

ABSTRACT

Theory

JENEY, Éva: The Greatness of Minority: Paul Ricœur, Philosopher and Protestant

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Before 1789, the French Protestant minority was subject to continuous and open persecution resulting in an unceasing decrease in numbers. Today, outnumbered by Catholics and Muslims and preceding the adherents of Judaism, Protestants – including Calvinists and Lutherans – are the third largest religious group in France. The history of French Protestantism, however, is not to be considered a story of decline: French Protestants played a significant role in French history, and continue to play an important role today. Paul Ricœur, a philosopher who left behind a vast and extremely diverse oeuvre, was an outstanding, globally influential representative of this historical minority. As a devout Christian and a philosopher, he was actively involved in Protestant social movements as an associate of the most prominent thinkers including Brother Roger, Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann and others. His library was bequeathed to the French Protestant Theological Institute. He was recurrently awarded the epithets ‘Protestant philosopher’ or ‘Christian philosopher’ which he refused to accept saying, ‘I am a Christian and a philosopher.’ This paper is meant to shed light upon the reason why he did so.

SZÁSZ, László: András Sütő’s *Calvin* and Its Reception by the Church 15

The two areas on which the paper focuses have so far been rather ignored by researchers of the prominent Transylvanian author’s work. Literary critics have given an extremely welcoming reception to Sütő’s plays with themes from the history of religion, but little is known about their reception by the church. His most controversial work, the play titled *Csillag a máglyán* (Star Burned at the Stake) is a representation at a high literary quality of the theoretical conflict between Calvin and Servetus. On the one hand, the paper examines the way the church reacted, in the wake of the play’s stage production, to the literary treatment of the subject. For obvious reasons, no criticism appeared in the church press in Romania (although it was hotly debated in the informal zone); in Hungary, the play met with chiefly hostile reception from representatives of the Reformed Church. On the other hand, relying partly on a toolkit of psychological biography, the focus is on unearthing

Sütő's psychological motives that led him – a writer disappointed with Communist ideology – to produce a highly nuanced analysis of the compromises that Calvin was compelled to accept due to his role. In addition to highlighting certain experiences Sütő had as a child and a high school student, the paper provides a list of the exact *loci* of the play's literary sources.

VARGA, Attila: The Influence of John Calvin's Ideas and Work as Church Organiser on Constitutional Law

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The significance and far-reaching impact of John Calvin's work as reformer, theorist, theologian, and church organiser is well known. Not only was he a reformer and originator of a new denomination, his work and ideas have for centuries exerted a great influence on what is today called capitalist Western civilisation and culture. The paper is an attempt to describe the impact Calvin had on the development of the theory of the state and constitutional law. The main branches of these include religious freedom and, indirectly, human rights, direct and representative democracy, the concept of sovereignty, the rule of law and the principle of the separation of powers, and the idea of self-government. Studying, researching, and interpreting Calvin's work may therefore help not only to increase our knowledge of the past, but also to find solutions to problems of the present.

Reformed Personalities in a Minority Situation

FILEP, Tamás Gusztáv: "God goes before us."

Additives Péter Mihály Bishop's portrait

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The career and work of leaders of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Czechoslovakia is still unexplored. This paper is the first attempt to sketch a portrait of Mihály Péter, bishop of the Cistibiscan Church District between 1929–1932. In the Hungarian-language opposition papers of the 1920s he kept raising the issue of serious problems faced by his church and her members. He was also the one to know the most about Reformed church members of Slovak nationality who, in fact, belonged to his Church District. One of the hardest issues the Church faced was the fact that the state refused to recognise synodal legislation unless a separate presbytery was created for Slovak believers. Synodal presbyterian principles, however, required that such a request should be initiated at a lower level, but a large majority of Slovak church members did not support the idea of creating a separate presbytery of their own. Part of the tragedy of Bishop Mihály Péter was that he became a victim of this stalemate.

HATOS, Pál: "Born Socialist?" Churches in the 1918 Aster Revolution: Transylvanian Reformed Church District Chief Clerk László Ravasz's Assessment of the Situation in the Autumn of 1918 61

On October 31, 1918, the historical Hungary collapsed and the 'Aster Revolution' triumphed. It would be hard to imagine a wider gap between interpretations of a historical event than the gap which exists in the case of the first 'Hungarian October.' The events that took place in those days have ever since provided a fundamental myth of betrayal for those on the right. For the left, however, they remain the archetype – and an eternal unfulfilled promise – of a modern democratic Hungary. The multitude of conflicting interpretations is unlikely to ever allow a shared understanding. The possibility of new points of view emerges from the disturbingly diverse narratives of contemporary sources even if the eternal question, 'What really happened?' will never be answered decisively. No thorough analysis has, for instance, taken place of the churches' assessment of the situation and their patterns of action, although assistance from priests and ministers is a prerequisite of any revolution. László Ravasz's assessment of the situation, which appeared in mid-December of 1918 in the theological journal *Út*, published in Cluj, is instructive because it was written in the very short period when the Monarchy was already defunct but the hope was still alive that the Republic of Hungary might keep her nationalities and territorial integrity within the framework of social reconciliation in a democratic order. This however never happened: Ravasz's ideas turned into 'future in the past.' It is, however, still intriguing to read about the hopes entertained in those days – especially if we set aside the dubious gift of hindsight.

MÁK, Ferenc: In the Wolf's Lair. Sándor Ágoston's Path from the Diaspora to the Upper House 81

Sándor Ágoston (Feketics, 8th May 1882 – Feketics, 24th June 1960) was the first Reformed bishop in Yugoslavia as well as a religious writer and newspaper editor. He completed his theological studies in 1904 in Budapest. Serving as pastor in Kórógy between 1904–1921, he took spiritual care of the Bosnian Hungarian diaspora as well. Between 1908 and 1918 he published in and edited *Eszéki Magyar Újság*. He was in close contact with the Julian Association. In 1921 he returned to Feketics where he and his colleagues established the Reformed Christian Church in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, of which he was elected bishop in 1933. In 1923 he founded the Reformed Orphanage, and published each year the Reformed Orphanage Calendar, a uniquely informative document concerning the operations of Ágoston's Church. The paper outlines his career as pastor and bishop, a career inseparable from the fate of Hungarians in Vojvodina.

Reformed Church in a Minority Situation

MAKKAI, Béla: The Reformed Missionary Presbytery in Moldavia and Wallachia in the Era of Dualism 95

Drawing on hitherto unexplored archival and news sources, the paper outlines the history of the establishment and institutionalization of the Hungarian Reformed Church in Old Romania. The first Reformed congregation was established by Hungarian emigrants in Bucharest in 1815. Within a few decades, strong communities formed in other major cities as well. From 1887 these congregations formed into a separate presbytery. All this demanded sacrifice, a lot of missionary work, and a moral stand on the part of pastors, congregations, and the mother country as well. From 1901, Hungary resorted to church networks to continue its activities in support of Hungarian minorities in a xenophobically minded Old Romania. Spanning the one-hundred-year history of one of the most easterly outposts of the Reformation, and certainly the most recent one, the study chronicles successes and failures of the preservation of identity and of self-organization.

TÖMÖSKÖZI, Ferenc: A Brief History of the Self-Organization of the Universal Reformed Church in Slovensko and Subcarpathia Between 1918 and 1923 124

The study presents a little-known but very important series of events in the history of the Universal Reformed Church in Slovensko and Subcarpathia. The period of self-organization began with the organization of independent presbyteries, of church districts, and of the Universal Church. The period was concluded with the Universal Constituent Church Assembly at Levice, a synod to draft the Church's new and independent constitution which was to be never recognised by the state. One of the main issues of the period under scrutiny was the manner of self-government to be adopted by church districts. Another important issue was the matter of special administration in Subcarpathia, a situation affecting the Subcarpathian Church District as well in terms of the constituency's composition and relationship to the Universal Church.

JÁNOSI, Csongor: Romanian Protestant Elite in the Service of the Powers That Be: Espionage, Persuasion and Networking at Meetings of Protestant World Organizations in the 1960s 146

Given its double minority position, the Reformed Church in Romania was treated as a matter of national security throughout the fifties and sixties. As a result of Cold War political division, her international church activities allowed for several years the Reformed Church in Romania not only to survive, but also to play an intermediary role between western Christianity

and Orthodox atheist party-state structures. As evidenced by Romanian and Hungarian State Security files, Church representatives carried out eminently diplomatic functions in the international scene such as representation, observation and discussion, contributing to the enforcement of Romanian church policies in the domestic and international spheres.

LÁNYI, Gábor János: New Frontiers in the Life of Hungarian Reformed Congregations on the West Coast

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The aim of this paper is to present the work in mission congregations established by the Hungarian Reformed Church in America (AMRE) in the last two decades. As a travelling minister, the author himself took part in this work between 2012 and 2015. Following a brief historical introduction, the first part of the study offers an overview of newly established congregations and the peculiar characteristics of missionary work in that context. The second part provides a deeper and more detailed insight into the foundation of congregations via a case study of the Las Vegas congregation.

JAKAB, Bálint Mihály: The First Decades of the Reformation in Órség

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The period discussed in the paper includes the beginnings of the Reformation until the first third of the 17th century; the location is the region called Órvidék where a triple border zone (*gyepű*) was established at the time of the Hungarian Conquest to protect the western frontiers of Hungary. The spread of the Reformation was started by itinerant preachers; local land owning aristocrats, however, played the role of patrons of the Reformation right from the outset. Such patrons included the Nádasdys in Sárvár and its surroundings and the Batthyánys with their estate center in Némétújvár; in Zala County, the Bánffys of Alsólendva and the Széchy family of Felsőlendva; in Muraköz, György Zrínyi, son of Miklós Zrínyi, the hero of Szigetvár. The role of the aristocrats is also important because they were the people who invited the pastors to come and live on their estates and thus supported them. Today, the Reformed Presbytery of Órség is the largest and the smallest Reformed presbytery in Hungary in terms of territory and population, respectively.

On the Research Trail

“I’ve decided to walk into the library and stay there until I have found the answers to questions that people have been contending over since 1989–1990 without really knowing what they’re talking about.”

– Nándor Bárdi in interview with Tamás Gusztáv Filep

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Review**COROI, Livia: Germans in Romania: A Bygone Age
in Transylvanian Romanian Memory**

Cosmin Budeancă: *Imaginea etnicilor germani la românii din Transilvania după 1918. Studiu de caz: județele Hunedoara, Alba, Sibiu. Cercetare de istorie orală*, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016

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NAGY, Barna Krisztina: A Forgotten War

Csernicskó István: *Nyelvpolitika a háborús Ukrajnában*, Autdor-Shark, Ungvár, 2016

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