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# THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN OLTENIA. THE IMPACT OF THIS REGIME ON THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTERS IN OLT COUNTY IN THE PERIOD 1944–1989

**611.02. HISTORY OF THE ROMANIANS (BY PERIODS)**

**Abstract of the doctoral thesis in history**

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## CONCEPTUAL MARKINGS OF THE RESEARCH

**Actuality and importance of the topic addressed**. The Orthodox Christian religion, professed by the majority of the Romanian population, constitutes a component part of the Romanian identity. All major events in the millennial history of Romanians are directly related to the Christian faith. The Romanian Orthodox Church (B.O.R.) has a role and a substantial spiritual and material influence in the daily life of the Romanian people. Orthodox Christianity gave the Romanian nation its own identity in the European space.

The darkest period in the history of B.O.R. it constitutes the one in which the communist regime totally subsumed its ecclesiastical institution and its ministers. Included in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, Romania was subordinated to the atheistic state, and this fact could not but directly affect the B.O.R. Starting from the Marxist-Leninist concept that religion is "opium for the people", the communist regime launched an offensive against the B.O.R.

The investigation of the communist regime in Romania would be incomplete if the historiographic approach neglected the massive influence of the political-ideological factor on the B.O.R., which tended to minimize the religious institution in the social life of the state or to completely subordinate the religious authority in favor of the secular one. At the same time, it is important to research the continuities and syncopations of institutional memory. Unlike the U.S.S.R., in Romania the church was not separated from the state. From this perspective, different forms of adjustment of the ecclesiastical institution to the new realities were outlined.

The pressure of the communist regime on the B.O.R. it was one with strong distribution valences of the poles of influence. If the ecclesiastical institution created a social prestige created and maintained over several centuries, then the only governing party – the Romanian Workers' Party /the Romanian Communist Party – established and maintained by force, through terror and violence, had to- and legitimize authority. Therefore, during the entire period of the existence of the communist regime in Romania, there was a silent competition and struggle between the secular (political) and the ecclesiastical (spiritual) power, the dimension less addressed in the historiographical discourse.

Taking into account the fact that the relationship between the political regime of the B.O.R. and its servants were applied, both moderate strategies (collaboration with the state authorities, tacit support of state policies) and violent forms (detention, labor camps), both of which had direct consequences on the personality profile and behavior of to the Orthodox

clergy, the topic addressed represents a special interest for the scientific environment, trying to highlight the aspects, mentioned above, in order to elucidate them.

The sudden change of the axis of material and spiritual values was marked by profound transformations on the horizontal and vertical dimension of the Romanian society. In the context of the creation of the cult of personality (initiated by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and reaching a paroxysm in the "Ceaușescu era"), there was even an attempt to replace the biblical models with those of the head of state, to whom the ecclesiastical authority was subordinated and addressed with various laudatory messages. If the "secular" dimension was more widely addressed, then the "ecclesiastical" one was eclipsed from the researchers' view.

The relationship between the "center" (Bucharest) and the "periphery" (Oltenia) at the state and church level is another reality of the communist regime that is less addressed in the economics of specialized works. Oltenia represents the Romanian province with the largest Orthodox Christian population (99%). From Oltenia, most priests participated in the Christian mission during the Second World War in Transnistria. Most Bessarabians took refuge in Oltenia, including clerics. In other words, this reality could not escape from the "watchful eye" of the Soviet authorities, who occupied Romania in 1944. One of the punitive forms applied in relation to Oltenia was the liquidation of the Metropolis of Oltenia (M.O.) in 1945 There was an interconnection between the hierarchies of Oltenia and the Romanian Patriarchate. At the political level, it is necessary to mention the fact that there was a duplicity regarding Oltenia: on the one hand, spirits were asserted here that evoked the necessity of maintaining Romania in the European geopolitical zone, on the other hand, also here, formed a subversive far-left movement, among them the future leader of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu.

The research of the stated theme is necessary to know in depth the activity of the servants of the B.O.R. from Oltenia under the impact of the communist regime. Or, this fact would allow the historiographic approach and that of the public space to elude the erroneous information about the relations between the ecclesiastical and the secular factor, presenting a radiograph close to the primary historical sources (archive documents) often ignored in the presentation of value judgments. The essence of the communist regime in post-war Romania cannot be understood and approached without a deep research of the religious life in Romania, in general, and that of Oltenia, in particular.

Identifying research problems. The research problems aim to study broad social, political and spiritual dimensions exercised by B.O.R. and implicitly by his servants in the state led by the single party, thus making contributions regarding the formulation of some

value judgments and the presentation of an ideology, which could serve as a landmark in the deeper understanding of Romania under the communist regime. The approach of the targeted theme is of major interest, because it brings additional information regarding the relationship between the state, national identity and religious reality, thus providing perspectives for the research and definition of the "cohabitation" relations of the B.O.R. under the communist regime and the research of these dimensions from a local (regional) perspective.

**The purpose** of the paper is to research, identify, estimate the role and contribution of the communist regime in Oltenia on the B.O.R. and the fate of the clergy from Olt County in the years 1944–1989.

In order to achieve the proposed goal, we set the following research objectives. 1) Analysis of the historiography of the problem and the documentary sources in order to identify the research level of the impact of the communist regime on the church and its ministers in Olt county in the years 1944–1989; 2) Researching the impact of the communist regime on B.O.R. and of his servants from the perspective of political, educational, ideological and oppressive factors; 3) Establishing the role and place of the communist regime in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) in relation to the B.O.R.; 4) Identification of the interdependence between the changes in the organizational structure of the ecclesiastical institutions as a result of the interference of the bodies of the state institutions; 5) Appreciation of religious life in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) in the process of institutionalization and consolidation of the communist regime from the perspective of human and patrimonial resources.

**Research hypothesis**. Through the advanced research hypothesis, an exploratory one, we consider that the communist regime established in post-war Romania, an essentially atheist one, played an essential role on the evolution of B.O.R. and the fate of her servants in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) during the years 1944–1989.

**Synthesis of research methodology and justification of chosen research methods**. The work aims at an interdisciplinary approach, calling on different scientific branches in the research field of the humanities: history, theology, political science, international relations, conflictology, sociology, bibliometrics, etc. From a theoretical perspective, I specifically used the analytical method of the factual material collected from specialized literature and historical sources and the synthetic method used to formulate some value judgments and conclusions regarding the impact of the communist regime on the B.O.R. The practical approach of the work was maintained through qualitative, comparative (from a geographical and chronological perspective), critical, diachronic, structural-functional methods, which

allowed us to investigate vertically and horizontally the influence of the political regime on religious life in the county. Olt and Romanians. The use of the synchronous method allowed us to address the impact of the communist regime in Romania in the same chronological interval as the policies promoted by the state and the Church in relation to Oltenia, implicitly the county. Olt. The quantitative method was used when referring to the vast number of documents, including those found in five archives, and bibliographic titles.

*The metaphysical method* allowed the investigation of the conceptual transfer of approach to theology under the communist and post-communist regime. By using the *behaviorist method*, we investigated the reactions and behavior of the Soviet Union involved in the competition to promote geopolitical interests on a religious dimension in its sphere of influence, implicitly in Romania. *Microhistorical analysis* represents an attempt to incorporate another image of historical realities treated at the macro level.

Microhistory, in the present case, reproduces the impact of the communist regime on Oltenia, a historical picture directed "not towards isolated individuals, but towards social relations, towards those relationships, within which members of society build their "strategies". By resorting to the sociological survey and the opinion poll, we managed to develop the interview guide applied to the witnesses of the implementation of state policies in the field of religion from the targeted chronological segment. In order to better know the degree of research of the investigated topic and to identify new aspects of the scientific approach, we used the bibliographic method. In this sense, I used as a working tool the historical bibliography, but also the specialized bibliography directly related to B.O.R., or the bibliography dedicated to M.O. These works allowed us to have a strong point of departure for studying the historiographic approach. We applied the principles of objectivity and impartiality, principles inherent in the scientific approach strongly marked by the ideological imprint of the communist regime in Romania. The methodology used in the economy of work allowed us to create the fundamental (theoretical) and applied (practical) architecture of the scientific approach.

The geographical framework of the work. From a geographical perspective, the subject covered includes the historical province of Oltenia (with its center in Craiova), and the local one, which focuses on Olt county (with its residence in the municipality of Slatina). Until the administrative reform of September 6, 1950, there was also the county. Romanians (with residence in Caracal), including the central-southern part of the current Olt county. That's why we also took into consideration this small interval of time that targeted the current area of Olt County. In order to give a contextual historical explanation, I also applied in the

thesis the national space, which refers to the whole of Romania, called at the time the People's Republic of Romania /the Socialist Republic of Romania (with Bucharest as its capital).

**The chronological framework of the research**. The lower milestone of the work includes August 1944, when Romania enters the war on the side of the Allies, Soviet troops invade Romania, implicitly generating the inclusion of the Romanian state in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union (Sovietization), and from 1947 the control of Romanian society was concentrated by The Romanian Communist Party, the only governing party, thus establishing the communist regime (communization), with a direct impact on the B.O.R. In the case of B.O.R. an important role was played by Decree no. 177 of August 4, 1948 for the general regime of religious cults. According to the document, the hierarchs of the cults were to take an oath before the secular authority. The upper milestone – December 1989 – by removing the Ceausist dictatorship, marks the removal of the communist regime and the return of the B.O.R. to authentic, national values. These chronological limits have framed historical turning events for Romania, of political essence, representing essential milestones in the activity of the Romanian ecclesiastical institution and the clergy.

## THE BASIC CONTENT OF THE THESIS

The doctoral thesis in history was developed in accordance with the requirements provided by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, stipulated in the regulations in force. The work is made up of annotations in Romanian, English and Russian, the list of figures and abbreviations; introduction; three chapters divided into subchapters; general conclusions and recommendations; bibliography; annexes; disclaimer, author's CV.

The introduction includes the following elements: the topicality and importance of the topic addressed, the purpose of the work, research objectives, description of the situation in the field and identification of research problems, the geographical framework of the work, the chronological framework of the research, the research hypothesis, the scientific novelty and originality, the scientific results obtained, the synthesis of the research methodology and the justification of the chosen research methods, the theoretical significance, the applicative value, the approval of the obtained results and the summary of the thesis chapters.

Chapter 1, entitled "Historiography and historical sources", frames the historiographical aspects of the topic addressed, as well as the analysis of classified historical sources.

The degree of study of the theme aimed at the following research direction: the analysis of scientific works that give us a general look at the essence of the totalitarian regime, following the thread of their application in Romania, implicitly in Olt and Romanați counties.

Until the beginning of the 1990s, the subject addressed in the doctoral thesis was poorly researched due to the restrictions imposed by the communist regime, the censorship of the press and church publications, and the inaccessibility of documentary sources. We find a special interest in the ecclesiastical theme from authors from the clergy. Research has transgressed Romania's borders, at the same time, being a concern abroad. After 1990, a series of works were published in Romania that revealed the harsh period that the B.O.R. went through, implicitly the counties of Olt and Romanați, being part of its jurisdiction.

The historiographic approach regarding the B.O.R. during the communist period in Romania, it was a special concern of the clergy, obviously interested in the environment in which they worked. Historians, in the happiest case, researched historical periods more marked by the interference of political and ideological factors, or "migrated" to interdisciplinary subject areas, such as, for example, ecclesiastical art, spiritual heritage.

Church servants were actively involved in the development of the scientific approach to the history of church life. The learned Metropolitan Nicolae Mladin published a volume in which he refers to the spiritual connection of Romanians through B.O.R. In 1962, summaries of the B.O.R. were prepared for the international public in French and German.

The recording of important events in the ecclesiastical environment gave rise to various editorial appearances. In 1968, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the enthronement of Patriarch Justinian Marina (1948–1977), reference works were published on religious life in Romania in the context of the history of the universal church and patrology. In the same context, researcher Ioan Rămureanu elaborated a synthesis of ecclesiastical historiography.

An important milestone of ecclesiastical research is the work of historiographical synthesis prepared by Mircea Păcurariu and Al. I. Ciurea (1971), which includes church historiography after 1948. M. Păcurariu persevered in historiographical research and other reference studies. In the second half of the 1980s, in the context of some anniversaries generated by the autocephaly of the B.O.R. we note the elaboration of some syntheses published under the auspices of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of the B.O.R. or some studies. In this sense, we also mention the article of the Archbishop of Craiova and Metropolitan of Oltenia Nestor Vornicescu.

In general terms, the literature regarding the situation of religious life in the county. Olt and Romanians during the communist regime consider it to be a precarious one. The subject was approached only through the prism of the history and art of ecclesiastical monuments. Strictly speaking, an authentic historiography of the subject during the communist regime was lacking. This reality was related to the political particularities, inherent to the time in question.

Until 1989, Western historiography, focused on the testimonies of refugees from Romania, on the information transmitted by members of different denominations, as well as on the interpretation of official data, addressed themes focused on the anti-Catholic campaign, especially on discrediting the Greek-Catholic Church, an action generated by the Romanian communist authorities, on religious persecutions, etc.

After 1989, scientific studies were published with a varied range of documents and (re)interpretations. Belgian historian Oliver Gillet points out that the Church cooperated with the state to ensure its existence. This work gave rise to polemics in the intellectual environment in Romania, being criticized for the author's partisan position, hieratic voice, Catholic origin. The researcher Sabrina P. Ramet elaborated a study regarding the Church under the communist regime in Romania, presenting data on the differences between the hierarchies and the lower clergy, the former being considered more docile to the system. Western historiographical discourse allows us to make a comparative spatial and interpretive approach to the stated subject.

The representatives of the Romanian exile, educated in Christian values, constantly had under their sights the state of religious life in Romania under the communist atheist regime. The themes addressed by the literature in exile refer to the limitation of public religious life, the imprisonment of clerics, the demolition of places of worship, the collaboration of the B.O.R. with the communist regime, political culpability.

In post-revolutionary Romania we see an "explosion" of works dedicated to religious life during the communist regime. The first authors who signaled the pressure of the communist regime on the church were the prominent representatives of the clerical environment. In the first post-revolutionary decade, there was a call to sources of information such as: the press, official materials, memoirs. A major shortcoming of these works is the precariousness of the theoretical-methodological aspect. With the researchers' access to the declassified archive sources, since 2000 the range of documentary sources used and their accessibility for the general public has been diversified, the working tools and research methodology, the interdisciplinary approach, etc. have been completed. In this

historiographical "avalanche" a critical debate and historical distancing is called for. Various research institutions were involved in the research of the ordeal that the servants of the Church went through.

Regarding the impact of the communist regime on the Church in the county. Olt and Romanati, the persecution of the communist institutions against all those who were ordained and wore priestly robes, a territory where the Securitate adjudged its first position without the right of appeal, left deep traces among the representatives of the clergy. The pressures and terror that fell on the Church and the clergy in the targeted area during the communist period was neither higher nor lower than that in other counties, where the Security and other institutions of the state before 1989 imposed themselves by force. Everything the Securitate did was in unison with the sentiment and ideology of the single ruling party.

Of special importance is the scientific research related to the Resistance Movement against communism, formed after 1948, of which representatives of the clergy from Oltenia were also part. Some resistance movements had an implicit religious content. In this context, we highlight the resistance of the people of the Church in Romanian exile.

Some of the most representative works on the subject of priests arrested during the communist regime in Olt and Romanati are those of the researcher Ana-Maria Rădulescu[1]. The author highlights the extent of the persecution to which the servants of the Church in Olt County were subjected by the local authorities. Another line of subject addressed by the researcher Ana-Maria Rădulescu concerns the situation of monastic settlements within the Archdiocese of Craiova during the years 1958–1960[2]. Recently (2023), the author published a monograph based on her doctoral thesis that refers to the relations between the political authorities and the Church in the Metropolis of Oltenia, in the years 1939–1964 from a historical, theological, political science perspective[3].

Depending on the historical periods, general and specific particularities were delimited, generated, in particular, by political and ideological factors. Overall and less regional research is found, including regarding the county. Olt and Romanians. Drawing on the diversity of historical sources broadens research perspectives.

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[1] RĂDULESCU, Ana-Maria. Clerici ortodocşi în închisorile comuniste. Studiu preliminar, V „Judeţul Olt". In: *M.O.*, 2005, an. LVIII, nr. 5-8, pp.143-144; *Idem, Clerici ortodocşi în închisorile comuniste. Judeţul Olt*. [Craiova]: Editura Aius, 2006, 310 p.; *Idem, Slujitori ai Bisericii din Olt și Romanați, prigoniți în timpul regimului comunist*. Craiova: Editura Episcopiei Slatinei și Romanaților, 2013, p. 16.

[2] *Idem*, Desfiinţarea mănăstirilor din Arhiepiscopia Craiovei: 1958–1960. In: *Studia Politica*, 2007, 7, nr. 3, pp. 675-696.

[3] *Idem*. *Relațiile Bisericii Ortodoxe Române cu Statul. Studiu de caz: Mitropolia Olteniei (1939–1964)*. Craiova: Editura Mitropolia Olteniei, 2023. 566 p.

In order to achieve the formulated goal, I used several historical sources. Thus, the support of the scientific research of the subject of the doctoral thesis is based on a complexity of original historical sources (archival sources) and edited documents (collections of laws, memoirs, iconographic sources, interviews, etc.). Specific to the historical sources issued during the communist regime is the censorship of the media, which represents both an instrument for ensuring the "protection of political power and official doctrine" and a form of legitimizing power. When developing the scientific approach, this particularity of totalitarian regimes will be taken into account.

At the basis of the elaboration of the doctoral thesis are original historical sources. The impact of the political factor in the life of Romanian society, in the terminal phase of communism, we could detect in the materials of the Archives of the National Council for the Study of Security Archives (A.C.N.S.A.S.). In this sense, I studied F. "Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (C.C. of the P.C.R.). Chancellery Section" where I found N. Ceaușescu's Report to the XIV Congress of the P.C.R. The fate of the clergy in Romania, including Oltenia, especially in the county Olt and Romanati was investigated based on the following funds: "C.C. of P.C.R. Chancellery Section", "Ministry of Internal Affairs (M.A.I.). Documentary. The documentary fund relating to persons with a reactionary political past, former exploiters, proposed to be interned at the Craiova-Pitesti Labor Colony", "M.A.I. General Directorate of Penitentiaries. Work Unit Formation 0893 Constanța", "M.A.I. Directorate reg. Oltenia", "M.A.I. Pitesti Region Directorate", "M.A.I. Human Resources Management Department", "M.A.I. County Inspectorate Olt", "Military Court Craiova", etc. In order to research the religious life in the county. Olt and Romanați, especially regarding the situation of priests and places of worship, research was carried out within the Archives of the Râmnic Diocese (A.E.R.) based on personal files (Constantin Boștinescu, Nicolae T. Popa) and funds: "Protoierie address to the Holy Episcopate", "Archbishopric of Craiova. Church Administrative Section", "Church Central Consistory", "Craiova Court. Criminal Section", "Episcopate of Râmnic and Argeș", "Drăgănești Rural Peace Court, Olt county", "Ministry of Cults". The Inspectorate of Cults to the Holy Episcopate of Argeș", etc.

State policy in various fields, including the ecclesiastical one, I was able to find it in different funds of the National Archives of Romania (A.N.R.): "Central Committee of the Communist Youth Union", "Oltenia Regional Committee of the Romanian Communist Party", "Ministry of Cults and Arts. Directorate of Studies".

The state of mind in the second half of 1944 regarding the clergy I noted from F. 1135 "Episcopia of Chișinău" (1918–1948) of the National Archives Agency (A.N.A.). An

important source from the same archive was F.R-2529, that of the proxy, an official who followed the policy in the field of religious life promoted during the "Ceaușescu era".

In the current archive of the Clocociov Monastery we found a series of original iconographic sources.

The role played by Oltenia for the evacuation of Bessarabians, including priests, during the Second World War was analyzed in the transcripts of the meetings of the Council of Ministers. The national resistance movement in Oltenia can be seen from the collection of documents edited by Radu Ciuvceanu and Puica Buhoci.

An important support for the development of the thesis was the normative and legislative framework of the era. In this sense, I have consulted the "Monitorul Oficial", but also collections of published laws. Romania's constitutions from the period of the communist regime (1948, 1952, 1965) were also not excluded from the scope. Religious freedom was guaranteed by two Constitutions – from 1948 (art. 27) and the one from 1952 (art. 84). The statutes of the P.C.R. and that of the P.M.R. they are period documents with projections on the ideological perspective of the ruling party. When preparing the work, the resolutions, declarations, decisions, guidelines taken by the only party that was active in the communist regime were also taken into account. The P.M.R. /P.C.R. congresses and conferences were not eclipsed from the sight either.

The leader of the B.O.R., Patriarch Justinian, tended to connect the ecclesiastical legislation to the legal framework of the new political realities, taking into account, at the same time, the traditions. In 1948, the new Church Organization Law was established in the form of a Statute, and in 1953, the Regulation was established for the organization and administrative and disciplinary functioning of monasteries.

From the category of these historical sources we mention the official data provided by church institutions to be put in the informational circuit.

The 12 volumes of "Social Apostolate, Parables and Exhortations for the Clergy" are of indisputable value for understanding the Church's relations with the communist regime, for the formation of concepts adjusted to the new political and ideological realities.

The chronicle of church life during the period April 1, 1945 – December 31, 1959 is presented by Dudu Velicu (1905–1977), former personal secretary of patriarch Miron Cristea (1936–1938), Eugen Cristescu (1943–1944). The diary (July 2, 1967 – September 29, 1968) of Alexandru Mironescu reproduces the relationship between faith and science, as well as between culture and spirituality.

In the 1990s – early 2000s, we see the publication of several testimonies of ministers of the Christian cult who were imprisoned.

An inside approach to Romanian political life is presented to us in the "work" of Romania's leaders: Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Access to the 189 letters from the period 1941–1977 of Patriarch Justinian reveals the hierarch's relations with the state authorities, as well as his interventions to release priests from the repressive bodies.

Oral history is a significant historical source for the scientific approach of the contemporary period. In post-revolutionary Romania, several interviews were published with the clergy who suffered during the communist period. Between September 23, 2021 and August 10, 2024, the author of the thesis conducted five interviews with four servants of the B.O.R. (two monks and two priests) and one layman. It is about the nuns Filofteia (Cristina Grigoraș) from Brâncoveni Monastery and Iulia (Iuliana Băgăcean) from Clocociov Monastery, priests Daniel Augustin Delureanu and Ilie Popescu and professor Ion Vladu.

In the case of periodicals from the period of the communist regime, preventive censorship is specific (by "removing all elements considered inappropriate for publication"), posterior censorship (carried out "after the completion of the cultural product") and self-censorship, as a form of expression and dissemination of information.

The diversity of historical sources allows to evaluate the diversity of information of the period, to collaborate and to extract the authenticity of historical realities, to compare the statements and ideological intrusions of the period.

In that chapter, the subject related to the influence of the political factor on religious life in post-war Romania was addressed. The inclusion of the Romanian state in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union generated major changes in the activity of religious cults. Both the B.O.R. and the other confessional institutions recognized by the state were marginalized and subjected to severe pressure from the political leaders, strongly ideologised by the branch of the single party – the Romanian Workers' Party/Romanian Communist Party. At the same time, in order to consolidate total power over Romanian society, there was a major tendency of the communist regime to have a massive influence on religious cults. The levers of pressure used by the communist regime in the case of religious cults were the Security and its institutional "allies" (Militia, Security troops, Justice, prison system, Ministry/Department of Cults), administrative pressure, individual and collective intimidation, secularization of education. On the chain of some religious cults (neo-Protestants) there were also supports from outside Romania.

To face political pressure from the state, to "come out of anonymity", B.O.R. he identified compromise solutions that resonated with his own spiritual mission. Thus, a direction of activity with impact in the field of international politics, one intensively promoted by the secular authorities, was the struggle led by the religious establishment to maintain world peace. It was a recurring theme after the end of the Second World War, being interpreted at the time according to the interests of the Soviet Union.

For the consolidation of the communist regime in Romania, a decisive role was played by the control over the legal system and the legislative system, carried out according to the model of the Soviet secret services. Following the implementation of the amended criminal legislation, it was ordered to make the arrest as easy as possible of all those who opposed the regime, and at the same time, to send them to camps or to deport them under compulsory residence regime.

Constitution of the S.S.R. adopted by the Great National Assembly in the meeting of August 21, 1965 provides in art. 30 the following: "Freedom of conscience is guaranteed to all citizens. Anyone is free to share or not, a religious belief. Freedom of religious worship is guaranteed. Religious cults organize and operate freely". This fundamental law was often evoked by the hierarchs of the B.O.R.

In 1968, the Front of Democracy and Socialist Unity (F.D.U.S.) was established, appreciated as "the expression of our national unity around the state leadership and ensures the participation of the broad masses of citizens regardless of nationality, beliefs or faith, of the entire people in the new life of the homeland" . From the composition of F.D.U.S. the B.O.R. hierarchs were also part of it.

During the 11th Congress (November 25–28, 1974) the P.C.R. program was approved. of creating the "multilaterally developed socialist society" (this project established the strategy of the P.C.R. for a period of a decade). According to the ideology of the P.C.R., the multilaterally developed society represented the highlighting of socialist principles in all sectors of economic and social life, the fuller manifestation of personality, aspects that had the role of masking the face of socialism. All this took place in contrast to the spiritual dimensions of the Romanians, anchored in ancestral Christian values.

Theses from April 1988 and N. Ceaușescu's presentations at the plenary session of the C.C. of P.C.R. from November 1988 and April 1989, were appreciated as "an expression of the deep democracy of our society, of the strong unity between the party and the people". The subject of profound changes in the social structure of the country, of socialist homogenization, was addressed. At the same time, it was concluded that: "the era of the 24

years that have passed since the 9th Congress – called with justifiable pride by the entire people the "Nicolae Ceaușescu Era" – is the richest in achievements in the entire history of the Romanian people". N. Ceaușescu, announced to the citizens about the new stage of "the creation of the multilaterally developed socialist society and the advancement of our homeland towards the golden dream of mankind – towards communism"[1].

The revolution of December 1989 put an end to the communist regime in Romania, and the 18 recognized religious cults had the chance to regain the assets lost after 1945, the year in which Petru Groza, from the P.F.P., a close member of the P.C.R., became prime minister, being strongly supported by the Soviet Union.

In the paragraph dedicated to the hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the clergy and the political authorities, it was emphasized that there was a tendency of the communist regime to involve the hierarchs of the B.O.R. and the clergy in political life and, in this way, to discredit them. Under the auspices of the government, in the Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, on October 16–17, 1945, the General Congress of Cults in Romania (Congress of Democratic Priests) was organized with great pomp, in which Patriarch Nicodim was also forced to participate, who after opened the lavish event decided to leave the proceedings of the congress. As a sign of satisfaction for these actions taken by the priests to be with the power, the government of Petru Groza decided to increase the salaries of the clergy. The event in question represented a declarative form of winning the Church on the part of the political power, but, in the context of an uncertain political manifestation of the clergy, it suffered a lamentable failure.

An important measure taken by the communist regime was to infiltrate within the diocesan assemblies and the National Church Council, pro-communist persons who could influence the Holy Synod in order to impose retirement laws and the withdrawal of certain members from the high clergy. In this way, the communist regime wanted to promote to the leadership of the B.O.R. loyal and easy to manipulate people.

The communist regime always wanted to remove or marginalize the disloyal representatives of the B.O.R. from the management, something that happened in the case of Nicodim Munteanu (1939–1948) and Bishop Irineu Mihalcescu, who had a suspicious death. In place of Nicodim, a scholar with an impressive number of translations from contemporary theological literature (over 35 volumes), Justinian Marina came to the helm of the Church.

[1] A.C.N.S.A.S. F. „C.C. al P.C.R. Secția Cancelaria”, d. 76/1989, f. 40.

Patriarch Justinian's tendency to break out of ecclesiastical isolation was blocked by political power, because the prerogative of collaboration with outside churches was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the P.R.R., led by the first female foreign minister in the world, Ana Pauker[1].

By electing the Patriarch Justinian, the communist regime believed that it could completely subordinate the Church, or even reduce it to absolute silence. This hierarch agreed to collaborate with the state, implicitly with the communist authorities in order to maintain a balance.

On February 23, 1949, the new Law on church organization was drawn up in the form of a Statute (similar to that of 1925), based on the concept of socio-religious origins of Byzantine law and aimed at the administrative triad: autocephaly, autonomy and sobornicity (synodality).

This administrative change represents a form of interference of secular power over ecclesiastical power. The institution of the bishop-vicar was abolished, and dioceses were abolished, merged or established.

Emerging from the new situation, Patriarch Justinian skilfully applied the "acrobatic" between his ecclesiastical function and that of "conciliation" with the secular authorities.

The communist authorities widely applied the imperial principle of divide et impera provoking tensions and confrontations among the hierarchs and clergy of the B.O.R. In this context, we note the support in 1956 by the communist regime of Iustin Moisescu, the Metropolitan of Transylvania, in the elections for M.A.N. This political support occurred in the context of the same being denied to Patriarch Justinian. In this way, the patriarch (who in August 1944 sheltered Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, escaped from the Târgu Jiu camp[2]) was punished because he had the courage to criticize the personality cult of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1944–1965), thus losing supporting the communist regime. Synod B.O.R. it was "recommended" that "strictly politically vetted" churchmen be included.

The one who succeeded Justinian Marina in the high hierarchical position, was Iustin Moisescu (1977–1986), a distinguished intellectual, a graduate of the Universities of Athens and Strasbourg, the author of a doctoral thesis in Greek dedicated to the life, writing and teaching of Evagrius Pontic (1937), university professor (1942) of the University of Warsaw. Patriarch Iustin continued the "social apostolate", being considered a national pastoral

[1] CALAFETEANU, Ion. *Scrisori către tovarășa Ana*. București: Univers Enciclopedic, 2005, pp. 326-344.
[2] GEORGESCU, Bogdan. *B.O.R. şi puterea comunistă (1945–1964)*. București: Editura Eikon, 2015, p. 24, Nota 48.

framework. He understood the "missionary and social dimension of the Church in the new political situation; therefore, he did not create expectations that would frustrate the faithful, nor did he start projects destined to remain unfinished"[1]. The fourth patriarch of the B.O.R. he faced the megalomaniac initiatives (primarily the policy of systematization, as a result of which several places of worship were annihilated, many of which represented real monuments of history, art and architecture) of Nicolae Ceaușescu. In the same way, the hierarch faced the actions of the Department of Cults, an institution that took the initiative for the number of students from Bucharest and Sibiu to be much smaller, and the number of prints to decrease considerably. This patriarch is the author of a reference work on "the church hierarchy in the apostolic age".

Patriarch Iustin was criticized for having a soft attitude towards the communist regime. Indeed, this fact can also be glimpsed in the nuanced data of his official biography.

In the Security's materials from 1988, Patriarch Teoctist and other Orthodox hierarchs targeted by foreign intelligence services, circles and religious organizations from outside were mentioned, who through the diplomatic corps (Americans, Austrians, French, etc.) accredited in Bucharest intended to form " "breaches" or dissensions among the higher clergy. As a result, the Security undertook supervisory actions within the Romanian Patriarchate, of eparchial and administrative-ecclesiastical centers, in monasteries and hermitages, theological institutions and seminaries, etc.

In the context of the revolutionary events of December 1989, B.O.R. he radically changed his attitude towards the communist regime he glorified.

A separate paragraph was devoted to the secularization of religious education. By Decree no. 175, issued by the Minister of Public Education, regarding the Education Reform and Decree no. 1383 of August 2, 1948 the educational system was secularized. The Religion discipline and religious insignia were taken out of the school. These legislative changes remained in force, with some subsequent modifications, until 1968. Thus, a legislative support was created that formed the basis of the linear education system, a system completely broken from the traditions of Romanian education: the elementary school with two cycles (I and II), middle school (high schools, technical and pedagogical schools) and higher education, consisting of universities, polytechnics and higher education institutes. The two laws that followed in chronological order (1968 and 1978) tried to return to the traditional structures, but not with regard to the study discipline Religion, which still remained prohibited not only

[1] BRIA, Ion. In memoriam: Patriarhul Iustin al B.O.R. In: *B.O.R.*, 1986, an. CIV, nr. 1, p. 15.

as an object of study, but also as a mention of the concept religious within other disciplines of study.

Many places of worship were demolished, because they inconvenienced or blocked the process of material development, thus undermining the development of religious education. With the change of the political-ideological regime, there is an increasingly intense interference of the political decision-making factor in the internal activity of the B.O.R. The training of the clergy in the spirit of the old Christian traditions was in contradiction with the new political course. That is why there is an increasingly obvious marginalization of theological education and its replacement with a deeply ideological one. In parallel, the repressive structures also attacked the Romanian clergy, who did not comply with the new socio-political requirements.

Repression and resistance constituted another subject line in our research. Pro-communist historiography considered that the main elements of these anti-communist resistance structures were made up of landlords, industrialists and peasants, in reality, the social composition of these social-political movements was much more diverse, including all social categories, including the clergy. From the perspective of the communist regime, B.O.R. it had two faults: the interwar anti-Bolshevik rhetoric and the missionary activity promoted in the years 1941–1944 in Transnistria. The repression was carried out even in violation of the communist regime's legislation, a fact attested even by the Party Commission of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the P.C.R.

The system of repression was maintained through an extensive network of penitentiaries in Gherla (here in 1950 2,000 worker and peasant legionnaires were imprisoned), Jilava, Ocnele Mari, Pitești (here in 1949 student legionnaires were grouped), Suceava, Sighet, Oradea, etc. The convicts were subjected to work at the Canal or in other units. It should be mentioned that, at the Canal, there was brigade no. 34 priests[1].

After an apparent relaxation (1954–1955) marked, especially by the release from prisons, in the context of Romania's admission to the United Nations Organization on December 14, 1955, new repressions are triggered against the background of the Hungarian Revolution (1956). It relied on the closing of places of worship or their strict supervision, spaces considered to be hostile to the communist regime. Towards the end of the 1960s, the law enforcement agencies were still suspicious of ex-convicts. They were still called "bandits" (formers) or favoritism, and returning home involved "discernment, their selection in the work

[1] ROSKE, Octavian. *Mecanisme represive în România (1945–1989). Dicționar biografic*. Litera M. București: Editura Institutului Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2005, p. 201.

base", being necessary "multilateral analyzes of all the materials held about those in question". The activity of these was appreciated as being "anti-state", eager "to return the orders of the past". In the 1980s, the repressive methods on the clergy were more moderate, but they, too, were strictly supervised by the repressive bodies.

In the third chapter of the thesis, entitled "Orthodox religious life during the years of the communist regime in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties)" approaches are presented from the "center" (Bucharest) to the "periphery" (Oltenia) and vice versa on political, ideological, religious dimension. If in certain situations these relationships were horizontal from an administrative perspective, then, most of the time, they were created on the basis of a directive, vertically. Either way, this situation created either tense moments or moments of loyalty.

The local historical-political and economic framework was addressed, configuring the major changes that Oltenia went through in the post-war period, transformations that, in our opinion, deeply marked the religious life of the Romanian province. Or, the target that the communist regime set in the targeted area was to distance the Orthodox Christians from the authentic spiritual values, formed over several centuries, in a short time.

The suspicion that the heart of Oltenia, Craiova, is not politically and ideologically prepared to face the new realities persisted until April 1953, when, by a decision of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers' Party, a series of party committees regional, including those in Craiova, were mentioned as not systematically concerned with political agitation, likewise, they did not offer a combative character, they trained the agitators artificially and at a low level[1]. All this took place in the context of the establishment of the myth of the formation of a powerful communist organization in Oltenia.

If during the leadership of Romania by Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej, criticism was brought from an organizational perspective to the party bodies in Oltenia, which held many meetings and therefore had little time left for direct political-organizational activity, then, in the "Ceaușescu era", until the end of the 1970s, the region was presented as being an exemplary one.

In general terms, Oltenia was estimated at the time to be a space of the "revolutionary struggle of the working class, of the P.C.R. The radical transformations in the social and economic life had the desired goal of distancing the region from the traditional values of the Romanian people. It was an unfit ground for the natural activity of the religious life or B.O.R.

[1] *Rezoluții și hotărâri ale Comitetului Central al Partidului Munictoresc Român (1951–1953).* Vol. II [Numai pentru uz intern]. București: Casa Scânteii „I.V. Stalin”, 1954, pp. 374-376.

from Oltenia was forced to coexist with a regime that tolerated her more than accepted her in essence. The sociopolitical and economic transformations in post-war Oltenia were at odds with the spiritual experience of the Orthodox Christians in the area in question.

A separate paragraph was dedicated to the dissolution, reactivation and evolution of the Metropolis of Oltenia. In the interwar period, if Transylvania had the fewest Orthodox Christians (27.7%), then Oltenia had the largest Orthodox population (99.0[1]) in the country. The concept of church institutionalization was materialized on November 7, 1939, through the creation of the Orthodox-Romanian Metropolis of Oltenia, Râmnic and Severin, by royal decree, on the occasion of the centenary of the birth of the first king of Romania, Carol I (1839–1914). As suffragans of the new ecclesiastical institution were the Archdiocese of Craiova (also created then), with extension over all counties. Olteniei – Vâlcea, Romanati, Dolj, Gorj and Mehedinți – but also the Episcopate of Argeşului (the monastery of Argeşului which until then functioned as an Episcopal Cathedral, later to be the family crypt of the Romanian sovereigns). December 1939 in the Cathedral "St. Dumitru" from Craiova, now the Metropolitan Cathedral, during a lavish event. Having political support, being a member of P.N.Ţ. and a relative of Ion Mihalache, the priest Marina became archbishop-vicar, initially in Craiova, then diocesan bishop at Curtea de Argeş in 1944, suffragan M.O. It was a favorable path, coming from Oltenia, for the future patriarch of Romania.

A peculiarity of the diocese of Oltenia shepherded by Nifon Criveanu resides in the fact that it hosted the largest number of refugee clerics from Bessarabia, northern Bucovina, Cadrilater, following the territorial reports from the summer-autumn of 1940. In Oltenia, 134 priests, deacons and singers from Bessarabia, 25 servants of the Church from Bucovina, 14 from northern Transylvania and seven from Quadrilater[2]. Likewise, Oltenia hosted many Bessarabians following the re-annexation of Bessarabia by the Soviet Union in 1944. Among them were Vladimir Potlog, the future dean (1983–1989) of the History Faculty of Chisinau State University[3].

The plan to abolish M.O. was implemented after the events of August 23, 1944 occurred in the radical changes in political life in Romania. Thus, according to Decree-law no. 305 of April 20, 1945 M.O. was abolished. According to researcher Ana-Maria Rădulescu, M.O. represents "the first Romanian diocese that fell victim to a practice that became current

[1] SCURTU, Ioan. *Viața cotidiană a românilor în perioada interbelică.* București: Editura RAO, 2001, p. 218.
[2] *Vieaţa bisericească în Oltenia. Anuarul Mitropoliei Olteniei*. Craiova: Tipografia Sfintei Mitropolii a Olteniei, Râmnicului şi Severinului, 1941, p. 126, 128.
[3] XENOFONTOV, Ion Valer; PRISAC, Lidia. *Profesorul Vladimir Potlog (1927–2022): Povestea vieţii. Studiu de istorie orală* /red. șt.: Liliana ROTARU. Chişinău: Lexon-Prim, 2022, pp. 90-93, 190.

during the communist period, namely the abolition of dioceses with the aim of removing hierarchs not approved by the authorities and replacing them with obedient hierarchs"[1]. Metropolitan Nifon Criveanu, faced with the fait accompli, was informed by the sub-prefect of Râmnicu-Vâlcea that he had to leave the city for two days, because he was to be appointed to the bishop Atanasie (Dincă) Bârlădeanul, in the seat of deputy bishop.

By the election of Firmilian Marin, the Archdiocese of Craiova was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan, with the newly organized Episcopate of Râmnic and Argeș as its suffragan. At the meeting of the Holy Synod on February 21, 1968, attended by all synodal members, Dumitru Dogaru, the general secretary of the Department of Religions, it was decided that the Archdiocese of Craiova would include the county Dolj, Gorj and Mehedinți, and the Diocese of Râmnic and Argeş to include the county. Vâlcea, Olt and Argeș, with the exception of Câmpulung protoieria. By Order no. 438/c/1968 of the Department of Religions attached to the Council of Ministers approved the territorial delimitation of the dioceses of the B.O.R. The fact that in the fall of 1972, this diocese was visited by the superiors of the Russian and Romanian Orthodox Churches tells us about the prestige enjoyed by the Diocese of Râmnic and Argeș.

Following the death of Firmilian, Archbishop of Craiova and Metropolitan of Oltenia, on January 28, 1973, after the Doxology service, which took place in the chapel of the Patriarchal Palace, the Electoral College for the election of bishops and metropolitan archbishops (82 voters out of 92 members present) met in the festive hall of the National Church Assembly. The meeting was attended by Patriarch Justinian, Stanciu Stoian, the delegate of the Great National Assembly of the SSR, Dumitru Dogaru, the president of the Department of Cults. As a result of the counting of the ballot it was found that out of the total of 82 votes, Bishop Teoctist of Arad obtained 81 votes, thus being elected to the seat of Archbishop of Craiova and Metropolitan of Oltenia[2]. In the fall of 1974, Craiova was visited by Elias IV, the patriarch of Antioch and of the whole East, together with the patriarch Justinian of the B.O.R. A year later, Craiova was visited by Metropolitan Hrisantos de Lineassol. This is how the consolidation of the "Oltean group" takes place in the Bucharest sphere of influence. Or, Teoctist will become patriarch of Romania in 1986. In 1987, the representatives of Oltenia were part of the composition of the Holy Synod: Nestor,

[1] RĂDULESCU, Ana-Maria. *Slujitori ai Bisericii din Olt şi Romanaţi, prigoniţi în timpul regimului comunist*. Slatina: Editura Episcopiei Slatinei și Romanaților, 2013, p. 157.

[2] Procesul-verbal din 28 ianuarie 1973 al Colegiului Electoral Bisericesc asupra alegerii I. P. S. Teoctist ca Arhiepiscop al Craiovei şi Mitropolit al Olteniei. În: *B.O.R.*, 1973, an. XCI, nr. 1-2, pp. 251-252.

Metropolitan of Oltenia and Damaschin Severinean, bishop-vicar of the Archdiocese of Craiova.

Nestor Vornicescu, the metropolitan of Oltenia in the years 1978–2000, stood out as a great scholar defending his doctoral thesis on the topic "Patristic writings in B.O.R. until the century XVII". He was the president of the Romanian Commission for Comparative Ecclesiastical History. The 16th working session, for example, held on December 14, 1985 at the University Theological Institute in Bucharest, was chaired by the hierarch of Oltenia. The purpose of the Commission was "to contribute to the illumination of the monolithic, spiritual and national unity of the Romanian people"[1]. The 20th meeting of the Romanian Commission for Comparative Ecclesiastical History took place on February 18, 1988 in Bucharest. Metropolitan Nestor Vornicescu was part of the ecumenical structure of the Christian Conference for Peace, participating in the numerous meetings of an ecumenical nature that had on the agenda the promotion of peace between people belonging to different confessions and religions, publishing works in this sense.

Like other administrative institutions of the B.O.R., and M.O. he was sending tributes to the leader of the Romanian state.

A separate paragraph concerned the institutionalization of oppression in Oltenia: priests between "reconciliation" with the state, repression and resistance. The reconfiguration of the political and ideological system left a direct imprint on the servants of Oltenia, implicitly the county. Olt and Romanians. Following the establishment of a harsh system of oppression, the servants of the B.O.R. they were the target of restrictive actions, which obviously left its mark on their entire activity. From this perspective, white and black clergy were pressured by a number of factors to act against their social purpose. Thus, we find a set of dichotomous actions of the priests in the targeted space.

In the paper I addressed the subject of the creation and activity of the institution of oppression in Oltenia, a violent tool for putting into action the political directives generated by the communist regime in Romania, including in the field of religious life. A general presentation reveals the fact that all social categories were the target of the set of actions that oppressed the population both in terms of physically as well as spiritually. In order to implement their political decisions, guided by ideological approaches, the institutions of repression were created. It should be mentioned that Oltenia provided a number of human resources for the activity of oppressive institutions.

[1] IONIȚĂ, Viorel. Cea de a XVI-a întrunire a Comisiei române de istorie eclesiastică comparată. In: *B.O.R.*, 1986, an. CIV, nr. 1-2, p. 56.

The life of the cults in communist Romania, including in the county Olt and Romanați, was carefully monitored by the Ministry of Cults. In 1954, M.O. was visited several times by the Minister of Religions. The "watchful eye" in the Ministry of Cults was the commissioner/territorial inspectors, a function created according to the Soviet model.

A general look at the institution of oppression in Oltenia demonstrates the fact that it kept under strict control the "enemies of the people", a punitive phrase applied to all social categories. The biographical data of the cadres employed in the security service reveal that they did not have a high intellectual training, therefore many errors were made, even from the internal perspective of these institutions.

Another category of priests, who were among the first to suffer after the establishment of the communist regime, were the Bessarabians. During the annexation of Bessarabia by the Soviet Union, in the summer of 1940, civil servants and farmers from Oltenia worked in the Romanian province, who together with Bessarabians from different social categories, including servants of the B.O.R., in the context of the tense situation created, had to repatriate in the country, in Oltenia. It should be specified that the government of Ion Antonescu fixed Oltenia and Banat as Romanian provinces intended for the evacuated, except for those who had close relatives in other parts of Romania[1]. The Romanian security fully enslaved by the Soviet Union promptly executed all the requests of the expansionist state. It is also the case of the Bessarabian clergy, refugees in Oltenia during the occupation of Bessarabia by the U.S.S.R. (1940, 1944). Out of a total of 368 refugee clergy, 44 people were assigned to the Archdiocese of Oltenia[2]. We do not overlook the case of the priests from Oltenia, who served in Bessarabia during the Second World War. Archimandrite Efrem Enăchescu, former exarch of the monasteries of Oltenia, former Archbishop of Chişinău, transferred his residence in the fall of 1944 to the Regional Museum in Craiova, later the hierarch was retired by the communist regime. There were also convicted priests from Oltenia, graduates of the Faculty of Theology in Chisinau. Even the priests from Oltenia, who were on mission during the years of the second world conflagration in Transnistria, did not escape the authorities' sights.

The revolutionary events in Hungary in the fall of 1956 also found resonance in the clerical environment of Oltenia. For example, during events in the neighboring country, and after that, Ion Stănculescu, priest at the Bălțati parish, highlighted this event, stating that even in the R.P.R. the same events will take place, and the measures taken by the P.M.R. and

[1] CIUCĂ, M.D. (ed.). *Stenogramele şedinţelor Consiliului de Miniştri: Guvernarea Ion Antonescu*. Vol. X (ianuarie – aprilie 1944). București: Arhivele Naţionale ale României, 2007, p. 74.
[2] PETCU, Adrian Nicolae. Ortodoxia basarabeană în timpul Guvernării Antonesciene (1941–1944). In: *Studia Universitatis Moldaviae*. Revista științifica a Universtității de Stat din Moldova, 2023, nr. 4 (174), p. 33.

government in order to raise the standard of living of those who work were linked to the changes produced in Hungary.

In August 1958, Metropolitan Firmilian Marin of Oltenia was investigated for legionaryism, a fact he did not declare in his autobiography at the episcopate[1]. There were also tendencies of the Security to include priests, ex-prisoners, in the network of informers.

In the late 1970s – early 1980s, church ministers were still under the watchful "eye" of state bodies. Some of the priests only had their information tracking file closed after their death.

The analyzed material allows us to ascertain a series of moderate or violent actions promoted by the political authorities in relation to the clergy of Oltenia, implicitly the county. Olt and Romanians. From the perspective of the communist regime, church servants were considered a disloyal social category, a turbulent one for the state and the party, therefore it was constantly strictly monitored by the secular authorities.

A separate paragraph was dedicated to the state of places of worship. BORON. was forced to cede several real estates to various public institutions. The authorities carefully monitored historical monuments, including those of a religious nature, which could be visited by tourists from abroad. A moderate form of maintaining places of worship was the organization of religious art museums in their incitement. Under the slogan that places of worship are "assets of the people who, over the generations, have left their marks of political and social struggles on them", Patriarch Justinian Marina managed to coordinate the repair, restoration and construction activities of 70 churches and monasteries from the country in the years 1951–1952, including in the county Olt. In 1960, a series of instructions for the systematization of buildings were launched; demolition of chapels, church paintings. It became more and more difficult to obtain favorable approvals for the construction of churches, chapels, parish houses, the number of requests with unfavorable approvals for construction and repairs of places of worship, requests for land for construction, was clearly higher than those with favorable approval. Distributions of construction materials were transferred to production cooperatives within some Orthodox dioceses.

A special impression on the state of the holy places in the county. Olt had Elena Bărbulescu (nicknamed "The Lady"), general school inspector in the county. Olt, the sister of the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, the one who ruled the entire county with an "iron fist". Many places of worship in the region disappeared after the sister of the president of the R.S.R.

[1] VELICO, Dudu. *Biserica Ortodoxă în anii regimului comunist. Însemnări zilnice II (1948–1959)* /Ed.: îngrijită de Alina TUDOR, Şerban MARIN. Bucureşti, 2005, p. 246.

ordered the demolition. But there were some exceptions. For example, the Brâncoveni Church, located 20 km from Slatina, documented in the time of ruler Mircea cel Bătrân (1386–1418), was saved from demolition and renovated thanks to the intervention of "the Lady", together with Bishop Gerasim.

In the era, Oltenia was presented as being rich in its votive painting. Researchers Aurelia Mincă and Mihail Butoi mentioned in 1984 that the documentary fund that belonged to the monasteries in Olt consists of 1,315 documents, "without mentioning the fact that many of them were destroyed by the vicissitudes of time, among which invasions and fires have were the most destructive"[1]. In the work, the general evolution of the monastic settlements in the county was addressed. Olt and Romanați under the communist regime, with a general presentation of the state of the monastic hearths at the local level (Seaca-Mușetești, Brâncoveni Monastery, Căluiu Monastery, Clocociov Monastery).

The state of the monasteries, hermitages and churches remained at the disposal of the central heritage conservation institutions, of the local authorities, but also of some private initiatives, including those of the servants of the B.O.R.

## GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The period in which B.O.R. and his servants operated under the communist regime was the most difficult in the history of religious life in Romania. The scientific research of these relations between the Church and the state is necessary to bring to the academic environment and the public space relevant arguments regarding the impact generated by the geopolitical, political, ideological factor on an ecclesiastical structure created during a historical period, identified, implicitly, with the history the Romanian people.

Starting from the formulation of the purpose and objectives of the doctoral thesis entitled The Communist Regime in Oltenia. The impact of this regime on the church and its servants in Olt county during the period 1944-1989, towards the end of the scientific approach we draw the following general conclusions:

1. The thorough study and analysis of the research degree of the theme allowed us to identify the following historiographic spaces and periods: Romanian historiography under the communist regime; Western historiography; Romanian historiography from exile; post-communist Romanian historiography. If the Romanian historiography under the communist regime was totally enslaved to the political factor (deliberately avoiding disturbing the secular

[1] MINCĂ, Aurelia; BUTOI, Mihail. *Monumente istorice și artă din județul Olt*. București: Editura Meridiane, 1984, p. 43.

authorities), being focused more on the official presentation of internal religious life, then the post-revolutionary historiography evolved from one with emotional approaches (with an approach criticism of the recent past, seconding, however, the collaboration of historical sources), to one with problematic openings (the collaboration of the hierarchs of the B.O.R. with the state, oppression, resistance), theoretical-methodological structures, interdisciplinary openness and to new historical sources. The Western historiographic approach approached the subject through the lens of the confrontations generated by the Cold War that divided the world into antagonistic dimensions, emphasizing, in particular, the ideological factor and the cooperation of the B.O.R. with the state. The Romanian historiography in exile drew attention to the direct interference of the state in the life of the Romanian ecclesiastical institution. If at the national level, the impact of the communist regime on B.O.R. and its servants there is a varied range of scientific works, this aspect is not so extensive at the regional level. Regarding Oltenia, implicitly, county Olt and Romanați, with the exception of some segmental research carried out by Mircea Păcurariu, Ana-Maria Rădulescu, Adrian Nicolae Petcu, we note a precarious level of studying religious life in the targeted area. The specialized literature allowed us to carry out a research focused on the institutional state-church relationship generated by the center in relation to the periphery, with the local level and implicitly on the inversion of these relationships, starting from the local, regional and targeting the center. Or, precisely this type of approach is one eclipsed in the discourse recent historiography.

2. In order to develop the scientific approach, I emphasized the use of a complex set of historical sources. In this sense, we have used unpublished historical sources (identified in three archives from Romania and one from the Republic of Moldova) and published documents (collections of laws, memoirs, iconographic sources, interviews, etc.). In the work we also used oral sources, interviewing direct witnesses, who provided us with valuable information regarding the historical events and facts addressed. At the same time, we took into account the fact that during the communist regime there was a harsh censorship of the means of information (thus accentuating the dose of subjectivity), a fact also reflected in the historical sources, that is why we emphasized the collaboration of as many documentary sources, with specialized literature, stating, in this sense, also their own value judgments.

3. With the change of geopolitical direction after August 23, 1944 and the inauguration of the communist regime, a turn of religious life takes place in Romania. The new regime had a duplicitous attitude in relation to B.O.R. and her servants. On the one hand, an attempt was made to attract the largest ecclesiastical institution in the country into political

life, on the other hand, the anti-Bolshevik attitude and action of the B.O.R. in the interwar period and the association of some clerics with the far-right movement generated various punitive forms, including detention, work in colonies, marginalization, compromise, intimidation. The places of worship, considered to be hostile to the communist regime, were strictly supervised by the repressive bodies. Violating the principle of autocephaly, through the Russian Patriarchate, Moscow was directly involved in the election of the B.O.R. hierarchs, directing it towards the promotion of anti-Western policies. Despite the fact that Romania was included in the sphere of influence of the U.S.S.R., a state that intensively promoted militant atheism, however, it is necessary to mention that in Romania the extreme actions used with excess zeal in the Soviet state were not applied. B.O.R. hierarchies they collaborated with the communist regime, although, on certain segments, they also undertook actions that did not resonate with that of the political factor. Through the process of secularizing religious education and intensifying secular education, it was aimed at creating generations of citizens loyal to the communist regime and detached from spiritual-Christian values.

4. In the doctoral thesis we focused our attention on Oltenia, implicitly the county. Olt and Romanians. Here we found a political-administrative duality: a tendency to "conserve" the geopolitical realities of the state, but suppressed by the new realities, and the existence of a communist subversive movement generated between the two world conflagrations. With the arrival of Nicolae Ceaușescu to the leadership of the state, it is noted that the county Olt, the native space of the general secretary of the P.C.R., was "protected" by him and his associates. Emphasis was placed on the economic development, especially the industrial one, of Oltenia. From an ideological perspective, there was speculation on historical realities, on equality and the social imaginary, and the religious dimension was eclipsed from the political-ideological discourse. Considering the fact that the hierarchs and clergy from Oltenia were actively involved in the missionary activity in Transnistria during the Second World War, the province being also a space for refugees from Bessarabia, at the same time collaborating with the subjective factor we note the fact that went to an extreme action, the liquidation in 1945 of the Metropolis of Oltenia. The reactivation of the administrative institution took place through the replacement of the hierarch, one supported by the central secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Oltenia was one of the important areas of the national resistance movement in Romania, which also included the clergy. Punishment of B.O.R. servants it took place through the chain of some institutions of oppression. In this sense, we analyzed the activity of the Regional Security Directorate in the city. Craiova, of the representative/territorial inspectors

within the Ministry /Department of Cults. It should be mentioned that during the period 1970–1989, the management of the Department of Religions was formed, exclusively, by staff originating from Oltenia. The analysis of the historical sources and specialized literature allows us to note the fact that regarding the clergy in Oltenia we highlight a nuanced picture: some of the priests openly collaborated with the communist regime, others tried to "cohabit", but some of the church servants had to suffer as a result of the establishment of oppression through mistreatment, convictions, intimidation. There was also a segment of the clergy who opposed the political authorities. The maintenance of places of worship (churches, monasteries and hermitages) was determined by the legislation of the time, but also by the initiatives of the servants of the B.O.R.

Therefore, the interdisciplinary study, from a historical perspective, supported by a rich specialized literature and a multitude of documentary sources, allowed us to analyze in complexity the communist regime in Oltenia and its impact on the B.O.R. and the clergy of the county. Olt in the period 1944–1989.

The researches carried out highlight the importance of the theme we tackled for the History of Romanians in the Contemporary Era and from this point of view we recommend the following:

1. Continuing the research of the impact of the communist regime on other counties in Romania, thus creating a general and particular image of the history of the B.O.R., and its servants under the communist regime.
2. The organization of national and international scientific events devoted to the impact of the communist regime on the various counties in Romania with the full inclusion of specialists from the fields of history, theology, education, anthropology, cultural heritage, museums, archives, international relations, collective mentalities. These meetings will be attended by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities who will take into account the suggestions and recommendations of specialists in the related fields in order to develop policies and practical actions.
3. Dissemination of scientific results in the secular and theological education system, in scientific research institutions, for the promotion of cultural heritage, in the mass media.
4. Elaboration of an interdisciplinary synthesis with the research theme related to the history of B.O.R. under the communist regime from a national (general) and local (specific) perspective.
5. Creation of a historical-spiritual tourist itinerary with the generic "Bessarabian priests in Oltenia and Olteni priests in Bessarabia/Republic of Moldova".

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## ADNOTARE

**Enache I. Ionuț, „Regimul comunist în Oltenia. Impactul acestui regim asupra bisericii și slujitorilor ei în județul Olt în perioada 1944–1989”, teză de doctor în istorie, specialitatea 611.02 – Istoria Românilor (pe perioade), Chișinău, 2024. 230 p.**

**Structura tezei:** adnotări, lista figurilor și abrevierilor, introducere, trei capitole divizate în subcapitole, concluzii generale şi recomandări, bibliografie din 676 de titluri, 151 de pagini de text de bază, 7 anexe, declarația privind asumarea răspunderii, CV-ul autorului. Rezultatele obținute sunt publicate în 13 lucrări științifice (3 articole științifice în reviste acreditate, 1 articol într-o revistă neacreditată, 6 publicații în materialele conferințelor naționale și internaționale, precum și 3 articole în culegere colectivă).

**Cuvinte-cheie:** regim comunist, stat, politică, represiune, rezistență, Biserica Ortodoxă Română, Mitropolia Olteniei, cler, lăcașuri de cult, România, Oltenia, jud. Olt, 1944–1989.

**Scopul lucrării** constă în cercetarea, identificarea și estimarea rolului și contribuției regimului comunist din Oltenia asupra B.O.R. și destinului clerului din jud. Olt în anii 1944–1989.

**Obiectivele cercetării:** analiza istoriografiei problemei și a surselor documentare în vederea identificării nivelului de cercetare a impactul regim comunist asupra bisericii și slujitorilor ei în județul Olt în anii 1944–1989; cercetarea impactului avut de regimul comunist asupra B.O.R. și al slujitorilor săi din perspectiva factorilor politic, educațional, ideologic și opresiv; stabilirea rolului și locului regimului comunist în Oltenia (jud. Olt și Romanați) în raport cu B.O.R.; identificarea interdependenței dintre modificările în structura organizatorică a instituțiilor ecleziastice ca urmare a ingerinței organelor instituțiilor de stat; aprecierea vieții religioase în Oltenia (jud. Olt și Romanați) în procesul de instituționalizare și consolidare a regimului comunist din perspectiva resursei umane și cea patrimonială.

**Noutatea și originalitatea științifică:** teza de doctorat constituie, în premieră, o cercetare științifică bazată pe o bogată literatură de specialitate și diversitate de izvoare istorice axată pe impactul regimului comunist asupra B.O.R. și slujitorilor ei în Oltenia (județele Olt și Romanați) în perioada 1944–1989. Tema investigată acoperă un gol informațional în istoriografia românească orientată mai mult spre macroistorie, decât pe microstorie.

**Problema științifică soluționată**: rezultatele științifice obţinute, constau în abordarea și caracterizarea impactului regim comunist asupra bisericii și slujitorilor ei în Oltenia (județele Olt și Romanați) în perioada 1944–1989”, microcercetare ce a dus la elaborarea unor viziuni de ansamblu a prezentării într-un tot întreg a B.O.R. și a slujitorilor ei în evoluție și involuție istorică în vederea aplicării rezultatelor științifice obținute în cercetări științifice fundamentale și aplicative din domeniul istoriei românilor în epoca contemporană.

**Semnificația teoretică**: se investighează din perspectivă conceptuală și ideatică esența regimului autoritar comunist în România în raport cu instituția ecleziastică ortodoxă, cu ierarhii și slujitorii ei, cu mecanismele opresiunii asupra vieții religioase, raportul dintre „centru” și „periferie” în problema religiei, spiritualitate versus ideologie, starea patrimoniului ecleziastic sub regim ateist; se analizează trăsăturile vieții religioase în Oltenia în contextul factorului politic și religios din cadrul României.

**Valoarea aplicativă**: rezultatele investigației științifice pot fi utilizate de specialiști în domeniu, în elaborarea lucrărilor interdisciplinare, aplicative, de istorie locală, regională, națională, conturând imaginea generală și specifică a B.O.R. sub regim comunist. Totodată, rezultatele cercetării pot constitui drept repere pentru întocmirea unor teze de licenţă, master și de doctorat, pot fi aplicate în cadrul unor discipline pre și universitare din domeniul istoriei și teologiei.

**Aprobarea rezultatelor obținute**: aspecte ale problemei cercetate au fost prezentate la 6 manifestări științifice și volume din Republica Moldova și România, 3 articole științifice în reviste științifice acreditate din Republica Moldova, 1 articol într-o revistă neacreditată, 3 articole într-o culegere colectivă din România.

## ANNOTATION

**Enache I. Ionuț, ”The communist regime in Oltenia. The impact of this regime on the church and its servants in Olt county during the period 1944–1989”, doctoral thesis in history, specialty 611.02 - History of Romanians (by periods), Chisinau, 2024. 230 p.**

**Author:** Enache I. Ionuț.
**Structure of the thesis:** annotations, list of figures and abbreviations, introduction, three chapters divided into subchapters, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography of 676 titles, 151 pages of basic text, 7 appendices, statement of responsibility, author's CV. The results obtained are published in 13 scientific works (3 scientific articles in accredited journals, 1 article in a non-accredited journal, 6 publications in the materials of national and international conferences, as well as 3 articles in collective collections).
**Keywords:** communist regime, state, politics, repression, resistance, Romanian Orthodox Church, Metropolis of Oltenia, clergy, places of worship, Romania, Oltenia, Olt county, 1944–1989.
**The aim of the thesis:** the aim of the paper is to research, identify and estimate the role and contribution of the communist regime in Oltenia on the B.O.R. and the fate of the clergy in Olt county in the years 1944–1989.
**The objectives of the thesis:** analysis of the historiography of the problem and documentary sources in order to identify new research aspects; the research of the impact of the communist regime on Romanian Orthodox Church and of his servants from the perspective of the political, educational, ideological and repressive factor; establishing the role and place of the communist regime in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) in relation to Romanian Orthodox Church; the appreciation of religious life in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) under the communist regime from an institutional, human and patrimonial resource perspective.
**Scientific novelty and originality:** the doctoral thesis is, for the first time, a scientific research based on a rich specialized literature and diversity of historical sources focused on the impact of the communist regime on the B.O.R. and her servants in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) during the period 1944–1989. The investigated theme covers an information gap in Romanian historiography oriented more towards macro-history than micro-history.
**The results obtained:** the scientific results obtained consist in the approach and characterization of the impact of the communist regime on the church and its servants in Oltenia (Olt and Romanați counties) during the period 1944–1989, micro-research that led to the elaboration of some overviews of the presentation as a whole of Romanian Orthodox Church and its servants in historical evolution and involution in order to apply the scientific results obtained in fundamental and applied scientific research in the field of Romanian history in the contemporary era.
**Theoretical significance**: the essence of the communist authoritarian regime in Romania is investigated from a conceptual and ideological perspective in relation to the Orthodox ecclesiastical institution, with its hierarchs and servants, with the mechanisms of oppression on religious life, the relationship between ”center” and ”periphery” in the matter of religion, spirituality versus ideology, the state of the ecclesiastical heritage under the atheistic regime; the features of religious life in Oltenia are analyzed in the context of the political and religious factor within Romania.
**Application value:** the results of the scientific investigation can be used by specialists in the field, in the elaboration of interdisciplinary, applied works, of local, regional, national history, outlining the general and specific image of the Romanian Orthodox Church under the communist regime. At the same time, the research results can be used as benchmarks for the preparation of bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses, they can be applied in pre-university disciplines in the field of history and theology.
**Implementation of scientific results:** Aspects of the research problem were presented at 6 scientific events and volumes from the Republic of Moldova and Romania, 3 scientific articles in accredited scientific journals from the Republic of Moldova, 1 article in a non-accredited journal, 3 articles in a collective collection from Romania.

**АННОТАЦИЯ**

**Энаке И. Ионуц, «Коммунистический режим в Олтении. Влияние этго режима на церковь и ее служителей в округе Олт в период 1944–1989 гг.», докторская диссертация по истории по специальности 611.02 – История румын (по периодам), Кишинэу, 2024 г. 230 с.**

**Автор:** Энаке И. Ионуц.

**Структура и объем диссертации:** аннотации, перечень рисунков и сокращений, введение, три главы, разбитые на подразделы, общие выводы и рекомендации, библиография из 676 наименований, 151 страниц основного текста, 7 приложений, сведения об ответственности, автобиография автора. Полученные результаты опубликованы в 13 научных работах (3 научные статьи в аккредитованных журналах, 1 статья в неаккредитованном журнале, 6 публикаций в материалах республиканских и международных конференций, а также 3 статьи в коллективных сборниках).

**Ключевые слова:** коммунистический режим, государство, политика, репрессии, сопротивление, Румынская православная церковь, Олтенская митрополия, духовенство, культовые сооружения, Румыния, Олтения, уезд Олт, 1944–1989.

**Цель исследования:** является исследование, выявление и оценка роли и вклада коммунистического режима в Олтении и его влияния на Румынской Православной Церковьи и судьба духовенства округа Олт в 1944–1989 гг.

**Задачи исследования:** анализ историографии проблемы и документальных источников с целью выявления уровня исследования влияния коммунистического режима на церковь и ее служителей в округе Олт в 1944-1989 гг.; исследование влияния коммунистического режима на Румынской Православной Церковьи и его духовенства округа с точки зрения политических, образовательных, идеологических и репрессивных факторов; установление роли и места коммунистического режима в Олтении (уезды Олт и Романац) по отношению к Румынской Православной Церковьи; выявление взаимозависимости между изменениями организационной структуры церковных учреждений в результате вмешательства органов государственных учреждений; оценка религиозной жизни в Олтении (уезды Олт и Романац) в процессе институционализации и консолидации коммунистического режима с точки зрения человеческих и материальных ресурсов.

**Научная новизна и оригинальность исследования:** докторская диссертация впервые представляет собой научное исследование, основанное на богатой специальной литературе и разнообразии исторических источников, посвященное влиянию коммунистического режима на Румынской Православной Церковьи в Олтении (уезды Олт и Романац) в период 1944–1989 гг. Исследуемая тема охватывает информационный пробел в румынской историографии, ориентированной больше на макроисторию, чем на микроисторию.

**Полученные результаты:** полученные научные результаты заключаются в подходе и характеристике воздействия коммунистического режима на церковь и ее служителей в Олтении (уезды Олт и Романац) в период 1944–1989 гг., микроисследования, которые привели к разработке некоторых обзоров презентации в целом Румынской Православной Церковьи в исторической эволюции и инволюции с целью применения научных результатов, полученных в фундаментальных и прикладных научных исследованиях в области румынской истории в современную эпоху.

**Теоретическая значимость исследования:** сущность коммунистического авторитарного режима в Румынии исследуется с концептуально-идеологической точки зрения в отношении православного церковного института, с его иерархами и служащими, с механизмами притеснения религиозной жизни, взаимоотношениями между «центром» и «периферией». В вопросе религии, духовность против идеологии, состояние церковного наследия при атеистическом режиме; особенности религиозной жизни в Олтении анализируются в контексте политического и религиозного фактора внутри Румынии.

**Прикладная ценность полученных результатов:** результаты научного исследования могут быть использованы специалистами в данной области при разработке междисциплинарных, прикладных работ по местной, региональной, отечественной истории, очерчивающих общий и специфический облик Румынской Православной Церковьи в Олтении при коммунистическом режиме. При этом результаты исследования могут быть использованы в качестве ориентиров при подготовке бакалаврских, магистерских и докторских диссертаций, могут быть применены на довузовских дисциплинах в области истории и теологии.

**Результаты исследования:** аспекты исследуемой проблемы были представлены на 6 научных мероприятиях и томах из Республики Молдова и Румынии, 3 научных статьях в аккредитованных научных журналах Республики Молдова, 1 статье в неаккредитованном журнале, 3 статьях в коллективном сборнике из Румыния.

**ENACHE IONUT I.**

**THE COMMUNIST REGIME IN OLTENIA. THE IMPACT OF THIS REGIME ON THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTERS IN OLT COUNTY IN THE PERIOD 1944–1989**

**611.02. HISTORY OF THE ROMANIANS (BY PERIODS)**

**Abstract of the doctoral thesis in history**

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