950, shortly before his release, the Special Disciplinary Tribunal of the Hungarian Lutheran Church formally stripped him of his office.⁶⁴ The American press commented on the event as follows:

This action by the Hungarian Lutherans in deposing their bishop at the government's behest shows that the division between them and the rest of world Lutherianism is now virtually complete. From now on this branch of Protestantism must be regarded as being as subservient to the Communist state as is Orthodoxy in Russia and its eastern satellites.⁶⁵

The American Lutherans, of course, could not know that the action of the deposition was taken because of the threat from the Stalinist Dictator Rákosi, namely, that "if the decision of the tribunal in the case against Ordass is not condemning, they [the State] will raise a charge of treason against him, and the sentence will, without any doubt, be death".⁶⁶ The frightened Tribunal of the church felt forced to choose, what they believed to be, the lesser evil.

On May 30, 1950, the doors of the Vác prison opened for Bishop Ordass. He returned to Budapest to begin six years of total seclusion, earning his living by knitting. He and his wife had to work hard to provide bread for their children. In Lutheran circles it was fashionable for a while to wear a scarf that was knitted by Bishop Ordass. During this time of silence he began to write Passion meditations and to work on a translation from Icelandic. At the same time he completed the first part of his *Autobiography* with the title: *Little Mirror of Great Times*. During these years Bishop Ordass was completely isolated. His pastors, being frightened, deserted him. There is only depth, suffering and silence. But this is only the end of Act III.

ACT IV. Bishop Restored (1956-1958)

Stalinist terror was in its full swing in the early 1950s in Eastern Europe. But after the death of Stalin in 1953, and particularly after the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, the hard political line softened somewhat. The Protestant churches claimed to have found their place in the “socialist Hungary”. The leaders of the Reformed Church were Bishop Albert Bereczky and Bishop János Péter (after 1956 openly Communist and the Foreign Minister of the Kádár Government). The leaders of the Lutheran Church were Bishop Lajos Vető and Bishop László Dezséry (after 1956 a Communist publicist, self-proclaimed atheist, and Parliament representative). In the beginning, the Reformed leadership received open support from the theologian Karl Barth. But some years later Barth, in a famous letter, reproved Bereczky of being “on the way to making [his] affirmation of communism a part of the Christian message...”⁶⁷

The Lutherans, fortunately or not, had no such authoritative voices behind them.

On August 17, 1955, *The Christian Century* reported that “the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches ... in Davos ... has accepted the invitation of the Hungarian churches in the World Council to hold its annual meeting next year in or near Budapest”.⁶⁸ Why should this meeting take place in an Eastern-bloc country? The point of the Western churches is easy to understand:

By this decision the executive agency of the council has told the world that it does not intend to allow political or social barriers to balk the spread of the ecumenical movement. At the first sign of lessening cold war tension, the World Council has voted to make this spectacular gesture of fellowship with the churches in communist areas.⁶⁹

But why were the “Red” bishops so keen on having this meeting behind the iron curtain if they were representing the interests of the state and not of the church? Recent research in archives has shown that in the early fifties these church leaders had been commended to try to occupy important posts in the world organizations.⁷⁰ In their home-rhetoric they cunningly condemned these organizations as “anti-Communist” bodies. But in the meantime they tried to exert their influence by grasping these positions.

Indeed, the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches was to take place in Galyatető in August 1956. During this summer, Ordass’s home, unvisited in the past six years, now suddenly became a very busy place. The first unexpected visitor to knock on his door was Bishop László Dezséry. Ordass usually recorded his significant meetings as *Pro*

memoria notes immediately after the events. His conversation with Dezséry is also recorded in his *Autobiography*, this time in the form of a dramatic dialogue. Therefore we can get an authentic and vivid image of what actually happened.⁷¹ The reason for Dezséry's visit was the impending WCC Central Committee meeting in Galyatető. The leaders of the great church organization would undoubtedly want to meet Bishop Ordass, who had been the Vice President of the Lutheran World Federation between 1947 and 1952. It was in the interest of the leaders of the Hungarian church that this meeting should proceed smoothly and that Ordass's report should not discredit them. The Hungarian leaders did not want the visit of the foreign church-leaders to turn into a pilgrimage to Ordass's home. Therefore they planned to organize a "package-visit" with one of the bishops accompanying the visitors.⁷² On July 7, János Horváth, the President of the Hungarian State Bureau for Church Affairs, also came to Ordass's home.⁷³ He immediately offered financial support: an increase in pension and a recompensation for the loss of the past six years. On July 24, four days before the arrival of the delegates, Horváth visited Ordass again.⁷⁴ Now he raised the possibility of his rehabilitation by the state. In the mutually courteous dialogues on the present situation of the church, Ordass never failed to mention that his possible rehabilitation could not be separated from the rehabilitation of two Budapest Pastors: András Keken of the Deák-tér congregation, and György Kendeh of Kelenföld congregation. Both of them had been imprisoned in 1950 in order to force the Disciplinary Tribunal to formally strip Ordass of his episcopal office.

On July 28, 1956, two leaders of The Lutheran World Federation indeed arrived in Ordass's home: the President Hans Lilje and the General Secretary Dr Lund-Quist. Hans Lilje said that it was not an accident that they had accepted the invitation to organize the meeting in Hungary. They came with the purpose of helping their Christian brothers in Hungary, especially Bishop Ordass, the former Vice President of the Lutheran World Federation. "Your steadfastness in faith has become a symbol of Christian steadfastness in the Western world",⁷⁵ said Lilje when they were leaving. This first visit lasted only for half an hour, for Bishop Vető was waiting for them in front of Ordass's home.

On August 1, he was revisited by these leaders. Their company was joined by Dr Franklin Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church in America⁷⁶ (from 1957 President of the Lutheran World Federation). Fifteen years later Ordass remembered this visit as follows: "Dr Fry, weighed down with work, still found time ... to deal with the Hungarian government regarding my case."⁷⁷ Two days later the negotiations took an official form in the State Bureau for Church Affairs with the foreign church-leaders present (this time including Willem A. Visser't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of

Churches).⁷⁸ An agreement was made the following day, August 4, and was announced officially at the closing section of the Galyatető-meeting. According to the declaration, 1. The World Council of Churches will be entirely satisfied only if Bishop Ordass is restored as Bishop. 2. The official rehabilitation of Ordass on behalf of the state is in progress. 3. Both the state and the church will work out the possibility of Ordass's practical episcopal activity. 4. Temporarily Ordass will lecture as a Professor at the Theological Seminary.⁷⁹ The excited atmosphere and the delegates' concern for Ordass is well reflected in an article of *The Christian Century* on August 29, 1956.⁸⁰

However, the rehabilitation was not going to take place as quickly as expected. Almost two months passed without anything happening. On September 21, János Horváth eventually called Ordass to his office.⁸¹ He explained to Ordass that the belatedness of his rehabilitation was due to the recent American press-image of Ordass having been "the Lutheran Mindszenty" and with the excited, anti-Dezséry mood of the Pastors' Conferences of Fót in early September.⁸² But because of letters urging the rehabilitation from abroad, the state did not want to delay it any longer. On October 6, when the Communist martyr of the Stalinist era, László Rajk, was officially reburied, Ordass also received the letter of the Supreme Court announcing that they had overturned Lajos Ordass's conviction on the grounds that no crime had been committed. Three days later, in Ordass's words: "tottering after the measures of the state",⁸³ the General Court of the Lutheran Church declared the 1950 deposition illegal. Ordass preached first on October 14 to the Budahegyvidék congregation. His text was on the King's Marriage Feast in Mt.22:1-14. He said among other things:

When everybody deserted me and I shook with fear my Savior called me and took me in his two strong arms. He led me through a burning flame and showed me the beginning of a new life. I know that if nothing is constant in this world, God is unchanged; and to Him which was sin yesterday remains sin today and that which was holy yesterday remains holy today.⁸⁴

Ordass was to begin his lectures on Scandinavian research on Luther at the Lutheran Theological Academy on October 24 but the sudden political changes interfered with the ecclesiastical plans. The Hungarian revolution broke out on October 23. Bishop Dezséry resigned on October 30, "giving over the episcopal seat" to Bishop Ordass.⁸⁵ Thus on October 31, Reformation Day, Ordass could preach from the pulpit of Deák-tér congregation as the restored bishop. He was reported to have been greeted by "eyes glistening with tears of joy".⁸⁶ And with the resignation of Bishop Lajos Vető on All Saints

Day,⁸⁷ Ordass was automatically restored to the primacy of the whole church. When it became evident that the Soviet troops were reinvading the country on November 2, Bishop Ordass was asked to give a Radio-Appeal along with Cardinal Mindszenty and the restored Reformed Bishop, László Ravasz. Ordass delivered his speech in Hungarian, Swedish, German and English. The speech was more confessional than political in tone: it addressed the Lutheran brethren abroad to support the Hungarian people with medicine, food and so on. The only political touch was his request "to give us any possible *help* [it (T.F.)] you can for the recognition of the declaration of the neutrality". But if we read the text carefully, we can recognize that he was saying this not "in the name of the church" but "in the name of the nation"⁸⁸ (again, a careful distinction between the "two kingdoms"!). On November 3, the Bishop organized a meeting for Pastors and Seniors and Professors he could reach. If one reads the minutes of the meeting one cannot but be impressed by the dynamic revitalization and restructuring of all aspects of church life, including ministry, education, media and so on.⁸⁹

The Russians invaded Hungary on November 4. Ten days later the American journal *The Christian Century* reported on the Protestant churches as follows:

The picture is one of a vital and vigorous Protestantism, ripping through the terrible tarpaulin of repression, springing out to reorder and redirect its own valiant life. The bloody brutality of Russian butchers has now pole-axed all that new life and hope.⁹⁰

However, this "pole-axing" was not so obvious, not so immediate in the case of the Lutheran church. "Large-scale arrests, executions and deportations characterized the restoration of Communist authority, but despite his open association with the revolution, Ordass was allowed to continue at his post."⁹¹ – writes Eibner.

Here we arrive at a very exciting question. Why and how could Ordass and the Lutheran church under his leadership survive for almost two years? At first sight we receive a disturbingly incompatible image: exodus from Hungary, terror, imprisonments in the country and the Lutheran church meanwhile flourishes. How is it possible? Various solutions can be given to answer this dilemma. The first and most obvious answer is that changes within the churches usually follow the political changes with a certain delay. But two years seem to be too long a delay! Another reply is perhaps of minor significance: it concerns the initial good relationship between János Horváth, President of the State Bureau for Church Affairs, and Ordass: it is recorded in the minutes of the November 3 meeting that Ordass offered protection and help for János

Horváth and his family during the time of the revolution. When in March 1957, Decree 22 of 1957 was issued about the "advance state-approval of higher church-office nominations", Horváth called Ordass saying that "the Lutheran church is all right in this question".⁹² This humanitarian reason may be a factor, but again not a full explanation. A more rational argument could be that Ordass was extremely skillful to restructure the church by appointing new persons to key positions immediately, in the first days of November 1956. His enemies later called this "the counterrevolution in the Lutheran church". Another reason, not unrelated to the previous one, could be that Dezséry resigned not only his episcopal seat but also his "church-membership". By this I do not mean any formal resignation but only the fact that he ceased to be interested in church affairs. He had probably no ambition to know what course the church was going to take: he was in the process of reconverting the direction both of his life and professional career. The lack of his presence could undoubtedly suggest a sense of liberty within the church. We may argue that the state wanted to keep Ordass for tactical reasons: to uphold him as the sign of the freedom of the churches in postrevolutionary Hungary. They were keen on his leading the Hungarian delegation to the Lutheran World Federation Assembly to be held in Minneapolis during the summer of 1957. We may continue with various explanations. But it is undoubtedly true that during his twenty months of leadership the Hungarian Lutheran Church was reactivated, the church-press and theological work revitalized, the congregation-life and the intercongregational conferences began to flourish again. *The church became a church*, and not a subservient tool of the state.

Eibner is probably right when he finds the explanation in Ordass's "new-found flexibility" in dealing with state-authorities.⁹³ Far from being "unbending" or "stubborn", as his enemies earlier called him, now he was willing to compromise. He must have recognized that the church was in a totally different situation in 1957 than in 1948. He accepted this new situation: that "the Church fulfills its mission in Hungary by following the course of socialism".⁹⁴ We could draw up two lists: the first containing those questions on which he was willing to compromise and another list of questions on which he was not. What may surprise us at first sight is, perhaps, that now he approved and accepted the same 1948 "Agreement" that he so much opposed ten years earlier. Eibner remarks: "he could not have taken such a step lightly, for he was implicitly abandoning the Hungarian Lutheran Church's historic claim to autonomy, formerly at the root of his conception of the Church's service to the nation."⁹⁵ Moreover, he agreed that the Church should participate in the work of the government-sponsored National Peace Council and accepted the request to become a member of the Presidium of the Patriotic

People's Front, an organ of the Kádár-regime's "politics of alliances". We get a more subtle picture of these compromises from the *Autobiography* of Ordass that was published four years after Eibner's article. We can understand the necessity of compromise. Though Ordass's acts seem to be at first sight somewhat different from those ten years before, he still remained true to himself. My thesis is that the "new" Ordass is ultimately the same as the "old". In both cases, though in different situations, he fully understood that he had to defend his church or people against the state. Ordass *did* represent the interest of the church against the state and not the other way round as interim Bishops Dezséry or Káldy, the latter being the one who was made to fill Ordass's place after his removal in 1958.

There is also another group of questions in which he was not willing to compromise because he found that by doing so he would damage his soul and that of the church. He insisted that on these issues there should be a "halt", otherwise he would lose himself. However, they will dramatically emerge only in the autumn of 1957, after his return from the Lutheran World Assembly in Minneapolis. Again, before his "downfall", he has yet to reach the "heights".

In August 1957 Ordass led the delegation of the Hungarian Lutheran Church to Minneapolis for the third Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation. When he arrived in New York he met Paul Empie, the old friend whom he had seen ten years before. He learned from him how some of his compatriots tried to undermine his reputation in the West and that efforts were being made by the Americans on his behalf. In Minneapolis at the opening service he preached before an audience of 12,000. The *Lutheran Herald* that published his sermon, "The Fruits of the Death of Jesus Christ", also described the dignity and modesty of his appearance,

hero of faith ... whom the Lutheran World Assembly chose to honor by designating him preacher at the opening service... His eyes are deep-set... For they are the eyes that have looked deeply into the hell that evil men can make for one another ... that have seen the suffering and deprivations of his people: that have witnessed the perfidy of those who had been his friends.⁹⁶

In his simple sermon of brief sentences he referred to himself in third person singular and the congregation was deeply moved:

You have heard these words from an aging disciple of Christ. The disciple would now in concluding his formal message give a personal testimony of his Lord and Saviour. He would like to say how many times in this life he has experienced the

forgiving grace of Jesus Christ. And he would also like to say that when he was in bondage in the most literal sense of the word, Christ gave him kingly freedom. And what a joy it was to be able to experience this freedom!⁹⁷

When he gave an interview to the reporter from *Time* magazine, instead of praising the political system (which was expected by the government officials in Hungary) he praised the vivid church-life. This was no lie: "today there is tremendous enthusiasm for the church and its leaders".⁹⁸

It was a joy for him to learn that another old friend, Dr Franklin Clark Fry, the President of the United Lutheran Church in America, had been elected President of the Lutheran World Federation. Ordass was elected as the first Vice-President and his old Swedish friend, Bo Giertz, the other Vice President. Ordass later reported that on August 1957 Franklin Fry spent his fifty-seventh birthday with the six-member Hungarian delegation at his home in New Rochelle.⁹⁹

The last days of this summer mark the second zenith of this dramatic life. When Ordass returned to Hungary in the autumn of 1957 a new confrontation with the state was about to develop which would necessarily lead to his isolation and his second and last tragic downfall. This will be the subject of the last Act of his dramatic life. Here we shall try to show that we can speak about a "downfall" only in a material sense. With the eye of faith one sees the opposite. With the well-known words of the apostle, unlike the "natural" person, the "spiritual" person is able to discern that what actually was taking place was not defeat but victory.

ACT V. Isolated and Silenced Again

Upon his return from the United States Ordass had to experience that the political climate was becoming more and more unfavourable towards the churches. Now it would become obvious that Ordass's "new-found flexibility" was different not only in degree but also in kind from that of those who had made the church simply subservient to the state. We have seen the questions in which Ordass was willing to compromise, and now we will come to see that this compromise had clear-cut limits. He was conscious of how far he could go, and where he had to stop. He knew that only by stopping, standing and remaining firm could he preserve integrity and identity. For Ordass "standing firmly" meant, of course, standing and remaining in faith. He found that any further compromise would result in a fall (not simply "falling into line" but becoming "fallen in faith": *lapsi*, as the Fathers put it).

Wherein lies the particularity of Ordass's compromise? To be sure, to a certain extent and to a certain point, he was willing to cooperate or even support the Kádár-regime! But as Eibner rightly perceives it, this was a *conditional* support: "He placed conditions on the Church's cooperation ... he made the Church's support for the Kádár government conditional upon its efforts to work for national reconciliation, the establishment of the rule of law, the cultivation of patriotic virtue, the creation of a healthy and just social order..."¹⁰⁰ His participation in the Peace Council and the Patriotic People's Front were both conditional. He was willing to take part in these activities as long as the church's participation did not harm the integrity and the identity of the church. He knew that if he went any further, he would harm the church's integrity, and this would be a betrayal. "Further flexibility would be infidelity."¹⁰¹ He had no particular ambition, personal, political or whatsoever. His purpose was modest: he only wanted to let the church be a church and nothing else. The state, however, had a different "vision".

What were the questions that he found non-negotiable, in which he was not willing to compromise? They become evident from the sincere and courteous twelve page letter he voluntarily wrote to János Horváth in October 1957. He began with the personal questions. He protested that the state wanted to restore the church's secular leaders: Supervisor-General Ernő Mihályfi and Supervisor of the Southern Diocese, József Darvas who had abandoned their offices during the 1956 revolution. Both of them were self-professed atheists and wanted to subjugate the church to the interests of the state. Another issue was that of the press. Ordass's position was that the church press should serve the interest of the church and nothing else. Therefore he protested against censorship or external demands of any kind. As the publisher of the *Hungarian Church Press* he disagreed with the publication of an article that condemned missionary work as imperialistic activity. When the article was nevertheless published, he resigned. He was astonished to discover at the meetings of the Patriotic People's Front that those who were publicly supporting the state were condemning it in private conversations. Towards the end of the letter he complained that pastors were arrested, persecuted or unjustly harrassed.

Due to the letter the official negotiations between the Lutheran church and the state began in November 1957. Ordass's *Autobiography* at this point, as in most cases, perfectly coincides with the report in the American press. Therefore I shall quote from the latter source:

The government arranged negotiations. János Horváth, director of the state office for church affairs, tried first to select the church's representatives for the negotiations. To sit with Bishop Ordass he appointed four officials ousted by the church after the

October revolt! The four are Bishop Lajos Vető; Nicholas Pálfi, former dean of the Lutheran seminary in Budapest; Károly Grünvalszky, former general secretary of the church; and Ádám Mekis, former assistant to the ignominiously deposed László Dezséry. Bishop Ordass rejected Mr Horváth's proposal. But when he was then allowed to appear at the negotiations seconded by Bishops Zoltán Turóczy and Bishop Szabó, the three discovered the four rejected government [recte: church] men sitting in as representatives of the state. As in the August 1956 negotiations to reinstate Bishop Ordass, it was these government "Lutherans" who were more violently opposed to the church's freedom than was the Communist state.¹⁰²

There was disagreement not only concerning the membership of the delegation but also over the agenda. The subjects to be discussed were the relationship between the state and the church, the question of the press, personnel questions and the church's relationship to Hungarian ecumenical efforts. The representatives of the state tried to negotiate from a position of power. János Horváth said: "We came together not on the basis of the law but on the basis of utility."¹⁰³ "All churches, including the Lutheran church, have power. If she is not willing to give this power over to the state, the state may be offended."¹⁰⁴ So the state demanded extensive control over the church and openly wished to interfere in her life, including the election of leaders, deans, determining what should be published in the church-press and so on. These issues, however, for Ordass were non-negotiable. The negotiations continued, then were suspended, continued again and eventually reached an impasse. Ordass's views were incompatible with those of the state's. The state then decided to take action without seeking the approval of the leaders of the church. They restored Ernő Mihályfi as the Supervisor General of the Northern Diocese. On December 19, Mihályfi proposed that Bishop Vető's resignation not be accepted by the state because Decree 22 of 1957 concerning the advance civil approval of nominations for church leadership was valid in retroactive force. That was the way Bishop Turóczy was removed as a Bishop of the Northern Diocese (he was installed in his office by Ordass on February 6) and he was replaced by Lajos Vető whom the state considered as Primate.

But what happened in Ordass's diocese? When the negotiations failed and Ordass remained unbending, János Horváth announced promptly that the church was forbidden to have foreign connections and a government commissioner was appointed to run the affairs of the Lutheran Church, to control her correspondance and activity. The task was given to Károly Grnák at the end of November. With the appearance of "The Voice of a Stranger ... in the church", as the American press well observed: "The church, instead of being God's, is on the way to becoming an instrument in the hands of somebody else, in this case the Hungarian state."¹⁰⁵ From here on Ordass refused to open any letters.

By the end of the year it became clear that the battle had been won by the state. Ordass, as always, refused to resign in the face of external pressure. Then why was Ordass allowed to be in office for another six months? Why was he not removed as drastically as Turóczy, by appealing to the retroactive force of Decree 1957? The answer, I think, lies in a sentence of Horváth, "In 1948 the Rákosi-system committed a mistake when they made a 'world-affair' out of Ordass's 'affair'. They could have kept Ordass in his office while at the same time creating a 'moral zero' out of him".¹⁰⁶ (This sentence, a crucial one in my view, well illustrates the difference between the short-term "hard" Communism and the long-term "soft" Communism; how the latter by being more subtle, was able to demoralize the church, ultimately a moral body in society!)

That was indeed now the policy of the state: to humiliate Ordass by creating, if not a "moral zero", a scapegoat out of him. Ordass, who was so much supported by his people, was now gradually being abandoned. On the one hand he was openly attacked by men like Lajos Vető, Miklós Pálffy, Károly Grünvalszky, Emil Koren and eventually Zoltán Káldy who tried to force the pastors to issue statements of no-confidence in him. They hoped to achieve this because the state announced it would withdraw the financial aid owed to the Pastors of Diocese unless their bishop relented.¹⁰⁷ "To forestall the possibility that pastors would be forced to issue statements of no-confidence against their bishop, he asked the church court to investigate whether he retained the confidence of his diocese, but no action was taken."¹⁰⁸

Thanks to the manipulations of the pastors by these "Government Lutherans", the bishop became somewhat isolated. Nevertheless, as long as he could, he continued to visit the parishes throughout his diocese.

The state waited until mid June 1958, when it eventually brought forth a decision. Throughout the long and tense period of the first six months of the year the state seems to have achieved its purpose of seriously damaging (if not mortally wounding?!) the small body of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. The removal of Ordass (the "beheading" of the Church) seems to have been motivated by some immediate political events. On June 19, three days after the execution of Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister during the 1956 revolution, Ordass received a letter from Ernő Mihályfi. Due to the retroactive force of Decree 22 of 1957, he wrote, the state did not recognize the resignation of Bishop Dezséry in October 1956. It meant that Bishop Ordass had been removed for the second time from his office by the force of the state.

During the summer László Dezséry was restored for two hours so that he could now "officially" resign. In November 1958 the thirty-nine-year-old Zoltán Káldy, the Dean of Pécs was consecrated as Bishop.

For Ordass the rest was *twenty years of silence*.

Epilogue

Imre Veöreös in his recent book *A "harmadik" egyházi út* [1990] (The "Third" Way of the Church) argues that Ordass in the second period of his episcopal activity, unlike in 1948, was ready to compromise with the state. That reveals that he had changed his style of conduct, and now he recognized the "truth" of the "third way", then led by Bishop Turóczy. The more I study Ordass's writings, the more I realize that this is basically a mistaken view. Ordass did not change his attitude or "policy" (a wrong word in connection with Ordass) despite the apparent differences in his conduct. In both cases Ordass was defending the church. In 1948 the parochial schools were parts of the body of the church. Ten years later that was not the case any more. By endorsing the 1948 "Agreement" (perhaps a difficult decision) Ordass conceded that the boat of the church was now smaller. But he found that it was still a boat that could be navigated, provided its inner autonomy was respected. As he himself noted in his *Autobiography*, in 1948 he had felt that God wanted to use him to speak the word, and in 1958 the mission he had from God was to try to defend the rights of the Church provided by the constitution. Indeed, he took orders from no one other than his Lord. He did what he had to do. He could not do otherwise.

Notes

1. Eibner, 1983.
2. Ordass, 1982.
3. Ordass, 1985; Ordass, 1987.
4. Terray, 1984.
5. Terray, 1990a.
6. Terray, 1990b.
7. Terray, 1990b, 5.
8. Larson, 1976, 38.
9. Mathe, 1949, 365.
10. CC, 1949, 1028.
11. Empie, 1949, 588.
12. Terray, 1956; Stone, 1971.
13. [Terray], 1957.
14. CC, 1957, 68.
15. *Lutheran Herald*, 1957, 602 (July 9).
16. CC, 1958, 820.
17. Knutson, 1970.
18. *Lutheran Standard*, 1976, 15.
19. Larson, 1976, 38.

20. *New York Times*, 1958, November 6.
21. Schioz in *The Lutheran Standard*, 1978, 16.
22. *Empie* in *The Lutheran Standard*, 1978, 16.
23. Hoffmann, 1985, 49.
24. Eibner, 1983, 185.
25. Instead of the conventional narrative terms I have chosen the dramatic terminology which I think is more appropriate for my present purposes.
26. Eibner, 1983, 180.
27. Ordass, 1982, 11-16.
28. Eibner, 1983, 180.
29. Ordass, 1982, 32-33, 34-39.
30. Eibner, 1983, 182.
31. Unpublished letter by László Terray to John V. Eibner (October 24, 1989). The Swedish book is by Sam Dahlgren *Politik och kyrka. Lutherska kyrkor i Osteuropa* (Politics and Church. Lutheran Churches in Eastern Europe), Verbum, Stockholm, 1989, 325 pp. With regard to the invasion of Yugoslavia the views are as follows:
 Eibner: "When Hungary as a result of her participation in Hitler's 1941 invasion of Yugoslavia, regained land taken away by the treaty, Ordass declared: 'the partial solution of that oppressive problem fills us with candid joy'."
 Dahlgren: "The criticism of Ordass against the peace treaty after the First World War appeared also in connection with Hitler's invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 when Hungary got back a part of the lost territories, as thanks for their contribution to the war operation. Ordass expressed his joy over this..." (Terray's translation)
 Terray: "This [Dahlgren's sentence], of course, is built on your quotation...: 'The partial solution of that oppressive problem fills us with candid joy.' Now, a more precise translation of this sentence from the Ordass article should be: 'The partial alleviation of this straining grief (pain) fills us with sincere joy.' What is Ordass, then, speaking about at this point? Not about the participation of Hungary in the invasion of Yugoslavia, neither about regained territories. He speaks about those 70.000 Lutherans (among them was also the congregation of Torzsa, the birthplace of Ordass himself), who were lost for the Lutheran Church in Hungary in 1920 (this was the grief) but now became united with this church (membership at this time about 500.000) and thus represented a numerical strengthening (számbeli erősödés) of the church (this was the joy)."
 With regard to the "just war" these are the views:
 Eibner: "One year later, when Hungary was allied to Germany in the war against Russia in the hope that more former Hungarian lands might be recovered, Ordass implicitly sanctioned the Hungarian Government in an article supporting the just war doctrine."
 Dahlgren: [Ordass] "supported also the decision [of the Hungarian government] to participate in the war against the Soviet Union. This was a right decision and a just war, he meant (according to the review by John V. Eibner in *Religion in Communist Lands*, of book containing articles of Ordass edited by István Szépfalusi). [Terray's translation]
 Terray: "If you read this article once more, you will see that Ordass does not use the expression of 'just war', except when he dissociates himself from it (two long passages on p. 37). First he states that every war is in clear opposition to the Gospel of Christ... Second he admits that the state has some power means... at disposal (to restrain the evil). Third, he raises the question of a 'defensive war'. To be sure, he concludes: 'If our country is attacked, we cannot simply step aside.' But this is something different from supporting the just war doctrine... this is not a quarrel about bagatelles. It is rather worry about the misunderstand-

- ings that may arise then joy about the strengthening of the church becomes support to Hitler's invasion of Yugoslavia... and when discussing 'defensive war' becomes support to the war against the Soviet Union as a 'right decision and a just war'. (These assertions stand, to be sure, also in contrast to what both yourself and Dr Dahlgren are referring, right in addition, about Ordass' stand against Nazi influence, about his support to the Norwegian Church resistance and his action to help Jews. But even therefore, they also represent a certain degree of self-contradiction.)" – I am grateful to László Terray for sending me a copy of this letter. (T. F.)
32. Ordass, 1982, 58–69.
 33. Ordass, 1982, 40–57.
 34. Eibner, 1983, 181.
 35. Ordass, 1981, 91; Eibner, 1983, 181.
 36. Ordass, 1982, 112. On the "two kingdoms" see "Christ and Caesar" in Gritsch, Eric W.: *Martin – God's Court Jester. Luther in Retrospect*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1983. 111–129.
 37. Eibner, 1983, 181.
 38. The Slovaks in Hungary could voluntarily leave the country while in Czechoslovakia those had to leave only who were summoned by the government. The Slovakian Lutheran Church took an active part in this action and even wanted the Hungarian Lutherans to assist them, which, however Ordass refused to do.
 39. Ordass, 1982, 123–124; 127–130.
 40. The Government decided that not only former members of the Volksbund were to be deported but all who declared themselves of German mother-tongue at the last "népszámlálás".
 41. Ordass, 1972, 242.
 42. Ordass, 1982, 153.
 43. Terray, 1990b, 68–69.
 44. Terray, 1956, 3; [Terray] 1957, 664.
 45. [Terray], 1957, 663–664.
 46. Eibner, 1983, 182.
 47. Ordass, 1982, 177–179.
 48. See e.g. Karl Barth, "How My Mind Changed, 1938–1948." Part IV. *CC*. 1949, March 16, p. 333. "I maintain that the positive way taken by the Hungarian Reformed people is preferable to the glory they might win as standard-bearer for the so-called 'Christian West'." The American Lutheran theologian and ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr in *The Christian Century* was frequently critical of Barth's support of Protestant church leadership. "Karl Barth... despite an explicit disavowal of all secular ideologies, is influenced by a Marxist estimate of America as a 'capitalist' country and a 'confidence' in the 'socialist' economy of Russia which obscures the nature of her totalitarian regime... Niemuller... is influenced by Barth... Hromadka... is influenced by Barth... Berezky is influenced by Barth.", in "Communism and the Clergy", *CC*, 1953, August 19. 937. Several years later, after the failure of the 1956 revolution in Hungary Niebuhr wrote another article "Why is Barth Silent on Hungary?" in which he called Barth "a kind of unofficial pope of the Hungarian Reformed Church". *CC*, 1957, January 23. 108–110. There was a defence of the master from Barth's English-speaking seminar in Basel to which Niebuhr immediately responded: "Barth on Hungary: An Exchange" *CC*, 1957, April 10. 453–454. and "From Dr Niebuhr in New York", *CC*, 1957, April 10. 454–455. As it is well-known, Barth after his early support to Berezky reproved him in a famous letter: "Barth to Berezky. A Letter." *CC*, 1952, July 30. 876–877. The letter

- was originally written as a private one on September 16, 1951 but soon was published in France, The Netherlands and Germany before the American publication.
49. Ordass, 1985, 292–293.
 50. Terray, 1990b, 95; Ordass, 1985, 295.
 51. After Ordass's *Autobiographical Writings* had been published in Hungarian in 1985 and 1987, Imre Veöreös collected a bunch of his articles written in support of the "Turóczy-line" between 1948–50. In: Imre Veöreös: *A "harmadik" egyházi út*, Budapest, A Magyarországi Evangélikus Egyház Sajtóosztálya, 1990. (NB. The Hungarian Lutheran Church sponsored the quick publication of this book.) He created a conception of three "ways" of the church in the period between 1948–50: the way of "opposition" (Ordass), the way of "conformity" (Dezséry, Ordass's successor, the "Red" Bishop) and the third "way" was represented by Turóczy and Szabó who were following the theologically narrow path between the extremes. Some of the reviews praising the book associated these so-called extremes of the political "right" and "left", implying again an image of Ordass as a "political reactionary". In our view the concept is untenable and mistaken in several aspects. First, as we have seen Ordass's line or "way" was not "opposition" but "defence". Second, Dezséry's "way" is not as legitimate as the "ways" of Ordass or Turóczy since the latter ones were representing the interest of their churches against the state while Dezséry—who later himself admitted to have become atheist—(Ordass, 1985, 252–253) represented the interest of the state against the church). See also Zoltán Dóka's remark in *Keresztyén igazság*, Nr. 9. March, 1991.
 52. Paul Empie in defence of Bishop Ordass quoted a book by Stewart Hermann: *It's Your Souls We Want* in which the author described the relation of the Nazis to the church in Germany. Empie adds that the "title could apply to the Communist Government's attitude toward the schools in Hungary": Empie, 1949, 589.
 53. This is a perceptive insight of Gábor Itzész in *Keresztyén igazság*, Nr. 9. March, 1991.
 54. Quoted in [Terray], 1957, 664.
 55. Ordass, 1985, 330.
 56. Eibner, 1983, 184.
 57. CC, 1948, 990 (September 29).
 58. CC, 1948 (November 10).
 59. Ordass, 1985, 384–385.
 60. Mathé, 1949, 365.
 61. Empie, 1949, 588.
 62. Empie, 1949, 590.
 63. Ordass, 1985, 360–361.
 64. Ordass, 1985, 373–374.
 65. CC, 1950, 604.
 66. Quoted by Eibner 1983, 183., as a non-identified death bed confession according to Szépfalusi.
 67. See Note 48.
 68. CC, 1955, 937 (August 17).
 69. CC, 1955, 937 (August 17).
 70. I am alluding to research by Zoltán Balogh, Jr., Reformed Minister in Hungary. I heard his lecture on this subject in June 1991 at a conference organized by the Renewal Movement within the Reformed Church. I am not aware whether or not he published the results of his research.
 71. Ordass, 1987, 471–487.
 72. Ordass, 1987, 489–508.

73. Ordass, 1987, 489–508.
74. Ordass, 1987, 508–514.
75. Ordass, 1987, 518.
76. Ordass, 1987, 518–524.
77. Ordass, 1972, 244.
78. Ordass, 1987, 530–536.
79. Ordass, 1987, 536–539.
80. CC, 1956, 991 (august 29). T.A.G. “Freedom for Bishop Ordass [Editorial Correspondance-Continued] Galyatető, Hungary, August 6.” The author first praises the skills of Dr Fry and then describes the excitement of the participants: “Dr Fry has been a masterful diplomat in his conduct of the negotiations for the W.C.C. His fine-honed intuitions and/or the Holy Spirit have shown him when to stand on his representative dignity, when to bow in Christian humility, and how to laugh... Everyone knew that something was going on, and most guessed that the conferences with government leaders had something to do with the scandalously mistreated Hungarian Lutheran bishop, Lajos Ordass... The chiefs of the Lutheran World Federation served fair notice that if the Central Committee came to Budapest they would of course pay friendly calls on the respected, lonely man who is still a bishop in their eyes. There was consternation among the present Hungarian Lutheran leaders, and the Lutherans from outside were strongly dissuaded from the visit. But one does not easily dissuade a Hans Lilje or a Franklin Clark Fry or a Carl Lund-Quist; who would want to try to stand up against such a trio—or the quartet formed when W. A. Visser’t Hooft joined the party?... Can’t you just hear Dr Fry before the government officials, carefully, and placing precisely the most devastating emphasis on his words, calling Ordass ‘*Bishop Ordass*’ and referring to the two new bishops as ‘*Mr.*’?... the glad announcement was ready for the conference at the very end of the last session... The announcement of the agreement was a smashing end to a great meeting.”
81. Ordass, 1987, 539–552.
82. See notes, *ibid.*
83. Ordass, 1985, 413.
84. [Terry], 1957, 664. In Hungarian: Ordass, 1982, 288–291; Terry, 1990b, 148–149; Ordass, 1992, 246–249.
85. See Dezséry’s pro-revolution resigning letter in Ordass, 1987, 570–571., and Vető’s similar revolution-praising but at the same time “penitent” letter *ibid.* 573–574.
86. Quoted by Eibner, 1983, 185.
87. Ordass, 1987, 574.
88. “In the name of the holy God I send the word to you our Lutheran brethren all over the world. Not long ago your representatives were among us. They actually assured us of your help which usually has supported our church struggle for freedom. Dear brethren, I speak to you in the name of our church... on the way of freedom and in the name of our country which is surely tried at this moment. The National Government of the independent Hungary has declared the neutrality of our country which is surely tried at this moment. The National Government of the independent Hungary has declared the neutrality of our country and I should like to ask you to give us any possible help you can for the recognition of the declaration of neutrality from where we should be able to find a way for the future. We would like to live in perfect agreement and harmony with all the nations of the world under the guidance of the allmighty [sic] God. At present we are to face very difficult problems in fact. Our war of independence has demanded victims and... [sic] of sacrifice. There are many people here who lost the provider in these days. There are many who were wounded in the...

[sic] They need medicine badly. We suffered a lot of the buildings and many other... [sic] In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I ask you to help. We by our church organization do our best that your gifts do come to those who are in want for the help of Christian charity. We beseech God to the force of presence upon you." In: Ordass, 1982, 190.

89. Ordass, 1987, 579–581.
90. CC, 1956, 1318 (November 14).
91. Eibner, 1983, 185.
92. Ordass, 1987, 626.
93. Eibner, 1983, 185.
94. Quoted by Eibner, 1983, 185. Ordass, 1982, 194.
95. Eibner, 1983, 185.
96. *Lutheran Herald* 1957, 822 (September 3).
97. *Lutheran Herald* 1957, 824, and Ordass, 1992, 320.
98. *Time*, 1957 (August 19).
99. Ordass, 1972, 245; Terray, 1990b, 162.
100. Eibner, 1983, 186.
101. CC, 1958, 36 (January 8).
102. CC, 1958, 36 (January 8).
103. Ordass, 1987, 708.
104. Ordass, 1987, 709.
105. CC, 1958, 36 (January 8).
106. Ordass, 1987, 799.
107. Ordass, 1987, 794–795.
108. Stone, 1971, 6.

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This bibliography is organized under the following headings:

- I. Primary Sources: 1. Autobiography; 2. Published Books; 3. Writings (Articles, Sermons) Published in English;
- II. Secondary Sources: 1. Monographs; 2. Major articles; 3. Editorials. (Articles are listed in the alphabetical and editorials in the chronological order.)

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Abbreviations:

CC = *The Christian Century*

OPRE = *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*
(Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ)

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JEWS, JUDAISM AND ZIONISM IN HUNGARY 1945-1953

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The fate of the 140,000 Jews in Post-Holocaust Hungary, a figure from 1949 based on denominational grounds, has been the subject of numerous studies, which have tackled the various issues from several viewpoints. For years the "Jewish question", and the life of Hungarian Jewry was a taboo topic, although this began to change with the process of liberalization in the last years of the Kádár regime. The collapse of the one-party-state, naturally removed all still existing barriers, and new vistas, based on previously less accessible sources were opened. Not only a flourishing historiography has emerged in Hungary, based on the work of Jewish and non-Jewish scholars, but scholars from the West and Israel currently enjoy the full cooperation of the authorities and institutions in Hungary.

Among the historical periods and issues on which current research focuses are the events of the period of the Communist take-over and the heyday of Stalinism in Hungary. While it seems that no surprising or spectacular documents and findings will emerge from the present trend in scholarship, the de-ideologization of the past along with the combination of various methods and approaches, drawing on sources from both inside and outside of Hungary, none the less allows a reexamination of past events and of the role of the various persons and organizations involved.

Naturally, the gradual aging of those persons who were active in the period under discussion, the rise of the post-war generation, as well as the understandable "deconstruction" of the myths of the Communist regime, are all factors which indicate the need for a critical reexamination of the past. It seems that the scholarship dealing with the period is rapidly and successfully emerging from unilateral dependence on official sources on the one extreme, and personal memoirs, on the other.

Among the many issues concerning the fate of the Hungarian Jewry after the War, and the "Jewish question" in general, we shall concentrate on several major issues. First, the phases of reconstruction following the Holocaust, secondly the denominational aspects of Jewish life and thirdly the place and

role of Zionism in shaping Hungary's Jewry in the period under discussion. These points shall be presented against the background of crucial factors influencing and shaping Hungarian Jewry's life, namely the psychological aftershocks of the Holocaust, the changing social structure, the revival of antisemitism, the emerging policies of the new regime and the Communist take-over, and the impact of the establishment of the State of Israel.

The crisis of identity

The remnants of the Hungarian Jewry returning home after the end of the War faced several urgent tasks. These included not only the grave problems of rebuilding shattered lives and problems of daily existence, but also the problems related to the restitution of property and rights. It seems that parallel to these burning questions shaping daily life and behaviour, there was a deeper problem: that of a crisis of identity¹ which manifested itself in the forthcoming years in a variety of ways. There was a sense of lost direction, of the failure of assimilation, of the failure of the Hungarian nation to defend the Jews (this most loyal element which considered itself as an integral part of the nation), culminating in a parting of ways, a radical break with everything that the recent past represented. Internal divisions among Hungary's Jews on the road to be taken were among the most acute among the surviving Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Internal polarisation² took various forms, not only on the ideological aspects, but gradually also on the organizational level. Hungary's Jews had to decide, and daily realities compelled them to decide as soon as possible, between the few existing options – to assimilate, in spite of the former failure of assimilation, to try to rebuild and live a Jewish life in Hungary, or to take up the Zionist challenge and leave for Palestine, and after 1948 for the State of Israel. Each solution reflected in a way the crisis of identity, the political, social, economic realities of those days. Each option, whose chances of success fluctuated with the changing developments, presented a challenge to which it seems every person of Jewish origin had to relate and to take a personal decision. Each option had its appeal. The Communist one, promised the chance of integration into the “new, socialist Hungarian nation”, thus a repetition of the old, nationalist assimilation into the Messianic promises of a new, egalitarian, internationalist world which promised to erase the class and national divisions between people. The role of Jews in the Communist movement, which falls outside our present discussion, though a fascinating topic in itself, is frequently mentioned, even in post-Communist Hungary, as proof of the disloyalty of the Jews, without any real attempt to

understand the psychological and pragmatic factors behind the Jewish participation in the Communist movement. From a sociological point of view, Victor Karady's thesis that "Jews as a group... could offer many more suitable candidates for responsible positions in the new system than any other politically fit social group"³ could serve as a major starting point for the debate on why and how Jews took part in the establishment of the Communist regime.

The belief that Jewish life could be rebuilt in Hungary was based on the notion that a truly democratic Hungary would provide the legal and material possibilities to practice the Jewish faith. In spite of the deep differences between the three main branches of the Jewish religious and community structure,⁴ those adhering to this option, felt that there were enough possibilities and chances to rebuild a Jewish life in Hungary.

The Zionist challenge was a crucial one. Zionism never took firm roots in pre-War Hungary, and Zionists did not play a major role in shaping pre-War Hungary's Jewish life. Their role during the Holocaust, especially that of the youth movements, is a saga that recent scholarship has only started to deal with in the past decade or so. After the Holocaust, thousands, especially from the younger generation, flocked to the various branches of the Zionist movement, in its secular, religious, socialist or middle class forms. Zionism had one major aim, even if its implementation could take various forms – the reorientation of the Jews to Palestine/Israel, and the negation of the "galut" – the Diaspora. Thus, the Zionist option *a priori* had to negate the two other ones, both of which were based on the continuing existence of Jews on Hungarian soil. Zionism attempted to solve the crisis of Jewish identity in its most blunt and direct form – those who are and feel Jewish, should leave and build up their historical homeland. Thus, from a purely Zionist perspective the nature of the political regime is important only in its attitude toward emigration and Zionist activity prior to that step, and the renewal of Jewish spiritual, religious life along with communal and educational institutions is important as a staging ground for the next step, that of implementing the Zionist ideal. Without elaborating on the complexity of Zionist ideology or rather ideologies, in its religious, secular, socialist, even Marxist, and ultra-conservative, nationalist forms, it should be clear that one of the main pillars of Zionism is that Jews have prayed for two thousand years to return to Jerusalem, but have done very little to do so in reality.

Did Hungary's Jewry solve the crisis of identity in the post-war years? The answer is: only partially, and in Hungary, as elsewhere, there were those who oscillated between the various options, and we have to remember that it was often the political regime, and day to day realities which compelled people to take one road or another. In fact, the completion of the Communist take-over left few options to choose from.

Reconstruction

The reconstruction and revival of Jewish life in post-war Hungary is a very complex story, and present day historians still do not have all the necessary information at their disposal. Reconstruction entails the complicated struggle for the restitution of Jewish property as well as rights, the organized opposition to all manifestations of antisemitism, together with the reorganization of pre-war structures, and the formation of new ones. The problem of Jewish unity and the unification of the religious, communal organizations became a top priority, a fact never realized until Hungary's Jewry was compelled to do so by the Communist regime.

The Hungarian Jewish community showed a remarkable vitality in reconstructing its religious and communal structures, taking into consideration the difficult post-war times, the polarized political atmosphere and the rising tides of antisemitism. While much was done through foreign financial aid, in line with the Jewish world's mobilisation after the Holocaust to aid the destroyed communities, the groundwork on all levels of Jewish communal life was done by Hungarian Jewish organizations. What was even more remarkable in this period of reconstruction, was that it took place against the background of an intensifying power struggle between the various forces active in the community, especially in Budapest, the major center of post-war Jewish existence.

The intricate Jewish politics of post-war Hungary, centered around the emergence of Lajos Stöckler, and the gradual involvement of the new regime, especially the Communists, in promoting reliable elements from their perspective, was not much different from the models that emerged in other East European states. In Hungary, as in other East European states like Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia, the achievement of "Jewish unity" among all segments of Jewish public and religious life was a top priority. However, in Hungary as elsewhere, the efforts for unification took a different turn when the Communists started to intervene and manoeuvre, in order to promote loyal elements.

At least until 1947, when the Communists intervened more forcefully into shaping Jewish politics, the reconstruction in Hungary proceeded in such forms that it provided a workable framework between the surviving Jewish community and the post-War Hungarian state. Communal and religious institutions, educational facilities, social services built up by the Jewish community were not in contrast to the post-war efforts of reconstruction in Hungary. As we shall indicate later, the Zionist activity and the attitude of the Communists was to change drastically the rules of the game between the state and the organized Jewish community.

The process of "democratization" of the Jewish community took on similar forms in Eastern Europe. In Hungary, however, the Communists did not opt for the formation of a "Jewish Democratic Committee", as for example in Romania, formed already in June 1945, which was to swallow gradually, by salami tactics, all elements of Jewish activity, including the religious one. In Hungary, the Communists were determined to channel the newly reconstructed Jewish life into full cooperation with the regime. To this end, Stöckler and his colleagues were employed, until, having completed their mission, they were removed, as were other top Jewish leaders in Eastern Europe almost without a trace. We can conclude that the organizational framework and the various representative bodies of the Hungarian Jewry were presented on a silver plate to the Communists, only to be destroyed by them, when these bodies had completed their tasks. After 1949-1950 Hungarian Jewish organizations became a tool in the hands of the regime, not different from other public organizations. The Hungarian Jewry had at its disposal in the first post-war years a remarkable structure of civil society, which from a Communist point of view had to be destroyed. The various forms of so-called "unified representation of the Jewish faith" in Hungary were not much different from those in other states, and in fact one can trace an almost exact comparative timetable of parallel developments between the various states. Thus, the Communist take-over of the reconstructed Jewish life can serve as a case study for the process of communization in Hungary. The last years of Stalinism in Hungary were the Jewish community's dark years. Coupled with the anti-Zionist campaign, the community's so-called "unification" erased in fact all remnants of the period of reconstruction built up after the War.

Denominational aspects of Jewish life

By the beginning of 1950 the unification of the three branches of Judaism in Hungary was achieved, in the classical pattern of the Communist take-over of religious establishments. Ironically, it was the Communist regime that forcibly and artificially erased the long held traditions of the Hungarian Jewry. The process by which the new regime brought Jewish religious life under its heel has been discussed by, among others, Prof. Csorba. We have a fairly complete picture of the phases of that process, especially from 1948 on when it was clear that any form of independent religious activity would not be tolerated. The separation of state and religion, as indicated in the December 1948 agreement between the Hungarian State and the leadership of the Jewish community, went on quite smoothly as significant features of the free pursuit

of religious life and education were restricted, and those which were promised were usually not kept in subsequent years. In spite of the fact that some activities were preserved, such as the Rabbinical Seminary, which often served a propaganda purpose, and other activities amply described by Professors Csorba and Tamási,⁵ the limitations on Jewish religious life were very evident.

Without presenting here the doctrinal aspects of denominational activity, or the process through which all religious establishments became by the early fifties poor reflections of their previous forms (forms that were rebuilt after the War), we shall limit our comments to several main features of the process of the Communist take-over of religious life. One of these is that the Communists were pursuing the integration of the churches into the new system, and within the Jewish community they found the leadership, which of course was promoted by the new forces, very cooperative in this project because, ironically, both the Communists and the Stockler leadership had found a common enemy, the Zionist movement.

Secondly, the regime was interested in fostering a leadership that would stress religious matters, and thus, the emerging regime was ready to allow a certain degree of freedom of activity, as long as it was disconnected from Jewish life abroad. The result was that by and large, Jewish life in Hungary acted in a void, in which religious holidays and other elements of Judaism were practised as if Judaism was a sect particular to the Hungarian environment, without any outside roots or base. At best, small scale cooperation was allowed with other socialist states.

Thirdly, although Jewish religious life was cut off from the outside world for many years, the regime, it seems, needed for public relations purposes and as proof of the freedom of religion, a shadow of religious activity, which in some cases was even more liberal than the policy pursued towards the Christian Churches.

Yet, the regime was very careful that the small scale practice of Judaism would not become a widespread phenomena among the Hungarian Jewry, and that the Jews would not identify religion as a symbol of national identification, as indeed was the case in the sixties and later on. Furthermore, it seems that the more advanced one was in age, the greater the tolerance of the regime. While the more elderly were considered a lost generation, the clear aim was to keep the younger generation from practising the freedom of religion that the regime was so proud of.

The Zionist factor

As indicated, Zionism became a major force in Hungarian Jewish life. The Zionist movement took an active part in the reconstruction of Jewish life, and

the emissaries from Palestine, representing the various political movements were very active among the younger generation. The Communist leadership, with its large proportion of members of Jewish origin, allowed for a time a free hand to the Zionist movement. Hungary became a primary transit point for the post-Holocaust emigration to Palestine, part of which was illegal, because of the position of the British government. Yet, the Communist–Zionist cooperation was based on pragmatic lines, namely Soviet support (with reservations) for the Zionist plans in establishing the state of Israel, a policy that lasted until September 1948. The Hungarian Communists made clear in Erik Molnár's article in 1946 that they reject Zionism, and that total assimilation had to be the solution to the "Jewish question".⁶ Yet, with ups and downs they tolerated the activities of the movement, and it even became a convenient source of income in hard currency, which the Zionists paid to the Party. It seems that the Communists became annoyed with the Zionists not only after they denounced most forcefully the resurgence of antisemitism⁷ and criticized the left for not doing enough, or even promoting the mass hatred towards Jews, but especially after the Zionists entered and took over some significant positions in the Jewish community. As indicated, in the ensuing power struggle the Zionists had to be blocked, as they opposed Stockler and his friends' perception of "Jewish unity". Reports from the Zionist Federation in Hungary sent to Palestine in 1947 indicate that the Zionists opposed the "autocratic" line of Stockler, and the attempts of the community leadership to "orient the congregation and community totally toward a religious line".⁸ How ironical that leftist Zionists were opposing the religious trend of the official leadership, which was in fact supported by the Communist Party, for the reasons mentioned before! The Zionists acted in this way because they clearly understood that the Judaism allowed by the Communists would be one emptied of its national–Zionist content.

The fate of the Zionist movement was sealed with the change in the Soviet policy by the end of 1948. *Új Élet* would be a very poor source to read about the existence of a Jewish state, unless mentioned in the connection that Zionism is a reactionary movement, and that Israel is a spearhead of Western imperialism. Hungary had its own Zionist trials, that of Dénes Béla, and some references in the Rajk trial. Fortunately Mindszenty, accused of being an agent of most existing Western intelligence services, was not accused of being an Israeli one too. It seems that the big show in Hungary was to have taken place later, spoiled by Stalin's death, in which Zoltán Vas and others would have been the accused in a major Zionist trial.

The history of Zionism in post-war Hungary has yet to be written, and its tremendous impact among Hungary's Jewry has yet to be assessed, but we can conclude with several major points.

One of these is the great appeal of the movement among Hungary's Jews. Secondly, Zionism, in all its forms, challenged the emerging power structure of the Jewish community, as it stressed the need for enthusiastic activity aimed in fact at closing down the final chapter of Jewish existence on Hungarian soil. The new regime along with its limited policy of emigration had to assure the complete loyalty of the remaining Jews. Zionism presented a greater danger to them than the Jew who wished to remain a Jew and sought the possibility to pray for Jerusalem, in its spiritual sense. The Jew wishing to implement the prayer, was considered more of an enemy. It seems that the Communist regime's calculation was that a Judaism emptied of its real content, cut off from outside communities, along with the social restructuring of the Hungarian society, would not present any real challenge. Thirdly, Zionism, and not so much Judaism, reminded the Jews of their true identity. Thus, for those not opting for assimilation, Zionism, including religious Zionism, was a danger which the Communists and those Jews who cooperated with them, had to combat.

The existence of the State of Israel was a great source of pride for the Jewish communities in the Communist countries, and there is no doubt that one of the major reasons for the turn to the worse in the Soviet attitude, followed by the other bloc states, was the attraction of Israel, either for emigration, or for expression of national identity. The taboo on Israel imposed on the Jewish community after the end of 1948, was yet another clear manifestation of this policy of Judaism emptied of its present day significance.

The revival of Jewish life in Hungary in the last years enables us to look again into the history of those turbulent years when officially the "Jewish question" ceased to exist. Only today, can we perhaps realize the complexity of the issues facing the generation which placed so much faith in the new post-war era.

Notes

1. See Peter Vardy, "The Unfinished Past—Jewish Realities in Postwar Hungary", in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *The Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry*, Social Science Monographs, Boulder, Colorado and Institute for Holocaust Studies of the City University of New York, 1986.
2. Bela Vago, "Communist Pragmatism Toward Jewish Assimilation", in Bela Vago (ed.), *Jewish Assimilation in Modern Times*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1981, 115.
3. Victor Karady, "Some Social Aspects of Jewish Assimilation in Socialist Hungary, 1945–1956", *The Tragedy of Hungarian Jewry*, *op. cit.*, 81.
4. See Csorba László, "Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészkorszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig", in *Hét évtized a hazai zsidóság életében*, MTA Filozófiai Intézet, Budapest, 1990.

5. See Csorba László and Tamási György's studies in *Hét évtized... op. cit.*
6. Molnár Erik's study, "Zsidókérdés Magyarországon", published in *Társadalmi Szemle*, July 1946, reprinted in *Zsidókérdés, Asszimiláció, Antiszemitizmus*, Gondolat, Budapest, 1984, 117–134.
7. See Ständeisky Éva, "Antiszemita megmozdulások Magyarországon a koalíciós időszakban", *Századok*, no. 2(1992), 284–308.
8. Report of the Hungarian Zionist Federation (MCSz) to the Executive of the Jewish Agency, April 17, 1947, *Central Zionist Archives (CZA)* S 5/757.



POLITICAL DILEMMAS OF THE RELIGIOUS JEWS IN THE 1960–70S

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“We want to restore the Jewish Community’s good reputation which – to tell the truth – was slightly jeopardised here as it was abroad.” Endre Sós made this statement on being elected as the new leader of the largest group of Hungarian religious Jews in the summer of 1957. With this address he hoped to begin a new period in the history of the Hungarian followers of the so-called “Moses-faith”.

To understand how the “reputation” of the official organisations of religious Jews was jeopardised in the post-war period, we need to survey the consequences of the collapse of Stalinism in Hungary from the point of view of the whole Jewish community during and after the revolutionary uprising of 1956. We shall focus on religious life because this topic reveals the most general problems of Jewish families insofar as a public self-identification of Jewishness only assumed religious forms during the socialist period of Hungarian history. The question of religious relations is also important in showing the manner in which the leadership of Hungarian churches and religious communities was politically manipulated. In particular, their sources were only made available for research on one occasion, neither before nor after which historians were able to have access to such materials.

The reason for this apparently strange occurrence was actually quite simple. Following the election of the Polish Karol Wojtyła as the Pope of the World Catholic Church in 1978, the leadership of cultural policy in the Hungarian “White House” – the well-known nickname of the central office of Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party – suddenly discovered the regenerating influences of religions and churches on the “building of socialism”. Lacking accurate information about their real political abilities, György Aczél, responsible for the ideology and control of culture at the top of the communist leadership, entrusted one of his close co-workers, József Lukács, to start a research program settled to the Philosophical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. As a director of that institute, József Lukács undoubtedly served the so-called “hand-operated cultural policy of Aczél” but it must be said to his

credit, however, that he was among the first who analysed religion as an object of social science instead of as an object to be simply denounced. The final conclusion of this research, presented in 1985 inevitably reflected the claims of the regime, though it is important to note that the authors of research papers were free to work without direct control. Moreover, having been interested in discovering what the real situation was, the State Office of Church Affairs, the main instrument of communist ecclesiastical policy, was able to offer important help with the program.

As a member of a group of scholars surveying the history of the Hungarian Jews between 1918–1980, I received a permit to examine the neglected papers of the rapporteur of Israelitic Affairs at the Library of the State Office of Church Affairs. I am convinced that the employees of this library had no idea of the contents of these materials. The information contained in these miscellaneous files can start to reveal the trends of the political manipulation of religious communities in Hungary in the 1960s. After completing this research, the archives of the library were once again closed for research purposes and have not been opened to this very day. Following the silent death of the communist regime, the materials of the abolished State Office of Church Affairs were delivered to the National Archive (Department of the Modern Age) and – the best part of them – to the Ministry of Education. According to official opinion they have recently come under inspection for research without any deadline. But it is time to start a brief account of the problems of Jewish religious life in postwar Hungary. We should say first of all that the survivors of the darkest episode of Hungarian history have very contradictory experiences of persecution. On the one hand, the new “people’s democratic” regime started a process of judicial and financial compensation, called the perpetrators of the anti-Semite atrocities to account and legally declared the freedom of lifestyle for different religious and ethnic groups. On the other hand, however, the regime was unable to stop the revival of anti-Semitism. More than one bloody public disturbance of the unruly crowds of Communist and Peasant Party sympathizers revealed the dangers of a policy which opened the gates of parties to the “little Fascists” in an effort to gain mass support. But the experiences of the failure of assimilation faithfully followed in the previous decades resulted in only a minority of the Hungarian Jews choosing religious identity with a perspective of Zionism. The majority of them were once again willing to follow the new leadership of the religious community in joining the official – currently “people’s democratic” – policy. From a historical perspective this was nothing more than a renewal of a long tradition in the life of Hungarian Jews: an attitude in which the Jewish character was identified in religious, instead of ethnic, terms and a policy that sought to

secure Jewish life not through numerous autonomous organizations but only through the general protection of the state in exchange for political loyalty.

The above-mentioned political orientation of Jewish leaders undoubtedly had a certain logic and was supported by a real, but one-sided interpretation of several historical experiences. Therefore it caused a paradox in the Hungarian Zionist movement. Although sympathising with the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine and increased religious activity for the sake of the Jewishness outside of Hungary, many Hungarian Zionists did not want to emigrate from Hungary forever. They chose Zionism, rather, for an opportunity to oppose the official Jewish policy and, on the other hand, to provide different – not always religious – ways of Jewish self-identification. Therefore it might be considered that the contentment of Jewish leaders with the official condemnation of Zionism was an important event by which the leadership of the Jewish community compromised itself in the eyes of their contemporaries abroad. Furthermore, it was a generally accepted notion in 1956 that absolute loyalty to the “people’s democracy” during the Rákosi-era had been determined not only by the well-known antireligious policy of the communist dictatorship, but also by the corruption and degeneration of the leaders.

The materials at the Archive of the State Office of the Church Affairs mentioned earlier, contained no data which might have verified this serious charge. But Endre Sós and his followers, although they were aware of logistical problems, didn’t want to begin their activity with a juristic “clean sweep”. The solution to a multi-faceted crisis of Jewish religious life caused by the fleeing of around 200,000 persons in the fall of 1956 required a new policy to compensate for the miserable stagnation in the first half of 50s. “We don’t want to sink to a level of ‘soup-kitchen Jewishness!’”, the newly elected president said and added: “We have been ‘cultured-Jews’ and we want to remain as ‘cultured-Jews’.” The majority of the approximately 100,000 Hungarian religious Jews probably preferred, however, Sándor Scheiber’s formulation mentioned in his address to the new leadership: “We remained here, because we were held back... by shouldering responsibility, by caring for those who depended on us, by caring for the fate of our institutions, by our affection for the Hungarian language and culture, by scientific goals – absence of a thousand years – whose search for data can only be accomplished here.” One thing is certain: it was not the positive qualities of the new leaders, but two other elements of the new political situation that were responsible for the rapid consolidation of basic necessities in the following decade: first, the increasing activity of the believers’ groups operating within the greater freedom of movement afforded by “Kádárism”, and, secondly, the increasing aid of international Jewish organisations which flowed into the country through channels recently opened by the communist government.

I have neither the time nor the space to survey in detail the impressive prosperity resulting from the restoration of synagogues to a greater availability of kosher foods, from the reorganisation of kindergartens and schools to the restoration of orphanages and hospitals, from the abundant cultural programs of more than forty Jewish communities to the Public Institute of Rabbinical Studies, which was one of a kind during the whole socialist period in Eastern Europe. Our focus, instead, is on the strange events resulting from a conflicting relationship between 'Síp utca' – one of its buildings houses Budapest's Hungarian Jewish community – and the Embassy of Israel. A confidential note that President Sós sent in 1965 to János Pratner, the then President of State Office of Church Affairs, complained that the Israeli diplomats had become active in an "incredible number" and "they are penetrating all spheres of the Hungarian Jewry". They had made a strong impact on the parents of Jewish educational institutions supported by the directors of secondary schools and they managed to utilize the commemoration of the Holocaust as well as medical assistance from abroad to spread their dangerous ideas. 'Zionism' was the magic word which alarmed the communist leaders, who faithfully followed the Soviet interests in their one-sided support of Arab countries in the complicated political situation of the Middle East.

The 'Zionist' label had at least five different meanings in the 1960s in Hungary. As in all countries in the communist block, the official media used it as a synonym for the current policy of Israel, as a sort of feature of American imperialism, and as a servant of the interests of worldwide capitalist exploitation in the Middle East. Secondly, 'Zionism' referred to a historical movement aimed to organise Jews into a modern nation and to establish a new country with an Israelite/Jewish national consciousness. Thirdly, a particular national consciousness of an ethnic or religious minority was called 'Zionism' if its followers sought to realise a special Jewish way of life in their own countries while recognizing Israel as a distant homeland of Jewishness. Fourthly, any kind of claims for an autonomous Jewish life and community outside of Israel – with the exception of the strictly-controlled religious organisations – was qualified as 'Zionist'. And finally, mere sympathy or friendly feelings towards Israel and its inhabitants were also branded as 'Zionist'. In his unconditional political solidarity with the communist government, president Sós did not want to separate the different and confused meanings of this complicated idea. He probably put his faith in a policy that guaranteed the security of Jewish life through loyalty to the state, but was also aware that 'Zionism' was a traditional manifestation of the opposition of Hungarian religious Jews against its leadership.

Those responsible for communist ecclesiastical policy understood the ulterior motives in the president's note, because their similarities provided a basis

for the building of a system of mutual dependence between religious leaders and the State Office of Church Affairs. Instead of an answer to this letter, I have found a denunciation of Endre Sós written in the fall of 1965 in which Sándor Scheiber, the famous historian and director of the Public Institute of Rabbinical Studies was labelled a "favourite of the Embassy of Israel" and his institute as a centre of Zionist opposition during the campaign for the new election of the Jewish community's leaders. Although president Sós lost his office, his successor, Géza Seifert developed even stronger ties to the organs of state ecclesiastical policy. At the end of the first decade of the Seifert period, a rapporteur of State Office of Church Affairs honoured Seifert's achievements in a non public address as follows: "the development of ecclesiastical policy and political pressure have resulted" in the fact that the leaders of the Hungarian Israelites have always reconciled their positions with official opinion. This relationship was mutually beneficial: the State Office of Church Affairs "provided sufficient political assistance to religious leaders both in international and internal (personal) affairs". President Seifert really deserved this "progressive" label, a favourite of the regime in its political classification of Church leaders. Seifert was willing to support official communist foreign policy with respect to the Middle East, and he offered the following stereotypical response to the most important questions of Jews living abroad: first, Hungary had no Zionist movement because Hungarian Jews did not want to emigrate; and secondly, there were no anti-Semitic tendencies in Hungary, only anti-Semites, but even their influence was minimal because the state deterred them through educational and judicial means.

President Seifert's opinion written in this address, however, differed from his speech. Contrary to the above-mentioned denial of Zionism in Hungary, he informed the State Office of Church Affairs about "Zionist organisations" in a letter dated December 20th, 1966. Chief Rabbi Imre Sahn in Debrecen and Chief Rabbi Artur Geyer in Budapest – the latter being one of the former leaders of Hungarian Zionism in the postwar period – organised programs among Jewish youth about the Israeli State and taught courses in the New Hebrew language. Seifert considered these actions as an "immediate encouragement for defection" – this act, "defection" (in Hungarian 'disszidálás') was one of the deadly sins in the communist world because it symbolised the failure of a real salvation of human creatures within its boundaries. For this reason Seifert considered the activity of Rabbi Tamás Raj at Szeged more dangerous because he organized trips to visit Hungarian Jewish youths in Szabadka and Újvidék in Yugoslavia, where – according to Seifert – they were subjected to the influence of heated Zionist propaganda. The president declared that "in my opinion the Embassy of Israel in Budapest should remain in the background of this Zionist turmoil".

Although Hungary broke off diplomatic relations with Israel following the war of '67, the sporadic but on-going manifestations of a "nightmare" of Zionism made nervous both Jewish leaders and their partners in state ecclesiastical policy-making in the 1970s. The reason was quite simple: their desire to create a Jewish life separate from the close framework of the religious organisations, on the one hand, and the expression of sympathies towards Israel on the other. It was no surprise that when the Public Institute of Rabbinical Studies began to criticize Seifert's style of leadership, the President accused the director of this famous institution of Zionism. This same accusation resurfaced in a letter written by Miklós Máté, the director of the Jewish Secondary School, in September 1973. According to Máté, the reason the Rabbinical Seminary had been frequented by foreign visitors was that Sándor Scheiber had been judged "on the basis of information received abroad and he was considered a Zionist". This denunciation was effective because the following confidential conclusion was noted on the reverse side of that same letter by a rapporteur of the State Office of Church Affairs: "this note reflects the division between the Rabbinical Seminary and the progressive leadership of the Jewish Community."

The folder at the Archive of the State Office of Church Affairs did not contain any confidential records following the death of president Seifert in the mid-1970s. When we conducted our research the papers of this period were still in use by the employees of that office. But the issues addressed in the so-called "samizdat" literature of that time indicated that the leadership of the Hungarian religious Jews could not defeat the phantom of Zionism. The beginning of a new political age and an unmistakable mark of an unsuccessful policy of loyalty to the communist regime was the formation of the illegal group, "Shalom" – but its history will be a topic of another lecture on another occasion.

RE-EMERGENCE OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY IN HUNGARY

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The re-emergence of Christian democracy and related social reform movements – as indeed numerous other manifestations of institutional and spiritual rebirth associated with it – is seen most evidently in the re-establishment of that political party which bears the name, specifically the KDNP or Christian Democratic People's Party. However, numerous other political parties and movements, including the MDF or Hungarian Democratic Forum, also claim to be involved in the resurgence of this tradition. Needless to say, the resurgence is not limited by any means to the political sphere. The reception accorded Pope John Paul II on the occasion of his historic visit to Hungary in 1991 certainly illustrates the vitality of Hungarian religious life.

Hence any discussion of this phenomenon should not be limited to dealing with political and other formal groups and associations; rather it must focus on the institutional and even personal/spiritual resurgence of Christianity, broadly conceived, as a factor in private and public life. Before dealing with some of the manifestations of a renewed and resurgent Christian life in Hungary since 1989, one should cast a glance, necessarily brief and episodic, backward at the major political parties and institutional structures.

Just as in the rest of Europe, formal Christian democratic and social reform movements in continental political life date back to the waning years of the nineteenth century and reflect the influence of Pope Leo XIII and his epoch-making encyclical *Rerum novarum*, which provided the necessary support for democratic and social reform movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Evidently influenced by German, French, Belgian, and English thinkers and reformers in this Christian tradition, there soon emerged a mostly Roman Catholic (together with some Reformed and Lutheran manifestations) social and political reform movement which culminated in the formation of the Catholic People's Party in 1892 and eventually led to other organizations and activities including the active involvement of Ottokár Prohászka in Christian social and spiritual reform and the myriad reforming activities of Sándor

Giesswein, in the decades following and the ongoing presence of these movements in Hungarian political life from thence until 1949. The vicissitudes of their activity is one of the yet to be told stories of Hungarian history. It should also be pointed out that in spite of cataclysmic changes in the era of world wars and competing ideological forces, a Christian institutional presence persisted nonetheless in Hungarian life, certainly until 1945 and in a more limited institutional manner until 1949. The current revival reaches back to both the older and more recent manifestations of this Christian democratic and social reform tradition.

Until the closing days of World War II, Christian inspired political, institutional, and cultural life enjoyed a great measure of public support and institutional presence, albeit not without contradictions between the existing order and Christian ideals. Obviously, there always has been and always will be a dichotomy between a transcendental ideal and a secular, i.e. time bound, reality. Needless to say, this situation prevails into the present. It must be noted that much of the reason for the ongoing struggle between church structures, including especially parish priests and some of the hierarchy on one side and some of the bishops, regular clergy (at least in part), and most intellectuals and writers committed to Catholic reform on the other – focusing on the understanding of political and social reform, the role of the clergy and laity, and a host of other concerns related to the life of the Christian in an ever increasing secular world – can be traced back to the either incomplete or unassimilated understanding of the Second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar church generally; this issue, and many of the conflicts and misunderstandings stemming from it, must be eventually dealt with if the Roman Catholic church in Hungary is to have an impact now and in the future. Given the immense opening and opportunities for a Christian vision of the world, it is imperative that something be done.

The end of the Second World War inevitably called attention to the contradiction between the altered political realities of inter-war and post-war Hungary and the eternity of the Christian message; even so, the effort to sustain the latter was by no means easy in the changed circumstances. After the resolution of internal differences among the various Christian political leaders, István Barankovics called to life the Democratic People's Party in 1945. The name itself indicates not only the changed circumstances and a renewed emphasis on democracy, but also reflected a conflict with an institutional Roman Catholic church which had been too closely identified with the old regime and its essentially public law and neo-Baroque mentality and values. However, even with the changed designation, Barankovics wished to realize an essentially Christian democratic political program. Its contours

become quite clear from his speeches and writings of these years. Consider the following from one of the party program speeches: "The ideals of Hungarian Christianity, its distinctive culture and its believing people carry such a civic desire within themselves that demands a role for itself in the struggle of the parties and the shaping of public life." The further refinement of his ideas can be witnessed in his other speeches, in the activities and writings of many who shared his Christian inspired political ideals, based mostly on the articulation of natural rights principles, from 1945 to 1947, some of which are being reprinted at the present time. During the elections of 1947, the Barankovics led Democratic People's Party, in spite of only limited and not particularly enthusiastic support from the Catholic hierarchy, received the most votes, indeed even a relative majority of the total number of votes cast.

Not only was this broad based support the consequence of the program espoused, it was also the result of a spiritual and social reform movement of the 1930's and early 1940's (the Kalot, Kalász, village and town based youth movements, Prohászka circles, journals such as *Korunk Szava* and *Vigilia* among others, the Soli Deo Gloria movement among Protestants, parish renewal efforts, especially in Budapest and the larger cities, the memory of Sándor Giesswein, Nándor Zichy, and other reformers) which now manifested itself in a large number of votes for a political party, which made every effort to connect with this movement. It was certainly not by chance that the city of Győr was the initial locale of the renewal of Christian democracy and social reform in the years just after World War II; this certainly recalls the central role of Sándor Giesswein in this context; indeed, the earliest Catholic trade unions had been established at Győr in the waning years of the nineteenth century and its bishops had generally supported efforts to foster Christian democracy and social reform.

Closely tied to these mostly Catholic movements, one must also take note of similar efforts by the Reformed and Lutheran churches. While mostly independent of political parties at first, these Reformed and Lutheran struggles for Christian-inspired socio-political reforms, because of strong confessional differences and the close relationship of the Roman Catholic church to Christian democracy, tended to be more active in other political configurations, especially the Smallholder's Party and its related organizations. Its basic orientation was certainly Christian-inspired, as its motto of "God, Homeland, and Family" amply demonstrated. These Protestant movements were also generally more nationalistic and more in evidence in eastern Hungary.

However, forty-some years of an imposed Communist hegemony have left gaping holes in a Hungary characterized for many years by a Christian

hegemony. Together with gaping holes in the social reality, there is an even broader breach in Christian consciousness, values, practices, and morals, together with the mostly still untold story of the institutional churches of Hungary in our own century. Some of these needs have been addressed by the publication of some volumes on church history.

Even more problematic for the full understanding of Christian democracy has been the virtual silence until just recently about the origins, inter-war, and post-war Christian-inspired social, cultural, and political movements. This remains one of the great future tasks of Hungarian historical scholarship; one must first begin by collecting the documents and the memoirs of its numerous participants, then must follow the examination of the social impact of the movement, and finally there should emerge a comprehensive historical account before it disappears from our consciousness.

Nor can one neglect to study the manifestations of the Christian-inspired political and social reform movements as these began to slowly re-emerge during the days of the revolution of 1956. Some of the political formations dispersed after 1949 (or earlier) reappeared this year in the form of fledgling political parties; most of these were inspired by the movement broadly characterized as Christian democracy. However, one cannot neglect the 1956 role of Cardinal József Mindszenty and numerous Reformed and Lutheran churchmen; the spirit of both the institutional churches and the elemental force of Christian beliefs were and remained an integral part of the tradition of the 1956 revolution, but once again as a mostly neglected part of the larger historical record. After the glorious days of the revolution, much of it was again suppressed for many years, but not forgotten, as the resurgence of those revolutionary ideals was to fuel a multifaceted dissident movement that culminated in the restoration of democracy, including the ideals of Christian democracy, by 1989.

Each historical situation, though, brings its own problems, and at present the problematic issue has become one of toleration for other views and traditions; this seems to be in short supply at present, but it is also, or rather, should be seen as an intolerance born of a committed struggle after many years of oppression or a condition of comfortable stagnation. However, even an essentially positive cast of mind on this issue cannot and should not obscure the concern.

Christian democracy has had an opportunity to function on a mostly level playing field since 1989, and the political parties constituting the current governing coalition are each tied in some way to this political and social orientation. Whereas the opposition is centered mostly on those advocating some form of liberalism or a transformed market socialism. The tension arising

from this situation creates the furor over the issue of toleration in an ever more politicized and polarized society, focused, virtually of necessity, on very compelling economic concerns.

However, let us focus on the intellectual (I hesitate to say ideological) orientations clashing with each other as we approach the elections of the coming year. The currently governing coalition consists of an amalgam of value orientations not alien to the traditions of Christian democracy broadly conceived; this is certainly true of the Christian Democratic People's Party and mostly true of the Smallholders, at least in terms of their earlier noted base-line values. The MDF or Hungarian Democratic Forum is a more variegated political entity and represents essentially the somewhat contradictory traditions of nineteenth century national liberalism, some elements of Christian democracy, and the numerous strands of populist thought with an evident sense of nationalism. Thus, it could be argued that Christian democracy is the common element in this center-right coalition faced with the unenviable task of sustaining the course of a democratic Hungary. To accomplish this, it must fight against the temptation to coalesce or harden into an ideological party because that would ultimately negate its self-professed Christian values. However, the temptation to do that is inevitably present because the combination of nationalism and religion is generally a dangerous, combustible, and often an intolerant one. The extent to which these dangers can be moderated will to a great extent determine the future of Christian democracy and its undeniably positive values in Hungary. This is what the more extreme elements of this orientation fail to recognize and many of the ongoing problems of the governing coalition can be traced to this situation.

Certainly, as virtually all the opinion polls seem to suggest, the short-term prospects of the coalition are not very promising, but that certainly does not negate Christian democratic values in the long term. The ongoing institutionalization of Christian inspired ideals in the emerging social structure is indeed the promise of a future and on-going presence. There are many manifestations of this other than the political and the effort to achieve a greater presence in education is probably the most visible one at present. This too is not without its dangers in an ideologically charged society, but it is an activity which must be undertaken – and in a tolerant spirit – if the ideals of Christian democracy are to be maintained and preserved. The ongoing institutionalization of democracy is the major guarantor of toleration and diversity, an atmosphere to which Christian democracy has contributed in the past and must do so again in the future.

TENDENCIES OF RELIGIOUS CHANGES IN MODERN HUNGARY

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Religious people hold dual citizenship, subjects both of God and Caesar. They need not feel schizophrenic in consequence, nor do they have to serve two masters, as they may serve the Lord in both capacities. In Hungary, the construction of the anti-environmental Danube power plant at Nagymaros was prevented by a nationwide protest movement even before the change in the political system. A spiritual power plant had been in operation at the same Nagymaros as early as 1971. This is where meetings of young Catholics were held, at first illegally, then quasi-legally, and since 1980, fully legally. How many people in Hungary aspire to such dual citizenship? How do they experience their twofold role?

In a minority

While practically all Hungarians declared themselves as adhering to one *religious denomination* or another at the end of the forties, twenty years later only half of the population declared themselves believers, and another ten years later only two-fifths did so. The loss of religious faith was faster and deeper in Hungary than in any Western European countries during the same period. All this is the result of *worldwide secularization* combined with the *atheism forced upon people* by a Stalinist state. However, there has been a *religious renewal*. The interest of young people in religion is growing, as is the number of intellectuals who think of themselves as believers. There are thousands of small religious communities and self-supporting units striving to realise a religious way of life. There is an increasing interest in religious knowledge and in religious art. As a result of two opposing trends, the spread of atheism has stopped and, after the change in political system, a slight reversal can be anticipated.

For the past forty years, *denominational ratios* appear to have stayed relatively steady. Forty years ago (when denomination still featured on census

forms) 70.5 per cent were Catholics, 21.9 per cent Calvinists, 5.2 per cent Lutherans, 1.5 per cent Jews, 0.4 per cent Greek Orthodox, 0.4 per cent of other religions and 0.1 per cent professed no religion. In the past hundred years the proportions of Catholics has steadily grown, a trend that continued in the past forty years. A new element is the rising number of those baptized who profess no religion and stay outside religious traditions and culture. (Among children the proportion today is 30–35 per cent and may reach the same proportion in the adult population by the onset of the 21st century.) In the period of secularisation and enforced atheism, the Calvinists suffered the heaviest losses. Only half of those declaring themselves believers go to church even at Christmas or Easter, and the proportion of those practising religion is under one fifth. Among members of small denominations (in Hungary mostly Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, or Pentecostals) this proportion is much higher, exceeding 70–80 per cent. The religious population are a minority in another respect as well: the religious people are found mostly among the elderly, the unschooled, the poor and village-dwellers. Religious intellectuals are scarce, and though a majority of the members in the present government are practising believers and the three parties of the governing coalition profess to be Christians, the current proportion of actively religious professionals is 2–4 per cent, as against the general 10–15 per cent.

The consequences of a minority situation are often assimilation, a set of *minority complexes*, a pseudo-martyr role, a rejection of responsibility as well as a denial of the facts, in favour of the pretence that “we are still a Christian country”.

Types of religiousness

Superficial observations would show that *traditional religiousness* is still alive in villages, while towns display a new type of *intrinsic* religious behaviour, characterized by the recognition of minority status, a more absorbed spirituality, an increased intellectual interest, and a sense of community and solidarity. Taking a closer look, however, it turns out that both the traditional and the new types are in a minority. In towns as well as in villages, *extrinsic (formal)* religiousness prevails. The type rooted in folk customs and penetrating all the events of daily life is still alive, albeit only in small, reservation-like villages. Even today, children in the countryside are more likely to be born into Christianity than those in towns; yet it is also true that more young people *lapse* from religion after confirmation in villages than in towns. The community and spiritual life in Hungarian villages is also undergoing a crisis, which

is another reason why atheism has reached new levels in villages. At the same time, there are a growing number of cases where traditional religiousness is grafted onto the new type. In towns, especially in those of over 50,000 inhabitants, intrinsic religiousness is present mostly among secondary-school pupils and university graduates. In a considerable number of cases, they come from small communities.

Only a third of religious people declare themselves to be *believers in terms of the doctrines of their church*; the others think of themselves as *religious after their own fashion*. A majority of these latter do not practise their religion, lack a sense of identity with a congregation or parish, have minimal religious knowledge and some are anticlerical. The rest, a clear minority, lead more-than-average religious lives but feel their religion to be *individual*, cut to their personalities, and in some aspects they are critical of their church, particularly of its leaders.

The zone between religiousness and non-religiousness is broad. Some of those religious after their own fashion quickly drop out. Among university students, the proportion of those professing religion after their own fashion is two or three times that of those who follow the doctrines of a church. The number of the latter is exceeded even by those who answer "I really consider myself to be a *seeker for God*". In this circle, the proportion of *staunch atheists* (an approximately equal number of materialists, non-materialist and Marxist atheists) is relatively small, a third or a quarter of those who regard themselves *indifferent, unsure, pragmatic, free of ideologies or rationalists*.

I have had the opportunity to examine this dual citizenship as experienced by young Catholics and Protestants who, attending church schools or belonging to small religious communities, are more religious than the average person. One of many groups is characterized by a split personality of the "everything in its own place" approach, a *schizophrenic* state of mind of Sunday religion and weekday utilitarianism: "Body and mind are to be separately developed, each according to its own laws". Or, "When I say 'I', that means my personality. When I say 'we', that means Christians". "I accept Marxism concerning social problems, and religion concerning faith". "My tastes are not influenced by my faith, nor is my faith influenced by my tastes". The religiousness of the second group is the best characterized by calling it *laic*. They question the authority of religion, churches and the clergy in some important fields: "My religion aids me in many areas of my life – but definitely hampers me in my research." "As for me, Christianity means first of all the expression of my national identity." The third group includes those of overzealous behavior (we might even call them *bigoted* and *dogmatic* as well). They harbour prejudices concerning the world as a whole or some of its aspects: "A Christian must recognize barriers

around his personality." "Faith is more important than knowledge, even in science." "The finest poetry is in the prayer book." "A Christian may choose only a profession befitting a Christian." The members of the fourth group suffer a *conflict* in their dual citizenship: "I feel that my faith and knowledge must not contradict each other. At the same time, I also feel that the two cannot be brought into a harmony." "I long to enter non-religious communities as well, yet I must not serve two masters at the same time." "To remain an individual even as a faithful Christian while also evolving my personality, yes, that would be fine, but the two cannot go together." A fifth group includes people in whom the two citizenships are in *harmony*, with the transcendental and secular spheres welded into one: "As a religious person, I can be all the more of an individual." "Art, I think, is part of the supernatural. And that concerns the work of non-Christian artists, too." "I belong to both a religious community and a non-religious one. On the basis of the law of communicating vessels, I suppose the values of one reach the other." The overzealous strategy has a more-than-average number of supporters among people professing traditional religion: the wordly and split ones attract mainly people of extrinsic religiousness; those of intrinsic religiousness can be chiefly found in the conflict-ridden or harmonious groups.

Of intellectual Christian strategies, one group aims at the individual, another at the small community, a third at the institutional church, and the fourth at the link between church and world. The scenarios of strategies aimed at the *individual* are as follows: 1) to love more, 2) to reach deeper into one's soul, 3) to become a more worthy Christian, 4) to become a more conscious Christian, 5) to be present as a sign in the word. In the second kind of strategy, the nature of the link is the *basic unit* of Christianity, or the Church: 1) family, 2) small community. The third group is that of the strategies desiring *to reform the institutionalized church* in either a moderate or a radical way: 1) improve standards amongst the clergy, 2) increase the numbers of the clergy by recruiting laymen, 3) improve the liturgy, 4) transform congregations or parishes into efficient organizations, 5) shape congregations or parishes into living communities, 6) create an open, ecumenic church, 7) create a democratic church that works from the bottom up. The fourth kind, the strategies of dialogue, urge a change in the relationship *between the church and the world*: 1) creating a more political church, 2) appearing on public platforms, 3) moving out into the world through charity (social and psycho-hygienic), 4) participating in social life through cultural activities, 5) creating links in all directions and every way with the secular sphere, 6) evangelization and missionary work through dialogue.

Church life

There is an essential difference between the historical (Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran) and smaller churches with fewer than 30,000 members (Baptists, Jehova's Witnesses, Pentecostals and about three dozen others). The congregations of these latter are *intimate*, their members live in a face to face relationship, and their activities often cover a wide range (help and support, culture, education and merrymaking). These congregations' composition according to age, sex and profession is far more *balanced* than that of the historical churches, and is very similar to Catholic basic communities.

Aside from exceptions in the 5–10 per cent range, the parishes and congregations of the historical churches reveal a picture that differs considerably from those of small churches. Most of these parishes or congregations *are not communities* yet—or no longer so. It is conspicuous that even the Calvinist Church has become thoroughly hierarchical and, in many places, the faithful are neither partners nor brethren, but a mere flock.

According to a recent survey, there are great differences in the Catholic parishes' equipment, personnel, activity forms and range of influence. Of 100 priests, 6, aged 60–70, look after their parishes, each with 3–4 filiae, without any assistance. A single priest, aided by one lay helper, looks after a parish of 400 as well as one of 5,000; in some, forty attend Sunday mass, in others seven hundred, the catechism is taught to fifty as well as to two hundred children. There is no end of examples of unequal burdens. The effect is, of course, visible also in religious life.

Only a quarter of *parish boards* include members under thirty. A third of them are men only, a fifth have no members under 61. In an overwhelming majority of the cases, the parish priests holds the reins, and the number of conflicts between priests and laymen is limited only because there is no opportunity to express opposing views.

There is no *charitable* organisation in one third of Catholic parishes. A massive majority of these are village parishes where a sense of social responsibility seems to be even rarer than in towns. Charity work is haphazard in most villages.

The number of *baptisms* is declining in 60 per cent of parishes, rising in only 5 per cent, the conditions of administering the Sacrament differ widely. 50–90 per cent of those *confirmed* (the number in villages, where confirmation is a folk custom rather than a Sacrament, exceeds that in towns) lapse soon afterwards; confirmation is often bitterly called "The Sacrament of leaving the Church". The number of *confessions* is steeply declining almost everywhere, and a majority of priests urge their flocks to confess more often, *treating them*

as children, instead of asking them to lead spiritual lives as responsible adults. "Instead of considering their actions, they confess them", complains a priest of an average village parish about a flock of infantile piety. "Characteristically, for the past thirteen years no one has confessed fornication or abortion to me. The most frequently confessed sins are 'I swore' or 'I quarrelled with the wife', says the priest of a secularized village. The number of *church weddings* is on the decline in two thirds of the parishes; yet there are still a few villages where all weddings take place in church. The (mostly not too intimate) ties established with the couple during the premarital instruction are mostly broken immediately after the ceremony.

In 1989, the year leading up to the major changes in the political system, 10–15 per cent of children attended *religious instruction*, more in villages, fewer in towns. In most places, their numbers rose by 10–40 per cent after the change. Only 15 per cent of parishes or congregations provide religious instruction for children of kindergarten age, 50 per cent for young people, and 25 per cent for adults.

Cultural and community activities are poor and only improving slowly. A considerable proportion of religious small communities keeps apart from the parish, in a majority of cases due to the priest's dismissive or uncertain attitude. The parishes' links are uniformly poor with neighbouring parishes, congregations of other denominations and lay communities alike. Although the change in the political system led to the foundation of several hundred parish clubs, libraries, scout troops and newspapers, these are still relatively rare.

Characteristically, only a third of the parish priests in the surveys answered the question, "What do you expect of the Catholic Church leadership?" Most of them want it to be more courageous and decisive. Though four fifths of the parishes have plans of some kind, a third of those concerns only the maintenance of the church and/or the presbitery. Other items at the top of that list are improving the quality of youth work and catechism classes, church schools or kindergartens, improving pastoral work, establishing communities, family care and boosting cultural activities.

In a considerable proportion of Catholic parishes, *pastoral work* is limited to the administration of the Sacraments. Even in that respect, there are more and less efficient parishes. On a second level there is considerable Catechization; on a third, there is even charity work; on a fourth, all that is topped by cultural and community activities; and on the fifth level, the presbitery serves local social life.

Besides secularization and the previously enforced atheism, the present situation of parishes and congregations is significantly determined on the one hand by a kind of *clericalism* that is jealous of lay organizations and lacks both

timeliness and clearcut ideas, and on the other hand by the *passivity* of Christians adjusting to a *ghetto existence* and displaying a *consumer mentality* even in religion. There are, however, happy exceptions both in towns and villages, places where religion flourished even in the years of repression, where fresh ideas made up for underdeveloped infrastructure, where the faithful carried their parish forward on their shoulders.

Movements and small communities

In Hungary, the number of small communities made up of members of the historical churches is between two or three thousand. An exact number is difficult to establish for two reasons: 1) they surfaced after an *underground existence* barely a year ago and are still cautious of both the world and the church leadership which do not trust them, 2) it is seldom easy to establish whether the particular group are catechists with a strong community spirit or a genuine small community.

Half of the small communities belong to four major and half a dozen minor *spiritual movements*; 95 per cent of them are Catholic small communities. Of four major movements, two are of Hungarian origin; the others are the international *Focolare movement* and the *charismatics*.

Of the Hungarian movements, *Regnum Marianum* was founded early this century as a community of priests joining forces to educate adolescent boys. Though its main objective remains the education of youth, it now embraces both sexes, from toddlers to adults. Its main values are Christianity, self-cultivation, the love of nature and national identity. The "*Bokor*" (Bush) movement, founded by the Piarist priest György Bulányi 45 years ago, emerged from obscurity in the early 1970s. Its aim is a radical experience of the Christ paradigm, its main values are poverty, donation, non-violence and an aware faith. Owing to its radicalism, this movement was relegated to the sidelines of Hungarian church life. Catholic "*Bokor*" members (like Jehova's Witnesses and Nazarenes) refuse to do military service. In their struggle, they clashed not only with the Communist state but also with the church leadership that collaborated with it. The other point at issue was their criticism of the rigid Catholic hierarchy.

These four movements cover 100–200 communities each. Another half dozen movements, including the "*Bárka*" (Ark), "*Hit és fény*" (Faith and Light), the Neocatechumenic and Taizé groups, account for another 5–10 communities each. A majority of the other half of small communities are *parish communities*; a minority of them are *independent* of movements or parishes.

These small communities are an élite within their denomination. There are, however, still some *hurdles in the way of their recognition and integration*, a problem for all of them and not only for the “*Bokor*” movement. The lives and values of small community members are *markedly more Christian*, their faith deeper than those of regular churchgoers outside these communities, or even of church school pupils. In the birth of these groups, the following factors must be considered (in varying proportions for each movement and community): 1) the growing influence of *laymen*, 2) a demand for *personal involvement and community life*, 3) *political repression* which forced them to go underground, 4) *deeper religiousness*, 5) *the challenge of small churches*.

One in every three or four Catholic small communities has one or two Protestant members. Thus, these small communities are also bases of a practical “grassroots” *ecumenism* in which the Taizé movement’s influence has played a major role. In the early 1970s, young members of these small communities organized the first, at the time quasi-illegal, meeting in the spirit of *evangelization*. (The “spiritual power plant” at Nagymaros, mentioned already, is their achievement.) Their evangelizing activities joined forces with some pop groups and the ensuing amalgam with its emphasis on musical communication proved to be very efficient in attracting young people.

Undoubtedly, the small communities are the élite force of the historical churches today: they intend to provide a warm hearth for those outside, a reliable haven in which people will not be disappointed, where individuals are not cogs in a social machine, but vessels of irreplaceable value.

Towards a new Christian course or a Gaudiopolis?

“A new era is backoning to Hungary’s Christianity. We have survived forty years of persecution! Bruised and diminished in numbers, we are considering our options. While cleaning away the debris, we are simultaneously taking care of valuable building material and avoiding hidden minefields. Many problems must be solved. On the one hand, we feel the increased need for Christianity, and are part of the religious renewal. On the other hand, we are painfully aware of our smallness, our limits, our helplessness. We are glad to say that, since the 1970s, it has been possible to give evidence of the renewal in figures. Yet we are awed by the multiplicity of options, but we have just no idea about how to use them.” So wrote the sociologist Miklós Tomka, in early 1990. One of the hidden mines is a *national church triumphant*, maintaining close ties with those in power. The memory of the Christian course between the two world wars is still attractive to many Christians. It is there in the thinking of all those

bishops, chaplains, the ordinary faithful, whose ideas are not adjusted to the present. Albeit to a smaller extent than among non-religious citizens, an *identity crisis* can be felt even by Christians of dual citizenship. Against that, "Christian politics" is used as a panacea by many people. They vote for Christian parties, urge the introduction of obligatory or a least optional religious studies in schools, and consider themselves, though a small minority, as the majority. Those Hungarian Christians unsure of their identity also tend to use adjectives (most often 'Christian', of course) instead of ideas, and to speak of the devil (identifying him as the liberals). Though there is clearly a possibility that the ideology of the Horthy era may rise from the dead, several factors work against such a rebirth: 1) the *unpleasant memory* of that rightist, reactionary, ultra-conservative period, 2) those forty years which, beside the losses, were also responsible for the emergence of a new kind of solidarity, the sense of community of a minority that shared its thinking, and *readiness for dialogue*, 3) the *spirit of the Second Vatican Council*, 4) the *Jesus paradigm* itself, in which, according to St Paul, there are no more Jews or Greeks, slaves or free citizens, men or women, can be continued in today's Hungary by saying that there are no longer religious or non-religious people, former communists or formerly persecuted, government supporters, Christian democrats or liberal democrats, Catholics and Protestants. That is, we have them all. We have them as valuable differences, complements of each other. And thus there is a chance for a Gaudiopolis based upon the spiritual power plants, a secular merger of the two states.

Nevertheless, the road to Gaudiopolis is rocky, with a number of hurdles to be cleared away. Much has to be done. 1) Religious people should possess a better *psychophysical condition, consciousness and identity* together with the gift of forgiveness. 2) There is a need for a more up-to-date, *dialogue-oriented theology* presenting an *image of man* as well. 3) Rigidly hierarchical, obsolete *church institutions must be democratized*, 4) Small communities must be supported, promoted supplied with things to do and means withal, 5) *Lay helpers* must be found to assist the abandoned and exhausted priests. 6) The guarding of tradition must be balanced by *modernization*. 7) Hungary should be made a missionary target, though *evangelization must be dialogue-oriented* and a service rather than a constraint. 8) Spontaneous and politically, illegal or quasi-legal initiatives must be institutionalized with a simultaneous *socialization of institutions* that have obtained monopoly status and work in inefficient, antidemocratic ways. 9) *Social platforms* must be used. 10) *Cooperation* must be established *between denominations*, especially between Christians and Jews, and between the two rivals for the past four hundred years, the Roman Catholic and Calvinist churches. 11) Churches must participate in education and socialization by presenting something valuable and different.

Keeping tradition alive and working for radical reform are equally important. Adapting ourselves to something new is not enough in itself since, as a sociologist put it, "The devil's hoof of a self-repetition peeps out from under the cloak of change". It would be wonderful to believe that Hungarian Christians, doomed to sudden liberty, will find a way that combines *sticking to the score and improvising skills*.

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RELIGIONS, CHURCHES IN MODERN HUNGARY AND *METEM* RESEARCH

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Crises in identity are a common phenomenon in the life of individuals, societies, institutions and churches of our days. For the Roman Catholic Church the Second Vatican Council had the task of offering guidelines on how the church should see itself in the modern world. And similar efforts can be detected in religions and churches everywhere. For obvious reasons in Hungary all this was and is still moving very slowly. Churches and religions are just starting to take account of themselves, to find their identity by rediscovering their history, and to catch up with the rapidly changing world around them.

For this reason we all should welcome the present symposium organized by the Hungarian Studies Program of Indiana University. It gives us an opportunity to reflect, and take account of what are the functions of the churches and religions in our modern age. I commend this initiative because an analysis of the impact linguistics makes on religion and religion on linguistics is long overdue. For example, studies on the Finnish Language and its impact on Finnish Lutheranism, the Hungarian Language on Hungarian Roman Catholicism and Hungarian Judaism, the Uzbek Language on Uzbek Islam, etc., and conversely, could be the topic of a challenging Uralic and Altaic Studies Conference to be held in Bloomington or in Budapest. But I commend this initiative especially because it highlights the objective of *METEM* research, making the Hungarian Church self-conscious in the light of its history. The research began in 1985 and now it is part of the churches and religions in modern Hungary.

METEM is an acronym for the Hungarian name *Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközössége*, "Society for an Encyclopedia of Hungarian Church History." Its objective is to prepare and publish an Encyclopedia of Church History in Hungary, which would list in alphabetical order places, persons, councils, documents, monuments, and writings relevant to the one thousand year history of religious faith in Hungary. It is expected that the project will give perspective and purpose to the manifold ongoing research,

facilitate the retrieval of the results of past investigations, and point to various areas overlooked thus far (*METEM Vázlatok, Essays in Hungarian Church History* 1989, 1:6-7, 279-324; 3:245-258).

Membership is open to individuals of all beliefs, cultures, religions, countries who support the purpose of the Society and who are dedicated to maintaining high scholarly standards, and able to make a contribution to the realization of METEM objectives.

Research into the history of parishes has preeminence in the project. They are the founding communities of the people of God which in the light of *Lumen gentium* of Vatican II (13-16) include not only Catholics but non-Catholics, Jews, Muslims, theists, and atheists who "moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience" (no. 16). Such a history of parishes is something new; it needs, therefore, a preliminary reflection, a search for methods in the light of modern historiography.

For the preparation of this project a periodical entitled *Vázlatok, Essays in Church History in Hungary* was launched in 1989 for the discussion and critical assessment of studies in preparation for their final incorporation in an encyclopedia. The aim of the periodical is to provide a forum for experts to discuss and express their views on the various topics. By doing this it is expected that articles, prior to their incorporation in the encyclopedia, will be scholarly and of high academic standards. Manuscripts are welcome in Hungarian, English, French, German, Spanish, Rumanian, Croatian, Slovak and other Slavic languages. They must be scholarly, well-documented, self-critical and attentive to the hermeneutical influence of one's own tradition. Each essay is followed by an English resumé.

Essays are published under 20 main headings, which concretely illustrate what we understand under church and religion.

Here are the 20 headings:

1. Parishes, local communities
2. Persons
3. Buildings
4. Prayers
5. Worship and Liturgy
6. Organizations, social structure
7. Associations, religious orders, etc.
8. Spirituality
9. Persecutions
10. Activities:
 1. Pastoral
 2. Teaching

3. Political and diplomatic
4. Scientific
5. Charities
6. Economic
7. Artistic creations, painting, works of art
8. Music
9. Entertainment
10. Literature, poetry

All these entities and activities make up a church. To study a church is to study at least all these things. Looking at the program of our symposium we can see that a great number of the presentations is focused on the political and diplomatic activities of the churches, and other topics are not mentioned at all.

In the remaining part of my presentation I would like to mention some examples symptomatic of the modern age in religions and churches in Hungary. Being a Roman Catholic I am more familiar with the movements in my own church. Thus the examples I present are taken from the Roman Catholic Church. Yet the tendencies and initiatives mentioned here, in various degrees, were and are active in all the religions and churches in Hungary. I limit myself to three movements with examples taken from the times between the two world wars, when modern initiatives started to take shape in Hungary.

1. Local communities

In modern Hungary as in the modern world in general there is a greater emphasis on smaller geographic units, on basic communities, the local parishes. It might be true that the parish is just a part of greater units like the diocese or the global church, yet it is also true that the parish is the visible image, the symbol of any larger units, the global church included. It is the realization, the *Verwirklichung* as one of the great theologians of this century, Karl Rahner, said: "Die Pfarrei ist die primäre Verwirklichung der Kirche als Ereignis" "Plébánia az Egyháznak mint eseménynek *elsődleges* megvalósulása" (K. Rahner, 1956, 34). The history of the churches is really not so much the history of kings and bishops, and of their political intrigues, as the history of the people, the history of the common people, an idea that "plébánia," the Hungarian name for parish, expresses so well.

The German word "Pfarrei" comes from the old Gothic word *parra* which means a "umgrenzter Bezirk," a fenced off region with its head, the "Pfarrer," the "Pfarr-Herr," the lord of the parish territory (Melzer, 1965, 214). The

English "Parish", like the Latin "parochia" and the Greek *paroikia*, means neighborhood, or more exactly, a place (*oikia*), where people live side by side "ahol nép egymás mellett (*para*) él." Whereas, the Hungarian "plébánia," "plébános" comes from the Latin word *plebs*, *plebeius*, which means people, common people, "közönséges nép," everyone, the "plebs." The parish priest, the "plébános," therefore, is not a "Herr," but a man of the people, an idea which is very close to the Second Vatican Council's concept of the church, the people of God, to which, every human being, in various degrees, is related, and belongs (*Lumen Gentium*, 13-16).

It is in the parish where one can see, not in theory or in the abstract but in reality, what a church as a people of God is. The parish is the church incarnate, embodied in a specific time and place with its eucharistic celebration, the foundation and center of the parish (Riepe, 1967, 1018).

Such a conception of the Church had motivated the *Kalot* (Katolikus Agrár Legények Országos Tanácsa), the Council of Catholic Agrarian Young Men. The Jesuit Jenő Kerkai founded it in 1935 and within 10 years it had about half a million members. The aim was to save the agrarian youth of the Hungarian countryside. "Műveltebb falut!" a "More Educated Rural Country" was one of its guiding principles which mobilized Hungary's most numerous social class, living without hope in a self-defeating lethargy. They were simple people. Thus they were the appropriate symbol of a Church which dared to boast of the title "the people" of God. Reflecting on them the Hungarian church could begin to discover itself as the people of God, with the vocation of becoming a more Christian, human, and vigorous people. Since neither was the concern of the communist ideology, the beginning of the communist regime had to be the end of *Kalot*.

2. Economy

METEM has listed economic function with economic responsibility as one of the ten functions of the churches. And I propose this as the second example of the symptoms of the modern age in religions and churches.

Economics is concerned not only with distribution and consumption of goods but with production of goods and creating jobs. Labor is one of the most important economic factors. A study of the history of the Church is not complete unless it pays attention to the Church's economic functions, its production and distribution of goods, its job creating function and so on. Notwithstanding its supernatural vocation the church can be considered as one of the most significant and lasting economic institutions of the world. Through centuries it has invested its accumulated wealth in constructions, building

churches, cathedrals, schools, hospitals, rectories with decorations and special furnishings. It has promoted artefacts and artistic creations. Especially through its religious orders it has cultivated land and taught people to work and produce food. In doing this the church produced goods and created opportunities for work. And as a result it shared both the benefits and the problems of any economic enterprise with its inherent temptations, failures and injustices yet without giving up its will to correct faults by means of trial and error. The economic concerns expressed in the Vatican II document, entitled *Gaudium et Spes*, suggest a self-corrective "economic system" of this kind, practiced throughout two millennia.

Whereas in its Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, the Church reflected on itself, its identity, and its function, in its Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, Chapter 3, Part 2 the church addressed the economy, and now we can ask whether the church follows in its own economy the guiding principles laid down in its own document.

Reading the document one has the impression that the economy practiced by the Church is characterized by a concern aiming at equilibrium and equity among the people in the world and, specially more recently, at involving as many people as possible in the decision-making process in financial matters.

The difficulty and intriguing problem for the Church is how to give unconditional priority to the Church's spiritual vision and mission in a world where profit is a fundamental prerequisite for any institution that plans to function for more than a year or two. The difficulty of such a problem, however, may be just the incentive for an inventive mind. The challenge of great polarities is one of the resources that in economics is called the entrepreneurial spirit. Reassured by faith in the providence of God there are some real entrepreneurs in the Church. Ferenc Bíró in 1921 gathered a group of Hungarian women for bringing the Church into the world of economics. And he called them simply "Népleányok", the Daughters of the People, the People of God. Though the name was later changed to Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the mission remains unchanged: an effort to give unconditional priority to the Church's spiritual vision and mission and compete, at the same time, with a world of economics where profit seems to be the only rule for survival (Bíró, 1920, 1935, 1943).

3. Alienation

In addition to the two rather positive symptoms of the modern age I would like to mention one more symptom, a negative one: alienation, alienation from

oneself and alienation from everyone else. One of the modern age's most ostentatious displays of alienation was Marxist-Stalinist communism. Its dazzling effect was the alienation of parents from their children, and children from their parents, wives from their husbands and husbands from their wives, friends from their friends.

There are some who believe that the damage the communist dictatorship inflicted on the Hungarian people and particularly on the Hungarian church was heavier than the damage done by the previous three national disasters, The Devastation of the Tartars, "Tatárjárás", Turkish Menace, "Török veszedelem," and the Austrian Oppression, "Osztrák elnyomás." The Communist dictatorship, "a kommunista egyeduralom" is a strong fourth contender. It was communism which systematically tried to bury all the churches forcing them to march on the road to Calvary. The life of Cardinal Mindszenty is the best documented symbol of that.

Coming back from the road to Calvary the revenge cannot be the church's answer. Religions and churches have to forgive. But forgiving is not forgetting. Forgetting might be dangerous because it may enhance the possibility of repeating the past and failing the future. *Historia est mater studiorum*. And this should be METEM's modest contribution to the post-Calvary life of the Hungarian religions and churches: placing great tragedies within the panorama of a remarkable past and offering hope for a better future guaranteed by an impressive past.

Hungarian religions and Hungarian churches share a common past. And this past includes also the pre-Christian Hungarian religion that in the light of Vatican II can be considered also as a vehicle of grace. The life of a nation and the life of its religions and churches are one, because no religion or church can exist without people and no people can live without hope, without ideals and convictions transcending the "here and now" of a material world. The road to Calvary was a common journey for the church as well as for the people of Hungary. We hope and pray that the road to recovery will be also a common journey for both the Hungarian people and the religions and churches in a modern Hungary.

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POST-COMMUNIST DILEMMAS OF HUNGARIAN CHURCHES

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The independence of the churches achieved after the collapse of the communist system brought about the possibility of the assumption of their just place in society. The unshackling of the churches, and their freeing from superimposed state control, however, was not, and still is not, a smooth process. Both the churches and the state have to accommodate themselves to the changed conditions and have to learn to function in a society which wants to become a modern, pluralistic, democratic one, but which still carries the burden of its recent and remote past.

Neither the institutions of the state nor the churches themselves function under the conditions of modern democracies.

This is a sweeping statement which requires clarification and qualification. The historical development of Hungary, its late and incomplete arrival to capitalism and modern democracy, the trauma suffered by the Trianon peace treaties and the subsequent loss of two-thirds of the country's territory, the aborted bourgeois transformation, the archconservative regime of Regent Horthy, the totalitarian communist system's forty-odd year long rule did not allow the emergence of democratic state institutions. Nor did it foster the development of a strong civil society or civic consciousness. The members of the state did not become citizens, but by and large remained subjects.

When the social earthquake – the collapse of communism – did happen, neither society as a whole, nor the churches were prepared to assume their functions in new ways, under the given conditions, to accomplish rapidly the requirements of modernity. This statement does not seek to lay the blame on either party, although both the state and the churches could have done more, and more rapidly, to avail themselves of the opportunities opened up by the post-communist society.

In principle, the churches have a most favourable situation to revitalise themselves and their functions. Obviously, they suffered under communism, their institutions having been largely destroyed, their scope of activity severely restrained. Already in the last phase of communist rule, the reform-commu-

nists acknowledged that there cannot be a free society without freedom of conscience and that churches do have a place in the spiritual and cultural life of the society. The majority of citizens agreed with this, although only a minority amongst them approved of the political role of the churches.

There were no parties in the newly elected Parliament which would air antireligious or anticlericalist views. Indeed even the Hungarian Socialist Party has a Christian faction. Moreover, the parties of the governing coalition ever more frequently made references to the Christian traditions of the country (occasionally even with exclusionist overtones). Influential politicians often mention the Christian-national values as the beacons which ought to guide the nation and permeate its culture.

And still, *in practice*, the great revival of the churches did not follow. They still struggle to rebuild themselves and search for their place in the web of contemporary Hungarian society.

The reasons for this are complex and manifold. Obviously the persecution of churches under communism did not, could not, remain without lasting consequences. The leaders of the large Christian churches (cardinals Mindszenty and Grósz, bishops Ravasz and Ordass) were coerced out of their positions, sentenced on constructed charges and spent long years in jail.¹ The smaller Christian communities, with a few exceptions, were outlawed and persecuted. In sum, one can say the churches were decapitated and placed under state control. This was accomplished by among others, forcing on the churches leaders who were ready to collaborate with the state.

It would be easy to blame the collaborating church leaders for cowardice and unnecessary compromise, but it would also be somewhat unfair. Often one hears voices which compare the behaviour of Hungarian church leaders to that of Polish ones. True, there were occasions when, even with the benefit of hindsight, one could reproach certain church dignitaries for making needless compromises (e.g. the Catholic church's acquiescent stand on conscientious objectors or their complicity with the state in the case of small church communities – the case of Father Bulányi). None the less, the specificities of the Hungarian situation should make such hesitations and compromises easier to understand. What, however, was harmful for the churches, was some of their leaders' involvement in the party-state's political actions or even acceptance of political positions (e.g. Ernő Mihályfi, János Péter, Albert Bereczky). This was especially harmful when it was rationalised by theological considerations, e.g. the theology of the diakone advocated by bishop Zoltán Káldy of the Lutheran Church. Also, the involvement of parts of the clergy in the state sponsored "peace priests" movement or some bishops' participation in the state sponsored "Peace Council" reduced the authority of the church and gave

rise to voices that wanted to take to task those who were members of this movement or otherwise compromised themselves with the communist authorities.

Whatever the case, the churches did not emerge unscathed from the communist era. The post-communist churches had to renew their activities under conditions where their members were divided in judging the correctness of the leadership's past behaviour.

The social structure of the country, with the concomitant institutional and cultural changes, has been altered irrevocably. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the arrival of the post-communist era found a deeply different Hungary from the one of 1945 or even 1948. The class structure, the occupational structure, the level of industrialisation and urbanisation, of scholarisation, the type of culture—including the culture of everyday life—have been irreversibly changed.

True, all these processes were carried out under communist rule and in correspondence with the communist ideal of a future, "perfect" society. The result was that no real modernisation took place and despite urbanisation and industrialisation, the ingrained habits, behavioral patterns and cultural norms of the past remained firmly entrenched.

Nevertheless, a measurable secularisation process also took place, which changed the scope and type of religiosity. Part of the secularisation process was enforced: the restrictions placed on religious instruction, the abolition of religious instruction in the public schools (and after the nationalisation of ecclesiastic schools in 1948 there remained only a handful of church-run schools in Hungary²), and the officially endorsed anti-religious attitude in public life resulted in an observable diminishment of religious activity. Whether this was a genuine abandonment of religious belief and practices or simply a survival tactic is subject to discussion. One cannot exclude the possibility that there emerged a "bedroom religiosity", that is a survival of religious beliefs and some practice (e.g. prayer) which, however, did not find public expression.

But the other possibility, namely that a real secularisation took place, is substantiated by sociological research. Miklós Tomka in his book *Magyar katolicizmus 1991* (Hungarian Catholicism 1991) publishes some revealing data which indicate a rather large-scale secularisation.³ He mentions, for example, that on any given Sunday only about 8–10% of Catholics participate in the holy mass (p. 16).

In many respects the decline in religiosity is quite understandable. In spite of the aforementioned distortions and inadequacies of the modernisation process, the massive urbanisation loosened the rather strict social control

mechanisms which existed in rural areas or small towns. This, coupled with the officially sponsored secular culture, contributed to the slackening of religious beliefs and practices.

At least two more features of Soviet type societies ought to be mentioned here. The first is the enforced and artificial community-building. The authorities realised that spontaneously formed communities endanger the working of the system because these would not lend themselves to strict party-state control. While religious communities did exist, they were marginal and/or illegal. The communist sponsored quasi-communities were for the most part substitutions and often attended because of the lack of any other solution. The second is that for a long time the churches were the only tolerated seats of civil society – if we understand civil society as that sphere of human life and activity where people come together spontaneously and pursue their own interests (material or spiritual) – without state intervention.

However, as far as the second feature is concerned, the gradual reforms introduced by the party-state from the late seventies on – and especially in the eighties allowed the individual to pursue his economic interests in a much less restricted way. This expanded the sphere of civil society but also carried negative consequences for society and the individual. People engaged in the so-called “second economy” exploited themselves by working double shifts, giving up their annual vacations and this resulted in a dramatic increase in heart disease, deaths caused by cardio-vascular disease, suicide and alcoholism. It is understandable that this life-style did not leave (much) time to be engaged in church activities or satisfy spiritual needs. Paradoxically, communism, which espoused a collectivist ideology, opened up the way to a rampant individualism and materialism.⁴

Broadly speaking, this was the condition in which the churches found themselves at the beginning of the system-change. Already before the declared collapse of the Soviet type systems, in the period of the latent, and later not so latent, decomposition of the communist regime, they ceased to function as the sole field of civil society, even in the political sphere. The emerging oppositional movements and their growth in the late 1980s made it possible, for those who wished and dared to engage themselves in political activity, to find organisational forms for their activity. Meanwhile the largest Catholic “oppositional” movement refrained from direct political engagement and aimed rather at a spiritual renaissance.

In different periods the individual churches had been allowed different access to international communication (attendance of the meetings of the World Council of Churches, communication with the Vatican, etc.). These were under strict state control exercised through the State Office for Church Affairs. (The existence, and especially the mode of functioning of this Office

was, strictly speaking, unconstitutional because the communist constitution of the country declared the separation of church and state.) The Roman Catholic church was in a particularly difficult situation because the Kádár regime preferred to ignore the Hungarian hierarchy and conducted direct negotiations with the Vatican in trying to solve the Mindszenty problem. And in many instances the treatment of the Hungarian church depended on the progress of those negotiations.⁵

As a result of the restrictions placed on international contacts the Catholic church had few chances to adapt itself to the spirit and resolutions of the second Vatican council. As Tamás Nyíri, the renowned professor of the Catholic Theological Academy stated, the Catholic churches in the region, i.e. the Hungarian, the Croatian, the Slovak, the Czech, and the Polish, lagged 40–45 years behind the development of the Western churches.⁶ The *aggiornamento* (adaptation to the modern and rapidly changing world) propounded by Pope John XXIII is, of course, a controversial project. On the one hand, it was necessary to draw the church nearer to the realities of the contemporary world and thus enable the Catholic church to carry out its mission under radically changed conditions. Vatican II introduced a certain degree of democracy in the working of the hierarchy, gave greater power of decision to the national bishops' conferences, opened up the way to the greater involvement of laypeople in the work of the church and introduced important theological changes. Also, the second Vatican council introduced a more ecumenical attitude towards other Christian churches, a greater understanding with Jews, with non-Christian believers, and even with humanist non-believers.

On the other hand, the project of *aggiornamento* made the church more enmeshed in the social, political and economic problems of the contemporary world. (This inevitably forces the church to take stands on social and economic problems. Thus, even if its position is largely couched in moral considerations, it has to voice its position in temporary, this-worldly matters.)

True, in the modern world, since 1891 when Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, the church has issued papal statements concerning the theological and moral assessment of the institutions of market-based capitalist society. Especially Pope John Paul II in his social encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and *Centesimus Annus* criticised unfettered liberal capitalism and emphasised the need for developing “an ethically guided, mixed economy, solidary welfare capitalism – a capitalism with a human face.”⁷ The challenge, and the dilemma, of the Hungarian Catholic church is how to adapt these teachings to the practice of present-day Hungary, where the emerging capitalism gives rise to extreme individualism and, leads to the economic polarisation of society.

So far the Hungarian churches have not addressed this problem. They are mainly preoccupied with their own reconstruction, with the resumption of their normal pastoral, caritative and educational activities, as well as with the reconstruction of their institutions: schools, monasteries, hospitals, and old people's homes. There is, understandably, an inward looking tendency in the present activities of the churches. After more than four decades of communist rule the "housecleaning" and "housekeeping" tasks took priority.

The past situation of the churches makes these tasks rather difficult. While the government emphasises historical continuity and wishes to bracket out a half century-long history of trying to (re)build institutions in a way that would (re)establish them on past patterns, the churches cannot follow that road. The renewal of the churches rests upon their ability to overcome the crippling effects of the decades of oppression; they have to overcome the discord, the lack of understanding, mistrust, insinuations, etc., and build a consensus within themselves. There are encouraging signs that this is slowly happening. Nevertheless the churches still have to accomplish reconciliation, as well as a critical confrontation with their past. A crucial question is whether, without changes in the church leadership, this could be accomplished. Short of this, the churches cannot gain widespread credibility and face up to modernity.⁸

Modernity, among many other things, means pluralism. Pluralism is often viewed in a superficial way as political pluralism alone, i.e. the presence of several political parties that vie for power and compete with their political programmes. However, pluralism in modernity also means the competition of world-views. Moreover, in post-modernity it is generally acknowledged that there is no more possibility for a discourse considered universally valid. There is no validity attributed to a world-view which claims to explain the substance and all substantive phenomena of nature, society and human beings. In modern times it was religion and Marxism which claimed this universality. Religion's greatest adversary, Marxism, has suffered a setback, not only because of the collapse of the Soviet type systems but rather because of its failure to prove the validity of its universal discourse. Religion, however, still maintains its claim to universal validity, to the representation of a transcendent truth.

The dilemma is how to make plausible this claim under the condition of pluralism as interpreted above, i.e. pluralism in culture and world-views. "Pluralism [...] impinges on human consciousness, on what takes place within our minds. [...] Cultural plurality is experienced by the individual, not just as something external [...] but as an internal reality, a set of options present in his mind."⁹ In that sense, pluralism means for the individual a permanent uncertainty insofar as he or she has constantly to face and make choices, the

consequences of which are unknown or at least uncertain. Nevertheless, this feature of modern society is deeply entrenched and is also expressed by the institutional separation of different spheres of life (economy, politics, religion, etc.) whereby each of these spheres operates under different rules, which the individual has to learn in order to function successfully.

Under these conditions the churches have to compete with other world-views and have to make plausible their own ideas. The dilemma which emerges from this situation is that on the one hand religion claims to represent eternal truths, but on the other hand the church as a community of believers has to make these acceptable and obvious for the believers. The question is, among others, whether the churches are capable of reaching large segments of the population with ideas and methods that are not obviously attractive, especially for the young. (I am *not* thinking of superficial techniques like the introduction of rock music in service.)

Peter Berger, in his book, *A Far Glory*,¹⁰ mentions the following survival strategies for the church under the conditions of pluralism: "cognitive bargaining", "cognitive surrender" and "cognitive retrenchment" – the latter in a defensive or offensive form. In other words, religion, *as interpreted by the different churches*, in order to maintain its plausibility and dynamism ought to develop a discourse and a strategy that would allow it to compete successfully with other world views. A "cognitive surrender", however, would mean for the church to *accommodate* itself to the prevailing secular discourses. It seems to me that the Christian churches in Hungary in the present phase of the country's and their own development are closest to the defensive "cognitive retrenchment" mixed with a dose of "cognitive surrender".

The reason for this is that, in my view, the churches in their theology and pastoral methods experience serious difficulties in adapting to the actual social and cultural conditions in Hungary. In spite of the favourable political conditions (the government's definitely positive attitude toward the churches has been manifested in legislating the return of nationalised church property, the already mentioned inclination of the governing coalition toward Christianity as the leading value system, etc.) the churches have to present themselves in a credible way as institutions capable of winning over the minds and souls of people, especially of the young.

A rather symptomatic indication of the Hungarian churches' reluctance, or inability, to adapt themselves to even an *ecclesiastic pluralism* is their overt or covert support of the bill presented to Parliament which would change the hitherto existing mode of financing of churches or religious organisations. Until now the churches or religious organisations received financial support from the state according to the size of their membership. The amendment

to restrict state support to churches which have existed for more than 200 years or have at least 10,000 registered members. This would reinstate the old distinction between "accepted" and "recognised" denominations, thus introducing a division between "first class" and "second class" churches or denominations. The sympathy of the established churches to this proposed amendment (the constitutionality of which is questionable) demonstrates their rejection of denominational pluralism and competition amongst religious organisations, which, however, is a feature of modernity.

The churches also have to accommodate themselves to the political aspects of pluralism. It is true that in Hungary, unlike in Poland, they cannot claim exclusivity in defining the morality and behaviour of the whole society.¹¹ Nevertheless, they face the dilemma, which is shared by the whole of the Western world, that they ought to accommodate themselves to a largely secularised society, representing their social and moral agenda and yet maintaining their reference to a reality that is held superior to the transient.

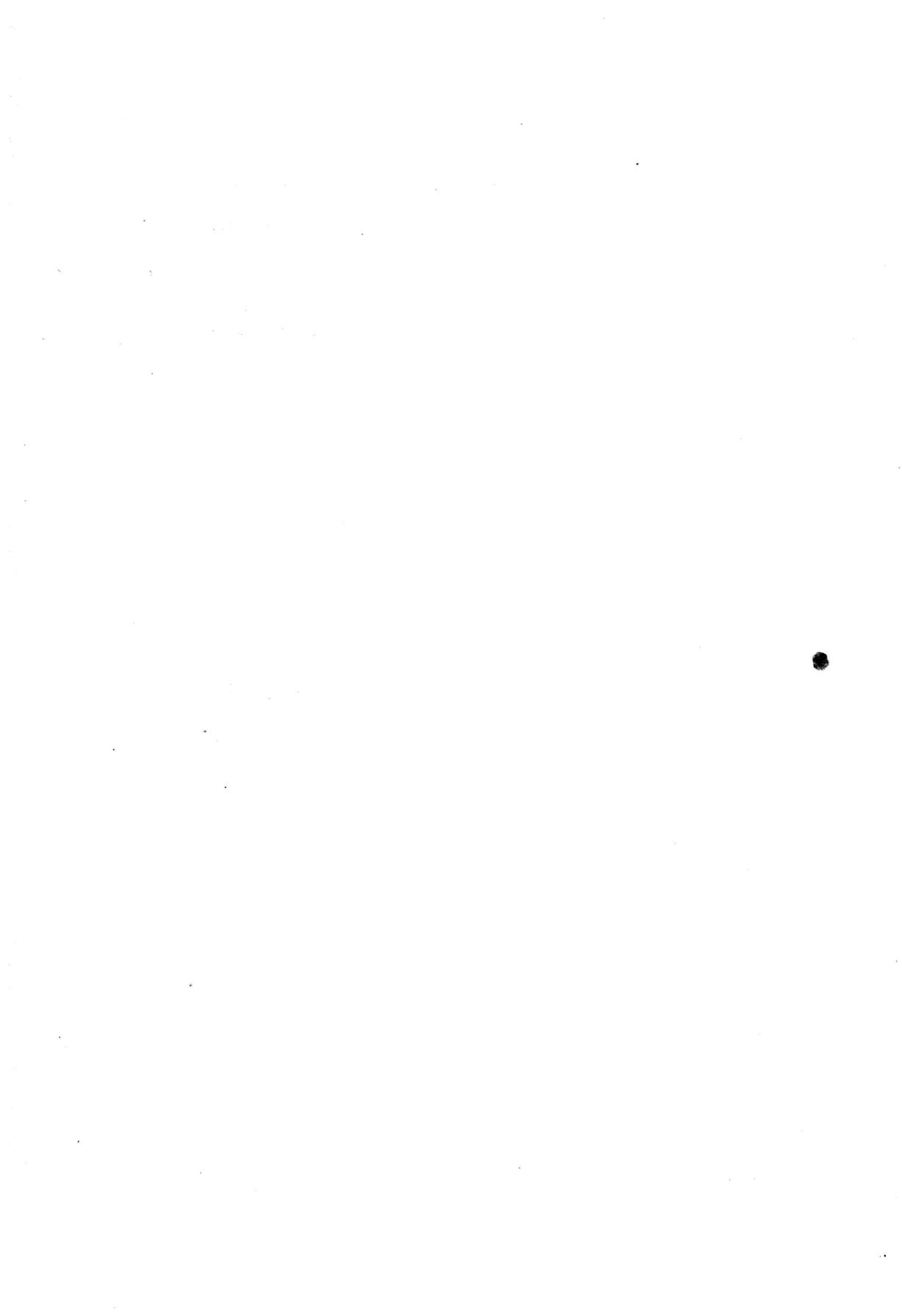
Thus, the greatest and most encompassing dilemma the churches face in present-day Hungary is whether they wish, and are able, to contribute to the modernisation of society while still upholding their fundamental doctrines as well as their moral authority in a credible, plausible and attractive manner.

Notes

1. The exception was Bishop Ravasz who lived in the vicinity of Budapest, isolated and virtually under house arrest.
2. Only high schools were allowed to function. There remained eight Roman Catholic, four Calvinist and one Lutheran secondary schools.
3. Budapest: Országos Lelkipásztori Intézet, Katolikus társadalomtudományi akadémia, 1991, esp. 9, 15, 16, 19.
4. This is the feature of modern societies which has been denounced by Pope John Paul II. The Pope, however, did not take into consideration that crass materialism was widespread in the East-Central European countries.
5. Other political occurrences also influenced the state-church relationships. In 1977, for example, many priests were arrested and sentenced for anti-state activities. The most plausible interpretation is that the state security apparatus, which felt its position weakened, attempted to magnify the danger of "clerical reaction" and thus regain its power.
6. Cf. "168 óra" (168 Hours), III year, no. 30, July 30, 1991, Budapest. 10-11.
7. G. Baum, "Liberal Capitalism", in: Baum, Gregory-Robert Ellesberg (eds.), *The Logic of Solidarity: Commentaries on Pope John Paul II's Encyclical "On Social Concern"*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1988, 88.
8. As far as the Roman Catholic church is concerned, Ferenc Tomka, in his book *Intézmény és karizma az Egyházban* (Institution and Charisma in the Church) Budapest, 1991, presents a comprehensive view of how the reassessment and modernisation ought to be accomplished.

While the original manuscript was written in 1973 and the confrontation with Marxism as one of the main preoccupations of the author, his views reflect one of the most thoroughly self-critical standpoints and could be expanded to non-Catholic Christian churches as well.

9. Peter L. Berger, *A Far Glory: The Quest for Faith in an Age of Credulity*. New York: The Free Press, 1992, 67. Berger, one of the most noted contemporary sociologists of religion, emphasises the burden modernity and pluralism place on the individual.
10. *Op. cit.* 41–46.
11. It is important to note that the Hungarian legislation concerning abortion and the decision of the Constitutional Court about neutrality in world-view of schools is significantly different from the Polish practice and legislation.



IDYLLIC FAMILY LIFE IN PÉTER ESTERHÁZY'S NOVELS (A SEMIOTIC APPROACH FROM A FEMINIST POINT OF VIEW)

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'T is a Woman's whole existence; Man may range
The Court, Camp, Church, the Vessel, and the Mars;
Sword, Gown, Gain, Glory, offer in exchange
Pride, Fame, Ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these can not estrange;
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.
(Lord Byron, *Don Juan*)

Feminist criticism

Most recent Western literary theories, such as structuralism, close reading, semiotics, etc. are also well known in Eastern Europe. They were accepted and explored at the time when the dominance of the Marxist approach was still very strong. The only theory that did not become popular in countries like Poland and Hungary was feminist literary theory. The East European societies do not have to fight for things, such as employment of women, longer maternity leave, or day care. Since 1945, all these changes have been implemented by the state and have had a significant impact on people's mentality. Whether this has had a fully positive effect on the position of woman is a moot question. It was accepted that a woman might be working outside the home for financial reasons; if her work was interesting, or if she was well-educated, she gained a certain social position and her family, including her husband, were proud of her. In the East European societies, a new kind of mentality has developed since the war: a woman's career became as, or more, important than the care of the family and children.

This situation explains, to a certain extent, why neither Hungarian nor Polish literature has any explicitly feminist writers. This also explains the lack of interest in feminism and feminist fiction *as political writing*, i.e. as the means of changing social reality and people's mentality. Besides, this mentality was

changed to such an extent that, due to a very low birth rate in Hungary, the state decided to encourage women to bear children and take care of them by giving the mothers a three-year-leave for each child and the right to return to their job after the period of absence.

However, since the beginning of the 1990s, feminist theory has been noticed in some way in both countries. Courses on the feminist perspective are now being given at the university of Budapest by American and English scholars (see Sükösd 1992). In Poland, an article about feminists, a kind of ironic dictionary of feminist terms was written by a famous Polish critic and published in one of the best literary periodicals (see K. Mtrak's article in *Literatura* 1992). Despite this, there are no books written from the feminist perspective, no translations of such books from other languages, no departments or chairs of Women's Studies and no advertisements encouraging women to apply for a job by suggesting that if they have the same qualifications as the male applicants they will be selected for the job in question.¹

In the West, feminist studies are very advanced and the feminist point of view is adopted to historical, sociological and literary research. Some Western feminist criticism argues that the whole history of literature has been written from a masculine viewpoint and that it has had a very important impact on the appreciation of some masculine values.

Consequently, literary work by women has been considered less interesting and marginal.² This is the reason why feminist criticism tries to focus on women's works and, specifically, on women's values. One example of this kind of research is Alison Light's book *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars*. The author focusses exclusively on women novelists and this is the most feminist aspect of her study. In my opinion, her book, as well as the greater part of feminist studies, can be considered a mixture of sociology of literature and reception-theory, both well-known in Eastern Europe. I would like to mention two examples of interest in feminine behaviour which do not adopt the feminist perspective. The first is a study by Éva Bálint and András Veres (1974), entitled *A sikertelenség környezetrajza* [The Topography of Failure], in which three novels by three male writers have been selected from a sociological perspective, documenting the impossibility of a happy life in a concrete Hungarian situation. One of them is a novel by Ákos Kertész, which depicts the relationship between a young girl, Vali Szombathy, and a worker, Ferenc Makra. She is ambitious, unconventional and she knows what she wants: to become an artist. He has perhaps enough talent to become a sculptor, but he has no artistic ambition and, as a result of his environment and the lack of education, he is only interested in a very traditional way of life (marriage, children, and a good housewife). When Vali gets pregnant, she

decides to have an abortion, despite the fact that she really is in love, and loved, and that the young man wants to marry her. She feels, understandably, considering the very difficult economic circumstances in Hungary in the 1950s that the acceptance of marriage and family life would make her own personal development and that of her lover impossible. The critics were very negative about such an outcome and accused the writer of lacking the ability to create a positive and hopeful end to the story. They also found Vali, as a character, to be unconvincing, exaggerated, monstrous and very problematic from the ideological point of view. Of course, this study, published in the 1970s, was influenced by Lukács' theory. I mention this example, because of the system of values which I will analyze later in my article. It is also interesting because it shows an unusual picture of a woman drawn by a male author. It is also interesting to know that the writer shows the unhappiness of the male character who has abandoned the young girl after the abortion and has chosen a traditional way of life: a marriage with a simple girl. In the end, Ferenc Makra commits suicide while, as the text suggests, Vali is happy, leading her unconventional life, somewhere outside Hungary, which she has left after the Revolution of 1956.

In this context, the concept of "negative images of women" in male writing seems to me a very ambiguous one. Following the stages in the development of feminist literary theory enumerated by Julia Kristeva (quoted by Mills 1989: 4), I would like to argue that it is possible and sensible to discuss negative judgments about women and female writers only in male critical writings and not in literary texts.

Another example of interest in the position of Hungarian women was a sociological study by Pál Lócsei (1985) *A női munkavállalás és a hagyományos magyar család* [Female Employment and the Traditional Hungarian Family]. From the modern (or feminist) point of view this very serious and interesting study is somewhat paternalistic. Considering the fact that an average Hungarian family is economically based on two bread-winners, Lócsei pleads for the possibility of part-time jobs for women working outside the home:

"What has prevented, and still prevents, the establishment of work places with 4-6 working hours for women who wished and wish to reconcile the dual tasks assumed by them?" (Lócsei 1985: 90)

The author is obviously convinced that there are some typically female activities, apart from the biologically determined ones, related to the household and motherhood, which can be done only by women. He cannot imagine that the option of a part-time job can be also taken up by men.

I would like to suggest that there are two main reasons for the lack of interest in feminist criticism in Eastern Europe: a social one and a purely theoretical one. Having explained the totally different position of women in Eastern Europe and its consequences for people's mentality, I would like to focus briefly on the theoretical aspect of feminist criticism.

An important group of feminist writers examines or criticizes the position of women in society, now or in the past. This kind of writing can be seen as 'documents of the time', and such texts are generally written in a realistic prose, which is a fairly direct representation of the real world. This kind of writing, feminist or not, was selected, evaluated and interpreted by the method called sociology of literature, which was the favourite theory of the Marxists: all problems were examined as illustrations of the struggle between people of different social classes, but no distinction was made between the situation of women and the position of farmers. In fact, feminist criticism, especially so-called Marxist-Feminism, is doing the same: it focusses attention on a group of human beings who are oppressed, this time because of their gender. It is interesting to see that Western feminist critics have a link with Marxism or with its point of view. Some feminist critics use Marxist terminology. For example, A. Light argues that even that feminism which allied itself with a socialist tradition seemed to have little to say about a sense of class difference in women's lives. The term 'consciousness-raising' in a feminist context³ reminds one of the term 'class consciousness' that was to be developed by the communist party. This kind of Marxist sociolect would be very irritating in the East European countries, especially after the change in 1989, when Marxist ideology became rejected. The problem is that feminism is closely connected with the socialist tradition, the Women's Movement, politics and, as such, seems to be more of an ideology than a scientific method (see Mills 1989: 3-4, 186-225).

However, one ideological task of feminist criticism that certainly makes sense is the revision of literary history. It is a feminist point of view that makes it clear to me that, according to one of feminism's arguments, Hungarian literary history needs some supplementing and should perhaps be rewritten. The absence of woman writers in Hungarian history of literature is obvious and, in some way, suspect, but the general opinion is that this fact is due to the low aesthetic level of their novels and poetry. It does not seem important to know who these female writers are and what kind of books they have written. For Hungarian literary history, the first step should be a registration of woman writers in the form of an annotated bibliography, which can be followed later by an analysis of the characteristics of Hungarian women's writing. The Hungarian female literary tradition, as far as it is known, is so

important that it can be argued that male authors such as, for example, Zsigmond Móricz and László Németh, were influenced by it.⁴ The problem is that most of the books written by women that are not considered part of the Hungarian literary canon are unavailable. However, book publishing in Hungary is now more free and, consequently, there are some re-publications of the female writers who were very popular before the second world war.⁵ As long as the criterion of gender is considered to be scientifically irrelevant, there is no hope for a change. It is significant that, at the moment, only Hungarian scholars living in the West pay attention to feminist criticism and female writers. One example of this interest is the 10th number of *Arkánium* (December 1992), a literary periodical edited by Hungarian (male) scholars and writers living in the USA and Canada, which published Hungarian translation excerpts from the works of Luce Irigaray (1992) and Constance Penley (1992). This is also the first attempt to appropriate the terms of feminist criticism into the Hungarian language.⁶

The second theoretical problem with feminist criticism is its inability to characterise women's writing: neither the poetical approach, nor the thematic point of view is able to define it. There are some attempts and statements, such as 'the symbolism of fluidity and female sexuality' in confrontation with 'the phallogocentrism of Western philosophical writings' (quoted by Mills 1989: 7), or the conviction that 'a link between fiction and life can be considered as the essence of feminist thought' (quoted by Mills 1989: 171). At the same time, there are those who argue that a text must be seen 'as discursive construct rather than reflections of an individual authors's experience' (quoted by Mills 1989: 8). But the fact that there is no agreed opinion amongst feminist critics can also be seen as a challenge to analysis of the male and female writing from this point of view.

The reconstruction of values

The analysis I will present here is a reading of Esterházy's novels, influenced by feminist theory and executed in semiotic terms. It is not my intention to show the positive or negative image of women in Esterházy's fiction, but only to show the fine interaction between the female and male characters and the system of values that underlines it.

At any times, every society has a number of values which are connected to its norms and rules. By norms I understand the rules which are fixed by law (Greimas' domain of *competence* and *performance*); by values I understand a much more subjective combination of meanings, ethical beliefs and ideas that change in time and are characteristic of a social group. Because they are not

defined by law, they can be discerned by empirical sociological research or by a survey of (literary) texts. The values belong to the domain of *manipulation* and *sanction*.

It is possible to reconstruct the feminist system of values, if we examine carefully their publications (Brouwer et al. 1990: 12) and interviews. From a feminist point of view, knowledge and technology, as well as some cultural, political and economic developments in our society, have had a positive impact on the women's lives. They enabled them to realize the following values:

- the opportunity to postpone and choose motherhood,
- smaller dependency on men,
- greater control over one's own destiny,
- engagement in public life.

The most committed feminists would formulate those values more strongly:

- independence,
- total control over one's own destiny,
- a career.

It is absolutely clear that these values are also masculine values, and the paradoxical situation is that what feminists wanted was to replace masculine values by some feminine values. It is significant that some successful women declare proudly that they have strength, vision and dominant behaviour while, at the same time, admitting that these qualifications are seen in our society as masculine (see interview with Madonna, BBC 1992). Another statement from the same interview made it clear that intelligent, independent women are not interested in marriage and children.

I would like to illustrate, using the Greimasian model, the system of values held by Vali Szombathy, the character from Ákos Kertész novel's:

Manipulation	Competence	Performance	Sanction
personal development	a strong will and possibility to do that	abortion	independence; impossibility to realize one aspect of femininity: motherhood

The more extreme form of behavior was manifested by Renate Dorrestein, a Dutch feminist, who was sterilized when she was twenty-two. According to Greimas' semiotic model, her life can be represented as follows:

Manipulation	Competence	Performance	Sanction
independence	a strong will and possibility to do that ⁷	sterilization	successful career; impossibility to realize one aspect of femininity: motherhood

The question is whether intelligence, independence and career exclude motherhood and a (happy) family life. I would like to show that this opposition (independence and career on the one hand and the motherhood and the family on the other) is typical of some militant Western feminists and those Hungarian writers who elevate family life. However, this fact is only apparently paradoxical.

The idyllic family life in the work of Péter Esterházy

I am now going to provide a semiotic analysis of the image of family life in Esterházy's first novel *Termelési-regény* [Production-novel]⁸ (1979) and in *Hrabal könyve* [A book of Hrabal], published in 1990.

Termelési-regény is a novel about a young writer, Esterházy Péter,⁹ his wife and their two children, and his family (his parents, his brother, his aunts, uncles and cousins). The novel has two narrators: an impersonal, third person narrator and a very involved one who, like Goethe's chronicle writer, Eckerman, whose name he has adopted, writes a kind of a first person chronicle about an admired novelist. This impersonation results in an ironically exaggerated attention to the young novelist to the detriment of everybody else, including his wife. Furthermore, the narration of the whole novel is ironic and intertextual, with commonplace and conventional images coherently presented with meta-linguistic commentaries. This novel paints a perfect and harmonious family life and the image of an 'ideal woman'.

Esterházy's *Hrabal könyve* is also about a writer's family, his wife Anna and their three children. This novel is to some extent autobiographical. There is some tension between the husband and his wife, who is pregnant with her fourth child and, this time, sees motherhood as a burden. The novel has a third

person narrator, but several times the narration is taken by Anna (apparent Direct Speech) who talks about her family in general and about her feeling and fascination for the older novelist, Bohumil Hrabal. In this novel, which also has a happy-ending, the idyllic atmosphere is mixed with some reality.

The *Termelési-regény*

Adopting Greimas' terminology, it can be said that the discursive configuration of *family life* occupies an important place in some of Esterházy's novels. This configuration can be described as:

the life of a family in its customary way of doing it; the family is a group of people that consists of parents and their children, in a large sense aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents.

There are, of course, more configurations in the novel such as *politics, social life, literature* etc. A short enumeration of the thematic roles of both actors shows the configurations to which they belong:

The roles of the masculine character, Péter Esterházy:

<i>politics:</i>	a person of aristocratic origin: an Esterházy, a Hungarian citizen, a novelist;
<i>social life:</i>	a person of aristocratic origin, a Catholic, a novelist, a footballer;
<i>literature:</i>	a (famous) novelist, a friend of famous writers, a literary critic;
<i>family life:</i>	a husband, (to some extent) a lover, a father, a child (of his parents), a brother.

The roles of the feminine character, Mrs Esterházy:

<i>family life:</i>	a wife, (to some extent) a mistress, a housewife, a mother
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In semiotic terms, this distribution of roles means that the female actor is connected to the configuration of *family life* only and that inside it she has fewer roles than her husband.

In some way, Esterházy's text confirms the statements of feminist criticism:

'Traditionally women's lives have been imagined in relation to men's lives, as the daughters, mothers, mistresses, wives of men. They have, in consequence, been imagined either in terms of a single role, psychologically important to men (virgin, temptress, bitch, goddess) or in terms of their single social and biological function in male society (preparing for marriage, or married).' (quoted by Ruthven 1990: 73)

The author of *Feminist Literary Studies*, K. K. Ruthven argues that a good deal of this would be equally true if the terms were simply reversed:

'Traditionally men's lives have been imagined in relation to women's lives, as the sons, fathers, lovers or husbands of women.' (Ibid.)

Sadly, he does not mention the most important part of men's images, namely their social roles and their career, which mean their attachment to other configurations such as, for example, *social life*.

Their thematic roles determine the space in which the characters move: it is clear that Mrs Esterházy never ventures outside her home, she has no friends of her own, we know nothing about her family or her education prior to her marriage. This is quite strange considering that the setting of the novel is Hungary in the 1970s and that the text relates to political and social reality by, for example, ironically using Marxist sociolect. In the 1970s, most Hungarian women were working outside the home. In contrast, the only place where Mrs Esterházy plays her roles is in her home. Consequently, with one exception, her family name is not given:

'I can, for example, look at a million faces, and yet I hold Gitta Reén the fairest one of all.' (Esterházy 1979: 303)

This is the only time when Gitta's family name is mentioned. It is also noticeable that it is the very name of the author's wife. It is significant that Mrs Esterházy has several names given to her by the narrators. All these names are connected with her husband's point of view:¹⁰ the wife of Esterházy, a Lady, the marvellous lady Gitti, Frau Gitti, my little Gittus, sweet Gittis etc. Most of these names express adoration and love and, as a whole, the text expresses the love for a woman who has accepted the traditional distribution of tasks within the family and has undertaken to do the cleaning, the cooking, the sewing, the caring for the children, and the entertaining. The distribution of roles between the female and masculine characters is clear cut, but Mrs Esterházy is allowed to be irritated about the way things have turned out. Some situations are presented ironically and the irony touches the male character, in particular, but he will never change. The passage introducing Mrs

Esterházy into the novel illustrates this well: the chronical part of the novel starts with the conventional image of a man looking for his sports gear and indirectly accusing his wife of having put it away. Mrs Esterházy's first utterance in the novel is the question: 'Are you blind?' (Ibid., 133); her irritation is emphasised by the narrator's comment who qualifies her question as an utterance 'without any rhetorical quality'. Mrs Esterházy's second utterance is given by the narrator in indirect speech without a comment: it is a question about whether her husband's visitors want some coffee.

All the traits of the characters and their roles are static and strongly opposed to one another: there is an opposition between the euphoric (connected to the female character) and the dysphoric (connected to the male character).

euphoric

vs

dysphoric

she is a beautiful woman

'Frau Gitti looked up with sleepy eyes. The Master again observed with admiration the morning smoothness of her face, the vivid red of her mouth, the blinding darkness (not exactly like that!) of her eyes, the soft arch of the eyebrows, the intimate neutrality of the base of her nose ("exxcellent!") and the tired purity of her forehead;

he is not a really handsome man

while he, the Master, always wakes up wrinkled like a bulldog.' (Ibid., 336)

The above example shows that most of the descriptions are finely ironic, mainly because of the stereotypes which are embedded in the language. Such use of language is typical of the whole text of the novel and emphasises the stereotypical situations in which all things and characters are presented. I shall return to this problem later on.

When there is no intention to compare the woman's beauty, then it is shown from her husband's viewpoint:

'Frau Gitti's thighs are *first class*; coming at the women from the psyche: she fulfills the most extreme adolescent dreams of the Master!' (Ibid., 176)

'Lady Gitti was as pretty as a picture. Her olive skin and her freckles positively radiated outwards, fragrant, colorful bubbles of air floated towards the city. The Master closed his eyes, people stopped in their tracks everywhere, and just stared and stared.

«You know, my friend, I saw my wife, I personally, with my very eyes!» (Ibid., 342–243)

Returning to my earlier discussion, we find more examples of the opposition between the euphoric and the dysphoric in the text:

she is practical

Frau Gitti helps both of them

Gitti has to list the things that are missing, like spoons and small plates

she advises him to open the door and to look

she is a very good cook

she is always busy and helpful

'The plates were changed (thanks to Lady Gitti's presence in the background, [...].)' (Ibid., 185) 'Fragrant black coffee beckoned invitingly, the result of Lady Gitti's blessed hands.' (Ibid., 208)

she is a very good and caring mother
when their daughter is bleeding because of her fall from the bicycle, she is the first to run to help

he is very clumsy

once, when he once tries to console a crying baby, he falls into the bed

once he serves breakfast in bed, but forgets to bring half of the things

when he asks who is ringing at the door

he never cooks

but he can make some tea

at home, he is mostly sitting

in his favourite arm-chair, reading newspaper and receiving visitors; Gitti's illness is a disaster, it makes clear what takes up most of her days: there are so many dirty dishes in the sink, that he cannot fill the kettle to boil some water for a cup of tea.

he tries to be a good father

he makes first an literary association: 'Blut muss fließen knüppel-dick, vivat, hoch, die Republik!' (371) Then, he also helps the child.

In the light of the above examples, it is absolutely clear that the narration of *Termelési-regény* is not realistic. Firstly, the accumulation of stereotypical

situations, behaviours and statements is obvious. Secondly, the use of language is such that it does refer not only to reality, but also to the literary and everyday language. It is a feature of Esterházy's style that he makes use of literary and linguistic stereotypes. In this context, it is important to realize which stereotypical situations are *not* shown and which descriptions are *not* ironically stereotyped. All things which have to do with family ties, religion and fidelity are presented without irony; they are the unquestioned values. (The fact that some characters show quite an immature behaviour at the table or in the church is relevant only to them, and not to the values themselves.)

Let me give an example: The young husband is absolutely faithful to his wife. Of course, he notices other women and he likes some of them, but they never attract him physically. The structure of the text could make it possible that, in the stereotypical situation of a famous writer touring Europe, he should flirt with some attractive girls or have an affair, but this is not the case. Not even an (imaginary) meeting with Gina Lollobrigida and her proposition to visit her in the evening can breach his fidelity. On the contrary, at night he passionately desires his wife.

In this very intertextual and meta-literary text, there are some very brief statements, spoken and repeated by both actors, which are conspicuous by their simplicity:

'You darling.' (Ibid., 201, 202, 303)

'It's great living with you.' (Ibid., 303, 345)

There are also statements without irony or poetry:

'Big Boss, I love you,' he said to the sleeping woman. 'I love you because you're gorgeous, you have a fine mind, and because your ass is absolutely purrfect.' (Ibid., 443)

There are also erotic descriptions in the text such as, for example, those of Gitta in the bath (349) which in addition to being simple and lacking irony, express her husband's great admiration for her beauty.

In Esterházy's novels, a happy family life is a very important value, but it seems to be in conflict with a woman's independence. This means that a value such as one's independence is absent, because dependence is seen as an intrinsic part of love.

Using the Greimasian model, the system of values held by Frau Gitti can be illustrated as follows:

Manipulation	Competence	Performance	Sanction
happiness	marriage	love and dependency	happy family life

In this context, I would like to suggest that the values in the discursive configuration of Esterházy's family life are based on Christian virtues, for example, on selfless love.

Hrabal könyve

The Novel *Hrabal könyve* is a tale about a family, with the character Anna as the central actor. This is almost a realistic story, but there are two actors in it who do not belong to the 'real world': they are angels sent by God to protect the family happiness. Once upon the time, God needed to send one angel only, the archangel Gabriel, to announce the pregnancy, but in modern times, when the protection of pregnancy is the main problem, God needs two helpers. One of them was earlier called Gabriel, but nobody uses his name now. In times that have changed, God and the two angels will not intervene, they can only watch the events: the angels, installed in a Lada car communicate with God by modern technological equipment and in a very modern language. The installation of the two observers makes it possible to present Anna from a point of view other than that of her husband's, but the result is the same: the angels are delighted with her beauty and they express this in a very sexist language, talking about her 'pretty ass'. Of course, they are not really 'dangerous' as men. Besides, Anna sees them as spies.

There are many thematic and poetical¹¹ similarities between the two novels: Anna's husband is a writer,¹² the family ties are very important and Anna who is presented as a pretty and desirable woman, is consciously and extremely devoted to her family. However, Anna has a much more independent personality than Frau Gitti. This is apparent from the enumeration of her roles which are, nevertheless, still only connected to the discursive configuration of *family life*: a wife, (to some extent) a mistress, a housewife, a mother, a daughter-in-law, a daughter, a niece.

Anna sees herself as having more roles and tasks. Let me illustrate this by citing one of her statements:

'I can see and understand that I'm needed around here. Only sometimes I think that someone is needed here and not me, a kind of anonymous jack-of-all-trades, lover, wife,

family, secretary, mother, mother in lieu of mother, interior decorator, cook, kitchen help, spiritual solace, corrector, gardener, receptionist, nurse, charwoman, friend, [...].'
(Esterházy 1990: 151–152)

It is clear that all these words have, as a common characteristic, the notion of servitude.

As the above quotation shows, Anna has a voice in the text: the third person narrator “allows” her to take over the narration about herself and to present her interior monologues. Her husband and her family constitute a big part of it. Most of her inner thoughts are addressed to the Czech writer, Bohumil Hrabal, in whom Anna’s husband is interested, since he is writing a book about him. Through her husband, Hrabal becomes present in the family and becomes her friend. This is a really grotesque situation: only thanks to her husband can Anna have somebody to whom she can tell her problems, but it is a very logical solution, because, like Frau Gitti, Anna is mostly enclosed in her home and surrounded by her children, husband, and her family. She only goes for a short walk early in the evening and then she thinks about the life that she has accepted and loves. However, there is some tension in this novel and, this time, this tension is inside Anna herself.

euphoric	vs	dysphoric
it is fine to have always somebody around		it is tiring to be never alone
after nearly twenty years, she still adores, loves and desires her husband		she dreams about Hrabal and she speaks to him in her mind
she adores her parents-in-law		she never had a really good relationship with her own parents
she likes cooking		she is not patient enough to make a good soup (like her mother-in-law did) she is not able to get up early every morning to prepare breakfast for her family (like her mother and mother-in-law did)
she loves her children		she is frightened by her fourth pregnancy

It is not the desire for personal development or career that forces Anna to think about the abortion, it is only the tiredness.

'I don't want to have any more children, ... No, no, no I don't want them anymore. I don't want to carry my big belly, my big bloody belly any more, I don't want to wear the same dress for half a year, no more iron for me, no more throwing up, no more pain, no more hospital [...]' (Ibid., 114)

Anna speaks about the abortion to Hrabal, and she revolts against her husband. Finally he persuades her to keep the baby, sitting in the kitchen and caressing her hand, by the following arguments:

'[...] he was clearly struggling with words,' if ... if you want ... if you want it ... then ... then I will give birth...'. (Ibid., 144)

The novel ends with the happy-end, Anna shall bear her child. As she herself says, a miracle has happened, so the angels were not sent in vain. Using Greimas' framework, her life can be depicted as follows:

Manipulation	Competence	Performance	Sanction
happiness	marriage and motherhood	acceptance of the fourth pregnancy	happy family life

Happiness is, of course, a very relative notion. In this novel, happiness means living in the family and working for it. The wife and the husband have totally different tasks, but the same goals. He brings bags of cement, when the family house is being built and spends whole days in his study writing books. She cooks and the attention that the text pays to the preparation of meals is significant: eating together in a family, eating with friends, offering food to a stranger (to console him) become the sharing of food, creating a community in the Biblical sense. Happiness means, thus, living closely together and serving each other. This is, of course, a very traditional model of life. It can be called paternalistic from feminist viewpoint, but it is simply based on other values: dependence, solidarity, happiness through other people, sense of being useful. In the light of some interviews with Esterházy, the family (and the church) appears to be the very place for a lonely human being (Keresztury 1991: 24).

The acceptance of all the tasks connected with the family life is explicitly expressed by Anna:

'I'm a wife, with a stress on all three words.' (Ibid., 147)

'It was my choice. I'm free and I'm confined, that's my condition.' (Ibid., 152)

These words, spoken by a female character in a book by a male writer will not sound convincing to everyone. The whole thing looks more like an idyllic and, in some way, romantic, male fantasy.

This novel creates a fairy land, where good heroes always get their just rewards.

Notes

1. This kind of 'positive discrimination' is current in the Netherlands.
2. Feminist studies give us examples of 'discriminating' behaviour against women writers: 'It may be respectable to write about Conan Doyle or even Raymond Chandler but Christie remains beyond the pale, [...]. It is an extraordinary fact, given the centrality of her work to British cultural life, that no self-respecting British critic has ever written at decent length about her, [...].' (Light 1991: 64)
The Hungarian critics and scholars show a similar attitude.
3. '[...] 'consciousness-raising' came to signify a variety of related activities which are spelled out in Juliet Mitchell's definition: the process of transforming the hidden, individual fears of women into a shared awareness of the meaning of them as *social problems*, the release of anger, anxiety, the struggle of proclaiming the painful and *transforming it into the political*.' [*my emphasis*] (quoted by Ruthven 1990: 71.)
4. The connection between Kata Bethlen and Margit Kaffka on the one hand, and Margit Kaffka and the two above-mentioned male writers on the other is certainly worth considering.
5. As an example, I would like to mention the reprint of two novels by Renée Erdős (1879–1956), a Hungarian female author. The Hungarian critics were unanimously negative about it (Illés 1972, Iszlai 1990). It is also significant that only a scholar outside Hungary is interested in analysis of books considered to be trivial literature. I allude to the paper presented by L. Kemenes Géfin at the Modern Languages Association Convention (Toronto 1993), entitled *Female Identity in the Novels of Renée Erdős*. I would like to thank the author for allowing me to read his manuscript.
6. Another example of research from feminist viewpoint into Hungarian literature, written in Hungarian is the article by a Dutch scholar (Molemkamp 1994).
7. Sterilization is not allowed in Eastern Europe.
8. This novel is translated into the French: Esterházy Péter: *Trois anges me surveillent. Les aveux d'un roman*. Traduit du hongrois par Agnès Járász et Sophie Képés. Paris 1989: Gallimard.
9. This novel is to some extent autobiographical. This is the reason why the name of the author and that of the most important character are the same.
10. In Hungarian: Esterházy felesége (113), az asszony (ibid.), a mester felesége, a csudás Gitti asszony (138), Frau Gitti (139), Gittuskám (ibid.), Gittus (173), Édes Gittis (176), etc. All the quotations from Esterházy 1979.
11. We can also recognise the typical Esterházy's style which I have just described in connection with the *Termelési-regény*.

12. This time it is the husband who has no name. The third person narrator calls him simply 'the writer'. When Anna takes over the narration she speaks about 'my husband', using often a somewhat archaic form, or she expresses her feelings for him by calling him 'my happiness', 'my darling', etc.

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Die Ungarn, ihre Geschichte und Kultur

Edited by L. Kósa

Ein hervorragendes Autorenkollektiv unternimmt hier erstmals den Versuch, den Leser über alles, was zur Hungarologie gehört, zu informieren. In diesem Werk sind sämtliche das Ungarn und Ungarn betreffenden Kenntnisse kurz und knapp zusammengefaßt. Nach einer Einführung in die Hungarologie, ihrer Begriffsbestimmung, der Anzahl und territorialen Verbreitung der Ungarn in der Welt folgt ein Überblick über die ungarische Sprache, deren Verwandtschaft und Perioden. Das Kapitel über die Geschichte Ungarns beginnt bei der ungarischen Urgeschichte und erstreckt sich bis hin in die neueste Zeit. Die Literatur und Künste werden ausgehend von der ältesten ungarischen Dichtung nach Perioden und Themenkreisen bis in die jüngste Vergangenheit hinein behandelt. Die Ethnographie, die ungarische Volkskultur, deren historischen Schichten und Stellung in Europa bilden den Schluß dieses umfassenden Werkes. Die Bibliographie enthält in den Welt Sprachen erschienenen Studien und Bücher, die zur weiteren eingehenden Orientierung verhelfen.

Das Buch wendet sich an alle, die sich mit der ungarischen Sprache befassen und die Vergangenheit sowie Kultur der Ungarn kennenlernen möchten, es richtet sich an jene, die zwar ungarischer Abstammung sind, aber nicht in diesem Kulturkreis aufgewachsen sind oder leben, und es ist für all die von Interesse, die mehr über Ungarn wissen möchten, als ein Reiseführer vermittelt. Gleichzeitig bietet es das erforderliche Grundwissen für ein ausführliches Ungarnstudium.

Readership: historians, undergraduate students, general public

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Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

Nous, les Hongrois

by I. Nemeskürty

Cet ouvrage n'est pas un traité d'historiographie, mais comme les autres livres d'István Nemeskürty, une lecture captivante qui facilite la compréhension du présent de la Hongrie par la présentation de son passé.

L'auteur traite l'histoire de Hongrie dans l'ordre chronologique, de la conquête du pays à 1947, date du traité de Paris. Nous lisons avec intérêt les événements qui marquèrent le règne du roi saint Etienne, fondateur de l'Etat, et celui des autres Arpadiens, l'époque de la maison d'Anjou, la gloire des Hunyadi, l'occupation turque et les malheurs du pays divisé en trois parties. L'auteur nous fait connaître le monde des kouroutz, puis nous présente l'empire Habsbourg, le mouvement des jacobins hongrois, les guerres napoléoniennes, la Réforme, ainsi que la révolution bourgeoise, la guerre d'indépendance de 1848; puis le Compromis. Il consacre tout un chapitre à la tragédie de la première guerre mondiale, ainsi qu'à la période qui va du traité de Trianon à celui de Paris.

Le volume est complété d'une Petite encyclopédie, qui contient des données de base vulgarisatrices sur les personnalités hongroises ou les personnalités étrangères en rapport étroit avec l'histoire de Hongrie. Cet appendice enrichit la matière du livre, le rend plus systématique et plus facile à utiliser.

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