

Sorin Ivănescu

Summary

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One of the first methods used by the political police to control the activity of cults consisted in their monitoring, the Secret police trying to build itself a database that might allow the control and subsequent indictment of religious activists who were not willing to comply with the new regime. Orders and detailed instructions were passed within the Ministry of Internal Affairs regarding the monitoring methods of religious cults, both the acknowledged and the forbidden ones.

Secret police reorganized its records, from a technical point of view and also considering its activity issues. In order to be able to control this environment, they recruited agents who were supposed to collect information from churches, praying houses, monasteries, hermitages, synagogues, etc. Throughout the period that we hereby study, the political police tried to collect any possible information that could serve at compromising hierarchies, whether in view of attracting people for collaboration or of forcing them to leave their positions.

According to the communist outlook, for the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1948 was the year when an obedient patriarch was vested, as well as the year when the most recent “problems” were sorted out, such as the removal of religion from the school curriculum, a complete “democratization” of the existing hierarchy, installation of regime-biasing protopopes, reorganization of the theological educating system, etc. The desiderates of the state-party were applied whether by administrative measures, fulfilled by means of the Cult Administration, or by repressive measures applied by the Secret police. Church representatives, who had refused an actual collaboration with the party, had to bear the “rigors of working” involved by the Secret police. Therefore, an unexpected issue, which disturbed the good development of the activity performed by the political police, was the change of direction made by the Patriarch Justinian, who was to become an enemy of the repressive authorities, due to his will of managing his Church according to the Gospel principles and the canonic provisions, aiming at its preservation within the new Romanian political context.

As far as the Catholic Church was concerned, since its center of decision was in Vatican, outside the socialist camp, the efforts made by the Secret police focused on making its representatives inside the country cut off all links with the Pope, by creating some sort of dissidence, or, in other words, by creating a national Catholic Church. The permanent connection with Vatican, by means of the Apostolic Nunciature, would morally and financially encourage the hierarchy of the Roman-Catholic clergy, as well as the Greek-Catholic one, thus leading to an ample opposition to the “democratic-popular” regime. The repression exercised by the Secret police against the Vatican-supported Catholicism deepened when the party launched its fight against “all saboteurs and conspirators” in the People’s Republic of Romania, after the plenary resolution of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers Party from 10-11 June 1948. This was the occasion when they condemned the Catholic Church and the Jehovah’s Witnesses followers as supporters of “fascist-legionary elements”. This party document represented the Secret police’s guiding lines as far as religious cults were concerned, since the two churches would “benefit” from special attention in its informative monitoring. This may explain the rough repression applied to Catholics and Jehovahians and the relative sparing of the other confessions.