

In the spirit of Prohászka – on the wings of faith

The theses of a doctoral dissertation titled:

New challenges and attempts at solutions in the Diocese of Székesfehérvár and in the life of the parishes of Budafok (1930-1970)

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Part I. Background of the research and the raising of issues.

After 1945, first the physical materials, then the personal conditions, for writing church history were eliminated.¹ The historiography in this country seems to have forgotten the local socio-political origins and the welfare activities of the churches; until the regime change (1989), the activities of religious orders and of church parishes in this area remained unknown. The theory of a “ruling class, exploiting and abusing the people, and their servile clergy” had no room for a Catholic and Protestant Church aimed at improving the situation of the peasants, workers, urban poor through community cooperation.

The views of the church-historical works of Jen Gergely, that were published between 70 and the regime change, faithfully reflect the ideological demands of the party line, while subsequent to the change, he reappears with new works that indicate a fundamentally changed spirit, and today is one of the initiators of research in this new spirit at ELTE (Eötvös Lóránd University of Liberal Arts and Sciences). Gábor Gyáni also observes that, prior to the end of the 1980s, there was barely any mention of the history of social-politics. He mentions, as an example, the eighth volume of the ten-volume History of Hungary, edited by György Ránki.² During December of 1988, Reformed Theological Institution (Református Teológia) provided space for a memorial exhibition and conference of the Protestant People’s Academy, where the former leaders of these movements gave presentations. The first detailed book, dealing with the Christian movement was a work dealing with KALOT (National Association of Rural Catholic Young Men).³ The history of the

1 Gergely Jenő: Az egyháztörténeti kutatások helyzete és kilátásai a XVIII-XX. századi Magyarországgal kapcsolatban. in: *Fiatal egyháztörténészek írásai*. Szerkesztette: Fazekas Csaba, Lektorálta: Bessenyei József és Zakar Péter. Miskolci Egyetem BTK Újkori Magyar Történeti Tanszék, Miskolc, 1999.

2 Gyáni Gábor: Szociálpolitika és jótékonyosság a két világháború közötti Magyarországon. in: *Szociális kérdések és mozgalmak Magyarországon (1919-1945)*. szerk. Szilágyi Csaba. Gondolat – Barankovics Alapítvány, Bp., 2008. 12. p.

3 Katolikus Legényegyletek Országos Tanácsa. Balogh Margit: *A KALOT és a katolikus társadalompolitika 1935-1946*. MTA Történettudományi intézete, Bp., 1998.

Christian-socialist popular movements between 1935-49 was published as the Unfinished Age of Reform (Félbemaradt reformkor), in the form of the reminiscences of their former organizers.⁴

Given the fact that the documentary material collected at the national center of the ecclesial organizations and movements, the Actio Catholica, disappeared after the arrest of Ödön Lénárd, the activities of the different ecclesial movements can be researched only through examining dispersed local material, through conducting research in regional and local historical material. The activities of the Catholic Church of Budafok, the 'gem' of the diocese of Székesfehérvár, with its organizations and groups, is one such terra incognita. Thus, I was forced to conduct original research in the local source documents and archives pertaining to the years between 1945 and 1970. In the pages of this work, I bring to public attention for the first time the works of Bishop Lajos Shvoy and his outstanding co-workers relegated to obscurity, both in the area of Church activism and organization, as well as the generous actions of the families of Budafok who were forced to remain silent or to emigrate.

Outline of the contents of the chapters:

Chapter I (The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries: New social challenges facing the Catholic Church). Towards the end of the 19th century, the reformer Bishop Ottokár Prohászka already foresaw the process that was to lead to the dissolution of the traditional, values-supporting small communities and to the breakdown of society resulting in the discarding of the ethical norms. The double blow that struck the country (the Treaty of Trianon and the communist dictatorship of 1919) awakened the Church for the need of an active social policy along the lines of the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII. The reform minded clergy of the country was raised on the ideology of bishop Prohászka and the results of his initiatives bore fruit in the renewed pastoral activities of the '30s, as well as the expansion of ecclesial autonomy during the '30s, along with multi-faceted community care as practiced at the diocesan level.

⁴ Félbemaradt reformkor 1935-1949. Róma 1990- Budapest 2005. Püski Kiadó. Szerk. Kovács K. Zoltán

In my thesis, I examined from a new perspective the views of bishop Prohászka, who exerted so much influence over the Diocese of Székesfehérvár, with regard to the Jewish question; adding new facts to the literature dealing with the topic and showing its effects on the socio-politicians and clergy during the '20s and '30s. As in most European countries, and here too, intellectual life in the '30s was permeated with articles on the differences in Judeo-Christian ethics but, for Catholic publicists, this meant merely an 'ethical anti-Semitism,' that is, it was free of any racial discriminatory overtones. Adding to existing publications, I will attempt to show the period's economic basis for the perceived union of capitalism, liberalism and the Jews, its appearance all over Europe, even among Left-leaning thinkers. On the other hand, to argue against the commonly held view that these ethical trends necessarily led to the Holocaust, I will offer, through the writings of Lajos Mezőgár, Prohászka's successor, and his brave stand beside the Jews during the 'perilous period', that the theoretical error could not lead to racial hatred in a Christian believer. Rather, the attitude led to active opposition in the '40s to the Germans and the Arrow Cross, the sharp struggles with the volksbund. Jesuits, who studied sociology in universities abroad, certain priest in Trans-Danubia, their bishops (Lajos Shvoy, Vilmos Apor, József Mindszenty), together with the group formed around Pál Teleki and university professor Béla Kovrig, began to gather families, into self-regulating local communities, based on a solid Christian value system that set down demands of the individual according to their age and occupation. They began, in every social strata and occupational group, the training of a Catholic elite through leadership courses, leadership camps and workers' continuing educational schools. The findings of my research have borne out the view that all these often had to be undertaken against certain government objections, while they had to shield their organizations.

My researches will shed detailed light on the activities of Bishop Lajos Shvoy of Székesfehérvár, who surrounded himself with priests who argued, on the pages of the diocesan newspaper, for the urgent resolution of the land-problem, and demanded social reforms. I was able to conclude that a relatively wide-spread reform-clergy came into existence in Trans-Danubia who were progressive and actively

searching for solutions to land redistribution and unemployment. They, along with Kerkai, Apor, Mindszenty and Shvoy were already proposing in the '30s the creation of a Christian-Democratic Party that stood for the necessary social reforms; they finally got into such a position around 1944-45 to be able to carry it through. Contrary to the Social-Democratic view, they proposed a solution to the problem of the workers on a business-related basis but in the spirit of the papal encyclicals. They warned their readers of the perils of Fascism and Nazism and during the 'perilous period', the various organizations and parishes rescued Jews and the persecuted, with the bishops' blessings. The experience of Shvoy with the Regnum Marianum movement practically predestined him to reorganize the entire diocese along its pattern into a system of self-regulating parishes. To accomplish this, there was a need in the hub, at Fehérvár, of such agile and highly trained persons as Lajos Mezgár, an able organizer, theologian and newspaper editor, regional director of the Actio Catholica, and the local chief organizer of KIOE (National Union of Catholic Young Workers), KALOT, EMSZÓ (Community Workers Groups), and HIVATÁSSZERVEZET (Vocational Organization). I was able to expand the scarce data regarding HIVATÁSSZERVEZET through research in Fehérvár and shed light on its influence within the union movement, through the strikes and wage negotiations carried out by Mezgár in Fehérvár. Also through archival research, I was successful in bring to light the social work of the former long-time Finance Ministry official, Antal Czermann, whose work - largely forgotten today - even traversed the country's boundaries. He organized in Fehérvár the Diocesan Center for Youth Associations. Groups doing social and cultural works, covering all age groups, volunteer parish groups sprang up in a wide institutional range (kindergarten, day care for apprentices, home for servants, poor house, cultural center, summer camp), mainly staffed by volunteers or monks - at low cost.

My research in this area bears out that the Actio Catholica, under the direction of the synod of bishops, in conjunction with the dioceses were more effective than so far thought in excluding the Volksbund from influencing the young of Schwabian origin. In the Pécs and Székesfehérvár diocese, he was successful in curbing the spread of the Volksbund from 1940, with the help of the local clergy and

teachers, and in cooperation with KALOT. According to the assessment of Lajos Mezgár, the new system of parishes in Hungary was founded by Shvoy.

The need to put in practice the ideas of the papal encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, and the ideal of the Christian-socialist state affected numerous entrepreneurs, as well: I will add to the data already published (Manfréd Weiss, Csonka, etc.), expand the known information about Nagykovácsy, and make public the previously unknown parish work of the persecuted Törley and Czermann families.

In Chapter II (History of the Parishes of Budafok to the Second World War.), I cover, from their beginnings in the '20s, the activities of various Catholic organizations and groups. It is apparent from the reports of the parish priests how difficult it is to bring into the church the inhabitants of villages and small towns who are in the grip of atheism and apathy. Abbot Rezs Poós of Budafok, with his numerous groups, especially the KIE (Christian Youth Association), towers far above the other parishes.⁵ The activities of KIE, founded in 1922 under the patronage of Prohászka and directed for 20 years by Antal Czermann, will be treated for the first time by me in the pages of this work. During the Shvoy years, rural branches of KIE were founded, later ones in Northern Hungary (today in Slovakia). The greatest achievement of the founder, Antal Czermann, was, without doubt, the lakeside campsite in Balatonudvari, established during the '30s (today known as Balaton-Fövényes) - whose founding details and associations I shall document, based on archival and local sources. At Antaltelep (Camp Antal), members of Church organizations were able to provide summer camps to needy rural children.

The Budafoki Ferences Mária Gondozó nővérek (Franciscan Nursing Sisters of Mary in Budafok) looked after the poor, the sick and small children using the methods of Norma Egri. Having examined written

5 Lelkipásztori jelentések 1924-1926. Források a Székesfehérvári Egyházmegye történetéből III. kötet. Szerkesztette: Mózes Gy. Gergely. Székesfehérvári Püspöki és Székeskáptalani Levéltár, Székesfehérvár, 2008.

sources, I have come to conclude that this was cheaper and more effective than the municipal poor-house with its paid staff.

In Chapter III (The Catholic community during the economic and political transformation between 1945 and 1946.), I present Mezgár's pastoral activity - known to date only through oral tradition - through archival material, local historical sources and court records. During the war years, he was the protector of the persecuted and of the Jews. My research also indicates that the new generation of priests, growing up in the spirit of Prohászka, were dedicated to the idea of forming a new Christian political party dedicated to social reforms and land redistribution. Since the 1930's, Mezgár - nationally renowned socio-political priest - had been involved, as Shvoy's representative, in the attempts to found the Christian-Democratic Party and gave the party a 'home' in Budafok. Challenging the conventional 1948 change in direction, my research results disclosed that the Communists had decided, already in 1945 with the election results, to exclude the churches and eliminate the former social elite classes: in 1945, Mezgár and Ferenc Nagy, a priest from Fels város, were elected as members of the committee for the reconstruction of the city. They were both previously involved in assistance programs and with the public food supply and distribution. Now, they worked together with Social-Democrat and Communist representatives, until the exclusion permitted. I have been able to show that the tricks, to make the financial situation of the (Catholic) diocese impossible, were begun well in advance of nationalization taking place, in 1945 already. To add to the published history on the topic, I shall document the beginning of the deportation of the Schwabians, begun in 1946. The bishop and the pastors of the parishes were inundated by the applications of the faithful of Budafok, fearing deportation. In the hope of being able to stay, many Schwabians submitted their requests to the Interior Ministry to Hungarianize their names. Even those priests of Schwabian background, who courageously opposed the Arrow Cross Party, were put on the list of people to be deported. The research results have validated the clergy and the bishop did everything possible on behalf of the persecuted Schwabians and re-settled Magyars. The Communists were taking note of who attended German-language Masses ... Mezgár, realizing the danger

threatening his parishioners, discontinued the German-language Masses. The assimilation of the Schwabian speeded up.

In Chapter IV (Ideological and power struggles, soul by soul, 1945-48), I present Bishop Shvoy's sweeping attempt, starting with great momentum after 1945 - largely unknown - at reorganizing the diocese. He defined concrete tasks for each of the departments of the parish in the areas of school education, organized recreation and religious commitment! He specified that every parish should hold at least five parental meetings during the 1945/46 school year, where the parents were to be informed of the legal circumstances of the maintenance of the schools, of the need for religious instruction, and of financial matters. He assigned specific tasks to every department. He requested the financial departments of the parishes to look after the restoration of the church, the priests' residence, and the school. He still placed trust in the government's promise that they will be granted land in lieu of the patronage expenses.

In Budafok, boy scout troops, congregations, choirs, altar circles, and the Association of Parents were reorganized. A ruling of 1945 decreed that the Hivatásszervezet (Vocational Organization) and EMSZO (Community Workers Groups) were 'anti-democratic organizations.' My research led me to the conclusion that the Communist Party wished to ensure that the interests of workers would to be defended solely by leftist unions, hence the banning of competitive Catholic organizations. Despite all this, the life of the parish bustled: annual fundraisings were held, the children of the needy were treated to vacations, concerts, plays, dances, sporting events, and parish dinners were organized. Parental meetings and teacher-staff meetings were held at the parish hall in order to keep the parishioners informed during the times of attacks against the Church. Because of the certification procedures, B-listings, land redistributions, and the denial of financial support for the patronage expenditures, the conflict deepened between the former élite and the new, Social-Democrat - Communist municipal leadership. The operations of KIE, and other significant national organizations (KIOE, KALOT, etc.) were outlawed simultaneously in 1946, and their assets nationalized. The closing down of KIOE was particularly painful for the parish because KIOE attracted to its apprentice

centers the young of the working class who grew up amid miserable circumstances. These directives verified my supposition that the Left could not permit the education of the young and of the working class not to be directed by them. In March of 1947, they even forced the closure of the soup kitchens run by the Church. As soon as there was a disagreement between the Actio Catholica and the government over the distribution of Red Cross packages, there were attacks on the local organization in Budafok and on Mezőgar. Finally, just as across the entire country, they replaced the leadership of the local organization in order to have their own people distribute the incoming international aid. While party propaganda preached the Marxist world view at meetings held in workshops and factories, it became necessary, if only for the sake of self strengthening, to organize an academic series with Christian philosophers and theologians. They invited Sándor Sík and the noted experts of the Barankovics party. Based on archival material, I will introduce the desperate attempts to defend the church, the school, and the cultural centre, as were the attempts to save the existence of organizations by small and large compromises. The post-1945 daily struggles were indicated by the Parents' Association's battle to maintain the teaching of religion, to oppose the nationalization of schools, as well as the faithful's stand in support of the Eucharistic Day of Budafok in 1947, which was tantamount to a demonstration. At the same time, they exhibited the societal strength hidden in the Catholic community, a force which opposed, at the local level, the Communist Party: the Eucharistic Day of Budafok was knowingly planned in advance of the elections of 1947 in order to strengthen the Catholic faithful.

Chapter V (The destruction of the parochial organizations of Budafok and that of the local society organized around these.),

I present the struggles directed by the Parents' Association, a subordinate of the central organization of the Actio Catholica (namely, of Ödön Lénárd) against the nationalization of the educational institutions run by the Church. Up to now, the vocational literature wasn't familiar with the details of the letter written by Margit Slachta, member of Parliament, to the parishes, and the dedicated work with which she collected the objections from the parish against the nationalization of schools, in order then to present

them in the parliamentary debates. We are familiar with the events of Pócspetri. My current aim is to add to the history of the three year struggle of the Catholic intellectuals of Budafok, augmenting Church history by this series of obscure events: the struggle of the Parents' Association, under the leadership of pastor Ferenc Nagy of Fels város, against the forces of the local leftists. In several instances, there were scenes of rough insults. Some people persisted, while others changed sides under pressure on their livelihood. Using its last ounce of energy, secretly, close to bankruptcy, intimidated, Budafok collected signatures and character references in order to save the life of Lajos Mezgár, their beloved and respected priest, who was accused of committing crimes against the state and the people, and was summoned before a People's Court in 1948. My research also sheds light on the strong local resistance supporting Mindszenty, almost a revolution, from the very beginning against the local party and civic leadership struggling to grasp total control from the former entrepreneurial and intellectual elite who were attempting to safeguard the independent organizations united and governed by a democratic system. The old elite, while continuing to develop the Christian-Socialist model, took refuge behind the Church and its organizations. My findings disclose the parallel struggle of the Catholic Church and Cardinal Mindszenty, as Primate, waged with the Left, and that of Mezgár and the local Catholic community with the local party and civic bosses.

In Chapter VI (Withering between 1950-1970.), I will present the system of Church persecution of the 1950s in a more nuanced manner, with the assistance of Party documents, Parliamentary records and personal recollections. I will use the Party Committee minutes to expose its methods of intimidation: midnight visits to the parish rectory, taking note of the sermon and those receiving Holy Communion, shaming those children who go to religious instruction, parents of children who study catechism have their name noted at their place of work, teachers with religious conviction let go from their position, some former office holders in the parish recruited into the Communist Party, re-educators sent to the homes of actively religious families, etc. The Party Committee regularly collected data on those attending religious instruction and prepared statistics. Religion teachers, who worked effectively among the young, were

relocated, the routes of religious processions were curtailed, or permission was simply not granted; noisy counter-activities were organized to coincide with Church events (e.g.- confirmations); the deadlines to sign up for Confirmation were altered at the last minute. Privately held religious instruction was hunted; the existence of religion classes in schools was investigated and the teachers and principal were made responsible to convince parents to renounce their faith.

In Chapter VII (The participation of the intellectual of Budafok in '56.), I will treat the revolutionary events of 1956 in a chronological manner in my work. The leaders were those who were sidelined in the post-1945 - anti-Church onslaught - transition period, yet still respected by the people of Budafok, who were able to prevent the people's anger from turning into summary judgement. Instead, they made an attempt to organize the community along the pre-1945 democratic lines with which they were familiar. Disenchanted with socialism, some Left-wing intellectuals changed sides who had achieved significant career success in the '50s, such as the artist Emil Vén and the sculptor Tibor Vilt.

Chapter VIII (The vibrant effects of 1956 on religious life. 1957: restoration through 'administrative' means.): The '60s, the period of the great compromise, when Ádám Ásguti uses the example of the 'formal' peace-priest (those co-opted by the system) who, through various tricks, manages to elude the attention of the authorities who oversee religious affairs to allow him to carry out his vocation, offer protection to his chaplains and offer a refuge to the persecuted, among them: the Paulist order clerics dr. Béla Gyéressy and Ferenc Oláh; Ákos Bolyos, also of the Paulists, released after a 6-year jail term; the Regnum Marianum activist László Em di, also just out of jail. Thus, Prohászka's prediction came true in our age: With the excision of a transcendent value orientation, the Communist Party created the local rule of an unrestrained and uneducated stratum, while scattering the community of that value orientation, which today is unable to offer opposition to the harmful effects of globalization.

Part II. The research methods, data gathering, methodology.

(1) The *Historia Domus* of the inner and upper city of Budafok served as the basis for my research, along with parish baptism and confirmation records. I am indebted to the parish priest of upper Budafok for the History of the Franciscan Nursing Sisters of Mary. It contains baptism and confirmation data, annual church events, pilgrimages, and the costs and progress of major construction. It also sheds light on the life of smaller communities, alludes to the meetings of parish bodies, along with photographs and newspaper clippings, one of which is a letter from Brazil recounting the final years and death of Lajos Mezgár. Rounding it out are various flyers, publications and material of the various groups (Budafok still has a significant number of German-language sheet music used in the liturgy and journals awaiting analysis.).

(2) I was able to carry out research among the documents in the archives of the diocese and chapter of Székesfehérvár (8000 Székesfehérvár, Városház tér 5) relating to Budafok, which I found to be very orderly and easy to access. The 1943 *Canonica Visitatio* details the history of the parishes, their land holdings, the history of the patronage donation and the expenses accruing to the see arising from it. The material dealing with educational matters between 1945 and 1948 has disappeared; it has either been destroyed or the secret police have appropriated it. I have made use of the correspondence between the parish priests and the bishop, the parish reports, correspondence relating to the activities of associations, the minutes of the center for youth organizations for the diocese, the minutes of the sessions of the house of representatives (regarding current events), requests from parishioners, various reports, bishop's circulars, instructions, events, requests and newspaper articles.

(3) The Historical Archives of the State Security Services contain the 1956 material relating to the XXII. district. These I have amended and/or cross-checked with material found in Budafok, with reports made by participants in the events of 1956, living both here and abroad, and local historical source materials, as well.

(4) I have studied in the Archives of the City of Budapest the minutes of Party Committee meetings of the MDP and MSZMP, the material relating to deportations, the letter written by the national committee of Budafok to the people's court, minutes taken at city hall, and the exchange of correspondence regarding the confiscation of the KIE assets. The documents of the Premontratsian Academy of Jászóvár in Budafok, for the years 1943 to 1948, are also kept here. I was also able to find here the material relating to the court case against Mezgár, among them his written defence, statements made in his behalf by intellectuals, businessmen and workers from Budafok and Székesfehérvár and his own detailed recollections of his activities. Among the case files are form letters sent to the parish priests of the Hungarian Holy Crown Association in which, through response to a questionnaire, in an effort to provide assistance and equipment for a Catholic labor draftee.

(5) In the periodicals and microfilm section of the Széchenyi Library, I pored over newspapers of the period (Budafok Népe, Budai hírek, Budai krónika, Fehérmegyei Napló, Fehérvár, Uj Fehérvár, Városok Lapja), which gave me great insight into the journalistic and theological activities of Mezgár, an understanding of the Budafok situation and the nuances of the local power politics. In the library, I found a handbook by Mezgár on his methodology of assisting the poor, a pamphlet of his laying out the objectives of the Vocational Organization, and a book dealing with the founding of KIE.

(6) Library of Parliament: material relating to representative Antal Czermann, KIE documents and the parliamentary speeches of Shvoy and Czermann.

(7) In the Antal Budai Nagy Academy in Budafok, I read through the yearbooks and documents of its predecessor, the Premontratsian Academy. I gained access to the correspondence of the Parents Association active in the Upper City parish through local historian László Garbóczy, whom I would like to thank here.

(8) Oral history: I sought out the old people of Budafok, the parish members, the '56 participants, the descendants of the well-to-do

families who once dominated the city, and the aged priests who served there at the time.

Part III. Functional results, future opportunities.

By the end of the '30s, the combined membership of KALOT, EMSZO, KIOE, the Christian unions, the Community Workers Group, the Social Mission, the KALASZ (Catholic Young Ladies' Circles and DL (Catholic Working Young Ladies' National Association) hovered between 500 and 800 thousand. Add to it the numbers in the scouting movement and the various charitable organizations (Norma Egri, the Sisters of St. Vincent, etc.), it becomes evident that civil society (including the Protestant organizations) played an overwhelming role in social and cultural plans. Without them, the country would not have been able to rise from its post-Trianon economic and intellectual collapse. Under their dedicated direction, thousands of social workers cared for the elderly, the sick and the needy and educated the young, the apprentices and household servants.

Based on my research finding, on the assumption that scant monies could have been devoted to these targets from the national budget of a teetering country, I am of the opinion that the value of these Church (funded) activities have been unfairly ignored by later generations. In today's England, under the aegis of the Anglican Church, older retired volunteers in their golden years are finding creative opportunities in teaching and providing care for the elderly and infirm -- saving the country from significant social and charitable expenditures. My experiences in Transylvania have disclosed the same; on top of their regular salary, for a modest stipend, high school teachers also perform the role of psychologist, agronomist and public educator in their chosen little settlement in Szeklerland. Would it not be cheaper and more effective for us, too, to have the work carried out by dedicated volunteer 'social workers,' reintroduced but updated by the earlier lessons learned?

Bishop Lajos Shvoy, Cardinal József Mindszenty, Béla Varga, Cardinal-Primates Béla Kovács and Jusztinián Serédi and bishop Vilmos Apor, the president of the Holy Cross Society actively involved in rescuing Jews, were in constant contact with the group working in close contact with Pál Teleki, and Teleki's chief socio-political advisor, the rector from Kolozsvár (today Cluj in Romania), Béla Kovrig. The task of Department IV of the Prime Minister's Office, the so-called 'in the service of national policy,' was to charged with the concrete anti-German policy of Teleki, to identify and follow German and Arrow Cross activities and to try to deflect them.

In adding to what is already published on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that Prime Minister Teleki, knowing that he had to operate between the real threats of either a German or Russian occupation, began a dual policy, placing reliance on the well developed organizational network of the Church, years before Kállay:

(1) Yielding to German pressure and in return for Northern Transylvania, Teleki enacted the III Jewish Law (which, same as the previous ones, were not totally observed) and permitted the Germans of Hungary to be unify into the Volksbund.

(2) At the same time, Teleki establishes: Department IX, under József Antal sr., tasked with saving Poles and Polish Jews, Department IV, the national policy service. As part of this latter department's activities, Church leaders and their organizations disseminated clandestine propaganda materials (directly opposed to Teleki's own official policies) and organized, within their bodies and parishes, resistance against the Arrow Cross and Volksbund movements, as well as rescuing Jews, with aid and Church infrastructure assistance, under the direction of bishop Apor and the Actio Catholica. My research has shed light on some local methods in this endeavor. The not-insignificant secret accomplishment of the local clergy can only be established by further research into the parish records, recollections, other Historia Domus and diocese archives. I can attest that, without these local investigations, we shall have a lopsided picture of human stand in the time of the Holocaust,

the moral behavior of the clergy and the parishes, and of the organized nature of the rescue of Jews.

Beginning in 1945, Church autonomy was slowly eroded through administrative and police methods: sources of finance were withdrawn, pressure on the livelihood of activists, making it impossible for potential donors, etc. By 1948, the organizations of society's Christian elite were either eliminated, or forced into exile abroad. The 1964 agreement with the Vatican resulted in a decline in persecutions by the local party committee, as well as in the number of baptisms, numbers taking religious instruction and the drastic drop in church attendance (from 80% to under 20%). Admirable laic and clerical bearing was demonstrated at the local level (in Budafok), where many priests lived up to their calling in an atmosphere of total helplessness, beset with petty problems, under the strain of constant surveillance and indignities.

Part IV. My publications on this topic

- Az ismeretlen segítő. (Nem mindenkiből halt ki az emberség a vészkorszakban.) in: *Magyar Nemzet*, 2004. Április 16. 4. p.
- Prohászka öröksége a fehérvári egyházmegyében – Mezgár Lajos, a társadalomforradalmár pap. in: *Valóság*, 2006. 9. sz.
- Tüntetések, harcok 1956-ban Budafokon. (*Városházi Híradó*, 2006. nov. 24.)
- Mezgár Lajos közéleti tevékenysége. *Egyháztörténeti Szemle*, 2007/1. VIII. évf.1. sz. 17p.
- Szociális és karitatív tevékenység – autonóm egyházszervezetben - a fehérvári egyházmegyében, Budafokon (1919-1945). in: *Szociális kérdések és mozgalmak Magyarországon (1919-1945)*. Faludi Akadémia – Gondolat - Barankovics István Alapítvány, Bp, 2008.