

The Teacher Conferences From The Transylvanian Orthodox Archbishopic (1901-1906)

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Rezumat

Conferințele învățătoresți din Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă a Transilvaniei (1901-1916)

Așa cum am arătat în cuprinsul acestui studiu, tot ceea ce a avut impact asupra activității învățătorilor confesionali și care s-a derulat în perioada 1901-1905, s-a raportat în primul rând la dorința acestora de a fi la curent cu cele mai moderne teorii și practici pedagogice. Acest lucru s-a realizat prin consultarea celor mai cunoscute periodice de specialitate europene.

Un alt aspect pe care l-au considerat important a fost cel al raportului stabilit între misiunea lor didactică și cea națională, cel al alianței cu preoții, în dorința lor de a prezerva și a împlini o serie de comandamente naționale.

A existat o mare dorință pentru a găsi cele mai bune soluții în depășirea dificultăților financiare. În timp, a devenit foarte clar că se impunea cu claritate o delimitare a rolului, pe care îl juca și pe care trebuia să-l joace învățătorul de la școala confesională românească în cadrul societății transilvănene.

The historiography connected to the evolution of the Romanian confessional education from Transylvania, irrespective of its religious affiliation, generally went through the same stages as the historiography concerning the Romanian nation-building process.¹ This fact is demonstrated by a more and

¹ In this respect, see below a rich and relevant bibliography, which has presents the stages that the confessional school went through in close connection with the educational policies of the Habsburg monarchy and later of the dualist one beginning mainly with the 19th century. These bibliographical references, regardless of their more general or specific topics and, in some cases, of the period in which they were published, emphasize the organic link between the modern-period Romanian nation-building process, the activity of the national Churches, i.e. the Orthodox and Greek Catholic ones, and confessional schools. Out of an impressive array of general and specific

more complex historiography that is interested in emphasizing the degree in which education, both in Transylvania and across the entire dualist state, became either an aim in itself or a predominantly political aim.

The documents currently available in the ecclesiastical archives present a complex image concerning the evolution of the Transylvanian Orthodox confessional education into an independent body during the most delicate period, namely the one of the dualist state, when it found itself in a precarious balance between the educational policies of the dualist state and the continuation of an educational process characteristic of its confessional status.

scholarly works, we selected the most relevant ones: George Barițiu, *Părți alese din istoria Transilvaniei pe 200 de ani în urmă*, vol. I-III, Sibiu: 1890-1891; T. V. Păcățian, *Cartea de Aur sau luptele politico-naționale ale românilor de sub coroana ungară*, vol. I-VII, Sibiu: 1902-1915; Augustin Bunea, *Episcopii Petru Paul Aron și Dionisiu Novacovici sau istoria românilor transilvăneni de la 1715 până la 1764*, Blaj: 1902; Augustin Bunea, *Din istoria românilor. Episcopul Ioan Inocențiu Klein (1728-1751)*, Blaj: 1900; Francisc Pall, *Inochentie Micu-Klein. Exilul la Roma, 1745-1768*, Cluj-Napoca: 1997; Vasile Netea, *Lupta românilor din Transilvania pentru libertate națională, 1848-1881*, Bucharest: 1974; Nicolae Albu, *Istoria învățământului românesc din Transilvania până la 1800*, Blaj: 1944; Nicolae Albu, *Istoria școlilor românești din Transilvania între 1800-1867*, Bucharest: 1971; Nicolae Bocșan, *Contribuții la istoria iluminismului românesc*, Timișoara: 1986; Keith Hitchins, *Conștiință națională și acțiune politică la românii din Transilvania (1700-1868)*, Keith Hitchins, *Ortodoxie și naționalitate. Andrei Șaguna și românii din Transilvania, 1846-1873*, Bucharest: 1995; Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria învățământului românesc*, Bucharest: 1928; G. Bogdan-Duică and I.G. Popa-Lisseanu, *Viața și opera lui Gheorghe Lazăr*, Bucharest: 1924; Eusebiu Roșca, *Monografia Seminarului Teologic „Andreian” al Arhidiecezei greco-ortodoxe române din Transilvania*, Sibiu: 1911; Teodor Botiș, *Istoria Școlii Normale (Preparandia) și a Institutului Teologic Ortodox Român din Arad*, Arad: 1922; G. Sima (Onisifor Ghiбу), *Școala românească din Transilvania și Ungaria. Dezvoltarea ei istorică și situația ei actuală*, Bucharest: 1915; Nicolae Comșa, *Dascălii Blajului*, Blaj: 1940; Ion Rațiu, *Dascălii noștri. Scurte notițe din viața și activitatea lor literară*; Virgil Șotropa, *Istoria școalelor năsăudene*, Năsăud: 1913; Carol Göllner, *Regimentele grănicerești din Transilvania, 1764-1851*; Vasile Oltean, *Școala românească din Scheii Brașovului*, Bucharest: 1989; C. Pavel, *Școlile din Beiuș, 1828-1928. Cu o privire asupra trecutului românilor din Bihor*. Beiuș: 1928; Mircea Păcurariu, *Două sute de ani de învățământ teologic la Sibiu, 1786-1986*, Sibiu: 1987; Iacob Mârza, *Școală și națiune. Școlile din Blaj în epoca renașterii naționale*, Cluj-Napoca: 1987; Ioan Chiorean, *Rolul Vienei în formarea intelectualității românești din transilvaniei din Transilvania în secolul al XVIII-lea în vol. De la Umanism la Iluminism*, Târgu-Mureș: 1994; Simion Retegan ed., *Sate și școli românești din Transilvania la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea, 1867-1875*, 1995; Luminița Mirela Murgescu, *Între „bunul creștin” și „bravul român.” Rolul școlii primare în construirea identității naționale românești (1831-1878)*, Iași: 1999; Cornel Sigmirean, *Istoria formării intelectualității românești din Transilvania și Banat în epoca modernă*, Cluj-Napoca, 2000.

Firstly, an issue that needs to be tackled is the one pertaining to the reevaluation of the fundamental role that the two national Churches, i.e. the Orthodox and Greek-Catholic ones, played in the case of Romanians. This reality is reconfirmed by the impressive number of relevant documents that resurfaced with the opening of the above-mentioned archives. Secondly, a more thorough research concerning pedagogy from that period is needed, along with the aims that were imposed to it in the sense of its study as a science in itself and not as an annex to an educational policy.

These aspects were analyzed in recent scholarly works dealing with dualist Hungary. Thus, Paul Lendvai argues that a more balanced approach pertaining to the most important historical events that took place after the instauration of dualism is more beneficial in the hope of dialogue between the „competing“ historiographies of the successor states on this topic. However, the noble ideas of the liberal István Széchenyi were and remained only in his works and speeches since his statement „a nation lives through its language“ ultimately had dire consequences, although Lendvai underlines the fact that the learning of Hungarian was considered the only condition for assimilation.¹ The popularization of the liberal articles from the 1868 Nationalities Law, adopted a year after the creation of the Austro-Hungarian dualist state, was meant to quiet the „losing“ nations down. According to Lendvai, the non-Hungarian half of the Empire did not meet the expectations of the governments from Budapest.² Among the most convincing examples, he provides data concerning school legislation by mentioning the most important consecutive laws from 1879, 1883, 1891, and 1907-1908, which imposed the mandatory teaching of Hungarian from kindergarden to secondary school, thus surpassing the logical limit of the necessity to speak the official language of the state. Lendvai reaches the conclusion that the state made a number of experiments, including in the field of education, which aimed more at the political objectives of the educational process itself.

Trefort Ágoston, the longest standing Minister of Religious Affairs and Public Education, who remained in office for sixteen years, was convinced that he „did not want to forcefully hungarize anybody, although [he] had to declare openly that in Hungary the state can exist only as a Hungarian state.“ Certainly, the aforementioned politician referred to the preamble of the Nationalities Law, which stated that even if an ethnic nation existed, thus hinting at the nations of the Empire, the nation that had to prevail was the civic one. The mission of the dualist state, at least initially originating from a clear reality and not from a romantic history, was the linguistic domination of

¹ Paul Lendvai, *Ungurii*, Bucharest: 2001, p. 310.

² *Ibid.*, p. 310.

a multiethnic and multi-confessional population that was more numerous than the Hungarian ethnic nation.¹ In reality, school policy failed to lead to the expected result, because „realism had never been the strong point of Hungarian’s² political thought“³ in this respect, too.

Returning to the complex question of the Romanian Orthodox confessional school, we should say that it evolved in a necessary tandem with the nation’s elite, whom it represented. The German historian Joachim von Puttkamer, in a comparative work that refers among others to the case of Transylvanian Romanians, tried to answer the question concerning the degree in which the most important ethnic minorities responded to the aforementioned school policy that aimed at the creation of „a cultural hegemony of the Hungarian nation.“⁴ Puttkamer made a comparative analysis on the way in which Transylvanian Saxons and Romanians on one hand, and Upper Hungary Slovaks and Germans on the other, responded to this policy. The first problem tackled by the author referred to the non-Hungarian nations’ existing basis on which to receive the educational „offers“ of the dualist state, in other words the way in which these nations elaborated their own school policy.

In the case of Transylvanian Romanians, the relationship between elites, churches, and schools prevailed or maintained itself as a necessary basis. The author has no doubt that church autonomy was one of the main difficulties facing government policies, with or without references to the 1868 Nationalities Law. Nevertheless, its articles were invoked not only by the authorities, but also by the representatives of the non-Hungarian nations in their defense, since they referred to a Hungarian nation, but to more nationalities. Therefore, the term „nation“ was ambiguous, because it was used to illustrate two separate ideas.⁵

School policy, having as point of departure the noble aim of eradicating illiteracy, later imposed upon itself other standards that it wanted to meet at any cost. According to Puttkamer, because illiteracy was a mass phenomenon,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

² [Author’s note] In the original German version, Paul Lendvai uses the term *Ungarntum*, which was wrongly translated into Romanian as *Hungarism* instead of *Hungarian nation*. Hungarism was an ethnocentric and anti-Semitic ideology professed by the Hungarian extreme-right movement (the Arrow Cross Party) of Ferenc Szálasi in the 1930’s and 1940’s.

³ Lendvai, p. 319.

⁴ Joachim von Puttkamer, *Schulalltag und nationale Integration im Auseinandersetzung mit der Ungarischen Staatidee, 1867-1914*, Südsteuropäische arbeiten, 115, München, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003, H-net review, January 2004, p.1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

national Churches were initially allowed to create and support a network of primary schools, also known as confessional schools. The practical results of such school laws varied from nation to nation and according to each nation's actual situation under various aspects.

Thus, the Slovaks and Upper Hungary Germans were not interested in the consequences of some laws, because their political activity was rather weak. Moreover, particularly among Saxons, there was a confessional division into Catholics and Evangelists. Therefore, they did not put up great resistance when their elementary schools were closed down between 1874 and 1876. The situation in Transylvania was radically different, though. There, both Romanians and Saxons held a number of trump cards. Romanians ethnically dominated their two national Churches, and therefore were capable of creating a united front. According to Puttkamer, Romanians' major inconvenience was their 20% literacy rate despite representing the majority of the population. Transylvanian Saxons had other advantages. They benefited from a very good quality educational system with teachers educated in German and Austrian schools, a very strong material basis, and a 90% literacy rate.¹

All the above-mentioned arguments were considered sufficient to highlight what Puttkamer named the second fault of the system, namely the overemphasizing of nationalism. There was a genuine desire to create a civic elite of the Empire, but the state's over-involvement in every aspect of non-Hungarians' primary education would have dire consequences in the end. If the state's involvement had aimed only at the improvement of pedagogical methods, the discussions and differences of opinion would have remained only mere material for royal inspectors and specialized publications, but the state's degree of involvement was much higher. Moreover, the state affirmed its desire to get involved, but at a price. The desire to supervise the professional improvement of teachers and professors, including the Transylvanian Romanian and Saxon ones, was doubled by a series of interferences in the primary schools curriculum, for instance through the attempt to impose only a certain vision of history, which non-Hungarians considered unacceptable. In this context, one can also mention the attempt to elude the place and role of history in the primary school by granting civic culture greater practical importance, which was justifiable to a certain extent.²

The subject matter of history represented the point of departure for renewed and emotional polemics that steadily gained momentum within elementary schools. As we noted before, history was more attractive, because it was easier to manipulate. At first sight, history textbooks had to adopt the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

official line of a unique and exemplary political nation, i.e. the Hungarian one, which led, in the case of non-Hungarian nations, to the presentation of sometimes-exaggerated personal points of view. Expectedly, the Hungarian point of view focused on the Hungarian conquest and its consequences as well as on the lack of any political and social structure at the time of their arrival in the targeted territories, thus imposing their privilege and historical right to rule the land. From a historical point of view, the most sensitive area for Slovaks was the existence of the Kingdom of Greater Moravia in the Carpathian Basin, which history textbooks barely mentioned. Transylvanian Saxons never had the intention to get involved in the polemic, because they considered that it was more important for them to integrate their history into the Hungarian one. They gave greater importance to economic, administrative, and cultural achievements. The interesting ideas of some 17th century Saxon historians who embraced the primacy ambitions of being the descendants of the Goths, whom Jordanes mistook for the Gets, had vanished; the Saxons' official history now began with the Andream Diploma.¹ Nevertheless, Puttkamer argued that the hardest test for the official history was the Romanian continuity theory. No doubt, with Romanians, as descendants of Dacians and Romans, it was more difficult for anybody to feel master of the land. The theory that the author considers „very controversial and contested“ became the strongpoint of Romanian resistance against Hungarian hegemony including in school curricula, which is not surprising given the importance that education undoubtedly played in this context.²

Thus, one of the major questions that arise in this context would be the following: „For which nations of the Empire was school more defining as a means of building and preserving national identity?“ Arguably, school played a major, but not decisive role as a link between the ethnic nation and the process of national identity building. However, this „model“ that we know from the Transylvanian area is not unique. On a strictly pedagogical level, Romanian confessional schools followed the same evolution pattern as the other primary schools supported by the non-Hungarian nations. This evolution was influenced by legislation that moved ever farther from the scope and aims of the pedagogic act, because it wanted to create, beginning with primary education, the idea of a distinctive civic nation from a linguistic perspective as well.

The 1901-1906 teachers' conferences, which will be presented in this study, include only the Orthodox areas of Transylvania and emphasize teachers' interest primarily in education itself, rather than in the political aims

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5-6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

of their didactic endeavor. In this respect, we consider that it would be worth mentioning an additional two works, which presented the evolution of Romanian confessional education in situ and its interdependencies with the legislation of the dualist state from a different perspective.¹

Ioan Meșianu, who became Transylvania's Metropolitan Bishop and Archbishop of Sibiu in 1899, tried and managed to maintain, in most of his endeavors and under the abovementioned circumstances, the relationship between the Church and School in the spirit of Andrei Șaguna's Organic Statute. Out of the desire to follow the above-mentioned „church law“ by the letter, the 1900-1906 teachers' conferences replaced the Reunions, and preserved only their sixteen Circles organization. The program remained similar, but the Consistory imposed upon teachers a compulsory theme of debate, along with the ones that were of interest locally or professionally.

The conferences were presided over by consistorial commissioners coming either from the ranks of protopopes or seminary professors as well as Romanian secondary school teachers. It must be noted from the start that although they were aware of the organic link between priests and teachers that enhanced the importance of the debated didactical topics, there were opinions according to which a protopope, for instance, would never be able to understand fully the true meaning of a pedagogical debate. From among the consistorial commissioners, we can distinguish Dr. S. Stinghe, Matei Voileanu, Nicolae Ivan, Dr. Ioan Stroia, Dr. Iosif Bologa, Dr. Pavel Oprișa, V. Damian, Dr. Petru Șpan, T. Herman, Gregoriu Pletosu, and Dr. Elie Cristea.²

Ever since the first conference, the participants from certain Circles, such as those from the Seventh Circle (Hațeg – Hunedoara), requested a return to the old Reunions (disbanded in 1899, right at the moment when their Statutes were adopted), by invoking the following motives: they held only annual meetings, they had enjoyed wider freedom in the old reunions, and the consistorial commissioners were not acquainted to all the „local circumstances,“ meaning that some of them were less familiar with matters

¹ Paul Brusnovschi, *Învățământul confesional ortodox din Transilvania între anii 1848-1918 între exigențele statului dualist centralizat și principiile autonomiei bisericești*, Cluj-Napoca: 2005; Constantin Valer Necula, *Contribuția școlii ortodoxe teologice de la Sibiu la dezvoltarea pedagogiei românești. Întemeietorii. Mitropolitul Andrei Șaguna*, PhD dissertation defended in 2004.

² Arhiva Arhiepiscopiei Sibiu (A. A. Sibiu), IV, 52/12530, 1901, the sixteen Circles were made up of the following protopiates: 1. Brașov, Trei-Scaune, 2. Bran, 3. Agnita, Făgăraș, 4. Avrig, Sibiu, 5. Săliște, Miercurea, 6. Sebeș, Alba-Iulia, 7. Hațeg, Hunedoara, 8. Orăștie, 9. Deva, Dobra, Ilia, 10. Zarand, 11. Câmpeni, Abrud 12. Lupșa, Turda, 13. Cluj, Unguraș, 14. Dej, Bistrița, 15. Cetatea de Piatră, 16. Reghin, Mureș-Oșorhei; school circular no. 5362.

concerning pedagogy and didactics. Nevertheless, the Consistory wanted, right from the start, to offer a good reason for the change, namely the necessity to strengthen the link between the Church and confessional schools under the circumstances created by the new school legislation.

A first important feature of the 1900 conference that we wish to emphasize is the teachers' desire to petition the Government to review the Law of the Regnicolar Pension Fund for a fairer establishment of pensions. In the coming years, this request would resurface in the minutes of the conferences, because teachers wanted to retire after thirty, not forty years of work, and they wanted their working years be calculated from the date when their diplomas were issued, and not from the date when they were granted permanent tenure (sometimes there was a lapse of ten years between these two aforementioned dates). Beside wages, they also wanted remuneration for some of their five-yearly promotions, regardless if they moved from one commune to another. Because they reached the conclusion that the topic could not be exhausted during one conference, they proposed to organize two additional conferences on this topic. In order to facilitate a better collaboration between priests and teachers, the latter insisted that the Consistory should also send them an exemplary of the Archbishopric's school circulars, and that textbooks should be censored by the consistorial commissioners as well. This opinion was not shared by the majority of the participants.

The Sibiu Consistory also analyzed the more interesting proposals submitted by teachers from certain Circles, such as those from Săliște. They would have liked (in order to avoid the payment difficulties facing the faithful) that the sum of all teacher salaries be sent to a special fund in Sibiu, from which they would be remunerated according to three salary categories (I. 2000 crowns, II. 800 crowns, and III. 700 crowns). Teachers from the Orăștie Circle demanded that before entering the pedagogical section of the Sibiu Theological Institute, candidates should graduate a four-year preparatory course on the model of the German *Vorbereitungsschule*. In the Deva Circle, one of the main shortcomings was the absence of literary and pedagogical readings at the Seminary. Therefore, there was much interest in a project on the creation of school libraries in every parish, which would be given greater importance in the future. Other discussed issues referred to the education plan divided into subject matters and the teaching of German at the Andreian Institute in order to have better access to the German pedagogical works, which also gained the support of teachers from the Zarand Circle.

In the beginning, the Consistory's analysis on the „general state“ of education focused on pointing out its shortcomings, which offered, beyond the negative dimension, a primary image of the school system's realities that the Transylvanian Archdiocese had to face in the time of Ioan Mețianu. At least

twenty-six negative elements were inventoried; among these, the most important were the lack of school furniture and school requisites, „bad upbringing“ in the family, the lack of cooperation between schools and parochial committees, and various material shortcomings including the late payment of teachers' wages. Teachers were also complaining about some of their peers' lack of vocation, the insufficient years of study before their admission to the Seminary (not even four secondary school years), the strained relations with priests, the fact that the higher church authorities did not receive accurate school reports, that they were not rightful members on the parochial committees and „did not have anybody“ in the Consistory and the Synod.

Inspection also represented a sensitive issue on the agenda. On the local level, if there was no priest available, it was performed by the members of the parochial committee (some of them were semi-illiterate!), who could not make a fair assessment of the teacher's competence. The same situation occurred during the end-of-year examinations. The consistorial assessors replied that both the priest and the parochial committee had to perform their duty. Although the Organic Statute did not specify teachers as rightful members of other higher church organizations, in practice nobody could prevent them from being so. The fact that they did not have a 1000-crown salary or a house and school garden, should not have been a hindrance. None of the other religious denominations had four-year pedagogical sections either, but this appeared as a necessity for the Andreian Seminary.

A serious analysis of the situation of temporary teachers, who had to receive permanent tenure in order to avoid conflicts with the Ministry, had been requested since 1901. This issue, together with the practical lessons and dissertations on a topic that was considered important in 1901, namely „What is the most ignored element in the activity of our school teachers?“ would be discussed during the following conferences. Most of the answers referred to some teachers' lack of vocation (in Hunedoara they offered the example of teachers born in the parishes where they were teaching), improper school buildings, insalubrious teacher homes, pupils' absenteeism, against the general background of a people perceived as „uncultivated.“ For the Zarand Circle, it was important to increase the amount of readings at the Seminary and to have different levels of remuneration, namely between 600 and 800 crowns according to the size of the village, and 1000 crowns in towns. The Alba-Iulia teachers demanded an end to all attacks against teachers and priests in the press. They also demanded the clear designation of those who could inspect and evaluate confessional schools: the priest according to the Organic Statute along with either the protopope and the hierarch or the president of the parish committee.

Even though there were cases of conflicts between priests and teachers in the Twelfth Circle (Lușța-Turda), the main reason for concern was the existence of „materialism,“ which had embraced the entire society. In order to describe the situation, they chose an interesting „formula,“ i.e. „the teachers’ indifference,“ similarly as the new Metropolitan Bishop Ioan Meșianu had spoken of „the Romanian people’s religious indifference“ at the pastoral conference in 1899. Moreover, in the Thirteenth Circle (Cluj-Unguraș) another excuse was insinuated for the teachers’ attitude, namely that „priests wanted to be the only ones to assert themselves in front of the people,“ while teachers’ attitude towards pupils could be strongly linked to the stance of their parents, who barely paid the teachers’ salaries. The Circle encompassing the Sighișoara and Cohalm protopopiates demanded the printing of a Practical Guide Book for Teachers, which would comprise all the laws, ordinances, and school regulations. Dr. Eusebiu Roșca, the headmaster of the Sibiu Seminary, who also represented the Thirteenth Circle (Cluj-Unguraș) at the teachers’ conference, tried to explain why teachers’ conferences replaced reunions. In his opinion, the latter were reduced to a mere administrative role, and came to have a passive role in debates. Returning to an already discussed topic, Dr. Roșca agreed that primary and secondary schoolteachers were not represented in the Consistory, but their professors from the Seminary, namely „the professors of former students,“ were at least part of it.

Teachers’ normal remuneration had to be assured with the support of the parish committees, but they had to set up the distribution lists in time, or else it might have led to many acts of negligence both from their as well as the priests’ side. The deepening of this conflict could lead to formulas such as „the priest is to blame because he does not want me here!“ and teachers, in order to avoid any possibility of conflict, were advised „not to take sides with any party in the commune.“ In the Twelfth Circle (Mediaș – Târnava), the teacher N. Nătescu from Boiu did not agree with the way in which the state calculated his working years. Although he had been a teacher since 1885, having received the diploma in the same year, he was accepted in the Regnicolar Pension Fund only in 1897. Therefore, he demanded the intervention of the Consistory so that „his [financial] rights would not be reduced.“

Along with priests, as the rightful inspectors of confessional schools, royal inspectors became a constant presence under the provisions of the new school legislation of the dualist state. Some of the royal inspectors demanded – as in the case of István Téglás (the Turda shire) – not to be considered „enemies, but people who were sympathetic to [them] and to [their] cause.“ Usually, their speeches included advice for teachers to do their work „out of genuine vocation.“ Peasants had a very low turnout in the opening meetings of the conferences. Instead, the royal inspectors inspected confessional schools. Also

in this context, one must underline that, in the Cohalm Circle, priests as headmasters did the same thing. By participating in these conferences, royal inspectors accepted them pro facto, although initially they had regarded them as Reunions, which were considered illegal, because their Statutes were not sanctioned by the Ministry.¹

Drafted by the consistorial commissioners and sanctioned by the Consistory on September 16, 1899, *The Guide Book on the Running and Organizing of Teachers' Conferences in the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of Transylvania*“ represented, until 1917, the basic document concerning pastoral conferences. As for the Consistory, it preserved a much-desired balanced attitude, regardless of the nature and diversity of the debated topics (practical lectures to pupils, dissertations, or pedagogical issues). There was one topic imposed by the „centre,“ followed by the topics established on the local level, which fell in the following categories: pedagogical topics, and issues pertaining to school discipline as well as local administration. For instance, the 1902 topic referred to „teachers' collateral occupations,“ which were regarded as obstacles in the „way of steady progress in confessional schools“ during the 1901 conference.

Beginning with the 1902 conferences, the number of Circles reached eighteen. Consistorial commissioners were to set up a nominal list of teachers. It was also established that conferences should begin with the Holy Mass, and their program should be published in the *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph]. The state of the education in a Circle would be analyzed by a tree-member permanent commission, which could make concrete proposals for the solving of the detected shortcomings. The minutes of its meetings were validated and later presented to the Consistory, along with the list comprising teachers' absences and dissertations, which they were requested to write. The general report on the 1902 pastoral conferences was systematized beginning with the number of participants and ending with the conclusions of the main topic that was debated on the Consistory's proposal. Seven hundred and forty-five out of the nine hundred and thirty-one teachers worked on it. In fact, this was the most common participation rate, i.e. between 70-80%. The highest teacher turnout was at the conferences from Braşov, Bran, Făgăraş, Sibiu, Sălişte, Sebeş, Orăştie, and Zarand. The lowest turnout was registered at the conferences where there were more temporary teachers, who had not been granted permanent tenure yet. A total of eighty-three practical lessons were held, and sixty-three „elaborate papers and dissertations“ were defended. Among the most important dissertations were those entitled *The Education Plan for Schools with Several Teachers* (in the Braşov, Bran, and Sighişoara

¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 52, 5021/1901, 12530, 5021-5235, 3232,4287, 5736, 3758, and 4288.

Circles), *The Importance of Poetry in Popular Schools* (Sibiu), *The Spirit of Love in School* (Sebeș), *The Organizing of Education in order to Improve Vocational Schooling* (Orăștie), or *The Influence of School Libraries* (Cluj).

A circular helped popularize, throughout the Archdiocese, the dissertation on the *Education Plan* divided into weeks for schools with one to four teachers, while circular no. 4850/1901 popularized the decision to increase the number of school libraries. The most interesting *elaborate paper* came from Sighișoara and tried to pinpoint the best methods for a teacher to remain *a leader of his people*. In Brașov, there were plans for the publishing of a review called *Învățătorul Român* [The Romanian Teacher] in a period when it was generally difficult to find new publications. The inspection of the permanent committees revealed great achievements as well as shortcomings in the Abrud and Solnoc protopopiates. The shortcomings were attributed to the various animosities also involving teachers. Therefore, at the aforementioned conference there was a request to rewrite the minutes because they did not reproduce accurately the discussions. The Solnoc representatives signaled to the commission, which made the inspections, that church authorities failed to inform them about the examinations date.

Other topics discussed there were the need for teachers with permanent tenure, and the teaching of religion by a teacher instead of a priest in order to avoid a form of „dualism.“ Due to its importance, the protopope’s opening speech was later published in the *Telegraful Român* [The Romanian Telegraph]. The five-crown fine imposed on the absentees would go to an eparchial school fund. Subsequently it was decided that this money should be used for other purposes as well. The Consistory’s topic on the compatibility of extra-curricular activities with the teaching position was debated at a similar conference. The topic itself stirred great interest among teachers as well as priests, because both professional categories gained part of their income from these collateral activities.

Teachers divided extra-curricular activities into compatible and non-compatible with the teaching position. The first category encompassed agriculture, animal breeding, tree growing, and especially cantor and choir leader activities, secretarial jobs for the cultural and philanthropic societies, and functionary activities within charity organizations. The second category comprised the following occupations: mail carrier, salesperson, inn tenant, bank clerk, or functionary in a communal notary public office. It is worth noting here that there were several situations when cantor activity was also regarded with suspicion, because it was time-consuming.

In the Fifth Circle (Săliște-Miercurea), the teacher Nicolae Iosif from Aciliu demanded that church singer status should not be a compulsory requirement anymore in applications for teaching positions. This was one of

the first signs of teachers' displeasure at the lack of time caused by the ever-ponderous education plans issued by the Ministry. In the Tenth Circle (Cluj-Unguraş) led by Eusebiu Roşca, teachers were also required to get involved in agricultural activities, because this offered them the possibility to give useful advice to peasants (there was a direct hint at gardening for which peasants were ill-prepared); handicraft was also included on the list. In the Fourteenth Circle (Dej-Bistriţa), any extracurricular activity, in case it was abusively imposed upon teachers, could be considered incompatible. In the majority of protopopiates, cantor activity was considered a normal extension of teaching activities, because teachers were in any case responsible with taking pupils to church on every Sunday and during church holidays. Unlike agricultural undertakings, cantor activity was an obstacle to those from the Twelfth Circle (Brad-Câmpeni). Bran teachers' 800-crown salary compelled them to take up other activities apart from the pedagogic ones while public school Hungarian teachers' salaries were at least 200-crown bigger (they received extra money for the rent as well as for professional degrees). Therefore, the only solution was a salary increase. Some of the Bran teachers wanted to be again *affiliated* to Braşov, because they believed that teachers from central schools *had a different view on the meaning of pedagogy*. Teachers from Agnita and Făgăraş did not have any reticence unless their extracurricular activities were permanent and escaped Church jurisdiction, e.g. functionary activities. Parochial committees would accurately establish *the accepted collateral occupations*.

Although Meţianu admitted, through circular no. 5362, that teachers should also be cantors, this represented a major inconvenience to the teachers from Lupşa and Turda, because it could cause conflict with the priest, and in any case the number of religious ceremonies was considered too high; there were approximately fifty consecrations, twenty last rites, thirty funerals and between six to eight wedding customs called *scoaterea mărului* [approx. extraction of the apple]. Agriculture appeared to be teachers' best extracurricular activity, because it allowed them to become good advisors. Thus, the heavily indebted peasants living in the Apuseni Mountains could benefit from teachers' advice as to the ways in which they could get out of this situation. Teachers were encouraged to show *affability and strength of character* towards every *poporean* [member of the community or fellow-villager]. Besides agriculture, teachers dealt only with the instruction of their pupils; any other occupation would hinder the normal progress of education and would corrode their dignity. Moreover, the participants at the Reghin and Mureş-Oşorhei teachers' conference concluded that every year several teachers would migrate from one school to another until they were granted permanent tenure. The ban on cantor activities was demanded in the protopopiates where the education process was deemed unsatisfactory due to the precarious

material basis, e.g. in the Cohalm protopopiate. Analyzing this attitude, the Consistory answered that cantor activities cannot be humiliating to teachers, because it was primarily the best connection between the Church and its faithful.

In 1902, the Sixth (Sebeș – Alba-Iulia), the Fifteenth (Cetatea de Piatră – Solnoc), the Ninth (Deva), and the Seventh (Orăștie) Circles sent a number of interesting proposals to the Consistory. In Sebeș, they decided to create an Insurance company for Romanian priests and teachers, which would primarily ensure financial support for their widows and orphans. The statutes would be elaborated after consultations with every teachers' conference. Some teachers from the Cetatea de Piatră and Solnoc protopopiates were compelled to demand of the Consistory that teachers' wages should be paid via civil authorities, for instance communal councils, due to their difficult collection. For a while, this method was applied, but it had even more serious consequences. The Consistory received several reports from priests, in which they show that the state, instead of collecting the money from the parishioners, accused parochial committees and even seized Church goods.

Seminary professor D. Comșa, consistorial commissioner in Orăștie, paid an unexpected canonic visit to confessional schools and presented his conclusions during the conference. Although he visited only two schools from Sebeș, he was disappointed with the schools gardens, which he found in an advanced state of decay. Although the conference unfolded smoothly, Dr. Comșa failed to notice great zeal among the young teachers, who had only two-year seniority. Teaching did not follow the formal steps method taken from German culture. Moreover, the level of readings dropped drastically. Dr. Comșa painfully remarked that the majority of the participants confused essential notions, i.e. the education plan with the lesson plan or the lecture. He could only strongly recommend them to carefully study Dr. Petru Șpan's work *Treptele formale* [The Formal Steps].

As a result, education plans would go through permanent changes, especially beginning with 1909, and references to them would become regular at the upcoming conferences. State inspectors did not have any notable interventions in 1902 either. They were rather interested in neutral topics. For instance, inspector Gál István from the Zarand shire was interested in the didactic topics discussed at the conference, while state inspector Téglási István from the Thirteenth Circle (Lușa-Turda) was interested in the plan for instructional classes. The moment inspectors realized that the topics debated at this type of conference primarily reflected the nature of the profession, they let sub-inspectors as well as the mayors of the aforementioned conference-hosting localities convince themselves of this. The minutes of the conferences, which were to be transmitted to Sibiu in order to be analyzed, often did not

raise any questions. Nevertheless, in 1902, the consistorial commissioner from the Eleventh Circle (Abrud-Câmpeni) complained that the minutes, after being transcribed for esthetical reasons, did not reflect anymore the original text. Consequently, he demanded that the transcribers should be sanctioned for negligence.¹

The 1903 conferences were organized in seventeen Circles, because Bran joined once again the First Circle (Braşov and Trei-Scaune). Circular no. 2/1903 imposed the Consistory's two topics:

1. What is the reason that after so many years there are still so many illiterate people, and those who went to school neglect and even hide their writing and reading skills?

2. The establishment of a weekly division of subject matters for schools with two or more teachers.

Seven hundred and fifty-eight out of nine hundred and twenty-three teachers were present. The turnout was higher than before, although there were teachers who still thought that work within Reunions was more efficient. This opinion persisted even among Seminary professors, simply because the decision to replace Reunions with conferences was taken by a one-vote margin at the 1899 Archdiocese Synod. Commissioners' daily allowances, totaling nine hundred and two crowns, were covered from the Eparchial School Fund. The order of conferences with the highest teacher turnout was the following: Sibiu, Braşov, Făgăraş, and Sălişte. At the bottom, there was the Sixth Circle (Haţeg-Hunedoara), where only four out of sixteen teachers participated. This was the exact reason why Lazăr Triteanu, the school referent of the Archdiocese Consistory, was dispatched there the following year. Forty-eight dissertations were defended and seventy-eight practical

¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 1902, school circular no. 1; the eighteen Circles are composed of the following protopopiates: I. Braşov, (Braşov, Trei-Scaune protopopiates [pp.]), II. Bran (Bran pp.), III. Făgăraş (Făgăraş and Agnita pp), IV. Sibiu (Sibiu and Avrig pp.), V. Sălişte (Sălişte şi Miercurea pp.), VI. Sebeş (Sebeş and Alba-Iulia pp.), VII. Orăştie (Orăştie pp.), VIII. Haţeg (Haţeg şi Hunedoara pp.), IX. Deva (Deva, Dobra, and Ilia pp.), X. Cluj (Cluj and Unguraş pp.), XI. Zarand (Zarand pp.), XII. Abrud (Abrud and Câmpeni pp.), XIII. Turda (Lupşa and Turda pp.), XIV. Dej (Dej and Bistriţa pp.), XV. Solnoc (Cetatea de Piatră and Solnoc pp.), XVI. Reghin (Reghin and Mureş-Oşorhei pp.), XVII. Mediaş (Mediaş and Târnava pp.) XVII., Sighişoara (Sighişoara and Cohalm pp.); 5304, 5366, 5045 – Fourteenth Circle (Dej-Bistriţa); 4881 – Bran; 4681 – Făgăraş şi Agnita; Fourth Circle – it was considered disadvantageous for teachers to hand subpoenas or deal with the cattle register; these activities needed the approval of church authorities; 4633 – Thirteenth Circle (Lupşa-Turda), 5289 – Sixteenth Circle (Reghin-Mureş), 5275 – Seventeenth Circle (Cohalm – Sighişoara); 5044 – Fifteenth Circle (Cetatea de Piatră – Solnoc); 5043 – Zarand; 4633 – Thirteenth Circle (Lupşa –Turda).

lessons were held during seventy-two meetings. Lessons were held according to the formal steps method, but only on a smaller scale.

One of the most valuable themes was considered *Chants in the popular schools*, presented by the Sebeș participants. A collection of one hundred songs divided according to school years was presented at the Sibiu conference. There was dissatisfaction with the failure to send important dissertations to Sibiu, such as those from Mediaș called *How to Arouse People's Interest in the Church and School* and *What Should Be the Relationship between Priests and Teachers*, or the one from Sighișoara called *The Benefits of Knowing National History*.

The topic of illiteracy was thoroughly analyzed. Primarily, it was about those aged between six and twelve, who did not attend a repetition school (which was for the 13-15 years old), and then about all the other age categories. From the Consistory's point of view, the elements contributing to the high illiteracy rate among Romanians could be divided into two categories: external and internal. The main element from the first category was the state, because it did not make accurate statistics and did not punish those parents who refused to send their children to school. Political communes were also accused of inertia. Statistics encompassed also the Roma, who were not compelled to attend school according to the legislation. As for the Romanian peasant, he was described as *weathered and eaten by landlords*, preferring to say he could not read and write. Therefore, statistics included such cases. A decision was made that the Consistory should establish, through a circular, the exact number of illiterates from each protopopiate.

The most sensitive were the internal elements, which were split into pedagogical-didactic and administrative ones and were subject to constant inter-correlations. Thus, it was considered that teacher's lack of vocation and consideration towards parents were aggravated by improper schooling facilities, inefficient inspections, misunderstandings with priests, and hardships caused by the belated payment of salaries. These observations were mentioned at pastoral conferences from Brașov, Sibiu, Orăștie, Sebeș, Cluj, Sighișoara, etc. Moreover, in Sibiu, it was proposed that a meeting of all Orthodox confessional schoolteachers from the Archdiocese should be organized there, and every Circle would delegate two representatives. Also in Sibiu, the person, in charge of the Application School from the pedagogical section of the Andreian Seminary, proposed the creation of a foundation, which would bear the name of the famous pedagogue D. P. Barcianu, and should be financed from the fund of the former Reunions as well as by private donations. As a result, one hundred crowns were collected in the Sibiu Circle. Another interesting initiative coming from Sibiu was the implementation of a four-year program for pedagogical studies, which was subsequently put into

practice, unlike the initiative to have two inspectors for each protopopiate. Similarly, teachers from the Cluj Circle demanded that the Consistory should take better care of schools, because they were surrounded by the city of Cluj, by other Hungarian communes, and by a great number of public schools. The proposal of Dr. Iosif Bologna, consistorial commissioner from Sebeș, to create a mutual help association for priests and teachers could not be taken into consideration, because most of the teachers' conferences did not discuss it, and it was firmly rejected in the Lupșa Circle. There, participants were also informed that a school foundation presented at the Abrud conference was named after the new Metropolitan Bishop, Ioan Mețianu.¹

The Consistory requested the debate of the following topics:

1. The importance of singing in school, specially songs referring to our people
2. The importance of family and its decline
3. The benefits of school libraries

The organizing of conferences could also be hindered by pandemics, as was the case of the Fifth Circle (Săliște and Miercurea) pastoral conference, which was postponed. At the 1905 teachers' conference seven hundred and thirty-three out of nine hundred and thirty-seven teachers participated, meaning a 78.22% turnout rate. The most active Circles were the Fifth Circle (Săliște and Miercurea) with a 100% teacher turnout, followed by the Brașov, Bran, Trei-Scaune, Sibiu, Orăștie, and Zarand Circles. However, a negative situation persisted in the Hațeg and Hunedoara protopopiates, in which many teachers had a probationary status, mainly because they studied in state pedagogical schools, and therefore they did not excel in participation.

Fifty-one dissertations were defended and sixty-one practical lessons were held during sixty meetings. One of the discussion topics was that more and more teachers did not want conferences to take place in autumn anymore, and that the conduct of conferences should be more diversified. Therefore, in 1905, three proposals were submitted. The first proposal referred to the introduction of three-monthly conferences in every protopopiate, the second one aimed at the introduction of three-yearly Circular conferences, while the third wanted the then-existing conferences to convene annually in every protopopiate. This division came into effect beginning with 1909. Once again, they decided to postpone the printing of the annals of teachers' conferences, because they wanted to print a periodical instead. In the Fifth Circle (Sibiu – Avrig), priests were requested to participate, although for a long time, they considered that it was sufficient if protopopes participated on their behalf. The Orăștie representatives proposed that more discussions should be held within

¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 2/1903, 2905.

sections and workshops and that, on the model of pastoral conferences, the emphasis should be laid on practical matters and lectures should be held in communes. Teachers from the Twelfth Circle (Cluj – Unguraș) requested that parishes and parochial committees should have greater concern for pupils' supply with school requisites.

Vasile Firea, a teacher from Ineu (the Solnoc protopopiate), shocked the participants at the Solnoc – Cetatea de Piatră conference when he proposed that a telegram should be sent to the minister Berzeviczky, in which to express their agreement with his legislative project, which in fact paved the way for more severe legislation concerning nationalities living in the dualist state. There were other relevant proposals. For instance, the Seventeenth Circle representatives proposed the organizing of common conferences with priests, because they considered that priests were already overburdened by the Ministry. Additionally, they wanted pupils who skipped classes to be warned.¹ Teachers from Brașov were the most interested in everything connected to the then-popular German pedagogy, and implicitly they demonstrated their ability to analyze the latest ideas applied in the reform of the education plan.

In the above-mentioned year, Nicolae Sulică, a reputable pedagogy professor, published a brochure in Brașov, in which he pleaded for the necessity to introduce much needed principles in schools that would decongest the education plan. It was considered overburdened since the emphasis was laid on the assimilation of a large quantity of information. Nicolae Sulică's brochure entitled *Reforma sistemului actual de învățământ* [The Reform of the Present Education System] along with the one published by Petru Șpan, contained most references to the pedagogical theory of formal or psychological steps. He mentioned the German pedagogues who contributed to the elaboration and development of this theory, such as Herbart, Rein (according to whom, in the development of a pupil's instruction, one could apply five formal steps and not only the three initially proposed), Dorpfeld, and Königbauer (who elaborated six psychological steps). There were also references to American pedagogy, which laid the emphasis on pedagogies instead of pseudo-pedagogies. The second part had greater applicability given its attention to principles, which had to be applied in making education more efficient. The principle of intuition was the basis of the formal steps theory.

The so-called *gramatization*, which had been used until then, had to be abandoned altogether, and it became necessary for primary schools to consist of six instead of four grades in order to better prepare pupils for the repetition schools. According to a minister's order issued in 1896 and renewed in 1902,

¹ *Ibid.*, IV, 1905, 1171/1905, in the Hațeg protopopiate, fourteen out of thirty-one teachers absented while in the Dej protopopiate fourteen out of a total of thirty-four.

repetition schools would be doubled by economic repetition schools, which could be supported by religious denominations. However, the language of instruction was to be Hungarian. Nicolae Sulică's laudable initiative would find fertile ground for the launching and debating of new pedagogical theories. These praiseworthy initiatives counterbalanced the sometimes-dubious behavior of some Romanian teachers from Braşov.

The Consistory's discussion topic *The nefarious influence of alcohol and the way in which it can be eradicated through school education* aroused great interest; during the discussions, the participants requested the dissemination of brochures, including state-sponsored ones on this topic. It was expected that the Consistory would also condemn, through a circular, the nefarious influences of alcohol. Dr Vasici's brochure was considered the most eloquent. Although discussion on this topic was recommended only to repetition schools, teachers considered that it should be introduced in elementary schools as well. The differences of opinion stemmed from the ways in which this topic should have been approached. Representations of the consequences of drunkenness were easier to accept than real-life examples from the village, which could have had a negative impact on pupils, in case their parents had been singled out. Youth parties were to take place always outside inns or taverns following the example of those from Banat. However, given that the topic was also tackled at pastoral conferences, the conclusion was that alcoholism, beyond its eradication, should also be prevented through the organizing of youth meetings with the support of priests and teachers. In the Fourth Circle (Orăştie), youth societies were set up, where youngsters learned Romanian dances, such as *Romana*, *Bătuta*, and *Căluşelul*; alcohol consumption was banned altogether. The youngsters from Lancrăm were given as examples.¹

Beginning with 1906, permanent commissions, which used to inspect as many schools as possible between conferences, presented their reports regularly. They focused not only on the shortcomings, but also on the efforts made to make sure that confessional schools lived up to both the expectations of state authorities and especially those of the Church and the faithful. In Zarand, inspections were made at the time of the summer exams. Teachers proved to be reluctant to fill out the school registers; they were displeased at the belated payment of their salaries. Inspectors found untidy schools in

¹ Nicolae Sulică, *Reforma sistemului actual de învăţământ. Studiu pedagogic.*, Braşov, 1905, pp. 5-17. Other principles that pupils should applied to pupils were the following: pupils should have a minimal amount of homework, the introduction of fifteen-minute long breaks, variation in teaching methods in order to balance the good and weak pupils' efforts in a class, the rotation of teachers in every class, and the preference for a subject-matter to be taught by the same teacher in secondary schools.

Dupăpiatră, Blăjeni, Luncoiu de Sus, Cărstău, Lunca, Junc, Valea-Brad, Grohot, Tomnatic, Bulzești, and Peștera, while tidiness was satisfactory in schools from Buceș, Luncoiu de Jos, Brad, Mesteacăn, Țebea, Ribița, Vaca, and Armindea. Only a small number of schools, such as those from Brad, Mesteacăn, and Țebea, managed to receive a „very good“ rating. Schools from Buceș, Blăjeni, Cărstău, Dupăpiatră, Lunca, and Grohot were rated „mediocre.“ Lax discipline was illustrated by the great number of absences, although inspectors generally considered teachers' attitude as *dignified*.¹ Unlike in previous years, the progress achieved in schools from the Cluj and Unguraș protopopiates was evident. Teachers were called to compensate, through their work, the other shortcomings of the school system. For instance, in Cluj, twenty-eight out of thirty-two schools did not have proper buildings, while in Unguraș only eight out of nineteen school buildings were suitable. In Cluj, only six out of twenty-nine teachers had permanent tenure, while in Unguraș there were thirteen such teachers. Also there, the school from Romita had to be closed for a year because of a scarlet fever epidemy. School libraries were still in their early stages of organization, but a two-crown usage tax was established for each teacher. Although these two protopopiates had limited material possibilities, they nevertheless came up with a good initiative, namely that each teacher should write a monograph of the school in which he taught. This initiative belonging to Petru Bura gained large popularity, and beginning with 1909, it became compulsory for every teacher.

The issues discussed by the teachers from the Fourth Circle (Sebeș and Alba-Iulia) led to heated debates within the Consistory and at the meetings of the Andreian Seminary. Right from the start, teachers condemned „[priests'] patronizing attitude towards the underling teachers.“ They considered that the reason for this was the Seminary theologians' intellectual despotism. Priests, as behavioral model, could not transgress what Slavici and Agârbiceanu called *the model of love and abnegation*. Teachers perceived even the new teaching model as *a philistines' pedantry and a useless logomachy*, and believed that reality could offer the most suitable teaching methods that considered local conditions. Dr. Ioan Lupaș, as a consistorial commissioner, pleaded for the improvement of the incriminated relations between priests and teachers. He also believed that part of confessional schoolteachers' dissatisfaction could be explained by the fact that they felt terrorized, because royal inspectors did not inform them on the minimum and the maximum of school efficiency required in Hungarian language classes. At the same time, the Romanian language subject matter had become neglected due to the decrease in the number of classes. Another manual called *The Book of Romanian Thought and Feeling*

¹ A. A. Sibiu, IV, 11/6419, Ninth Circle (Zarand).

was really needed, and the Consistory was requested to offer a prize for the best reading textbook. Another problem remained, namely who had the right to teach religion in confessional schools. Although there was a Consistory circular issued on this topic, it was unclear if priests had the right to teach religion only in repetition schools or in all the others (confessional, repetition, secondary, and state ones – where Orthodox pupils learned) as well.¹

In the Sibiu center, Matei Voileanu, the consistorial commissioner, used the opportunity to plead for his cause indirectly. In his opening speech, he argued that he was capable to discuss any problem concerning schools. The dissertations and lessons at this conference dealt with the following topics: *hygiene in popular schools, phonomimics in the teaching of reading and writing skills*. The lesson on the river Tisa was held in Hungarian. Royal sub-inspector Lajos Mirtse, who participated at the conference, intervened and presented a ministerial order, which recommended the teaching of Hungarian according to the direct-conversational method.

The Braşov, Bran, and Trei-Scaune representatives focused their attention on the people's shortages. Therefore, one of the papers tried to single out *The Causes of Their Decadence* by referring to Romanians from the Săcele parish. Professor Nicolae Sulică, as consistorial commissioner, demanded the dissemination of this paper by all teachers through the meetings of the Association. The headmaster of the state repetition school from Săcele (the conference-hosting locality), invited the participants to make an inspection, including in the school garden, where crops followed the five-field rotation method. He did not forget to underline that, in the girls' class, they divided the vegetable garden on the three-crop system, and he specially emphasized the progress made in the learning of Hungarian.²

There was still little discussion on the issue of school libraries, although school circular no. 13497 from 1904 had introduced the Regulation of Circular Libraries, which came from the former Reunions. There were still Circles where teacher absenteeism was motivated by poverty; the nine teachers from the Haţeg protopopiate along with the four teachers from the Hunedoara protopopiate requested that a commissioner from Sibiu should be sent to inspect schools exactly because it was impossible to make an accurate assessment of the state of education. There, the state was represented by the headmaster of the Petroşani state school.³

At the conference from the Bistriţa and Dej Circles, participants decided that inspectors should be substituted with the representatives of the local

¹ *Ibid.* Twelfth Circle (Cluj – Unguraş), IV, 11/6611, 1906.

² *Ibid.*, The Bran, Braşov, and Trei-Scaune Circle, 11/546, 1906.

³ *Ibid.*, The Sixth Circle (Haţeg)

administration, i.e. protonotaries and the so-called *pretori* [administrative functionaries who represented central authorities at the local level]. The report of the permanent commission revealed the regress of the Bistrița protopopiate compared to the Dej one. End-of-year exams were deemed satisfactory in many communes, but there was still a shortage of school requisites and textbooks, a high level of absenteeism, and parochial committees were far from being efficient, which was underlined by the belated payment of teachers' salaries. Moreover, parochial libraries were non-existent. Progress was encouraging in many communes from the Dej protopopiate, where twenty-four schools had nineteen teachers out of whom eleven with permanent tenure; seven school buildings were in an unsatisfactory state, and a new school had been built in Ciceu-Hășmaș. Teachers who absented from several conferences were to be treated more severely, mainly because they showed much disinterest in their activity as well.¹ Participants at the conference from the Sixteenth Circle (Cohalm-Sighișoara) debated the new orthographic rules, the establishing of a better schedule, as well as the salary raise from 800 to 1000 crowns.²

As we noted before, the elements, which had an impact on teachers' activity and stood out between 1901 and 1905, were teachers' desire to stay in touch with the most modern pedagogical theories and practices by consulting European specialized periodicals, their awareness of the importance of their didactical and national mission, and their alliance with priests in their belief in and struggle for the preserving and fulfillment of the national ideals. There was a strong desire to find the best solutions in order to overcome financial difficulties. Teachers and professors from Romanian elementary and secondary schools wanted, as is the case nowadays, a clearer delimitation of the role they play or should play within the Transylvanian society.

¹ *Ibid.*, Thirteenth Circle (Bistrița-Dej), III, 11/3819, 1906.

² *Ibid.*, Seventeenth Circle (Cohalm-Sighișoara), IV, 11/3959, 1906.