

**BISHOP DR. H. C. AUGUSTIN PACHA AND THE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF TIMIȘOARA (1923-1948)
(Part II)**

Abstract: With an old academic tradition, the Theological Academy in Timișoara adapted to the new social and political conditions after 1919, the institution practically becoming, in 1930, the seminary of the newly organised Diocese of Timișoara. Bishop Augustin Pacha's concern for the training of the indigenous clergy was translated into reality both through the appointment of professors of unquestionable academic standing at this school and by sending an entire plethora of seminarians to study abroad, who later also became professors at the institute. Subjected to particularly strong pressures already in 1946, the Theological Academy was abusively dismantled by the communist state in 1948. It clandestinely survived until 1950, but after that it permanently closed its doors, the students continuing their training at Alba Iulia.

Keywords: theological academy, seminary, diocese, Pacha, bishop

The Theological Academy² and Bishop Dr. H. C. Augustin Pacha (1923-1950)³

In the capital of Banat, immediately after taking over the leadership of the Timișoara Apostolic Administration, Canon Augustin Pacha realised the decreasing numbers of Hungarian-speaking students, in parallel with the constantly increasing number of German speakers, and demanded the introduction of Hungarian language courses, in light of the fact that these future priests would at one point come to serve in parishes with Hungarian parishioners.

During this period, due to the departure of Bishop Glattfelder and the lack of a consecrated bishop, who might have the ability to ordain priests, the issue that emerged concerned the place where the future priests of the Apostolic Administration of Timișoara would be elevated to this capacity. Pacha's solution was one that took into account the new political and national conditions, but also the bad relationship between Glattfelder and the Romanian authorities on his departure. Glattfelder had proposed to Pacha that he should send the candidates to the priesthood to Szeged, so

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² The Institute was called, at the time, the "Roman Catholic Theological Academy." The name of seminary was used in parallel with that of academy.

³ This study is structured in two parts: an overview of the creation and evolution of this theological institute of academic rank, starting from medieval times until the end of World War I (see the study published in the previous issue of *AMN*), and a presentation of the evolution of the Roman Catholic Theological Academy from Timișoara under the pastoral care of Bishop Augustin Pacha, starting from the year 1923 and ending in 1950, the moment of the effective suppression of the seminary, which had actually already become clandestine in 1948 (the study in this issue of *AMN*).

that they may be consecrated there. Pacha, however, refused the bishop's proposal and decided to send all the candidates to Oradea, where Emeric Bjelik, auxiliary Bishop of Oradea and titular Bishop of Thasus, was to celebrate the ordinations for the Banatian administration. This was solved thus in the period 1923-1927, that is until Pacha himself was consecrated as bishop, receiving the faculty of ordaining priests.⁴

Another serious problem of the new apostolic administrator was that of ensuring a well prepared teaching staff for the seminary, as well as the seminarians. While the latter problem was not an easy one to solve and Pacha had to rely henceforth only on local resources and not on the surplus of students or priests that had arrived, prior to the end of World War I, from present-day Slovakia and Hungary, the problem of the teaching staff could be solved in time. To this end, he sent young students or priests to study in Western universities or seminaries. Notable examples included: Adalbert Boros and Ferdinand Cziza in Rome, Julius Lamoth in Bonn, Anton Schuler and Lorenz Zirenner in Münster/Westphalia, Nikolaus Csatóry and Franz Kräuter in Vienna, and Josef Schwarz in Innsbruck.⁵ They all returned home or subsequently obtained doctorates in Philosophy, Theology, Church History and Sociology.⁶ The costs of schooling these young people were ensured by the *Reichsverband für das katholische Auslandsdeutschtum (Imperial Association for the Catholic Germans Abroad)*, a Catholic association that supported the pastoral care and development of the German-speaking Catholic communities outside Germany.⁷ To this improvement of the academic level was added one at the spiritual level, as spiritual retreats for seminarians and the clergy were permanently organised, either in the seminary or at Maria-Radna. These exercises were attended, each time, by Pacha personally. Also in this sense, of improving intellectual and spiritual life, the bishop, permanently invited, through the Cathedral Chapter and/or the management of the Theological Academy, guest professors and various foreign intellectuals who gave various lectures for the young students and for the priests, as well as for high school students. In this regard, mention should be made of the lectures delivered by professors from the University of Münster at the seminary in the spring of 1927, during Easter week, in parallel with other courses held in the "Banatia" High School for the students of this pedagogical institute for primary teachers.⁸

The standards of this Theological Academy belonging, as of 1930, to the newly established Roman Catholic Diocese of Timișoara, were visible both prior to this date and subsequently, even through the visits of some high prelates or even monarchs, like Carol II, who came to see the seminary and the neighbouring high school

⁴ Franz Kräuter, *Erinnerungen an Bischof Pacha. Ein Stück Banater Heimatgeschichte*, Bukarest: ADZ Verlag, 1995, p. 80; Claudiu Călin, *Dr. h.c. Augustin Pacha (1870-1954)*. "Succint excurs biografic al primului episcop romano-catolic de Timișoara," in *Banatica*, no. 19, Reșița, 2009, p. 239.

⁵ Franz Kräuter, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-85;

⁶ Anton Peter Petri, *Lehrkörper und Anzahl der Theologen im Temeschburger Priesterseminar (1806-1948)*, in the series **Neue Banater Bücherei**, No. VII, Mühlendorf/ Inn, [no publisher], 1984, pp. 3-6, 11.

⁷ *Archivum Dioecesanum Timisoarense [ADT]*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, the letters of Emil Clemens Scherer, Rector of the Theological Academy in Berlin, to Augustin Pacha, from 3 and 15 February 1933, unnumbered.

⁸ Franz Kräuter, *op.cit.*, pp. 85, 93.

“Banatia” (the Catholic German *preparandia* for teachers), accompanied by Prime Minister Nicolae Iorga.⁹ The series of visitors included: Emeric Bjelik, military bishop, in 1916, Lipot Árpád Varady, Archbishop of Kalocsa (former priest of the Diocese of Cenad), in 1917, Francesco Marmaggi, apostolic nuncio in Bucharest in July 1921, Raymund Netzhammer, Archbishop of Bucharest, in 1922, Rafael Rodić, Archbishop of Belgrade-Smederevo in 1924, Alexandru Cisar, Archbishop of Bucharest, in August 1925, and Mihai Robu, Bishop of Iași, in December 1925.¹⁰ To the list of high guests was added Archbishop Andrea Cassulo, Apostolic Nuncio, in 1943, who arrived in Timișoara to visit the Soviet prisoners’ camp on the outskirts of the city, but also to be with Bishop Pacha on the jubilee of fifty years of priesthood. After the Pontifical Mass, celebrated by the jubiliary in the Dome, the dinner and the ceremony, restricted in terms of pomp and the number of guests (there were, in any case, 100 people), were held in the festive hall of the Theological Academy. The guests who visited the seminary on this occasion included: Márton Áron, Bishop of Alba Iulia, Ioan Bălan, Greek-Catholic Bishop of Lugoj, Nicolae Brînzeu, Provost of the Greek-Catholic Cathedral Chapter of Lugoj and Vasile Lăzărescu, the Orthodox Bishop of Timișoara.¹¹

The economic situation of the country in the early 1930a was particularly difficult. Higher interest rates at the banks, high rates of inflation, the plight of agriculture, the situation of wages – all these were reflected negatively on the remuneration of the bishop, of the chapter members or of the professors at the seminary. Under the new monetary law of 7 February 1929, which established the regaining of national currency reconvertibility, it was stipulated that only a small portion of bank debts should be acquitted, the law also applying on arrears to the payments of the parishioners’ contributions to the financial support of their own religious denomination. Amid these realities and even – internally, at the organisational-ecclesiastical level, amid conflicts between the local church communities and some of the believers, debtors of these taxes¹² – there were even periods of up to a year in which the state was unable to pay its employees, in this context, neither the bishop, nor the professors from the Theological Academy receiving any remuneration from the state.¹³

From the point of view of ecclesiastical discipline, the Theological Academy from Timișoara was subject to the local bishop, who always had the last word in appointing the seminary rector and professors. However, the Holy See also had a central body of coordination and control over the theological institutes. This was the so-called *Sacra Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus*. Periodically, the prefect of this Roman Congregation had the obligation to send an Apostolic

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 116.

¹⁰ Faragó János, *A csanádi kisebb papnevelde története. Szent Gellértől napjainkig (1030-1925)*, Timișoara (Temesvár): Tipografia “Der Landbote,” 1925, pp. 170-171.

¹¹ Franz Kräuter, *op.cit.*, p. 146; Claudiu Călin, *Augustin Pacha (1870-1954)*, p. 249.

¹² See *Statutele unitare și obligătoare pentru Comunitățile Bisericești în Dieceza Romano-Catolică de Timișoara*, Timișoara: Tipografia “Victoria,” 1934, pp. 1-39.

¹³ Franz Kräuter, *op.cit.*, p. 117.

Visitor to take the pulse of life in the seminaries, at the scene of the place. In this regard, in the summer of 1939, Cardinal Giuseppe Pizzardo sent to Romania the monk Joseph Rousseau from the Order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, in order to visit the seminaries of the Latin-rite dioceses in our country. The report following this visit, issued on 8 December 1939, contains only general recommendations for the dioceses of Romania, essentially being a document containing directives that regard the discipline of theological schools. It emphasises the spiritual aspects of the life of seminarians and the seminary, demanding frequent confessions and the existence of appointed confessors, discipline in spirit and in urban social behaviour, the existence of printed regulations of these institutes, training focussed on four years of study, two of Philosophy and two of Theology, the appointment of well-trained teachers, the study of special subjects, such as Ascetic Theology, the Doctrine of Catholic Action, the Rites of Oriental Churches and History.¹⁴

The issue of general, unitary regulations for the Roman Catholic Seminaries and Theological Academies in Romania came, in the first half of 1943, under the attention of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Denominations and, respectively, of the State Secretariat of Religious Denominations and Arts, the Directorate of Historical Denominations. To this end, the ministry created a special commission, which included Anton Durcovici, then Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Bucharest. Unable to offer any solution, the commission was dissolved. Following verbal consultations held between the Nunciature and the State Secretariat of Religious Denominations, it was decided that, in accordance with Article XVI¹⁵ of the Concordat between the Kingdom of Romania and the Holy See, the Latin episcopal ordinariates in the country should submit their proposals for a set of regulations, which were to be processed, assembled together in a unitary text and subsequently subjected to the Holy See for approval. This, in turn, mandated the Nunciature to oversee this process lest the episcopal ordinariates should somehow have their freedom to instruct and form their own clergy restricted. On 15 September 1943, these intentions of the state were brought to the awareness of Bishop Augustin Pacha by Nuncio Andrea Cassulo. The answer, containing Bishop Pacha's point of view, came before too long. Although it contained only two points, the Banatian bishop's letter of 23 September drew extensive attention to aspects of law enshrined

¹⁴ ADT, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, the letters of Cardinal Pizzardo, Prefect of *Sacra Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus*, to Augustin Pacha, of 19 April and, respectively, 8 December 1939, unnumbered.

¹⁵ "Article XVI § 1. In each Diocese, the Seminary for training the young Clergy shall be under exclusive dependency to the bishop. § 2. The professors shall be Romanian citizens, apart from the exceptions permitted, by common agreement, by the Holy See and the Royal Government. § 3. The program of studies shall be fixed by the competent ecclesiastical authority. § 4. In the seminaries, the study of the national language and history shall be mandatory, according to the schedule established by the Diocesan Bishops' Conference, in agreement with the competent Ministry, to the extent that this does not hinder theological studies and in such manner as to be compatible with the religious character of this Institute; to this end, the said Minister shall be informed of the schedule referred to in the preceding paragraph." See *Lege pentru ratificarea Concordatului*, No. 1842, of the Official Gazette, Part I, *Legi Decrete, Direcțiunea "Monitorul Oficial" și Imprimeriilor Statului*, București, Wednesday, 12 June 1929, pp. 4478-4489. Article XVI of the Concordat can be found on p. 4483.

in the Concordat: 1. The exclusive and free right of the Church to organise their theological education system (there are mentioned here: Canons 1352 and 1354 of the Code of Canon Law (1917 edition), Art. XVI, § 1 and § 3 of the Concordat and Art. 15 of the Law of Religious Denominations), issues that also applied to the Orthodox Church, and the fact that the loyalty of the Church State was also reflected in that in the seminaries and in the theological academies, the national language and the history of the country were taught as an independent subject, according to the rules established between the episcopal ordinariates and the competent ministry. These elements were, at that time, fully respected in the Theological Academy of Timișoara. The bishop noted that the theology students from Timișoara came from public high schools where these subjects were taught thoroughly and verified through serious public examinations. For this reason, he considered that any interference of the state in this respect was superfluous. The ordinary having referred to the development of common rules for the seminaries of the ordinariates throughout the Kingdom of Romania, paragraph 2 of Bishop Pacha's response reminded that bishops were granted, under the Code of Canon Law, the right to establish and regulate, through their own measures and regulations, approved by the local bishop, the activity of theological academic institutes in which they could train their clergy in accordance with the local or regional realities and needs (C.I.C. Can. 1354 § 1, Can. 1357 § 1, § 3, Concordat Art. XVI § 1, § 3). In light of these explanations, insofar as he was concerned, Bishop Pacha wanted to guarantee these rights, without any interference of the state or of any civil power, which he considered harmful, worthy of being rejected and avoided.¹⁶ Augustin Pacha's position reveals a certain fear of state interference with almost exclusively canonical aspects and with the education of the young clergy. His position was likely to be substantiated by the existing political context at the time: Romania, as an ally of Nazi Germany, could be placed, in this aspect, in the political and ideological service of the Reich, which was not desirable at all as regards the issue of the education of the clergy and which, according to Bishop Pacha, was entirely harmful and to be avoided.

Noting the interest of the authorities in this matter, Bishop Pacha submitted to the ministry in question two memoranda in 1943: No. 3235 and No. 3653. Unfortunately, their content is unknown to us, the documents no longer being preserved. The official response arrived on 23 December 1943, demanding that regulations governing the organisation and functioning of a Roman Catholic Theological Institute in Timișoara should be drawn up, stating the rules for the recruitment of the teaching staff, in agreement with the published laws, in force, on similar, state education. This regulation was to be submitted to the state and published. Prior to the submission of this document, Professors Adalbert Blaskovics and Antoniu Schultzer could only be recognised as substitute professors and not as full professors.

¹⁶ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, the Correspondence between the Apostolic Nuncio Andrea Cassulo and Augustin Pacha on the matter of a single Regulation governing the diocesan seminaries in Romania, 1943, unnumbered.

In the case of this document, Bishop Pacha resorted to a simple solution: he submitted the ministerial address to Rector Josef Korner and requested him, on 29 December 1944, that regulations governing the hiring of the faculty of the Theological Academy should be issued, in compliance with the canonical and legal (civil) provisions in force. Rector Korner's reply came only on 25 February 1944, the priest-professor noting, in his turn, that unitary regulations of this kind, for all the Roman Catholic dioceses across the country, negotiated and obtained through the Nunciature, would not be a bad idea at all. Korner's draft regulations, submitted both in German and in Romanian to the bishop, comprised nine points. The very first point states that "The right to appoint the professors of the Academy lies exclusively with the diocesan bishop" (sic!). Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 refer to the qualities that must be met by the future professors: to excel in science, virtuous life and restraint, to have – preferably – a doctorate in a theological university recognised by the Holy See and to be Romanian citizens, of course, outside the exceptions allowed by mutual agreement "of the Holy See and the Royal Government." The fifth point lists the departments, six in number: 1.- for the "Romanian national subjects,"¹⁷ 2.- for Bible study, 3.- for Philosophy, 4.- for Dogmatics, 5.- for Canon Law and Moral Theology, 6.- for Ecclesiastical History and Pastoral Theology.¹⁸

Advancement from substitute to full professors was made after two years of operation. The bishop was the one who appointed them. They had to teach during these two years in order to automatically become tenured professors. This was referred to under the sixth point of the envisaged regulations.

Points seven and eight related to some salary rights, benefices and pension rights, of which the latter could be raised only by the clergy pension fund, pertaining to the Diocese of Timișoara. This last point seems to have been subsequently deleted from the draft regulation. Having been preserved in the diocesan archives of Timișoara, this draft regulation shows corrections in this regard.

On the last point, the ninth, it was stated that the diocesan bishop had the right to depose the Professors of Theology from office at any time. No details are provided on the conditions under which these dismissals could be made.

The points of this draft regulation were submitted by Augustin Pacha to the Apostolic Nunciature on 28 February 1944, with the mention that the text fully respected the provisions of paragraph 1 of Article XVI of the Concordat signed by the Kingdom of Romania and the Holy See in 1929. Nuncio Andrea Cassulo replied to Bishop Pacha on 4 March 1944, in a letter acknowledging the receipt of his proposal on the regulation in question and requesting him not to engage, for the moment, in any negotiations with the Romanian state, given the superior nature of the issue.

¹⁷ The bill for a Regulation submitted by Dr. Josef Korner was in perfect agreement with the provisions of the Concordat, Article XVI, §§ 1-4, but added some small amendments of a moral, academic and administrative nature.

¹⁸ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, the Correspondence between the Apostolic Nuncio Andrea Cassulo and Augustin Pacha on the matter of a single Regulation governing the diocesan seminaries in Romania, the bill for a Regulation submitted by Dr. Korner to Bishop Pacha, 1943, unnumbered.

Furthermore, the nuncio assured the bishop that the Holy See had been informed of this fact and that the Papal State would demand compliance with said provisions of Article XVI of the Concordat. In addition, Cassulo asked Pacha if, at any time in the past, the seminary in Timișoara had depended in any way on the state authorities on matters other than the provisions concerning the professors' citizenship and the subjects taught in Romanian. Again, on 14 March 1944, the bishop requested the rector of the seminary a competent and adequate response to the inquiries coming from Nuncio Cassulo. Three days later, on 17 March, rector Josef Korner informed Bishop Pacha that the seminary had always been under free diocesan authority, the state demanding, at most, some statistics about the number of professors and students, just once a "Syllabus" of the subjects taught and, also just once, a control of the subject matters to be taught in Romanian. According to Rector Josef Korner, these relations with the state had always been kept within the limits specified by the Concordat. On the other hand, the professors' salaries had always been paid by the state, which had, in fact, established their amount. Initially, even the newly appointed professors received a full salary, being recognised by the state as "provisionally tenured professors." Only in 1934 did the two new professors employed, Julius Lamoth¹⁹ and Adalbert Boros, receive only 80% of their salary, being recognised as "substitute professors." After four years, however, without any formality being undertaken by the Theological Academy, the state supplemented the salary of the two and recognised them as "provisionally tenured professors." The situation changed, however, for the teachers employed in 1937 and 1938 (Adalbert Blaskovics²⁰ and Anton Schulter²¹). After the four years had passed, the episcopal ordinariate

¹⁹ *Julius Lamoth* (1907-1967), born at Deta, studied at the Theological Academy in Timișoara, being ordained as a priest by Bishop Augustin Pacha in his native village of Deta in 1932. He activated for about a year as chaplain at Cenad, then he was appointed as a Professor of Theology at Timișoara. Since 1937, among others, he was appointed as manciple of the academy. In 1946 he was transferred as a parish priest in Șandra (Timiș County). In the last part of his life, he worked as a parish priest in Pișchia (Timiș County). He died at Jebel on 4 November 1967, being buried in Deta. See *Schematismus Cleri Dioecesis Timișoaraensis pro Anno Domini 1948*, Timișoara: Typis Typographiae "Victoria," 1948, p. 114.

²⁰ *Adalbert Blaskovics* (1895-1981), born at Oravița (Caraș-Severin County), studied theology in Timișoara, being ordained as a priest in the town by the Bega River in 1917. He studied in Vienna (Augustineum) between 1917 and 1918, obtaining his PhD in Theology here. He served in several parishes until 1935. Later he was appointed Professor of Religion at Timișoara, at the "Banatia" Pedagogical Institute for Roman Catholic Teachers and prefect of studies in Emericanum. In 1937 he became a member of the examination board for Catholic teachers and a professor at the Theological Academy. In 1943 he was appointed as a parish priest in Șagu (Arad County). In his old age, he retired to Reșița, where he helped as a priest-chaplain. He died on 22 May 1981, in Reșița. See *Schematismus 1948*, p. 103.

²¹ *Anton Schulter* (1907-1998), born in Lovrin (Timiș County), studied theology in Timișoara, being ordained as a priest in his native Lovrin by Bishop Augustin Pacha. He continued his studies at Münster in Westphalia, obtaining a Ph.D. in Theology in 1936. He served briefly as a chaplain at Jimbolia. In 1937 he was appointed Professor of Religion at Timișoara in the "Banatia" Pedagogical Institute for Roman Catholic Teachers and prefect of studies in Emericanum. On 21 August 1940, he was appointed professor at the Theological Academy in Timișoara. During the periods of thaw in the relations between the Socialist Republic of Romania and the Holy See, he was awarded the title of Papal Prelate. During

demanded that the state should supplement the salary, which up until then had been only 80% 1. This time, however, the specialised ministry requested the immediate submission of a “regulation” under which the two teachers were employed and based on which they filled their positions. In this regard, the above mentioned answer was submitted by 28 February 1943.

For the seminary, for the professors and the theologians in Timișoara, the 1940s represented a relatively tense period. The spread of Nazi ideology in Banat occurred, unfortunately, rather quickly. The tensions between those faithful to the Church and not involved politically or ideologically, on the one hand, and the advocates of the new ideology imported from the Reich, on the other hand, often turned into moments of serious humiliation and marginalisation of the former. Eventually, on 26 March 1942, Bishop Pacha was forced to sign the contract under which, according to the Romanian laws and the agreements between the Romanian Government and the German Government, a large number of Catholic schools were ceded to the Nazi organisation in our country, the German Ethnic Group (*Deutsche Volksgruppe in Rumänien*). The Theological Seminary did not come under the provisions of this contract, but neighbouring “Banatia” did.²² This place of Catholic spiritual, civic and moral education became a hotbed whence Nazi ideology could spread in Banat. It was precisely from such “neighbourhoods” that the tribulations of the future clergy arose later, given their public labelling and their frequently being offended by the followers of National Socialism as the “dark people of Catholicism.”²³

The years of World War II left traces in the life of the theological seminary in Timișoara. From the triennial relations submitted by the rector of the seminary and the diocesan bishop to the *Sacra Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus*, we find out a series of details about the activity of this academic institution. Thus, the report of Josef Korner, the rector of the Theological Academy, issued on 4 July 1945, comprises nine points. At the first point, it recounts the fact that the previous academic year had ended on 21 July 1944, but that because of the war and the transformation of the country and of the diocesan territory into a war theatre, after 23 August 1944 courses could not start as usual, on 15 September, and it was necessary to postpone the opening of the academic year until 26 October. In addition, much of the building was requisitioned by the army for war purposes. The issue of the number of seminarians is addressed in the second paragraph of the letter. Unfortunately, during the war their number had declined. In the autumn of 1944, twelve students attended studies, including 8 from the Diocese of Timișoara, two from the Diocese of Alba Iulia and two from the Order of the Salvatorians and,

the last part of his life, he served as a parish priest at Aradul Nou (Arad County), where he died on 2 February 1998 at the age of 91 years. See *Schematismus 1948*, p. 123; *Schematismus Ordinarius Rom. Cath. Timisoarensis pro Anno Domini 1986*, typed manuscript, compiled as instructed by the diocesan ordinariate, Msgr. Sebastian Kräuter, by Fr. Dr. Csáthy Miklós, a parish priest in Timișoara VI Fratelia, on 15 April 1986, p. 9.

²² Franz Kräuter, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

²³ Nikolaus Engelmann, “Prälät Josef Nischbach - Der Geistige Vater der Banatia,” in Annemarie Podlipny-Hehn (ed.), *Banatia – 70. Jubiläum*, Temeswar: Mirton-Verlag, 1996, pp. 34-35; Franz Kräuter, *op.cit.*, pp. 141-143.

respectively, from the Banatian communities of the order. The rector presented three main reasons underlying the decline in the number of theology students:

a. Since most candidates came from German language schools, their young students had been indoctrinated, during their high school studies, with ideas derived from the Nazi ideology, so there were not many who enrolled in a theological college. Fortunately, however, secondary school graduates with a humanistic training were more protected from such an ideologised education, those enrolled in the first year generally coming from this environment.

b. Starting from May 1943, a part of the German-speaking youth with theological leanings enrolled, at the age of 17, in the German Army rather than in the Romanian Army, so as to complete their military service.

c. While theology students had been exempted from military service in the Kingdom of Romania up until that moment, the rules in this regard were modified despite the interventions of the Nunciature. In this sense, the theologians who had been exempted thus far were also compelled to provide some services, conceived as an “extension of studies,” a modality that was subsequently also no longer used, since the obligation of military service was imposed. For this reason, in the previous year, there were no freshmen and sophomores among the seminarians.

The discontinuation of theological studies for 50 days, starting from 13 December 1944, is treated under the third point. The rector described the fact that other areas of the seminary had been requisitioned (which had probably not been requisitioned before), which meant that now, the most part, the building would serve the army.²⁴ The professors and the students were forced to gather their things in two days and leave the building. Only the basement spaces were left to the seminarians and those were insufficient, as various pieces of furniture, objects and books that should have been evacuated from the rooms on the upper floors had been gathered there. For this reason, the students were sent home, with the recommendation that they should continue their activity together with the parish priests from their places of origin and learn on their own. The benevolence of Divine Providence was expected for the recommencement of studies in a normal manner and in a scholastic setting.

The fourth section describes the atmosphere of anxiety and even of terror triggered by the deportation to the “work of reconstruction”²⁵ (forced labour, in fact)

²⁴ ADT, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Certificate 317 of 21 March 1946, issued by the Commission for Requisitioning and Billeting at the Timișoara City Hall, stating that the entire building of the Roman Catholic Seminary in Timișoara, no. 2 General Hochberg St., had been requisitioned by the Soviet Army from 13 December 1944 to the present date (21 March 1946), unnumbered.

²⁵ Paul Philippi, “Cuvânt înainte,” in Hannelore Baier (ed.) *Deportarea etnicilor din România în Uniunea Sovietică - 1945*, Forumul Democrat al Germanilor din România, Sibiu: Tipografia Honterus, 1994, p. 5. The above-mentioned sources suggest the figure of 70,000 citizens of German origin deported for the “reconstruction work” in the USSR (see also Rudolf Gräf, “Germanii din Banat sau istoria între două emigrări. Cercul care s-a închis,” in Smaranda Vultur (ed.), *Germanii din Banat*, București: Paideia, 2000, p. 29.), the figure of 75,000 is also advanced (see also Hannelore Baier (ed.), “Einleitung,” in Hanelore Baier (ed.), *Tief in Russland bei Stalino. Die Deportation in die Sowjetunion 1945*, București: ADZ Verlag, 2000, p. 11, Hannelore Baier (ed.), “Vorwort,” in Hannelore Baier (ed.), *Russland-Deportierte erinnern sich*, București: Verlag der Zeitung “Neuer Weg,” 1992, p. 7.). An older

in the Soviet Union of the men of German ethnicity, with ages between 17-45 years, as well as of women. Most theology students or candidates were enrolled in this age group. For this reason, recourse was made, once again, to the intervention of the Nunciature, so the priests, the nuns and the seminarians were exempted thereof. However, the lack of space – the seminary still being requisitioned – made theological training impossible. In this sense, point five mentioned the opening manifested by Bishop Augustin Pacha for the seminar. He brought together the professors and the students in his episcopal palace, where he provided them with several rooms for living and for classes. Under point six, it is stated that on 26 March, the seminarians had been gathered in the episcopal palace to prepare for the exams of the first semester; during Holy Week (pre-Easter), they were examined in the subjects of the first half year, after which they actively participated in the celebrations of Easter from the Episcopal Cathedral (the Dome in Union Square). The examinations for the second semester were prepared and delivered in the same way – as we are told under the seventh point – the students meeting on 22 June, also at the episcopal residence. Here they were received, examined and encouraged by the bishop directly for the path they had embarked on. Political conditions meant that the time for restarting studies for the next academic year could not be communicated to the students. This was to be conveyed in writing, to each in a sealed envelope, by mail. The problem of spiritual retreats for the seminarians is tackled under the eighth point. Unfortunately, because of threats and fears, these retreats were omitted during the current year. However, for the three existing candidates to the priesthood, there were provided three days of spiritual, preparatory recollection. Under the ninth (last) point, there are described the hopes for the future: in July 1945 there were only five diocesan students enrolled in Theology. It was hoped that the published episcopal circulars would create an atmosphere of confidence and normality, so much so that candidates would enrol in theological studies without fear. It was also hoped that the aspects listed under points 2 b) and c) would be eliminated, so that the number of German seminarians would grow, those speaking other languages being very few, as young people belonging to these other nationalities were less likely to attend secondary schools. Also, it was hoped that the building of the seminary would be restored so that courses could be conducted in an appropriate setting.²⁶

The above-described report issued by Rector Korner was sent to the relevant Roman congregation, along with a letter signed by Bishop Pacha, on 6 July 1945. In his text, the bishop explained the extraordinary, difficult conditions, marked by

source, from Western Germany, claimed in the late 1950s that the figure had approximately amounted to 80,000 deportees; a situation by regions: Transylvania 27,000 (of which 16,000 women and girls), Lowland Banat 35,000 (of which 20,000 women and girls) and Mountain Banat and the Old Kingdom 18,000, most of them women and girls (although the amount that is advanced here is 70,000 as well) (see Hans Hartl, *Das Schicksal des Deutschtums in Rumänien (1938-1945-1953)*, from the collection *Beihefte zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität, Königsberg/Pr. XIV*, Holzner-Verlag Würzburg, 1958, p. 121).

²⁶ ADT, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Report no. 41/ 1945 by Rector Dr. Josef Korner, concerning the activity and situation of the seminar, a document dated 4 July 1945, unnumbered.

danger and fear, that had marked the Theological Academy in the 1944/1945 academic year. Drafted in four points, the letter contains the main elements also mentioned by Rector Korner, with some significant details. Under the first point, the bishop complained about the requisition, at some point, of the entire edifice of the seminary, which had seriously disturbed the educational process. The bishop added, however, that even the spaces of the convent “St. Emeric,” also housed in the seminary, had to be evacuated, so even this “nursery” for young candidates to the life of a theology student had been compromised. At the second point, the bishop clearly stated that his greatest pain was the sharp decrease in the number of theologians, 8 having been enrolled in the previous academic year, especially since there existed the possibility of more than 40 youth being schooled. In the third paragraph, the bishop lamented, in his turn, the standard of education provided in schools until then, a fact that he also drew attention on in his last circular no. V/1300 of 1945.²⁷ Pacha gave a simple statistic under the fourth point of his writing: he believed that the diocese was in a deplorable situation, given that in 1943 it comprised 420,316 parishioners, spiritually served by only 231 priests. Pacha said that the state of the diocese had been much degraded, in recent years, by the realities of the world war. After 1943, the bishop said, six priests refused to be obedient canonically, leaving the country and entering German military service. They came out of the priesthood and contracted civil marriages. Other 2 or 3 priests were interned for (more or less credible) political reasons. In September-October, during the fights between the fronts in Banat, an entire series of faithful left the diocese, along with 17 priests, all of them fearing for their lives. Only three of the 17 returned to the diocese. Another priest was killed by soldiers. 11 other priests were deported to forced labour in the USSR. The old lack of priests that had also manifested in the past had deepened over the past year through the absence of more than 30 priests, who, for various reasons, could not exercise their functions. In addition, there were enough sick and aged clerics who wished to retire with a pension. Although the number of seminarians was small, the bishop stated, in the last lines of the letter, that the atrocities of war had worsened the spiritual and social situation of the believers in an altogether sad manner.²⁸

The two letters, of Rector Korner and of Bishop Pacha, were submitted, through the Nunciature, to the Roman congregation responsible for seminaries and universities. Cardinal Giuseppe Pizzardo’s reply, dated as late as 24 January 1946, was eventually sent to the Nunciature in Bucharest, which stated this thing and remanded it, together with its own letter of encouragement, to Bishop Pacha on 22 April 1946. The text of the congregation contained an acknowledgement of the difficult situation described by Bishop Pacha. Rome could not do much at the time, but the cardinal ascertained not only the depth of the problems, the effects of the ideologies that were inimical to God, but also the significant involvement of Bishop

²⁷ *ADT*, Fund: Circulares Dioecesanes, Circular of Bishop Augustin Pacha no. V/ 7 June 1945, Timișoara: Tipografia “Victoria,” pp. 61-63.

²⁸ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Bishop Augustin Pacha’s Letter 1558 of 6 July 1945, accompanying Report 41/ 1945 by Rector Dr. Josef Korner, issued on 4 July 1945, concerning the activity and situation of the seminary, unnumbered.

Pacha for improving the situation of the vocation for a priestly life, of the seminary and of his diocese. The cardinal stressed the importance of training the youth and the hope for a normal, peaceful future, which would restore the young people's courage to pursue such a vocation.²⁹

This correspondence on the activity and status of the seminary having just been carried out, the Nunciature sent Bishop Pacha a new request from the congregation for seminaries, calling for a detailed report on the issue of the new theological academy in Timișoara. Bishop Pacha and Rector Korner compiled a new report, only Pacha's accompanying letter thereof having been preserved. This letter does not contain significant additional information compared to the previous documents, but only more incomplete details. However, it states that in the latest circular issued at Easter, the bishop had addressed the clergy and the faithful, urging them to encourage and support sacerdotal vocations.³⁰

Another relevant document from this period is communication no. 50/ of 29 July 1946, issued by the seminary's rectorate, reinforced and recommended by Bishop Pacha to the clergy and their faithful, under circular no. 2058 of the same day, in which appeal was made for voluntary donations to repair the building of the academy. The letter stated that for two years the building had been requisitioned for military purposes, being now finally released. It was, however, in a poor condition and required renovations to be restored to its own purpose of existence. For the next academic year, 1946/1947, the Rector's Office envisaged the renovation of at least the south wing, so that the Academy and "St. Emeric" boarding school could be reopened. The costs of the works had been evaluated at 25-30 million lei, but the seminary could hardly invest that amount of money. The last collection for the seminary, at the Pentecost, had managed only to cover the debts of the institute up to that time. By 12 August 1946, the priests of the diocese were requested to inform the Episcopal Ordinariate the amount that they would be able to collect to support the renovations.³¹ In this context, the donation made by the priest in Bocșa Montană, by his parish and by a parishioner is exemplary: 100,000 lei in the donation box from the icon of St. Jude Thaddeus, 100,000 lei to the box of St. Anton, 100,000 lei from the parish priest's personal income (state-funded salary) and 60,000 lei from a parishioner in Bocșa Română who had been deported to the USSR and had returned home safely.³²

²⁹ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Cardinal Giuseppe Pizzardo's Letter 115/44/11 of 24 January 1946 concerning the report on the activity and the situation of the seminary in Timișoara, unnumbered, and Letter 12705 of 22 April 1946 addressed by the Apostolic Nuncio Andrea Cassulo to Bishop Pacha, concerning the delivery of Cardinal Pizzardo's letter of 24 January 1945, unnumbered.

³⁰ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Bishop Pacha's Letter no. 1869 concerning the activity and situation of the seminary, a document dated 28 June 1946, unnumbered.

³¹ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Communication no. 50 of 29 July 1946, addressed by Rector Dr. Josef Korner to the diocesan clergy and people, unnumbered.

³² *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Letter no. 241/ 1946 addressed by the priest Stefan Schrotz from Bocșa Montană to the Diocese of Timișoara, referring to the donations for the seminary, unnumbered.

The dismantlement of the Theological Academy and the confiscation of its building

Since 1946, the Romanian state had tried to impose its ownership over the building of the Roman Catholic Theological Academy in Timișoara, by confiscating half of the spacious premises of the priestly seminary for the newly established Faculty of Medicine. Already in October 1947, the Faculty of Medicine had raised claims over the entire edifice, attempting to turn it into the headquarters for its higher education purposes. The Episcopal Ordinariate submitted protests and took all possible legal steps to prevent this. Even the Apostolic Nunciature in Bucharest intervened in favour of the diocese, all attempts in this regard being doomed to failure. According to the police order, the building of the local priestly seminary had to be completely evacuated and was to be ceded to the Faculty of Medicine, with the entire existing inventory at the time. Under these circumstances, the rector of the seminary and, at the same time, Vicar General of the Diocese of Timișoara, Canon Dr. Josef Korner, who had dedicated his entire life to the diocesan seminary and was living on the premises thereof, together with the theological students and the other teachers, suffered a heart attack. The authorities exploited the moment and ordered the evacuation of the building that same day. The diocesan Bishop Augustin Pacha, decided that the rector and the seminarians should be moved into the episcopal palace. The bishop's measure was not implemented because of the demise, the next morning, on 18 November 1947, of Rector Dr. Josef Korner. The seminarians, who were few in number because of the political context in the country, were received by the Salvatorian monks in their residence from the Elizabethan district, where the Salvatorian Provincialate was also located. Prior to the confiscation of this construction, the seminarians lived here. Afterwards, they moved to the episcopal palace, which, in turn, was confiscated in 1950. Henceforth, the seminarians were scattered to their homes, and they could resume their studies only in 1953, at the seminary in Alba Iulia.³³

It may be said, however, that the fate of the Theological Academy in Timișoara had been decided by the communist regime with the promulgation of Decree no. 177 Regulating the General Regime of Religious Denominations, published in the Official Gazette, issue no. 178 of 4 August 1948, which provided, in Chapter VI, "On religious education," Art. 49, the second paragraph, for the organization of the theological education of the "Catholic denomination" in our country. That paragraph stipulated: "The Catholic denomination shall have a single theological institute at university level, with the special required sections."³⁴ In vain were there negotiations

³³ Franz Kräuter *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155, 158-159.

³⁴ ADT, Fund: Circulares Dioecesanes, Circular issued by Bishop Augustin Pacha no. VII/ 1948, typed manuscript, p. 6 (192). The latest official circular printed by the "Victoria" typography was the one with no. V/1948. Already from Circular no. VI/1948, these public documents addressed by the bishop to his diocese could no longer be officially printed, but were typed and copied so as to be sent to the parishes. See also *Decret pentru regimul general al cultelor religioase*, București: no publisher, 1948, pp. 8-16.

carried out, in vain were regulations drafted and curricula compiled,³⁵ and in vain was correspondence exchanged for regulating the functioning of the diocesan theological seminaries in Bucharest, Timișoara, Alba Iulia, etc.: the communist power had already decided to keep just one institute of this kind. This was not the institute from Timișoara, Iași or Bucharest, but the one in Alba Iulia. Still, the Bishop of Alba Iulia, Aron Márton, was one of the most active Catholic prelates as regards the approval, by the state, of a Statute of the Catholic Denomination in Romania, in line with “the profession of faith of the universal Catholic Church, which is identical and immutable throughout the world.”³⁶ This statute was to recognise the ties between the Catholic Church in Romania and the Holy Father, the Pope, and Rome, a statute that could guarantee the functioning of the Church under both its major rites, Latin and Byzantine, as well as the number of dioceses existing hitherto, pertaining to each rite.

During the negotiations, it became clear that the state only condoned the existence of one major theological seminary (of university standing) and one minor seminary (a school for cantors). Bishop Márton Áron also brought into question, however, the creation of schools for the training of priests, monks and nuns from different religious orders.³⁷

Notwithstanding all this, Bishop Augustin Pacha maintained the Catholic diocesan seminary in Timișoara in operation. This is attested by circular no. V/ 15 May 1948, in which the bishop appealed to the clergy to encourage and support the seminary, which, the bishop said, “is in a sad financial situation. We do not just sit here, before you, without a building of our own, but also without almost any kind of material help.”³⁸ The building had already been confiscated from him under decision 214, of 25 August 1948, and assigned to the Faculty of Medicine as a dormitory.³⁹ In the meantime, the diocese, which had been downgraded by the communist power to the level of an archpresbyteriate or a vicariate, appealed in 1950 against this confiscation and the transcription of the estate, in the land register, as the property of the Romanian State or, more precisely, of its so-called academic institutions. Still, this action was doomed to failure, as the Timiș-Torontal Court rejected, under the civil

³⁵ ADT, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Standing regulations of the Roman Catholic Theological Seminary in Timișoara, annexed to the letter of 64/7 September 1948, addressed by Rector Dr. Adalbert Boros to Bishop Pacha, unnumbered. Boros proposed even that the official name of “Theological Seminary” should be given to the institute in Timișoara, responding thus to the request of the Archbishop-Metropolitan Alexandru Th. Cisar, of 2 September 1948 (no. 953/1948).

³⁶ ADT, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, the letter 2173/2 noiembrie 1948 addressed by Bishop Márton Áron to the Minister of Religious Denominations, Stanciu Stoian, concerning the status of the denomination and of the theological institutes, unnumbered.

³⁷ ADT, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Letter 2706/30 November 1948 addressed by Bishop Márton Áron to the Minister of Denominations, concerning the issue of the “[operating] licences of religious Orders” and of the statutes of theological institutes, unnumbered.

³⁸ ADT, Fund: Circulare Dioecesane, Circular issued by Bishop Augustin Pacha no. V/ 1948, typed manuscript, p. 1 (181).

³⁹ Claudiu Călin, “Dieceza de Timișoara între 1948-1989,” in *Biserica Romano-Catolică din România în timpul prigoanei comuniste (1948-1989)*, ed. Dănuț Doboș, vol. edited by the National Commission for the Study of the History of the Catholic Church in Romania, Iași: Editura Sapientia, 2008, pp. 100-102.

sentence no. 23 of 10 January 1951, the applicant's appeal.⁴⁰ The building of the seminary was to remain in state ownership until late, in the post-revolutionary era, being eventually returned to the diocese. The theologians and the professors, meeting in 1948 at the Salvatorians' monastery and, later, in the episcopal palace, continued their courses and religious education until the year 1950. A proof of this is the letter of 28 January 1950, which Rector Adalbert Boros⁴¹ and the manciple of the seminary, Ferdinand Cziza, addressed to the "episcopal authority" (sic!) in Timișoara, requesting its approval of the plan on expenditures for the ongoing academic year, 1949/1950. At that time, the "family" of the seminarian consisted of seven seminarians, three professors and two sisters, and up to 10 seminarians studying there could be maintained without problems. It was proposed that the salaries of Professors Boros, Schwarz, Cziza and Aubermann should be raised to 4,000 lei. It was envisaged that when Professor Aubermann retired, the already active official Professor Anton Schuler could be officially employed in his stead, at the parish of Sănandra (Timiș County). On 7 February 1950, Bishop Pacha approved the expenditure plan submitted, requesting that the authors should also remit it to the Episcopal Ordinariate in Alba Iulia for similar approval, as this ordinariate was also officially responsible, before the state, for the "Vicariate of Timișoara."⁴²

Although it had a long historical and university tradition, the Roman Catholic Theological Academy in Timișoara did not survive the atheist-communist era. A genuine centre for the training of the Banatian Catholic clergy, this institute had been a hindrance to the goals pursued by the policies of the regime of "popular democracy." Forming leaders of opinion, spiritual educators and true moral mentors, the theological seminaries were opposed, by their very nature and purpose, to bereaving the country and its inhabitants from their dignity and freedom. Unfortunately, like many other institutes and establishments suppressed in 1948-1989, the Theological Academy from Timișoara remains only a memory now, but also a moral, pedagogical and historical hallmark for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Timișoara.

⁴⁰ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Civil Sentence of the Timiș-Torontal Court no. 23 of 10 January 1951, unnumbered.

⁴¹ *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, Appointment document no. 3673 of 22 November 1947 for Fr. Prof. Dr. Adalbert Boros, by which he became rector of the seminary in Timișoara, taking the place of the late Pr. Dr. Josef Korner, unnumbered.

⁴² *ADT*, Fund: Priesterseminar, Packet: Acta Varia: 1917-1950, the Request of 28 January 1950 for the approval of the expenditure plan of the diocesan seminary, submitted by Rector Dr. Adalbert Boros and the manciple of the seminaru, Dr. Ferdinand Cziza, unnumbered.