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The Romanian Peace Movements as Ecumenical Initiatives Reflected in *Református Szemle*²

Abstract.

The Bucharest Conference convened by Iustinian, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, on 23 June 1949 marked the starting point of meetings between the leaders of the Christian and non-Christian faiths in the country, and, according to the higher orders, these conferences took place annually during the communist period that followed, also being known as “peace conferences”. At the first conference, representatives of seven Christian denominations and those of the Jewish and Muslim communities signed a statement expressing their appreciation of religious freedom built on popular democracy and affirmed the equality of the various churches.

In this “local ecumenism” that was prescribed by the state, the interconfessional conferences of the Orthodox and Protestant theology professors, which started in 1964 and alternately took place in Bucharest, Cluj, and Sibiu, proved to be very important.

The topics of discussions at these conferences were theological issues; there was a forced search for aspects linking the two churches, and the guidelines prescribed for the churches by the state apparatus were also introduced.

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² This article was subsidized by the Committee of National Remembrance.

This study analyses the nature of the conference topics, namely the political implications by which “they wanted or had to please the state”. The conference presentations are even more significant as they served as a basis for the annual training of priests and ministers, and the studies were published in the scientific journals of the churches as well.

Keywords: *communist regime, communist dictatorship, church history, peace conferences, interconfessional dialogue.*

Following World War II, a significant political change was brought about in Romania by the dissolution of the Romanian kingdom in 1947 and the establishment of the People’s Republic, the country’s only governing body gradually becoming the Romanian Communist Party between 1946 and 1948. The communist dictatorship meant atheism, repression, confiscations, the era of destruction of monuments and villages. In 1948, the Romanian state unilaterally denounced the concordat with the Vatican.

Along with the establishment of Petru Groza’s rule (6 March 1945), all the denominations in Romania were bound to adapt to a new political and social configuration for which religion did no longer bear the meaning it had had during the previous centuries. As it is revealed by the many documents of the Secret Services (the Securitate), the preservation of the institutional character and the guarantee of a restricted autonomy did not mean the guarantee of the personal integrity of the clergy members, the theologians, and the faithful. The decree listed the accepted denominations.³

The representatives of the atheist-Marxist ideology that came to power in 1948 began to organize the economic and cultural life of the country based on the Soviet model. This also meant that they considered enemies all those who did not follow

³ The Law on the general status of denominations was published on 4 August 1948 (repealed upon the publication of Law No. 489/2006 on Religious Freedom and the General Status of Denominations, acknowledging the existence of 14 denominations: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian-Gregorian, Old Calendarist Christian Church (Lipovan), Reformed (Calvinist), Evangelical-Lutheran of the Augustan Confession, Sinodo-Presbyterian, Unitarian, the Mosaic faith, Muslim, Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pentecostal and Evangelical Christian Church, all having their specific organization and places of worship.

their atheism. The communist regime seriously restricted the freedom of worship, and the era of persecution of the churches began. During the terror-centred regime, fear and distrust made ecumenical connections impossible both for the Orthodox Church and for the Protestant churches.

With the establishment of the “people’s democracy”, the communist regime reproached the church with a series of political, even legionary behaviours with the intention of making it give up its efforts to solve the problems it was facing.

The church was accused of pursuing “legionary policy” through its students of theology, and the law enforcement agencies were tasked with proving it through arrests made during 1948 and later in 1958–1959. The church was accused of having teachers of theology with a “hostile” past and of not being able to continue its work with such elements, arrested in 1950 and then in 1958–1959. By closing down many educational institutions in 1948–1949, the communist authorities tried to radically limit the educational process so that the construction of socialism would not be jeopardized.

For a more rigorous control over part of the Christian believers in Transylvania, the communist regime campaigned for bringing Greek Catholics back to Orthodoxy. The Ukrainian scenario of 1946 was closely followed, the communist state being the artisan of this religious mutation, through a skilful campaign in the press, intimidation, even the use of repression, but especially by speculating on the sensibilities of the Romanian Orthodox Church officials.⁴

In the first stage, the communist regime aimed to drastically restrict the scope of the theological education system.⁵

⁴ As a result of the political measures, there was not even an alternative of compromise for the Greek Catholic Church. Decree no. 358 of 1 December 1948 dissolved the administrative structure as well as all kinds of ecclesiastical or theological training. Cf. VLADIMIRESCU, Mihai-Valentin (2011): *Învățământul teologic în România comunistă, 1948–1989*. In: *Analele Universității de Vest din Timișoara, Seria Științe Filologice* XLII. 34.

⁵ In Cluj/Kolozsvár for the Reformed and Unitarians, in Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár, Iași/Jászvásár, and Bucharest for the Roman –Catholic, and in Blaj/Balázsfalva and Oradea/Nagyvárad for the Greek Catholic. Until 1945, the clergy training functioned as follows: for the Orthodox – six seminaries with a duration of five years (Bucharest, Buzău/Bodza, Mănăstirea Neamț, Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár, Craiova/Krajova, and Caransebeș/Karánsebes) and two Faculties of Theology with a duration of four years in Bucharest and Sibiu/Nagyszeben. Some of the teaching staff of the former Theology in Cluj/Kolozsvár were moved to the Orthodox Theology in Sibiu/Nagyszeben

Along with the intensification of the world ecumenical movement, the regime required the churches and legal denominations to maintain relations with the Romanian churches, in particular the Romanian Orthodox Church, required the establishment of relations of cooperation and mutual respect among religious denominations in the country, to connect and cooperate with Christian churches abroad.⁶

This decision was a political act with the aim of unconditionally subjecting all denominations in Romania to the communist state.

The relations between the churches and the religious communities in Romania were determined by the political and economic situation of the Romanian society in general. Denominations in Romania were forced to focus on promoting a theology concentrated around the concepts of peace and solidarity of unarmed peoples, in accordance with the demagogic ideology of communist regimes. Only in these conditions did the churches allow the ecumenical dialogue, which also made it possible for the theological students and teachers to study abroad.

but without being completely assimilated. The two theologies granted the graduates BAs in theology. Doctoral studies could be pursued only in Bucharest and only later, after 1984, in Sibiu/Nagyszeben as well.

In higher education, the faculties of theology were separated from the universities, and three university-rank institutes of theology were created instead of the former Faculty of Theology in Bucharest and the Theological Academy in Sibiu/Nagyszeben and Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár. Eventually, in 1952, only two institutes were kept in Bucharest and Sibiu/Nagyszeben, the authorities having dissolved the institute in Cluj/Kolozsvár. This decision was ostentatious, also exacerbating the existing interethnic animosities⁵ by the fact that the regime allowed the Protestant Theological Institute of university rank in Cluj/Kolozsvár to carry on its activity as continuation of the long-standing Calvinist theological education, which started off in Alba-Iulia/Gyulafehérvár in 1622, moved to Aiud/Nagyenyed in 1662 and to Cluj/Kolozsvár in 1895, where Reformed ministers were trained who were joined later, starting from 1959, by the Lutheran and the Unitarian theologians. Cf. MORARU, Alexandru (1996): *Învățământul Teologic Universitar din Cluj (1924–1952)*. Cluj-Napoca. 181–182.

⁶ The Romanian Orthodox Church has been active in the World Council of Churches since 1961. It sent delegates to the General Assemblies in New Delhi (1961), Uppsala (1968), and Nairobi (1975), all led by the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Suceava of the time, Iustin Moisescu (former member in the Central Board until 1977), and in Vancouver (1983), led by the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Antonie Plămădeală. Other Romanian Orthodox hierarchs and theologians activated in different boards of the Ecumenical Council of Churches. Patriarchs Justinian and Iustin visited the headquarters of the Council in Geneva (1966–1981).

During the communist dictatorship (1948–1989) in Romania, a state-imposed ecumenism arose, materialized through meetings between religious leaders and interfaith theological conferences among the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant theological institutes with the participation of teachers, hierarchs, and leaders of religious denominations.⁷

Conducting research on the communist period, it can be concluded that the relationship between the churches in Romania between 1948 and 1989 can be divided into two stages: Obviously, it is not possible to draw a sharp chronological line between the two stages. The ecumenism of the first stage is characterized by the peace movement while the second by the “local” Romanian Ecumenism, which was manifest in the Interfaith Theological Conferences focusing on the issues that concerned the international ecumenical bodies on the one hand and on the issue of the unity of the Romanian people by imposing mutual respect on the other hand. Between 1964 and 1987, interfaith conferences were held with the participation of teachers from the theological institutes of university rank in Bucharest and Sibiu/Nagyszében and from the Protestant institutes of Cluj/Kolozsvár. The Roman Catholic Church was represented by observers from the Theology of Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár.

These conferences were initiated, held, and controlled by the communist regime and were not, as such, devoid of political connotations, but they still cannot be underestimated. The interfaith dialogues began in 1964; they included a total of 50 meetings by 1989, addressed 150 issues, and excelled in high-quality theology.⁸ If we were to summarize the objectives of the interfaith conferences according to their topics, they can be divided into three categories:

⁷ MORARU, Alexandru (2006): *Biserica Ortodoxă Română între anii 1885–2000. Dialog teologic și ecumenic*. Vol. III. Bucharest, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. 342–351; PĂTULEANU, Constantin (2000): *Die Begegnung der rumänischen Orthodxie mit dem Protestantismus (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert), unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des bilateralen theologischen Dialogs zwischen der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland und der Rumänischen Orthodoxen Kirche (1979–1998)*. Hamburg, Verlag Kovac. 180–276.

⁸ Some conference topics: *The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Unity in the Cosmic Christ in Universal History*. Bucharest, 27 March 1964;⁸ *The Covenant of Peace and Life*. Cluj/Kolozsvár, 30 May 1964; *God’s Reconciling Work Today among the People*. Cluj, 9 June 1965; *The Active Meaning of Christian Hope*. Cluj/Kolozsvár, 9 May 1969; *Jesus Christ as Relief and Unity. The Theological Basis of Human Rights. Ecumenism and Proselytism*. Sibiu/Nagyszében, 5 November 1974; *Theology and Witnessing. The Church in the World of Technology*. Bucharest, 2 April 1974.

1. Familiarization and common growth on the path to a visible Christian unity.
2. Preparing the topics for the meetings of the Conference of European Churches (KEK) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).
3. Professing peace by creating good relations between peoples and nations by addressing issues related to human rights, freedom, and justice.

This study aims to present the first stage in which the mission was to “preserve” peace. The periodical *Református Szemle* (hereinafter also as: *RSz*) dealt with and covered the events that the Transylvanian Reformed Church undertook for preserving peace and recorded the ecumenical activities and manifestations whenever it was possible.

If we look at the decades-long material in the journal, we can see that there was no issue that did not address this topic to some extent: it covered the meetings and decisions of church leaders, ethical or biblical theological approaches to peace. At the level of reports, it also presented the meetings of church leaders, the common positions of theological teachers, and, last but not least, church-level interfaith events concerning the public church.⁹ From the news of the congregations, a bright and constructive picture could be drawn, which would “reveal to our eyes the so many congregational and public church manifestations pointing to the Holy Church”, concluded István Tókécs in his short review published in *Szemle*.¹⁰

The ecumenical material of the *Szemle* did not only cover the churches in Romania – for instance, the main events of the Orthodox Church –, but it also examined the ecumenical events worldwide, moved to a global scale, reported on the Orthodox churches, the international brotherhood, the situation of the Yugoslav churches, the theological training of the clergy in the Soviet Union, and the peace movement of the Russian Orthodox church¹¹, and kept the readers posted about the events of the Reformed,

⁹ For example, Dezső László speaks about the Reformed church in downtown Cluj/Kolozsvár being the venue of awarding an honorary doctorate to the Metropolitan.

¹⁰ TÓKÉCS, István (1973): Ökumenikus kapcsolatok a *Református Szemle* tükrében. In: *RSZ* LXVI, 4. 280–282.

¹¹ A Szovjetunió összes egyházai és vallásos társulatai békeértekezletének megnyitása. In: *RSz* 1952. XLVII, 4–5.90; A Szovjetunió összes egyházainak és vallási társulatainak békeértekezlete befejezte munkálatait. In: *RSz* 1952. XLVII, 4–5. 91.

Presbyterian, Lutheran world council,¹² of the global mission – e.g. it condemned the war in Korea.¹³

Undoubtedly, one can ascertain the openness of *Református Szemle* to all denominations. Nevertheless, coverage of the events of the Romanian Orthodox Church clearly predominated, being a priority.

It is not up to us to judge the honesty of these manifestations. Certain church historians, such as Pătuleanu, have a positive opinion about the said meetings. He considers that the meetings were honest, open, well-organized, mature, and practically meaningful. In Romania, a “new ecumenical theology” and “a new common language” were created.¹⁴

In the two and a half decades following World War I and after the annexation of Transylvania to Romania, ecumenical approaches were primarily of ethnic nature mainly due to the common fate of minorities, but with the end of World War II the sudden, exaggerated interest in them became prominent, especially on the part of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which represented the majority. Presumably, the representatives of the denominations admitted that lasting peace could only be achieved through cooperation, but on the basis of the growing communist dictatorship and the hostile, destructive measures adopted against the churches in general, we can speak of an obedient “attempt to engage”, being dictated from above.

Obviously, if this encounter had taken place within a democratic state, it would have been perceived completely differently.

Szemle reports that the First World War was barely over when the representatives of the denominations in Cluj gathered for a joint peacekeeping meeting under the chairmanship of Bishop János Vásárhelyi, where they repented for having failed to get in touch with each other in the past and raised the question of how they could remove the obstacles on the path towards reconciliation.¹⁵ The further training courses

¹² NAGY, József: A világ protestáns egyházainak a béketábor küzdelmében való részvétele és béketevékenységünk kiemelkedőbb mozzanatai. In: *RSz* 1952. XLVII, 4–5. 11–12; Protestáns egyházak közös békegyűlése a teológián. In: *RSz* 1952. XLVII, 4–5.

¹³ Béke Koreáért. In: *RSz* 1951. XLVI, 2–3.

¹⁴ PÁTULEANU 2000, 271.

¹⁵ GÁLFY, Zoltán (1951): A Református egyház állásfoglalása és a református lelkészek kötelessége a békeharcban. In: *RSz* XLVI. 282.

for the clergy also laid special emphasis on the peace movement. An example in this sense was the 2nd further training course for ministers, in which 134 persons participated and where the participants were encouraged by Bishop János Vásárhelyi himself to continue the series of meetings. Endre Szóts also attended the course as a representative and observer on behalf of the ministry.¹⁶ It is worth mentioning Zoltán Gálfy's speech delivered in 1951 during the further training course for ministers, titled *A Református Egyház állásfoglalása és a református lelkészek kötelessége a békeharcban* [The standpoint of the Reformed Church and the Ministers' Duties in the Peace Movement], also published in *RSZ*.¹⁷ The author reviewed the speeches and resolutions for peace delivered by the Transylvanian Reformed Church District starting from 1944, emphasizing that this struggle was the largest and most important area of the church's public role. The overview reveals that in the seven years prior to his speech delivered in 1951 such manifestations on behalf of the church were considerable, and the Reformed Church set out to establish and consolidate peace even before the cross-denominational arrangements that took place in an organized form. Zoltán Gálfy supports his belief with several quotes from the Bible as well as from the writings of prominent Reformed theologians.¹⁸ He underlines the statement of Professor Karel Hromádka from Prague: "the organized struggle for peace in the world is an offensive of love, and any church that believes it can miss out on this offensive has abandoned the greatest value of its own mission".¹⁹ He also mentions that he attended the National Peace Congress held in Bucharest on 9 September 1950, where 17 nations were represented by 2,500 delegates and where the delegates for the Second World Peace Congress in Warsaw – where 80 states would take part in the most sublime struggle for peace – were appointed from among the participants.²⁰ He also reports that representatives of the denominations in Cluj/Kolozsvár endorsed the World Council's call for peace signed in Berlin in the ceremonial hall of the Protestant Theological Institute in Cluj/Kolozsvár.²¹

¹⁶ Vásárhelyi János püspök megnyitó beszéde a második lelképásztori továbbképző tanfolyamon. In: *RSz* 1951. XXXXVI, 9. 276.

¹⁷ GÁLFY 1951, 280–291.

¹⁸ Op. cit. 281.

¹⁹ Op. cit. 282.

²⁰ Op. cit. 287.

²¹ Ibid.

On state level and in an organized manner: The first step towards the attainment of the “communist” type of local of ecumenism was made immediately after the appointment of Patriarch Justinian Marina as head of the Romanian Orthodox Church. At his initiative, meetings were organized among the leaders of the denominations in Romania, especially on topics of practical collaboration and for peace. These meetings were attended by the 13 leaders of the religious denominations in Romania, namely: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian-Gregorian, Old Calendarist Christian Church (Lipovan), Reformed (Calvinist), Evangelical-Lutheran of the Augustan Confession, Sinodo-Presbyterian, Unitarian, the Mosaic faith, Muslim, Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pentecostal and Evangelical Christian Church.

The first Meeting of the Religious Denominations took place at the Patriarchal Palace in Bucharest on 23 June 1949, “following the approval by the State of the Statutes for the organization and functioning of the Denominations” listed above.

At the end of the meeting, “a motion”²² of gratitude was adopted, as the document reads: “to the Leaders of the State as for the first time in our country denominational equality as well as religious freedom are granted and ensured ...to organize and train their clergymen in their own schools...”²³ The “gratitude” for the state and socialism in the statement was exaggerated and forced, as was the 1973 commemoration of this event in the columns of *Szemle*: “...the denominations testified together that in the new social order of Romania, which had embarked on socialism, they acknowledged the caring will of God and were happy to undertake and perform their service...”²⁴ The author wrote this in a context in which the churches were in a completely vulnerable position and were forced to introduce similar studies in the periodical in exchange

²² “We are grateful to the Government and the Ministry of Religious Affairs under the Government for their wise goodwill by which they strengthened our laws, ensured our clergy training at academic level, grant aid to our parishes and clergymen, our churches, and we solemnly declare that we respond to it wholeheartedly and with loyal work considering the highest interest of our country. We would like to carry out this work together with the leaders and priests of the biggest church, the Orthodox Church, in Christ’s spirit abiding by His order: ‘By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.’” In: *RSz* 1949. XXXIV, 12. 318–329.

²³ ALEXE, Ștefan (1973): *Relațiile Bisericii Ortodoxe Române cu celelalte culte religioase din țara noastră*. In: „O” XXV, 2.193.

²⁴ TÖKÉS 1973, 281.

for their survival and the publication of the only theological journal, their messages being read between the lines. “We are not talking about the current situation.... the ecumenical material of *Reformatus Szemle* has become even richer in the last decade.”²⁵

Such writings “praising” the communist regime also made it possible to publish the official periodical of the other denominations.

We would like to emphasize that the “practice” of motions or sending telegrams (to the statesmen) was preserved throughout Communism, all religious denominations in Romania participating in such acts. This act can be understood in the political context in which the churches were forced to carry out their activities, given also the fact that the dissolved Greek Catholic Church was not even given the possibility of compromise.

The second meeting of the representatives of the religious denominations took place in the Patriarchal Palace in Bucharest on 19 December 1950. The main topic of discussion was the need for “the working methods of the Churches in the struggle for peace” in our country²⁶ and worldwide.²⁷

RSz published the standpoint of the 13 church leaders in full in no. 1/1951, which reads among other aspects: “Starting 1 January 1951, our nation has taken the path of the first five-year plan during which our lives will become better and nicer with reasonable work and due diligence; and our beloved country will grow stronger and more prosperous.”²⁸ The third meeting also took place in Bucharest on 25 November 1952.²⁹ The organizers of the said meetings published *Buletinul Comitetelor de Luptă pentru Pace* [The Newsletter of the Peace Movement Boards]. Generally, the texts were mandatorily edited by the official reviews of the respective churches,³⁰ which were still being published but were strictly censored.

²⁵ Op. cit. 282.

²⁶ A R.N.K.-ban levő összes kultuszok vezetőinek híveinkhez intézett közös felhívása. In: *RSz* 1951. XLVI, 1. 13–17.

²⁷ ARDAY, Aladár (1951): Békét Koreának. In: *RSz* XLVI. 33; A béke hívei II. Világkongresszusának kiáltványa. In: *RSz* 1951. XLVI. 3; A varsói világkongresszus lelkesízi résztvevőinek felhívása. In: *RSz* 1951. XLVI. 63.

²⁸ *RSz* 1951. XLVI, 1. 16.

²⁹ BARTHA, Kálmán (1952): A béke ügyének szolgálata. In: *RSz* XLVII. 200; VÁSÁRHELYI, János (1952): Aktív békeszolgálat, beszéd a kolozsvári felekezeti békekonferencián. In: *RSz* XLVII. 216.

³⁰ The example: the words uttered by Reformed Bishop of Cluj/Kolozsvár János Vásárhelyi at the Patriarchal Palace in Bucharest in 1950 was published in full in the official Reformed review *Reformatus Szemle* 1950. XXXV, 7.177–178.

The meetings were mandatory as well as the messages that were sent from these meetings to the clergy and the faithful of all denominations in Romania.

One such pastoral letter was the Christmas message of 1950, which Bishop János Vásárhelyi himself refers to on the first page of *RSZ* [151.1]. In his circular, he expresses his hope that all the ministers on the second day of the celebration “remembered the service and safeguarding of peace in the Spirit of Christ and prayed for the gifts of that service and work”.³¹ It also published the report delivered by Patriarch Justinian at the Peace Congress in Warsaw, which he had already read to the participants convened at the Bucharest Peace Congress on 19 December 1950.³² We would like to underline the exhortation of János Vásárhelyi, Bishop of the Reformed Church District of Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár and of Aladár Arday, Bishop of the Church District of Oradea/Nagyvárad, which was formulated and published in relation to the capitalist biological war led against Korea. It calls upon the ministers for supporting the Koreans and praying for peace.³³ The above-mentioned examples also reveal that each issue of the periodical focuses to a significant extent on ecumenical events, expressing gratitude to the government and the party for their support, far more than once. In his article titled *The Cooperation of all Religious Faiths in the Bihar Province in the Struggle for Peace*, Sándor Buthi reports on the event held in Oradea/Nagyvárad on 27 May 1952. He explains that for centuries ruling classes have incited churches against each other, aroused hostilities among them, and religious freedom was only illusory, but the current democratic government “abolished oppression and privileges. The liberation of conscience for all denominations... created a fair relationship amongst the different religious denominations in our country.”³⁴ The representatives of the churches in Bihar/Bihar decided at the meeting that: “To fight for peace in our country means to embrace all the constructive efforts of our working people, the objectives of our government, to be one with the interests of our working people in our church service and outside the church, to unmask the instigators to war and teach and encourage the same behaviour every time.”³⁵ The

³¹ *RSz* 1951.XLVI, 1. 1.

³² *Op. cit.* 6–13.

³³ Azegyházszolgálat a békeharcban. In: *RSz* 1952.XLVII, 4–5.

³⁴ BUTHI, Sándor (1952): A Bihar-tartományban lévő összes vallás-felekezetek együttműködése a békéért folyó harcban. In: *RSz* XLVII, 4–5. 102.

³⁵ *Op. cit.* 109.

same tone can be encountered in the report of the Managing Board before the Church District Assembly, titled *A kolozsvári református Egyházkerület békevédelmimunkája* [The Struggle for Peace of the Reformed Church District of Cluj/Kolozsvár].³⁶ Both Hungarian and Romanian authors wrote about the peace celebrations.³⁷

The denominations in Romania could not take a sincere, objective stand against the manifestations on the part of the state because they were exposed to persecutions coming from the communist leaders; on the other hand, they themselves had a humanitarian purpose in a period of political instability and “cold war”.

In the 1950s/60s, and even more so in the 1970s and 1980s, the life of the Orthodox Church was often presented to the Reformed and Lutheran pastors as all congregations were required to subscribe to the Review.

Through the columns of the *RSz*, the Reformed and Lutheran pastors and faithful could learn more about the history of the Orthodox Church³⁸ and the teachings of the Romanian Orthodox theology.³⁹ They had a preference for publishing the theological writings of Nicolae Corneanu, Metropolitan of Banat, and of Bishop Vasile Coman of Oradea/Nagyvárad.⁴⁰ They both published their studies for the first time writing directly to *Szemle*. The introduction reads that “A new colour, a new fragrance appears in the relationship between Romanian Orthodox and Hungarian Reformed theologians”⁴¹ and that “The Hungarian idiom of *Református Szemle* has become the language of the Holy Spirit of Christ”.⁴²

³⁶ TÖKÉS, István (1952): A kolozsvári református Egyházkerület békevédelmi munkája. In: *RSz* XLVII, 4–5. 109–111.

³⁷ Békeünnepély a Protestáns Theológiai Intézetben, 1960. április 7-én. In: *RSz* 1960. LV. 120; Câmpeanu Virgil egyetemi tanár beszéde a RNK Országos Békevédelmi Tanács részéről. In: *RSz* 1960. LV. 342.

³⁸ GÁLFY, Zoltán (1953): Az ortodox egyház életéből (kiadványai és folyóiratai alapján). In: *RSz* XLVIII. 155–162; JUHÁSZ, András (1966): Egyháztörténelmi tanulmányok a román orthodox teológiai folyóiratok 1949–1965 közötti évfolyamaiban. In: *RSz* LIX, 3. 171–189; ALBU, B. Zoltán (1985): Ortodox és protestáns együttműködés Bukarestben az ökumenikus mozgalmakat megelőző időkben. In: *RSz* LXXVII. 29–33.

³⁹ MLADIN, Nicolae (1971): A teológia megújulása. In: *RSz* LXIV. 235–239.

⁴⁰ Karácsonyi ajándék. In: *RSz* 1976. LXIX, 5–6. 365–367.

⁴¹ Op. cit. 365.

⁴² Op. cit. 366.

Readers were informed that the new translation of the Bible was being prepared,⁴³ it was outlined what the liturgy meant in the life of the Orthodox faithful,⁴⁴ and the Orthodox holidays were listed.⁴⁵

Reports on Orthodox archbishops were on the agenda, their visits⁴⁶ and their most important pastoral letters.⁴⁷ The most important commemorations of the Orthodox Church were also mentioned⁴⁸ along with the new turn in the Orthodox–Catholic relationship in the nullification of the 1054 anathema by the Catholics.⁴⁹

Based on the principle of reciprocity, the Reformed are also praised by Orthodox theologians.⁵⁰

In conclusion, although these interfaith meetings were imposed by the state, the investigation and analysis of the topics demonstrate the existence of an authentic ecumenical theological dialogue between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Protestant churches—Reformed, Unitarian, and Lutheran—and the Roman Catholic Church in Romania.

⁴³ Készül a Szentírás új román nyelvű fordítása, 1975-ben. In: *RSz* 1975. LXVII.70.

⁴⁴ COMAN, Vasile (1976): A liturgia szerepe az ortodox hívők életében. Transl. by Gyula Kováts. In: *RSz* LXVIII 6. 374–384.

⁴⁵ Az ortodox egyház ünnepei. Püspökszentelések 1973. augusztus és szeptember hónapban. In: 1974. *RSz* LXVI.64.

⁴⁶ JUHÁSZ, István (1967): Justinian pátriárka látogatása Angliában. In: *RSz* LX. 197–200; TÖKÉS, István (1971): Justinian pátriárka Kolozsváron. In: *RSz* LXIV. 315; Justinian pátriárkai szolgálatának negyedszázados évfordulója, 1973. június 5-én. Nagy Gyula püspök üdvözlő levele. In: *RSz* 1973. LXVI. 283; Szerkesztőség: Justinian pátriárka hetvenéves. In: *RSz* 1971. LXIV. 318–320; TÖKÉS, István (1977): Közös gyász. Justinian pátriárka halála, 1977. március 26-án. In: *RSz* LXX. 436–438; ALBU, Z. Zoltán (1977): Dr. Justin Moisescu a Román Ortodox Egyház új pátriárkája. In: *RSz* LXX. 439–441; Valerian Zaharia nagyváradi román ortodox püspök gyászbeszédé (Búthi Sándor temetésén). In: *RSz* 1967. LX. 97–99; Valerian Zaharia üdvözlő beszéde (Papp László püspök beiktatásakor). In: *RSz* 1967. LX. 229–230.

⁴⁷ Corneanu Nicolae bánáti metropolita húsvéti pásztorlevele. In: *RSz* 1982. LXXXV.333; CORNEANU, Nicolae (1981): Pastorală la nașterea Domnului 1980. In: *RSz* LXXIV. 83–84.

⁴⁸ SZÉKELY, Károly (1967): Curtea de Argeș. Ünnepi istentisztelet az ortodox egyházban a kolostor felszentelésének 450. évfordulóján, 1967. augusztus 15-én. In: *RSz* LX. 353–357; A putnai kolostort 500 évvel ezelőtt alapították. In: *RSz* 1966. LIX. 382; NagyJózsef (professzor) Putna. In: *RSz* 1967. LX. 64–68.

⁴⁹ Róma és az ortodoxok. A II. Vatikáni zsinat 1965. december 7-én hatálytalanította az 1054-es egyházi átkot. In: *RSz* 1977. LXX. 425.

⁵⁰ Gheorghe Maior cikke Vásárhelyi János püspök új prédikációs kötetéről. A Lélek gyümölcse, 64 rövid egyházi beszéd gyűjteménye. 1954. In: *RSz* XLIX.162–166.

Characterizing the ecumenism of the decades after World War II, Zoltán Gálffy sends a message to posterity included in his 1953 study, which reads as follows: “The relationship among our churches today is beyond the purely ecclesiastical nature and increasingly aims at building deeper friendly relations so that we get to know each other’s spiritual treasures and exchange values.”⁵¹ The author gets to the heart of the matter – presumably, at the level of the public church, the approach governed from the top was actually far from happening. Trends in this direction will/may be the result of decades of painstaking work, but friendships and acquaintances have been born and mutual respect has emerged due to the same oppressed condition of denominations.

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⁵¹ GÁLFY1953,155.

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