

Babeş-Bolyai University
Faculty of Reformed Theology

**History of the Southern Transylvanian
Reformed Church District (1940–1945)**

PhD Dissertation Abstract

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Table of Contents of the Dissertation

Table of Contents.....	1
Foreword.....	7
1. The Beginnings of the Southern Transylvanian Reformed Church District.....	14
1.1. Formation.....	14
1.1.1. The Second Vienna Award.....	14
1.1.1.1. The Premises and the Declaration of the Award.....	14
1.1.1.2. The demographic consequences of the Award.....	18
1.1.1.2. The Separated Church District.....	20
1.1.2.1. The Transylvanian Reformed Church in 1940.....	20
1.1.2.2. The consequences of the Second Vienna Award in the Life of the Church.....	21
1.1.2.3. The Naming of the Governing Committee.....	24
1.2. The First Period (October-November 1940).....	28
1.2.1. The Start.....	28
1.2.1.1. The First Meetings.....	28
1.2.1.2. The Provisory Organisational Chart.....	30
1.2.2. Census.....	31
1.2.2.1. Difficulties.....	31
1.2.2.2. Dioceses.....	32
1.2.2.3. Mass Exodus of Pastors to Hungary.....	34
1.2.2.4. Decrease of the Number of the Followers.....	37
1.2.3. The State Recognition of the New Church Government Structure.....	39
1.2.3.1. First Contact With the Government.....	39
1.2.3.2. The First negotiations in Bucharest.....	41
2. The Life of the Southern Transylvanian Reformed Church District.....	43
2.1. Church Government.....	43
2.1.1. Organisation of the Church District.....	43
2.1.1.1. Church District or Fragment?.....	43
2.1.1.2. The First Attempt to Gather the General Assembly.....	49
2.1.1.3. The Suggestion of the Pastor's Conference of the Diocese of Nagyenyed.....	52
2.1.1.4. Debates Over the Organisational Chart.....	58
2.1.1.5. The Final Church Organisation.....	62
2.1.2. The Governing Committee.....	63
2.1.2.1. The First Open Meetings.....	64
2.1.2.2. The Secret Meetings.....	66
2.1.2.3. Open Meetings in 1945.....	71
2.1.3. The College of Deans.....	72
2.1.3.1. College of Deans and/or Governing Committee?.....	72
2.1.3.2. Open Meetings.....	73
2.1.3.3. Secret Meetings.....	75
2.1.4. The Presidential Board.....	80
2.1.4.1. Competence.....	80
2.1.4.2. Methods.....	81
2.1.4.3. The Presidential Board and the Hungarian Government.....	83
2.1.4.4. The Presidential Board and the Romanian Government.....	88
2.1.4.5. Financial Aid.....	90
2.1.4.6. Canonic Visitations.....	92
2.1.4.7. The Vice-Bishop, Nagy Ferenc.....	93
2.1.4.8. The Churchwarden, Bethlen Bálint.....	97
2.1.5. The Central Office of the Governing Committee.....	99

2.1.5.1. Organising the Central Office	99
2.1.5.2. The Departments	100
2.1.5.3. The Auxiliary Functions	105
2.1.5.4. Committees	107
2.1.6. Critics Against the Activity of the Governing Committee; Conflicts.....	108
2.1.6.1. The Tőkés Ernő-case.....	109
2.1.6.2. The Governing Committee and the Diocese of Nagyenyed	114
2.1.6.3. Szócs Sándor and the Governing Committee	116
2.1.6.4. The Governing Committee and the Borough Council of the Bethlen Reformed College in Nagyenyed (Aiud)	118
2.1.6.5. Nagy Ferenc and Musnai László.....	124
2.2. Relationship Between the Reformed Church and the State Authorities	126
2.2.1. The Loyal Attitude of the Church	127
2.2.1.1. Lack of Illegalities and Underground Combinations.....	127
2.2.1.2. Observation of Legal Measures	128
2.2.2. The Attitude of the Government	132
2.2.2.1. Playing for Time	132
2.2.2.2. Contradictious Measures.....	134
2.2.2.3. Malice	135
2.2.2.4. Aversive Government Clerks.....	137
2.2.3. Evaluation of the Relationship of the Church with the Romanian Government	140
2.3. Relationship with the Other Hungarian Churches	144
2.3.1. Relationship of the Governing Committee with the Governing Board of Kolozsvár.....	144
2.3.1.1. Support.....	144
2.3.1.2. Prejudices.....	146
2.3.2. Relationship with the Fragment of the Western Transylvanian Church District.....	148
2.3.2.1. Negotiations Regarding Union	148
2.3.2.2. Conflicts.....	152
2.3.3. Relationship with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gyulafehérvár.....	155
2.3.3.1. Cooperation.....	156
2.3.3.2. Disputes	160
2.3.4. Relationship with the Lutheran Church	162
2.3.5. Relationship with the Unitarian Church	164
2.4. The Life of the Southern Transylvanian Reformed Dioceses.....	164
2.4.1. The Reformed Diocese of Brassó	166
2.4.2. The Reformed Diocese of Gyulafehérvár.....	169
2.4.3. The Reformed Diocese of Hunyad	170
2.4.4. The Reformed Diocese of Kalotaszeg	173
2.4.5. The Reformed Diocese of Kolozsvár.....	175
2.4.6. The Reformed Diocese of Küküllő	177
2.4.7. The Reformed Diocese of Mezőség.....	178
2.4.8. The Reformed Diocese of Nagyenyed.....	182
2.4.9. The Reformed Diocese of Nagyszeben.....	184
2.4.10. The Reformed Diocese of Old Romania.....	186
2.5. The Internal Life of the Church	191
2.5.1. Church Service.....	192
2.5.1.1. Attendance	192
2.5.1.2. Sermons	194
2.5.1.3. Obstacles.....	194
2.5.2. Catechese	196

2.5.2.1. In Confessional Schools.....	196
2.5.2.2. In Public Schools	197
2.5.2.3. In Congregations (Preparing for Confirmation)	198
2.5.3. Internal Mission	199
2.5.3.1. Proposal of the Provisory Missionary Council	199
2.5.3.2. Paralyzed Organisations of Internal Mission	200
2.5.3.3. Women's Association	201
2.5.3.4. Work with Children	203
2.5.3.5. Mission in Prison	204
2.5.4. The Charity Work of the Church	206
2.5.4.1. Financial Help of the Distressed Followers	206
2.5.4.2. The Orphanage of Szászváros	209
2.5.4.3. The Alms-houses of Brassó	212
2.5.4.4. Other Charity Institutions	213
2.5.5. Diaspora Care	214
2.5.5.1. Plan of Activities	214
2.5.5.2. Financial Aid for Diaspora Congregations	215
2.5.5.3. Catechism for the Diaspora	216
2.5.6. Church Press	218
2.5.6.1. Suggestions, Press Committee	218
2.5.6.2. Journals	220
2.5.6.3. Books for Children.....	222
2.5.6.4. The Bethlen Printing Press.....	223
2.5.6.5. Book Publishing.....	225
2.5.6.6. The Reformed Calendar.....	226
2.5.6.7. Manual Publishing	228
2.5.6.8. Confessional Publications.....	229
2.5.7. Pensions and Other Benefits	231
2.5.7.1. Proposal for the Joint Pension Fund	232
2.5.7.2. The Separate Pension Fund.....	233
2.5.7.3. Occasional Benefits	236
2.5.7.4. The Benefit Fund	237
2.5.7.5. Other Types of Financial Aid	238
2.6. The Confessional Elementary Schools of Southern Transylvania.....	239
2.6.1. Confessional Elementary Education in Romania in the Inter-war Period	239
2.6.2. Confessional Elementary Education in Southern Transylvania in the months following the Second Vienna Award.....	243
2.6.2.1. General Overview	243
2.6.2.2. Exodus of Teachers	244
2.6.2.3. Disorders Regarding the Start of the Schoolyear.....	246
2.6.2.4. Financing of the Schools.....	248
2.6.3. Confessional Elementary Education in Southern Transylvania Between 1941 and 1945	250
2.6.3.1. Lack of Well-trained Teachers.....	251
2.6.3.2. The Pupils	255
2.6.3.3. Abuses of Authorities	259
2.6.3.4. Financing	264
2.7. Reformed Secondary Schools in Southern Transylvania.....	265
2.7.1. Reformed Secondary Schools in Great-Romania	265
2.7.2. Reformed Secondary Schools in Southern Transylvania after de Vienna Award	268

2.7.2.1. General Overview	268
2.7.2.2. Decrease of the number of students	269
2.7.2.3. The Exodus of the Teachers.....	270
2.7.2.4. Financing, difficulties	270
2.7.3. Reformed Secondary Schools in Southern Transylvania Between 1941 and 1945....	272
2.7.3.1. Teachers	272
2.7.3.2. Students.....	275
2.7.3.3. The Diplomatic Conflict over School Policy and its Consequences	277
2.7.3.4. Financing	280
3. Offenses against Southern Transylvanian Reformed Followers between 1940 and 1945	281
3.1. General Overview	281
3.1.1. Background Motivations of the Anti-Hungarian Attitude in the Beginning of the 1940s	281
3.1.1.1. Collective Guilt of the Hungarian Community, Reprimation of Offenses Against Romanians in Northern Transylvania	282
3.1.1.2. The Ideal of the Homogenous Romanian National State.....	282
3.1.1.3. The Minority Policy Based on Reciprocity.	285
3.1.1.4. The Primitive Nationalism and Pragmatic Aspects	289
3.1.2. The Different Types of Atrocities Committed Against Hungarians in Southern Transylvania	291
3.1.2.1. The First Period: September 1940 – January 1941	292
3.1.2.2. The Second Period: January 1941 – August 1944	292
3.1.2.3. The Third Period: August 1944 – April 1945	296
3.2. Individual injuries	301
3.2.1. The Anti-Hungarian Atmosphere	301
3.2.1.1. Propaganda in Press and Political Debates	301
3.2.1.3. The Romanian Refugees of Northern Transylvania	304
3.2.2. Dismissals and Deportations.....	307
3.2.3. Insults, Atrocities, Outrages.....	312
3.2.3.1. Against Reformed Pastors, Teachers and Followers.....	312
3.2.3.2. Against Reformed Churches, Schools and Other Buildings.....	322
3.3. Harrassment of Authorities Against Pastors.....	327
3.3.1. The Abuses of the Police	327
3.3.1.1. Permanent Surveillance.....	328
3.3.1.2. Unjustified Searchings.....	329
3.3.1.3. House-Searches.....	331
3.3.1.4. Other Abuses	335
3.3.2. Proceedings of Martial Courts	337
3.3.2.1. Numbers.....	338
3.3.2.2. Defendants	340
3.3.2.3. Prejudices Caused by the Proceedings.....	340
3.3.2.4. The Most Common Accusation: Offense Against the Romanian Nation.....	342
3.3.2.5. Illegal Assembly	348
3.3.2.6. Forging.....	350
3.3.2.7. Illegal Violation of Frontier.....	351
3.3.2.8. Other Cases	353
3.4. Community Injuries	354
3.4.1. The Laws Regarding State of Siege.....	354
3.4.2. Restrictions Regarding Free Assembly and Their Consequences	359
3.4.2.1. Restrictions Regarding Free Assembly.....	359

3.4.2.2. Paralyzing Church Authorities.....	362
3.4.2.3. Paralyzing the Community Life of Pastors and Followers.....	364
3.4.2.4. Paralyzing Church Services.....	368
3.4.2.5. Paralyzing Church Administration.....	371
3.4.2.6. Paralyzing Individual Pastoral Counseling.....	373
3.4.3. Restrictions Regarding Mobility.....	374
3.4.4. Restrictions Regarding the Use of Hungarian Language.....	377
3.4.4.1. Hungarian Inscriptions, Hungarian Mail and Phone Conversations.....	377
3.4.4.2. Use of Hungarian Toponyms.....	379
3.4.5. The Censorship.....	380
3.4.5.1. The System of Censoring.....	380
3.4.5.2. Aversive Attitude of the Censors.....	382
3.4.5.3. Censorship and Church Press.....	385
3.5. Economic Injuries.....	387
3.5.1. Requisition of Church Estates.....	387
3.5.1.1. Quartering of Romanian Soldiers and Refugees.....	387
3.5.1.2. Requisition of Church Estates.....	388
3.5.1.3. Requisition of School Buildings.....	394
3.5.2. Differentiated taxes.....	397
3.5.3. War-loans.....	402
3.5.4. Illegalities Regarding State Financing of the Church.....	406
3.5.4.1. Administrative Aid.....	406
3.5.4.2. School Financing.....	408
3.5.4.3. Discounts for Railway Tickets for Clerics.....	409
3.5.4.5. Financing of the Schools From the Budget of Local Authorities.....	410
3.5.5. Illegalities Regarding the Salaries of the Priests.....	411
3.5.5.1. Validity of Diplomas.....	412
3.5.5.2. Financial Aid for Deans.....	412
3.5.5.3. Financial Aid for Pastors with Children.....	413
3.5.5.4. Suspending Pastors' Salaries.....	414
3.6. Injuries after the 23 rd of August 1944.....	418
3.6.1. Injuries Committed by the Authorities.....	420
3.6.1.1. Restrictions of Mobility.....	421
3.6.1.2. Internments.....	423
3.6.1.3. Camps of Forced Labor.....	440
3.6.1.4. Proceedings of Martial Courts.....	441
3.6.1.5. Limitation of the Usage of Hungarian Language.....	442
3.6.1.6. Requisition of Church Assets for Military Use.....	443
3.6.2. Injuries Caused by the Military Units and Civilians that Passed Southern Transylvania.....	446
3.6.2.1. Looting in Villages Located Away from the Front.....	447
3.6.2.2. Injuries Suffered by Communities in the Line of the Front.....	451
4. The Union of the Transylvanian Reformed Church.....	456
Overview, Conclusions.....	465
Bibliography.....	471
Archival Sources.....	471
Printed Archival Sources.....	472
Memoirs.....	472
Studies, Books, Reviews.....	472

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Church History, History of the Reformed Church of Transylvania, History of Romania during WW2, Southern Transylvania, Hungarian Minority, Antonescu-regime, Romanian-Hungarian Relationship, Governing Committee, Ferenc Nagy, Bálint Bethlen, János Vásárhelyi, Reformed Church in Southern Transylvania, 23rd of August 1944, Romanian-Hungarian War, Atrocities and Injuries Committed Against the Church.

Introduction: the Topic of the Research

In August 1940 the Romanian and Hungarian governments asked for the arbitration of the German and Italian governments in order to solve the territorial dispute between the two countries. The applicants obliged themselves to accept the terms of the decisions without reluctance. The arbitrary decision, which was made on the 30th of August 1940 in the Gold Cabinet of the Belvedere Palace in Vienna based on ethnical, economical and strategic premises, divided the land of Transylvania, which constituted the topic of the territorial debate, in two parts. The Northern part was annexed to Hungary, and its southern part remained in Romania.

The new border tore Transylvania in two parts in an unprecedented way. It divided historical regions, centuries-old economical, social and cultural relationships, villages, families, doing all this without any pragmatic regard. Cities lost their supplier villages, industrial facilities their raw material bases, producers their markets, important rail-lines became standoffs, main roads became dead-ends. The decision parted Transylvania and its inhabitants. Romanians in the north and Hungarians in the south sadly watched the new border, joy and acclamation on one side and rising hatred and nationalist hysteria on the other. The already burdened relationship of the two nations has turned to open animosity. Hundreds of Romanians were killed by the revenge of Hungarian paramilitary units in the north, and hundreds of thousands of Hungarians were expecting their darkest period of minority existence in the south.

The border, which has been drawn by Adolf Hitler himself, also tore the Transylvanian Reformed Church District in an unprecedented manner. 3/5 of it was hoping development and integration in Hungary, but 2/5 of it was expecting an almost total narrowing of its possibilities and the continuous and stubborn fight for survival in Romania. The southern part of the church district lost its centre, and was left without government, Theology, normal school for women, official newspaper, printing press etc. At first, the departure of its leaders and followers had been anticipated, followed by the decay of its institutions, total chaos and the certain liquidation.

It didn't happen that way. The Reformed bishop of Transylvania, János Vásárhelyi decided in the night after the Vienna Award that he would stop by any means the disruption of life in Southern Transylvania. The next day he delegated a vice-bishop to keep his place, and a Governing Committee to keep the place of the Governing Board. His decision was very important, because due to this committee the church district managed to avoid the irreversible decay, this committee was able to rescue five complete and four partial dioceses, almost 200 congregations, a large number of primary and secondary schools and several charity institutions from the torments of war and the wrath of the Romanian nationalism.

The Governing Committee fulfilled his duties with exemplary consciousness. They settled a new headquarter in Nagyenyed (Aiud), established contact with the Romanian government, asking for the financial support for the Reformed pastors' salaries, they collected data, established provisory dioceses, and in only two months set up a working administrative machinery, which helped the church avoid the disruption of life after the break-up. After the consolidation of his situation, the committee tried to set up the final organization of the Reformed Church in Romania, organized the church work from the internal mission to charity deeds, supported the primary and secondary schools, established a Theological Faculty, took care of the retired

people, helped its distressed pastors and followers, offered legal remedy for the people harassed by the authorities, established a printing press, edited manuals, calendars, catechism, hymnbooks.

Synthesis (general and chapter description) of the dissertation

In our dissertation we present the five years of existence (1940–1945) of this particular and unique form of church organization from the history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District. Five years, which until now have not been presented by the church historians. The researchers and the inquirers of the era know well, that the Reformed ecclesiastical historiography has a severe lag in the up-to-date and factual presentation of the 20th century Reformed Church History of Transylvania. The period of 1940–45 is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and unique parts of this era. In the decades that followed the Second World War, during the well known circumstances of the communist regime, the topic could not be treated, so the analyzed period is a white spot regarding both the Transylvanian parts annexed to Hungary and those left in Romania. Moreover, the latter has been considered a taboo until 1990, so the wider audience had not even heard of the existence of the Southern Transylvanian Church District. The main goal of our dissertation is to clear this white spot.

In the first chapter we present the circumstances of the partition of the Church District. After a short presentation of the premises of the Second Vienna Award and its consequences over Romania and Hungary, we present the new situation caused by the Award. We present the process of the formation of the Governing Committee, which ruled the Southern Transylvanian Church District, the circumstances of the accreditation of vice-bishop Ferenc Nagy, and the churchwarden of the Church District, Bálint Bethlen, and finally the events of the first period.

The second part of the dissertation presents the everyday life of the church structure partly consolidated from November 1940. First we present the church government. We show the attempts of the Governing Committee to create a new church district in Romania, and what has obliged them to exist until the liquidation of 1945 in the mainframes settled on the 31st of August 1940 by bishop Vásárhelyi. We present the activity of the main governing authorities (Governing Committee, College of Deans, Presidential Board, Departments), thoroughly presenting the persons and activities of the two presidents (Ferenc Nagy and Bálint Bethlen). Next we present the relationship of the Governing Committee and the Reformed pastors with the Romanian government, and what they could expect from the Romanian authorities, and the relationship with the other Hungarian Christian denominations, with the other Reformed Church District from South-Western Transylvania, and with the Governing Board of Kolozsvár. The next subchapter presents briefly the contemporary situation of the five complete, four partial and one dismissed dioceses, which were left in Romania. The chapter continues with the presentation of the internal life of the church: we present the liturgical life, the catechesis, internal mission and charity work of the church, the life of the two important charity institutions: the orphanage of Szászváros (Orăștie) and the alms-house of Brassó (Brașov), we outline the few results achieved in the field of church press and Diaspora care, and finally how the Governing Committee took care of the retired pastors and teachers, and how it helped its distressed pastors and followers. The chapter ends with the presentation of the Reformed elementary and secondary education of Southern Transylvania.

The next chapter presents the injuries of the Reformed people of Southern Transylvania between 1940 and 45. First we analyze the background of the anti-Hungarian mentality of the Romanian government and public opinion, outlining all of the possible reasons, which are reflected in the contemporary political and social circumstances, and after that we present in short the full scale of the injuries suffered by the Reformed Church. The next four subchapters give a detailed presentation of the injuries, which the church had to suffer in individual, com-

munity, and economical matters during the Antonescu regime. We speak about the anti-Hungarian atmosphere, the mass dismissal of Hungarian workers, the insults suffered by Reformed pastors and followers, the different kinds of harassment of Reformed pastors by the authorities and the proceedings of court-martial against Reformed people (individual injuries). We present the laws regarding state of siege in Romania, and those community injuries, which were caused to the church by the arbitrary application of the laws regarding mobility, gathering and language usage and by the censorship. We follow the line with the discriminative economical measures, we present the occupation of the different types of buildings of the church, the differentiated tax policy applied against the church, the war loans, and the irregularities regarding the church financing and the salaries of priests. At the end of the chapter we present the injuries suffered by the church in the period following the 23rd of August 1944, mostly during the Romanian-Hungarian war, caused by the authorities or by the passing armies: violent actions, internment, destruction and looting.

The dissertation ends with the presentation of the reunification of the Church District. We shortly outline the circumstances of the reunification of Transylvania, and the reintroduction of Romanian administration on the whole territory of Transylvania, and we speak about those kinds of measures, which lead to the recreation on the 28th of May 1945 of the united Transylvanian Reformed Church District. The chapter is ended by the presentation of the events of the next half year, steps taken toward the liquidation and dismissal of the Governing Committee, and the presentation of the last meeting of this committee.

After a quick look over the structure of the dissertation, it is obvious that there is a whole chapter dealing with the injuries suffered by the church. This is the consequence of the fact that in the particular situation and due to the anti-Hungarian and so anti-Reformed mentality of the Romanian administrative authorities and public opinion, we can count much more injuries than results in the life of the church. Looking over any aspect of its activity we will shortly meet barriers, hardness, disabilities, which are mostly caused by factors outside the church. The followers and the pastors of the church had suffered in an unprecedented way, and we think that these injuries would appear more accentuated if we presented them detailed in a separate chapter. The large number of injuries is proved also by the contemporary general presentations of the church life. For instance, the monumental report of the Reformed Church, called *The Situation of the Reformed Church of Southern Transylvania from the Second Vienna Award until the 5th of May 1943*, presented under the signature of vice-bishop Ferenc Nagy to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gives a detailed presentation of the church life in 241 pages, answering the questions of the Hungarian government. 200 pages of the report speak only about the injuries suffered by the church. And even though the injuries are presented in a separate chapter, when the report presents the life of the church district (publishing, internal mission, liturgical life, etc.), it also outlines barriers, hardness and discriminative measures. On the 25th of November 1945 on the last meeting of the Governing Committee, Ferenc Nagy had presented his presidential report of the five years of existence. The report has 35 pages, of which 21 contain the detailed presentation of several injuries suffered by the church. The proportions reflect the mentality of the vice-bishop and the pastors and followers of the church, who considered the five years of separate existence as an injury.

We also have to mention that in the dissertation we did not present thoroughly the history of the Bethlen Gábor Theological Academy of Nagyenyed (Aiud). The main reason of this fact is that when the Academy was dismissed in 1945, its rector, László Musnai edited a thorough and detailed presentation of the history of the institution (*Serving the Word of God, Nagyenyed, 1945*), which was published in the same year. We could not add any new detail to the facts presented in the book, so we did not want to repeat the information it presented. But this does not mean that we did not mention the Theological Academy. We do it, whenever its

existence, its problems, or issues regarding it come to order. But there is no chapter or sub-chapter dealing with the Theological Academy.

Sources

Because – as we mentioned – there is no monographic work written either about the Southern Transylvanian Church District or the Transylvanian Reformed Church during the Second World War, in our research we could only use archival sources. In our breaking of new ground we could use only the memoirs of some of the contemporary personalities and some general works describing the political, military, minority situation of Southern Transylvania in the researched era. Due to the fact that in the mentioned period there was almost no ecclesiastic or laic press, the press publications of the era could not be the basic resource of information.

The main body of our research source was the archive of the Southern Transylvanian Reformed Church District stored in the Archives of the Transylvanian Reformed Church in Kolozsvár (Cluj). The material consisting of 5.4 linear meters is the most important resource for describing the life of the church district. It has been seriously damaged (at the end of September 1944 Soviet soldiers quartered in the offices of the Governing Committee broke into the cabinets, and ravaged all of the documents), so the image outlining from it is sometimes incomplete.

The minutes written on the secret meetings of the Governing Committee and on the last meeting in 1945 are held in the Archives of the Governing Board of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. This archive stores also the first report written by Vice-bishop Ferenc Nagy. From these archives we have also examined the documents of the Transylvanian Reformed Episcopate regarding the related period. The Archives of the Reformed Dioceses (Hunyadi – Hunedoara, Kolozsvári – Cluj, Küküllői – Târnaveleor, Nagyenyedi – Aiud , Nagyszebeni – Sibiu) have also offered data concerning the life of the church. These archives – excepting the one of Nagyenyed – Aiud – can be found in the Archives of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. Our knowledge was enriched with useful background information by the correspondence of the professor of theology András Nagy. In his letters we have found information about the relationship between the Governing Committee and the Borough Council of the Bethlen Reformed College in Nagyenyed (Aiud), about the financial aid, which arrived from Switzerland and about the fate full of torments of some southern-Transylvanian pastors.

In The National Archives of Hungary we have researched the following collections: Press Archives, Archives of the Hungarian Prime Minister's Office, Archives of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry. The collection titled Press Archive has a smaller collection called: "Southern Transylvanian Database" holding an important volume of reports regarding the lives of several southern Transylvanian Hungarian institutions, churches and regions. In this collection we have found the earlier mentioned exhaustive report, which was written by the Presidential Board of the church district for the Hungarian government in May 1943. The Archives of the National and Minority Department of the Office of the Hungarian Prime Minister, and the archives of the Political Department of the Hungarian Foreign Ministry hold a large number of documents regarding the injuries suffered by the Hungarian Reformed people and pastors in Southern Transylvania. We have found a small but important amount of data in the Archives of the Hungarian Community of Romania.

In the Archives of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church we have examined documents regarding the support provided for Reformed people in Southern Transylvania, and the pastors and followers who have fled to Hungary during the years of separation, as well as the Southern Transylvanian students, who have studied in Hungary in that period.

In the Romanian National Archive we have researched the collections of the Ministry of the Cults and Education of the Antonescu-cabinet. In this material we have found substantial

information regarding the correspondence between the Reformed Church and the Government Institutions, and the background of several administrative actions of the government against the Reformed Church.

Because there is no relevant bibliography of church history regarding this period, we could only use works of general view.

We could use some of the memoirs of contemporary Hungarian and Romanian personalities. One of them was the summarizing writing of István Hegyi, former Reformed pastor of Petek. An abridged version of this writing has been published in the journal *Református Híradó* in Székelyudvarhely (Odorhei), and its manuscript was presented to us by prof. István Tőkés, whom we thank his kindness. Another memoir used was the autobiography of Sándor Kacsó, former editor of the newspaper *Erdélyi Gazda*. In the third volume of his work, which deals mostly with the period following the Second Vienna Award (*Nehéz szagú iszap felett*) the author presents a serious amount of details regarding the life of the Hungarians and the Reformed Church in Southern Transylvania, and the fate of the Hungarians (and among them several Reformed pastors and College teachers) sent to internment in Târgu Jiu. We could also use the memories of Horia Sima, which speak about the period following the Second Vienna Award, and of Petru Groza: *Malmaison, in the shade of the prison*, which has been written in 1946, when he recalls the years of the Antonescu-regime.

From the bibliography dealing with the events of the researched period we could use the works of the Hungarian historians: Dániel Csatári, Péter Illésfalvi, Béni L. Balogh, Mihály Zoltán Nagy, Péter Szabó, Norbert Számvéber, László Szenczei, Gábor Vincze, and of the Romanian historians: Dumitru Șandru, Ottmar Trașcă and Viorel Achim. The writings of the enlisted authors deal thoroughly with the second Vienna Award, the Hungarian-Romanian relationship, the activity of the German-Italian military committees, the minority policy of Hungary and Romania, the demographic movements between the two countries, the events of the Romanian–Hungarian war etc. We used these works to examine the situation of the Hungarians in Romania and the approach of the Romanian government and public opinion toward the Hungarians.

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Results, conclusions, theses

In our dissertation we have presented the history of the Southern Transylvanian Church District between 1940 and 45, a period in which 2/5 of the body of the Reformed Church had lived a provisory separate life, torn from its centre. We have presented the newly created church structure, which came to existence in a particular historical situation during World War II, on the southern part of the divided Transylvania. Based on the available information,

we have presented the circumstances of its formation, organizations and the hardness of the first months. We have presented the newly formed governing structures; we have outlined the results of the government of the church authorities, the hardness and lags of their activity. We have run through the relationship of the church district with the Romanian government and with the other Hungarian churches, through the life of the dioceses left completely or partially in Romania, and through the different segments of the internal church life. We have outlined the social, political relationships, which formed the background of the injuries suffered by the church and of the anti-Hungarian and anti-Reformed approach of the Romanian government and public opinion. We presented thoroughly the several types of injuries suffered by the church from individual, community or economical aspects, and the torments and looting suffered after the 23rd of August 1944. Finally we have presented the events of the reunification of the Transylvanian Reformed Church, and the reorganization of a unified government.

From the large amount of presented data regarding the unique chapter of the history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church, we can conclude the following:

1. The Second Vienna Award tore not only Transylvania in two, but it also divided the Transylvanian Reformed Church District. By the measures taken by Bishop János Vásárhelyi and the meeting of the Governing Board on the 31st of August 1940, the church could avoid the final rupture of the Southern Transylvanian part from the body of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. The decision of the meeting, claiming that “it declares the congregations, schools and institutions left in Southern Transylvania belonging to the body of the Transylvanian Reformed Church”, had a key importance, because through this decision the provisory character of the division was preserved throughout the whole time of partition. In the first two months, the newly created Governing Committee did not try to organize a separate church district, hoping that based on the principle of mutuality, the Romanian Government will allow Bishop Vásárhelyi to exercise his Episcopal authority over his followers in Southern Transylvania. When it became clear that this is impossible – after the discussions of November 1940 from Kolozsvár (Cluj) – the presidents decided to convoke the general assembly of the church in order to elect a new bishop and a new governing board. We presume that their main task was to preserve the continuity of existence of the Reformed Church of Transylvania, acknowledged by the Romanian confessional law in 1928, and to get a better dealing position with the Romanian government as a separate church district, and finally to pacify those who were discontented because of the naming of the presidents and the lack of elections. However, the convocation of the general assembly and the election of the bishop would have meant the acceptance of the final partition of the Southern and Northern Transylvanian Church District. But this did not happen due to the approach of the Romanian government, which considered the decision of the Governing Board from the 31st of August 1944 unchangeable, and accepted the authorities created by this decision only. This way the Governing Committee had become the substitute of the Governing Board in Southern Transylvania, and it always had to report to this governing authority. This way the unity of the Transylvanian Reformed Church did not cease, and this is best proved by the fact that there was no hardness in 1945 in reestablishing the unified government in the whole church, and it did not involve any relevant change in the government system or structure of the church.

2. Despite the fact that the unity of the Transylvanian Reformed Church did not cease, the two divided parts practically started separate, different, parallel ways of life. The Northern Transylvanian part became again part of the Hungarian Reformed Church, new church laws were introduced, and on several areas the way of ecclesiastical government changed substantially, in Southern Transylvania however the 1904 Church Law remained the only valid law source. Bishop János Vásárhelyi was not in Nagyenyed (Aiud) between the Autumn of 1940 and the Spring of 1945, starting with 1941 the Governing Board of the Transylvanian Reformed Church did not deal with the problem of the Southern Transylvanian Church District,

and the Governing Committee in the south introduced new regulations during the time of the partition. After the liquidation of the common pension fund the problem of the Reformed pastors' pension was resolved separately, the financing of the Church District also being resolved from separate funds. The schools held by the Reformed Church worked in the south according to the Romanian Education Law, and since the Theological Institute remained in Kolozsvár (Cluj), in the south a new Theological Academy was established. The Church District established a printing press, published his own official paper, new manuals for primary education, and his own hymn book and a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism.

3. Looking over the five year long history of the Southern Transylvanian Reformed Church District, we can affirm with certainty that on the day following the Vienna Award János Vásárhelyi and the Governing Board chose such persons to lead the newly created church district that were perfectly fit to fulfill the tasks they had been given. Ferenc Nagy, pastor of Tövis (Teiuș), dean of the Diocese of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia), has led the church district for five years with consciousness, patience and prevision, and preserved it in the period which brought probably the most torments in the history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church, even though he did not look for his mandate, and wanted to decline it. His attachment, endeavor and responsibility for the cause of the church is obvious both from his declarations, and from the opinions of his contemporaries or his governing methods. During his negotiations in Hungary or in Bucharest he perseveringly represented the interest of the church district, and providently handled its spiritual and material concerns. The most eloquent proof of his prevision is the fact, that in August 1944, jeopardizing his own image, he decided to bury the money deposits of the church district (cca. 30 million lei), saving them from the looting of the Soviet soldiers quartered in the offices of the Government Committee, who had broken its safe. The churchwarden Bálint Bethlen, an aristocrat with Spartan habit, who avoided boasting and display, became an excellent working partner for Ferenc Nagy. The co-operation of the two leaders was undisturbed; we have no information of any dispute or conflict between them.

4. In its activity, the governing authorities and the central office of the church faced critic from the beginning, and had to deal with serious animosity. Most of these emerged from the frustration of persons, who considered themselves neglected, and the resulted debates and conflicts often turned into personal remarks or ill-advised affirmations. Such conflict was outlining from the relationship of the Governing Committee with Ernő Tőkés or with the Conference of Pastors in the Diocese of Nagyenyed (Aiud). The conflict that broke out between the Governing Committee and the Borough Council of the Reformed College in Nagyenyed emerged from the opposite standpoints of the warden of the College, Pál Szász, and the churchwarden, Bálint Bethlen, and from the differences in principles and ideology regarding financial problems between the Presidential Board, the College of Deans and the Borough Council. During the debate however old injuries or disputes of decades between teachers and pastors had come to surface. The boards standing on opposite sides could not find the possibility of cooperation, and their bad relationship was preserved until the liquidation of the Church District, since the members of the Borough Council decided to boycott the last meeting of the Governing Committee. The animosity between Ferenc Nagy and László Musnai and Sándor Szócs, shaded their activity, which on the other hand was efficient. The lack of proper tone and communication made their reconciliation impossible even after 1945.

5. The zeal, consciousness and perseverance of the Governing Committee of the Southern Transylvanian Church District and of the pastors and teachers helped to avoid the liquidation of several congregations and institutions of the Church. In the first months Bishop János Vásárhelyi and Vice-bishop Ferenc Nagy were those who stopped the mass of pastors and teachers in fleeing to Hungary, even though some of them still left the country (pastors in a smaller, but teachers in a larger number). And even though fleeing from the church district

was constant, its foreseen liquidation did not occur. Moreover the church achieved considerable results in the field of education, internal mission, Diaspora care, assistance of distressed persons, book publishing etc. The lags in their results are not the consequence of some kind of wrong spirituality, or the lack of zeal, they emerged instead from the countless individual and community injuries the church had to suffer and from the complete narrowing of the possibilities of the church. This fact is proved by the conclusions of Bishop János Vásárhelyi formulated on one of the last meetings, and those of the Governing Board formulated on the 25th of October 1945, stating that “given the circumstances the Governing Committee tried his best to fulfill the duties” given by the Governing Board in the Autumn of 1945.

6. The Church District has found loyal allies in the other Hungarian churches for his fight for survival. The relationship between the Hungarian churches is best characterized in this period by common stand-out for the common cause and by cooperation. Their good relationship was clouded only by local quarrels, but these did not interfere with the achievement of common goals. The plan to unify the Church District with the fraction of the Western Transylvanian Church District failed, and this failure was followed by a cold relationship between the two fragments, mostly because dean Elemér Nemes made a grievance of the way the Hungarian financial aid was distributed in Southern Transylvania.

7. After the Second Vienna Award the burden of preserving the Reformed elementary and secondary education fell over the Southern Transylvanian Church District. The educational network, which was hard to preserve even for the unified Transylvanian Reformed Church, despite any effort of the Church District started to atrophy and decay. Organizing the elementary education was severely hardened by the fact that a lot of teachers had fled from the country and by the discriminative measures of the authorities against Reformed schools. Therefore only one third of the Reformed children of school age attended Reformed schools, and their number was constantly decreasing. The number of schools was also decreasing: in 1940 there were 104 elementary schools, but in 1945 there were only 75. The efforts of the Governing Committee were in vane: they could not raise the number of well prepared educators, they could not substitute those who had left.

The secondary schools were also expecting a slow but sure decay. Even though at the end of the first school year there were signs of optimism regarding the flourishing of the secondary educational system, starting with the second year, the number of leaving teachers was constantly growing, and there was no chance to substitute them. Even though the number of students was constantly growing, the aggressive approach of the Romanian government, which peaked in 1943 with the closing of the secondary schools on Nagyenyed (Aiud) and Brassó (Braşov), narrowed every life chance of the secondary education. This way in the summer of 1944 in Southern Transylvania neither the church leaders, nor the political leaders of the Hungarians considered the educational problem a key matter, because their 15 year long perspectives were only the total liquidation of these schools.

We have to emphasize the fact that preserving the school system would have been almost impossible without the efficient help of the Hungarian government. The church directed 71 % of the financial aid of the Hungarian government to preserve the school system. We think that this measure stopped the quick decay of the schools, but it was not enough to cease their slow disappearance. Looking over the five years history of the elementary and secondary education, we can affirm that its decay was not caused by the lack of proper financial support. The fleeing of teachers and educators was the result of spiritual and not material reasons, and it is obvious that the human resource problems could not be balanced with the raising of financial support.

8. The approach of the Romanian government and public opinion toward the Hungarians was characterized in the researched period by serious hatred and revengefulness and the determination for ethnical cleansing. In the background of this approach were the following: the

desire to avenge the injuries that the Romanians had suffered in Northern Transylvania; the determination to create the ethnically uniform Romanian national state; the politics based on reciprocity, which were concretized in mutual avenge from both sides; the primitive nationalism and finally pragmatic and economic considerations. In the researched period there was no place either for pluralism or for the elementary rules of democracy in Romania. The Hungarian could feel themselves as second-hand citizens, or “vogelfrei” as the Jews. Their situation was improved after the break with the Nazi ideology, moreover, during the Hungarian–Romanian war they were treated as dangerous elements, public enemies in Romania. The Antonescu-regime was nothing more than a totalitarian dictatorship, which extended to the infinite the nationalist state politics of the 30s, and the following governments, even though they denied ethnic discrimination, practiced hidden offensive politics toward the Hungarians.

They did not consider the Reformed Church as a spiritual reality, but more as a Hungarian public institution, so the discriminative and biased measures taken against Hungarians hit the church as well. The authorities have considered it the representative of the Hungarians, so as they have narrowed the life possibilities of the Hungarians, they have narrowed it for the Church also.

9. The history of the Southern Transylvanian Reformed Church District is a history of suffered injuries. Even though the main target for the newly created Governing Committee was to find a *modus vivendi*, as we look over the wide scale of the suffered injuries, or over their considerable number, we can affirm that the five years of separation brought the church no chance for living, only suffering. Ferenc Nagy characterized the life of the church in 1943 by saying that “the Reformed people here live with the tormenting feeling that there is a death sentence declared over them, but it has not been executed yet”.

Taking into account the large number of illegalities, or crying injustice, atrocities of xenophobe acts emerging from declared hatred, committed with the appearance of justice, among any type of background search is obvious: the contemporary Romanian community and the government considered that they have to create with any price the ethnically homogeneous Romania, which is free from Hungarians or other minorities.

Beyond mutuality, revenge or pragmatism both during the Antonescu regime and during the following governments there is a definite outline of a well thought policy to bereave the Hungarians of their basic human rights, forcing them to voluntarily give up their positions and find a new home in their kin state. Even though this policy had succeeded, there was no complete success, because the majority of the Hungarians stood still on their positions. Anyway, this policy had brought unprecedented sufferings for the Hungarians and implicitly for the Reformed Church. The violent actions, the countless harassments from the authorities (confiscations, court martial proceedings based on false accusations), the constant abuses, the requiring and the war loans, the illegal limitation of salaries of pastors, which meant their daily bread, and finally the internments lasting for months and the complete lack of legal defense against injuries had stressed considerably the leaders of the church, the pastors and the followers, causing for some mental illness, and for others even their death. The injuries regarding the use of languages, the limitations of traveling and gathering, the censorship, the decay of newspaper and book publishing, the austerity of the authorities that paralyzed in every aspect the ecclesiastical and educational life, the over calculated taxes, war loans and the bereaving of the communities of their legal financial support made whole church communities incapable of living, and turned the life of the church into a constant struggle for survival.

10. The constant attacks aiming at the welfare, assets and communities of the church contributed to the violent assimilation of the Hungarians in Southern Transylvania, and therefore to the dispersion of the Reformed Church. The representation of the Southern Transylvanian Hungarians and Reformed people, their demographic and spiritual potential was seriously decreasing in this period, and the effects of this decrease can be seen even today.

11. Finally it is necessary to emphasize the heroism of those people who made their sacrifices for the survival of the church. We think that by presenting the life of the church and the suffered injuries the importance of their resistance becomes obvious, and it can be proved that there were people who held their positions in knowledge of their vocation and mission, neglecting their own financial advancement and jeopardizing their own and their families' existence and safety. There were only a few servants of God who fled from their duty, and most of them did this when they could not stand anymore the everyday torments.

And finally we have to agree with Béni L. Balogh, who weighing the importance of the minority life between 1940 and 1945, mentions as the only positive fact that the Hungarians in Southern Transylvania survived this period full of torments, even though they brought enormous sacrifices. We think that his statement is valid for the Reformed Church also.