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The Ecclesiastical History of Experience of Forced Collectivization in Szolnok County (1945-1962)

THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

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I. Background to the research and problem statement

Although a considerable amount of work has been done on the subject of forced collectivization in agriculture by historians both in Hungary and in Eastern Europe, studies examining the social history of this process are relatively recent in Hungarian historiography. Over the past fifteen to twenty years, a number of excellent monographs and studies have been published on attempts to adapt the structure of agriculture within the Soviet bloc to domestic conditions and on the effects of collectivization on the employment sector. However, analyses of the process of collectivization from a bottom-up, experiential perspective cannot yet be considered sufficiently explored subfields within social history, particularly with regard to the subdisciplines of political and ecclesiastical social history. I see the scientific relevance of this research in the fact that the region-specific characteristics of macroeconomic and social processes can contribute to a more complex big picture in terms of how much the results changed compared to the original objectives of the project during the demonstrably violent adaptation of a model adopted from abroad. In addition to the long-term results of processes that are mostly embedded in a modernization paradigm, regional-level in-depth studies can also shed more light on the social costs of implementation. In this context, I examine "the church" – in this sense, traditional Christian denominations – as a social institution, an approach that represents one possible dimension of these denominations' self-definition.

The dissertation examines the social history of the transformation of land ownership in relation to the "long 1950s" within the Great Plain region, focusing on the Roman Catholic and Reformed parishes of Szolnok County, which was considered a priority area for the collectivization of agriculture by the communist party state. The micro- and meso-level, structuralist, sectoral approach research covers the period from the 1945 land reform from the abolition of the church's

large estate system to the full implementation of forced collectivization and the consolidation of the Kádár regime's "federal policy." When deciding on the boundaries of the period, I ultimately chose the date of 1945 because, although the short period from the end of World War II to the public law revolution does not strictly belong to the period of collectivization from a political or social history perspective, from the perspective of church history, it is impossible to ignore the land distributions of 1945. The abolition of the church's large estate system created a situation that laid the foundations for the peasant society, which was the material basis and "spiritual hinterland" of the local parishes, and, with the collectivization of these private estates, the more intensive existential exploitation of the denominations than ever before. Beyond the economic aspects of this process, its consequences can be seen in the long term – starting in the 1960s – mainly in the everyday practice of religion and in the declining trends in religious life. Based on my research findings, I argue that the above-mentioned phenomena are not merely the "inevitable" consequences of these economic and social processes, but that the socialist regime of the time regarded collectivization as a kind of "weapon" in its policy toward the church that accelerated the processes of secularization, or more precisely, laicization and definitive de-religionization of agrarian society.

In my view, Szolnok County is an ideal terrain for mapping these macro-processes: during both the Rákosi and Kádár eras, the Great Plain served as a model region for both industrialization and the collectivization of agriculture. Following the county reorganization of 1950, the county, consisting of seven districts and seven county-level cities, can still be considered a fairly heterogeneous area in terms of its geographical and economic characteristics, land ownership structure, social stratification, and denominational characteristics. which has resulted in different responses from local parishes to the efforts of the authorities to impose uniformity. In the best case scenario, this could even serve as a starting point for a later, larger-scale series of comparative studies.

II. Methodological approaches

Ecclesiastical social history. Wolfgang Schieder separates research into the social history of religiosity from classical church history methodology insofar as the latter approach focuses on the religiosity of communities with church membership and the social behaviors and practical manifestations of this religiosity. The "church society" defined in this way focuses on examining the local political, economic, and cultural value of these communities and the changes therein, as well as the possibilities for the pastors of these communities to assert their goals and interests vis-à-vis secular authorities. Consequently, this approach is not satisfied with merely monitoring the implementation of national church policy at the county or municipal level and the specific characteristics of its social practice in relation to the big picture but also examines the historical forms of religious behavior in church society, the social conditions that enable it, and the dynamics of change in the frameworks that support it in a high-stakes crisis situation and a radically changing environment.

Resilience – cultural resistance. This approach examines the extent to which complex systems such as church communities are able to anticipate, adapt, recover, and learn in the face of serious threats, surprises, and disasters. This is very important from the perspective of church society. The extremely fluid social structures of the "long 1950s" between the new geopolitical situation that emerged after World War II and the "soft dictatorship" that solidified in the early 1960s, the demonstrations of power by the unstable state authority of the Rákosi era, and the ability to adapt flexibly to the centrally designated, constantly changing spheres of action were fundamental issues for both the clergy of the Christian denominations and the community of believers, especially the peasant society. In the spirit of the above, this thesis takes a bottom-up, experiential approach to examine the forms of everyday resistance of the church community in relation to forced collectivization using the given method: the possibilities, examples, and results of nonviolent resilience in

practicing religiosity, and, through these practices, the attempts of the social groups concerned to assert their interests, since the horizon of the real scope of action of the forms of resistance ranged from open confrontation to "hidden techniques serving to undermine the functioning of power."

"Collective Socialization" – social participation in the operation of dictatorship. Even in dictatorial systems, individuals were not merely passive objects of political domination; in relation to authoritarian, but especially totalitarian systems, the model that is much more fruitful in terms of society is one that views society as the executor, shaper, multiplier, and reproducer of the given political will. Following József Ö. Kovács, the above expression refers to a formal and informal system of relationships between the executors of dictatorship and society, in which all strata of society were involved – whether driven by the mobilizing effects of propaganda, coercive measures by the authorities, or personal interests. For this reason, the most important instrument and separate field of investigation for promoting the program presented as a modernization project within the church is the peace priest movement, whose representatives, as members of the priestly hierarchy, were equally responsible for ensuring the church's room for maneuver within the framework of the dictatorship – but at the same time, it is also true that (as a political body) it functioned as a transmission belt for the party state within the institutional system of the church. Therefore, beyond the various scenes and forms of expression of their participation in collectivization, it is worth exploring the reactions of other members of the church community to the above, as well as the individual motivational factors and decision-making situations behind the participation of the body that played a role in the operation of the dictatorship's church policy.

The source base for the above theoretical methodological approaches was primarily provided by administrative and diocesan archives. The most important source group consisted of reports from county and lower-level council and party bodies, documents produced for internal use by the national and county state church administration, and investigation files from the relevant state security authorities. In

addition, the minutes of deanery district meetings, church visitation minutes, and local documents from various denominational parishes served as excellent source material for mapping the church's reception of the collectivization project, the formal and informal networks that influenced the implementation of decisions, and individual and group experiences.

Based on the above, the practical methodological approach applied during source processing is primarily *microhistorical*, in order to map individual and group interest enforcement and survival strategies, and secondarily *structuralist*, as I interpret the local historical space as the scene of general, macro-level processes, which can be used to identify connections between the individual elements of complex socio-political constructs. In addition, it is important to mention the *comparative approach* focusing on the differences between the economic, social, and religious parameters of the county's individual regions.

III. Results achieved during the research

In terms of the basic structure of the thesis, methodologically, I examined the following denomination- and region-specific issues of rural parishes and everyday religious practice operating within the framework of the state socialist dictatorship: ***1. changes in church property structure and the economic power of parishes***; ***2. the interactions between the formal and informal networks of local parishes and representatives of the authorities*** at the macro (county), meso (district), and micro (given settlement) levels of analysis; ***3. the pastoral opportunities available to the clergy within the changed social framework***; and finally, ***4. the tendencies toward secularization indirectly induced by collectivization***. I summarize my theses according to the above four criteria.

1. The most characteristic regional phenomenon of the 1945 land distribution was that, due to less favorable land ownership conditions, the beneficiaries were mostly from the areas beyond the Tisza River, while conflicts caused by a strong sense of private ownership among the entrepreneurial middle peasantry and low land concentration were most pronounced in the Roman Catholic parishes of Lower and Upper Jászság However, the general trend was that *land claim committees confidently expropriated even areas below the 100-acre property limit in many places*. I consider the division of large church estates in 1945 to be a long-term trend, the first step in the radical transformation of land ownership structure from the perspective of church social history during the "long 1950s." This was partly because the land redistribution had broken up the large church estates, and partly because the party-state dictatorship that had been established by the turn of the 1940s and 1950s needed all available resources, including those from agriculture, for its planned economy policy aimed at developing heavy industry and the military industry. Thus, in the wake of the land reforms, in order to increase the size of collective farms and state farms, and due to the threat posed by unrealistic tax burdens and delivery obligations, as well as the kulak lists, *churches at the local level sought to dispose of even the land they had acquired in 1945. The vast majority of parishes of both denominations offered their properties at least a year before the decree on the state offer of church lands, i.e. before the summer of 1951.* In many cases, even the land offers did not free the congregations from the tax burdens of land ownership: it was a general trend for local collective farms to arbitrarily use church lands during the collectivization process, after which the tax burdens continued to harm the church in the absence of a land transfer order. The County Land Office was unable to correct the sloppy land registration of the 1945/46 land distributions in all cases, and these errors were also reflected in the land donations: as a result of the sloppy land registration, attempts were often made to identify nationalized church property going back several years, and based on the incorrectly reported cadastral number, in some cases the tax burden of the local Reformed congregation's property was transferred to otherwise unencumbered Roman Catholic lands, or vice

versa. In many cases, even the state purchase price converted into cash, corresponding to the net income per cadastral acre of the offered land, was not clear. *The myriad of ad hoc problems cannot be explained solely by the negligence of the executive bodies of local government – this trend points to a deliberate attempt to bleed the churches dry economically and ultimately hand them over to the state.* Nevertheless, the reports of the chief ecclesiastical officials in the spring and summer of 1962 show that, despite the 20% reduction in state aid in the spring of 1961, which coincided with the full implementation of collectivization, *despite the 20% reduction made by the Office State of Church Affairs in the spring of 1961 – the parishes nevertheless showed signs of increased financial sacrifice*. In the case of Szolnok County, with regard to the economic impact of collectivization on local parishes, it can be said that, contrary to the intentions of the party-state and despite the damage caused, the process did not represent an immediate "death blow" for the churches.

2. *Despite the openly aggressive church policy that began in the summer of 1948, it cannot be said that, in the present case, officials had a uniform attitude toward religious denominations even within a single administrative county in connection with collectivization.* Party committees, burning with the fever of having to meet unrealistic targets and with a rather underqualified cadre, often had to rely on the help of local pastors; without this resulting in a further increase in the influence of the churches within these party organs, a trend that was particularly characteristic of the aforementioned districts of Jászapáti, Jászberény, and Szolnok. In the Tisza region, and especially in the Nagykunság region—particularly in the "collective farm towns" with a Reformed majority and significant political importance—the local party leadership's dogmatic isolation from the church or open hostility towards it can be observed. These characteristics accompanied all waves of collectivization, so these tendencies can also be observed in the early stages of the Kádár regime. *In addition to the above, an examination of the division of church congregations according to employment and social strata reveals that, contrary to the image suggested by the regime, the wealthy farmers known as kulaks were*

by no means overrepresented in these councils. Despite their low numbers, they were more likely to hold influential positions in the Reformed presbyteries of Nagykunság, but this cannot be considered an exclusive trend – the majority of them were occupied by the rural intelligentsia and, above all, by poor and middle peasants, whom the regime of the time referred to as its primary social base of legitimacy.

The same duality can be observed in the peace priest movement, in terms of its relations with local representatives of the party state. *In the case of the Jászság region and the Szolnok district, the municipal and village authorities allowed the peace priests surprisingly much leeway in shaping community life, considering the framework of a dictatorship.* In the above circumstances, in addition to the traditional Catholicism of the Jász region, the logic of planning for immediate results and the inadequate competence of the existing cadre also played a major role. Admitting this would, of course, have meant acknowledging the dysfunctionality of the system, so the recurring themes in reports discussing these problems were the “danger of complacency” and the “overinvolvement of peace priests.” In the above areas, the members of the peace priest council actively participated in pulpit sermons, press statements, and even personal visits to families belonging to the congregation. Although they often encountered hostility from the faithful, during the Rákosi era, almost all of the areas with the highest proportion of applicants for religious education at the county level were dominated by peace priests in "key positions," which nuances the picture of unanimous opposition surrounding them. Some of the peace priests were willing to make this compromise with the representatives of local power in the changed social conditions and for the sake of continuity in church life, they were willing to use their religious influence and network of connections. However, this allowed priests to establish overly informal relationships with local council potentates and certain priests in the eyes of the county party committee, and therefore this cooperation went beyond the limits permitted by the central authorities. *The boundaries between the small number of passive clergy and the local authorities, who were not merely aloof but often*

resorted to arbitrary abuses of power, were much more static than in the areas west of the Tisza. Although this posed fewer problems for the county committee, it did not fully comply with the relevant central political will, given that, apart from minimal attempts by local party and council bodies to promote collectivization through sermons, which would have required some minimal gestures of generosity towards the clergy. *In the early period of the Kádár regime, the regime also took into account the social influence of the churches, but due to problems with implementation at the local level, it can be said that the use of peace priests was not of decisive importance in the context of the national history of forced collectivization.* When considering the factors influencing church resistance and cooperation, the characteristics of the given denomination and church organization are certainly not irrelevant, nor is the governing style of the higher church authority. While the situation was clear in the case of the Reformed Church, in that the secular chief administrator of the Tiszántúli Church District, Ferenc Erdei, party-state church policy could be directly enforced at the executive level, leaving the congregations and pastors of Nagykunság extremely vulnerable. On the Roman Catholic side, however, a more nuanced picture emerges. The acceleration of the reorganization of the county peace committees in 1958 and, after the suppression of the revolution, in order to make the committee more effective compared to the Rákosi era, Archbishop of Eger Pál Brezanóczy sought to place "cooperative, progressive" and highly qualified pastors in parishes considered to be key positions. On the Vác side, however, Bishop Vince Kovács deliberately left the main parish of the Szolnok Deanery vacant, which meant that the county's chief ecclesiastical representative had no opportunity to exert direct influence over the deanery in personnel matters, In fact, he was usually one step behind the Vác court in terms of its disposition. Due to their existential constraints and ecclesiastical circumstances, the Reformed pastors of the Nagykunság and Délpest dioceses were much more integrated into secular society than the celibate Catholic clergy This circumstance resolves the apparent contradiction that some of them were members of "social organizations," but at the same time, during the revolution, they were much more represented in the workers'

councils and were also more active than their Roman Catholic counterparts.

Looking at the local distribution of the perceived and actual revolutionary roles played by pastors in the dissolution of the collective farms in 1956, it is striking that the districts of Kunszentmárton, Tiszafüred, and Tiszántúl (Törökszentmiklós district, but also some towns in Nagykunság) – were affected, i.e. mainly areas dominated by the Reformed Church. These areas generally had poorer quality land, and many of the poorly functioning collective farms were dissolved, mainly due to the burden of loans granted in the early 1950s. In order to consolidate the public mood, which had been stirred up by the persecutions of previous years, pastors felt it necessary to take on personal roles and social responsibilities, especially in these areas. In Jászság, however, with its Catholic, entrepreneurial, and middle-class past, where the fewest collective farms were organized in the county, the lower clergy did not participate at all in the local events of the revolution. The majority of the Roman Catholic clergy did not actively participate in the county-level events of the revolution – their proposals to the local party-state authorities were limited to correcting the violations of religious rights experienced during the Rákosi era, or even less than that. The settlements mainly associated with the Szolnok district also do not indicate that any episcopal statements made by the Diocese of Vác encouraged the lower clergy to participate in the revolutionary committees. *In contrast to the Catholic priests, who adhered to a strict hierarchy, the Reformed pastors were much more closely connected to the presbyteries, which consisted mainly of wealthy farmers, rural intellectuals, and small craftsmen. Due to their existential vulnerability, they were forced to become more involved in local public life through their congregations. For this reason, they were more active in the forums of "peace work"; but for the same reasons, they participated in greater numbers throughout the county—and presumably throughout the country—taking on a more intensive role in local events of the revolution. Thus, the reprisals following the suppression of the revolution—as well as the formation of Protestant*

peace committees during the reorganization of the peace movement—affected Reformed pastors in Szolnok County in greater numbers.

3. *With regard to this issue, it is essential to review the politicized, schematic, state-socialist division of the clergy into "collaborators, neutrals, and resisters"* — a perspective that is often reflected in historiography concerning the church under dictatorship. *The changing forms of work brought about by large-scale farms, the campaign-like, forced work competitions, and, especially for peace priests, the religious and methodological problems of the theologizing promotion of collectivization, or even the emigration that occurred within a part of society as a reaction to the above, turned pastors toward newer, more effective forms of evangelization, "pastoral hiding places."* In order to pursue the unchanging missionary goals of Christian denominations since their founding, a certain tool that had been used flexibly to adapt to the increasingly harsh political climate could very quickly be reclassified as anti-systemic, even though the tools in question were far from being created to oppose the system. These phenomena are manifested in the collective farm-membership of Reformed pastors, in illegal evangelism during work, in Catholic pilgrimage festivals that flexibly circumvented agricultural planning periods, and, in general, in the distribution among congregation members of the burdens of a historical situation that seemed hopeless in the given circumstances and affected all members of the congregation equally. Typical forms of behavior in relation to the above were considered to be defiant seclusion, leaving the priesthood, open anti-collectivization agitation, and, in connection with the cultivation of traditional areas of religiosity, "mobilized pastoral care" – within this, mainly the organization of religious life in rural areas neglected by the party-state authorities, taking advantage of geographical opportunities. *However, it may be problematic that the definition of "reactionary" used by the state authorities in relation to the last wave of collectivization does not fully overlap with the hidden or open, but in any case actual forms of resistance expressed by priests or pastors against collectivization. The cadre staff of the party and council bodies, and thus the social experience of the practical*

implementation of Kádár's "alliance policy," did not change one iota compared to the Rákosi era. At the same time, precisely because of this, the classification of local cadres as “reactionary” by the clergy – in connection with concrete, actual clerical opposition to collectivization – caused confusion in the assessment of pastors in light of the events of 1956. In other words, party secretaries and council chairmen – and sometimes even the chief ecclesiastical representative himself – judged the behavior and activities of pastors during collectivization in light of their perceived or actual role at the time. When weighing up the evidence, the researcher's task is made more difficult by the fact that, in connection with the work plan for assessing the behavior of the denominations during collectivization, even the majority of district-level party organs did not understand what their task was, and this also had an impact on the work of the councils. As a result, many "neutral" priests were labeled "reactionaries" and vice versa; in fact, as we have seen, the harsh behavior of the council bodies could turn even "progressives" into at least "neutrals" or, in the worst case, “reactionaries.” *However, in terms of their pastoral opportunities following collectivization, it was not their involvement in 1956 that had the greatest impact on pastors, but rather the reactions of local parishes to the pastoral work carried out in the interests of collectivization.*

In the context of the Kádár regime, the experience and memory of the brutally defeated revolution is usually cited as the reason for the spectacular decline of church resistance during the revolution after 1957-1958, neglecting the effects of one of the most significant events of the turn of the 1950s and 1960s at the level of society as a whole, the full and final implementation of collectivisation. *Here too, the dimensions of cooperation, abstention and resistance were crucially influenced by the economic, infrastructural and sectarian attributes of the region. Thus, in some cases, unlike in Jászság or Szolnok, for example, in the Tiszántúl region or Tiszafüred district, the large number of poor people and the scarcity of employment opportunities meant that the pastor's entry into the congregation did not necessarily entail a loss of prestige for the pastor, and had a negative impact on*

the religious tendencies - in fact, they could avoid the possibility of verbal pressure or physical violence in the heat of 'agitation'. In Jászság, on the other hand, the wealthy, redemptive middle classes, who also had an entrepreneurial past, confronted their own pastors when necessary. And since the members of the parishes had already experienced the dissolution of the collective farms twice, and the methods of the local authorities in connection with this did not deviate significantly from the experience of the 1950s, most of these communities were more loyal to pastors who had opted for more open forms of resistance. It is important to note, however, as a fundamental difference in the context of the Kádár system, that unlike the previous methods, the first attempt was made to 'win over' the formerly rejected farmers who had been classified as kulaks - sometimes even members of the church council or presbytery, and sometimes presidents - to the cause of collectivization, hoping that the authority of these farmers would win the consent of the local farming community. As for the further existential possibilities of parish societies, we have seen that, despite the continued surveillance by state security of former members of dissolved monastic orders and the more rigid materialistic constraints of the teaching profession, the parish communities have been able to continue to make a living, that the full implementation of forced collectivization at the county level did not cause an explosion of laicisation among the forced to join - indeed, in the spirit of the "Kádárian bargain", if the person's "religiousness does not affect his work performance", he was even left alone. The everyday conflict and autonomy struggles of the church in rural society now continued within the world of collective farming units.

4. In the wake of industrialisation and collectivization, and in the context of radically changing forms of work and traditional customs, it is necessary to focus first on the public spaces of religiosity and church festivals. *In a given historical situation, the quality of the available cadres, the quality of the relationship between the various administrative levels and departments, the personal nexus between the local state or party elite and the pastor, and the geographical and infrastructural challenges, make it illusory to assume the unity of a*

central apparatus that is apparently completely centralised. Instead, in an attempt to ferret out the real or perceived intentions of central expectations within a given local milieu, local authorities often imposed their will through arbitrary and individual procedures. An important element in the desacralisation of the religious cultural tradition was the reduction of public spaces of religiosity to the walls of the church, and at the same time the ritualisation of institutionalised forms of dictatorship. Since there had been no confirmation ceremonies in many places in the county since 1954, Roman Catholic religious educators, taking advantage of the general post-revolutionary religious revival, focused on preparing for this from 1957 onwards - this was also the case in the districts of Szolnok and Törökszentmiklós and the two districts of Jászság. For similar reasons, the Reformed faith teachers tried to make up for years of instances of preparation for confirmation, and in some cases the low attendance of faith education in schools was not an insurmountable obstacle, as was the case in Kunhegyes district.

As far as the problem area is concerned, however, it can be said that the real fault line, both for the party-state and for local church society, was youth pastoral care and faith education in schools. It can be argued that forms of direct violence alone did not contribute to accelerating the loss of religiosity. Indirect, administrative, structural violence was a more decisive factor. In this context, the most important point is to clarify the term 'drop-out', which has been cited many times in this thesis: the systematic dismantling by the authorities of groups of pupils who have been approved by official legislation and who have fulfilled the conditions laid down in that legislation. In this respect, the period of just one and a half years of the 'new phase' has not brought about any significant, positive change in the life of local parishes. This was suffered equally regardless of denomination, but it should be added that in the case of the "co-operative towns" which were established in succession from March 1951, the suppression of forms of religious life, which were isolated, was also treated as a matter of prestige, In Jászság, the "silent battles" waged by local representatives of the party state against the entrepreneurial, Catholic Redemptorist middle classes were more protracted. " Overall, it can

be concluded that, despite its extremely high intensity, just as the results of the first great onslaught of the collectivization failed to fulfil the party's hopes, so too did the indirect secularizing effects of this project. *Moreover, it should be stressed that the partial Stalinist restoration of the ecclesiastical policy instruments coincided with the last great wave of collectivisation campaigns. From a research point of view, it is important to bear in mind and to study the fact that, in terms of intensity, an 'exit campaign' was conducted in roughly equal proportion to, or at the same time as, the 'entry campaign.' Although not in terms of scale, they both have in common the problematic of the campaign-like nature and the presence of organised violence, which are part of the same forced modernisation paradigm, a large-scale ideological enterprise at the level of society as a whole: the Sovietisation of rural life.* It is also a general tendency that the negative effects of the repression that hit the whole society after the defeated revolution were not particularly reflected in the population movement data, and in fact the number of people enrolled in religious education and participating in Easter and Holy Week processions was close to the figures of the early 1950s. In terms of statistics on religious education, even collectivisation itself showed a steady but moderate decline until 1961: the collectivisation that was carried out, however, and the socio-economic processes induced by large-scale industrial forms of work and their indirect negative effects on religious education were reflected in a spectacular way. As far as region-specific characteristics are concerned, in the Tiszántúl, but especially in Jászság, the highest rates of religious enrolment were generally found in the farm suburbs. Geographical factors may also have been decisive in relation to religious trends: for the Tiszafüred district, the proximity of the Archbishop of Eger's headquarters and the fact that the Archbishop's lodge was able to count on reliable priests to serve as deans. However, this was not the only consideration: despite the fact that it was an esperatorial centre for both Roman Catholics and Reformed, it did not help the district of Törökszentmiklós - or the town itself. It is safe to say that Törökszentmiklós was a more important area for the party-state in terms of the reorganization of the district. In terms of the trends of disinvestment, the above mentioned tendencies were obviously more prevalent in the more industrialised cities like Szolnok and Törökszentmiklós. But this tendency is not necessarily exclusive to large cities: Jászberény is a marked exception compared

to Szolnok, Törökszentmiklós and the "collectivized"-towns. The active religious upbringing in the family home testifies to the fact that the religious-religious traditions of the region were not only in opposition to secular authorities, but sometimes even in the absence of pastoral confirmation. As far as Nagykunság was concerned, especially the towns considered as model areas for the collectivization, and the revival of the church, the trend in the impossibility of local parishes was unchanged from the pre-1956 period, as was the church image of the local party elite and the semantic formulas reflected in the reports. *In general, it can be stated with regard to Szolnok County that the collectivization – in terms of the drastic restriction of youth pastoral care – did not cause a fatal and immediate blow, neither economically nor religiously. The rates of religious education in schools, which had already been declining significantly since the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, do not in themselves prove a decline in religiosity: the possibility of catechesis in churches for the purpose of system legitimisation merely meant a 'reallocation' of these rates.* The spread of 'social versions' of church rituals was still to come - but it is undeniable that, if not during the period under study, the 'long fifties' had undeniably taken hold in terms of the indicators of population movement during the period of the Kádár regime, which was known as 'goulash communism'.

IV. Publications related to the Topic of the Dissertation

- Monograph:

Szigorúan ellenőrzött vallásszabadság a Jászkunságban. A kádári egyházpolitika Szolnok megyében (1956-1964), Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség, Budapest-Szeged, 2015.

- Papers:

„A téesz-mozgalom egy csodás búvópatak, mely tóvá alakul!" A kényszerkollektivizálás békepapi recepciója Szolnok megyében (1959-1962), In: Vakvágány. A „szocializmus alapjainak lerakása" vidéken a hosszú ötvenes években 2., (Magyar vidék a 20. században 3.), (Szerk: Horváth Gergely Krisztián), Budapest, MTA BTK – NEB Vidéktörténeti Témacsoport, 2019 381-419.

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