

THE SCHOOL ISSUE AND THE TOLERATION PATENT: POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF LUTHERAN PROTESTANTS IN HUNGARY

Eva Kowalská

Promulgation of the toleration patent was greeted with undisguised enthusiasm by the Protestants, who expected that it would bring about in particular a renewal of their parochial life. In Hungary and Transylvania, where Protestants had managed to maintain a modicum of religious rights and autonomy, the patent quite paradoxically became a source of political quarrel and controversy, as Protestants became engaged in an outright conflict with representatives of a state pursuing a policy of enlightenment, representatives who considered centralization of religious affairs a prerequisite for national modernization. One of the fields where conflicts soon emerged was the school system, the autonomy of which to the Protestants was a manifestation of their autonomy, even during the reforms of the 1780s. Based on archive research, the author offers new insights in a chapter of Hungaro-Slovak history that has often been overlooked so far.