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CONCEPTUAL POINTS OF RESEARCH

The relevance of the research. The subject of this work, ***Bessarabian Priests in Communist Romania*****,** covers two complementary issues, one from the perspective of general history and the other from the standpoint of personal history. On the one hand, it analyzes the destiny of Bessarabia after 1940, seen through the prism of the destinies of refugee priests, and on the other hand, about religious policy in communist Romania and how it influenced the destiny of the priesthood, in general, and of the Bessarabian refugee priests, in particular.

To provide a necessary clarification to the title proposed for this topic, we point out that there were two periods of refuge for Bessarabian priests in Romania – one in 1940 and another in 1944 – both situations being determined by the religious policy of the Bolshevik regime that was established in the territory of Bessarabia immediately after the entry of the Red Army. We considered it necessary to analyze the context of their departure, seen through the prism of the events experienced at the individual level, as well as exemplifying the pressure on the Church as an institution. At the same time, we also aimed to follow the second dimension of the phenomenon, namely the life and destiny of these people in Romania after the establishment of the communist regime. In this way, we could identify the various attitudes, reactions, and histories of some priests, who took shape in as many forms of active or passive individual resistance. Although we did not intend to assign a generalized label of resistance, we cannot ignore the exceptionality of some destinies that managed to overcome the difficulties of the era and carry their spiritual message further. To illustrate such cases, we chose to present the case studies in Chapter V. However, the subject is also interesting to follow at the level of the interaction between institutional history and personal history, which provides consistency and validation of the analyzed topic.

Furthermore, to understand the specifics of this situation, it is necessary to recall the role that the Church had in history, as well as the weight of the priest in human communities. Communism radically changed the State-Church relationship, acting by all means to diminish the influence and importance of religion in society, implicitly also to abolish the priestly rank. To survive, the Church had to compromise: collaborate with the authorities. Hence the topicality of the theme, which is a less researched one can elucidate an important episode in the recent history of Romanians. We believe that by approaching it we have contributed to the knowledge of a historical process reflected by the first and second refuge of Bessarabians and Bukovinians in Romania, as well as to the situation of Bessarabia during the Soviet occupation in 1940-1941, 1944-1989. Studying the subject has also allowed us to reconstruct some personal destinies, for which the refuge in Romania was strengthened by the hope that things would improve in the country. What followed could only be reconstructed now, when the archives were opened.

We believe that studying the policy promoted by the communist party and the Soviet state in the field of religion in the MSSR is current and welcome from the perspective of knowing the historical truth, of the abuses committed by the Bolsheviks in all areas, including in the relations between the state and the church. What determined the concessions of the communist regime, atheist by definition, was the influence and role that the Church and the priest had in everyday life, and a submissive and docile church brought more advantages to the regime than one destroyed or liquidated in general. The institution of the Church could not remain neutral to what was happening both socially, culturally, spiritually, and politically, which is why it was preferred to perpetuate over time the cohabitation of the two institutions: church and state, which manifested itself in different forms from one stage or another, depending on the complexity and realities of the era.

Framing the theme in international, national, and regional historiographical concerns. The concern of historiography for the issue of Church-State relations is explained by the particular importance that these partnerships acquire from the perspective of the social, economic, and political elements of the communist project. There are undoubtedly major differences, from state to state, and from Church to Church, in terms of the way these relations were structured. Also, the political strategies were chosen differently by each government which was part of the socialist camp.

The identification of some particularities of these relations between the Orthodox Church and the state over time provides the opportunity to develop distinct studies on subjects less known in historiography, such as the theme proposed by us, namely the exodus of Bessarabian priests in Romania in 1940 and 1944, events that were caused, in turn, by a socio-political situation in which the two representative institutions were ideologically excluded in Bessarabia, or were in permanent negotiation in Romania.

The refuge of Bessarabian priests in communist Romania has not been treated methodologically so far, which is why we focused our attention on this subject and all accessible sources that could have elucidated it better. The placement in the academic network of the sources presented and addressed in our study and the new results of the research complete both scientific knowledge and the understanding of aspects that have defined in one way or another the nature of the relations between two of the most representative institutions: The State and the Church. The interest shown in the issue of Bessarabian priests who took refuge in Romania, the conditions that affected the exodus of 1940 and 1944, the way they fit into Romanian society which was in the process of Sovietization, the persecutions they were subjected to, either by the NKVD in the context of the "repatriation" policy on the one hand, followed by the control and surveillance of the Securitate on the other, influenced the choice of the subject.

The purpose and objectives of the research. The objective of this thesis was to examine the scope of a social phenomenon resulting from the incursion of Bolshevik ideology on the territory of Bessarabia, which resulted in the deaths of Orthodox clergy and their relocation to Romanian territory in 1940 and 1944. Furthermore, we intend to track the evolution of this phenomenon in Romania after 1948, not only in its broad scope but also in the specificities of certain destinies that we have chosen to examine in the case studies.

Considering the current state and complexity of the subject, but especially how the theme was treated in historical literature, we propose the following objectives: analysis and understanding of the phenomenon of the two refuges (1940, 1944) of Bessarabian priests on Romanian territory; analysis of the consequences of the new religious policies in communist Romania on the Orthodox clergy, such as repression and violence against priests, the birth of the phenomenon of resistance, and the attitude of compromise and negotiation on the part of the institution or some members of the Church; a meticulous research of the case studies, regarding the destiny of some members of the Bessarabian Orthodox Church in Romania, after 1948.

Pursuing the proposed objectives, we considered it important to analyze how the Bessarabian priests took refuge in Romania and adapted to the imposed social and political conditions and realities. It is difficult to establish the exact number of refugee priests in the two exodus because the available sources provide varied data and statistics. Those presented in the thesis present approximate but still different estimates, reflecting the difficulty of registering and monitoring the flow of refugees in 1940 and 1944, respectively. The figures remain indicative, without there being a unanimously accepted statistic for the number of refugee priests. However, based on the analyzed sources, we note that the refuge of the Bessarabian priests in 1944 was on a larger scale, compared to 1940.

The religious policy of the communist regime and the role that the security organs played in maintaining it represent another important chapter of this study. Persecutions and repressions among the priests were extreme forms of struggle against religion, but there were also forms of compromise, negotiation, opposition, and resistance. Their analysis represented another chapter of our research, to highlight a picture of spiritual resistance to the Sovietization of Romania. It is known that the Securitate pursued the clergy and put the Church under pressure, generally using all available means, including agents, surveillance, and operational techniques. This indicates that the Church was viewed as a potential threat by the communist regime and the repressive apparatus of the Securitate. For this reason, the Church had to be constantly supervised. All hierarchs were followed, and the informative notes abundantly prove this.

Research hypothesis. Our working hypothesis was that the impact of Bolshevik ideology on the territory of Bessarabia in 1940 and 1944 generated a phenomenon of repression on the Orthodox clergy that had consequences for the entire period that fol-

lowed. The victims of this repression, withdrawn to Romania, had only a few moments of "respite" since the Sovietization of Romania after 1948 led to the multiplication of abuses and the diversification of situations and destinies. Since the evolution of the communist regime in Romania was also sequential, with different political rhythms and attitudes from one period to another, this was also reflected on the Bessarabian priests who took refuge in Romania, being able to identify attitudes of individual resistance, spiritual resistance, negotiation, compromise, etc. All this journey makes the phenomenon of the refuge of Bessarabian priests a research subject that reflects not only local histories and particular destinies but also gives consistency to the greater history of the communist phenomenon present in Bessarabia and Romania.

Methodology. The subject was approached through an extensive process of documentary research, processing, and contextualization of information, and its integration, content analysis, and comparative analysis. Our study is based on a *historical analysis*; *critical analysis method*; *comparative methodology*; *classification method*; *historical-typological method*.

Chronological segment. Even if initially, the lower chronological limit of the work was established at 1947, the investigation of the phenomenon announced in the title of the thesis forced us to lower this limit to 1940 for several reasons. Researching the status of Bessarabian priests west of the Prut after the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, without an analysis of the events starting with 1940, would generate an incomplete and fragmented picture of the problem. For this reason, the lower chronological limit of the work is the second half of the 1940s. The study begins with the change in the legal status of the Church in the first year of the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia (June 1940-June 1941), marked by the anti-religious actions of the Bolshevik regime in the tendency to apply militant atheism. We observed a crisis of the church infrastructure during this period until the liberation from Soviet occupation and the return to the ROC, when the Antonescu government, in its work of restructuring the Romanian provinces, launched a series of steps to restart church life in Bessarabia. The events of the summer of 1944 generated a dramatic turn in the destiny of Bessarabia, which was preoccupied by the Soviet army. The Romanian administration in Bessarabia was forced to organize the evacuation of administrative resources and state officials after the Soviet army advanced towards the Dniester in March 1944. The ROC clergy, who were paid by the state, fell into this category. The Ministry of National Culture and Religious Affairs in Bucharest, together with the Metropolis of Bessarabia, led by Efrem Tighineanul (Enăchescu), lieutenant archbishop of Chişinău, metropolitan of Bessarabia, was actively involved in organizing the evacuation of the clergy. Unlike the withdrawal in the summer of 1940, when the USSR annexed Bessarabia and the Romanian administration did not have enough time for an organized evacuation, this time the actions were planned through coded special operations.

From the refuge in 1944, we aim to follow the evolution of the Bessarabian clergy in Romania, which was in the early phase of Sovietization, marked by the emergence of new state structures and strategies that placed the ROC in the face of compromise with a state regime that was atheist by definition. A brief analysis of how the relations between the communist power and religious cults, between the communist party and the ROC were outlined, structures three major stages in the evolution of these relations for the period in which Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was at the helm of the party (1947-1965). The first stage covers the period after the act of August 23, 1944, until the death of Patriarch Nicodim, in 1948. The second stage extends throughout the first part of Justinian's patriarchate and has as its final point the repressions launched by the communist state authorities in 1958-1959 against Orthodox monastic life. The third period covers the second part of Justinian Marina's patriarchate.

The upper chronological limit of the work is the mid-1960s (in the case studies we briefly followed some individual positions or actions reported to the 1970s). During this period, Romania was proclaimed the Socialist Republic of Romania, and the party took its official name -the Romanian Communist Party (RCP). Nicolae Ceaușescu's coming to power in 1965 marked a new stage in the history of Romania, both through changes at the institutional level and through the enunciation of the principles of leadership. After 1965, there was a reorientation of the communist regime's policy towards religions, in the sense that, after a short period of liberalization, the Securitate's control over them became more repressive. The years 1964-1965 represent the period when, from a political point of view, most of the priests in communist prisons were released, thus ending a complex cycle of relations between the ruling regime and the Orthodox Church. For the MSSR, this fact is highlighted by the abolition in 1965 of the two Councils (for the issues of the Russian Orthodox Church and the one for the issues of religious cults) and the formation of a single body for the supervision of religious life, the Soviet Plenipotentiary for Religious Affairs under the CM of the USSR for the MSSR.

Originality of the thesis. The proposed investigation is the first inquiry into the destiny of the Bessarabian priests, whose social and spiritual journey was marked by their two exodus to Romania and their attempt to survive and confront the political realities of the time, either through intelligence capable of adjusting to the circumstances or through subversive behavior. Regardless of the option, no one escapes the pursuit of the Securitate organs, for whom the ascension and maintenance of the commune meant the elimination of any potentially hostile elements from the path. It is not solely a listing of cases reported at various stages of the refuge, but rather an illustrative depiction of individuals from the clerical milieu whose actions enabled us to delineate certain political realities of the era pertaining to the persecution of religious cults.

THESIS CONTENT

Thesis structure and content. The work includes an amount of 151 pages of basic text and, from a structural point of view, consists of: Introduction; 5 chapters, divided into paragraphs; general conclusions and recommendations; bibliography of 222 titles; 9 Annexes; author's CV (2 pages) and Declaration on one's own responsibility (1 page). The work also contains Annotations in Romanian, English and Russian, including a list of abbreviations. In the *Introduction*, I presented the working hypothesis, the motivation for choosing the subject, the purpose and objectives, the originality of the topic addressed, the chronological landmarks, the methodology of scientific research, the inclusion of the topic in international and national research, the scientific novelty of the results obtained and the summary of the thesis sections.

Chapter I. ***Historiography and historical sources regarding the phenomenon of basarabian priests refugees in Romania***. The opening of archives has given researchers access to many documents, which has yet to be researched. The subject of this study is of vast complexity, which has determined a systemic approach to the sources and a separate bibliography.

Our study is focused on a topic of contemporary history which is less valued in historiography. Due to this reason, it is considered that any information derived from documents pertaining to that era is advantageous in comprehending the anti-religious practices of the Soviet totalitarian regime and their impact on the Orthodox Church in the MSSR, practices that also resulted in the emergence of the two refugees in Romania.

On the other hand, the role of the historiographical framework is imperative for the analysis of the situation of the ROC during the communist regime, to understand the life of the refugee clergy in Romania. The reconstruction of events, the analysis of decision-makers, centers of power, the presentation of working instruments and state bodies, and security, which supported the maintenance of the regime in power, are just a few aspects of the complexity of the problem regarding the refuge, the social and parochial classification more or less in Romania, all related to the evolution of church-state relations, the loyalty or lack of loyalty of the Orthodox cult as a whole towards the state authority, etc. The bibliography presented is not exhaustive, but we aim to constitute some essential landmarks to sketch an overall historiographical perspective regarding the history of the Orthodox Church and its representatives during the years of communism. Starting from the intention of elucidating some aspects of the phenomenon of refugee priests from Bessarabia, the characteristic patterns of oppression, as well as its reasons, we will focus on three significant examples among the Bessarabian clergy who became refugees in communist Romania (Antonie Plămădeală, Vasile Țepordei, Mina Dobzeu), and experienced convictions and detention, as a result of actions related to the multiple and controversial contexts of the era.

The level of investigation of the topic can be approached from the perspective of the specialized works available, but also of the archive files, namely documents

identified within ACNSAS, NAR, and NAA; newspapers; documents; the magazines of the time; general works on the confessional history and policy of the pro-Soviet regime towards the Orthodox cult; special works, studies, and articles, carried out on the subject of interest. Thus, the historiography regarding the *Bessarabian Priests in communist Romania* requires the chronological classification of the literature according to the following characteristics:

• Historiographic works and studies:
- historiography regarding the Orthodox Church in Sovietized Bessarabia;
- historiography regarding the Orthodox Church in Sovietized Romania;
• Historical sources. Unpublished and edited documents, collections of documents;
• Diaries and memoirs;
• Newspapers and documents of those times.

An important source of documentation during our research approach is the NCSAS archives. To identify the Bessarabian priests who fled the country, their origin, last residence, activity and forms of manifestation in Romania, and their entry into the sights of the Securitate, we have the Documentary Funds (D) regarding the Orthodox Cult: Priests of the Christian Orthodox cult born in Bessarabia (personal files) [1] and the Bessarabian Problem: Priests, monks who functioned on the territory of Transnistria, Bessarabia and Bukovina [2], containing information about their place of birth, last residence in Romania, parish affiliation, marital status and political activity before and after the 23rd of August, 1944. Regarding the actions of former Bessarabian leaders intended to raise the issue of Bessarabia and the Bessarabian refugees at an international level, we studied the criminal investigation file opened by the Securitate in the name of Pantelimon Halippa [20].

A detached chapter was the presentation of the case studies (Antonie Plămădeală, Vasile Țepordei, Mina Dobzeu), for which we undertook a vast documentary action in the archives, with an emphasis on the documents from the archive of the former Securitate, more precisely the Information Fund (I) no. 1015, in three distinct volumes, based on which we tried to draw a complete picture of Antonie Plămădeală's biography, following the most important stages of his development.

When developing the case study on the fate of the Bessarabian priest Vasile Țepordei, in addition to contemporary writings, was also a focus on the primary source of documentation reflected in the archives of the former state security, more precisely the Criminal Investigation Fund, no. 6164 in two volumes and the Network Fund (R) no. 68736.

The documentary sources regarding Mina Dobzeu's personality come from the NCSSA archives (Informative (I) and Penal (P) Funds), opened in 1961, but also from church archives, such as the Metropolitanate of Cluj, the Archdiocese of Roman and Bacău, the Diocese of Huși, the Orthodox Provostry of Dej, the Neamț Theological Seminary and even Jimbor, the parish where Father Mina served after his detention, all identified, worked on and published for the first time in a vol-

ume of 333 unpublished documents, dedicated to Father Mina Dobzeu [75], with an introductory study signed by historian Adrian Nicolae Petcu. In addition to the considerable volume of documents drawn up by the former Securitate and identified at CNSAS, research internships were undertaken at church institutions, to create the most comprehensive documentary vision possible, since many aspects related to the activity of the father are found mainly in church archives. An impressive volume of unpublished documents from the aforementioned archives forms the basis for the factual reconstruction of the Mina Dobzeu case and for the context in which he carried out his church activity.

At the ANA, were identified several documents that exemplify the significant phenomenon of the population's retreat across the Prut. A nominal list of the clerical personnel (priests, deacons and singers) from the Chisinau Archdiocese, refugees from Bessarabia in 1944 and distributed to the Romanian dioceses, mainly in Dolj County, Craiova, and other regions of the country, can be found in the Fond 1135 "Chisinau Diocese", the period 1918-1948 [29, pp. 1-76, pp. 93-95]. Information is found regarding the relocation of the administration of the Chisinau Archdiocese to the Old Kingdom, the personal residence of the Metropolitan of Bessarabia, Efrem, being established after the evacuation in the commune of Coşovenii de Jos, Dolj County, and the headquarters of the Chisinau Archdiocese on November 4, 1944 was located in the premises of the Regional Museum in Craiova [25, pp.17-18]. Other files related to the 1135 Fund are also relevant to our study, such as the files containing documents regarding the obligation by law of the return to parishes in the territories not occupied by the Soviets of priests who had taken refuge in Romania [28; 30, pp.77-92], or the documents regarding the establishment of the Purge Commission and the issuance of orders regarding the tracking and questioning of clerical personnel on Romanian territory [26; 27]. Another reference fund identified at the ANA is the Fund "Pledge of the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Issues under the SCN of the USSR for the MSSR", which contains documents of interest for the period 1944-1965.

We also consulted the archives from the offices of Marshal Ion Antonescu and Deputy Prime Minister Mihai Antonescu and the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, kept by the National Archives of Romania [35], and less redeemed in scientific efforts in the Republic of Moldova. To analyze the relations regarding the ROC, during the period of Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu, but especially the patriarchate of Justinian Marina, we turned to the documents from the Archives of the General Directorate of Police, identified in the National Archives of Romania [31; 32; 33; 34].

A special contribution is made by the *Transcripts of the Council of Ministers' Meetings* from the period of the Antonescu government [102] regarding the issue of the organization of Bessarabia and the other Romanian provinces. Numerous discussions were held in the Council of Ministers regarding the installation of authorities and the governing regime; church organization; the return of refugees after the 1940

exodus, all actions being oriented towards the reconstruction of the provinces in all areas. Later, with the evolution of the armed conflict and military operations on the Eastern Front, the meetings regarding the force majeure of the war, the organization of evacuation plans from the Soviets, the situation of refugees from Bessarabia and Bukovina, etc. The information which was recorded had an essential contribution in the analysis of the social and political context of this study.

The volume of documents *The Romanian Orthodox Church under the Communist Regime (1945-1958)* is a collection of documents that deal with the evolution of church institutions, of the BOR hierarchs, starting from the Patriarchs of Romania, Nicodim Munteanu and then Justinian Marina, to the priests from the country who resisted in his way the communist transition to atheism. The documents published by the authors focus on two coordinates: the control and pursuit of subversive elements and the verification or preparation of files of some hierarchs, priests, or monks. The tone of the documents also represents a step towards understanding the atmosphere of the era and the spirit that gripped those for whom surveillance was a matter of normality. The "black army of monks," as the Minister of the Interior Alexandru Drăghici called it, represented a formidable enemy that had to be eradicated [74, p.17] and the publication of these documents wanted to exemplify how the priesthood understood how to resist the new atheist regime.

Important is the contribution of academician Valeriu Pasat, who published the four-volume collection in Moscow. *Orthodoxy in Moldova: power, church, believers. 1940-1991: a collection of documents in 4 volumes*, regarding previously top secret documents from the archives of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova, and Romania. For the first time, official documents were published referring to the history of the complex relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church in Moldova and believers with the authorities in the years 1940–1991. The collections also include memoirs, certificates, and other materials from party organs and the commissariats for religious affairs. The collection is accompanied by a brief historical sketch, an archeographic preface, and comments.

Diaries and memoirs also have a special contribution, which comes with a personal perception of historical events. After all, any memoir reflects a unique experience, depending on the person's training, education, and professional background. To understand the impact that the events of 1940-1944 had on the destinies of Romanian clergy originating from Bessarabia, we consulted the diaries and notes of the Bessarabian priest Vasile Țepordei [106], Gala Galaction [58], writer, Orthodox priest, Romanian theology professor, the *Memories* of Antonie Plămădeală [99], high hierarch of the ROC, metropolitan of Transylvania (1982-2005), Paul Mihail, priest of the "Old Council" Church, founder of the Bessarabian Religious Museum and director of the School of Church Singers, all from the capital of Bessarabia, the Diary of Constantin N. Tomescu, professor at the Chișinău-Chernovtsi Faculty of Theology [110], etc.

The information reflected in the press of the Raza and Bessarabia era, as well as the central and diocesan church periodicals, the Transylvanian Metropolitanate, the Romanian Telegraph, and official documents of the Romanian state, such as the Official Gazette, holds utmost significance.

The approach to the topic that is the subject of this thesis required the review and analysis of a significant volume of documents, studies, and articles, necessary to be able to understand and define the phenomenon of the two refuges, as well as the subsequent human and professional path of the Bessarabian priests who settled in Romania. Being a subject little approached in historiography, the main sources used were archival ones. During the research, it was noticed the size of this endeavor, cannot be limited to the present thesis, which is why we cannot claim to have covered the subject exhaustively. But, what we consider to have succeeded in doing and is very important, are several clear directions of research on the topic, which, in turn, open the perspective of other scientific investigations. I have insisted on an approach that is as impartial as possible, honestly presenting the sources that I had at my disposal.

In **Chapter II**, entitled ***Bessarabia under Soviet Occupation (1940-1941) and the determination of the first refuge of Bessarabian priests in Romania***, the process of Soviet occupation and the anti-church actions in Bessarabia, carried out by the new administration, are analyzed. The Soviet authorities installed terror in the city, the NKVD drew up blacklists. Many properties under the jurisdiction of the Faculty of Theology, the Theological Seminary, and the Metropolitan Residence in Chisinau could not be evacuated. In the capital of Bessarabia, the buildings of the Orthodox Seminary and the Faculty of Theology were transformed into prisons, where numerous civilians, officers, and non-commissioned officers, including military priests, were imprisoned. The conditions of detention were inhuman due to the overcrowding of the prison, poor food, and lack of medical assistance. Most of the churches in Chisinau were closed. Such an evolution of things and events in the socio-political plan would create the context that conditioned the refuge of many priests in Romania. In this way, they left their parishes and homes of origin, taking the path of wandering.

According to Boris Buzilă, among those who took the path of wandering in 1940 were 487 priests from Bessarabia [48, p.345]. According to the minutes of the Council of Ministers, during the meeting of July 3, 1941, the undersecretary of state of the Ministry of National Culture and Cults, for Cults and Arts, Ion Sandu reported that out of 1259 priests that Bessarabia had before the Russian invasion, 648 of them took refuge, and another 611 remained in the province, that is, a little over half of the total number [102, IV, p.13]. Academician Valeriu Pasat indicates 526 priests remaining in Bessarabia after the arrival of the communists and another 563 priests who had taken refuge in Romania, but returned to the province [77, p.95].

The study continues with the refuge of Bessarabian priests in Romania and the measures of the authorities, clergy, and the population, who came to the aid of the

refugees. Assistance committees were established in all transit counties for evacuated people. Aid was collected, funds were raised and information and assistance points, including medical, were set up in train stations and on the roads. Thousands of people left their birthplaces from the first days after the Soviet ultimatum. The communiqué of the Ministry of the Interior of the 30th of June, 1940, recorded that in southern Bessarabia the evacuation continued in an organized manner, with people being boarded on trains, ships, and barges, and in the North of the region, the evacuation was carried out by all means of transport. The Bessarabian and Bukovina refugees were divided by counties, to monitor the organization and avoid overcrowding in certain areas of the country [53, p.207].

The following counties were established: Târgu Ocna and Bacău, refugees from Soroca and Bălți counties were to come. Refugees from Orhei and Lăpușna counties were headed to Buzău county, refugees from Tighina and Cetatea Albă counties were directed to Prahova county, and Neamț county, those from Bucovina and Hotin were expected. Refugees from the Cahul and Ismail regions were distributed to Muscel, Dâmbovița, and Argeș counties [100, p.65-66, p.70].

Considering the fact that the number of refugee priests registered a slight increase, in the media of the time was noticed the following distribution of refugee priests, Bessarabian and Bucovina, respectively: 147 priests in the Transylvanian Metropolis, more precisely in Archdiocese 40, in the diocese of Timișoara-38, the diocese Cluj-32, the diocese of Caransebeș-16, the diocese of Orăzii-12, the diocese of Arad-9; in the Metropolis of Hungarian-Wallachia-121; in the diocese of Romanu-37, the diocese of Argeșu-29, the diocese of Huși lor-27, the diocese of Buzăului-25, the diocese of Lower Danube-15, a total number of 413 priests being established [105].

According to historian Mihai Gribincea, in 1940-1941, no private or state organization in Romania did not assist refugees from the Russian-occupied provinces. By November 15, 1940, the Bucharest Government had placed 32,231 teachers, priests and civil servants, 457 lawyers, 6,200 workers, 1,500 students, 11,771 pupils, and 100,000 peasant farmers in their sphere of activity, and by March 1941 it had provided aid to 234,714 refugees [61, p.150].

At the same time, the Bolshevik persecutions against the Church and the priests that remained at home, in Bessarabia, are also presented in thesis by examples. The territorial-political occupation of Bessarabia determined the immediate inclusion of the Church in the great Soviet work of building an atheist state. The establishment of the soviets (local administrative councils), and the abolition of the deaneries and bishoprics greatly diminished the priest's authority, who no longer influenced his parish. Thus, not only the canonical connection between the hierarchical ranks was broken, but also the connection with the parishioners. In September 1940, the transfer of all goods, land, inventories, and real estate to the state was approved. The Church, as a legal institution, was liquidated [109, p.34].

The communists' religious hostility was manifested by the burning or ostentatious desecration of icons, damaging murals with trivial notes, and indecent writings. The priests' vestments were transformed into costumes for performances and theater. In a church in Chisinau, Stalin's face was painted on the wall of an icon of Christ, and in other churches, numerous icons were mocked, the eyes of the saints being gouged out or their faces being soiled. Some churches and monasteries were transformed into troop cantonments, stables, warehouses, performance halls, and, as is the case of a small church in the port of Ismail and the garrison church in Hotin, into latrines. The building of the Metropolitan Palace in Chisinau was transformed into a club, and the chapel into a dance hall, with the stage right on the altar. Icons in private homes were mocked, and the crosses on the chests of Christian children were torn off and thrown into the trash. Priests were spat on and hit on the street and in church and were booed during the service when they passed with funeral processions. Unfinished churches were demolished, and the material was used for other constructions. Priests and singers, especially those who distinguished themselves through their zeal and apostolate as Romanians and Christians, were deported, imprisoned, and killed. Added to this were all kinds of harassment, arrests, and deportations for Christians who chose to remain connected to the church [63, p.76-77].

Several priests managed to take refuge, but others remained in Bessarabia as a sign of solidarity with Christians or could not take refuge. The Soviets' attitude towards the clergy, but also the followers of other religions, was manifested through arrests and deportations, which were considered the lightest forms of persecution. Everything related to the status of priests was denigrated and forbidden. Priests were not allowed to wear church vestments, ring bells, or officiate divine services, and most churches were closed, liquidated, or transformed into entertainment institutions. The communist regime sought to destroy the resistance offered by the Bessarabian Orthodox environment, in which Christianity and traditional values were intertwined with the being of the simplest man. From this perspective, not only priests but also believers who were consistent in their faith were deported. The priests remaining in Bessarabia urged the parishioners to pray for those deported to the distant lands of Siberia [71, p.72-73].

Therefore, the Church institution had to bear directly and implicitly the repulsive actions of the Soviets. During a year of occupation, the Bessarabian priests remaining in the province were subjected to either persecutions and arrests or deportations, according to several cases exemplified in the thesis. Persecution, mockery, disappearances, and assassinations were among the working tools of the Soviets.

Chapter III, ***The Orthodox Church in Bessarabia during the Antonescu administration and the context of the second refuge in 1944***, the context of the liberation of Bessarabia by Ion Antonescu, and the reorganization of church life as a part of the work of institutional restoration in the liberated Romanian territory are examined.

The liberation of Bessarabia and the takeover of leadership by Ion Antonescu determined the reorganization of church life in the province, for the return to the Christian tradition. In addition to the return to Bessarabia of the refugee priests, and their inclusion in parishes, a series of measures were implemented against everything that meant Slavic church culture, namely, the removal of books in Church Slavonic, the introduction of the service in Romanian, the approval of the calendar reform regarding the performance of services in the new style. Metropolitan cathedrals were restored, old church buildings were rebuilt and new ones opened, and the role of the priest in society became a primary one to maintain discipline.

In January 1944, Soviet troops began the offensive across the Eastern Front, and the situation of Germany and its allies, including Romania, became increasingly difficult. The war quickly approached Romania's borders, overtaking them in the northeast of the country and advancing throughout Bukovina, Northern Moldova between the Carpathians and the Prut, to the vicinity of Iaşi and Orhei. These are other aspects analyzed in the 3rd Chapter, namely the political events that generated the second exodus of Bessarabian priests to Romania, which occurred in 1944, the involvement of the authorities in the organized evacuation of the population, the difficulties encountered, the loss of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina, Romania's move to the United Nations side and the phenomenon of the forced "repatriation" of Bessarabian priests, triggered by the NKVD on Romanian territory and the threat of the Gulag. The condition of the Orthodox Church in Bessarabia under Soviet administration, in the 40s-50s, is also presented.

According to the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers, as early as November 1943, the marshal requested the initial phase of the evacuation plan for the Romanian population and property. He ordered an evacuation organized by the Romanian Army's General Staff to anticipate the events that started in the summer of 1940 [102, IX, p.552]. A temporary withdrawal was expected, for this reason, the territory attacked by the Soviets should not be devoid of Romanian population. Under these conditions, priests, teachers, and local officials who were not part of the Army cadres had to remain in place. The Chancellery of the Chisinau Archdiocese was evacuated to Craiova, Dolj County, and the evacuated parishes were associated in groups of four or five to be further served by the clergy remaining in the region.

Although the authorities took measures, certain situations could not be foreseen, because the panic produced among the population and the mobility of the front generated transport congestion in the stations. There were difficulties in the supply of food and the provision of sanitary and medical assistance. Disinformation, thefts committed by German soldiers in retreat, cases of corruption recorded at customs points, etc. were widely spread. In April 1944, air attacks on Romania by Anglo-American aviation began.

Meanwhile, the Soviets were advancing massively into Romanian space to "repatriate" refugees by Art. 5 of the Armistice Convention of September 12/13, 1944.

This process was executed violently by the Bolsheviks, assisted by the authorities in Bucharest to the greatest extent possible. Very few managed to hide or to get false documents and extend their stay with the hope of establishing in Romania. Some refugees experienced "repatriation" to the remote lands of Siberia, and others managed to remain in the country they considered their homeland.

Secret agents were infiltrated inside the church to diminish its influence. In the church hierarchy, the agents occupied leadership positions. The closure of churches and the transfer of their property to Soviet bodies, the increase in taxes, kept the church in tension. The press, radio, television, and the organization of public trials are just some of the means used by the system for anti-religious propaganda. A second wave of repressions against priests and ministers of religion in Bessarabia followed, in the period 1947-1948, but also later. Many priests and monks who remained in place were arrested, killed, or deported to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and other parts of the USSR [72, p.125]. The practice of Soviet repressions in the case of Bessarabian priests was based on accusations of complicity with the Romanian authorities, espionage, and counter-espionage, their active participation in the Romanianization of the Orthodox community in Bessarabia - an aspect equated with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, which meant the inevitable punishment of those who submitted to the jurisdiction of the ROC [77, p.140-141].

The anti-religious policy implemented in the MSSR paradoxically contributed to the consolidation of religious identity. In addition, the anti-religious nature of the Soviet state contributed to the refusal of the majority of the population to identify with the values and directives of the regime.

In ***Chapter IV***, the subject is the ***Romanian Orthodox Church in relation to the political regime in Romania (1944-1965),*** the aspects of the church-state relationship in Romania (1944-1947) are analyzed, subsequently the policy of Patriarch Justinian Marina and the redefinition of this relationship, from the perspective of the strategy of the social apostolate and the way in which this policy favored more or less the inclusion of refugee priests in the social and spiritual life of Romania, which was in the incipient phase of communization. If we refer to a periodization of the communist dictatorship in the phases of development of the ROC, the church historian Paul Brusanowski distinguishes two stages, respectively from 1948 to 1958, when the ROC fought for survival, then the years 1959 and 1989, when despite political passivity, the ROC managed to consolidate itself internally, something that was largely unnoticed from the outside. This breakdown blurs the transition from a non-communist or anti-communist patriarch (Nicodim Munteanu until 1948) to a superior, Justinian Marina, who conformed to the system, thus assuming that there is political continuity between Nicodim and Justinian [96, p.193-194].

Three essential aspects were determined by the complexity of the relations between the Romanian state and the ROC in the first years of the transition to communism (1945–1947) and after its installation. First, the new regime imposed structural

changes on the ROC. These changes opened the way for "new" democratic realities in the state-party relationship and the Orthodox church, and third, the repressive apparatus, the Security and Security, began to act directly on Orthodox priests and monks [111, p.48]. In these historical conditions, the ROC faced a dilemma: to continue its mission, make concessions to the regime, or to switch to defensive positions. The first option was chosen, that of ending the regime "harmoniously fulfilling the needs and interests of the church with the aspirations and concerns of the state, achieving a fruitful and useful collaboration for both the church and the homeland" [40, p.44], a concept defined by Justinian Marina, newly elected Archbishop of Bucharest, Metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia and Patriarch of the ROC, with 383 votes out of the total of 428 votes cast. Justinian Marina was the one agreed upon by the government [30, f.116] and preferred by the new regime in Romania to be elevated to the rank of patriarch because the rulers believed that he was one of their own and would subordinate the ROC to the communist party [113, p.12].

Justinian's landmark was to develop a partnership with the communists based on mutual "loyalty", to ensure the widest possible field of maneuver for the church in society. According to some historians [51, p. 201-224; 60], the Orthodox church was a beneficiary of the communist regime, despite the important role it played in the resistance against atheistic materialism, representing a place of refuge for those who rejected the communist dictatorship and suffering as a result of this attitude.

During the communist period, the church institution was positioned between two extremes. On the one hand, the struggle with communism which wanted its liquidation, or at least, the diminution of its role and status. On the other hand, the excessive interference of the state in the activity of the church. The appointment of Justinian Marina as patriarch represented for the communist leaders the possibility of having a church subservient to party interests. Being aware of the socio-political realities of the era, the new patriarch accepted to become a collaborator of the regime, to avoid an open conflict with inevitable consequences for the church institution. However, any type of compromise ensured an advantage for ROC. The collaboration between the ROC and the communist authorities was more of a form of survival, or rather, the communist state and the church would have been mutually exclusive, which is why the official speeches of the BOR must be analyzed concerning the political context of the period.

The institution of the church in Romania enjoyed the maintenance of rights impossible in other communist states. For most of the communist times, churches remained open continuously, religious services were held, religious works could be edited and published, etc. In addition, priests were provided with state salaries and pensions, places of worship were kept open, the priestly garment was worn without restrictions, and the faithful were called to service by ringing the bell, chances that did not exist in other socialist countries. Many other cults also enjoyed these benefits, but the state, for political reason ensured similar rights to other existing cults.

Despite all the restrictions imposed, many churches and works of church art were restored and preserved, and numerous places of worship and parish houses were built. According to statistical data, from the records of the Patriarchate, in the period 1948-1966, 269 new churches were built, and between 1967-1989 another 773 churches. In the period 1950-1956, some Romanian saints were canonized. There was a monastic revival (Rugul Aprins, Sihăstria, Slatina, Putna, Râmeț, Prislop) and a continuation of the hesychasm tradition through the volumes of the Philokalia [98, p.85].

Chapter V, entitled ***Destinies of Bessarabian Orthodox Priests in Communist Romania: Case Studies***, presents the forms of resistance and protest of the Bessarabian clergy against the pro-Soviet regime, the practices of the Romanian Security institutions in the pursuit, investigation, arrest and persecution of Bessarabian priests, including from the perspective of the case studies proposed for analysis: Antonie Plămădeală, Vasile Țepordei and Mina Dobzeu.

Taking refuge in Romania from the Russians (1940 and 1944), the Bessarabian priests soon became targets of the Security Service of a state transformed into a satellite of the USSR. Starting in 1948, the situation of the Bessarabian clergy followed the course reported during the reassignment of church personnel coordinated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which was implementing the new legislation regarding religious denominations. Unlike the period of refuge in 1940, when most of the refugee priests were assigned to Romanian churches, the process was much more difficult in 1944.

Most of the Bessarabian and Bukovina clergy appeared in the Securitate files as members of the Ploughmen's Front, the Romanian Workers' Party, some from the SDP or as former members of the PNP, until its dissolution or without political activity. In terms of culture, but, in essence, still with political activity, many clergies appeared as members of ARLUS, but without activity. If a person was not a member of ARLUS, it was qualified by the authorities as "anti-Soviet". In terms of education, the clergy under investigation mostly graduated from the Theological Seminary of ten or eight classes, but also graduates of the singers' school. In terms of age, we identify older clergy, some born in 1882, but also younger ones, those after 1910, generally having a degree in Theology [81, p.161].

The arrests that followed targeted refugee clergy, and the Securitate departments aimed to intimidate the entire social group through repressive measures against certain individuals and to discourage acts of passive or active disobedience. The fear of priests-anti-communist elements, by definition, keepers of old traditions and customs that contrasted with the declared goal of the new man, builder of communism, was also maintained by pressure from the USSR leadership, concerned about the communist future of Bessarabia. The ties between relatives on either side of the Prut border had to be prohibited, as did the Bessarabians' hope of being liberated. The thesis analyzes three representative cases of Bessarabian clerics caught in the

clutches of the Securitate: Antonie Plămădeală, Vasile Țepordei and Mina Dobzeu.

Antonie Plămădeală in the Securitate files. The biography of one of the most prominent representatives of Romanian Orthodoxy, Antonie Plămădeală, was little studied until 1968, the year he left for Oxford, from where he returned as an already appointed patriarchal vicar-bishop. After 1989 access to archival documents offered the possibility for historians to reconstruct his biography. A first-hand source is the *Memoirs* of Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală, narrated during the interview conducted by Dragoș Șeuleanu and Carmen Dumitriu [99], in which the stages of his life as a convict in absentia, pursued by the Securitate, investigated and imprisoned in communist prisons, as well as the stage following his detention are recalled. Also important are the works that bear his signature, *Tradition and Freedom in Orthodox Spirituality* [84], with a preface by Fr. Prof. Acad. Dumitru Stăniloae and a Foreword by the author, as well as materials signed after 2000, including *Basarabia* [82] and *Rugul Aprins* [83], published in Sibiu.

In reconstructing the biography and activity of Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală, a special place belongs to the well-documented studies of historian Adrian Nicolae Petcu, as well as to the accounts of one of Leonida's brothers, Mihai Plămădeală [86]. In parallel, we undertook documentation in the archives, with an emphasis on the documents from the archive of the former Securitate (Information Fund, file no. 1015, vol. I-III), based on which we tried to sketch a complete picture of Antonie Plămădeală's biography, following the most important stages of his development (studenthood, activity as hierodeacon and hieromonk at the monasteries where he lived), on which the regime that definitively marked his existence left its mark (investigation, conviction and detention in communist prisons).

Starting from the biographical milestones of Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală in the 1950s and until his release from communist detention, I have exposed, based on archival documents, memoirs, and existing literature, the course of several years of constant wandering from the objective of the State Security organs of a Bessarabian priest who took refuge in Romania, but who in years will be named Orthodox Metropolitan of Transylvania (1982-2005). Through this study, we have tended to analyze the social and political context of the era that Antonie Plămădeală managed to confront, especially at the end of the 1950s, when there was a repression directed against the ROC. At the same time, his formation as an intellectual was completed and consolidated in the interaction he had in detention with the great intellectuals of the time (Emil Hațieganu, Prince Mavrocordat, Corneliu Coposu, etc.).

The stages covered, namely student life with all the material difficulties it entails, continuous pursuit by the security departments and conviction in absentia, a refuge in Baia Mare and pedagogical activity as a Russian language teacher, graduation under harsh conditions from the Faculty of Theology and defending his degree in the field, entering monasticism in Prislop and constantly fleeing from his pursuers, settling in Crasna and settling in Slatina, arrest, confrontation with the Vladimirești

phenomenon, retrial, and detention with all its moments marked by the torture of the Security and the specifics of communist prisons, were the directions that we tried to outline in a study dedicated to a representative figure of Orthodoxy, Antonie Plămădeală, who later became a high hierarch of the ROC, metropolitan of Transylvania and representative of the ROC at the World Council of Churches. "If Antonie Plămădeală exists now, it is the result of a biography that if it were not so, Antonie Plămădeală would not exist!" - emphasized the metropolitan [99, p.259].

The controversies of the anti-communist resistance of the Bessarabian priest Vasile Țepordei. In a space subjected to a century of denationalization and Russification policies, such as Bessarabia between 1812 and 1918, the mission of the ROC servants comes with something extra compared to the role of the priests in the country, namely combating Bolshevik and anti-national elements. This explains the fact that during the Antonescu government, the political regime demanded a clear attitude from the Church, aiming to "cleanse" Bessarabia of elements sympathetic to the communist ideology, including many clergymen. An eloquent example was the case of the priest Vasile Țepordei, persecuted during the Russian occupation of Bessarabia and after his refuge in Romania when he became the target of the Securitate [47, p.526-531]. In developing the study, we used Vasile Țepordei's testimonies from *Selected Writings*, *Memories from the Gulag*, *They Died with the Thought and Longing for Basarabia*, the series of articles published in the press of the time, mainly in the Raza newspaper, and last but not least, the documents from the archives of the former State Security, more precisely the Criminal Investigation Fund, no. 6164 in two volumes and the Network Fund no. 68736.

The journey of the Bessarabian priest Vasile Țepordei is reflected from the perspective of the two refuges in Bessarabia, subjected to the Bolshevik invasion, in Romania, transformed into a communist country, starting in 1944. The change of regime in Romania, through the forced abdication of King Michael and the legislation of the results of fraudulent parliamentary elections, changed the political life of Romania for 50 years, subordinating it ideologically, economically, and militarily to the USSR. Through his journalistic activity, mainly in *Raza* and *Bessarabia*, Vasile Țepordei would have created a favorable trend for the continuation of the war of aggression started by the fascist regime of Antonescu against the peaceful peoples of the Soviet Union. He would have praised Hitlerism and fascism established in the country, and his journalistic activity would have been oriented towards subordinating the interests of these regimes. In communist ideology, priests were generally considered fascist remnants and, therefore, a purge of clergymen and theologians considered undesirable was required [59, p.18]. Consequently, he was sentenced by the Soviet tribunal in Constanta to 25 years of hard labor, of which he served 8 years, in various Siberian camps, including Vorkuta, beyond the Arctic Circle.

Another aspect of our analysis highlights, through the personal example of priest Vasile Țepordei, the relationship between the church and power, being rele-

vant for understanding the conditions and importance of the Church and its representatives. The issue of refugee clergy from Bessarabia opens the way to understanding the circumstances in which they worked after 1947, in Romania, under the conditions of an antidemocratic regime. Faced with the new political framework marked by the coming to power of the communists, the Sovietization of the state, and awareness of the material issues which were during that time, the ROC redefined its role in Romanian society through a compromise with the new regime.

The "Manifesto" - a form of resistance against the collaboration between the ROC and the communist regime. The case of Mina Dobzeu. The involvement of the Church in the politics of the new regime, by putting the Church at the service of society, as a formula for the adaptation and existence of the ecclesiastical institution under the conditions of a declared atheist regime, determined the open disapproval of some priests, expressed in manifesto-addresses. An example in this sense is the anti-communist appeal of the Bessarabian monk Mina Dobzeu to the representatives of the ROC [44, p.43-48; 46, p.273-279], in which he called on the Orthodox clergy not to interfere with politics and not to submit to the regime. Through his actions, according to the files of the former Securitate, he would have manifested his "fierce hatred against the regime of popular democracy" [18, f.2].

This form of anti-communist opposition is known in the historiography of the field as specific to the period in which the dissidents from the RCP manifested themselves, that is, starting with the 70s. Here, however, we are faced with an Orthodox cleric, who was not a member of the communist party. The sources of documentation regarding the personality of Mina Dobzeu come from the archive of the former State Security, but also from the church archives, published for the first time in a volume of 333 unpublished documents, dedicated to Father Mina Dobzeu [75], to which I contributed as co-editor. Alongside Nicolae Steinhardt's *Journal of Happiness*, in which we find the moment of the baptism of the future monk from Rohia described, there are several other biographical writings, some documented, such as those of the historian Costin Clit [50, p.223-225], Gabriela Grigore [62, p.106-112], Octavian Moșin [70, p.313-315], to which are added several interviews and testimonies of Father Mina Dobzeu. The hieromonk is an extraordinary case because she is among the few who chose the manifesto as a form of opposition to the atheist regime. Intransigence and refusal to make concessions to an atheist state are proof of faith but also personal courage.

The analysis of the case studies, for Metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală, Priest Vasile Țepordei, and hieromonk Mina Dobzeu, offers us a detailed and complex picture of the church-state relationship, the attitude of some priests, their opinion, and their reasons for adopting one attitude or another. In this chapter, the NCSSA archives are consistently exploited and the personal paths of these priests can be identified as well as how the Romanian authorities, acted towards the Bessarabian priests who fled to Romania due to Soviet repression.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The subject of *Bessarabian Priests in communist Romania* and the relations between the two Church-State institutions, on either side of the Prut, has been and continues to be controversial in historiography, just like the history of Bessarabia in the last hundred years. Until 30 years ago, the subject was taboo, and the sources of knowledge were one-sided. The opening of archives offered the the possibility to focus on this topic, in all its aspects. At the same time, the democratization of political life stimulated the production of memoirs and the interviewing and evocation of the testimonies of survivors. During the research were analyzed several sources to see the full image of various dimensions of the regime's policy towards cults. Previous studies, interpretations, and contextualization ensured a series of conclusions on this subject:

1) The analysis of the bibliography on the subject of the two exoduses from Bessarabia during World War II, the relationships between the state, society, and the Church, the position of the Orthodox clergy in the new political realities of the era, the forms of resistance or collaboration of clerical representatives with the regime led us to reconstruct a general picture of the historiographic discourse on the stated subject. The research would have been incomplete without an extensive documentary search in the archives and the identification of an impressive volume of documentary elements necessary to complete the historiographic arsenal revealing documents for the topic under discussion, the number of analyzed files was much larger. The inclusion of unpublished sources into the scientific sphere represents an important contribution that we bring to this subject.

2) The territorial-political occupation of Bessarabia determined the immediate inclusion of the Church in the Soviet project of building an atheist state. Consequently, favorable premises were created for the atheist plan to destroy the spiritual values of the Romanians in Bessarabia in 1940-1941. Everything mentioned above was materialized by the Bolsheviks during a year of Soviet occupation. Many churches and monasteries were closed and/or were transformed into warehouses, entertainment venues, asylums, etc. Churches and monasteries were deprived of property and goods that ensured their maintenance, and stripped of spiritual things, such as icons, books, libraries, and archives. The officiating of religious services was conditioned by extremely high taxes, which determined the impossibility of paying them and consequently, the closure of churches. During a year of occupation, the Bessarabian priests remaining in the province were subjected to persecution, arrests, and deportations.

3) The Soviet authorities installed terror, causing fear among the population and threatening to deport non-conformist elements. Such an evolution of things and events in the socio-political plan conditioned the refuge of many priests in Romania in 1940. The number of refugees is difficult to establish precisely because the sources provide various statistics. The data presented in the thesis are approximate, but there is not an officially accepted number of refugee priests.

4) The King, the Government, the House of Clergy in Bucharest, the Central Church Council, the City Hall of the Capital, the Archdiocese of Bucharest, and Romanian public opinion came to the aid of the Bessarabian refugees immediately after the acceptance of the final dates. Dormitories and canteens for the refugees were organized in train stations and various locations, where they were accommodated and fed free of charge, and provided with clothes and footwear. The General Commissariat of Refugees was also established. These measures and actions contributed to the improvement of the living conditions of the refugee brothers and the raising of their morale.

5) The liberation of Bessarabia and the restoration of church life, the return to Christian tradition, and national unity by eliminating Bolshevism from Bessarabia were the priorities of the Antonescu government. Therefore, the religious policy of the Antonescu regime favored the return to Bessarabia of priests who had fled to Romania after the communist occupation. Also, a series of measures were implemented against everything that meant Slavic church culture, namely, the abolition of books in Church Slavonic, the introduction of the service in Romanian, the reform of the calendar, as part of the Romanian church identity, the old-style service being associated with the tradition of the Russian Church. At the same time, the metropolitan cathedrals of Chisinau and Chernivtsi were restored, the old Church buildings in the three dioceses of Bessarabia were reconstructed, theological schools were reopened, and church periodicals began to reappear.

6) The return of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina to Romania was a short episode. Soviet troops led by Marshal I. S. Konev entered Chernivtsi on March 30, 1944, and Red Army units entered the capital of Bessarabia on August 24, 1944. By mid-April 1944, Soviet troops had completely occupied the counties of Soroca, Bălți, and partially the counties of Orhei and Chișinău. These events marked a new retreat in Romania. Unlike the retreat in the summer of 1940, the Antonescu authorities planned an organized withdrawal. The second retreat was defined by the shattering of the belief that Bessarabia would ever be liberated from Bolshevism. The fate of those who remained behind, for various reasons (some of which are analyzed in the thesis), was cruel: many priests and monks were arrested, killed, or deported to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and other regions of the USSR.

7) Following the principles of anti-religious policy, the Soviets developed a mechanism for the surveillance of the State-Church relationship. A clear proof of the subordinate position of the Church in the Republic of Moldova was the establishment of a special institution for the State-Moscow Patriarchate relationship. Other structures of state power (the Council for the Issues of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the MSSR, state security organs, etc.) had in their sights the "anti-Soviet elements" among the clergy and parishioners of the MSSR.

8) In the context of a fierce anti-Romanian policy, schools, and other cultural establishments were abolished, newspapers were closed, the Romanian language was removed from all public institutions, and the Latin alphabet was replaced with the Russian one. Everything that reminded of the Romanian origin of the inhabitants was eliminated, even their family or baptismal names were Russified. Old calendar holidays were reintroduced. Secret agents were infiltrated inside the Church to diminish its influence. In the church hierarchy, the agents occupied leadership positions. The press, radio, television, cinema, and the organization of public trials were the most effective means of defaming the Church, used by the system for anti-religious propaganda. We maintain, based on documents, that the Orthodox Church in the MSSR was subjected to constraints and restructuring, attempting by all means to erase any Romanian identity elements.

9) The entry of Soviet troops into Romanian territory led to a debatable status of Bessarabian and Bukovinian refugees. After the signing of the Armistice Convention in September 1944, a large-scale action was carried out to identify the Bessarabian Romanian refugees in Romania and to send them to the MSSR. Being threatened by the danger of the policy of forced repatriation by the Soviet occupation authorities in Romania, some of the priests and ministers of Orthodoxy managed to remain in the country through various means, serving the ROC and adapting within a state undergoing Sovietization. The balance of power in the relationship between an atheistic governing regime and the ROC was represented by the newly elected Patriarch of Romania, Justinian Marina.

10) Because the institution of the Church represented an important factor in Romanian society, educated and formed in the spirit of Christian teaching, the communist leaders chose to use it in favor of their interests, demonstrating that the measures involving the religious domain did not affect historical traditions. ROC was "called" to accept a *modus vivendi* with the new regime in the formula of a conception specific to the patriarch, *social apostolate.* Accepting the idea of a compromise, the institution of the Church in Romania enjoyed the maintenance of rights impossible in other communist states. For most of the communist time, churches remained open continuously, religious services were held, and Orthodox literature was edited and published.

11) Paradoxically or not, the fate of some priests who had taken refuge in the country was not any easier, as they were arrested and deported to the Soviet Union. Once here, they shared the fate of those sentenced to forced labor or even death, they were declared as hostile elements hostile to the Soviet state. The practice of Soviet repressions in the case of Bessarabian priests was based on accusations of complicity with the Romanian authorities, espionage, and counter-espionage, their active participation in the Romanianization of the Orthodox community in Bessarabia, an aspect equivalent to anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, which meant the inevitable punishment of those who submitted to the jurisdiction of the ROC.

12) The three representative cases of Bessarabian clergy caught in the clutches of the Securitate come to prove the repressions to which Bessarabian priests were subjected, alongside their brothers in Romania. Whether it is a tribune of the people, Vasile Țepordei, who fought for the Bessarabian cause through his publications, exposing, in virulent articles, the life of the Romanian peasantry in Bessarabia, which remained under occupation; whether it is the future metropolitan of Transylvania, Antonie Plămădeală, who, after years of detention, followed an almost miraculous professional path, in a self-proclaimed atheist state; or whether we refer to the so-called conspiratorial clergy among the Bessarabians in the capital and in the provinces, whose actions were classified as insurgent, an example in this sense being the "anti-Soviet retaliatory action" of the monk Mina Dobzeu. We presented the three cases without assuming the role of judges, but we were firmly convinced that the historian's responsibility is to accurately and fairly analyze the sources.

Following the research undertaken on the issue of *Bessarabian Priests in communist Romania*, but also based on the conclusions and generalizations above, some recommendations can be given:

1) Continuing research on the recent past of church history in Bessarabia, regarding the phenomenon of the purge of Bessarabian priests who were refugees and persecuted by the NKVD organs, namely the practices of tracking and investigation, identification etc.

2) Continuing investigations into the human and professional evolution of Bessarabian priests employed in parishes in Romania, the forms of subversive manifestation or collaboration with the regime, in the perspective of researching particular biographies of clergymen representative, for a better understanding of the characteristic types of oppression of the Romanian security organs, reflected on an individual scale.

3) Complementary to the research of archival documents, field research (monasteries, churches, monastery cemeteries) would also be indicated, interviewing people who knew refugee Bessarabian priests and who could bring new elements to the biographies of some clergymen. Introducing the subject of church-government relations, their interdependence at a social level, redefining the role that the priest has in society by referring to his activity circumscribed to a wide occupational circle, apart from the religious one, all these elements being interesting and current subjects in the options of study disciplines for theological programs and in completing specialized works. We consider that the subject in question is part of a complex and necessary process of recovering historical memory, without which a community is deprived of the civic sense and that of ethnic belonging. In this case, the goal of historians is to be sure that historical memory remains active and, above all, lucrative.

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ADNOTARE

Autor: Buțcu Maria.

Tema: Preoți basarabeni în România comunistă.

Domeniul de studiu: specialitatea 611.02 – Istoria Românilor (pe perioade).

Cuvinte-cheie: refugiu, preoți, regim, bolșevism, biserică, stat, Basarabia, Ion Antonescu, exod, apostolat social, colaborare, compromis, Justinian Marina, Antonie Plămădeală, Vasile Țepordei, Mina Dobzeu.

Structura tezei: Adnotare în lima română, engleză și rusă, lista abrevierilor, introducere, 5 capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie: 222 titluri, 9 anexe, 151 pagini de text de bază (până la Bibliografie).

Scopul studiului vizează destinul preoților basarabeni a căror parcurs social și duhovnicesc a fost marcat de cele două exoduri în România, încercările prin care au trecut aceștia pentru a supraviețui politicii antireligioase, fie prin inteligența de a se adapta condițiilor, fie prin a se manifesta subversiv.

Obiectivele tezei: analiza evenimentelor politice care au precedat și succedat cele două refugii (1940 și 1944): cauze și consecințe; anexarea Basarabiei și politica regimului sovietic față de cultele religioase; guvernarea Antonescu și opera de refacere instituțională în teritoriul românesc eliberat; parcursul preoților basarabeni refugiați în România, încadrarea acestora în viața socială și duhovnicească; persecuția religioasă și metodele de reeducare practicate de regimul comunist; „repatrierea" forțată a preoților basarabeni; formele de protest și rezistență a clerului basarabean împotriva regimului pro-sovietic, văzute din perspectiva studiilor de caz propuse analizei.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică rezultă chiar din titlul demersului științific: *Preoții basarabeni în România comunistă*, ca urmare a raptului sovietic din 28 iunie 1940 și reocupării Basarabiei din 1944. Dramatismul acestor destine decurge din însăși drama României, care este lăsată, după război, pradă Uniunii Sovietice, fiind transformată într-un stat-satelit. Sunt aduse în discuție și puse în circuitul științific un șir de documente de arhivă (laice și bisericești), jurnale și memorii ale supraviețuitorilor, care vin cu o percepție personală asupra evenimentelor istorice trăite, raportate la scară individuală, din perspectiva studiilor de caz prezentate. Este pentru prima dată când se realizează o analiză complexă privind încadrarea preoților basarabeni în societatea românească, contextualizată la raportul Biserică-Stat din perioada comunistă. Un aspect aparte este rezervat relației dintre Securitate și culte, întregului arsenal de metode represive aplicate, care constituie subiecte pe care am încercat să le valorificăm într-o abordare sistemică, fundamentată științific.

Rezultatele obținute. Reconstituirea unui fenomen, cel al refugiului preoților basarabeni, privit din perspectiva celor două istorii: micro și macro; analiza comparativă a politicii antireligioasă din Basarabia în timpul ocupației sovietice (1940-1941, 1944) și România comunistă: asemănări și deosebiri. Rezultatele științifice obținute reprezintă un aport considerabil la înțelegerea fenomenului religios în anii comunismului, cu nuanțarea contextelor și a metodelor de represiune și rezistență.

Valoarea teoretică. Prin concentrarea pe aspectele teoretice și analitice, teza de doctor dezvoltă și consolidează o mai bună înțelegere a politicii antireligioase specifică statului comunist, cu implicații adânci la nivelul psiho-social și/sau modul în care persecuțiile religioase și represiunea au afectat psihologia individuală și colectivă.

Valoarea aplicativă. În urma analizei și elucidării diverselor aspecte din ceea ce a însemnat raport Biserică-Stat, a cărui evoluție a fost condiționată de o situație de război, regimuri de ocupație și administrație violentă, refugiu, parcurs uman și profesional al preoților refugiați, considerăm că ne-a reușit să trasăm câteva direcții clare de cercetare a temei, care, la rândul lor, deschid perspectiva unor alte investigații științifice.

Implimentarea rezultatelor științifice. Rezultatele documentărilor efectuate în arhive și biblioteci au fost materializate în publicarea, în calitate de co-editor, a unui volum de 333 de documente inedite: *Părintele Mina Dobzeu-Duhovnicul Hușilor. Documente (1946-2011),* precum și alte publicații științifice în reviste și studii, dar și prezentările sub formă de comunicări la conferințe naționale și internaționale, fapt care demonstrează aplicabilitatea și relevanța lor în mediul comunității academice.

ADNOTATION

Author: Buțcu Maria.

Subject: Bessarabian priests in the Communist Romania.

Research area: specialty 611.02 – History of Romanians (by periods).

Keywords: refuge, priests, political regime, Bolshevism, terror, church, state, Bessarabia, Ion Antonescu, exodus, social apostolate, collaboration, compromise, Justinian Marina, Antonie Plămădeală, Vasile Țepordei, Mina Dobzeu.

Thesis structure: Annotation in Romanian, English and Russian, list of abbreviations, introduction, 5 chapters, general conclusions, recommendations, bibliography: 222 titles, 9 appendices, 151 basic text pages (up to the Bibliography).

The goal of the study concerns the destiny of the Bessarabian priests whose social and spiritual path was affected directly by the two exodus in Romania, the trials they went through to survive the anti-religious policy, either through the intelligence to adapt to the new political environment, or by being subversive.

Objectives of the thesis: analysis of the political events that preceded and succeeded two refugee episodes (1940 and 1944): causes and consequences; the annexation of Bessarabia and the policy of the Soviet regime towards religious cults; Antonescu's governance and the work of institutional restoration in the liberated Romanian territory; the activity of Bessarabian priests refugees in Romania, their inclusion in the social and spiritual life; Religious persecution and re-education methods practiced by the communist regime; Forced „repatriation" of Bessarabian priests; the forms of protest and resistance of the Bessarabian clergy against the pro-Soviet regime, seen from the perspective of the case studies proposed for analysis.

The scientific novelty and originality are emphasized in the title of the research: *Bessarabian priests refugees in Communist Romania*, as a result of the Soviet abduction on the 28th of June, 1940, and the reoccupation of Bessarabia in 1944. The drama of these destinies reflects the drama of Romania, which became after the war, an object of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, being transformed into a satellite state. Various archival documents, memoirs of survivors are discussed and included in Academia, which comes with a personal perception of the lived historical events, described on an individual level. For the first time, a complex analysis is carried out regarding the inclusion of Bessarabian priests in Romanian society, contextualized to the Church-State relationship from the communist period. A special approach is reserved for the relationship between Intelligence services (Security) and cults, the entire arsenal of applied repressive methods, which constitute subjects of maximum sensitivity, which we tried to capitalize on in a systemic, scientifically based perspective.

Obtained results. The reconstruction of a phenomenon, that of the refuge of the Bessarabian priests, viewed from the personal and general perspective; comparative analysis of the anti-religious policy in Bessarabia during the Soviet occupation (1940-1941,1944) and Communist Romania: similarities and differences. The scientific results represent a considerable contribution to understanding the religious phenomenon during the years of communism, emphasizing contexts and methods of repression and resistance.

Theoretical value. By focusing on theoretical and analytical aspects, the doctoral thesis develops and consolidates a better understanding of the anti-religious policy specific to the communist state, with deep implications at the psycho-social level, which shook the foundations of the world.

Applicative value. Following the analysis and elucidation of the various facets of the Church-State relationship, whose evolution was influenced by a war situation, regimes of occupation and violent administration, refuge, and the personal and professional inclusion of refugee priests, we believe that we have successfully identified distinct research directions for the topic, thereby providing a framework for future scientific investigations.

Implementation of scientific results. The results of documentation carried out in archives and libraries were materialized in the publication, as co-editor, of a volume of 333 original documents: Părintele Mina Dobzeu-Duhovnicul Huşilor. Documents (1946-2011), as well as other scientific publications in magazines and studies, as well as presentations at national and international conferences, demonstrate their applicability and relevance to the academic community.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Автор: Буцку Мария.

Тема: Бессарабские священники в коммунистическую Румынию.

Область исследования: специальность 611.02 – История румын (по периодам).

Ключевые слова: беженство, священники, режим, большевизм, церковь, государство, Бессарабия, Ион Антонеску, исход, апостолат, социальное сотрудничество, компромисс, Юстиниан Марина, Антоний Плэмэдялэ, Василе Цепордей, Мина Добзеу.

Структура диссертации: Аннотация на румынском, английском и русском, языках, список аббревиатур, введение, 5 глав, общие выводы, рекомендации, библиография: 222 наименований, 9 приложений, 151 страниц основного текста (до библиографии).

Цель исследования: изучение судьбы бессарабских священников, чья социальная и духовная жизнь была отмечена двумя исходами в Румынию, а также испытания, через которые они прошли, чтобы выжить в условиях антирелигиозной политики.

Задачи диссертации: Анализ политических событий, предшествовавших и последовавших за двумя волнами беженства (1940 и 1944 годы): причины и последствия; путь бессарабских священников, бежавших в Румынию, их интеграция в социальную и духовную жизнь; Религиозные преследования и методы перевоспитания, применяемые коммунистическим режимом; формы протеста и сопротивления бессарабского духовенства против просоветского режима.

Новизна и научная оригинальность: они вытекают непосредственно из названия научного подхода: *Бессарабские священники, бежавшие в коммунистическую Румынию*, вследствие советского захвата 28 июня 1940 года и повторной оккупации Бессарабии в 1944 году. Обсуждаются и вводятся в научный оборот ряд архивных документов (светских и церковных), дневники и мемуары выживших, которые представляют личное восприятие пережитых исторических событий с индивидуальной точки зрения на примере представленных для анализа случаев. Впервые проводится комплексный анализ интеграции бессарабских священников в румынское общество, контекстуализированный на основе взаимоотношений Церкви и государства в коммунистический период. Особое внимание уделяется взаимоотношениям между Секуритате и религиозными конфессиями, а также всем методам репрессивного арсенала.

Полученные результаты. Воссоздание феномена беженства бессарабских священников с точки зрения двух историй: микро и макроистории; сравнительный анализ антирелигиозной политики в Бессарабии во время советской оккупации (1940-1941, 1944) и коммунистической Румынии. Полученные научные результаты представляют значительный вклад в понимание религиозного феномена в годы коммунизма, с уточнением контекстов и методов репрессий и сопротивления.

Теоретическая ценность. За счет фокусирования на теоретических и аналитических аспектах докторская диссертация развивает и укрепляет лучшее понимание антирелигиозной политики, характерной для коммунистического государства, с глубокими психологическими и социальными последствиями, которые потрясли основы мироустройства.

Практическая ценность. В результате анализа и выяснения различных аспектов отношений Церкви и государства, чья эволюция была обусловлена войной, оккупационными режимами и жесткой администрацией, нам удалось наметить несколько четких направлений исследования темы, которые, открывают перспективы для дальнейших научных исследований.

Внедрение научных результатов. Результаты исследований в архивах и библиотеках были реализованы в публикации в качестве соавтора тома из 333 уникальных документов: «Отец Мина Добзеу–Духовник Хушей. Документы (1946-2011)», а также в других научных публикациях в журналах, анналах и исследованиях, а также в виде докладов на национальных и международных конференциях, что демонстрирует их применимость и значимость в академическом сообществе.

BUȚCU, MARIA

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