

THE COMING OF FEMALE RE-CATHOLICIZATION ORDERS TO SLOVAKIA IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

The Counter Reformation and re-Catholicization deeply influenced spiritual, political, ecclesiastical and everyday life from the 16th to the 18th centuries. Under the term Counter Reformation we understand especially the forcible and active suppression of the Reformation confessions. Re-Catholicization is especially the internal reform of the Catholic Church.

The female re-Catholicization orders played an important part in these processes. This paper is concerned with two typical female re-Catholicization orders – the Ursulines and Congregation of Notre Dame.

Female orders played only a small role in the life of the medieval Church. Many nunneries existed, but they were not active in the outside world. They were enclosed. Following the words of St. Paul in the First Epistle to Timothy (2,11-15): „A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one who deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.“ With such views, it was difficult to imagine that women could more actively participate in public life. In general, we can say of the female religious orders of the Middle Ages, that the nuns belonged more to the urban middle class and aristocratic environments than to the women of the lower classes.

From the old medieval female religious orders only the Clarists were still significant in Slovakia in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. They were entirely enclosed in their convents and had only minimal contact with the outside world.

The 16th century brought great changes in the history of the Catholic Church and so also in its religious orders. There is an extensive expert literature on the question of the awakening and activation of women in the 16th century¹. On the Catholic side, this activation is associated with the Council of Trent and the subsequent internal reform of the Catholic Church. However, the Council of Trent itself caused great problems for the emerging new female orders. Canon 5 from the twenty fifth session of the Council of Trent ordered bishops to renew and strengthen enclosure of nuns². Implementation of this rule meant huge problems for precisely the emerging female religious communities, which were endeavoring to actively participate in the area of education of girls by founding girls' schools, or social care by founding hospitals, poorhouses and so on. Apart from new orders and reformed old orders, various so-called semi-religious communities developed. These semi-religious communities were called „fraternities“ or „communities“ in the terminology of the time, in Latin „sodalitas“ or „confraternitas“. They differed from the classic orders especially by not living the classic „vita communi“. They did not take monastic vows, but were subject to their own rules.

The more radical Counter Reformation came to the Kingdom of Hungary at the beginning of the 17th century. Its more serious application is associated with the name of the Jesuit Peter Pázmány, who became Archbishop of Esztergom in 1616³. The Jesuits were in Hungary earlier, but they struggled with basic problems. Only the 17th century and Peter Pázmány created an environment into which the more serious female re-Catholicization and Counter Reformation orders could come. In 17th

¹ CONRAD, A.: *Zwischen Kloster und Welt*. Mainz 1990. – It contains a bibliography with a large quantity of other literature.

² CONCILIUM TRIDENTINUM Sessio 25, Decretum de regularibus et monialibus c.5. In: Ehses, S. (Hg.), *Concilium Tridentini Actorum*, Pars Sexta, Freiburg 1924, 1079-1085.

³ Peter Pázmány was born on 4.10.1570 at Oradea in Transylvania, now in Rumania. He came from a noble Calvinist family, but in 1583 he became a Roman Catholic. In 1587, he entered the Jesuit Order. He spent his novitiate in Krakow and Vienna, where he gained a degree in philosophy. He studied theology in Rome, and was ordained a priest in 1597. He became Archbishop of Esztergom in 1616, and a cardinal in 1629 at Trnava. His re-Catholicization efforts were especially directed towards winning over the richest magnate families, which had a significant political effect for the Church. With the help of the Jesuits, he endeavoured to build up Catholic education and education of priests. In 1619, he founded an educational institute for the nobility in Trnava, in 1623 the Pázmáneum in Vienna, in 1635 Trnava University. He died on 19.3.1637 in Bratislava.

century Slovakia, these orders were the English Ladies and Ursulines. In the 18th century, the Order of St. Elizabeth and Congregation of Notre Dame were added to them.

The Ursulines and Congregation of Notre Dame directed their activity towards the upbringing and education of girls. The girls would become the mothers of the new generation, so well brought up girls would transform and renew the whole of society in the „Catholic“ spirit. Education of girls already existed occasionally in the Middle Ages. For example, in 1357 the cantor of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris had 25 women teachers available to teach girls⁴, but they were only isolated cases. The development of education for girls in the early modern period led to girls from rich families being educated at home by their mothers, then by tutors at home. All this culminated in a period in a convent boarding school. Poorer girls attended only people's schools.

However, girls did not have to attend only convent boarding schools. For example, in England it was common for girls aged 15 – 19 from aristocratic families to be sent to other families on a so-called pension. For example, in 1546, a certain Thomas Feuton sent his daughter to stay with her grandmother, where she met three cousins and three other young ladies⁵. They were taught social behavior and how to live in a group. Mid 18th century France had a similar conception of girls' education: 1. Upbringing and education at home, 2. One year in a convent boarding school, where a girl learnt to live in a group. A certain Miss Manon Phlipon, daughter of a rich Parisian middle class family, can serve as a specific example of this education. Manon was exceptionally gifted. She could read at the age of 4. At 7 she had various tutors for writing, geography, dancing, music and finally also Latin. As an 11 year old, she spent one year in the boarding school of a convent of the Notre Dame order⁶. Generally, the majority of girls stayed in the boarding school for one to two years. It was not recommended to leave a daughter in the Boarding School for longer than two years. It is necessary to realize that up to the 1770s the concept of the school year did not exist. Girls constantly came and went. The possibility of attending a boarding school was mainly a matter of the financial position of the parents.

The first important female re-Catholicization order to come to Slovakia was the Ursulines⁷. They were originally one of the semi-religious societies, but were gradually transformed into a proper order. They originated as a pre-Tridentine lay movement. It was the first organization in the Catholic Church with a special apostolate among young girls. The beginnings of the Ursulines need to be sought in the northern Italian city of Brescia, in the lay fraternity of Divine Love (Divino Amore), which operated here from 1520⁸. Many such lay fraternities (oratories) operated in Italian cities at the time⁹. Their activity was directed both towards cultivation of personal piety and towards charitable activity. Divino Amore founded a hospital for victims of syphilis, who were not accepted by other hospitals. The founder of the Ursulines, St. Angela Merici (1470/75 – 1540) emerged in the environment of Divino Amore¹⁰. She joined the Third Order of St. Francis as a young girl, and remained a Franciscan Tertiary even after the foundation of the Society of St. Ursula. At the end of the Middle Ages and beginning of the Modern Age, the Franciscan movement played an important role in

⁴ DUBY, G. – PERROT, M. Ed.: *Geschichte der Frauen*. Frankfurt am Main, New York, Paris: Campus Verlag 1994, p. 119-150.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ The Ursulines took their name from St. Ursula, patron saint of girls. She was born in the third century in Britain. According to legend, she came from a royal family. A pagan king asked for her hand in marriage with his son. Ursula agreed on condition that her future husband became a Christian and she went on a pilgrimage to Rome accompanied by 11,000 virgins. She sailed to Rome on 11 ships, going up the Rhine through Cologne and Basel. The Pope gave her a ceremonial welcome. On the return journey, the Huns attacked Ursula and her companions at Cologne. They bravely defended themselves. Finally, the king of the Huns (Attila?) offered that she could become his lover. She rejected the offer and preferred to choose death. The cult of St. Ursula spread especially when large quantities of female bones were found at Cologne. St. Ursula became the patron of the city of Cologne. For more details see: RUSINA, Ivan – ZERVAN, Marian: *Životy svätých (Lives of the Saints)*. Bratislava, Pallas 1994, p. 212-214.

⁸ CONRAD, A.: *Zwischen Kloster und Welt*. Mainz 1990, p. 19-35.

⁹ The first such fraternity (oratorium) was founded in 1497 at Genoa. In 1516, a similar society was established in Rome under the name Confraternitas Presbyterorum et Clericorum ac Laicorum sub invocatione Divini Amoris. Its members included Gaetan Thiene, founder of the Theatines and Gian Pietro Carafa later Pope Paul IV. Bartholomew Stello founded a comparable fraternity at Brescia in 1520. For more detail see: JEDIN, Hubert: *Ursprung und Durchbruch der katholischen Reform bis 1563*. In: *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*. 10 Bde. Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1962-1979, IV. Band, p. 451-520.

¹⁰ She came from a wealthy family. The death of her sister and soon after of both her parents was an important factor in her life. Angela Merici was given to be brought up by her relations, the noble family Saló. For more detail see: LEDOCHOWSKA, T.: *Angela Merici et la Compagnie de Ste. Ursule*. I. et II. Roma 1967.

the Catholic reform movement. Franciscan spirituality obviously influenced the Society of St. Ursula, with an emphasis on preaching and proclaiming the Gospel.

Men and women worked together in the hospitals established by the Society of Divino Amore. They also maintained an orphanage in Brescia. Divino Amore also ran a sort of rehabilitation home for former prostitutes. The first Ursulines were also associated with this range of activities. Some women and men, originally members of Divino Amore, formed a group around Angela Merici. They met and discussed various problems. The Society of St. Ursula originated from this discussion group.

In 1532, Angela Merici rented a room by the church of St. Afra at Brescia. Her group of women and men met here regularly. The men gradually left, while the women increased. In 1535, the group included 28 women. The Society of St. Ursula (Compagnia di Santa Orsola) was formally established on St. Catharine's day, 25th November 1535. The legal foundation for the new society was the rule compiled by Angela Merici together with Gabriel Cozzano, who became a sort of secretary to Angela Merici. The vicar general in Brescia approved this rule in 1536¹¹. The first election for head of the society was held in 1537 and Angela Merici was elected. The society has 150 members in 1539 and 400 by the end of the 16th century. Angela Merici died in 1540. Views on the character of the society were still developing. It received its final form only in 1581, when reformed rules were written and approved by the Archbishop of Milan Charles Borromeo. The main feature of the new rules is consistent subordination of the society to the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

From the point of view of the final constituting of the Society of St. Ursula, Charles Borromeo was a very important person¹². He intervened in the history of the society only after the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The plan for reform of the Catholic Church was thought out there. Milan and Charles Borromeo were an important center for the implementation and crystallization of views about reform.

A fraternity similar to Divino Amore of Brescia – the Fraternity of Christian Instruction already existed in Milan in 1536. It was a lay movement, but led and directed by the clergy. The main activity of the fraternity was to hold meetings of children for catechesis, that is religious education, on Sundays and holy days. Adults as well as children attended this catechesis. There was great interest and not enough catechists.

We do not know how Charles Borromeo learnt of the existence of the Society of St. Ursula at Brescia, but we know that he asked for the rule of this society from Brescia in 1566. He thoroughly revised the rule, creating the above mentioned „reformed rule“, and invited the Ursulines to Milan.

Thus, an Ursuline community was created in Milan. Its leadership was placed in the hands of a priest appointed by the archbishop. There was also a „council“ composed of several other Milanese priests. Thus, the leadership of the Ursulines was placed in male hands. Some modern authors, such as Anne Conrad, regard this as the greatest change in the history of the order¹³.

In general, we can say that the entire new female reformist Catholic orders in Europe appeared where the Jesuits had operated before. In many towns, where we later encounter Ursulines or similar

¹¹ The full title of the rule is: Rule of the new Society of St. Ursula at Brescia, stating how the virgins and widows in this society have to live, so that they will live true Christian lives and enjoy eternal life after death. The rule has 12 chapters. The introduction emphasizes that by entering the Society of St. Ursula, girls and women become true brides of the Son of God. Acceptance into the society is regulated in detail here. Girls, who wanted to be accepted into the society, had to be virgins or widows. Acceptance into the society had to be their free decision. Where age of acceptance is concerned, there are various levels. A lower limit of 12 years is set for application to join the society. From then girls could get to know the way of life in the society. The lower limit for actual acceptance into the society was 15. They could be formally accepted into the society, but really they could be fully accepted only at 18. The Ursulines did not specially stated clothing. They had to dress simply in dresses of dark color. Leadership was in the hands of 4 widows, 4 virgins and 4 men – the spiritual leaders of the society.

¹² Saint Charles Borromeo was born in 1538 at Arona in Italy. He came from the important Medici family. In 1559, a relation became Pope Pius IV. He appointed the still unorganized Charles Borromeo as a cardinal and administrator of the archbishopric of Milan. Charles played a decisive part in calling the final phase of the Council of Trent, which was successfully concluded in 1563. After the Council of Trent, Milan became an important center for applying the conclusions of the council. He founded an important seminary and several small seminaries for training priests in Milan. He also established a college for noblemen and a university for poor students. He significantly supported the post-Tridentine orders. He died in Milan in 1584. For more details see: RUSINA, Ivan – ZERVAN, Marian: *Životy svätých (Lives of the Saints)*. Bratislava, Pallas 1994, p. 212-214.

¹³ CONRAD, A.: *op cit.*, p. 120.

female communities, societies of so-called Jesuitesses operated before them¹⁴. For example, in Cologne, from where the Ursulines came to Bratislava, we find such a society already in 1578¹⁵.

Various similar female orders were founded around 1600. The order of Notre Dame originated in Lorraine around 1597¹⁶. In 1610, St. Francis de Sales with St. Jane Frances Frémoit de Chantal founded the Order of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary (Salesians) in Savoy¹⁷. St. Vincent de Paul founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity in 1633¹⁸.

The order of the English Ladies (Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary) had an interesting development¹⁹. Their founder was Mary Ward (1585-1645), daughter of an English nobleman. Mary founded important convents in Munich (1626), Vienna (1627), and in Bratislava and Prague. However, Pope Urban VII issued a bull against the English Ladies in 1628. The Institute was later formally abolished, but later re-established. The various views on the function and existence of female religious orders overlapped here. Could such institutions exist independently? If not, what form of leadership should they have from the side of the ecclesiastical authorities? These were also problems, which continued through the whole history of the Ursuline communities.

The Ursulines spread relatively quickly to France, where the idea crystallized of how the organizational structure should look. In Avignon, the Ursulines transformed themselves into an enclosed monastic community with a specific monastic habit. The Rule of St. Augustine was applied as well as the Ursuline rules. Such a closed monastic community also arose in Liege and an important convent was established at Cologne, where St. Ursula had long been venerated. She and her companions were martyred there. We already mentioned above that Jesuitesses already operated in Cologne in the 16th century. Ursulines came to Cologne from their convent at Liege in 1639, and founded an enclosed Ursuline convent according to the French example.

A convent was founded in Prague in 1655. It was the first of the Ursuline order in the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy. Its foundation was initiated by Countess Sybilla L'Amboy (von Lamboy). Six nuns came to Prague from the convent at Liege and a house was provided for the needs of the convent. A convent following the example of Prague was also founded in Vienna, the capital of the Habsburg Monarchy. In 1659, two years after her husband's death, Eleonóra Gonzaga (of Mantua), wife and later widow of the Emperor Ferdinand III (1637-1657)²⁰, asked her confessor to obtain information about the Ursuline order and specifically about the convent in Prague.

In the same year, Eleonóra met the founder of the Prague convent Sybilla L'Amboy in Vienna, and worked out a plan to establish an Ursuline convent in Vienna. In 1659, they sent a letter to Prague, informing about their intentions and asking for nuns to be found among the Prague Ursulines to found the new Vienna convent. Mother Alexia was proposed as head of the Vienna convent, but she had

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51-210.

¹⁵ The first community of Jesuitesses appears at Cologne in 1578. The Society of St. Ursula was established there in 1606 following the north Italian example. In the years 1611-1612, the Ursulines operated here only in the form of a fraternity. The first rule of these Cologne Ursulines says: 1. Once a week the Ursulines had to meet in the church of St. Ursula in Cologne at the altar of St. Cordula. They had to participate jointly in Holy Mass. 2. Once a month, they had to jointly pray the litany to all the saints. 3. Every member of the Society of St. Ursula had to choose a spiritual patron according to the example of the Society of Jesus. 4. Every day, every member of the society had to pray 11 Our Fathers and 11 Hail Marys in celebration of St. Ursula and for the other members of the Society of St. Ursula. 5. The main practical activity of the Society of St. Ursula was teaching the catechism to children. 6. On the feast day of St. Ursula (21st October), the Ursulines had to meet in the church and hold a small celebration there. 7. They had to participate in all processions recommended by the Church. 8. Members of the society had to care for sick members. 9. When a member died, the other Ursulines had to participate in her funeral and in Masses for her soul.

¹⁶ KAMENICKÝ, Miroslav: *Rehoľa Notre Dame v Bratislave (The Order of Notre Dame in Bratislava)*. In: *Trnavská univerzita 1635-1777: 360. výročie (Trnava University 1635-1777: 360th Anniversary)*. Trnava 1996, p. 331-343. Abundant further literature is given there.

¹⁷ KVASNIČKOVÁ, Jana: *Rehole včera a dnes vo svete i u nás (Religious Orders Yesterday and Today in the World and in Slovakia)*. Bratislava, USPO 1995, p. 104.

¹⁸ It is documented in detail in the work CONRAD, A.: *op. cit.*, p. 51-210.

¹⁹ KVASNIČKOVÁ, J.: *op. cit.*, p. 106. HEIMBUCHER, Max: *Die Orden und Kongregationen der katholischen Kirche*. 2 Bde. 3. Aufl., Paderborn 1933.

²⁰ Eleonóra Gonzaga of Mantua was born in 1630 in Mantua and died in 1686 in Vienna. She was the third wife of Ferdinand III. They were married in 1651 at Wiener Neustadt. Eleonóra was 21 and Ferdinand was 43. In spite of their age difference, they had a harmonious marriage and four children. Ferdinand died in 1657, when Eleonóra was aged 27. As Empress dowager, she was known for her great charitable activity. She founded the Order of the Star Cross for noble ladies and gradually gained a reputation of being a great supporter of the Ursuline order.

been transferred to Cologne. In spite of difficulties, she finally became head of the Vienna convent. Since the whole action had blessing from the highest places, with the support of the new Emperor Leopold I and all the relevant bishops, the formalities were completed quickly and on 16th August 1660, the first Ursulines came to Vienna. The bishop entrusted them to the spiritual care of the Jesuits.

The main aim of the order was the up bringing and education of girls. In Vienna, according to the valid statutes of the order, they established an internal or boarding school and a so-called external school²¹. The boarding school accepted only girls from the higher classes. In the initial period of the existence of the Vienna Ursuline convent, the daily routine of girls in the boarding school was relatively simple – they participated in the monastic life of the nuns. Participation in the prescribed prayers and other religious activities of the Ursulines was compulsory. More and more teaching of particular subjects (French, German, hand work) was added to this. They paid to stay in the boarding school. The girls were divided into groups of 8 – 12. Every group had its own classroom, bedroom and table in the dining room. Two teachers were responsible for each class. They taught the main subjects and looked after the girls. As a matter of interest, we will mention that it was possible to go out, even into the monastery garden, only with a mask on the face.

In contrast to the boarding school, intended for girls from the higher classes, all girls could attend the external school, without regard for social class. The external school was free of payment. The principle was that the boarding school paid for the external school. Non-Catholic girls sometimes attended the external school.

Further Ursuline monasteries were founded in the Habsburg Hereditary Lands at Görz (1670) and Klagenfurt capital of Carinthia (1672). In 1673, the widowed Emperor Leopold I got married for the second time, to Claudia Felicitas of Tyrol, who found a common language with her step mother in law Eleónora Gonzaga of Mantua, where establishment of Ursuline convents was concerned. Eleónora was aged 43 and full of energy. Claudia and Eleónora in cooperation with the Leopold Kolonič Bishop of Wiener Neustadt prepared a plan to establish a new convent at Wiener Neustadt²². This was precisely the period after the discovery of the Wesselényi conspiracy, when the Counter Reformation in Hungary had a unique opportunity to strike decisive blows against Protestantism. One of the leading Catholic personalities in this process with the Archbishop of Esztergom with his seat in Trnava and Bratislava Juraj Selepčény²³. With the help of the monarch Leopold I, he succeeded in getting the new Ursuline monastery established in the capital of the Kingdom of Hungary, Bratislava²⁴. The Protestants were deprived of two churches within the town. The larger was given to the Jesuits on 1st January 1673, and the nearby small Protestant church went to the Ursulines²⁵. It was taken from the Protestants on 18th July 1672.

²¹ KÖLBL, A.: *Die Ursulinen in Wien 1660-1820*. Wien 1997. HINNER, D.: *Ziele und Aufgaben der Jesuiten, Piaristen, Ursulinen und Englischen Fräulein in österreichischen Schulwesen vor 1938*. Wien 1994. It is a manuscript stored in the seminar library of the History Institute of Vienna University (Historische Institut, Universität Wien).

²² Leopold Kolonič (Kolonich, Kollonics, Chollonitsch) – was educated at the Jesuit lower school in Komárno. From 1645, he studied at Vienna University. He became Bishop of Nitra in 1666 and Bishop of Wiener Neustadt in 1670. He was chairman of the commission of the special court in Bratislava, which convicted a large number of Protestants in 1673-1674. Later he became Primate of Hungary.

²³ Juraj Selepčény (1595-1685) (Szelepchényi, Szelepčényi, Juraj zo Slepčian, Slepčiansky, Pohronicus, Pohronec) was Archbishop of Esztergom with his seat in Trnava and Bratislava from 1666 to 1685. Before this, he was Bishop of Veszprém from 1644, and Bishop of Nitra from 1648. He came from a poor, originally Slovak yeoman family from the village of Slepčany in the County of Tekov. Archbishop Peter Pázmany sent him to study theology. He made every effort to continue Pázmany's effort to re-Catholicize Hungary. He settled Jesuits in Žilina and Rožnava, Brothers of Mercy in Bratislava, Piarists in Svätý Jur, Carmelites in Budapest and so on. He not only financially supported ecclesiastical aims, but especially the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. He gave about half a million gulden to support troops to fight the Turks. During the 1683 siege of Vienna, he gave all his silver for this aim, and food supplies from his Czech and Moravian properties to a value of 170,000 gulden, from which he gained the title Defender of Vienna.

²⁴ The foundation of the Bratislava Ursuline convent is described in detail in an older work: *Kurze Beschreibung der Entstehung des Nonnen – Klosters der heiligen Ursula in Pressburg*. Pressburg 1876.

²⁵ Bratislava Protestants of Slovak and Hungarian nationality built the church in the years 1658-1663. Ondrej Segner, an important member of Bratislava town council, made a great contribution to its construction. The site of the church was in the Jewish ghetto in the Middle Ages. At the time of the Turkish threat, the Jews left the town, and a decree was issued that they could never return. Therefore, the site was free and the Protestants could build a church there in Late Renaissance style. The church was taken from the Protestants after the discovery of Wesselényi's conspiracy. For more details see: BAGIN, A. – KRAJČI, J.: *Kostoly a kapinky hlavného mesta SSR Bratislavy (Churches and Chapels of the Capital of the Slovak Socialist Republic Bratislava)*. Trnava, Spolok sv. Vojtecha (Society of St. Vojtech) 1988, p. 81. *Geschichte der*

As I said above, the resources intended for the convent in Wiener Neustadt had to be used for the new convent in Bratislava. According to the ideas of the Claudia Felicitas of Tyrol and Eleóna Gonzaga of Mantua, the nuns would come from the circle of the Vienna Ursulines, but the head of the Ursuline convent in Vienna opposed this. She argued that the convent had been significantly weakened in recent years, since its nuns had founded two other convents at Görz in 1670 and Klagenfurt in 1672. Her letter to the convent at Cologne shows the Empress Claudia's leading role in founding the convent, describing the problems connected with founding a new Ursuline convent in the Kingdom of Hungary. This old, already established convent accepted her offer and committed itself to send some sisters to Hungary to found the new convent in cooperation with the convent at Liege.

The nuns travelled from Cologne to Vienna on 24th March 1673. After they arrived in Vienna, it was decided that they would wait until at least provisional accommodation was available for their new convent in Bratislava. They waited for three years in the Ursuline convent at Vienna. It was definitively decided that the Ursulines would really receive the small Protestant church only in 1675. They received the official letter of invitation from the Primate of Hungary Juraj Selepčény only on 11th June 1676. Two days later they left Vienna at half past two by boat and sailed to Bratislava. Two nuns came from Cologne, one from Liege, two from Vienna and there were one novice and two candidates.

In the first part of the paper, I documented the fact that the Ursulines usually came to places where the Jesuits were already active. They were a sort of female branch of the Jesuits. This scenario was also followed in Bratislava. The Jesuits came to Bratislava in 1608. The Society of Jesus first came in the form of a mission. Archbishop Peter Pázmany, himself originally a member of the Jesuit order, laid the foundation stone for the construction of a Jesuit residence and Catholic gymnasium by St. Martin's church. In 1630, the Bratislava residence was made a college.

In 1672, after discovery of the Wesselény conspiracy, the Bratislava Protestants were deprived of their large church. It was granted to the Jesuits on 1st January 1673. They added a large new college to the adjoining former Protestant school building²⁶. And the Ursulines? As I mentioned above, on 24th March 1673, the founders of the new Bratislava Ursuline convent left Cologne. With a dose of simplification, they can also be called the „Bratislava Jesuitesses“ in the sense that they followed the example of the life style of the Society of Jesus, and supplemented their activity by educating girls.

After coming to Bratislava, the Ursulines waited for the arrival of Archbishop Juraj Selepčény. He came two weeks later and received the nuns in his residence, assuring them of his support. He authorized the Ursulines to further extend their order in the Kingdom of Hungary. However, the financial and other securing of the Bratislava community was probably the most important thing. The discussions seem to have been successful, since immediately after the visit to the archbishop, they began to buy houses and land around the church of St. Mary of Loreto. They immediately began to plan the construction of the new convent²⁷. In the course of the first year of activity in Bratislava, they had 17 girls (so-called *Kostfräulein*) in the internal or boarding school and perhaps 100 girls in the external school.

In the following 18th century, the Congregation of Notre Dame was the typical female re-Catholicization order. It originated in Lorraine and spread to France, Luxembourg and Germany. Nuns from Mainz founded the first convent in Bavaria in Eichstätt. The first members of this order in Bratislava came precisely from Bavaria, from the convent at Stadtamhof near Regensburg. They appear in Bratislava on 1st December 1747. The Stadtamhof convent was established only a few years earlier, in 1733. Its position is very similar to that of the Bratislava convent. It was situated by the Danube on land only recently made suitable for building by regulation of the river. It was outside the old town walls. The construction of the convents of Notre Dame in Stadtamhof and Bratislava meant significant modernization and growth of the towns, although the coming of the Congregation of Notre

evangelischen Kirchengemeinde A.B. zu Pozsony – Pressburg. I. Teil. Der äussere Entwicklungsgang der Gemeinde. Von Josef Schrödl. Übersetzt von Johann Pfeifer. Pozsony 1906

²⁶ KRAPKA, E. – MIKULA, V.: *Dejiny Spoločnosti Ježišovej na Slovensku (History of the Society of Jesus in Slovakia)*. Cambridge 1990, p. 105.

²⁷ The monastery was already built in 1676. A new street, Uršulínska ulica was created around the long building. It was divided into two parts. Little Uršulínska ulica went from the present Primaciálne námestie to Laurinská ulica. Greater Uršulínska ulica went from Primaciálne námestie to Námestie Slovenského národného povstania. HORVÁTH, V.: *Bratislavský topografický lexikón (Topographical Dictionary of Bratislava)*. Bratislava, Tatran 1990, p. 298.

Dame also understandably meant a further step towards re-Catholicization and the Counter Reformation. The view of re-Catholicization as a type of modernization of society is confirmed here²⁸.

Precisely in the period of foundation of the convent at Stadtamhof in 1733, Countess Juditha Antonia Oneil, born Maholányi, from Bratislava and the 45 year old wife of an imperial general came to Bavaria with three nieces. She accompanied her husband, who was fulfilling his duties. The countess was childless, but looked after three orphaned nieces. Since she could not live directly with the general in his barracks and military camps, she lived for a time in the convent. Her nieces were there for two and a half years²⁹.

They returned to Bratislava in 1735. Political relations between Austria and Bavaria significantly deteriorated in the following period. This culminated in the War of the Austrian Succession of 1740-1745. Soon after signing of the Treaty of Dresden in 1745, Countess Maholányi, whose husband Count Oneil had died in 1743, started activity connected with establishing a convent of the Congregation of Notre Dame in Bratislava³⁰.

On 18th August 1746, 14 years after leaving Stadtamhof, Maholányi wrote to the head of the convent at Stadtamhof that she wanted to found a new convent of this order in Bratislava. On 26th October 1747, she announced that she had received permission from Queen Maria Theresa to establish the convent. It was agreed in advance that 6 nuns would come from Regensburg to Bratislava³¹. On 4th November 1747 at Stadtamhof, Countess Maholányi met the head of the convent Maria Sebastiana Schinelinn and concluded an agreement, the text of which was preserved in the Diocesan Archives in Regensburg³²:

1. Countess Maholányi makes her house in Bratislava available to the order. The nuns can live and work there until the new convent and school are built.

2. She has deposited 18,000 gulden in a Vienna bank at 5% interest to provide financial support for the nuns. The annual 5% interest will represent a total of 900 gulden. Since 6 nuns would come, this will mean 150 gulden each. This is the basic, so-called Oneil endowment of the convent.

3. All transport expenses will be paid.

The future founders of the Bratislava convent left Regensburg on 11th November 1747 and arrived in Bratislava on 1st December 1747. Their first home was the house of Countess Maholányi. In 1749, there were 12 girls in the boarding school, in 1750 19 and in 1751 27. They included daughters from leading families, such as Elizabeth Nádasdy, Marianna and Cecilia Erdödy, Klara Grassalkowitsch and Charlotta Pálffy. Girls usually stayed in the boarding school for one year, but there were also some, who only stayed for a few weeks, for example Anna Maria Forgács in summer 1748 for 5 weeks, Jozefa and Theresia Csaky in November – December 1748 for 6 weeks³³. The income of the Congregation of Notre Dame can be divided into the following groups: 1. Income from endowments, 2. Loans, 3. Gifts, 4. Sale or letting of property, 5. Payments from pupils.

1. The convent had income from various endowments. The capital was usually deposited in a bank, for example the Oneil endowment in the Vienna city bank in the form of 8 obligations for 2,250 gulden. The obligations were deposited at 5% interest. Every quarter year the Notre Dame Sisters received interest of 225 gulden³⁴. It is also possible to mention the Nádasdy endowment, the Révay endowment and the endowment of Maria Theresia from 1749, deposited in the treasury of the Bratislava city parish. Four hundred gulden had to be paid each year from this endowment to the convent of Notre Dame in Bratislava³⁵.

2. Interesting new items begin to appear in the account books of the convent in connection with the planned construction of a new convent, school and church, especially after the Congregation

²⁸ BACKMUND, Norbert: *Die Chorherrenorden und ihre Stifte in Bayern*. Passau: Neue Presse Verlags, 1966, p. 140. REINHARD, Wolfgang: *Gegenreformationals Modernisierung?* In: *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 68, 1977, p. 226 and following.

²⁹ KAMENICKÝ, Miroslav: *Rehoľa Notre Dame v Bratislave (The Congregation of Notre Dame in Bratislava)*. In: *Trnavská univerzita 1635-1777:360. výročie. (Trnava University 1635-1777: 360th Anniversary)*. Trnava 1996, p. 331-343.

³⁰ Archív mesta Bratislavy (Archive of the City of Bratislava, below only AmB), Kláštor, Notre Dame, krabica č. 6. Tam rukopis Pressburg. Neue Stiftung eines Ordens-haus. (Convents, Notre Dame, box no.6. Manuscript Pressburg).

³¹ AmB, Kláštor, Notre Dame, krabica č. 6. Tam rukopis Pressburg. Neue Stiftung eines Ordens-haus.

³² Diözesanarchiv Regensburg (below only DR), Kloster (Kl), Notre Dame, Kl. 105/1, Pad. 13.

³³ AmB, Kláštor, Notre Dame, B.4. b.1/3.

³⁴ Ibid., IV.B. 4.b.1/4.

³⁵ Ibid., books of income and expenditure of the convent.

of Notre Dame received permission to collect money for this purpose in 1750). Various people, ecclesiastical dignitaries, noblemen and burghers paid larger sums of money to the convent treasury. However, they did not give the money as a gift, but for 6% interest. For example, Althann Bishop of Vác donated a gift of 1000 gulden and then another 1000 gulden, which he deposited for 6% interest. The interest was paid every quarter year. The interest for a quarter of a year was 15 gulden, and was paid from the convent treasury regularly until the client took the full amount of money back from the convent.

The amount of cash obtained by the Congregation of Notre Dame in this was really huge. However, the second question was whether they would be able to repay their obligations³⁶.

Friendly orders also provided help with building the convent. The Bratislava Elizabethines donated 1500 gulden in 1751 and lent another 1600 gulden at 6% interest. The Society of Jesus gave 4400 gulden at 5% interest and the Trinitarians 1000 gulden at 5% interest. The Fraternity of St. Stephen deposited 1000 gulden at 6% interest on 1st September 1751.

3. Apart from loans, the convent received numerous gifts, for example, 1000 gulden from Jozef Erdödy, 3000 gulden from Judita Alberstorf and so on³⁷.

4. The convent recorded its first income from rent for property in the town in 1749. It was paid for property bequeathed to the convent by benefactors. In 1755, the convent sold two houses in the town to the burgher Szgolanicz for 8000 gulden.

5. The school fee in the first period of existence of the convent was 150 gulden. Some girls received special grants from the monarch to cover the cost of attending the boarding school, or future nuns received it for their first year as novices. For example, Marianna Hasling received 500 gulden for her first year as a novice in 1751³⁸.

The financial situation of the convent rapidly worsened after 1757. The nuns incorrectly estimated their possibilities in connection with the high interest rate burden of borrowed money and the relatively low price of the service provided in the boarding school. They were saved from complete bankruptcy by a financial injection from Maria Theresia, who visited the convent several times and later ordered payments to the convent to cover its debts (1771: 12,000 gulden, 1774: 24,000 gulden)³⁹.

The only condition for acceptance into the boarding school of the Notre Dame convent in the 18th century was ability to pay. By the end of the 18th century, it was necessary to pay in advance 178 gulden 10 kreuzers for food and accommodation for the next year. It was also necessary to pay in advance a deposit of 60 gulden for irregular expenses. Girls had to bring the following to the boarding school: clothing, blue dresses are especially mentioned, as a sort of school uniform for pupils in the boarding school, 12 napkins, bed linen, 2 tablecloths⁴⁰.

The monastic rule of the Congregation of Notre Dame decreed teaching of girls without payment. This covered the following subjects: religious education, German and French languages and writing, geography, history, accounting and handwork. Emphasis was placed especially on good mastery of the French language. Pupils in the boarding school could pay for optional courses: Hungarian (3 gulden a month), Italian (3 gulden a month), drawing (3 gulden a month), dance (3 gulden a month), music (1 ducat a year). Various external teachers taught these subjects. The Congregation of Notre Dame devoted great attention to music. Notable artists such as Henrich Klein and Ján Gottwald taught it⁴¹.

The theatrical performances of the pupils of the Notre Dame convent school were very important. We have a large number of reports from contemporary newspapers, especially the

³⁶ Ibid., books of income and expenditure of the convent.

³⁷ All these are actually sponsorship gifts from parents of pupils in the convent. AmB, ND, IV.B. 4.b. 1/3. 1/4.

³⁸ AmB, ND, IV.B. 4.b. 1/3. 1/4.

³⁹ SCHAFFER, J.: *Kanonický svätého Augustína Kongregácie Notre Dame. Ich počiatky a účinkovanie. Podľa originálnych prameňov spracoval Josef Schäffer, profesor náboženstva na reálnej škole v Bratislave. The Canonesses of St. Augustine of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Their beginnings and activities. Written according to the original sources by Josef Schäffer, teacher of religious education at a secondary school in Bratislava.* Manuscript without indication of place and date of publication.

⁴⁰ AmB, ND, krabica č. 6.

⁴¹ ŠTIBRANÁ, Ingrid: *Život šľachtických chovaniak v bratislavskom konvikte Notre Dame v druhej polovici 18. storočia.* (*Life of the noble pupils in the Bratislava convent boarding school of Notre Dame in the second half of the 18th century.*) In: *Zborník mestského múzea, Bratislava, XIV, 2002, p. 35 and following.*

Pressburger Zeitung. They were performed in French, the language comprehensible to the nobility of the whole of Europe. French was one of the most important subjects in the boarding school. Performances were a practical way of learning French. The first known performance was held in 1751. They were intended only for a limited group⁴².

Girls came to the boarding school of the Notre Dame convent from the immediate and further surroundings. Apart from Hungary, they came from Upper and Lower Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, Poland, Silesia, Croatia and even Transylvania.

Pupils of the Notre Dame convent boarding school had to observe strict internal regulations. The main content of their lives was prayer and study. Apart from enclosure and silence, that is a rule of silence at certain times of day, when they had to turn to spiritual things, there was long-term separation from their parents, since holidays did not exist. The prefect of the school had direct responsibility for the pupils. She submitted a weekly report to the head of the convent about the current situation in the pupils' accommodation.

On ordinary days, the girls had to dress simply, and were forbidden to wear silk. On Sundays, feast days and walks outside the convent, they wore elegant light blue dresses. Food and medical care were on a good level. The girls in the boarding school did not lack oranges, lemons and French cheeses⁴³.

The Empress Maria Theresia took a personal interest in the Bratislava convent. Correspondence between her and the head of the convent is preserved. We learn from it that some girls were at the Notre Dame convent on the personal request and recommendation of Maria Theresia. She continued to take an interest in them. For example, in one letter she wrote: „I send to you, your and also my pupils. Take good care that they spend their time usefully. Miss La Normand should devote special attention to Italian, so that she can read accurately and quickly. She should also learn German and French. Miss La David can devote her attention to music”⁴⁴.

Where the daily routine is concerned, it is necessary to distinguish between the daily routine of the nuns, anchored in the rule and the daily routine of the boarding school pupils. The daily routine of the nuns was as follows: 4.00 get up, 4.30 meditation, 5.00 matutinum, laudes and prime, breakfast, tertia, sexta, convent Mass, TEACHING. The nuns spent the time between the end of teaching and lunch in their rooms – prayer, spiritual reading, and spiritual exercises. LUNCH – accompanied by reading from a religious book, 12.00 Loreto litany, rest, 13.00 continued teaching, 15.00 vespers – but only for nuns without study duties, 17.00 compline, 18.00 evening meal followed by rest until 21.00, litany to all the saints. Before going to sleep every nun had to think of an idea for meditation on the next day⁴⁵.

According to these general regulations, every convent of the order worked out its own regulations for its nuns and pupils. The main activities for the pupils were understandably prayer and study. The boarding school pupils generally got up at five o'clock in the morning. Religious meditation, Holy Mass and breakfast followed this. After breakfast there were school lessons until lunchtime. After lunch there was usually rest. Teaching continued from 13.00 until 17.00. It was followed by the rosary and litany. The evening meal was at 20.00. On Sundays and feast days they got up later (7.00). There was a longer Mass in the morning, with walks and learning of the catechism in the afternoon⁴⁶.

The original six nuns increased to nine in 1750. They had 31 girls in the boarding school and 78 in the external school. The number of nuns, boarding pupils and external pupils constantly

⁴² PINTÉR, Marta Zsuzsanna: *Francia nyelvű színelőadások Pozsonyban. (Education of girls in the French Language in Bratislava)*. In: *Bratislava – Pressburg – Pozsony*. Bratislava 1990, p. 53 and following.

⁴³ ŠTIBRANÁ, Ingrid: *Život šľachtických chovaniak v bratislavskom konvikte Notre Dame v druhej polovici 18. storočia. (Life of the noble pupils in the Bratislava convent boarding school of Notre Dame in the second half of the 18th century.)* In: *Zborník mestského múzea*, Bratislava, XIV, 2002, p. 35 and following.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 41.

⁴⁵ HEIMBUCHER, M.: *Die Orden und Kongregationen der katholischen Kirche*. 1. Band. München, Paderborn, Wien 1965.

⁴⁶ ŠTIBRANÁ, Ingrid: *Život šľachtických chovaniak v bratislavskom konvikte Notre Dame v druhej polovici 18. storočia. (Life of the noble pupils in the Bratislava convent boarding school of Notre Dame in the second half of the 18th century.)* In: *Zborník mestského múzea*, Bratislava, XIV, 2002, p. 35 and following.

increased. In 1784 there were 46 nuns, 50 girls in the boarding school and about 300 in the external school⁴⁷.

Apart from the boarding school mainly for the education of girls from noble families, a so-called external or four-class public school, which also accepted pupils from the lower classes, also operated at the convent from the beginning. If we take the boarding and external school together, girls from noble families made up 3-4% of the pupils of the Congregation of Notre Dame in Bratislava, middle class girls made up 45-69%, and girls from the lower classes formed 28-51%⁴⁸. Teaching in this period in the external school followed the general curriculum for the main school. Apart from subjects of study, the first class had teaching of reading, divided into training in the Latin and German alphabets. The second class had reading of printed texts, grammar, dictation, arithmetic and basic social science from the second volume of the textbook by Ignác Felbiger. The third class continued study of the Gospels and of the German language. The fourth class learnt calligraphy and writing of public legal documents such as exchange, wills and various kinds of letter, geography and natural science. The school also included a so-called „work school“, in which the girls were taught to sew, knitting and various kinds of handwork. The language of teaching was German. French was understandably not required from the lower class girls in the external school. However, it was offered as an optional subject or a sort of reward for the best pupils.

Surviving portraits of the boarders are an interesting and remarkable source on the pupils in the boarding school of the Notre Dame convent in the 18th century⁴⁹. I only emphasize in this place that it is a matter of group portraits of the girls in their school uniform (blue dresses) with the attributes of individual subjects of study. The portraits decorated the walls of the boarding school (class room, dining room, corridors).

In my paper, I wanted to point to the activity of the Ursulines and Notre Dame Sisters, two typical re-Catholicization and Counter Reformation female orders. The Counter Reformation had various forms. Apart from the forcible methods, the approaches of the male and female religious orders were more effective. They aimed to educate children from an early age to renew Catholicism and strengthen its position.

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⁴⁷ SCHAFFER, J.: *op. cit.* See note 39.

⁴⁸ KOWALSKÁ, Eva: *Horizonte der Mädchenausbildung im 18. Jahrhundert*. In: Čičaj, V. – Pickl, O.: *Städtisches Alltagsleben in Mitteleuropa vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Bratislava: Academic Electronic Press 1998, p. 197-199.

⁴⁹ ŠTIBRANÁ, Ingrid: *Život šľachtických chovaniiek v bratislavskom konvikte Notre Dame v druhej polovici 18. storočia*. (*Life of the noble pupils in the Bratislava convent boarding school of Notre Dame in the second half of the 18th century*.) In: *Zborník mestského múzea*, Bratislava, XIV, 2002, p. 35 and following.