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## IV.

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### **EXTREMIST TENDENCIES WITHIN THE ROMANIAN ORTODOX CHURCH**

Counting the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR) among those actors which may have a significant role to play in the development of extremism in Romania is a key point of this Report. For a long time, the part played by religion in the development of conflicts has been underestimated.<sup>99</sup> Ideological interpretations of the sources of conflict were rather preferred. Yet, especially after the Al Qaeda massacre of September 11, the relationship between religion, fundamentalism and extremism has to be reassessed.

This general statement finds an illustration in the case of the BOR. The Christian doctrine of the Romanian Orthodox Church is mystical in nature, and shows little interest in the values of respect and tolerance that are typical of other strands of Christian thought. As a national actor, the BOR has been constantly asserting its desire to regulate social relationships, and to impose an “orthodox” conception on peoples’ and institutions’ attitudes. Its attitudes can be interpreted as a convergence of four distinct characteristics: (i) the promotion of an exclusivist doctrine, synthesized by the two fundamental ideas of Orthodox nationalism: the Romanian state belongs to the Romanians; to be a Romanian is to be an Orthodox; (ii) the contestation of the principles behind the notion of the rule of law, which is considered “of second rank” in comparison with Orthodox principles, legitimated by their divine origin; (iii) the use, by members of the BOR clergy, of aggressive “instruments”, such as offensive speeches or threats, and even of physical aggression; (iv) the impressive ability (relative to other social actors) to mobilize resources and gain the confidence of the people in this Church.

<sup>99</sup> Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (eds.), *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994

## The Romanian Orthodox Church as a Medium for Extremism/Fundamentalism

The fundamentalist trends in the BOR “doctrine” are easy to spot in publications issued under the patronage of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in statements of the Church Hierarchy, in the public statements issued by BOR organizations – among which the very active Association of Christian-Orthodox Students in Romania (ASCOR). Among the periodicals, *Scara*<sup>100</sup> and *Icoana din adânc* are of particular interest. The latter, first issued in 1997, a self-avowed publication “of Christian-Orthodox attitude, theology, culture and the arts”,<sup>101</sup> published in its very first issue a memorandum meant to draw the attention of its audience to “acts that could threaten the very existence of the Romanian People”. Such are:

- 1) the compatibilization of Romanian legislation with a unique continental legal system;
- 2) giving up Bessarabia and Bukovina (the authors also voiced their unfavorable opinion with respect to NATO and EU accession);
- 3) granting unconditional rights of citizenship to immigrants (called “the social refuse of Asia, Africa and America”);
- 4) granting what the authors refer to as “privileges” to minorities;
- 5) adopting a law that allows for the purchase of land by foreigners;<sup>102</sup>
- 6) economic subordination to foreign capital (a reference to freedom of investment, privatization etc.);
- 7) the pressure put on Romanian culture by American, French etc. models (referred to as “the pressures of the empire”);
- 8) atheist liberalism, the chaos of rights – the rights to freedom of expression, opinion, information etc.;
- 9) turning Romania into a propaganda field of schismatic cults, and so on.

100 An Orthodox periodical sponsored by the Archbishopric of Bucharest. One of its founding members is Archbishop Bartolomeu Anania, well known for his fundamentalist attitudes.

101 A periodical belonging to the Orthodox Hierarchy. In spite of the fact that the Archbishopric of Bucharest does not feature as the official publisher, the editors include Teodosie Snagoveanul, Bishop Vicar of the Bucharest Archbishopric (as president), as well as other Orthodox clerics.

102 The Association of Christian-Orthodox Students in Romania (ASCOR) had previously addressed an open letter to the President, on the occasion of the voting in the Parliament of an amendment that replaced a restrictive article of the Investments Law, which now allowed foreign citizens to get license for land in Romania. The open letter protested “the operation of strategic accumulation of land, either by the representatives of states having direct interests in the area, or by proselytizing and propagandizing religious centers” (*România liberă*, April 2, 1997).

According to the memorandum, these policies would lead to “the spiritual and religious annihilation of one of the few remaining Christian centers.”

It is not only BOR’s own attitudes that are relevant to the fundamentalist tendencies of the Romanian Orthodox Church. One should also note the use of Orthodox places of worship in extremist actions, such as those of the Legionnaires. For instance, a meeting of the nationalist Romanian youth took place at the Sâmbăta de Sus Monastery in Făgăraș. Among the participants were representatives from Bucharest, Sibiu, Brașov, Cluj, Iași and Bacău.<sup>103</sup> One of the topics of the meeting was the organization of Legionnaire houses in these cities.<sup>104</sup>

To these manifestly extremist acts one could add other violent actions that received the sanction of the Orthodox clergy. There were many instances of aggression against Greek-Catholic believers perpetrated by Orthodox believers who were in turn responding to the incitements of their priests. Such violent actions occurred in Filea de Jos, 1991; Visuia (Bistrița-Năsăud county), 1991; Turda, 1991; Mărgău (Cluj county), 1991; Ceaba (Cluj county), 1992; Hodac (Mureș county), 1992; Hopîrta (Blaj county), 1993; Salva (Bistrița-Năsăud county), January and July, 1993; Romuli (Bistrița-Năsăud county), 1994; Pârâul Frunții (Neamț county), 1994; Breb (Maramureș county), 1994; Iclod (Cluj county), 1997; Botiza (Maramureș county), 1998; Ocna Mureș (Alba county), 2002 etc.<sup>105</sup>

Other well-known cases of obstructions and aggressive acts were directed against the Baptists and Evangelical Alliance,<sup>106</sup> the Seventh-Day Adventist Church<sup>107</sup> and Jehovah’s Witnesses.<sup>108</sup> The case of Ruginoasa

103 July 22, 2000.

104 About 15 young individuals were present, while the Senate of the Legionnaire Movement was represented by Mr. Sebastian Mocanu, member of the “Prof. George Manu” Foundation.

105 In many of these cases, the police failed to intervene. On the other hand, in some cases policemen actually prevented non-Orthodox religious manifestations.

106 “The religious activities of the Baptist Church and the Evangelical Alliance have often been obstructed by the local authorities under the influence of the local Orthodox clergy in Crucea, Valul lui Traian (Constanța County), Isaccea (Tulcea County), Frațilești, Săvești (Ialomița County) Vânători, Tulucești (Galați County), Sutești, Gemenele (Brăila County)” – *The U.S. Department of State Report on Romania – 2001* (<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/europe/15.html>).

107 “The Seventh-Day Adventist Church reported difficulties in obtaining approvals to use public halls for religious activities in the villages of Luna, Băiuț, and Vălenii de Maramureș (Maramureș County)” – *The U.S. Department of State Report on Romania – 2001* (<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/europe/15.html>).

108 Investigations confirmed the cooperation between the representatives of state authorities and the Orthodox priests in preventing Jehovah’s Witnesses from exercising their right to freedom of religion: the cases of Roșu (1997); Bobicești and Laloșu (1997); Țânțăreni, Gorj county (1997); Cluj-Napoca (1997); Pitești (1997) etc.

(Iași county, December 1997) led to international protests.<sup>109</sup> It was important especially because of the overt support received from the Orthodox Hierarchy. The Bishopric of Moldova and Bukovina issued a communiqué referring to the molestation, in Ruginoasa, of a group of Baptists by a group of Orthodox believers led by their priest: “It is not the Orthodox community or the Orthodox priests that are guilty of what happened there. The guilty parties are those who came within an essentially Orthodox community ... and aggressed it spiritually. These parties failed to show respect for the Constitution and for common-sense, they betrayed social and Christian morals by their aggressiveness and insolence – they probably considered the villagers ignorant – and they tried to proselytize.”

Spectacular BOR attempts to impose its interests by force include the Cluj procession of March 20, 1998. At the call of the Archbishop of Vad, Feleac and Cluj, Bartolomeu Anania, a march of approximately 2,500 priests and seminarists was organized in the city as a sign of protest against the retrocession of the Bishop’s Church “Schimbarea la față” to the Greek-Catholic Church, after a court ruling to that effect.<sup>110</sup> At the end of the procession, the Archbishop threatened, in Aesopian terms: “I want everybody to know, friends as well as non-friends, that we are still standing and that we shall respond to the fists and the poles with the cross. But they should also know that, as of today, our cross shall be firm. I invite them not to try to profit from Orthodox humility.”<sup>111</sup>

109 The statement of Droits de l’Homme sans Frontieres – Bruxelles, 1997. Several Baptists were molested by a crowd of Orthodox believers led by their priests. Baptists were also the target of aggression by the inhabitants of Cornereva, 1997 – an event that was the subject of several internal reports; Pantelimon (Ilfov county), 1998; and Luncaivea (Caraș-Severin county), 1999.

110 Their Holinesses Bartolomeu Anania, Ion Mihălțan of Oradea, Andrei of Alba Iulia, Ioan of Harghita and Covasna, and Bishop Vicar Visarion Rășinăreanu, all joined in.

111 This discourse is stylistically close to the speech of Slobodan Milosevic of June 28, 1989, on the “Field of Blackbirds” (Prishtina), at the celebration of 600 years since the Kosovo Battle (Kosovo Polje): “Six centuries [after the Battle of Kosovo Polje] we are again engaged in battles and quarrels. These are not armed battles, but this cannot be excluded yet.” (Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, Penguin Books, 1993, p. 35).

## **The Romanian Orthodox Church and the Contestation of the Rule of Law**

The previous example shows how BOR openly contested a final court decision and, in broader terms, the rule of law. BOR has refused several times the enforcement of court decisions unfavorable to the institution, so that Greek-Catholic churches are still in its possession in spite of court rulings to the contrary. Moreover, the state itself has acquiesced in the control exercised by the Romanian Orthodox Church. A well-known case is the ban on the Jehovah's Witnesses Congress of June, 1996, scheduled to take place in Bucharest. Several ministries and other public authorities simply broke their initial agreement with the Witnesses of Jehova because of an ample campaign against the Congress organized by the Orthodox Church. Many government and opposition officials were quick to offer their support of BOR's position.<sup>112</sup>

Another current practice of the BOR is the pressure exercised on the Parliament so as to prevent it from solving the fundamental questions of inter-confessional justice, adopt anti-discrimination positions, and thus fulfill its internal and international obligations.

On June 12, 1997, as the Senate approved a project retroceding several Greek-Catholic churches that rightfully belonged to this community, the Orthodox Hierarchy blocked the project by means of a prompt and vehement reaction. Patriarch Teoctist called this initiative a *diktat* "that may have unpredictable consequences with respect to peacefulness in Transylvania, for which those who voted the draft would be responsible." The Bishop of Transylvania stated the following: "The law ... shall generate conflicts and mutiny with unpredictable results." It would "be an attack on the life of the Romanian Orthodox Church and our people". Andrei, Bishop of Alba Iulia, announced: "I do not think that the Romanian Orthodox Church would allow anyone to stomp their feet."

In its addresses to the members of the Parliament, the BOR often invokes, as a threat, its ability to influence the voters. When, on September 13, 2000, the Orthodox Synod launched an appeal against the de-incrimination of homosexuality, it openly and repeatedly referred to "the millions of Orthodox Christians ... who mandated by their votes the Romanian Parliament." The Synod concluded: "the law-makers ... should tune their ears to the needs of Romanians ... who are going to the voting booth this fall."

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112 During a visit to Bucharest, Hillary Clinton, at that time the First Lady of USA, protested against the restrictions of the freedom of religion in Romania by refusing to participate in an official event.

## Submission of the Political Class to the Orthodox Pressure

The self-confidence of BOR's Hierarchy is also due to the humiliating submission of the political class to the Orthodox pressure. There is no opening ceremony of any party congress without an Orthodox mass. Politicians feel forced to attend every important religious event. Before the 1996 elections, *all* the presidential candidates showed their humbleness, meeting the relics of St. Andrew, which were being brought back to Iași.<sup>113</sup>

President Emil Constantinescu, the representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church and other statesmen gathered on 5 February 1999 to hallow the site and place a cross where BOR wanted to erect the Cathedral of Redemption of the Nation, although the General Council of Bucharest – the only authority in this matter – had refused to approve the building site requested by the Patriarchy.<sup>114</sup> In 1999, President Emil Constantinescu participated, together with the Patriarch Teoctist, in the sanctification of the church built by LukOil Company in the Cemetery of Petrol Workers in Ploiești, although this was not a positive sign for the Romanian foreign policy.<sup>115</sup>

Given such a relationship between BOR and the politicians, it is not surprising that certain institutions meant to defend the values of the secular state should become instruments of BOR. The institution that distinguished itself from this perspective was the State Secretariat for Cults.<sup>116</sup>

An astounding, but less widely known example, was the support that, in September 1999, Prime Minister Radu Vasile gave to the original form of a draft law regarding the general status of religious cults pro-

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113 On 13 October, 1996, the ceremony in honor of the return from Greece, from the Metropolitan Seat of Patras, of the relics of the apostle, was attended by Emil Constantinescu, Ion Iliescu, Petre Roman, Nicolae Manolescu and all the other presidential candidates. All made pious statements and insisted on their presence in the event.

114 The state Secretary for Cults announced, on January 4, 1999, in a press release, the start of works in Unirii Square.

115 This important company symbolizes the solidarity between the Russian Orthodox Church – led by the ex-KGB officer Alexei II, spokesperson of the conservative powers in Russia – and the great Russian oligarchy, which paid between 2 and 3 billion dollars for the building of the Orthodox Cathedral in Moscow.

116 Thus, answering the requests of BOR to stop the activity of religious minorities, state secretary Gheorghe Angheliescu issued, on 25 March 1997, a notification by which it demanded that the Town Halls cancel all authorizations for the building of churches of the religious communities that were not officially recognized (many of them had been registered as associations). The local authorities did so, despite flagrantly violating the constitutional guarantees concerning religious freedom (which includes the right to have such praying houses).

moted by BOR. This draft law seriously violated the constitutional right to religious freedom, so the government amended positively a series of articles. Despite the fact that the government, and not the Prime Minsiter, has the legislation initiative, Prime Minister Radu Vasile submitted the draft law to the Parliament in the non-amended variant, thus violating the will of the government, only to please the Patriarch.<sup>117</sup>

The status of Romania's Patriarch speaks volumes about the speed and breadth of changes that BOR benefits from in state life. By 2000, Patriarch Teoctist Arapasu, forced at the beginning of 1990 to resign from the leadership of BOR due to his cooperation with the Ceaușescu regime, had become one of the most honored personalities.<sup>118</sup> A genuine cult of personalities that in Romania only Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu had been shown.

Another possible evolution in the relationship between BOR and political life could be the direct involvement in politics of the Orthodox clergy. Archbishop Bartolomeu Anania asked in 1998 that "in the future parliamentary elections, whether early elections or regular ones, BOR (...) should give up the reservation that it imposed upon itself and (...) recommend from each parish the persons that should be promoted to the Parliament, regardless of their political allegiance."<sup>119</sup> Bishop Calinic of Arges and Muscel, demanded from the political parties eligible places on the list of candidates for the local, and even for the parliamentary elections.<sup>120</sup> In fact, "almost all parties in Argeș, whether right wing or left wing, accepted priests on their lists of candidates."<sup>121</sup>

## **Historical Connections to the Legionnaire Movement**

The extremist tendencies within BOR follow the historical line of its support of legionnarism between the two world wars. On the one hand,

117 According to the investigation that the author undertook, in October 1999. In the end, the draft law was withdrawn, thanks to internal and international campaigns.

118 He was awarded state medals and distinctions, he became member of honor of the Romanian Academy, he was honored by different professional associations, the Minister of Culture handed him the Eminescu medal, PNTCD presented him with their jubilarian medal etc.

119 "Renașterea", no. 5/1998, p. 1.

120 "As the orthodox church represents 87% of the population of the country, it would not be normal for it not to have clerical representatives in all the structures of leadership of the country." ("Dezlegare la ciolan" [End of fasting], in *Evenimentul zilei*, 28 April 2000, p. 6).

121 *Ibidem*.

legionnarism self-defined itself as a Christian-Orthodox movement, and the legionary ritual borrowed the cult for the death, the exercise of fasting and of praying. On the other hand, priests and Orthodox hierarchy were an important support for legionnarism, the ambiguities of the Synod, which shared a lot of the legionnaire values, resulting only from its duplicity. In its pastoral letter of 1934, the Synod asked for the support of nationalist students and encouraged them in their xenophobe and anti-Semite actions.<sup>122</sup> Among the legionnaire commanders there were Orthodox clergymen.<sup>123</sup> They were also among the legionnaires killed to avenge the assassination of Prime Minister Armand Călinescu, and among those who were nominated in the elections by the legionnaire formations. Viorel Trifu, the head of the Christian Orthodox Students' National Union, was one of the main initiators of the legionnaire rebellion of 21–23 January 1941, and 7.64% of those condemned for this attempted coup were priests.<sup>124</sup>

The lower layers of the clergy and the students of theology were supporters of the legionnaire movement. The latter participated in violent actions, such as the destruction of the Synagogue “The Beginnings of Science”. Among the young legionnaires, a distinguished figure was the present Patriarch Teoctist Arapasu<sup>125</sup> and the present Bishop of Cluj, Feleac and Blaj, Bartolomeu Anania. The historian Gabriel Catalan synthesized this part of history as follows: “... although the leaders of BOR most often had a reserved position or a conjectural one, the lower Orthodox clergy joined in or supported seriously the Legionnaire Movement, representing the elite social category, with an intense propagandistic activity and an important participation in the rebellion of January 1941.”<sup>126</sup>

After the communists gained power, several legionnaire priests were sent to prison, others were recruited as servants of the new regime within the church. Until 1989, BOR had been an instrument of the communist authorities. The hierarchs were all compelled to collaborate with

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122 The most visible proof of collaboration between the Orthodox clergy and the legionnaires was the procession on the occasion of the funeral of legionnaire leaders Mota and Marin in February 1937. During the procession, dozens of clergymen conducted mass, and the major religious service was conducted by over 200 priests, headed by the Bishop of Transylvania, Nicolae Bălan, together with other bishops and vicars (Gabriel Catalan, “Legiunea și slujitorii Domnului” [The Legion and the Servants of the Lord], in *Dosarele istoriei* [Files of history], no. 9, 2000, pp. 29-32).

123 Dumitrescu-Borșa, Vasile Boldeanu, Ștefan Palaghita.

124 Gabriel Catalan, *Op.cit.*

125 Archives of SRI, file 7755, vol. 3, f.211: nota 131/30 August 1949.

126 Gabriel Catalan, *Op.cit.*, p. 32



this regime which was, in fact, atheist.<sup>127</sup> BOR started to play a new role when Romanian communism moved toward national-communism. Since then, BOR was open to legitimate the chauvinistic and xenophobe measures of the regime.

### **The Army and the Orthodox Church**

One of the pernicious variants of the shifting frontiers between the Church (BOR) and the state is the relation between the Church and the Army. Their joint occupancy of the foremost position in opinion polls researching people's trust in institutions was one of the factors of a rapprochement.<sup>128</sup> The Public Opinion Barometer, the most systematic public opinion instrument in Romania at this date, indicated the following figures for the past 6 years, as concerns trust in the Church and in the Army:<sup>129</sup>

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Oct. 1996</b>	<b>Sept. 1997</b>	<b>June 1998</b>	<b>May 1999</b>	<b>May 2000</b>	<b>May 2001</b>
Church	83	86	85	88	85	89
Army	76	84	69	75	73	72
Parliament	23	38	19	20	28	33

The figures show that the Church is almost unanimously trusted.<sup>130</sup> Almost equally substantial in the trust in the Army, which leaves any other institution in Romanian life far behind.

On the background of this manifest fragility of civic consciousness in Romanian life, the leaders of the Army and of the Church have kept

127 Only one hierarch confessed, after the revolution of 1989, his collaboration with the regime. The Bishop of Banat, His Holiness Nicolae Corneanu, admitted excommunicating five priests from the Bishopric of Banat, who had reproached in 1981 "the prostitution of the Orthodox church"; his collaboration with the Bishop of Transylvania, Antonie Plamadeala, in the denigration in front of the Ecumenical Council of the Churches of some clergy who had opposed the regime; the reports sent to the Securitate.

128 As indicated by all opinion polls after 1990.

129 For a comparison, we also add the Parliament as an institution fundamental to democracy (Open Society Foundation, "Barometrul de Opinie Publică", May 2001, Bucharest, <http://www.osf.ro>).

130 The degree of conformity to religious habits is evaluated by the same opinion poll (May 2001), which found out that 2% of the population go to church daily, 15% go to church a few times a week, 33% go to church once a month or less, while 40% go to church several times a month. 53% of the interviewed believe in life after death, 65% in the Judgment Day, and 88% in the power of prayer.

emphasizing the fact that they are, both, the “fundamental institutions” of the Romanian state.<sup>131</sup> In order to maximize their quota *vis-à-vis* other social actors, the leadership of the Army and the Romanian Orthodox Church constantly refer to the trust *jointly* bestowed upon them by the population. Both groups are united by the importance they place upon authority, by the logics of a strict institutional hierarchy,<sup>132</sup> by their antipathy toward the values of liberalism and diversity, toward those that do not conform to the traditional mores and social roles. Consequently, they can count on long-term mutual support, which may be capitalized on both by conservative or extremist political forces,<sup>133</sup> and by their own leaders, should the latter feel threatened.

Relevant to the “in depth” cooperation between the two institutions is the involvement of the Army in the building of religious buildings by using the (unpaid) force of draftees. According to field investigations, many of the churches built in Romania could only be erected if soldiers are sent by their superiors to help with the construction work.

To what extent does the evolution of BOR hide an extremist threat?

After 1989, BOR grew extraordinarily. Traditional archbishoprics were re-established,<sup>134</sup> as well as new bishoprics that had never existed.<sup>135</sup> In

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131 In a volume dedicated to the relations between the Army and the Church in 1996 (Ilie Manole, ed., *Armata și Biserica*, Colecția “Revista de Istorie Militară”, Bucharest, 1996), commander Ilie Manole titled one of his chapters “The Army and the Church, fundamental institutions of the unity and continuity of the Romanians”. He noted that “we now have the first book on the heroic, deep, uninterrupted and useful work that the Army and the Church placed at the foundation of our House, Romania. Now and forever, bless them all: the Book, the Cross, and the hearth in which they coexist with the shield.” (p. 6); “The Cross and the Sword, the Flag and the Gospel have to live together. The Church and the Army must shake hands and make their long-lasting contribution in the shaping of great personalities that our people and the Romanian society need today” (p. 263). The representative of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Daniel Ciubotea, the Bishop of Moldova and Bukovina, called the two institutions the guarantors of the unity of the Romanian state: “the cooperation between the Army and the Church is a factor promoting national unity” (p. 10).

132 The hierarchy and order within the Orthodox Church is quasi-military in its strictness.

133 It is thus illustrative that the Romanian state made a symbolic statement in the region with the largest Hungarian concentration (Harghita county, 84.5% Hungarians) by planting there an army corps and an Orthodox bishopric (of Harghita and Covasna, in 1998).

134 The Archbishoprics of Tomis, Suceava, the Bishopric of Caraș and the Bishoprics of Huși, Argeș and Maramureș.

135 The Archbishopric of Târgoviște, the Bishopric of Călărași and Slobozia, the Bishopric of Giurgiu, the Bishopric of Alexandria and Teleorman, and the Bishopric of Harghita and Covasna.

addition, the Metropolitan seat of Western Europe, the Metropolitan Seat of Central Europe and the Romanian orthodox Metropolitan Seat of Hungary were established, and there are plans to set up bishoprics in most western states. The tendency is to install one bishopric in each county.<sup>136</sup>

The expenses for setting up a new eparchy in the country and abroad are sizable. As concerns the headquarters, Ceaușescu's ex-residences were provided, as well as hotels of the Romanian Communist Party.<sup>137</sup> The hierarchs are provided with limousines, and they have a numerous staff. Each newly-established eparchy is allocated several councilors and inspectors, paid as support staff: accountants, secretaries of the hierarchy, drivers. The entire clergy and support staff are paid by the state. For the religious services, they charge big amounts, which are mostly not recorded in accountancy.

Thirteen new Faculties of theology were set up, to which we should add the 38 Orthodox Seminaries. The number of students in theological education has reached 12,444, of whom 6,514 study Pastoral theology. (The necessary number of priests in the entire country is under 11,000).

The patriarchy obtained by law 200 hectares of land, and the other eparchies one hundred hectares each.<sup>138</sup> This permanent demand for resources<sup>139</sup> and the unimpeded development of BOR could produce a systemic crisis. There will be a powerful pressure on the institutions, on the population, affecting the (secular) Romanian democratic orientations. The immense number of graduates, coupled with the accumulation of riches that make BOR the biggest autonomous organ in Romania are constantly growing the power of the orthodox clergy. This is a process of positive retroaction. The more requests of BOR the state satisfies, the more the request for services from the state will grow.

The events of September 11 2001 drew attention on the danger that comes from religious fundamentalism. The example of what is happening in Islamic states such as Saudi Arabia is significant. The political elite granted resources to the Islamic schools which grew the fundamentalist contesters of this class, increasing the pressure upon it to provide

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136 Nicolae Boroiu, "Studiu privind patronarea de catre conducerea BOR a national-comunismului si a fundamentalismului ortodox", 2001, unpublished.

137 Slobozia, Miercurea Ciuc, Târgoviște, Alexandria, Turnu Severin and Slatina.

138 Even the newly established ones, which had never owned land, like parishes, old and new monasteries, which had no estate in the past.

139 For the new building of the Theological Seminary of Bucharest only, they recently (January 2002) allocated around 1.5 million dollars. According to the estimates of architects, the Church of the Cathedral of the Nation will cost over 1 billion dollars. BOR intends to obtain the assistance of the state, regardless of the economic impact that this would cause.

the Islamic clergy with new utilities to produce new religious contesters ... and so on, in a process that feeds extremism.

This scheme of the evolution of fundamentalism in the Islamic countries is found in all Orthodox countries today.<sup>140</sup> It attracts the attention on the danger of theocracy in countries such as Romania, where the secularity of the state is permanently contested by a Church (BOR) whose economic, symbolic and political power is increasing every day, in absolute and relative values, as related to all the other actors of social life.

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140 In different proportion from one state to the other. A similar evolution of the place of the Orthodox Church in the life of the state is taking place in the Russian Federation.