

The Orthodox Romanian Church During Popular Democracy

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Abstract

The period of the popular democracy in Romania meant a huge challenge for the Romanian Orthodox Church, immediately after the gradual installing of communism, when its own existence was threatened. In such conditions, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Justinian (1948-1977) was considered, sometimes, like a hero of the Church, and by some historians as the "red" Patriarch. The recent access to the archives of the Security after the 1990s has brought to light many new informations that more precisely outlines the profile of this personality of the patriarch and gives us a more accurate perspective on the tense relations between the communist authorities and the Church. A true programmatic document, the "social apostolate" of the patriarch is analyzed today in its historical context and by evaluating of their consequences in all the levels of the Church. The challenges that Church had cross under the popular democratic regime was: the persecution of the clergy by the Security, the loss of Church properties, the election of bishops, the closure of monasteries, the reform of theological education, the training of clergy in communist projects such as collectivization, catechesis of the young people, the popular religious movement, etc. Carrying out this synthetic and critical approach, this article aims to contribute to describe how the Orthodox Romanian Church crossed the period of popular democracy, as well as the polyvalent discourse used to survive. The reaction to the new challenges redounded more precisely to depict the role of the patriarch Justinian to build a new *modus vivendi* between Church and state. This model of polyvalent discourse represented a form of passive resistance face to the popular democracy.

Keywords: Polyvalent Discourse; Social Apostolate; People Security; Archives; Justinian