

The Population of Bessarabia Face-to-Face with Bicephalous Orthodoxy and Soviet Atheism Propaganda

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THE ANNOUNCED subject of this paper, starting with its title, seems correct to us for several reasons. First, it is a known fact that in the 19th century and in the geographic area concerned, i.e. the interfluvium of the Prut and Dniester Rivers, religious affiliation and spiritual life constituted the binding element of the national affiliation and identity recognition, due to the geopolitical conditions.

Later, in the 20th century, the issue of nation and national identity was already well known, but in this time segment the Romanian population in the Prut-Dniester interfluvium had to face another phenomenon (referring to the second half of the 20th century), and namely the resistance to the inclusion in the category called “homo Sovieticus” in historiography, where the spiritual element once again was to play an essential role.

In what concerns the first phase, Bessarabia was attached to the Russian Empire in 1812. So, a territory with a majority Orthodox population was incorporated by an empire where Orthodoxy was also a dominant religion, which fact naturally differs from a situation when a superior power annexes a territory with a heterogeneous population from the confessional point of view (in our case, an example would be the annexation of Polish territories—with a dominantly Roman Catholic population—to the Russian Empire).

However, in 1813, the Russian Orthodox Church—the representative institution of the Orthodox religion in the Russian Empire—and Tsar Alexander I approved the establishment of the Chişinău and Khotin Archbishopric headed by Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni, thus blatantly contradicting the already well-known usual canons of the Orthodox Church which acknowledge the obligation of a nation’s Church to organize itself along ethnic lines and be managed independently from the Church of another nation. It is a known fact that the latter provide the obligation that “no bishop shall cover another eparchy that was not in their hands in the past or from the beginning, or in the hands of their predecessors. And if somebody should cover a foreign eparchy and forcibly place it under their jurisdiction, they shall give it back in order not to violate the canons of their parents, and under no word of holy work let the pride of worldly domination emerge”¹.

The violation was not a merely administrative one, if it is possible to say so, also concerning the content and the ideological aspects. It is the misunderstanding of this rather

sensitive and complicated segment that makes the interpretation of the role played by the Orthodox Church for the Romanian Orthodox population understood in a duplicitous manner. And if we add to this the black-and-white interpretation of spiritual life in Bessarabia by some historians, without any kind of nuance, we end up with what currently exists, i.e. a number of works denoting the major importance of the Orthodox Church in maintaining the national identity—works which are correct, and, paradoxically, studies which demonstrate the disastrous role of the Orthodox Church in the denationalization of the indigenous Romanian population in Bessarabia, which are also true.

Just to understand this phenomenon in its complexity and determine the importance of spirituality in maintaining the Romanian identity of the population of Bessarabia, one needs to shed light on the effects that the Russian Orthodox propaganda had on the Bessarabian Romanians.

We believe that a more thorough understanding of the phenomenon is possible if we refer to a number of Russian authors of that period who discussed the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and its functions.

So, P.N. Miliucov states that “Religious belief seemed to be something innate, inseparable from nationality, a second nature, we might say A natural and Orthodox Russian person could not stop being Orthodox from the legal point of view, no matter how much he/she would change his/her religious beliefs”².

Even F. D. Dostoevsky stated in his lifetime that “A neo-Orthodox cannot be a true Russian”³. In fact, this idea continued to persist among Russian intellectuals not only during the 19th century; it is still endorsed by a part of the intelligentsia even nowadays. In this sense, we have the statements of Alexander Soljenitsin who said: “It is Orthodoxy, rather than imperial state that created the Russian cultural type. The Orthodoxy preserved in our hearts, our traditions and actions will strengthen this spiritual meaning, unifying the Russian people above nationality considerations. If we lose in the next decades, and if we lose part of our population and territory, and even our statehood, one of the unfading elements remaining in us will be the Orthodox Religion and its high manner of perceiving the world.”⁴

The Russian Orthodox believer type is very well depicted by the State Secretary and Minister of Education of 1824-1828. Preparations for a translation of the Bible into Russian started during the reign of Nicholas I, but were discontinued due to the endeavors of Admiral Shishkov, while the first printings in Russian had been burnt because, in the opinion of the latter, reading the Bible in Russian, and not in the Slavonic language, would mean demeaning its great destiny, being in fact, a step backward from the humble and meek soldierly obedience (*of the Orthodox believers a.c.*) to an individual understanding and interpretation, unacceptable for the Russian Empire.

During the same time, M.N. Katkov stated without hiding his irony: “It seems we have the highest regard for the defense of our Orthodox Church, but the methods we use in this regard do not show that we are convinced of its truths and power. We defend it as a political institution and sacrifice too much of it as a Christian Church. We are satisfied with the fact that it represents a well-set bureaucratic mechanism and it goes without saying that it delivers to us the very results that are specific to a mechanism of such kind”⁵.

Thus, one can clearly conclude from the above that “Russian Orthodoxy” had the mission of transforming the Romanian Orthodox population into “true believers of the Tsar,” i.e. true servants⁶. It is obvious that along with the administrative transformations implemented within a short timeframe, as showed above, with the establishment of the Chişinău and Khotin Eparchy, a number of ideological and propagandistic actions were carried out. The traditional religion of the Bessarabians was to be replaced by Russian Orthodox assimilation. In this sense, we refer here to a multitude of Russian saints and martyrs, complicated and labyrinthine Russian traditions, and unclear customs, incomprehensible to a big majority of the local population.

Such transformations were not long in coming, and in the introduction to one of the first books printed at the Eparchial Printing House in Chişinău, Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni wrote: “Finally, we consider it appropriate to announce to all our subjects loved by Christ in our Eparchy that we printed this book following the instructions given to us as required for the translation of prayer books printed in Russia and included in it, according to our duty, all the saints that are honored by the Exalted Orthodox Russian Empire, guarded by God, as well as the miracles that happened in many places of Russia with the Icons of the Holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary. Since our duty now, when the Merciful God deigned to redeem us from pagan oppression by the hand of Honorable Emperor Alexander I and unite us with other Orthodox countries loved by God under Russian power, I say, our duty now, beside other Christian Orthodox peoples, is to celebrate and honor the Saints who served God in Russia and some whom God glorified through many miracles, while others are glorified through eternal relics”⁷.

This trend continued, and not only on a small scale. However, the conciliatory discourse of the first metropolitans was replaced by a rather aggressive discourse of bishops in the second half of the 19th century, who were to pursue the goals set by the Russian Empire before the Orthodox Church, and namely to insure *total* integration of the population of Bessarabia. One can easily see this in the discourse of Archbishop Pavel Lebedev (23 June 1871–16 June 1882) who stated the following: “You are now faithful servants of the Russian Tsar, sons of Russia returned to our mother from under foreign domination. You are living members of the Russian People, forcefully cut out from it. Your former hierarch is standing now here, before your eyes, and heading you towards new church relations”⁸.

At the beginning of the 20th century the situation did not change either, and among other instructions issued by bishop Serafim Ciceagov appointed to the Chişinău and Khotin Eparchy (16 September 1908–20 March 1914) we can find the following: “To date, little has been done in this land washed by the Danube to unite it to the Russian pious spirit and to Russian culture; I count on your talents, on your youth, and I call upon you not only to make great efforts, but also to become involved in the Russian patriotic activity of self-sacrifice.”

As to the monasteries, Bishop Serafim reminded the following: “Moldovan monasteries shall not forget that Bessarabia and the Moldovan land are a land and a population of the Russian government. Therefore, they should pursue the goals of the state and the unification of peoples through the Russian language”⁹.

Such a position only alienated the native Romanian population from the Orthodox Church as an institution or at least generated a position of wait-and-see or of reticence among the large majority of the population.

On the other hand, the attempt to use the Orthodox Church as a tool for Russification made the distance between parishioners and this institution grow even more significantly.

Back on 31 January 1813, the same Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni requested upon the creation of the Theological Seminary in Chişinău, designed mainly for the clerics' children, the inclusion among the mandatory subjects of: "the Russian language, as a priority and mandatory subject, as a dominant language; the national language, i.e. Moldovan; Latin, as a language that the national language originated from and could be improved on its bases, Greek, just because the Christian law dogmas and teachings were written in this language, while the rest of the subjects should be optional"¹⁰.

The results of the Russian Orthodox propaganda and the imposition of the Russian language in church service as a Russification tool were not long in coming, and therefore the local population became passive in matters concerning religious life, in the best of cases, or even became alienated from religion, in the worst cases. However, the most negative result of the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church was the harmful reaction that finally led to crystallization of the Innochentist movement among Bessarabian Orthodox believers.

As for the second part of the communication regarding the atheist propaganda carried out by the USSR, which came to include the area between the Prut and the Dniester, in the form of the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic, we will only dwell upon the late 1980s, given the limited space, as well as in light of certain factors which we consider more interesting and more eloquent.

It is a known fact that, with Gorbachev's thaw, the management bodies of the communist party could no longer use traditional methods for fighting against believers and religion, the reason being more than obvious—showing the human face of the regime.

For these very reasons, starting with the second half of the 1980s, methods such as the closure of churches¹¹, the oppression, exile or extermination of believers became secondary. However, it is not necessary to consider they were fully removed. Thus, a report of the MSSR Soviet of Ministers showed that "The former premises of churches are being slowly assimilated. To date, 137 out of the 610 buildings removed from the state registry (as churches) have been used (as museums, exhibition halls, planetariums, while 20 of these have been refurbished as offices of different institutions, 11 as cultural centers, 11 as gyms, etc.), 99 are used as warehouses, and 373 are not used at all. According to data provided by district executive committees, 221 churches of the latter category are in a damaged condition.

In our opinion, the slow valorization of former churches is explained by the modest pressure exercised by the town and district executive committees upon the village and communal Soviets of people deputies and farm managers, the limited support in identifying the financial and material sources for the repair and conversion of these buildings on behalf of the MSSR Soviet of Ministers, of different ministers and departments, and of the society, for the protection of cultural monuments available in the republic, as well as by a poor repairs base within the Ministry of Culture of the MSSR"¹².

The leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), as well as the MSSR CP, now promoted a new method of fighting traditional religiosity, by introducing some new “Soviet type” rituals and traditions, which were to substitute the Christian traditions specific to the native Romanian population, which in fact characterize this segment of the population. This was specific for both the entire USSR and the MSSR territory.

On the one hand, the situation became even more complicated. It remains, however, of great interest to the researchers that the religious tradition amplified and, in the case of our research, this happened due to the 1000th anniversary of the Christianization of the Eastern Slavs in 988. In this sense, it was proposed to introduce some new “Soviet type” rituals and traditions in order to undermine the so-called “reactionary bourgeois propaganda” and undermine the Christian tradition in the Prut-Dniester space; such new rituals and traditions were to substitute the Christian traditions specific to the native Romanian population.

This fact is mentioned in one of the “strictly classified” documents detailing the actions to be carried out during 1985-1988, entitled “Activities strengthening the scientific-atheistic and counter-propagandistic work in connection with the preparation of religious organizations and foreign clerical-bourgeois centers for the 1000th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity in Russia.” According to this document, item 12 provided the following: “To broadly introduce socialist traditions and rituals in life, at the same time taking into consideration progressive national traditions and customs, and looking for some ideas and emotional forms of influencing people. To distribute and refurbish festive halls for family holidays in all the Soviets of people deputies from villages and towns and to more broadly use the premises of cultural centers and clubs for these purposes, thus ensuring a considerable growth in the volume of such services provided to the population.”¹³

As a result of the approved directives, all the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Moldova reported achievements in this area. The summary of the activity on the atheistic education of the population of 1985 shows that “In compliance with the joint decision of the CPRM CC and the Committee of Ministers of the Republic, an inter-ministerial Soviet has been established to carry out the new traditions and holidays in practice, headed by the Deputy Chair of the Soviet of Ministers of the MSSR, comrade Chiriac N.P. Analogous Soviets have been created in all the cities and districts of the republic. A scientific atheism sector was created within the Philosophy and Law Section of the Academy of Science of the MSSR, and a scientific atheism department was established within the State University, named after Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Over the last three years, issues related to atheistic education have been addressed in 16 plenary meetings and in 47 town and district party bureau meetings”¹⁴.

The party CC reports speak about the introduction of new rituals and customs, such as “Harvest Holiday,” “The First Sheaf Holiday,” “Investiture in Profession,” “Handing the Passport,” “Street Holiday,” “Honoring the Best Workers” or the well-known anti-alcohol “Komsomol weddings.”

In our opinion, it would be interesting to classify these new manifestations, their origin, and of course their impact on the society and the results achieved by implementing such “new Soviet ceremonies.” If we divide the latter into rural and urban, we can learn from the reports that the new traditions and rituals included:

In towns: the Town Day, initiation in the worker occupation, meetings with war and work veterans, international soldiers, street and yard days, new apartments holiday, young families holiday, folklore festivals, pink wedding parties and the registration of young families, anti-alcohol Komsomol wedding parties, initiation in profession, name day, handing the passport, “Housekeeper,” “Grandparents Go,” contests of amateur singers dedicated to Great October Revolution, meeting of generations, honoring families with many children, war and work veterans, twins celebration, “Soviet family holiday” or honoring worker dynasties.

For Chişinău, a document of 20 October 1987 is interesting¹⁵; it reads as follows: “Actions have been taken to implement the new Soviet traditions and holidays. It has become a tradition in the capital city to organize sports competitions, the ‘Soviet Family’ holiday, the registration of young couples at the Civil Status Office, street holidays bearing the names of Great Patriotic War heroes, the initiation of young people in their professions, the enlistment of young men in the Soviet army, honoring worker dynasties, etc.

Taking into account the suggestions of citizens and requests from worker groups and non-governmental organizations from the capital, the ‘City Day’ was organized for the first time in October of the same year. Such a holiday is planned to take place in the first Saturday of October every year. At the same time, Soviet bodies and cultural institutions do not pay due attention to the introduction of new Soviet traditions and holidays in the daily life and no strict control is carried out over the observance of the legislation on religions.”

If we refer to the villages, the so-called new Soviet traditions and customs were represented by: fairs, the enlistment of young men in the Soviet army, the opening of houses for the newly born and of houses of happiness (for newlywed young couples), young family holidays, folklore festivals, pink wedding parties and anti-alcohol Komsomol wedding parties, name day, handing the passport, “Golden Fall,” contests of amateur groups, new marriage customs, honoring of families with many children, war and work veterans, families who had lived together for 25 and 50 years, the organization of housewives’ evenings, the coming of spring and summer, sending mechanical workers and combine harvesters to the fields, the celebration of reaching adulthood, the Village Hora (dancing event), Jocul (dancing event), Pluguşorul, Malanca, Capra (goat), Ursul (bear), Căluţul (horse) (traditional Christmas customs), Şezătoarea (evening gathering of villagers to do various artisanal works and socialize), village holidays, competitions of plowmen, competitions of animal breeders, culture days of farms and enterprises, and harvest holidays¹⁶.

A number of data referring to these “new holidays” that can be found in the reports of party secretaries from different districts are quite interesting. Thus, we find out that “The ‘Remembrance Day of the Dead’ has enjoyed high appreciation among the population of the district.” During these days, meetings are organized in the previously designated cemeteries of each locality to honor those dead. Contemporary rituals are used, and new content is introduced as opposed to the traditional New Year ‘carols’ to glorify the working people, the native locality and the richness of nature.” Street and water well celebrations, as well as dancing events such as “Hora Satului” and “Jocul”

are popular among citizens and held in the villages of the district. Old traditions of disseminating handicraft activities, promoting artisans who make traditional costumes, traditional carpets or ceramics. Thus, among other events, a village holiday entitled 'The Potters Fair' was organized on the territory of Iurceni locality during the last fall."¹⁷

If analyze all the above-mentioned holidays more carefully, or even the names of the so-called Soviet traditions and customs, we can conclude that over 60% of all these "new holidays" were traditional holidays of the Romanian population, of which we believe at least 50% used to have a religious connotation.

Hence the desired results were obtained. First, we notice that even the party members continued to keep the Orthodox religion and traditions. In this sense, we would like to provide just two examples. Thus, the party secretary of Straseni district wrote in his report that "The Straseni District Committee of the Communist Party intensified their requirements for the communists who continue to practice different religious customs. Seven party members were held accountable for such infringements in 1987"¹⁸.

In the case of Causeni district, the report showed that during the current year, the District Bureau of the Communist Party of Moldova rejected the request for party membership of candidate Branzan I.I., chief accountant in the Constructions and Repairs Department of the Ministry of Social Services for the Population. The party organization of the Clearing Center severely punished communist Untu V.E for the same reason, while the nurse of kindergarten No.1, Untu Z.E., was rebuked at the Trade Union meeting of their organization. The Administrative Commission of the District Executive Committee fined four inhabitants of Zaim village for infringing the legislation on religions.¹⁹

If we consider the direct impact of introducing the so-called new Soviet traditions and rituals which were to substitute the customs of Orthodox religion, we would refer to several figures.

In the report submitted for Comrat district it was shown that in 1986, the Orthodox church in Congaz performed 1085 baptisms, i.e. 14 times more than in 1985, 316 religious wedding festivities, which is 10 times more than in the previous year. About 677 or 62% of all religious customs were performed by the inhabitants of Comrat district²⁰.

Data inaccuracy and the attempt to hide the reality is demonstrated in the rest of the report, which shows that during the first half of 1987, 238 out of 266 marriages were registered in a festive manner, constituting 89% of the total. During the same period, 934 children were born, 544 of whom were registered according to the ritual for the newly born, constituting 58.2%²¹.

The reality was very different, however. It was a known fact that even if a marriage or a newborn were registered according to the "new Soviet traditions," the people would seek a possibility to consecrate such acts in church, but this would not appear in any form in the reports of the district party leadership. However, some of the district leaders of the Communist Party of Moldova used to be more realistic in providing data, such as, for example, the secretary of Telenesti district, who reported that in 1987, 716 out of the 1826 newborn babies were registered in a festive manner, and 390 out of 587 marriages were registered in a solemn manner as well. The latter also reported that in

1987, the number of religious rituals decreased, including 581 baptism ceremonies versus 672 in 1986, and 207 religious marriages versus 263 in the previous year²².

We can find the same information in the report submitted by the party secretary of Criuleni district, who reported a decrease in the number of religious rituals for 1987 versus 1986, referring to christenings and religious marriages in church, showing that their number decreased by 1.2% in the first case, and by 4.1% in the second case²³.

The implementation of new traditions, as noticed, did not have a great success, the native Orthodox tradition maintaining its position. At the same time, neither the creation of an infrastructure required for supporting these “new” Soviet inventions (which, according to a report of 1987, was growing fast, as 31 of the former church buildings had been refurbished over the past three years for social and cultural needs, thus improving the material base for new rituals, including the fact that there were 35 funeral service houses, 23 marriage registration houses, 5 shops selling goods for young people, and 15 shops selling goods for newborn babies²⁴), could essentially influence the involvement of the population from the traditional Church in the new atheist traditions and customs.

In conclusion, we can say that the native population from the Prut-Dniester space was challenged twice to face the attempts of the Eastern neighbor (the Russian Empire and the Soviet Empire) to interfere in their moral and spiritual life.

If in the first case the Russian Empire, through their instrument, i.e. the Orthodox Church, tried to “convert” the local population from linguistic and moral points of view in order to fully integrate it in the imperial space, in the second case, the Soviet system, in general, sought to erase any links of the population with the religious tradition.

In the case of Russian Empire, the focus was on the unity of religion shared by Romanian population and the population of the empire, in order to integrate this segment under the bicephalous scepter of Sankt Petersburg. And even though they achieved a number of successes, whether we refer to Russification or to the imposition of some Russian religious traditions and their acceptance by the Romanian population, the Romanian Orthodox segment was anyway one of the main pillars of the national revival.

The Soviet Union and its designs for a “homo Sovieticus” came in the form of a much more violent policy, while the thaw that occurred under M. Gorbachev also brought a new form of undermining the moral and spiritual life by introducing the so-called “new Soviet traditions and customs.” However, the analysis of the latter demonstrates that they had a national substratum in order to be accepted by the Romanian population, and in some cases, they overlapped with religious traditions.

The entire policy related to these new forms eventually failed, the local population remaining faithful to local religious traditions, at best registering a double participation/involvement of the population (in both “new traditions,” and mandatorily in religious traditions), thus avoiding the negative impact that could have been caused by the Soviet repressive administrative bodies.

□

Notes

1. <http://pomocanon.com/canoanele-sinoadelor-ecumenice/>.
2. Миллюков П.Н., *Очерки по историрусской культуры*, В 3-х т. (Том. 2, Москва, 1994), с. 199.
3. Достоевский Ф.М., *Полное собрание сочинений*, В 30-ти т. (Том 10, Ленинград, 1974), с. 197.
4. Солженицын А., *Россия в обвале*, (Москва, 1998), с. 187.
5. Катков М.Н., *О церкви*, (Москва, 1905), с. 20.
6. According to the idea that persisted at the imperial court in Sankt Petersburg, the population loyal to the Tsar was a population that would think in “Russian” and be “of the same religion with the Tsar (одной царской веры).”
7. Cf. *Труды бессарабского церковного историко-археологического общества*, (Том 1, Кишинев, 1909). In fact, when creating the new ecclesiastic structure, in order not to generate too much resentment among the inhabitants of Bessarabia, Metropolitan Gavriil Bănulescu Bodoni wrote to the Holy Synod that he wanted to found a Metropolitan See by taking into account “the cultivation among the clergy and the people of Bessarabia of the habit of having higher respect for and trust in the metropolitan see.” The presence of this clause in the draft document of Gavriil is more than an issue of personal vanity; Gavriil was the titular holder of one of the most important Russian eparchies—the Kiev Eparchy—and then exarch of two Metropolitan Sees; he might have found it difficult to consider himself ..downgraded to an eparchy of the second category! In reality, this condition was forwarded not for an ephemeral existence of a person, but rather for the endurance of this institution! This clause was not observed. After Gavriil’s death, throughout the entire period of Russian occupation, i.e. between 1812 and 1918, the Church in Bessarabia was never again managed by metropolitans. Moreover, upon opening a eparchial printing house for the publication of religious books in Moldovan language, Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni would have to request from the Holy Synod the publication of the Gospel, the Apostle, and Ritual (Trebnic) according to the Moldovan tradition. This shows that the Gospel and the Apostle in the Romanian church are neither in compliance with the biblical order, nor in compliance with the beginnings, as in our Russian Slavonic book, being rather put in an order according to their reading from one Easter to another. In addition to this major difference, the Metropolitan indicated a number of differences persisting between the Romanian and Russian Orthodox Church traditions, for which reason he requested to print religious books in compliance with the old canons that existed on this territory, most probably to avoid the distancing of the local population and the opposition of the latter. Unfortunately, these requirements were observed just during the life of Gavriil Bănulescu-Bodoni only.
8. Boris Buzilă, *Some History about Church Life in Bessarabia/Din istoria vieții bisericești din Basarabia* (Chișinău, 1996), p. 53.
9. Ibid., p. 182.
10. Ibid.
11. For all that, these methods were still applied in practice. By 1983, there were 192 Orthodox churches, compared to 1090 before 1945, 10 Lipovan churches, compared to 19 existing before 1945; 2 synagogues, compared to 66 existing before 1945; 1 monastery, compared to 29 existing before 1945; 1 Catholic church, compared to 29 existing before 1945. In addition, there were registered 122 sectarian communions and another 172 ones operating without registration (Baptists, Jehovah Witnesses, Adventist Reformers, etc.) (According to

- the Archives of social-political organizations of the Republic of Moldova: hereinafter referred to as AOSPRM, stock No. 51, inventory No.71, file No. 543, pages 18-22).
12. AOSPRM, stock No. 51, inventory No. 71, file No. 543, pages 18-22.
 13. Ibid., p. 4-11. In addition, in compliance with another directive, item 20 stipulated as follows: “To translate into the Moldovan language and adjust to the conditions of the republic the scientific-methodological and informative-guiding publication ‘Socialist Rituality’ (Kiev, 1985). As a result, another report wrote “the scientific-methodological and informative-guiding publication ‘Socialist Rituality’ (Kiev, 1985) has been adjusted to the conditions of the republic and is being prepared for translation into the Moldovan language. The deadline for submission to the printing house is the end of 1987.”
 14. Ibid., p. 18-21.
 15. Ibid., p. 133-136.
 16. Cf. *AOSPRM*, stock No. 51, inventory No. 71, File 543.
 17. Ibid.
 18. Ibid., p. 302-305.
 19. Ibid., p. 165-168.
 20. Ibid., p. 140-143.
 21. Ibid.
 22. Ibid., p. 306-310.
 23. Ibid., p. 183-186.
 24. Ibid., p. 18- 22.

Abstract

The Population of Bessarabia Faced with Bicephalous Orthodoxy and Soviet Atheist Propaganda

This article tries to analyze two major problems for the moral-spiritual life of the native population from the Prut-Dniester interfluve. First, we know that, in the 19th century, and in the respective geographic area, the resistance of the Romanian population played an important role in what we can call Russian Imperial Orthodoxy, which the authorities attempted to use as an instrument for the complete incorporation of the respective population into the Russian Empire. The second part of the article refers to the Soviet confessional policy carried out on this territory, or indeed to a particular aspect of this policy, the one related to designing the which were to fully substitute the religiousness of native population.

Keywords

population, beliefs, traditions, customs, Russian Empire, communist party