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The 1848–1849 Revolution and War of
Independence in the following of
Consistory correspondence

PHD DISSERTATION/THESIS

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**The 1848–1849 Revolution and War of Independence in the following of
Consistory correspondence
-summary of the Phd dissertation/thesis-**

1. The theme of the dissertation and its division

The theme of this paper are typical categories of the Consistorial correspondence and their analysis. As a starting point we have historical context and assumed neuralgic of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese, its approach, appeals and statements. We paid special attention to the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese ministers' attitude during the Revolution, their participation, and more importantly their role in it.

In the main chapters of the thesis, we discussed the main themes of the Consistorial correspondence. The first chapter presents the literary history of the 1948-49 Revolution. The second chapter is about the Transylvanian reformed historiography's key events and an outline of the history of the Revolution. In the third chapter we talk about a key issue during the time of the War for Independence, the relationship between the state and the church. In the fourth chapter we summarize the most voluminous theme of the Consistory correspondence, the Transylvanian Reformed Educational system. In the fifth chapter we have the actual and practical problems caused by the church organization and Revolution. The sixth chapter summarizes the activity of the ministers of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese.

In the main text of the thesis one can find quotes that have sources, which were not revealed up until now. Some very valuable parts of the correspondence can also be found in the appendix. We present the reformed history of the Revolution.

2. The resources for the thesis

The main resource for our thesis is the Archive of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese, which preserved the Consistory correspondence. The correspondence from 1948 vary from 1-272. The letters have a file number each and have at least one, but at most forty-seven sheets. In these files we can sometimes find repetition too.

The most part of the correspondence is well-ordered and precise. But we can also find incomplete parts too, which were highlighted by the ones who ordered them. In 1949 there were only 30 letters, which were given file numbers. In contrast with this, in 1950 we found 128 such

letters. Besides the Consistorial correspondence, the reports of the Public Councils also gave us important historical orientation and point of reference. These were utmost important in regard to the loss of ministers during the revolution. Besides these materials form the achieve, we based our paper on memories, civil correspondence, press release and many more secondary literatures.

When learning about the content of the correspondence, it became clear that we have to divide the thesis into four main parts and two introductory chapters.

The systematization of the ministers' activity during the Revolution and its incorporation in the thesis will be done by also using the secondary literature. While reading and noting we chose some of the most interesting life-stories and we incorporated them in the subchapters.

The 1848-49 Revolution has a vast secondary literature. We managed to present a fraction of it in the thesis. There are many more important writings, that we could not mention here. But we did present many extensive literary works regarding the War for independence. When discussing the historical bibliography, we naturally presented some important works too. But the most relevant ones, are the ones presented above.

When presenting the literature of the Revolution we can note that, different regions, settlements and events stories are important resources. Many memories, documents and press resources helped the writing. For example, about the events at Hegyalja and Haromszek we can read from the pen of many writers. But on the other hand, there are regions, were we can find few or no monographies of the events of the Revolution. Thus, we will find some events and people, whose part in the war will be vastly presented, whereas other regions and events regarding the war will not be so well documented.

In the light of the Consistory correspondence, we will have deeper and more correct answers to our questions. Moreover, by discovering these writings, that have not been revealed so far, we will surly enrich out reformed faith.

3. A summary of the 1848-49 Revolution and War for Independence

In the introductory chapter we were presented with the social progresses in Transylvania. We could note, that in every region of Transylvania people were eager for freedom in their hearts. We could also note how bad the Habsburg empire's constraints were, and this was just worsened by the counter-reformation and catholicization. In the golden era of Transylvania, the

monarchs built a strong heritage in the region, and the duty of the decedents was to make good use of it.

The conservation of their national and social identity was tied to the freedom of their religious life. While the conscience was free, the social duties could be easily done. The bastions of the church were trying to be fundamentally built. The religious tolerance, the independence, the support of the monarchs, the financial sources, the broadening of peregrination, the attention to national questions, helped a lot in the conservation of the nation.

After 150 years of Turkish invasion, there came another 150 of Austrian. In these three hundred years the yearning for freedom, grew stronger. The civil and social developments in Europe also helped in the proclamation of this freedom. And everything depended on this in 1848.

Transylvania and Hungary's history of '48 were written by many. We can see different points of view in these writings.

In this chapter of our thesis, we tried by presenting a summary of the happenings before the Revolution of 1848-49, to build a strong basis for the unfolding of our theme. We tried to formulate the appropriate questions, in order to be able to: firstly understand, secondly organize and thirdly use the Consistory correspondence.

Briefly we also discussed the most important momentums of the war for independence. These fundamental dates and events are plainly to assure a frame for the story. The relationship between the church and state, the reform of the institute of education and the elimination of the problems in the organization of the church, were all discussed in detail.

4. The relationship between the church and state

The processes of faith were felt in almost all the fields of society. The protestant denominations during the centuries, tried to remain independent in their religious life, in their education and organization. Still, one of the consequences of the war was, that both the state and the church had to redefine itself.

The state and the church had an impact on each other. After the War for Independence, both of their functioning was transformed, both their mission and role in society stayed the same. The church, mainly the roman catholic lost in its position, whereas the protestant managed to

obtain an advantage. The state however, due to liberal proctors, broke away from the church and filled its role independently.

Due to the fact that the twelfth point in the Proclamation was achieved we could witness the birth of the Hungarian Reformed Church. The initiators were the leaders of the Dunantuli Diocese, while the Transylvanian delegation willfully accepted the possibility of this affinity. The documentation presented in September at the meeting in Budapest, showed the Reformed church's self-identity. At the birth of the Unified Hungarian Reformed Church, The Transylvanian Reformed Diocese also played an important role. This document, that brings the unity to a legal basis was introduced by the Transylvanian delegation at the meeting. The Consistory correspondence brings a lot of new information and documentation to the history of the war.

5. Educational questions during the period of the Revolution

The question of education in every social field goes hand in hand with the activity of the church. At the same time the state also plays an important role in the education of the future generations, regardless of ideology or politics.

In the thesis it is highlighted, that following the Reformation the school-system got better. They made a lot of sacrifices, and at the same time invested a lot in the future generation's social, scientifically, moral and religious upbringing. It also managed to keep its independence, until the war broke out. The Anti-reformation tried to narrow it and tried to change it into what the Austrian pattern asked for. The reforms they brought were essential and surly important, but they were the way to change them after the Catholic pattern. Both publications of the Ratio Educationis were essential in the educational system of the time. These efforts could clearly be seen after the war broke out.

The leaders of the Transylvanian Reformed Church had already made headway in the educational system before the war broke out. This can be clearly seen in the Consistory Correspondence, that presents the reform-efforts before the Revolution and the will for renewal.

After the 5th of March 1848 suddenly and surprisingly the school system in Transylvania underwent a change. The news of a War for Independence had an inspirational and motivating effect on the youth, but later the will to enlist drew them away from school. The discipline was disintegrated and the educational system faced a downfall. The students from the theology were

sent earlier to the Easter practice. Between Easter and Penthacost it was almost a common decision, to close the institutions. This decision was based on the fact that the students together were worse, then the student alone at home.

The Committee for Education requested a meeting but could not reach a decision. The essential matters were dismissed. However, they took into consideration the proposals for an educational reform. They presented the proposals of the schools from Udvarhely, Marosvasarhely, Nagyenyed and Kolozsvar, in which they outlined the Transylvanian Reformed educations system's main purposes. There were also other proposals regarding professional and vocational training. They also talked about the new ways of teaching natural sciences. At the end questions about the special need in Szaszvaros and Oboldogvfalva came to light and we could get a glimpse into that too.

Reading the Consistory correspondence bring things into a new light and offers new points of views and new resources. Due to this new information out views of the Transylvanian educational system changed a lot. The change in the schools of Marosvasarhely and Kolozsvar showed us that it was high time for a change and for renewal. The Revolution made it easier to reform the educational system and organize meetings regarding this.

The first major decision of the leaders of the shackle-free Hungarian nation was regarding education. The idea of a state-centered education seemed to come true, with the formation of the Union and later with the decisions of the Minister for Ecclesiastical Matters. The outbreak of the war was above human decisions. The restarting of the educational system was a very long process, and it only possible after the war.

In the thesis we can note, how hopeful people were before each gathering of the Minister for Culture. They drew a clear line round the question of education and had open dialogs about it. This made a great basis for the system of education and upbringing. The protestants were there at all the meetings and this was of great example. The Minister also promised that all the people who worked in the reformed educational system would get salaries given by the state. This filled everyone with hope. But because of the delays of this getting into the law and actually being achieved, and their discussions with baron Eotvos Jozsef dispelled all their dreams.

Due to the Transylvanian Civil War, the education could not be resumes neither from the 1st of September, neither the 1st of November. Only almost one year after the outbreak of the Revolution could it be resumed in Zilah. The process was made harder because of the

impoverishment and because of the deplorable state of buildings, due to the war. The state could not pay the amounts agreed, thus the outbreak of war made the process harder, than before.

The Consistory correspondence regarding the theme of education gave us a trustworthy picture of that period and made us see the true problems. Moreover, we could find new points of view in the interpretation of the Revolution.

6. Church organization problems during the period of the Revolution

The fifth chapter of the thesis and all its subchapters enumerates problems regarding church organization. During the war the legal frames were loosened, and this caused difficulties. Many reformed and Transylvanian people after the cessation of the tenth became overjoyed. But this made the life of the church difficult. Many people and congregations got really poor in a short period of time. Numerous petitions were sent regarding this matter.

The loosened legal frames led to vandalism. This culminated in robberies that could not be tracked because of the war. The legal frame that was used before, could no longer be applied.

The loosening happened in the organization of the church too. A state of emergency was declared both at government level and at social level. A state of emergency ruled even in the church. The self-maintenance was really hard.

In the subchapters we can find many such information, that does not relate necessarily to the Revolution. The choice of a new priest in Marosbogát, or the apartment of the bishop in Nagynyed, were issues that needed to be resolved, regardless of the war. But this just made it harder.

7. The reformed ministers' role in the war for independence

Being true to its missionary role, the church's testimony, the changing regime and political power, it had to show a firm standing. This profession of faith helped, at a time when the church lost ground also. Starting from the first century it has been noted that the church was famous for its charitable work. It belongs to the congeniality of the church to take care of the sick, orphan and weak.

In the appropriate chapter we see a clear outline from the point of the view of the church. This is rarely mentioned in the historical narratives of the time. To help their country many pastors and their congregations gave significant donations. This is as much as we know about

many of their involvement. This information is enough however, to show how devoted to their ministry they were. The leader usually paid attention to where the collected donation was given.

This collect reached a higher level in October 1948, because it was used for self-defense. In order for the people from Haromszek, to be able to protect their home, they started to make cannons. The church could help, by giving them church bells, precious metal and also clenodium. They were driven by the desire to protect their country. Transylvania was deeply shocked by the catastrophic days in Nagyenyed. The communities tried everything in their power to help the landless people. The ideologies, the nationalities, the cultural or religious viewpoints were no longer of importance. The important thing was to see these people with roofs above their heads and in safe living. Transylvania united in this too and the reformed church played an important role in this. The service to God was helped by this charitable work, offering help, care and goods.

Some people in the government from Hungary and Transylvania were ministers and had a conservative view. They were faced by the group of people who yearned for progress and development. Between these two group, we can find a third one, that were progressive in their conception but were democratic and had the people's interests at hand.

The ministers, both the ones in higher positions, both the others, can be enumerated in these categories also. The older generations had a conservative viewpoint. But it does not refer to all, because we could analyze the work of many ministers with experience, who had a progressive viewpoint. But the younger generations yearned for renewal and progress.

In regard to the War for Independence we can see that one of the groups wanted peace. They tried with all their power to ensure it and proclaimed the brotherhood of the nation. In contrast with these we can see the ministers who yearned for national interests and wanted to take part in the war. Some stand out even more from this last group. The ones who had republican spirituality and had a nationalistic ideology.

The work of the conciliarist ministers was valuable. They stood by their beliefs, mission and calling and in the midst of the war they tried to keep composure.

In my thesis we analyzed the lives and work of the ministers working in the army camps. We could see, that there were ministers who remained detached from the work of the army at first. Others were militiamen at first and later worked as ministers in the army camps. We noted their role and significance.

The combat during the Revolution took place mainly on the battle field, but there were times when it continued in offices, courtrooms and other such places. In these places we could also find ministers. Moreover, in Hegyalja and Haromszek they were the organizers of the self-defensive actions.

From an ideological point of view, they had high hopes regarding the changes in the social sphere. The theme and tone of the sermons also changed radically. We cannot generalize, but many ministers not merely because they felt it was their duty, read the proclamations of the revolutionary administration, and also many had sermons that gave answers to the political questions at hand. The explanation of the 12 Point and their effect on the different regions of Transylvania were the basis of many such speeches.

The minister's social role could also be noted. They played an important role in National Assembly, because they were the envoys of the people, earning their trust. With their speeches and works in their communities, defined the lives of different places and regions.

At the head of the Transylvanian Reformed Community stood many acclaimed ministers. Although they were also in the crossfire of the war, they managed to serve in the best way possible. We could note that the archives as well as the built heritage that were entrusted to the communities, were all dug out of the mud. And even in the most dangerous day, they continued to serve.

The two summaries presented in the Consistory correspondence were only a first level analysis. The third list, that contains the names of ministers, who were victims of the war, could only be done after 177 years.

I have to highlight that most communities kept the memories of the victims. In these regions the ministers who have lost their lives are remembered with piety. A wooden headboard or some kind of monument keeps their names, up to this day.

The first account, written in 1849, written by Z. Bodola Samuel, notes the names of 20 ministers, who have lost their lives during the War for Independence. In the second description we could find the same number of ministers who lost their lives in the civil war. But the number is not precise.

The result of our investigation and the literature taken into consideration can give a more precise number of the ministers who have lost their lives during the war. Our results are based on documents from the archives, memories and other secondary literature.

We could note, based on our resources that the above-mentioned lives were refracted by the Revolution. Z. Bodola Samuel noted that he would give a more precise description of the loss during war. But we could not find its trace in the years following the war. We can just assume that it had been done. Until then we remain with these descriptions.

Comparing the Consistory Correspondence, with different materials from The Archive and other secondary literature we can note that we know very little of the role of ministers and student from the Theology who had suffered retortion. There are some vague dates and information that came to light during the 19th century in different German media publications. But the memorials cannot be examined yet.

Because of the retaliation following the war, many such documents were destroyed, thus it is very hard to look into the details of the ministers' lawsuits. The memories of people and other documentation can only give some details.

Most probably many more ministers were the victims of retaliation. Some successfully changed their identity. Others chose to move to different regions. But many have spent years in prison, away from their families and congregation.

The police force's vengeance was terrible and they wanted to stop every sign of a new war in the bud. Thus, they wanted to use the ones caught and set them as examples. But the will for independence could not be stopped in their heats.

I would like to list the one who have lost their lives in the prisons during the retaliation, among the war victims. They spent years in the worst conditions and in some cases deprived even of their human nature. Many have also lost their lives due to the retortion. Others have suffered such trauma that made them incapable to serve anymore. They can also be considered victims.

The last topic of the Consistorial Correspondence, that deals with the ministers' role in the War for Independence was completed with reports from the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese General Council. Here we would find information about the rate, degree and personal significance of the loss of the Transylvanian Reformed Community. The Secondary literature helped in the interpretation of this information.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of our research is the presentation and summing up of the history of the Reformed Church during the War for Independence. In writing this we can conclude the following:

1. **The Consistorial Correspondance still contains valuable material that needs to be researched.** It gives a better point of reference when continuing to research and interpret the themes presented in the thesis. The correspondence paint a clear picture of the feeling and radical questions of the war.

2. **The question of education was crutial for the Consistory of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese.** As we could note above, two thirds of the correspondence is made up of questions related to education. The reports of the educational institutions, the reorganization of the educational system and the implementation of the reforms were all important basis for the correspondence.

3. **In the mirror of the correspondence we see a good cooperation between the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese and the state.** During the change in political affairs, the leaders of the reformed church were neither committed, nor vulnerable to the state. However, the state supplied documents to the church and asked their help in presenting and interpreting them to the people, it managed to keep it's independence from it.

4. **The leaders of the Transylvanian Reformed Diocese remained calm, peace-oriented, serving actively and looking for real solutions to the problems.** The Consistory faced many smaller issues relate to church organization, but managed to deal it with it accordingly. It did not neglect smaller problems and paid attention to the coordination of interior life. It tended to the pastoral services, even in the hardest times.

5. **More than half of the Transylvanian Reformed ministers played an active role in the Revolution and a quarter of them suffered from retorsion and even paid with their lives for the independence.** The fact present shocking data. The ministers were involved in the events occurring during the Revolution. They were all patriot, whether they preached, or fought on the battle field, or tried to convey peace, or offered charitable services during the Revolution. It is also thanks to their sacrifice and service that the Hungarian Civil Nation was born.