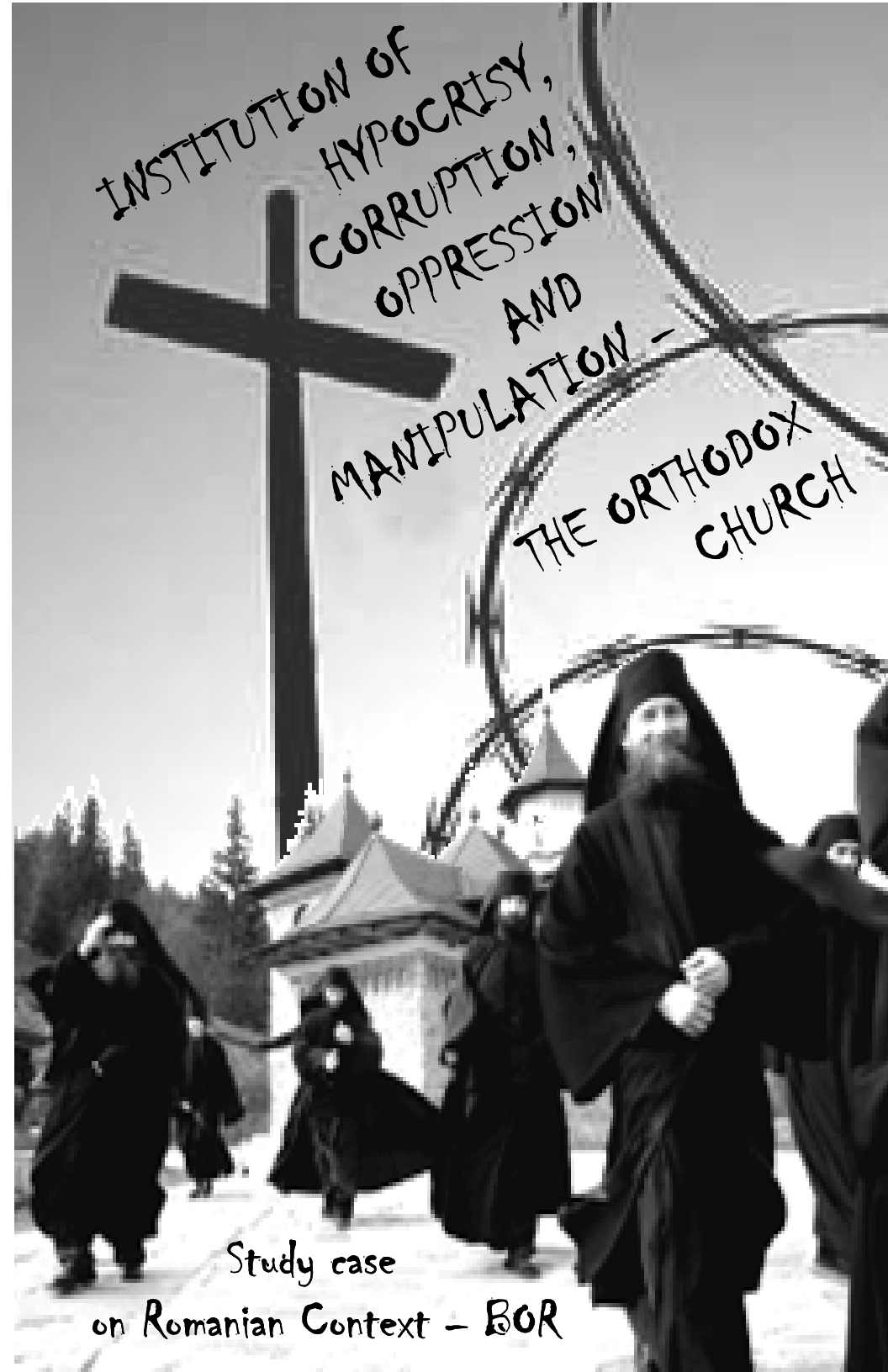


Free yourself from the  
Patriarchal chains !!  
Abolish Patriarchy !!




*Love Kills 2008*

INSTITUTION OF  
HYPOCRISY,  
CORRUPTION,  
OPPRESSION  
AND  
MANIPULATION -  
THE ORTHODOX  
CHURCH



Study case  
on Romanian Context - BOR



The brochure you are holding is a study case on the ordeals performed by the Romanian Orthodox Church – Biserica Ortodoxă Română, abbreviated BOR (hereafter). It is a study that required a documentation for more than half an year, being extremely difficult to acquire accurate needed information. I believe that this aspect is relevant to the Romanian context regarding freedom of expression, freedom of thought and freedom of consciousness, and nevertheless regarding the interests of patriarchal-corporatist media.

I am not trying to emphasize a presumptive supremacy of BOR's noxiousness within the framework of world's religions and churches. The option for discussing this exclusive Romanian context is motivated by my own experience which had profoundly affected my personal development in such a specifically repressive context. Being a woman (the gender category although not consciously and/or voluntarily assumed and accepted, was of course inflicted and imposed from the moment of birth) throughout my development, I had to face a genuine and frankly brutal mysoginism, which I later on discovered to have it's origins in how orthodox morality is perceived and practiced in Romania.

The study is divided in four sections:

- BOR – STATE
- BOR – ARMY
- BOR – EXTREME RIGHT WING
- BOR – OPRESSION OF WOMEN

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The only  
enlightening  
church is the one  
on fire

culture). The greatest fear was that, if not controlled, ethnic minorities would build a state within the Romanian state (the same motif appears in her writings that discuss the role of the Catholic Church in Romanian society as opposed to that of the Romanian Orthodox Church).

Her frenetic ethnical patriotism goes on to the point of focusing on the preservation of those innate characteristics considered specific to women belonging to the 'Latin race' such as devotion to family, love of tradition, and respect for nation. She also sees the emancipation of women in terms of its subordination to the higher interests of the nation.

Princess Alexandrina's discourse is mainly focusing on the women's potential to operate a desired moral, religious and even ethnic purification of the nation. The woman, as the entire nation, has to regard as enemy everything is considered to be foreign and dangerous for the unity and purity of the nation. The means to fight against this 'enemy', are provided by education, work, religiosity and morality. Therefore, the school, the church and the family are considered vital for the nation.

As I mentioned above, I find this study case very actual to the nowadays context and significantly suitable to the discourse of the 21st century Romanian *feminism*. The only differentiating aspect would be that the emphasize is not any longer on building the nation, but on preserving the moral and religious traditions of the nation.

Orthodoxy is keeping women silent, submissive and uneducated.



*"Feminists" piously listening to a priest's teachings*

"The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women's emancipation."

## **BOR – STATE**

A secular state is defined as a state which is neutral in matters of religion, neither supporting nor opposing certain religious beliefs and practices. The citizens are equally treated regardless of their religious confessions and religious freedom is guaranteed by constitution. The government is not influenced in any way by religion and vice-versa, religion is not controlled by government. Although most of the world's secular states are legally on paper "secular", in praxis there is often a state religion that interferes on the governing level up to the most private life of the citizens, for example a church holds a great legislative power (or power of influencing legislative measures), the clergy is salaried by the state, the religious education is compulsory implemented in the educational system, the head of state is usually committing to god, swearing on the bible when receiving the coronation oath.

Romania is not a secular state, no matter what the constitution might say, in reality the orthodox church is involved on high basis in all the aspects of public and private life of people; just as the president's (Traian Băscu) speech shows it:

"The Romanian Orthodox Church, is in my heart, regardless of what the law says, the National Church of Romanian State." While the orthodox hierarchy, Archbishop Gherasim, is reinforcing the idea of theocracy and the one of State ("national") Church, declaring that historically "...church was never separated from the state. Where the ruler of the state was, the hierarch [*priest on high position*] was standing by his side".



*The president and the patriarch shaking hands in the Parliament room*

## **BOR , Politics and Government**

In the Parliament room, on the front wall, the Christian symbol of orthogonal cross, with long inferior segment is hanged next to the Romanian flag. The Parliament as organ of State, is supposed to be representing the interests of all its citizens, but the mere presence of the Christian cross is suggesting that it is only serving for the interests of Christians.

In the post-communist era, BOR had diverse opinions and attitudes regarding the involvement of orthodox clergy in politics and specifically in the Parliament. While a great part of the lower clergy, especially in the rural area of the country, was involved in the local and county political administration and tending to run for parliamentary elections, the Holy Synod (the supreme assembly of orthodox hierarchs) has banned the involvement of priests in politics, decision made in 2004. Afterwards there were several changes of mind of the Holy Synod, running between interfering or not in government. In spring 2008, the democrat-liberal deputy Ioan Ol-

tean, had a legislative initiative regarding permanent representation of religious cults within the Parliament of Romania. The law-project is allowing the clergy to take part in parliamentary plenum and commissions "where normative-act projects are debated, concerning religious life, activity of cults, confessional education, social assistance and national patrimony". The Holy Synod once again embraced the initiative.

What the orthodox church is doing in fact is exercising pressure on the political actors, compelling them in adopting the church's objectives, masked under the pretext of patriotism and devotion to the people's wellbeing. The political ethics are considered to be the same with the moral-orthodox ones. The argument that the clergy is going to be present in the Parliament only for the benefit of it's parishioners [and by this it should be understood that the parishioners are the people], is accompanied by the one suggesting that the priest would perform a sort of exorcism, a sanctification of the political environment. Their electoral-confessional propaganda is highly based on the discourse of collectivity, nationalism and tradition, thus neglecting the human rights and freedoms of all the individuals living in Romania. The power that BOR is exercising over the legislative system is explained also through humble obedience of the political class to the orthodox pressure.



Prime Minister and heads of BOR

Even if BOR sustains that they are not going to form a clerical-orthodox party, they justify their involvement in politics by the idea that BOR will only interfere "as a major factor of electoral orientation, especially for the category of undecided citizens" and "we will enlighten our believers that they are Romanians and Christian-orthodox and that they should keep their faith and their nation and their church" and "the church is not going to make electoral campaign, but I would like you to keep in mind when you are going for vote, the ones who are inclined towards the church". This is called electoral-confessional manipulation.

BOR is in reality carrying a genuine electoral campaign, especially in the rural area. This can refer to hosting at the Sunday religious service (when the whole community is taking part) certain deputies making promises to invest in their village and offering them presents (consisting mainly in food-stuff, the greatest need for rural population) in bags with political party inscriptions, or distributing for free icons, that have on back side the electoral speech of community priests who are running for elections at the local council.

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**BOR and Money \$\$\$**

Romanian state is paying the orthodox clergy's salaries from the public money, through the agency of State Secretary for Cults. In this way all the citizens of Romania who are paying taxes, are actually paying in this way

- ✦ giving public lectures aiming to educate people in a moral, national and religious spirit,
- ✦ fighting for women's political and civil rights (from the "maternalist" perspective) and educating women in order for them to be able to practice those rights once achieved
- ✦ fighting for the preservation of national values and educating the masses through culture, the aim being to 'awake a *feminist* spirit in the consciousness of the masses'

Princess Alexandrina advocated emancipation of women, but this emancipation was seen only in relation to the reformation of society and nation in a moral/religious sense. The fight for women's rights was built on traditionalist and nationalist discourses, her *feminism* is based on the demands of nationalist projects from the view point of the woman as mother and citizen (woman is the "mother of nation"; the role of women in society interferes with the need for preservation of the traditional women's roles in society to ensure the perpetuation of the nation). Motherhood is not conceptualized as a mean of engaging the woman into the submissive prescribed gender roles, restricting and even denying her freedom of choice and liberties, but paradoxically it is conceptualized as a way to achieve an autonomous status in society and a role in the political life - her status as mother entitles her not only to duties and responsibilities but also to rights and authorities. The woman is conceived as the central factor in the national development - she can either help or ruin the national development given her great moral and ethical influence over the family. When Princess Alexandrina was attending an international meeting of women, and a member from Greece of the International Council brought up to discussion the reproductive and sexual rights of women, the princess closed the subject motivating that the right to abortion was a crime, a foreign concept, and not appropriate to "the European traditions, laws and rhythm of development".



Unfortunate marriage between feminism and orthodoxy

Woman has to be regarded as an important social and political factor in the 'healthy' development of the nation, because women are the preservers of tradition and Romanian spirituality and the stable point in the societal and spiritual chaos (women are symbols of morality and pacifism and **educators of the nation**).

Princess Alexandrina's *feminism* is not only engaging women in the traditional roles of the patriarchal society but moreover it is highly poisoned by **xenophobia, racism and ethnical patriotism**. She claims that women contributed more than ethnic minorities to the nation-building process. Thus conceptualization of women's rights is made in contradiction with that of minorities' rights. In her speeches, Princess Cantacuzino promotes an assimilation of minorities (especially through means of education and

important conservative politician of those times). She advocated for the women's rights, but only from an orthodox-traditionalist point of view and her feminist thoughts were highly correlated to nationalism, as she envisioned women emancipation in the context of "spiritual revival of the nation".

Princess Alexandrina founded numerous national organizations for "women's rights" and was on the board of many other international ones.

- ✦ In 1910 she started building up the National Orthodox Society of Romanian Women (Societatea Ortodoxa Nationala a Femeilor Romane), a Christian Orthodox women's charity society, society which was to become the hugest one in Romania, by 1937 it had 57 branches all over the country.

- ✦ She was also the president of Romanian Women's Association (Gruparea Femeilor Romane), founded in 1928,



Alexandrina Cantacuzino

- ✦ the president of Romanian National Council of Women (umbrella organization for most Romanian feminist and women's organizations and branch of the International Council of Women), founded in 1921,

- ✦ the president of The "Solidarity" Society (Societatea "Solidaritatea"), founded in 1925,

- ✦ member of The Association "Woman's House" (Asociatia "Casa Femeii"), founded in 1928,

- ✦ takes part in building up the foundation "The Little Entente of Women" (international organization of women from Romania, Greece, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland), established in 1923.

Other international organizations membership

All these organizations were based on the Christian orthodox and nationalist ideology and their agenda regarded mainly:

- ✦ moral and religious education of the nation and especially education of women in the spirit of Christian Orthodox religious values in order to ensure a morally healthy future for the nation. (Alexandrina Cantacuzino claims that The National Council of Romanian Women was born out of a national necessity - it aims to inculcate in future mothers' consciousness the Romanian national ideals and religious concepts that will secure the continuity in the preservation and exploitation of national traditions).

- ✦ building up hundreds of education establishments (many of them for children with special needs), churches, workers' and students' restaurants, hospitals (all these under the patronage of the orthodox church),



Prime-Minister and Patriarch signing contracts

the orthodox priests as well and the rest of the church functionaries, regardless of their religious or philosophical beliefs. The new Patriarch has a salary of 2.300 euros, while most of Romanians are earning between 200 and 400 euros a month. The state is giving the public money to BOR for construction and repairs of halidoms (churches, monasteries, sanctuaries, any annexes). The state is also financing BOR without specific destinations, only for supplement of their funds.

**BOR, public space and private life of individuals**

BOR has destructively monopolized the public space and public institutions after 1989, ceaselessly constructing churches, having one major aim: the penetrative invasion of public and private daily life of individuals, regardless of their religious beliefs.

Since the beginning of '90s, each year 150 churches and halidoms are being built in Romania, in great part being financed by the state from the public money. The state is supporting BOR with money, buildings, lands, industrial complexes and hotels. Money is being offered also by state banks and oil companies such as Petrom. The way the orthodox churches are constructed is in such a manner that they are to be perceived as the nucleus of community life, meaning that churches are placed between the blocks where people are living, often at a distance of 10-20 meters from their windows. Thus no matter how your daily life is taking place, you constantly have to face the imposing monuments of orthodoxy. The intrusiveness is not only taking a visual shape, but also a sonorous one. Orthodox propaganda is nowadays more efficacious than before, thanks to technology. The churches are using audio amplifying equipment in order to abusively reach those individuals who are not willing to go to church, if you are not going to church, than the church is coming to you; useless to close your windows, the annoying audio level is too powerful to avoid it. The speakers were supposed to be used at specific important orthodox ceremonies, when the church might become too narrow to receive all the parishioners, but the priests are immoderately using them each day, in order that the whole neighborhood is aware of the orthodox constant presence.

Another measure of penetrating the private life of individuals is the one when priests are coming to bless and "exorcise" your private apartment, with different orthodox occasions. A priest and one of his humble servants equipped with icons, bible, holly water and incense are knocking from door to door several times a year to bless and save people from the demons hunting their houses, everything in exchange of money; there is a certain amount asked by the church, but the more you give the better Christian you are. One can deny such a service and refuse to welcome the priest inside the home on whatever grounds, but one can then risk to be submitted to blame by community.



Project of Romanian People Salvation Cathedral

**Romanian People Salvation Cathedral** is a pharaonic project initiated by the former Patriarch of Romania in the '90s, the construction only started in spring 2008. The Cathedral can receive 6000 people inside, it has a library, a hotel for pilgrims and it is as well hosting the residence of the Patriarch. It is positioned next to the Palace of Parliament (previously named The House of People, it is the greatest second building in the world after the Penta-

gon building, and was constructed by Ceaușescu in order to gratify his megalomaniac dreams of triumph of socialism. At present it hosts the parliament of Romania). BOR received from the state 11 hectares for accomplishing this overwhelming project. It is going to be 114 meters high, taller than the Palace of Parliament and it will be possible to see it from all corners of Bucharest. The expenses for this project are estimated to 500 million euros up to 1 billion euros. The government announced it will donate 8 million euros and the Romanian Parliament enacted a law by which half of the building costs of the Cathedral will be paid from the state budget.

The former Patriarch of BOR, Teoctist Arăpașu was rejoiced with a truly cult of personality, comparable only to the one rejoiced by Ceaușescu in the whole history of Romania. Teoctist Arăpașu was indeed a very important tool of Romanian state, during all the three regimes during his lifetime. First he was a legionnaire, then he became informer and collaborator with Securitatea (the communist secret services), then turning to serve ultra-nationalist face of capitalist democracy. An important aspect that must be mentioned is the one regarding the myth of abolishing BOR by Ceaușescu. The dictator never intended to completely suppress BOR, being aware of the value of this institution in getting information about unfaithful individuals to socialism. The actual proportion of this phenomenon called "informer priests" can not be easily predicted since their files got lost from the archive of Securitate, after pressures done by different post-communist political parties and high positioned voices, trying to protect the orthodox clergy and opposing the opening of trials for these files. The way this collaboration was working is over an unimpeachable pattern: people were going to church, often "in secret" due to the state of terror, to confess to the priests about their private lives; then the priests were making reports or were interviewed by Securitatea officers to collect data over unfaithful individuals. Ceaușescu demolished indeed a huge number of orthodox churches, since the institution of church was serving for venerating somebody else than him, whether it was concerning an immaterial, spiritual figure – God, or an earthly human being – the priest. And indeed his propaganda was strongly opposing religion in all its forms of manifestation, from the same reason of veneration – Socialism and Ceaușescu were the only ones to be venerated.

applied on her a ritual of exorcism. They bound the young woman with chains on a wooden cross, blocked her mouth with a gag and left her immobilized with no possibility of feeding, hydrating or moving, conditions which lead to her painful death after three days. What the orthodox priest and nuns identified as the devil occupying the young woman's soul were in fact the symptoms of the emotional disorder, the girl had been previously diagnosed with; and the priests were aware of it. The whole village and the rest of the nuns and priests from the monastery have declared solidarity with the murderers and expressed their gratefulness for saving them from the devil. The reaction of the community is alarming, since it is characteristic for the people's blind worshiping of the orthodox church. The church is the one and only authority in the village, it is governing people's lives, not only in the religious way, but it is involved in all the other aspects, it interferes socially, culturally, politically and even economically in the community dynamics. It is even more alarming when you think that the rural population is almost half of the Romanian population (45.1%). Eventually the priest was convicted for 14 years of jail. In his defense the lawyer of the priest has used arguments such as: exorcism is a wide spread practice all over the country and similar rituals of exorcism are happening all the time with the approval and guidance of BOR.



Orthodox women praying in church

### **Christian feminism**

It is undisputable for me that church is the worst enemy of women's emancipation and that the bible is the root of the absolute oppression of women. This point of view is unfortunately not so widespread in the feminist movement. Very few critiques of the church are met in women studies, I would say that it is completely missing from the mainstream feminism and sadly rarely seen even in the most radical feminist approaches. In this context I would like to discuss the portrait of one of the most important *feminist* figures of the interwar Romania, princess Alexandrina. I chose to debate this portrait because I find it is of particular actuality nowadays, it is a Christian-national feminism that was very popular one century ago, but prevailed and is characteristic for today's feminist discourse.

Princess Alexandrina Cantacuzino (1876-1944) is one of the greatest figures in the emerging Romanian feminist movement from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of her life she had dedicated to Christian charity and social work; her career and popularity were highly facilitated by her social status which in turn was provided by her husband's aristocratic background and political influence (Grigore Gheorghe Cantacuzino was an

only because the child is female. The marriage has the aim of encouraging procreation (which later on will determine once more the filthiness of woman) and preventing debauch and harlotry. When she is getting married, the priest is teaching the woman "to submit to man, because man is the head of woman" and "to fear man". Thus woman is changing the authority she had been subjected to all her life, before the marriage - the one of the father, to the new one - the one of the husband. If the woman had sexual intercourse before marriage without the approval of the father, she is whore (harlot), and even after the marriage she will live under the sign of harlotry. As for the woman who is committing adultery, she will be sent away by her husband. The reciprocal situation is not valid, the woman is going to keep the man who is committing adultery.



*Orthodox women marching—led by a man*

It is often argued that even if 86,8% of Romanians are registered as belonging to orthodox confession, an almost insignificant percentage of them are actually practicing orthodoxism. This is true only if you are looking after who is in fact going regularly to church, celebrating orthodox holidays, respecting the orthodox restrains and so on. The vast majority of these 86,8% Romanians are rarely passing by church, neglecting the holidays and restrictions, these are the so called

"Sunday Christians", occasional ones, opportunists and in this way they do not represent a great danger, a real threat to women's emancipation...well, those who are satisfied with this kind of arguments seem to be ignoring the fact that 100% of this vast majority are living in extremely oppressive patriarchal family and environments, guiding all of their values and aims in life according to Christian morality, which is socially and culturally inherited, and thus deeply engrained in their subconsciousness. All the hierarchies and male-woman / superior-inferior dichotomy are present in their lives, this is the role model of the family, all these are coming from the orthodox teachings and Christian morality.

**The exorcism of Irina Cornici**

The cruel madness and tyranny of the orthodox church is not to be found only in discrimination and oppression of women in any kind, it doesn't stop here, it goes up to torturing and killing in cold blood. In June 2005 in a monastery from the N-E Romania, a priest assisted by 4 nuns killed a young woman by crucifying her. Under the pretext that she was possessed by the devil, their Christian duty guided them in spearing her soul and

Having this context in mind it's easy to depict the sameness of the both megalomaniac projects: the House of People and Romanian People Salvation Cathedral, comparably analyzing their architecture, their expenses, but also the ones who initiated them and longed for these monstrosities.

The omnipresence of the orthodox church is also to be found in all public and state institutions: kindergartens, schools, universities, hospitals, prison, army, government and so on.



*Teoctist Arăpașu between the portraits of Ceaușescu and Stalin*

**BOR and schools**

In public schools, orthodox religion is a compulsory subject for study, in the primary school; in the secondary school orthodox religion is an optional subject in theory, but in reality even if you declare yourself to have another religion or even more an atheist, you are still obliged to pass the exams and tests in this subject. At present BOR is trying to push things further and introduce orthodox religion as a facultative subject in the University level.

In 2006, the minister of Education, Mihail Hardău, disposed a law-project to take out from the biology textbooks in schools, the evolutionist theory, justifying that the textbooks are too heavy and overloaded. It was also decided the elimination from the philosophy textbooks of certain writers like Voltaire, Camus and Nietzsche well-known for their critical point of view on religion. The final decision was passed in 2008.

Also in 2006 a philosophy teacher from Buzău, Emil Moise, started a campaign regarding the elimination of orthodox icons from the public schools in Romania, arguing that these symbols are discriminating those children who not sharing the orthodox beliefs and that they are denying the right to freedom of consciousness. The National Council for Combating Discrimination took into account Moise's open letter and acted in court the Ministry of Education. Besides BOR, an aberrant alliance was built between traditionalist organizations like "The coalition for Respecting the Religious Sentiment", pro-life ngo "Pro-Vita", ultra-nationalist "Noua Dreapta" and different parent's associations like "Save children's icons" fighting against this initiative. The final decision was pronounced in 2008, the Court deciding that the presence of icons in public schools is legal, guaranteed by constitution [!!]

The religion textbooks for the primary school curricula are blatantly manipulating children, flooding them with texts containing threatens of divine punishment for unorthodox practices. If they are not behaving and not accomplishing God's will, they will suffer, by falling on the stairs, getting to hospital with high fever, spending their summer holidays immobilized in bed and so on. If they are not making the cross sign passing by an orthodox church "a car will run over them" - Textbook for first grade.

Even for playing children can be punished by the omniscient God: "Alina, my classmate/Is in hospital since one week./Not carefully playing she fell down and broke her arm."

"Vasilică, is a bad boy. He climbed a leader to destroy a martins' [birds] nest. But he got it, bad. God saw him and pulled the leader beneath his feet. The boy didn't enjoy his holidays, because he needed medical care. The martins are flying now joyfully and are thanking God for taking care of them." - "The primer textbook for the little Christian".

"After the Judgement day, the right ones [orthodox] will go to rejoice in God's kingdom, while the sinners will be thrown in the darkest abyss where there will be crying and the gnashing of teeth" - Textbook for eight grade

Incrimination of other religions: "Yoga is the direct work of demons" While the Catholic Church is accused of "bringing discord in Transylvania (North-West of Romania) Romanian peoples' faith and has had major consequences, reasoning into an establishment of a misunderstanding climate and mutual distrust, with long-term effects." - Textbook for tenth grade



Typical Romanian classroom and a religion textbook

Presenting biblical myths as plain truths of Universal reality in orthodox terms, is guiding the shaping of children's analytical thinking towards a mystical perception of own person in reference to the whole Universe. A greater abuse is when they are threatened with divine punishment, especially in a metal stage when development is in high correlation with how "fear" is incorporated in the processes of exploring the surrounding world and of building identity and self-image. This is not only to be interpreted only as an inaccurate formative method of education, but more like a neglect of children's rights in having the chance to learn real facts about the world, and not muddled mystical-orthodox fantasy.



Orthodox propaganda in schools

## BOR – OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

*"No institution in modern civilization is to tyrannical and so unjust to women as it is the Christian Church. It demands everything from her and gives nothing in return. The history of the Church does not contain a single suggestion for the equality of women...Though tyranny and falsehood alone is Christianity able to hold women in subjection."*

The inferiority imposed on women for centuries is a direct result of the misogyny preached by the bible. The start point of this hatred towards women was the invention of "Eve's Myth" and from this point on the biblical texts are absurdly trying to prove the inferiority of women through lousy stratagems making use of the effect terror and fear have on human rationality. Fear and hatred of women were built on the devilish image of woman, the source of all misfortunes on earth, the evil in itself.



Orthodox woman in Church

Here are some very few excerpts from biblical texts:

"Women should remain silent in churches. They are not allowed to speak; but must be in submission as the Law says." (I Cor. 14:34-35)

"A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." (I Tim. 2:11-14)

"The head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is man." (I Cor. 11:3)

"For man did not come from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." (I Cor. 11:8-9)

And here are only few of the real orthodox practices:

Women's fertility is regarded as something filthy. Whether it is about menstruation or pregnancy. If a woman is menstruating she is not allowed to enter the church for seven days from the first day of menstruation, or if she is to receive the baptism and this would coincide with the menstruation, the process is canceled.

If a woman is pregnant she is not allowed to enter the church until she is subjected to some cleansing religious services. If a woman is giving birth to a male child she will be unclean for seven days, but if she is giving birth to a female child she is going to be unclean for two weeks. Thus the future female is stigmatized before she is even born and she is in turn stigmatizing the mother twice, first because she is giving birth to a child and sec-



pregnant women who had no children, as well as young women who got pregnant without being married were not included in this category of deceases. Even with this dark and bloodthirsty history of murdering women, Pro-lifers, Noua Dreapta and BOR are campaigning against women's right to abortion and any sort of reproductive control. It is an undisputable imminent danger considering the legislative power that lies in the hands of BOR!

Other fanatical figures making use of orthodox-ultra-nationalism in their delirious discourses are Gigi Becali, leader of New Generation Party (Partidul Noua Generatie) and Vadim Tudor leader of Greater Romania Party (Partidul Romania Mare). Gigi Becali claims to be the envoy of God in Romania and used one of the slogans coined by the Iron Guard in his run for presidential elections in 2004: "I vow to God that I shall make Romania in the likeness of the holy sun in the sky". Gigi Becali is also the owner of a great Romanian football team, Steaua. The supporters of Steaua are known to be the most aggressive in overt racist manifestation. When talking about the football game between Steaua and Galatasaray (Turkish football team) in the Champion League, he stated that "this is a war between Orthodox and Muslims" and that he is trusting Virgin Mary on helping him winning this war.



Gigi Becali

The discourse of BOR is an overtly ultra-nationalistic, anti-Semitic, xenophobic, chauvinistic, racist, homophobic one, and at present it is one of the most popular propagandistic instruments for spreading these extremist attitudes and sentiments.



Orthodox priests and Noua Dreapta

## BOR – ARMY

*I swear fealty to my country, Romania.*

*I swear to defend my country, even at the price of my life.*

*I swear to respect the laws of my country and the military regulations,  
So help me God!*

*Soldiers, from this day forth,  
By your wish and God's will,  
You have pledged your life to your country.  
Do your duty! God be with you!*

...and the holy water drains on the barrel of their guns...and there they go...they are going to slaughter other human beings, to destroy as many lives as they can! In the name of their country and in the name of their damn GOD! This is the orthodox Church – preaching hatred, crime, atrocities, terror, torture, massacre, envy, greed, stealing....

Romania is living a time of "peace" and "freedom"! And still they are putting a great deal in the army and militarization (budget for 2008: 17.139.000 euros – for projects regarding fulfilling conditions for joining Schengen space; 5.139.000 euros – for consolidation as NATO member; 2, 300 billions euros – for Ministry of Defense)!! This is because

they have to fight wars in fact. Romania has been taking part in the military actions of coalition forces in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq (with an effective of more than one thousand soldiers in total). The reason they support and are actively participating in the "war on terror" is because they have to kiss some asses and please the most evil power!

### Orthodox justification of war

BOR has justified its position on war, as well as its direct and active involvement and support, by approaching these wars as so-called "Just Wars". This is one of the three positions Christianity has adopted throughout history (the other two are: Pacifism – rarely met, and Holy War – like Crusades for example). The belief in a so-called 'Just War' sustains that some wars, at least, are right because they are perceived to be in the interests of justice. This view says that the aim of Christianity is to promote a world in which peace and justice flourish everywhere: war may sometimes be the tool needed to do this, and waging war may sometimes be a lesser evil (a lesser injustice) than allowing injustice to persist or tolerating the victimisation of innocent people. The idea that violence is not inherently bad can also be seen in some versions of the Just War doctrine - vio-



Romanian soldiers being blessed by priests

violence (war) can be a vital tool in restoring justice and peace. Since BOR represents a moral authority, and since it is actively supporting the war, it makes it easier for the State to give enough reasons for participating in these armed conflicts.

**Breaching of the Holy Commandments**

After receiving the blessing of GOD, through his representatives on this earth – the orthodox priests (in this case), the Romanian soldiers are blatantly violating almost half of the ten commandments from their Bible!

1. the 6th law: „You shall not kill!” this is the greatest of all the ten commandments. Breaching this law, according to orthodox church is blatant! Killing can be both bodily and spiritually, it says further. And it doesn't mean that killing has to be by blowing someone's brain with a gun or bombing his/her home, it can also mean harming or hurting someone in such a manner that in the end it is leading to death, or depriving him/her from the necessary things he/she needs to survive, and this is what war has been doing everywhere and ever since. The vast majority of civilians have to suffer from lack of drinkable water and food, fact which is predisposing them to starvation and diseases causing a slow and painful death. Killing in cold blood, this is what good Christians are doing, if not by going on offensive mission, then simply by their mere presence over there.

2. the 9th law says: „You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor”. The orthodox church teaches good Christians to do not lie, meaning not holding back willingly the truth in the purpose of befooling, betraying and hurting another human being, which is exactly what Romanian soldiers are doing, since they are covering the political and economical interests and profits that nourish these wars under the mask of fighting to bring peace and democracy to people. Love your neighbor, this is what the Church says, but it doesn't say how close this neighbor should be. Obviously Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo nor Bosnia are not close enough (or is it because they are not Christians, they can not love them in such an extent that they wouldn't kill them)!! Instead Bush's interests are their interests and thus close enough to their souls so they can fight and kill for them.

3. “You shall not covet” your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. This is the 10th commandment. Well, our good Christian soldiers are blessed by the church so they can be protected by God's will while killing for oil, for example. How much greed do they need in order to slaughter those people so that they can steal from them?

4. This again violates another law, the eight one: „You shall not steal”. It seems that Christian morality preached by the church, is being denied by itself, when the military priests are blessing the soldiers and approving



Funeral religious service of a "martyr"

pre-Christian era, when the Celtic civilization was pagan). BOR and Noua Dreapta have been promoting hand in hand ultra-nationalism and orthodox fanaticism. It is very common to see the leader of Noua Dreapta (Tudor Ionescu) making speeches at the presidium of BOR's press conferences (proving a radicalization of the violent-traditionalist discourse sustained by the church and shared by the greater part of the population) and vice-versa, BOR is conferring Noua Dreapta with religious services when celebrating their "martyrs" or nationalists memorial days and blessing any of their initiatives. But one of their most aggressive collaboration is the "March for normality" organized each year (since 2005) as a counter event for Gay Pride Parade (first one taking place in 2005 as well). This march gathers members and sympathizers of Noua Dreapta but also has a significant participation of the church, not only the common orthodox fanatics but mainly the clerics making religious incantations with an icon in one hand and a bottle of holly water in the other, they are shouting in delirium "Romania does not want you, Romania is not Sodoma!". The march for normality gives a frightening picture of the extreme level of discriminating attitudes among Romanian spectators, when you hear the most offensive homophobic comments from aside. If asked why are they against such a manifestation they simply answer "It's against our tradition [*our orthodox Romanian tradition*]!" Each year there have been serious violent attacks with stones, smoking-bombs, eggs, tomatoes, bottles against the gay pride attendees and supporters. The attackers are mostly hooligans (football fans in Romania are well-known for their aversive racism and xenophobia and not surprisingly related to different extremist groups) but one can easily recognize some of the *orthodox* faces who several hours before were marching for "normality"!

Another campaign where Noua Dreapta is holding hands together with BOR is the one against abortion. Both Noua Dreapta and the church are trying to deny women reproductive rights once again. After the dark age of dictatorship women gained the full right to abortion and reproductive control in 1990. In 1989, Romania's rate of maternal mortality (having as main cause the *illegal* abortion) was the greatest ever recorded in history of Europe. Some records show that between 1976 and 1989 more than 7280 women died because of



"Abortion= Crime against Romanian Nation" - campaign of BOR and Noua Dreapta

*illegal* abortion practices. In reality, it is estimated that the number is much higher (a number that can not be inferred because of *illegality* aspect), as the official statistics are rounded by diminution –

nationalism and Orthodox religious convictions. Noua Dreapta is focusing on hatred and opposition to sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, abortion, cultural import and anything that is foreign and might undermine the Romanian traditional [orthodox] heritage. For example regarding religious diversity, the Iron Guard's warning on the "rabbinical aggression against the Christian world" is now transmuted in "the powerful offensive of sects which is aiming at destruction of orthodox Christianity and by this shattering the spiritual unity of Romanian people".

The rroma community is also one of their main targets. Aside from the common xenophobic and racist attitudes towards this community overtly showed by the vast population, Noua Dreapta is making a campaign against *maneie* (a music style specific to rromani culture, and enjoyed by a vast majority of Romanian people) arguing that *maneie* "is a symbol of lechery (depravity, decadence) and general perversion (corruption) of Romanian society and culture"!

They are advocating the moral regeneration of individual (*the new man*) through commitment to the Orthodox Church "the re-spiritualization and re-nationalization of individual and salvation of Romanian people by reconciliation with God". Their discourse and spectacular propaganda is identical

with the one used by interwar Iron Guard, using marches with religious invocations and patriotic hymns, volunteer working camps, charitable campaigns, pilgrimages and religious rituals to different orthodox monuments and halidoms. It is officially known that orthodox halidoms (churches, monasteries) are used by right winged groups and organizations for their manifestations and gatherings, especially



Legionnaires and monk in a summer working camp at monastery

by the legionnaires. For example Sambata de Sus Monastery has hosted in July 2000 one of the biggest legionnaire gathering, where extremists from the main cities of Romania, discussed the organization of the legionnaire nests, in these cities. Noua Dreapta has a cult of personality for Codreanu depicting him as a spiritual figure with attributes of a Romanian orthodox saint (often publicizing his portrait in the form of an orthodox icon).

The symbolism used by Noua Dreapta is the stylized Celtic cross (a circle with a cross drawn over it). Various versions of the Celtic cross and the sun cross ("sun wheel") [both the Celtic cross and the swastika are derived from the sun wheel] had been adopted by different neo-fascists and ultranationalists worldwide. At present in Romania, it is forbidden by law to show in public any sort of fascist, racist, Nazi symbols, but not surprisingly the Celtic cross seems to be in order on grounds of its Christian essence (even if its origins are coming not from the Celtic Christianity, but from the

the atrocities they are doing to other people, and then absolving their sins and supporting them spiritually /morally to go on and prove their loyalty to their country (or whom else they are serving) and to their God. When they come back alive, nevertheless proud of the horrors they have done, they get great honors and merits from the state and a shower of holly water, so that their sins are indulgenced; and if they come back in a coffin, then they get even greater merits so they can be proud of them on the other side, they also get a huge national flag to keep them warm six feet under and a one way ticket straight to haven.

**Military Church**

The military clergymen's role is to provide what they call moral and spiritual support for military stuff. By moral support they mean a sort of psychological support, approaching confessing as therapy; spiritual support of course meaning religious support (like absolving their sins). Thus they are explaining their presence in the battle field as a *sine qua non* presence,



Military orthodox priest

which provides "professional" support for the soldiers. Interesting is the fact that the military clergymen are remunerated by the army, this means that the budget for the national defense is calculated having in mind the presence of military clergymen as well. In this rationalism, the more battle fields there are, the more soldiers, the more priests, a higher budget for the army.

A great constraint is that being a state tending towards fundamentalism, the military clergy is orthodox,

so if there are soldiers of any other confession, they are constrained to attend the orthodox church. What I mean by constrain is not that they are being forced to attend the orthodox services, but due to the inexistence of other kinds of religious services they are driven towards it, masking this way their proselytism through a so called compassion and sensitivity to diversity. I am not advocating the presence of church pluralism on the battle fields, in the army or anywhere else in the society, since I believe that no religion or Church can be of any good for individual's rights and freedoms, what I am trying to emphasize is that BOR is a dictatorship restricting people's freedom of choice and thought.

Here are some fragments from a war correspondent in Iraq describing how "soldiers of different nationalities and confessions are coming to pray at the beautiful little wooden-church" [orthodox] in a military camp in Iraq: "In the beginning, the very first weeks, they were coming out of curiosity... Little by little the parishioners have multiplied... On Sundays there is a mixture of uniforms of different nationalities. Romanians, Italians, Americans, British. They are praying for forgiveness and for

an easier mission...

In order to touch everyone's soul the religious service is sprinkled with explanations in Italian and English...

For a moment they can forget about worries, about why they are being here. The little Church has become a meeting place, even only for a few hours, for those people who are missing their homes, missing the peace. And here they can fully find it...

It is 9 p.m. Everywhere in the camp you can hear only the church station. The religious service is floating above the hot and dusty air...

What has been only a curiosity in the beginning, has now become a tradition, a normality. No one finds the presence of other [confession] soldiers unusual. The scent of incense is being spread all over the camp by the air conditioning. The last sounds are getting lost into the air. When they are coming out, the parishioners are discussing, are taking pictures and the priest is giving them icons and wooden crucifixes...

They are ready to face another week, hardly waiting for the next Sunday's religious service."



"Little Wooden Church..."

### **Sisters in arms and Gospel**

The blood bond between BOR and Army is a result of the everlasting mutual support between the two of them, but most of all it results from making these two institutions the most trustful ones for the people. 60% of the Romanian people believe in and trust the army and 76% of them believe in BOR. These two percentages are way higher than those which describe the popular confidence in other institutions of the state, like government for example 18% or the parliament 13%. Although the confidence in Army and Church has slightly decreased during the last years, they are still on leading positions among popular trust-worthy institutions. The success of Church and Army among popular consciences is guaranteed by the authoritarianism these two institutions are implementing through the logic of submission and the logic of institutional strict order (in BOR there are quasi-military hierarchies and disciplinary rules), through their antipathy and repulsion towards any kind of aspect that might suggest liberty, diversity, equality, any kind of category in disaccord with the traditional model of society, anything that would neglect or endanger their authoritarian position. I mentioned before the everlasting mutual support between Church and Army. The Orthodox Church has been supporting the Army in its actions ever since for the sake of national unity.

The army in return has been providing the church for example with working force for building up churches (and even huge houses for priests). It is still going on today, in-term militaries are building churches without being paid, it is a patriotic and orthodox duty they must accomplish.

confusion) was representing the less radical wing of the legion and had the least Orthodox orientation. The Iron Guard allied with General Ion Antonescu, proclaimed the National Legionary State on September 6, 1940 and started a session of pogroms and political assassinations. The Iron Guard was seeking for full governing power and started the Legionary Rebellion in January 21, 1941. After 3 days civil war Antonescu supported by the German army defeated the Iron Guard, and proclaimed his own dictatorship. Horia Sima and the other heads of the Legionary Movement were forced to seek refuge in Nazi Germany. Under Antonescu Government, Romania joined the Axis Powers for most of the World War II. In August 1944 King Michael led a coup and deposed Antonescu dictatorship getting on the side of the Allies for the rest of the war. The aftermath of WWII placed Romania under Soviet occupation. The orthodox hierarchs, priests and students were actively supporting the legionnaires not only because of their overt religiosity but also for sharing the same "enemies" (the communists, the Jews, other religious and ethnic minorities) and had a high contribution in the pogroms led by the Iron Guard in 1941.



*Iron Guard marching in cross*

"Although at the leadership level of BOR most of the times there was a reserved or conjectural position, the inferior orthodox clergy had massively joined or sympathized with the Iron Guard movement, representing one of its elite social categories, with an intensive propagandistic activity and with a significant participation in the rebellion January '41".

Some of the greater legionnaire commandants were orthodox clerics: Dumitrescu Borșa, Vasile Boldeanu, Ștefan Palaghiță. The participation of orthodox clergy and theology students in the legionnaire rebellion is well attested by historical documents: "Reschith Daath Temple was devastated by orthodox legionnaires clergy and theology students, among which Grigorie Babuș – monk-priest at Patriarchy, Mitrofan Chiriac and Teoctist Arăpașu monk, deacon and I year student in theology" G. Catalan Teoctist Arăpașu was a legionnaire with intense activity and participation in the rebellion, later informer for *Securitate* (the secret services during communist era), had the position of Patriarch of Romania (highest position in the church hierarchy) between 1986-2007.

### **NOUA DREAPTA –precursors of the IRON GUARD**

The Legionary Movement reactivated in the post-communist era is represented by multiple extremist factions among which Noua Dreapta (New Right) is the most prominent organization and consider themselves to be the rightful heir of the Iron Guard; self-defined as orthodox-christian movement (as their official full name shows Forumul Crestin Noua Dreapta - New Right Christian Forum). Their doctrine is based on militant ultra-

## BOR – EXTREME RIGHT WING

In most of the post-communist Eastern-Europe states, there is an incontestable symphonia between the Orthodox Church and neo-fascist and ultra-nationalistic factions. Romania is not an exception, but more over a unique idiom of this symbiosis, taking the shape of an exclusivist doctrine – orthodox nationalism, a doctrine funded by C. Zelea Codreanu (ideologist and leader of the Iron Guard) during interwar period: *Romania is the state of Romanian people, and being Romanian means being orthodox Christian.*

Nowadays, things are evolving in a more and more dangerous direction and orthodox – ultra-nationalism is shared more vividly than before by the greatest part of the population, it is the Church they are trusting the most and whatever BOR is preaching can only bring salvation to people. BOR is the first and most powerful institutional partner of the main extreme right winged actors such as Noua Dreapta (New Right), PRM (Greatest Romania Party), the legionnaires (Iron Guard – the movement with this actual name is still registered, but is not publicly active), PNG (New Generation Party).

### THE IRON GUARD – short history and connections with BOR

In 1923 A.C. Cuza (far right politician and ideologist) together with Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (later known as the Captain [*Căpitanul*] of the Iron Guard) founded the National-Christian Defense League, an ultra-nationalistic and anti-Semitic party. Codreanu was at that moment a young student actively involved in the anti-communist and anti-Semitic movement that was taking shape in interwar Romania. He was already known for his mystical vision of the Christian-nationalistic movement he was about to build. He suggested that the league should have a more radical-revolutionary character (advocating pogroms and political assassinations), Cuza didn't agree so Codreanu started to build up a youth organization in 1927 which he named the Legion of Archangel Michael (Legiunea Arhanghelului Mihail) his inspiration came from an icon that was watching on him on the walls of his prison cell (at that time serving a sentence for conspiracy in a political assassination) and even claimed that he was visited by the Archangel himself.

In 1930 Codreanu formed the Iron Guard as a paramilitary branch of the Legion. The Iron Guard was one of the most unusual fascist movement in the interwar Europe due to their delirious religiosity and the fact that it was based on peasantry and students. In 1938 Codreanu was imprisoned and assassinated by the Gendarmerie. His successor Horia Sima (who took over the leadership of the Iron Guard after a long period of inner



Corneliu Zelea Codreanu

Here are some statements of Church and Army leaders, trying to emphasize the importance of the two institutions as fundamental ones for the Romanian state:

The commander Ilie Manole (1996), in a chapter called „Army and church – fundamental institutions of Romanian unity and continuity”:



Patriarch Teoctist and army leaders at a national ceremony

„Therefore we are having here the first book about the heroic, deep, continuous and useful work, which the Army and the Church have placed at the base of our Home, today called Romania. Now and forever bless them all: Book, Cross, their work and the basic hearth in which they are existing together with the shield.”

„The Cross, the Sword and the Gospel must coexist. Church and Army must shake hands and bring long term contribution in forming great personalities needed for our people, for the Romanian society.”

Daniel Ciubotea, a representative of BOR, the Bishop of Moldova and Bucovina states:

„The cooperation between Army and Church is a promoting factor of national unity”

A shocking example of “nuclear orthodoxy” comes from BOR’s greater sister, the Russian Orthodox Church: celebrating 60 years (September 2007) since the Russian military nuclear sector was built, in the religious service in Moscow, Putin has stated that:

“Traditional religion and nuclear weapons are related to the domestic and foreign security of Russian state.”

And the head of the Russian Orthodox Church added:

“Thanks to St. Serafin’s prayers, Russia has created a weapon which can protect us now.”

A concrete exemplification of how church and army are working together in nourishing nationalistic sentiments is represented by historical interpretation of the wars Romania fought against the Ottoman invasions for instance. Ștefan cel Mare, ruler of Moldova (one of the Romanian states before unification) between XVth-XVIth centuries was sanctified by BOR in 1992. He was one of the most cruel and bloodthirsty rulers Romania had and well-known for his religious fanaticism, he carried 36 wars during his reign. His right hand was the hierarch of the Church, and when the ruler was away on the battlefield, the hierarch was taking over the leadership. Ștefan cel Mare returned the favors Church was giving him, and built 44 monasteries in Moldova, monuments that are considered now one of the most important vestiges of the national patrimony. The sanctification of such a personality is not only a simple act of orthodoxism, it is as well an act of nationalism, symbolizing the national identity merging into the or-

thodox identity, a glorification of orthodox-ultra-nationalism.



*Museum statues of Ștefan cel Mare assisted at his throne by the Orthodox hierarch*



*Icon of Ștefan cel Mare*

Church is responsible for most of atrocities in the history. Gospel is the poison they are using on harmless and innocent people and their priests are the butchers. When Church meets the greed and the slyness of the greatest political and economical powers on earth these days, the eyesores coming out of this sick alliance are hard to imagine, since the vast majority of world's population have no clue about how the war really looks and feels like !!

