
NOTES

The Religious Reforms of Joseph II (1780-1790) and their Economic Significance

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Introduction

The religious reforms of Joseph II were embodied in two laws, following each other within a few months: The *Toleranzpatent* of October 1781 and the secularization edict of January 1782, eventually resulting in the secularization of one third of the Austrian monasteries. Both laws were inspired by economic considerations. The first of the two laws — even though it concerned itself with the broad issue of religious tolerance — aimed to increase the supply of skilled craftsmen, while the second was designed to decrease monastic idleness. In a broad sense then, both laws aimed to increase the labour supply. The secularization edict also aimed to reduce the extent of tax-exempt monastic real estate.

The Toleranzpatent of 1781

Austria had to pay the price of the Catholic Counter-Reformation with the virtual extermination by the Catholic reaction of the more skilled crafts in towns, constituting a bulwark of Protestantism. The motivation of religious tolerance was *essentially* Mercantilistic: handicrafts were to be stimulated by encouraging immigration of Protestant craftsmen and discouraging their emigration.¹ “The Counter-Reformation had broken simultaneously the power of the bourgeoisie and also the crafts. Those who had initiative, were strong willed and of strong character, would not bend, but would rather face

* Thoughtful criticisms of an earlier draft by John Komlos are gratefully acknowledged.

¹ ERNST TOMEK, *Kirchengeschichte Österreichs* (Innsbruck-Wien-München: Tyrolia Verlag, 1959), Vol. 3, pp. 374-375.

death or go into exile. To this group belonged the most useful and talented elements of craftsmen".²

After the end of the Thirty Years War complaints in large numbers reached the Imperial officialdom in Vienna from all over the provinces about the disintegration of the skilled crafts and about the shoddiness of craft products.³ To alleviate this problem decrees of 1725 by Emperor Charles VI stipulated that journeymen crafts constituting a guild would be allowed to open their own shop without obtaining the status and right of a master from the guild. These relaxations were at first limited to Vienna and Lower Austria, but shortly after were extended to Bohemia. The purpose of these decrees was not to lower the standards of the crafts but rather to circumvent a fundamental principle of the state: only Catholics could be citizens of Austria and only Catholics could become guild masters. Consequently, until 1725 Protestants were precluded from making a career in a craft. Now thousands of skilled Protestant immigrants from other parts of Germany moved into Austria.⁴ A few crafts, such as pharmacists, butchers, plasterers, carpenters and blacksmiths remained unaffected by these new decrees.

Thus, there were significant economically inspired antecedents for Joseph's greater religious tolerance. Nevertheless, during the reign of the Empress Maria Theresa — Joseph II's Mother — known for her devout piety, some Protestants from Upper Austria who proved to be "inconvertible" were expelled to Siebenburgen.⁵

Joseph II could not implement religious toleration during the period of the coregency (1765-1780) with Maria Theresa, but could pursue such a policy only after her death. While Joseph II did not share Frederick the Great's notion "that any subject might attain his salvation in any way that seems best to him, he was nevertheless anxious to that religious nonconformity and obduracy from causing the state to lose the productive services of some individuals".⁶

With the *Toleranzpatent* of October 1781 Joseph II was willing to grant the status of citizenship to selected groups of non-Catholics in order to be free to engage in agriculture or in a craft to the greater benefit of the state. We have tried to show that the *Toleranzpatent* was not inspired by a broad liberal ideology but rather by narrower mercantilistic economic considera-

² HEINRICH RESCHANA, *Geschichte des Kampfes der Handwerkerzünfte und der Kaufmannsgremien mit der Österreichischen Bureaukratie (Vom Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts bis zum Jahre 1860)*. (Wien: Verlage der Manz'schen K.K. Hofverlags und Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1882), p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ JOSEPH WODKA, *Kirche in Österreich* (Wien: Verlag Herder, 1959) p. 268.

⁶ PAUL P. BERNARD, "Joseph II and the Jews; the Origins of the toleration Patent of 1782, in *Austrian History Year book 1968-69 pp. 101-102*.

tions. The initial *Toleranzpatent* of October 1781 was not a law of general tolerance, as the name may suggest, but was narrowly circumscribed. The edict applied only to Lutherans, Calvinists and Greek Orthodox, but other Protestant splinter sects, especially numerous in Bohemia, and Jews remained excluded.⁷ To deal with stubborn individuals who persisted in proclaiming their adherence to one or the other of such sects, Joseph II instructed officials to give these people 24 blows with a cane to induce them to declare themselves for one of the major religions.⁸

Even for the Lutherans, Calvinists and Orthodox Catholics the *Toleranzpatent* delivered only circumscribed religious freedom. For congregations with less than 100 families, religious services were allowed to take place only in private homes. The several hundred people constituting about 100 families must surely have constituted a large multiple of what could be accommodated for a family service in a craftsman's home. In localities, where 100 or more families belonged to one or the other of these non-Catholic religions these nonconformists were allowed to build a church. Such a church, however, was not allowed to have a direct entrance from the street and was not to have any bells. These restrictions, especially the one hundred family "limitation", constituted an ingenuous harrassment suggesting that true tolerance was not part of the game.

In the case of mixed marriages of a Catholic father with a non-Catholic woman, all the children were to be raised in the Catholic faith. However, in the other case of a mixed marriage between a non-Catholic father and a Catholic mother, at least the daughters were to be raised as Catholics.⁹

As mentioned earlier, Jews were not covered by the *Toleranzpatent* of 1781. There was apparently considerable haggling in the *Staatsrat* whether and how to include the Jews in the *Toleranzpatent*. In the end the more conservative sentiments won out, at least temporarily. In this dispute Joseph II sided with the more liberal faction.

Jews had been formally banned from most Austrian provinces and—more importantly—also from Vienna by 1670. However, by 1690 some Jews were once more allowed to live in Vienna. This privilege required special letters of toleration which were issued—in turn—for the payment of a heavy tax. These letters were limited to heads of families, their wives and children. Maria Theresa viewed Jews as a necessary evil and refused many such applications. She consistently limited those "tolerated" to below 25 families or approximately 550 individuals.¹⁰

⁷ PAUL P. BERNARD, *Joseph II* (New York: Treaayne Publischers, 1968), p. 109; also Paul von Mitrofanov, *Joseph II, Seine Politische und Kulturelle Tätigkeit* (Wien: C.W. Stern, 1910), pp. 712-714.

⁸ PAUL B. BERNARD, *Joseph II*, p. 109.

⁹ MITROFANOV, *op. cit.*, p. 714.

¹⁰ PAUL P. BERNARD, *Joseph II Jews. op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.

Their status was only improved gradually by a number of decrees between 1782-1789. By virtue of these decrees Jews were allowed to live in Vienna but for this privilege had to pay a "tolerance tax". They were also granted eventually the right to learn a skilled craft, to attend the university, to have Christian servants. When travelling through Vienna, they were allowed to rest there without restrictions to time and place. They were also given the right of free movement during holidays at any hour of the day.¹¹

In spite or because of the economically inspired *Toleranzpatent*, it was officially emphasized "the perpetuation of the sole redeeming Catholic church... remained His Majesty's dearest duty..."¹² Apparently the *Toleranzpatent* of October 1781 had resulted in a greater number of protestant conversions than had been anticipated and this became a cause of apprehension. One source reports that by the end of October 1782, 73,222 Protestants had been registered.¹³ A decree of 1 January 1783 put an end to unencumbered conversions to protestant denominations. Subsequently anybody who wished to convert had to submit to a six-week period of "probation" in a parish building or cloister. What euphemistically was called "a period of probation", was for all practical purposes an incarceration. It was the stated purpose of "the period of probation" to dissuade prospective apostates to carry out their plans. Protestant pastors were prohibited to visit the secluded candidates of conversion.¹⁴ It also needs to be noted, that during this period of unproductive isolation, a craftsman was unable to provide for his family. A decree of April 1783 stipulated that for participation in the sanctioned Protestant religious services an official pass was necessary.¹⁵ It was further ordered that anyone who resisted the six-week "period of probation" and concomitant instruction or disrupted the instruction by loud and unseemly behaviour were to be caned severely "as a disobedient" subject.¹⁶

The *Toleranzpatent* thus applied only to specifically enumerated non-Catholic denominations. It was by no means a general charter of religious tolerance. Secondly, even those favoured denominations were subject to severe restrictions when they wanted to build a church. Thirdly, as discussed above, as of 1 January 1793 prospective apostates of the Catholic faith had to submit to a six-week isolated period of probation and systematic harrassment.

¹¹ MITROFANOV, *op. cit.*, pp. 722-723.

¹² Court decree of 8 March, 1782 as quoted by Mitrofanov, *op. cit.*, p. 716.

¹³ GUSTAV FRANK, *Das Toleranzpatent Kaiser Joseph II*, (Wien: K.K. Evang. Oberkirchenrat, 1881), p. 79.

¹⁴ Mitrofanov, *op. cit.*, p. 716. We have not been able to determine what the provision of food and lodging were during this period of isolation.

¹⁵ GUSTAV FRANK, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

2. The secularization of church property, 1782

The secularization of church property resulting from a decree of 12 January 1782 terminated eventually approximately one third of the Austrian monasteries. It was a unique, drastic confiscation of church property carried out by a Catholic ruler who — at the same time — remained in the grace of the church as a faithful son. In contrast to the secularization carried out by Henry VIII in England the clerical assets confiscated by Joseph II were transformed into the *Religiousfond* for the furtherance of the Catholic religion. More on that later. The motivation for this drastic move was essentially economic. The contemplative and even more so the mendicant orders were offensive to Joseph II.¹⁷ Beggars, no matter whether the more common variety or monks were just plain offensive to Joseph II and he was intent to suppress this evil.¹⁸

It was the duty of every member of society to contribute with work to the general welfare of society. The clergy, either secular or cloistered, was expected to meet these obligations to society by providing religious services such as baptisms, marriage and to the dying comfort and last rites. These religious services and also social services provided by the church, such as teaching and caring for the sick, were profoundly welcomed by Joseph II. Nothing could be further from the truth than to view the position of Joseph as anticlerical; it may be conceived, more correctly, as anti-monastic. The epoch of Joseph II aimed for a welfare state within which the focus of the church was not to be transcendental or other-worldly but rather to further the worldly moral well-being of society. Consequently, Josephism was appreciative of the pastoral activities of the Church, but at the same time was critical of the contemplative and ascetic monasticism.¹⁹ As was already observed, Joseph II remained within the fold of the church in spite of his extensive and aggressive move against the monasteries.

Some antecedents to this confrontation need to be recounted. Discord between Church and Crown on various economic issues, especially taxation, and some judicial prerogatives were chronic over time. The intensity of these

¹⁷ E.g., Mitrovanov, *op. cit.*, p. 685.

¹⁸ E.g., A Proclamation (*Nachricht*) of 11 October, 1783 in *Zinzendorf Nachlass* (Haus-Hof und Staatsarchiv) vol. 146b, p. 785. In this Proclamation which was posted, the general public is reminded that begging is strictly prohibited, that the truly handicapped are provided for by various endowments and that His Majesty for the purpose of exterminating idleness has provided a poor house, where those in need of work can earn a sustenance.

It is further made known that beggars of either sex in any locality will be taken to police stockades and "punished appropriately". All residents of Vienna are exhorted not to give alms to beggars in churches or other localities, but rather reject the beggars and make gifts to the General Endowment for the Poor.

¹⁹ Joseph Wodka, *Kirche in Österreich* (Wien: Verlag Herder, 1959), pp. 299-301.

struggles had clearly increased already during the reign of Maria Theresa, the devoutly religious mother of Joseph II.

The economic frictions between Church and Crown can be traced back to the XIVth Century. As is well known, these frictions arose primarily out of the large-scale bequeathing of immobile capital to the church. In this context, the church was referred to as the "dead hand", because wealth bequeathed to the church remained "in the hands" of the church forever.²⁰

The Church demanded for its wealth complete immunity from taxation. In order to limit the increasing quantity of non-taxable estates by virtue of Church ownership, rulers since the XIVth century promulgated laws prohibiting (with varying degrees of success) further accumulation of estates by "the dead hand" (*de non amortizando*) or, at least, made such acquisitions dependent on approval by the Crown.

In this context, the famous councillor of Maria Theresa, Johann von Sonnenfels, a converted Jew, observed that in granting tax immunity to clerical estates and in setting aside the amortization laws, rulers were very generous and profligate. According to Sonnenfels this generosity frequently constituted a bribe in order not to be castigated by the Church for some immoral conduct.²¹ He observes that such deeds were frequently given on the part of the dying in the hope of achieving salvation. This generosity was clearly to the disadvantage of legal heirs and resulted in the impoverishment of the fiscal system.

Maria Theresa desired to circumscribe the economic and juridical freedoms of the Church. These aims were part of a broader policy towards a centralized administration of the Monarchy with uniform laws replacing a more feederalized structure.²² A possible partial secularization of estates belonging to monasteries was apparently aired under her reign. The funds realized were to be devoted to religious purposes. Nothing came of these early discussions. However, Joseph II implemented such a policy in 1782. Maria Theresa opposed, in part successfully, the judiciary power of the church subjecting laymen to penalties and condemning members of religious orders to imprisonments in special jails within monasteries. Similarly, the state contested the right of churches to offer asylum. In 1754 and again in 1771 Maria Theresa ordered a reduction of religious holidays which had an adverse effect on productivity. In 1755 it was further ordered that the Church had to notify the government

²⁰ E.g., Meyer's *Konversationslexikon* (Leipzig and Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1908), vol. 1, p. 449.

²¹ Johann von Sonnenfels, *Grundsätze der Polizey, Handlung- und Finanz* (Wien: K.K. Hofdruckerei, 1787), 3 parts, Vol. 3, pp. 184-186.

²² ADAM WOLF, *Die Aufhebung der Klöster in Innerösterreich, 1782-1790. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Kaiser Joseph II* (Wien: Wilhelm Braunnüller, K.K. Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler), pp. 2ff.

of every excommunication. In 1779 it was decreed that all religious fines would have to be explicitly sanctioned by the government.

Joseph II, as mentioned above, desired above all that all citizens of his realm, worldly or clerical, be "useful", that is to say, productive. Secondly, he was greatly concerned that under the present state of affairs the administration of the sacraments — really the main function of a Catholic clergy, as well as teaching the young "Christian principles" — was organized very inefficiently.²³ In this respect, Joseph II was led by modern concepts.

Joseph II argued that, to provide such services efficiently, the entire monarchy should be treated as a unit. He observed that, unfortunately, there prevailed an unequal provision of such services throughout the monarchy. Bishops, dioceses and monasteries were parochially interested in increasing only their own wealth and were fundamentally lacking in the motivation to look at the problem in broad terms.

In order to appreciate the criticisms and proposed reforms of Joseph II, it must be realized that formal education was at that time virtually a church monopoly. The *handbillet* of 1783 actually contains detailed suggestions for the construction of a master table of the entire monarchy recording all Church properties and income and also all requisite expenses for religious services. I am unaware that such a table was ever executed. Joseph II for administrative purposes seems to have greatly preferred secular priests — conceived by him as somewhat similar to public servants — over priests belonging to different orders, imbued with parochial loyalties to these orders.

Joseph II, like many of his contemporaries at home and abroad, had an ambivalent attitude towards poverty. In passing one might observe that a similar ambivalence continues into the present day. On the one hand, there is concern for an adequate safety net, but on the other hand, many people are also concerned that "excessive" provision for the poor encourages idleness. No society appears to be able to construct an adequate safety net without some undesirable consequences.²⁴

The basic law for a partial secularization of monasteries was promulgated on 12 January, 1782. Orders of the Emperor to the Court Chancellery of 13 January elaborated important procedural details. The decrees of January 1782 ordered the closing of all contemplative and mendicant monasteries but also applied to others, which were in some way morally tainted or which were fi-

²³ E.g., *Handbillet* of Joseph II of 17 January, 1783, to Baron Kresel (Hofkammerarchiv: Geistliche Domänen), red. No. 1, Fol. 20-23.

²⁴ The ambivalence on these matters in English society is already reflected by the consolidation of the Elizabethan Poor Laws in 1601, the first nationwide legal system of social security. At the same time, there also were harsh laws on the books providing for flogging and branding of habitual vagabonds. E.g., E.M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief* (Cambridge University Press, 1900), p. 70.

nancially mismanaged and/or in financial difficulties. The clerical assets — mobile and immobile — confiscated by the state became part of the new *Religionfond* (by decree of 28 February, 1782). This state-operated endowment was devoted to “the furtherance of [the Catholic] religion and brotherly love”. It was only terminated in 1938 after Hitler annexed Austria! Some of the specific responsibilities of the *Religionfond* will be discussed below. By 1789 the Fond had received assets valued at 89 million florins.²⁵ The Emperor favoured the quick sale or lease of confiscated estates at low prices and low rents, since he was opposed to the operation of large state-owned estates. The former church estates were apparently largely bought up at low prices by bureaucrats on the inside tracks. Invaluable art objects, libraries and archives were also sold at low prices, scattered or simply abandoned. Some of the monastic buildings were converted into hospitals, asylums, apartments and army barracks.²⁶

The actual secularization started in Styria on 22 January, 1782 and continued until February 1786. The immediate cause for the action were disorderly conditions in two monasteries in Lower Austria. The law had very specific procedural provision and was carried out in some provinces in the midst of winter with great speed. One may surmise that the procedural details may have been worked out secretly well in advance and commissars may have been put in place secretly in advance to execute sequestrations in order to prevent hiding and transfer of treasure.

The provincial administration were instructed to furnish a competent commissar for each secularization procedure and also a competent bookkeeper. The commissar was to convene all the members of the monastery and was to read to the congregation “while observing the most modest demeanour” His Majesty’s decree. The abbot or prioress, in turn, was obliged to sign a protocol stating that the decree had been read. After this proclamation the commissar was to ask for the keys to strong boxes, rooms containing church treasures, archives, supplies of food and, in turn, was to seal everything not necessary for daily use. An inventory was to be taken of the sealed assets. Whoever administered the economic affairs of a monastery, whether a worldly bailiff or a member of the monastery was obliged to swear to the commissar that no assets had been concealed or diverted. False swearing would expose the individual to prosecution.

The secularization decree stipulated pensions and moving expenses for the members of the terminated monasteries: 1) the novices who had not yet rendered their religious vows were to receive each 150 florins and were to leave within four weeks. 2) Those nuns and monks who transferred to other mona-

²⁵ Lorenz Mikoletzky, *Kaiser Joseph II, Herrscher Zwischen den Zeiten* (Göttingen: Musterchmidt Verlag, 1979), p. 78.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Mitrovanov, *op. cit.*, p. 682.

steries would receive yearly pensions of 150, 200, or 300 florins depending on the holy order they belonged to. Those who decided to leave Austria and to go into monasteries in a foreign country were to be provided with a passport and appropriate travel money but excluded from any further pension. This limitation was probably motivated to stem adverse effects on the balance of payments induced by such remittances. 3) Those monks who opted to become worldly priests were provided with a pension of 300 florins until they were able to obtain a salary from a parish.²⁷ 4) All members of secularized monasteries were to depart within five months. For this interim period all monks would receive a daily allowance for food, drink and clothing of 40 kreuzer (60 kreuzer equal one florin), but nuns would receive only 30 kreuzer while prelates would be paid 3 florins. In addition, all were allowed fire wood from existing stocks. 5) Special provisions were made for the very old or sick monks and nuns who could not move to another monastery. 6) All cash balances of secularized monasteries were to be transferred to the state.

In 1770 there existed in Austria, in its German and Hungarian provinces 2153 monasteries. Of these 1562 were for monks and 591 for nuns. By 1786 738 monasteries had been closed, namely 477 for monks and 261 for nuns. This came to somewhat less than one third of the previously existing male monasteries and about one half of the nuneries. It may be inferred from these figures that — not surprisingly — a higher proportion of nuns were in contemplative and mendicant orders that was the case for monks. The monasteries were of very unequal wealth and size. One source gives the average membership of a monastery as about 20; this would give an initial total figure for monastic members of approximately 43,000 of which 15,000 were affected by the secularization.

Initial secularizations were better organized and more carefully inventoried than later ones.²⁸ In subsequent years the clergy succeeded in sequestering substantial amounts of wealth long before the commissars appeared at the monastery.

News of the momentous policy of 1782 of secularization of extensive church properties quickly reached Rome. Pope Pius VI decided already in January 1782 to travel to Vienna in order to persuade Joseph II to reverse his policies.²⁹ Joseph II had indicated to the papal nuncio beforehand that while the Pope would be received with the greatest honours nevertheless the Empe-

²⁷ It is to be noted that a pension of 300 florins represents the maximum on the scale given above. This generous provision is in accord with the preference of Joseph II for worldly priests, mentioned earlier.

²⁸ Wolf, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

²⁹ A summary of the Pope's journey is given by Wolf, *op. cit.* The most detailed and authoritative treatment of it is by Hans Schlitter, *Die Reise des Papstes Pius VI nach Wien und sein Anfechtung Darselbst* (Wien: F. Tempsky, 1892).

ror would make no concessions to his principles.³⁰ The Pope left Rome on February 27, travelling incognito and thus did not receive official honours from the Austrian government. He arrived in Vienna on 22 March and remained until 24 April. The topics for discussion were both the secularization and the *Toleranzpatent*. The Pope reproached the Emperor that Austria had gone further than any other Catholic state in allowing individuals to break away from the Catholic church. As we observed the "tolerance" granted by the *Toleranzpatent* was actually limited. Towards the end of the Pope's visit Joseph II fell to his knees and invoked the Pope's blessings, which he received, but the Pope's journey nonetheless must be viewed as a failure.³¹

We have suggested earlier that Joseph II desired to change the functions of the Church under the aegis of the state rather than curtailing them outright. As a result of his initiative *Religiousfond* actually financed 640 new parishes in Lower and Upper Austria, Styria and Carinthia compared to a secularization of about 150 monasteries in the same province.³²

After the Bishops of Salzburg and Passau failed to respond to instructions to make proposals for new parishes, the court chancellery by a decree of 20 October, 1782 gave specific instructions for the establishment of new parishes. New parishes were to be established: 1) when children could not come to church at all or only with great difficulties because of the condition of the path. 2) When the distance was more than an hour's walk. 3) When the population of a village was more than 700 persons. 4) When a village could prove that it had a parish priest at some earlier time.³³

According to Wodka the ambitious program of Joseph II of expansion of parishes itself created a strong impetus for secularization of monasteries on economic grounds rather than for the antimonastic ideological reasons discussed earlier. The program of rapid parish expansion needed funds and this, in turn, appeared to have led to a more aggressive programme of secularization. Wodka cites numerous cases of secularized monasteries which were not mendicant or contemplative orders.

As mentioned earlier the secularization decree was not exclusively aimed at the contemplative and mendicant order; it also allowed for secularization of monasteries in financial difficulties.³⁴ To convey the complexities of some

³⁰ Schlitter, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

³¹ On the day of the Pope's departure from Vienna, Joseph wrote to his brother Leopold: "I won't deny that I am rather pleased about his departure. Because of the dodges and dubious flatteries, which he managed to inject into the negotiations and also into all conversations, the whole affair became almost unbearable for me, especially during the last eight days", Lorenz Mikoletzky, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

³² WODKA, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

³³ WODKA, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

³⁴ WODKA, *op. cit.*, pp. 306-307 and ff.

secularization procedures one case, which was resolved only after five years of uncertainty, is reported below in some detail.

The Benedictine monastery of St. Paul in Carinthia was 700 years old and is described as a "small principality"³⁵ made up of numerous estates, a copper mine and houses in two cities. An abbot, Anselm Pausauco (1748-1778), apparently diverted considerable wealth to his family. At the time of his death the monastery was in debt to the amount of 567,060 fl. This exposed the monastery to substantial pressures of its creditors and the succeeding abbot was unable to reverse the situation. Also, because of financial stringency the quality of religious and educational services provided by the monastery had apparently deteriorated. With all these troubles a further deterioration in the financial situation was anticipated and in October 1782 the court chancellery issued an order giving His Majesty's decision to close the monastery and to distribute its members amongst other Benedictine monasteries.

This order was appealed by the monastery on grounds that its members felt such close ties with the locality and also because the monks of St. Paul had so honestly cooperated with the government in the secularization procedure. The appeal was temporarily successful. The government stayed the secularization and actually took over the financial administration of the monastery, somewhat similar to a bankruptcy trustee, paying some debts and covering the expenses of the monastery. In May 1786 the government countermanded the secularization order of 1782 and also ordered the reduction of monks in the monastery from 60 to 20.³⁶ However, the financial difficulties continued and the number of monks had actually dropped to twelve. In the end not only the Bishop of Lavant but also the abbot recommended that the monastery should be terminated. The "second secularization" took place in May 1787, this is to say after an uncertain interlude of five years. The monks, prior and abbot all received pensions: the monks received a pension of 300 florins, the prior one of 400 florins and the abbot 1460 florins.

While Joseph II energetically expanded the traditional religious services of the church, he achieved a further reduction of holidays from 42 to 27 and of all kind of religious pomp. He wanted the church to operate frugally. No detail escaped his attention. It was even attempted to limit the use of candles. The extreme of decreed religious frugality was reached with the order of 9 August, 1784, which has been cited widely in the literature. This order provided that henceforth sacks should replace coffins, in part for sanitary reasons. This order was widely resented by the population and rescinded within less than a year.³⁷

³⁵ WOLF, *op. cit.*, p. 94 ff.

³⁶ WOLF, *op. cit.*, p. 98-99.

³⁷ LORENZ MIKOLETZKY, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.

Summary and conclusions

We believe we have shown, as argued in the Introduction, that both the *Toleranzpatent* of 1781 and the secularization edict of 1782 were inspired by economic considerations and were not anticlerical. The *Toleranzpatent* was circumscribed and qualified; conversions to Protestantism were made onerous. The extensive secularization of monasteries actually furnished funds for a substantial expansion of pastoral services of the church. We also hope to have conveyed to the reader Joseph II's attention to very specific details of his reform programs. This trait has become a long lasting ingredient of the Austrian bureaucratic system.