

**”BABEŞ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA
FACULTY OF REFORMED THEOLOGY**

**EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS IN THE REFORMED CHURCH DISTRICTS OF
CLUJ AND ORADEA IN THE 1960s**

PHD DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Keywords:

Church history, the history of the Reformed Church in Romania, history of Romania during the communist regime, Securitate, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Department for Religious Denominations, Hungarian minority, Romanian-Hungarian relationship, international relations, emigration, bishop elections, the Reformed Church District of Cluj, the Reformed Church District of Oradea, Board of Directors, the Bishops' General Assembly, János Vásárhelyi, Aladár Arday, Dezső László, Gyula Dávid, István Tőkés, István Juhász, Gyula Nagy, Csaba Csutak, Árpád Péntek, Benedek Barabás, Mihály Teleky, Endre Szócs, Leó Peuker, Sándor Búthi, István Higyed, László Papp.

Introduction: the topic of the research

Papers written on the post-WWII relationship between the Romanian Reformed Church and the state are lacking at the moment. Consequently, this paper can be considered as an attempt at filling this blank since it sets out to study the bishop elections in the Reformed Church District of Cluj from 1962 and the episcopal elections in the Reformed Church District of Oradea in 1961, respectively, in 1967.

The domestic and international events of the studied period offered the possibility of evaluating the attitude of the contemporary ecclesiastical elite but also the way it related to the involvement of the atheist politics in the life of the Reformed Church – as expressed, on the one hand, by the Ministry for Religious Affairs and later by the Department for Religious Denominations, the administrative bodies, the voice pipes of the PMR and PCR, and by the Securitate, an executive body, on the other hand.

The evolution of the research was determined by the fact that we were forced to lean on archival sources that were in compliance with the teleological thinking and mode of action and which had been produced in the direct service of the Department for Religious Denominations and the Securitate, and, implicitly, of the Communist regime. The episcopal election files consulted in

2008 in the Archives of the State Subsecretariat for Religious Denominations in Bucharest outlined first of all the official relationship between the reformed ecclesiastical elite and the Department led by Dumitru Dogaru. This research was continued in the period 2008-2011 in the Archives of the National Committee for Research of the Securitate Archives (abbreviation in Romanian: ACNSAS). The research was rendered more difficult by the fact that in the Episcopal Archive pertaining to the Archives of the Reformed Church District of Transylvania there is not one single source material to be found which would document the history of the church district in the period 1958-1962, whereas the materials held by the Board of Directors as well as the Episcopal files from the Archives of the Reformed Church District of Piatra Craiului have contributed only to a modest extent to the elucidation and clarification of events. Consequently, the logic of the „Bad” might have been applied in the evocation of occurrences.

We have completed the archival sources by interviews made with the help of the oral history method, using these as supporting and interpretative material, nevertheless taking into account the fact that these memories are always dependent on a given situation.

Although more than two thirds of the paper are dedicated to the presentation of CNSAS archival sources, we refrain from stating that in the historical analysis of those identified as former episcopal candidates the nature of their cooperation with the secret police bodies was defining. Consequently, the sources are explored from the perspective of the secret services. On the other hand, though, the cooperation born from mere human wretchedness is a characteristic of the epoch and its inclusion in the historical presentation is fully justified.

We believe that we have proven the hypothesis contrived prior to the commencement of our research, according to which the main factor behind the bishop elections was not the Bishops' General Assembly or the parish presbyteries – as stipulated in the Statute from 1949 - but the Romanian Communist Party that with the help of the Department for Religious Denominations and of the secret police authorities decided on the appointment of the „proper” persons. At the same time, we could have committed ourselves to even more, having had the possibility to tackle the subject-matter also as a duel fought between the Communist regime and the Reformed Church. The deeply-rooted institutionalism, with a past of over 400 years as well as the chariot-fortress of social

inclusion, even if it involved the crumbling of the ecclesiastical elite, have proved to be enough, the earthly enemy having been brought to its knees by the adversities of fate.

General synthesis of the paper and of the chapters

The opening chapters of the paper made use of and revealed the findings of the specialized literature. The adjective „sketchy” seems to describe best the studies conducted on the Ministry of Religious Affairs, respectively, on its successor, the Department for Religious Denominations. This is due to the lack of institutional history – the documentary material is still waiting to be processed in the mouldy cellar of the State Subsecretariat in Bucharest –, which explains why we could only lean on studies discussing the subject-matter in just several pages.

With reference to the organization which played the role of the „shield and sword of the Party”, a series of documentation sources, books and publications are at the researchers' disposal. Nevertheless it remains unclear in the course of the Securitate's existence, marked by repeated reorganization, exactly which department or bureau was responsible for the supervision of the ecclesiastical life in Romania, what was the hierarchical order behind the classification of denominations and, obviously enough, we are dealing with the lack of local-territorial institutional history of the „cadres” who were active on-site (in various administrative districts and regions).

Beside the presentation of the Ministry for Religious Affairs and of the Securitate before 1967, we made an attempt – also for purposes of introduction and avoiding the repetition of results as much as possible –, at presenting the church government policy applied in the period 1948-1960/1961 and which was linked to the names of reformed bishops János Vásárhelyi and Aladár Arday, forced to adapt themselves to the new circumstances. Since the potential threat the church represented to the political and ideological monopole was a challenge the Communist elite could not possibly overlook, in order to avert such a threat, already from the early 1950s we can point out the efforts of the regime to win over and influence the bishops of the Reformed church districts in order to make them become loyal persons abiding by the will of the Party. In this respect, failed attempts involving Vásárhelyi and Arday were followed by the „preparation” of the succession of old bishops, since, according to article 119 of the Statute of the Reformed Church, the bishop was elected for a

lifetime. The deaths of said bishops in 1960, respectively, in 1961 also implied the end of an epoch. Consequently, our research highlights the importance of bishop elections which, through the appointment of Gyula Nagy as bishop of Cluj and the designation of Sándor Búthi – who died in a tragic accident in 1967 – and of László Papp as bishops of Oradea, gave the life of the Reformed Church a new direction.

The bishop elections proper are described in chapters V and VI. While in the given chapter the „shadow stories” involving the bishop candidates were told in accordance with the CNSAS documents – separated from other sources -, in depicting the „proper candidate”, his nomination, the election process and installation, we leaned on the materials pertaining to the Department for Religious Denominations, on church archive sources, on interviews as well as on the specialized literature, modest and revised.

Those episodes from the lives of the episcopal candidates that were unaffected by the Securitate are presented in the sub-chapters „Biographical data”, the remaining sub-chapters having been subject to the proportions of the CNSAS material we have gained access to. In the case of the bishop candidates within the Reformed Church District of Cluj, the year 1962 has been set as a deadline for the procession of personal files. In the case of the candidates from the Reformed Church District of Oradea we proceeded in a similar way, and so, after the year of the bishop elections in 1962, respectively, as of 1967 we discontinued the detailed description of their connections with the secret police, nonetheless we made references also to documents dating from later years in situations we considered necessary because of retroactive explanations contained in such documents. The process of the bishop elections having represented a major criterion in our approach, it determined us to lay the emphasis on the events that favoured certain candidacies and occurred prior to the elections.

We need to mention that beside the events strictly associated with the bishop elections, the partial presentation of certain occurrences linked to the Romanian Reformed Church was inevitable, such as: the ecumenical movement of the time, the major international ecclesiastical institutions, the politics-generated „divisions” within such institutions, the shaping of ecclesiastical activity of East and West. The foreign events have led to Romanian-Hungarian cooperation between the Ministries

of Interior and the secret police bodies in the time interval between 1957-1964. The measures taken by ministers and vice ministers on the basis of information supplied by the ecclesiastical informant network exceeded, in a short while, the verification and surveillance of the initially signalled persons allowing us to gain insight also in the Hungarian emigration to the West.

The findings of the research are presented in chapter VII. Beside the identification of different strategies of bishop elections applied in the two church districts, we were able to study the bishop candidates also as a „studied set”.

In the hereto attached annex we included those documents and tables - selected and drawn-up upon consultation of a vast archival material -, which through their significance and representative character we believe shall facilitate the better understanding of the issues described in the dissertation.

Conclusions, theses

I. If we go out from the idea that strategy is the long-time plan for certain actions aimed at the achievement of a certain goal and which in time provides itself with the resources necessary for its implementation, then the use of this term seems justified also in the case of episcopal elections, an issue of crucial importance, playing a defining role in the relationship Church-State in the 1960s.

After the deaths of bishops Vásárhelyi and Arday in 1960, respectively, 1961, possibility arose to designate „the proper candidate”, persons who had displayed unquestionable loyalty and were considered as convenient both by the Securitate organs and the representatives of the Department for Religious Denominations. The future bishop – in the vision of the Party – was forced to become a collaborator of the Securitate which required the regular drawing-up of certain informative notes regarding the internal and external state of the Reformed Church, the activity of pastors and of congregation members. The bishop was expected to lead the church district according to the directives of the Department for Religious Denominations and of the Securitate authorities. The appointment of the „proper candidate” was of utmost importance, since, in compliance with article 119 of the Statute of the Reformed Church, „the bishop is elected for a lifetime”. The ground for the involvement of politics in the bishop elections was long ensured. The favourable legislative

background was created already via the Statute of the Reformed Church, promulgated in 1949. According to article 123, the bishop elected by the Bishops' General Assembly, respectively, by the presbyteries pertaining to the parishes also needed a so-called Decree of Recognition from the Ministerial Council. This allowed the Department for Religious Denominations to transmit - prior to the official appointment - to the leaders of the church district the name of the only candidate who would benefit from the approval of the Party as well.

I.A. We can differentiate between two strategies of bishop elections. In the Church District of Cluj, beginning with December 11, 1960, the Department for Religious Denominations implements the procrastination strategy – through consequent refusal of candidates suggested by the church district -, situation which – upon the proposal of the Securitate bodies – after a year and a half, in 1962, eventually led to the identification and assignment of the „proper” candidate in the person of the dean of Sibiu, Gyula Nagy.

In „normal”, „bourgeois-landlord” times, the favourite candidate for the position of bishop would have been Dezső László, former dean of Cluj and director-general of the church district, who was convicted first in 1952 for his political activity between 1940-1944, and for a second time in 1957 in the political trial known as the „Dobai” case. Although he was released in April 1961, his status of former convict earned him the disqualification as a bishop candidate from the very beginning.

On the basis of the archival sources, the bishop candidates can be divided in several categories:

1. According to bishop János Vásárhelyi, the bishop- and chief notary elections organized in the church district of Cluj were always marked by two tendencies, namely: the tendency on the part of the centrally based staff from Cluj, to assign either a professor of the Theological Institute or a councillor from the centre; and that of the pastors and deans to see one of them appointed. The observation was partially valid also in the case of the elections from 1962, since we were able to identify several candidates who enjoyed support from the episcopal centre. Dr. Gyula Dávid, chief notary of the church district from 1953, was the official candidate of the Board of Directors. According to tradition and the system of „succession”, already beginning with the synod from 1726

the elected chief notary of the church district was, in all of the cases, equivalent to the next bishop. The delays and objections formulated by the Department for Religious Denominations with reference to the official candidate forced the Church District's Presidium to come up with more candidates, thus, apart from the chief notary of the bishopric, they proposed the director-general of the church district, Dr. István Tőkés as well as the theology professor Dr. István Juhász.

2. The second category includes the candidates of the regime. In this category we mention the name of Gyula Nagy, dean of Sibiu who became the favourite of the Department for Religious Denominations. Also in this category we need to mention the pastor Csaba Csutak of the Cluj Central parish, future dean of Cluj, the favourite of the regional inspector of religious affairs, Hoinărescu Țepeș, and also of the secret police authorities in Cluj. Regarding the designation of the bishop candidate, the intention of the state power was not unanimous even in the last minute: we can document the conflict of interests, the antagonism between centre and province.

3. The third category of candidates is made up of persons added to the list for diversion purposes in order to cover the agency, the real favourites of the Romanian Labour Party (PMR). In this respect, in accordance with the studied personal files, we mention the pastor of Turda-Veche, Árpád Péntek and the dean of Mureș, Benedek Barabás. In the case of the former, an affirmation of the Securitate strengthens the diversion, whereas the dean of Mureș found out only after the elections that his name had also been listed as a bishop candidate.

4. The fourth category is that of the „self-made-candidates”, of those persons who misunderstood or overestimated the generosity displayed toward them by the representatives of the Department for Religious Denominations and by the Securitate and who felt able and worthy of holding the position of bishop. In this respect we mention the theology professors Endre Szócs and Mihály Teleky, included in the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj, not for their scientific merits but as a result of the loyalty and devotion they had previously displayed in the course of their informative work carried out in favour of the Securitate organs.

We have to note that, according to the network's personal files and the informative dossiers, each of the above-mentioned persons – with the exception of Árpád Péntek and Benedek Barabás - has cooperated in one way or another with the Securitate up to the moment of their

candidature. The fact that the chief notary of the church district, Dávid, or the director-general Tőkés were not supported as episcopal candidates is due exclusively to the fact that they had, up to the moment in question, refused to supply informative notes or transmit in writing whatever they had discussed with the persons they came in contact with.

Chronologically, the candidate of the Department for Religious Denominations, Gyula Nagy was elected as bishop by the Bishops' General Assembly on July 28, 1962, the Decree of Recognition of the Ministerial Council was issued on September 26, 1962. The solemn installation took place on October 21, 1962 in the Central Cluj parish church from Kogălniceanu street.

I.B. In the Church District of Oradea the strategy of bishop election was, in 1961, reduced to the prompt election of the „extracted” and duly „promoted” candidate. This is also due to the changes the church district's elite has undergone by 1951. We cannot even speak about the existence of candidates, taking into consideration the fact that it all came down to the election without hesitation of Sándor Búthi, pastor from Oradea-Oraş Nou, councillor and chief notary of the church district. Nevertheless, there were other persons as well who were considered for the position of bishop. Thus, beside Búthi, we need to mention the dean from Săcueni, Kornél Szablyár, the dean from Timișoara, Leó Peuker and the dean from Oradea, László Papp, who were quick at realizing that the cooperation with the Securitate can lead to a series of personal advantages and, implicitly, they could relaunch their ecclesiastical careers. Nevertheless in 1961 the only serious rival of Búthi would have been dean Szablyár, but his brutality displayed in his relationship with the priesthood and the congregation members, his lack of diplomacy led to the favouring and eventual appointment of the former.

Chronologically: the presbyteries of the parishes elected the only bishop candidate, Sándor Búthi, on November 26, 1961; the appointed bishop was acknowledged by the Ministerial Council on December 25, 1961 and the solemn installation in the office took place on March 24, 1962 in Oradea before the Bishops' General Assembly and the invited guests.

I.C. The tragic demise of the bishop of Oradea, Sándor Búthi on March 15, 1967 once again raised the question of electing the „proper candidate”. Nevertheless, during Búthi's short life as bishop the leading positions within the church district and the various ecclesiastical forums were

already occupied by the „loyal” persons. This rendered the situation quite comfortable for the Romanian Communist Party (PCR). The loyalty to the state government of candidates with increased chances was a long-proven fact. This is the reason why we believe that in case of the election as bishop of László Papp, dean of Oradea, in 1967, we are talking much rather about a strategic election than an election strategy.

As concerns the contenders of the dean of Oradea, among the candidates with real chances to win the bishop elections were István Higyed, the vicar of bishop Búthi, chief notary of the church district, who, in the absence of the bishop was responsible for the administrative tasks pertaining to the church district in conformity with art. 125 of the Statute, and also Árpád Orosz, dean from Carei, the dean with the longest time spent in the office who in the bishop's absence performed the president's job requirements in the Church District of Oradea. Included in the category of candidates we find also Kornél Szablyár, dean of Baia Mare, who in the course of the years maintained an attitude totally devoid of popularity.

In the resulted situation in which each candidate cooperated with the Securitate bodies, we can state, on the basis of our research that there were nonetheless several criteria that influenced the evolution of the strategic elections:

1. The relationship between the candidate and the religious affairs inspector and the Securitate bodies. This was determined by the candidate's previous activity: to what extent did he expose the church, and, more precisely, the ecclesiastical collective, to the representatives of the regime. The „honesty” of the informant, verified through the notes submitted by other agents and collaborators, was highly appreciated as were the unscrupulousness displayed in transmitting information, the spirit of initiative and the ability of the informant to always supply information with so-called „operative value”.

2. Another important criterion was the relationship of the candidate with the local administrative bodies that submitted to the central state authorities either negative or positive references concerning the activity of the candidate in question.

3. The personal strengths of the candidate were only secondary to the above specified aspects: educational background in the field of theology, knowledge of international languages, diplomatic

skills and last but not least, his relationship with the priesthood and the members of his congregation.

The nomination, election, approval and installation of László Papp were done in slightly more than two months: the presbyteries of the 231 parishes appointed him as bishop on May 7, 1967, the Decree of Recognition from the State Council was issued on May 26, and the solemn installation took place on June 15, 1967 in Oradea before the Bishops' General Assembly and the numerous guests.

I.D. In the interpretation of episcopal elections we notice, on the one hand, similarities in principle such as: the shared goal; the methods and phases applied in order to achieve the goal (the search for the „proper” candidate, simulation of the election ceremony to maintain the appearance of legality with the required solemnity, with respect displayed toward the state bodies and attracting public opinion) and the result: two bishops as leaders of the Reformed Church who are fully loyal to the State.

On the other hand, we notice differences in the ways of solving the same problem, which is mainly due to the individual historical evolution of the church districts as well as to certain local particularities. In this respect we mention: the different stands taken by the pastors of the church districts in question regarding the issue of episcopal elections; but also the legislative difference in the bishop election procedures.

We cannot talk about an „inner resistance” proper displayed toward the imposed elections, definitely not in the case of the Church District of Oradea; in case of the Church District of Cluj, we witness the step-by-step crushing of the respect for tradition, and eventually we become witnesses to a church attitude that directly complies with the party directives.

In the time of bishop János Vásárhelyi the leader of the Reformed Church District of Cluj enjoyed a higher prestige. With the election of the new bishops, Sándor Búthi and László Papp, the Reformed Church District of Oradea gained two bishops with special aptitudes, speakers of foreign languages who were superior to their predecessor Arday also in the field of science and who, in matters of both common ecclesiastical issues and the strengthening of international contacts, placed

the bishop of Cluj, Gyula Nagy on a secondary place, a fact that later often gave rise to dissensions between the leaders of the two church districts.

II. The archival materials pertaining to the 14 bishop candidates made it possible for us to study them also as a “studied set”. Biographical data, family situation, qualification, knowledge of foreign languages, the position held in the moment of candidature as well as the political activity led us to make a few observations.

As shown in tables no. 17 and 18 from the annex, the studied persons can be divided in two generations according to their dates of birth: the members of the first generation - 10 persons – were born between 1902-1917, whereas the second generation includes the 4 representatives of the younger generation, born between 1919-1929. All of them are married, with families, with three children as per average, though there are cases where the number of children is 4, 5, 6 or even 8.

As far as the candidates pertaining to the Church District of Cluj are concerned, most of them graduated from the Theological Academy from Cluj or its successor, the Protestant Theological Institute - an exception in this regard was the case of Árpád Péntek, who graduated from the Theological Academy from Aiud due to certain occurrences brought about by the Second World War. In case of the candidates pertaining to the Church District of Oradea, we meet with a quite similar situation: they graduated from the University of Cluj; a rather interesting case is that of Leó Peuker. The future dean of Timișoara first graduated from the Academy of Roman-Catholic Theology from Timișoara in 1941, and later in 1946, from the Reformed Theological Institute from Cluj. In the majority of cases the theological studies have been completed by studies abroad, predominantly in Switzerland (Basel and Geneva), in Germany (Tübingen, Kassel, Leipzig), in Scotland (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow), in France (Strasbourg) and in The Netherlands (Utrecht), with extra points in favour of the candidates from the Church District of Cluj, where several persons also gained a PhD-degree in theology. In some cases there were also important scientific activities linked to their names, this is also due to the fact that they were teaching staff members at the Protestant Theological Institute from Cluj. Among the studied persons 6 were

speakers of at least two international languages; 11 were speakers of the German language, 6 could boast of their knowledge of French and only three spoke English.

As far as the ecclesiastical positions are concerned, the studied palette is more than nuanced. Apart from the 3 church district's chief notaries (Gyula Dávid, Sándor Búthi, István Higyed), we find a director-general of a church district (István Tőkés), a church district's clerk (Dezső László), a rector of the Protestant Theological Institute from Cluj (István Juhász), 2 professors of the above-mentioned institute (Endre Szócs, Mihály Teleky), 4 deans (Gyula Nagy, Benedek Barabás, Leó Peuker, László Papp), but also 2 parish pastors at the beginning of their ecclesiastical careers (Árpád Péntek, Csaba Csutak). As for the last two, the pastor from Turda-Veche held, for two cycles in the 1980s the position of rector of the Theology, whereas Csaba Csutak, pastor from the Central Cluj parish, was appointed chief notary of the church district in 1984.

After the war, the candidates from the Church District of Cluj, joined, sooner or later the Hungarian People's Union (Magyar Népi Szövetség). Before the war Gyula Dávid was a member of the Hungarian National Party, and after the attachment of Northern Transylvania to Hungary he was also active as member of the Transylvanian Party just like Dezső László or Benedek Barabás. As far as the Church District of Oradea is concerned, Sándor Búthi and László Papp were members of the HPU, the former having been also a member of the Romanian Communist Party for a short while. In the case of Leó Peuker and István Higyed we have not come across any information on political activity.

The materials found in the CNSAS-Archives made it possible for us to form an impression also as to the popularity each candidate enjoyed within the church, about their relationship with the Securitate bodies, about the mode of recruitment, about the ways of rewarding the informants or about the reasons behind the exclusion of some of the persons in question from the informant network.

Through the popularity of the candidate we tried to gain insight into the support the respective individual received from the reformed clergy. In the case of those who enjoyed the support of the Securitate we meet with certain labels attached to their names by the clergy such as: „unpopular”, „local popularity”, „incredulous”, „lacking authority”, „young man of perspective”

making reference to the younger generation, or „man of the Communists”. As an exception to this we can bring up the name of chief notary Sándor Búthi, who, despite the fact that everyone suspected he had earned the trust of the Securitate bodies, remained popular among the reformed clergy within the Church District of Oradea.

The fundamental prerequisite for the candidature was the „quality” of the relationship with the Securitate bodies, which required a very good or excellent qualification. Furthermore, the consensus between the regional and central representatives of the state bodies regarding the candidate's person was also of importance. We can only identify such state of affairs in the Church District of Cluj in the case of the dean of Sibiu, Gyula Nagy, and in the Church District of Oradea in the case of chief notary Búthi and dean László Papp, who eventually became bishops. In most cases these „relationships” were rather tense and the candidacy did not enjoy support from the Securitate.

Theoretically, the person who had a longer history as informant was in a more advantageous situation as compared to the one who was recruited later, at least he had better chances of proving his sincerity, devotion and loyalty toward the communist regime. Nevertheless, the answer is not unanimous. Here we can point out the case of Búthi, who began forwarding informative notes to the Securitate bodies already in 1947-1948 although it wasn't before November 15, 1952 that he was officially recruited. At the opposite pole we find the case of Gyula Nagy whose official recruitment occurred on March 22, 1962, only four months before the bishop elections. At this point we cannot fail to note that in the eyes of the Securitate all ecclesiastical persons were considered as „black sheep”, regardless of whether they cooperated or not. This is evident from the personal files.

The ways of recruitment – performed either on the basis of the compromising materials, or on the basis of „patriotic feelings” - as well as the types of conduct identified in the documents of the Securitate - 1. sincere, loyal, cooperating attitude 2. „hesitating” attitude 3. attitude characterized by seeking personal gain 4. rejecting attitude -, allowed us to sketch/nuance the cooperative attitudes displayed by the bishop candidates. According to this approach, 7 persons were recruited on grounds of patriotic feelings, though in some cases a potential refusal would have brought about the exposure of compromising materials, whereas 5 persons were convinced with the help of certain

compromising materials, such as: political ranks held during the Horthyst regime; newspaper publications with a fascist, anti-Soviet and anti-communist tone; connections with the forbidden group „Bethania”; hostile manifestations toward the regime displayed either from the pulpit or in society, etc.

The Securitate bodies made use of a series of modalities to reward the cooperators, such as: 1. gratifications, remunerations 2. promotion in rank, successive advancement in office 3. official or tourist trips abroad 4. „interventions” made in favour of family members 5. awarding with different medals and orders.

In most of the cases the exclusion from the informant network was determined by practical reasons, though it was also applied from merely strategic considerations. Among the practical reasons we name: 1. the lack of interest displayed toward the Securitate bodies and/or the agent's „fanatic, hypocritical and malevolent” attitude 2. self-exposure brought about by the public sympathizing with the system 3. lack of possibilities to perform the informant's job requirements (conviction, bad health, etc.). In the background of „formal” exclusion, we are much rather tempted to see strategic moves meant to avoid exposure. The exclusion of the bishop of Cluj, Gyula Nagy, from the informant network occurred in 1974, the Securitate motivated this gesture by arguing that he is a „religious leader”. In the case of the bishop of Oradea, László Papp, the same measure was explained by his political immunity obtained in 1967 when he became deputy for the Crişana Region, in the circumscription of Tileagd.

The character profiles contained in tables no. 17 and 18, which include data pertaining to the studied persons, need to be completed by the fact that their use in the epoch and milieu as simplifying mechanical formulas are not enough for finding an „historical answer”. Through their use we have only attempted to make a chemical analysis of the “slime” spectrum of the tackled subject-matter, respectively, the power and the victims of those times, a plastic presentation of the paths those in question were forced to follow.

III. At the time of the bishop elections in the '60s, the Stalinist-type communist arbitrariness was already the „master of all circumstances” for 15-20 years. In this period the Securitate became

more experienced, having gained more routine at the cost of the suffering of those who fell victims to the network of the regime. After 1956, the hope for a change of regime (linked also to the intervention of the US) was lost, and with the repression in process the determinacy: „let us adjust ourselves to the existing circumstances” appeared. On the other hand, the very slow and contradictory moderation of Stalinism on the part of the political power highlighted the necessity of a prolonged coexistence with the churchgoing common people, with the ecclesiastical officials and with the churches. So we are not implying – as this is also not supported by the CNSAS documents - that the former bishop candidates, the pastors and deans may have disregarded the interests of the Church: their profession and status simply did not allow them to do so. They, in person, were at the same time the nominative guarantee for the continued existence of the church. Although they signed the „pledges”, we cannot condemn them. The high ecclesiastical position held inevitably led to the appearance of the Securitate bodies, and in the lack of an open refusal, the cooperation proposal materialized in the form of cooperation. These people caught in an unequal interactive relationship began to learn how to dance “while all tied up”, and cooperation, this compulsive modality of staying alive beside the Securitate bodies, secured to the ecclesiastical elite that narrow path for social and religious survival, which was also enough for the Church to keep alive. Under the given circumstances survival may have been the only real purpose. It is unacceptable to lay the blame for the offences of the communist regime on those who were pressed and persecuted. All the more so as the bishop elections, which from the perspective of the regime yielded favourable results, have amplified the tactics of „top-down”, intensified the process of searching and attracting to cooperation within the church milieu, a phenomenon which in the late '70s and early '80s already affected the simple local minister of the countryside.

We could ask the question: had they accepted the „galley slavery”, would their subsequent substitutes have been better or more true? This was the diabolic trap of the system, and instead of the condemning narrative this calls out for a recountal meant to inspire contemplation, a storytelling marked by the understanding of the situation and of the epoch.

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Gyula Dávid Jr.: born on August 13, 1928 in Araci, Covasna county, nationality: Hungarian, religion: Reformed, studies: Faculty of Letters, the Bolyai University from Cluj, retired. The interview was made by the author in Cluj-Napoca on October 29, 2008.

József Komáromy: born on December 20, 1924 in Carei, Satu-Mare county, nationality: Hungarian, religion: Reformed, studies: Faculty of Mathematics and Physics at the „Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca, retired. The interview was made by the author on May 24, 2008 in Cluj-Napoca.

István Tőkés: born on August 8, 1916 in Malnaş, Covasna county, nationality: Hungarian, religion: Reformed, studies: Faculty of Reformed Theology in Cluj, retired. The interview was made by the author on November 20, 2008 in Cluj-Napoca.

László Varga: born on March 17, 1928 in Zaláu, Sălaj county, nationality: Hungarian, religion: Reformed, studies: The Protestant Theological Institute with university level from Cluj, retired. The interview was made by the author on June 21, 2008 in Târgu-Mureş.

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