THE POST-WAR REFORMED CHURCH IN FACE OF THE HOLOCAUST

PÁL HATOS

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
USA

Christian churches both Catholic and Protestant experienced a renewal of their theology and a revival of their impact on society in the interwar period; and they could count on the continuous good will of the conservative Horthy regime. Convinced that the leading role of Jewish intellectuals in the 1918–1919 revolutionary upheaval resulted the near ruin of the traditional society and amidst the shock caused by the collapse of historical Hungary, some leading members of Protestant churches endorsed various forms of political anti-Semitism, including the acceptance of some type of curtailment of religious equality, which had once been acclaimed as a significant achievement of nineteenth-century Protestant liberalism. While maintaining their sympathy for the Horthy regime till the very last, the leaders of the churches opposed the persecution and deportation of Hungarian Jews, which began escalating after March 1944. This paper will discuss some of the possible contexts of the Reformed Church's public statements concerning the Holocaust after 1945 and will focus mainly on the writings and sermons of the leading figure of the Reformed Church Bishop László Ravasz (1882–1975).

Keywords: Protestantism, anti-Semitism, Reformed Church, theology, Hungarian history after 1945, László Ravasz

The intent of this paper is to explore some aspects of the Christian attitudes towards the Holocaust in postwar Hungary. Christian churches both Catholic and Protestant experienced a renewal of their theology and a revival of their impact on society during the interwar period and they could count on the continuous good will of the Horthy regime, which vacillated between liberal-conservative and marked authoritarian tendencies throughout the whole period. Convinced that the leading role of Jewish intellectuals in the 1918–1919 revolutionary upheaval had resulted the near ruin of traditional society and amidst the shock caused by the collapse of historical Hungary, some leaders of Protestant churches endorsed various forms of political anti-Semitism, including an acceptance of some forms of the curtailment of religious equality, which had once been acclaimed as a very significant achievement of nineteenth-century Protestant liberalism. While maintaining

Hungarian Studies 18/2 (2004)
0236-6568/2004/$20.00

their sympathy for the Horthy regime till the very last, the leaders of the churches opposed the persecution and deportation of Hungarian Jews, which began escalating after March 1944 and the Nazi occupation of Hungary.

The paper will discuss some of the possible contexts of the Reformed Church's public statements concerning the Holocaust after 1945, focusing mainly on the writings and sermons of the leading figure of the Reformed Church Bishop László Ravasz (1882–1975).

Although there is a sizeable international literature on the Christian pronouncements on the Holocaust there has been little written so far about the relationship between Christian churches and the Hungarian Holocaust, apart from a growing amount of journalistic or pamphleatry output. Those few scholarly works on the subject either focus on the question of responsibility and the lack of confrontation with a painful past of Christian anti-Semitism or try to justify the actions and declarations of the Christian churches in a more or less apologetic way. Arguably both types of scholarship can mobilize strong moral consciousness, yet in this phase of the research one might examine the possibility of a limited exegesis, which will not claim to find a *via media* among the many different claims of truth and will leave the task of forming a moral, ethical or political judgement to theologians and political scientists. In the following I will try to examine some possible contexts of the Reformed Church's public statements concerning the Holocaust after 1945.

In the first place one may interpret as of primary importance the context which arose from the highly problematic process of the Reformed Church's accommodation with the social and political structures, which came into existence after the watershed date of 1945. The elements of this were: 1. the ambivalent political and intellectual character of the popular democracy, which ultimately turned into the totalitarian communist dictatorship,[1] but especially in the beginning appeared as a promising debut of real, if not unlimited, pluralism; 2. the hardening communist position *vis-à-vis* the churches.

The political and intellectual climate formed by the popular democracy included what in the common parlance of the day was still labeled as the 'Jewish question' after 1945. The highly conflicted political atmosphere produced various reactions to the phenomenon that contemporaries called "neo-anti-Semitism"[2] during 1945–1946, which wavered between suppression, political tactics and on rare occasions open speech. Jews returning from the death-camps and labor service, or liberated from the horrors of the ghetto, had alternatives at their disposal, which neither alleviated the efforts to cope with their tragedy nor did they make the difficult ways of reconciliation easier. The choices of the remnant Jews reflected the former divisions of the prewar Jewish community. Zionism strengthened considerably and introspective religiosity also gained terrain[3] but the most attractive option remained the thorny way of assimilation, despite the "fateless-

ness" experienced during the Holocaust, and all the more so since the more religious orthodox and the younger generation of Zionists would leave for Israel in the coming years. A new and increasingly appealing form of assimilation was offered by communism, which augured an era of universal brotherhood, a new and powerful identity based on communist messianism,[4] and offered at the same time a quiet practical inducement of opportunities and positions in those spheres of the state and political power from which Jews had previously been excluded. This has produced yet a new type of vicious cycle, since communism in practice meant entry into the service of Stalinism, and it consequently risked separation from the greater part of Hungarian society. Furthermore, the positions in the political police and summary courts exposed the Jews as a whole to the accusation of a "Jewish revenge".[5] In any event, for most who assumed a communist identity out of sincere commitment this choice proved to be an absolute impasse in the long run as long as it required the suppression of Jewish identity and forced silence instead of a genuine discussion about the trauma of the Holocaust and the roads leading to it. The Marxist approach, which linked anti-Semitism to high-finance and bourgeois capitalism, offered solution to the Jewish drama in an unconditional identification with the cause of socialism. This view became by 1949 the only available interpretation of the Holocaust and placed other discourses under taboo. Even a new vocabulary had been fashioned. Instead of the persecution of the Jews one needed to speak about the victims of fascism in general, since the antagonism of fascism and democracy was the only way to interpret history.

Another problem came from the fact that for a substantial proportion of Hungarian society 1945 had hardly been an opportunity for a new start but constituted a new catastrophe and a brutal colonization. According to this view, the frustrated anger and anxious expectations of the interwar period and its main feature consisting primarily of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon and the restoration of the country's lost territorial integrity continued to be seen as heroic attempts to regenerate a pillaged and humiliated nation despite the ban and stigma against such beliefs after 1945. This irreflexive position coupled with the abuses of the postwar purges disposed many to identify communism simply with Jewish dominance and the growing terror with Jewish vengeance. Nor has the division within the non-communist left been redressed. Urbanist writers bluntly stated that the folkish writers disqualified themselves as a block from Hungarian intellectual life because of their anti-Semitic rhetoric before the war. In the absence of operating forums of a free debate the folkish writers could retain some of their position only because of the protection of the Communist Party.[6] István Bibó's famous work on the Jewish question after 1944 was the most nuanced effort to deal with the problem of anti-Semitism *and* Jewish Hungarian coexistence.[7] Although some critics say that he over politicized his concepts on the basis of his feeling of guilt, which could not prevent the distortion of his sense of reality. Bibó's insights are still rele-

vant for many scholars of anti-Semitism studies.[8] In any case the essay in the last issue of the periodical *Válasz* came too late in 1948 to introduce a serious debate on the topic.

How have the various statements made by the Reformed Church been influenced or distorted by fear, self-justification, and internal power struggle stemming from the uneasy situation of the church after 1945?

The Christian churches, although exposed to increasing harassment and severe curtailment of their associative activities, were able to preserve a considerable part of their autonomy up to 1948. It seems plausible to argue that the churches remained the most unregimented parts of a shrinking civil society until the complete communist take over.[9] The Protestant churches unlike the wealthy Catholic Church did not have much to lose with the land reform. The most influential Communist party-leader Mátyás Rákosi several times spoke positively of the much exaggerated but highly symbolic connection between opposition minded Protestantism and the progressive tradition of freedom fighting as opposed to the clerical reaction of the Catholic Church, which was supposed to always lend its support to feudal repression. Of course Rákosi never lost an opportunity to complain about the treacherous turn of the contemporary Protestantism, which had embraced the feudal-capitalist reaction of István Tisza and Miklós Horthy. Nevertheless some of the most respected leaders of the Reformed Church, who had had strong personal ties and often expressed sympathies with the previous interwar establishment, hoped to reinvigourate the century old liberal dream of a "free church in a free state." At the same time they did penance and urged for spiritual renewal and for a new reformation. The social history of the religious life of the post-1945 era is largely unchartered territory but these impulses found fertile ground since there were clear signs that the movements of spiritual renewal of the post-1920 period had emerged with rejuvenated force forming a valuable reservoir for the faithful against forced secularization up until the 1960s. One aspect of these movements was constituted by those numerous public statements, sermons and declarations that stressed the church's own responsibility as the accredited dispenser of Christ's teaching in this world for what it failed to do for the prevention of the frightful cruelties and gruesome mass-murders:

> In the name of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church the Synodal Council by deeply humiliating herself confesses her sins with which she has offended the Divine Majesty of God. She has sinned by not fulfilling her office of Prophecy. She has failed to prevent the people and the superiors from choosing paths opposing the Laws of God, and she had not stood with full courage for the Persecuted.[10]

But the program of self-examination and renewal suffered from the beginning from some serious encumbrances. These declarations, regardless of what motivated them, could not avoid being interpreted through the ever changing and polarizing definitions of democracy and fascism. This context of growing uncertainty along with the problem of the continuity of the leadership, albeit based on the support of the overwhelming majority of church members, created an atmosphere where penance could at best be seen as an awkward attempt to change sides.[11]

Hence the illusions invested in the hope of a new foundation for church-state relations rapidly came to naught. Abuses of power, arbitrary interments, show trials – including those of many Protestant leaders – the narrowing scope of political freedom, and the more and more aggressive Communist behavior awakened them to the harsh reality of a totalitarian reality. In 1946 a group of radical pastors held a conference in Nyíregyháza and formed a Free Council which issued a programatic declaration, which among other things apologized to the decimated Jewish community in much the same language as the earlier ones. In itself this formed another station of the self-examination process – that was István Bibó's interpretation; but since its main motivation was to challenge the authority of all elected officials of the church on the basis of their conservatism the reply was a highly irritatable refusal from the larger part of the Protestant public.[12] The split in the ranks was avoided, and the Free Council disintegrated but the reconciliation process suffered a mortal blow in the eyes of everyone. In 1949 when all of the leading positions in the Reformed Church were taken over by the authors of the Free Council, thanks to the intervention of the Communist Party, the Presidium of the Synod of the Reformed Church approved the dismantling of the International Hebrew-Christian Association, which was an organ of the Jewish Christian dialogue, and argued that the new regime of democracy "completed as fully as possible the process of reparation of the persecuted…"[13]

The reactions of the Protestant public and the attitude of mutual distrust and irritation had an important background, which was provided by the multifaceted religious development of the interwar era and the Reformed Church's relationship to the Horthy-regime. It is a commonplace that this relationship was extremely cordial. The state supported the church by every means, and the church provided loyalty and a friendly attitude. The consensus was based on the mutual condemnation of the 1918–1919 revolutions and on the need for protection of the traditional social order. But this alone is not sufficient to explain the regeneration the churches experienced after 1920. The strengthening of missionary activity and an enthusiastic embrace of new forms of propagation and the reinforcement of religious observance were all signs of a Hungarian version of a "second confessionalization,"[14] which repudiated the old fashioned nineteenth-century Protestant liberal synthesis, which had combined the concepts of nation and progress. At the

same time it was not insensitive to the need for a comprehensive social reform, which nevertheless remained a second priority behind the desire for a restoration of the borders of historical Hungary.[15] The Catholic-Protestant relationship also remained far from unambiguous. But behind the spectacular instances of conflict and sometimes comical rivalry over preeminence a new commencement was at work. An ecumenical rapprochement initiated by some of the most eminent Catholic and Protestant theologians emerged as part of a need for unity against the most highly feared bolshevism and against the new paganism represented by Nazism.[16] The ecumenism on behalf of Protestantism was invoked on the basis of a conservative neo-Kantian axiology, which recognized a plurality of values in the face of a highly conflicting and competitive past.[17] This resulted a new assessment of the Reformation. It is true that all these efforts had not prevented a failure in 1944 to make a common stand against the deportations; nevertheless even though one can argue in retrospect that the very act of the attempt by the Reformed Church based on the Christian solidarity was a sign of new times. After 1945 Cardinal Mindszenty's intransigence had a large impact and created a very strong mobilizing force that dominated the attitude of the religious toward the new regime. Many Protestants regarded Mindszenty as an authentic figure of the resistance of a humiliated nation, even though some, who were otherwise sympathetic to his motivation, feared that a new 'Counter Reformation' was at hand.[18]

The Catholic Church had a different approach toward the problem of postwar anti-Semitism. It recognized anti-Semitism as a real problem and as destructive force but thought herself immune to its chimera, both in the past and the present. Characteristic is Bishop Endre Hamvas' declaration that "those who committed the crimes were not Christians; but the Jews had been working against the Christians for fifty years."[19] And Hamvas was among the few who had taken real measures for saving the lives of the persecuted during the Holocaust. All in all the Catholic Church, the most dynamic force against the growing Communist power and the most widely respected social institution of Hungary, had not attempted to face the resurgence of anti-Semitism nor did the church feel the necessity of self-examination in regard to the Christian aspects of the anti-Semitic legacy. (Albeit this refusal occurred against a backdrop of a triumphalist attitude and an awareness that the evaluation of all social and political problems, anti-Semitism being no exception, had been narrowed down to the fascist/democratic dichotomy set up by the Communist Party.)[20]

The most complex and least analyzed aspect of the issue under consideration is the theological background of the Jewish-Protestant relationship. The Reformed Church had always cultivated the tradition of persecution and the righteousness of the suppressed minority as an essential part of its identity, and as late as the nineteenth century had drawn parallels between the tribulations of Israel and the sufferings of the Protestants. This idea was also a constituent part of the movement

for emancipation which was enthusiastically supported by nineteenth-century Protestant liberalism.

After 1920 this liberalism faded away and gave place to a neo-orthodox return to the Reformers theology. Central to this new movement was the idea of the Mission through the institutionalization of revivalist tendencies. This lent a new momentum for the mission to the Jews, which for obvious theological reasons was considered as a very special and highly important issue. The tension between missionary conscience and the program of tolerance can amply be illustrated by numerous post-1945 statements, which all agreed that the most serious failure of the Protestants had been their lukewarm efforts to convert the Jews. "Evangelical Churches must admit that, misled by a false sense of tolerance, they failed to let the light of Evangelical Christianity make its force felt in the community of Jews."[21] Against objections raised by Jewish observers Bereczky insisted that giving up the missionary effort would mean "to cast the Jews out of the universal human solidarity."[22]

Yet the impact of post-1920s political anti-Semitism was even more serious. Protestant bishops endorsed by their vote both the first and the second Anti-Jewish law. True they cast their ballot for the first out of conviction and for the second out of political constraint. Furthermore, the newer and more and more racial versions of the anti-Jewish legislation encountered the bitter disapproval of the Christian churches because they concerned a substantial number of their own Christian faithful.

Most critics say that the churches faced a "status confessionis" during the deportations and the Holocaust of 1944, and their firmness and moral courage was far less than could be expected.[23] Their attitude displayed hardly more than a passive resistance, and most importantly churches recoiled from breaking with the state, which had institutionalized the persecution. The steps that they had made were far more motivated by the fear of a postwar calling to account, than by any genuine compassion and sense of responsibility. *Yet* it had been László Ravasz, who despite his well-known anti-Judaism had deployed the most energy to stop the persecutions.[24] Ravasz, an unquestionable authority far beyond the Protestant churches, was the same leader who formulated most of the postwar public statements of the church on these matters. In the remaining part of my paper I will try to explore some aspects of the paradox of this position. In doing so I will reject all explanations that attribute primarily to political reasons either his endorsement of the anti-Jewish legislation or the statements he made after 1945.[25]

There is a revealing story in Ravasz's *Memoirs*. When he was a schoolboy, he had mocked one of his classmates, a poor Jewish boy, who then complained about the insult to Ravasz' father, the schoolmaster. His father then forbade Ravasz to eat with the family until he had apologized publicly the Jewish boy. In order to facilitate the apology Ravasz' father speaks to him in detail about the misery and

struggles of the offended boy.[26] The story reveals much about the late 1880s, when Hungarian liberalism victoriously overcame the anti-Semitism that had been revived by the Tiszaeszlár blood libel case. I tend to see this story not as another expression of the all too well-known paternalistic attitude of nineteenth-century gentry liberalism but rather as a telling example of the more puritan pathos of Transylvanian liberalism. Ravasz' spiritual journey departed from the spirit of this emancipatory liberalism via a theologically justified ethnic nationalism, which eventually came to oppose racist persecution and ended in a predestination minded mortification and penance. This was a journey that he never pretended to see as an uninterrupted or unequivocal human achievement.

Until approximately 1910 Ravasz professed the values of classical liberalism, showed great enthusiasm for the poetry of Endre Ady, and became a freemason. Nevertheless, beginning with the early 1910s he went through a double process of conversion. His religiosity deepened and he became a conservative thinker. One has to admit that even in Ravasz's narrative the two processes were not necessarily intimately linked. But, as he put it in 1960, irrespective of the progressive tradition of Protestant liberalism he had felt a fatal either/or dilemma and the undermining of all traditional values in the wake of a radical attack on religion and the historical past.[27] This pushed him to an anxious awareness of the menace, and as a way out he turned to a reformulation of the religious foundations of Protestantism rooted in Calvin's doctrine of election and predestination. This shift reminds me to the functional explanation of the doctrine of predestination by the late Heiko A. Oberman.[28] Oberman recognized the attractiveness of this grim vision of the world in the existential situation of the defeated. Predestination is the core teaching of the Reformation of the Refugees. The dynamics of an imminent destruction found a tremendous assurance in the absolutness of the divine sovereignty. As might be expected this doctrine concedes almost nothing to human endeavors and consequently deprives the concept of progress of whatever positive value it could hold. On the other hand it fosters a highly dichotomous and stereotyping anthropology of history and social interactions.

In my opinion this view influenced a great deal of Ravasz' statements on the so called Jewish question, which nonetheless were not exempt from fluctuations. In 1917 he still held the view that it was a social and pedagogical problem and there was no other solution to be offered to the Jews but a way of assimilation to the ideals of the Hungarian soul. Whereas he spotted a major obstacle of the assimilation process in the attitude and the poor spiritual state of the Hungarians, yet he demanded from the Jews an unconditional identification with the ideals so badly exhibited by the Hungarians.[29]

In the interwar period he further advanced the theological aspects of the spiritual mission at the expense of the cultural ones but at the same time he deplored the expanding number of conversions, which were only for the sake of assimila-

tion, and stressed that not everyone was given the grace of election even within the church. But election can also work outside the visible Church. In that respect he acknowledged Zionism as an alternative but he had no other message for the secularized Jews than to embrace the Christian ethics of the majority. As to the problem of anti-Semitism, he was aware of the injustice of a phenomenon that is by its very constitution bad tempered but still diagnosed the core of anti-Semitism in the "otherness" of the Jewish spirit. The proposed solution of Ravasz was a simultaneous return of the Jews to the penitential traditions of the Prophets of the Old Testament and a sincere and comprehensive metanoia of the prodigious Christians.[30] Nevertheless his speech in the Upper House during the deliberation of the draft of the second anti-Jewish law can be regarded as remarkably inconsistent even with his own criteria: "…the people of the Saint of Saints abandoned the idea of sanctity" thus the "Jews are other than the Hungarians in fate, in history, and in spirituality." Thus, the breach of the principle of equality on religious grounds that he approved by his own vote was an unjustified departure of the middle ground of the spiritual encounter he had envisaged. The contradictions of this view are obvious especially in the light of another writing from the same period "The Spirit of National Unity", where he conspicously omitted any allusion to the Jewish problem while enumerating the long list of the divisions within Hungarian society.[31]

What remained and what changed in Ravasz's attitude after 1944? This is particularly interesting to examine because between 1945 and 1948 all official utterances regarding this issue were initiated or worded by him. According to Ravasz, it was 'fatal' to pass the first anti-Jewish law and to abandon the principle of religious equality and the principle of democracy.[32] This is the reason why he emphasized the importance of doing penance. He recognized the irrationalizing feature of the ideology of the extreme right and acclaimed that it was fallacious for the church to be contented with the mere theoretical rejection of a national socialism instead of taking action.[33] Nonetheless Ravasz viewed history and his personal contribution to it as a fate where human wisdom was in combat with dubious options for action. In 1946 at the assembly of the National Pastoral Association of the Reformed Church (ORLE) he could not deny that the aim of revisionist politics was rightly the alpha and the omega of Hungarian history in the interwar period and that there was no way out.[34] In this respect he maintained that his own faults were tragic mistakes that he compared to the ones committed by the protagonists of Greek tragedies. Ravasz held on to his former opinion that the Jewish question was an existing problem with only eschatological solution. The conflict resulted from the sinful human nature of both of the Jews and Gentiles alike and peace will be restored only on the Day of Judgement, when Israel the eldest-born returns to Christ. Up to then the only way of assimilation for the secularized Jew would be to adopt Christian ethics. In 1960 Ravasz recollected that the period after 1945 had offered a chance for the Hungarian soul to escape from anti-Semitism,

an opportunity, however, that was missed.[35] In his last sermon in 1968 Ravasz commented the *Nostra aetate* of the Second Vatican Council, which declared that it was not the Jews who killed Jesus. "Of course not" he added. He was killed by man, the all-time, sinful man.[36]

In summation one tentative conclusion can be formulated. The problem was not so much the absence of trying to address the issue of the tragedy of the Holocaust. Rather the failure came about through the insurmountable difficulties of creating and maintaining a trustful social environment amidst the more and more aggressive spread of sovietization and the irresolvable problems of accommodation. Thus, the process of reconciliation ultimately came to be blocked in the period immediately after 1945.

Bibliography

Apor, 1998 = Apor, Péter: "A népi demokrácia építése: Kunmadaras, 1946" [The construction of the people's democracy: Kunmadaras, 1946]. *Századok* (1998): 601–632.

Beke, 1996 = Beke, Margit, ed.: *A magyar katolikus püspökkari tanácskozások története és jegyzőkönyvei 1945–1948 között* [The history and records of the Hungarian Bishops' Conference 1945–1948]. Köln–Budapest: Argumentum, 1996.

Bereczky, 1945 = Bereczky, Albert: *Hungarian Protestantism and the Persecution of Jews.* Budapest: Sylvester, [1945].

Bereczky, 1947 = Radisics, Elemér: *Judaizmus, antiszemitizmus, cionizmus. Bereczky Albert és Herskovits Fábián hozzászólásával* [Judaism, anti-Semitism, Zionism. With a commentary of Rabbi Fabian Herskovits and Pastor and State Secretary Albert Bereczky]. Budapest: Officina, 1947.

Bibó, 1984 = Bibó, István: "Zsidókérdés Magyarországon 1945 után" [The Jewish Question in Hungary after 1945]. In *Zsidóság, asszimiláció, antiszemitizmus* [Jewry, assimilation, anti-Semitism], ed. Péter Hanák. Budapest: Gondolat, 1984, 135–294.

Blaschke, 2000 = Blaschke, Olaf: "Das 19. Jahrhundert: ein Zweites Konfessionellles Zeitalter?" *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (2000): 38–75.

Bolyki–Ladányi, 1987 Bolyki, János and Sándor Ladányi: "A református egyház" [The Reformed Church]. In *A magyar protestantizmus 1918–1948* [Hungarian Protestantism, 1918–1948], ed. L. Ferenc Lendai. Budapest, Kossuth, 1987, 25–118.

Congdon, 2001 = Congdon, Lee: *Seeing Red: Hungarian Intellectuals in Exile and the Challange of Communism.* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001.

Csorba, 1990 = Csorba, László: "Izraelita felekezeti élet Magyarországon a vészkorszaktól a nyolcvanas évekig" [Jewish religious life in Hungary from the Holocaust to the 1980s] In *Hét évtized a hazai zsidóság életében,* I–II [Seven decades in the life of the Hungarian Jewish community], I–II, ed. L. Ferenc Lendvai, Anikó Sohár, and Pál Horváth. Budapest: The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1990, 61–190.

Furet, 1999 = Furet, Francois: *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999 [1995].

Fürj, 1998 = Fürj, Zoltán: "Ravasz László az egyházkormányzó 1945–1948" [László Ravasz as church leader, 1945–1948]. *Confessio* (1998/2): 25–32.

Gergely, 1997 = Gergely, Jenő: "Egyházak és népi mozgalom" [Churches and popular/folkish movements]. In *A népi mozgalom és a magyar társadalom* [The populist/folkish movement and Hungarian society], ed. Levente Sípos and Pál Péter Tóth. Budapest: Napvilág, 1997, 383–400.

Giczi, 1999 = Giczi, Zsolt: "Egy eszmecsere és előzményei. Vélemények a katolikus-protestáns egység megvalósításának lehetőségeiről a *Magyar Szemle* és a *Protestáns Szemle* 1937–1938-as évfolyamában" [A dialogue and its precedents. A survey on the possibility of the realisation of a unity between Catholicism and Protestantism in the 1937–1938 volumes of the *Hungarian Review* and *Protestant Review*] *Acta Historica (Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae).* Tomes VIII. Szeged, 1999. 65–84.

Gombos, 1960 = Gombos, Gyula: *Szűk esztendők. A magyar kálvinizmus válsága* [The years of famine. The crisis of the Hungarian Calvinism]. Washington, D.C.: Occidental Press, 1960.

Gyurgyák, 2001 = Gyurgyák, János: *A zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Jewish question in Hungary]. Budapest: Osiris, 2001.

Horváth, 1946 = Horváth, Márton: "Zsidóság és asszimiláció" [Assimilation and Jewry]. *Társadalmi Szemle* (1946).

Huszár, 1984 = Huszár, Tibor: *Beszélgetések* [Conversations]. Budapest: Magvető, 1983.

Kiss, 2003a = Kiss, Réka: Ravasz László püspöki működése [László Ravasz as Bishop] *Protestáns Szemle* [Protestant Review] 2003/1, 12–44.

Kiss, 2003b = Kiss, Réka: "A diktatúra szorításában – Ravasz László egyházpolitikai útkeresése a második világháborút követő esztendőkben (1945–1948)" [In the grasp of the dictatorship. László Ravasz' search for a viable ecclesiastical policy in the postwar years 1945–1948]. *Századvég* (2003/3): 39–68.

Kósa, 2000 = Kósa, László, ed.: *A Cultural History of Hungary*, 1–2. Budapest: Corvina–Osiris, 2000.

Ladányi, 1994 = Ladányi, Sándor: "Vázlatos történeti áttekintés a magyarországi református egyház közelebbi múltjáról" [An historical outline of the recent history of the Hungarian Reformed Church]. *Valóság* (1994/4): 3–30.

Lugosi, 2001 = Lugosi, András: "A parasztéletforma válságától a demokrácia válságáig. Bibó István negyvenes évekbeli publicisztikájának történeti hátteréről" [From the crisis of the peasantry to the crisis of Hungarian democracy. The historical background of István Bibó's polemics of the 1940s]. In *Megtalálni a szabadság rendjét*. Tanulmányok Bibó István életművéről [To find the order of freedom. Studies on the works of István Bibó], ed. Zoltán Iván Dénes. Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2001, 145–169.

Majsai, 1984 = Majsai, Tamás and Mária Schmidt, eds: *Komoly Ottó naplója. 1944* [The diary of Ottó Komoly, President of the Hungarian Zionist Alliance] In *A Ráday Gyűjtemény Évkönyve* [The Yearbook of the Ráday Collection] III. Budapest, 1984.

Majsai, 1995a = Majsai, Tamás: "Bíborosok és püspökök a zsidómentés barikádharcában" [Cardinals and bishops in the streetfighting for the rescue of the Jews]. *Budapesti Negyed* (1995/2): 169–180.

Majsai 1995b = Majsai, Tamás: "A magyar református egyház és a Holocaust. A nyilvános tiltakozás története" [The Hungarian Reformed Church and the Holocaust. The history of the public protest]. *Világosság* (1995/5): 50–80.

Molnár, 1946 = Molnár, Erik: *Zsidókérdés Magyarországon* [The Jewish question in Hungary]. Budapest: Szikra, 1946.

Novák, 2000 = Novák, Attila: *Átmenetben. A cionista mozgalom négy évtizede Magyarországon* [In transition. Four decades of Hungarian Zionism]. Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2000.

Németh, 1989 = Németh, László: "A magyar élet antinómiái (A *Három nemzedék* új kiadásához)" [The antinomies of Hungarian life: on the republication of *Three Generations*]. *Sorskérdések* (1989): 124–125.

Oberman, 2003 = Oberman, Heiko A.: *The two reformations. The journey from the last days to the New World.* New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2003.
Pelle, 1995 = Pelle, János: *Az utolsó vérvádak* [The last blood libels]. Budapest, 1995.
Rainer, 1998 = Rainer, János M.: A magyarországi fordulat és a szovjet politika 1944–1948 [The change in Hungary and Soviet policy 1944–1948]. In *A fordulat évei. Politika, képzőművészet, építészet, 1947–1949* [The years of the turning point. Politics, fine arts, architecture]. Budapest: 1956 Institute, 1998, 17–45.
Ravasz, 1917 = Ravasz, László: "A *Huszadik Század* körkérdése a zsidókérdésről. Ravasz László válasza" [A survey of the periodical *Twentieth Century*. The reply of László Ravasz]. (Budapest, 1917), 126–129.
Ravasz, 1938 = Ravasz, László: *Legyen világosság* [Let there be light], I–III. Budapest: Franklin, 1938.
Ravasz, 1988 = Bárczay, Gyula, ed.: *Ravasz László válogatott írások 1945–1968* [László Ravasz's Selected papers, 1945–1968]. Bern: EPMSZ, 1988.
Ravasz, 1992 = Ravasz, László: *Emlékezéseim* [Memoirs]. Budapest: The Press Department of the Office of the Synode of the Hungarian Reformed Church, 1992.
Révész, 1990 = Révész, Imre: *Vallomások. Teológiai önéletrajz és válogatott kiadatlan kéziratok 1944–1949* [Confessions. Teologiacal autobiography and other unpublished papers]. Budapest: The Press Department of the Office of the Synode of the Hungarian Reformed Church, 1990.
Standeisky, 1992 = Standeisky, Éva: "Antiszemita megmozdulások Magyarországon a koalíciós időszakban" [Antisemitic disturbances in Hungary between 1945–1947]. *Századok* (1992/2): 284–308.
Szabó, 2001 = Szabó, Imre, ed.: *Ég, de meg nem emésztetik. Szabó Imre a Budapesti Református Egyházmegye első esperese, Naplók, 1914–1954* ["It burned with fire but was not consumed". The diaries of Pastor Imre Szabó, First Dean of the Reformed Diocese of Budapest]. Budapest: The Reformed Parish of Budahegyvidék, 2001.
Szakács–Zinner, 1997 = Szakács, Sándor and Zinner, Tibor. *A háború megváltozott természete: adatok, tények és összefüggések: 1944–1948* [The "changed nature" of war: data, facts, connections]. Budapest: Genius Gold Rt., Batthyány Társaság, 1997.
Szenes, 1986 = Szenes, Sándor. *Befejezetlen múlt. Keresztények és zsidók, sorsok* [Unfinished past: Christians and Jews, destinies]. Budapest: published by the author, 1986.
Tóth, 2001 = Tóth, László. "Bibó István és Ravasz László szellemi viszonya" [The intellectual relationship of István Bibó and Ravasz László] In *Megtalálni a szabadság rendjét. Tanulmányok Bibó István életművéről* [To find the order of Freedom. Studies on István Bibó], ed. Zoltán Iván Dénes. Budapest, Új Mandátum, 2001, 265–290.
Ungváry, 2000 = Ungváry, Krisztián. "Gyötrő illúziók. Bibó és 1945 eseményei [Tormenting illusions: István Bibó and the events of 1945]. *Beszélő* (January 2000): 40–48.
Varga, 1992 = Varga, László. "'Zsidókérdés' 1945–1956" ["Jewish question" 1945–1956] *Világosság* (1992/1): 62–67.

Notes

1 See Rainer, 1998, 17–45, Szakács–Zinner, 1997.
2 Standeisky, 1992, 284–308, and Pelle, 1995 stress the surviving anti-Semitism as being "the braise under the ashes"; while Apor, 1998, 602–603 reveals the significant shifts in the construction of anti-Semitism according to the logic of the new communist totalitarianism.
3 Csorba, 1990, 61–190; Novák, 2000.
4 Furet, 1999, Congdon, 2001.

5 Varga, 1992, 62–67.
6 Gyurgyák, 2001, 593.
7 Bibó, 1984 [1948], 135–290.
8 Ungváry, 2000, 48. Lugosi, 2001, 165 denies it.
9 Gombos, 1960, 16.
10 "A magyar református egyház zsinati tanácsa a zsinat nevében mélyen megalázkodva megvallja bűnét, amellyel Isten fölségét megsértette. Megsértette azzal, hogy a tőle vett prófétai tisztet nem teljesítette. Elmulasztotta inteni a népet és a felsőséget, amikor mindkettő Isten törvényeivel ellenkező útra tért, s nem állt ki egészen bátran az ártatlanul üldözöttek mellett." The May 9, 1946 Resolution of the Hungarian Reformed Church as quoted by Bolyki–Ladányi, 1987, 94–96, Ladányi, 1994, 3–4. This resolution along with others were almost always written by László Ravasz.
11 See the opposing interpretation of József Éliás as quoted by Szenes, 1986, 85 and Szabó, 2001, 85, 137.
12 See Kiss, 2003b on Free Council and its connection with Security Services.
13 Letter of Councellor Pálfy to Bishop Albert Bereczky on October 5, 1949 as quoted by Ladányi, 1994, 29.
14 Blaschke, 1999, 38–75.
15 Kósa, 2000, 203–210.
16 Giczi, 1999, 65–84.
17 Ravasz, 1938, I, 505–507.
18 Szabó Imre, 2001, 423–424.
19 Beke, 1996, 315 and 290–291.
20 Apor, 1998, 631–632.
21 Bereczky, 1945, 5.
22 Bereczky, 1947, 61; see also Révész, 1990 [1946], 90; Szenes, 1986, 89–90.
23 Bibó, 1984, [1948] 155–156 and Majsai, 1984, 239.
24 Majsai, 1995a, Majsai 1995b.
25 Fürj, 1998, 25–35, Tóth, 2001, 282–285.
26 Ravasz, 1992, 15–16.
27 *Ibid,* 122–123.
28 Oberman, 2003.
29 Ravasz, 1917, 128–129
30 Ravasz, 1938, III, 352.
31 Ravasz, 1938, III, 256–268.
32 Ravasz, 1988, 357.
33 See Ravasz' article in the journal *Haladás* [Progress] (December 22, 1945) entitled "Védőbeszéd és vádirat" [Plea and indictment] as quoted by Kiss, 2003a.
34 Ravasz, 1988, 73–75.
35 Ravasz, 1988, 362.
36 Ravasz, 1988, 348.