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THE CASE OF THE REFUGEE ROMANIANS ORTHODOX CLERICS IN WORLD WAR II – A LESSON OF PHILANTHROPY AND NATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Abstract: *The refuge phenomenon during WWII affected first of all the Romanian priests in the north and east of Romania, considered by the Hungarians and the Russians as “the most ardent exponents of the Romanian national idea”. That is why, approximately 40% of the Orthodox priests in the northern half of the Diocese in Cluj, dwelling on the territory conceded to Hungary, took refuge in 1940-1941 in the Vicarage of Alba Iulia, fleeing the Hungarians’ atrocities and then, half of them settled in other eparchies in the country. In 1943-1944 the Vicarage of Alba Iulia received in its structures many refugee clerics from Transnistria, Bassarabia, Bukovina and Moldavia. The council of the Vicarage tried to help all of them by offering them support, by placing them in different positions, by raising funds and interceding with the authorities for their cause.*

The present study illustrates the Romanians’ solidarity towards the refugees, as an actual assumption of the national and evangelical ideal, offering also novel statistics data about the cases of the refugee clerics in the Vicarage of Alba Iulia, particularly in the deanery of Alba Iulia.

Keywords: *Romanian Orthodox refugee priests, WWII, the Vienna Dictate, Marshal Ion Antonescu, northern Transylvania, Bassarabia, Bukovina, the Diocese of Cluj, the Orthodox Vicarage of Alba Iulia, the Orthodox deanery of Alba Iulia.*

In the dramatic circumstances following the Vienna Dictate (August 30th 1940), which split Transylvania (the central region of Romania), from a political and administrative point of view, in the context of the atrocities committed by the Hungarians against the Romanians, a great number of Orthodox priests from Northern Transylvania sought refuge in the free territory administered by Romanian authorities, most of them in the southern area of the eparchy of Cluj, precisely in the Romanian Orthodox Vicarage in Alba Iulia¹.

1 The Romanian Orthodox Vicarage in Alba Iulia functioned during WWII as a temporary body for the administration of parishes in the southern half of the eparchy in Cluj, left without a hierarchy after the Vienna Dictate, which practically split Transylvania in two, and, as a result, the eparchy of Cluj. Thus, 8 deaneries with 184 parishes remained in the territory conceded to Hungary, under the guidance of bishop Nicolae Colan and the other 10 deaneries (later 8, then 9), with 201 parishes, in Romania, for the latter being founded the Vicarage in Alba Iulia. This new administrative body, led by the archpriest of Alba Iulia, Alexandru Baba, lasted for 4 years and 7 months (September 6th 1940 - April 1st 1945); the Archives of the Archdiocese in Cluj (in this document marked as AAC), Fund *Romanian Orthodox Vicarage of Alba Iulia*, non-inventoried, in this document marked as *ROVAI*, doc. no. 1878/8 May 1942; see also

Despite being only at the beginning of its organization, the Council of the Vicarage in Alba Iulia reacted promptly to the cause of the priests who were refugees, initiating a charity fund for them (out of voluntary deductions from the priests' salaries and fund raising activities²), but also interceding with the Patriarchate and the Ministry of Cults in order to get support.

Most of the priests who were refugees were sent in parishes which had no budgets, the rest of them in the administration of the Vicarage center and in the parishes previously occupied by hieromonks³. These priests were paid by the Ministry of Cults, the amount of money being the one they had before their refuge. The parish priests who were assigned to receive a refugee in their parish had the obligation to accept him as adjunct priest⁴.

It is worth mentioning that not only the priests who were refugees received support from the Vicarage, but also the ones who had remained in northern Transylvania. Thus, informed on various occasions that in the space conceded to Hungary, the Hungarians did not cease the atrocities against Romanians⁵, the Council of the Vicarage addressed in

Rev. Fr. Prof. Alexandru Moraru, PhD, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română între anii 1885-2000. Biserică. Națiune. Cultură*, volume. III, tom I, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 2006, pages 649-650; Idem, *Violența împotriva lui Dumnezeu – câteva aspecte din perioada 1940-1945*, in volume *** *Violența „în numele lui Dumnezeu” – un răspuns creștin*, Alba Iulia, Reîntregirea, 2002, p. 94-95; Idem, *Vicariatul Ortodox Român Alba Iulia (1940-1945). Aspecte generale*, in Nicolae Boșcan, Ana Victoria Sima, Ion Cârja (coord.), *Identități confesionale în Europa Central-Orientală (secolele XVII-XIX)*, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2009, p. 491-510; Idem, *Date statistice privitoare la parohiile, filiile și credincioșii din Eparhia Ortodoxă Română a Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului la 1 septembrie 1940*, in „Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa”, LI, 2006, no. 2, p. 27-37; Idem, *Statistici referitoare la parohii, filii, clerici și credincioși din Eparhia Ortodoxă Română a Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului din prima jumătate a secolului al XX-lea*, in „Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa”, LII, 2007, no. 1, p. 39-49. On the first assemblies of the Vicarage and its initial moments, of organization, as well as the final ones, see Cosmin Cosmuța, *Momente privitoare la organizarea Vicariatului Ortodox Român de Alba-Iulia*, in „Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa”, LIII, 2008, no. 1, p. 47-56; Idem, *Vicariatul Ortodox Român de Alba-Iulia – documente privitoare la înființarea și desființarea sa*, in „Analele Facultății de Teologie Ortodoxă”, Tom X, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Renașterea, 2008, p. 273-282; also, see Alin Albu, *The Romanian Orthodox Vicarage of Alba Iulia (1940-1945) – the moments of constitution*, in vol. „Teologie și Istorie. In Honorem Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Alexandru Moraru”, editors: Gabriel-Viorel Gârdan and Cosmin Cosmuța, Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2014, p. 319-331.

2 AAC, Fund ROVAI, „Proces verbal din 16 octombrie 1940”, in *Registrul de Procese verbale...*, vol. I, p. 21; *Ibidem*, doc. no. 482/12 October 1940.

3 Following the proposal of the Vicarage Council, Patriarch Nicodim disposed the revocation of the monks who were parish administrators and they were sent back to their monasteries so that the refugees could be placed there as priests; *Ibidem*, doc. no. 341/1940; *Ibidem*, doc. no. 786/4 november 1940; *Raportul despre activitatea Vicariatului de la înființarea lui (6 septembrie 1940), până la 30 iunie 1941*, unregistered, p. 14.

4 *Ibidem*, doc. no. 1104/28 November 1940, p. 2.

5 For a detailed account of the atrocities committed by Horthy's soldiers in northern Transylvania after August 1940, see Rev. Fr. Prof. Alexandru Moraru, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română între anii 1885-2000. Biserică. Națiune. Cultură*, vol. III, p. 650-659; Rev. Archdeacon Prof. Constantin Voicu, *Biserica strămoșească din Transilvania în lupta pentru unitatea spirituală și națională a poporului român*, Sibiu, Tiparul Tipografiei Eparhiale, 1989, p. 220-254; Mihai Fătu, *Biserica românească din nord-vestul țării sub ocupația horthystă (1940-1944)*, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1985, p. 81-110; Nicolae Corneanu, Metropolitan of Banat, *Biserica românească din nord-vestul țării în timpul prigoanei horthyste*, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1986, p. 10-138; Petre Țurlea, *Ip și Trăzne. Atrocități maghiare și acțiuni*

November 1940 a petition to general Ion Antonescu, asking him to take diplomatic measures in order for these acts to stop⁶, then in February 1941 a report to the Minister of Cults which presented the inhuman treatment applied by the Hungarian army and population to the Romanians in northern Transylvania. The Romanians were "beaten, threatened with death, arrested and sent to prisons or camps, living in a condition of destitution"⁷. The persecutions were directed especially against priests, accused of being "the most ardent exponents of the Romanian national idea"⁸.

In the spring of 1944 there was a new arrival of refugees, many people from Moldavia from the banks of the river Prut and people from Bukovina, who receded from the advance of the Soviet troops that had reached the river Nistru⁹. Although the Vicarage had the obligation to place in its parishes only the refugees from the eparchy of Ismail, according to the distribution conceived at a national scale, the board of the Vicarage received refugees from other eparchies as well. On the one hand the board of the Vicarage was impressed by the difficulties of some members of the clergy; on the other it was in need of priests¹⁰.

Besides the Church, the state also involved in supporting the refugees, either financially, or juridically, by offering them new positions with salaries equivalent to the ones they initially had up, by elaborating laws and dispositions to ensure their social protection (in December 1940 the Ministry of Cults called all priests who were also teachers to choose one of the positions, being forbidden to possess both¹¹; at the beginning of 1941 appeared the Law nr. 2131, which suspended all new appointments until the refugees priests were placed¹²). Nevertheless, after October 1st 1941, the Ministry of Finances stopped giving salaries to the refugee priests who had now to be placed in new positions¹³.

In April 1943, according to the dispositions of Marshal Antonescu, was initiated "a national-cultural internal action of consolidation of the national conscience" (*Propaganda National Internal Action*), meant to ensure, besides military fighting, the "final victory of the Romanian nation"¹⁴. The Ministry of Propaganda offered instructions in several directions, one case being that of the refugees, urging the population to accept the refugees, to assist them from a material and spiritual point of view in order for them to be integrated in the life of the local community and in order to ensure an active solidarity¹⁵. Stating the factors involved in running this action of consolidation of the national conscience, one insisted on the role of the teachers and of the priests, not forgetting the refugees who belonged to these two professional categories. The latter, who were urged to

diplomatică românească – studiu și documente, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1996, 593 p. Note the author's presentation of the speciality literature at pages 14-15.

6 AAC, Fund ROVAI, „Proces verbal din 6 noiembrie 1940”, in *Registrul de Procese verbale...*, vol. I, p. 28.

7 *Ibidem*, The Address of the Vicarage to the Minister of Cults concerning the problem of the refugees, February 21st, 1941, unregistered copy.

8 *Ibidem*.

9 Valer Moga, *Despărțământul Alba Iulia al „Astrei” (1918–1948)*, in „APVLVM”, XXXI, 1994, p. 485.

10 AAC, Fund ROVAI, doc. no. 3006/21 Juny 1944; no. 3074/26 Juny 1944; no. 3226/8 July 1944;

11 *Ibidem*, *Raportul despre activitatea Vicariatului de la înființarea lui (6 septembrie 1940), până la 30 iunie 1941*, unregistered, p. 14.

12 *Ibidem*, doc. no. 10/4 January 1941.

13 *Ibidem*, no. 3483/6 October 1941.

14 *The address of the Ministry of the National Propaganda*, no. 491/1944, copy in AAC, Fund ROVAI, no. 3157/5 July 1944, 4 pages.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 1-2.

become members of the local branches of various cultural associations and foundations¹⁶, could offer a valuable cooperation in this direction. Such is the case of the Alba branch of the "Astra" association, invoked as paradigmatic, by participating in the General Assembly of the representatives of the University in Iași, which had taken refuge in Alba Iulia¹⁷.

After these historical-juridical marks of the refugee priests' issue, here is some precise information from the Vicarage, but also at the level of the deanery in Alba Iulia, which, being at the centre of the Vicarage, is illustrative of this topic.

In December 1940, in the area of the whole Vicarage there were 70 refugee priests from northern Transylvania¹⁸, whereas in 1941, 40 priests were identified¹⁹ and in July 1942, 35 priests, two church singers and a church clerk²⁰. The difference between the figures is explained through the refugees' great degree of mobility in their attempt to find a proper position and create better subsistence conditions. Out of these, nine were used at the Vicarage as members of the board.

In June 1941, the situation of the refugees was the following: out of the 377 clerics of the Cluj eparchy (as a whole, not split), 206 remained on the territory conceded to Hungary and 74 priests, 3 deacons and 3 professors from the Theological Academy sought refuge in Romania (this represented approximately 40% of the clergy in the northern part of the eparchy in Cluj which had remained in the conceded territory!). Out of these, 34 priests, two deacons and the three professors were placed in other eparchies and the rest (40 priests and a deacon) were used in the Vicarage (7 initially at the Vicarage center and the others in parishes as adjunct priests functioning with the parish priests). In the Vicarage, between September 1940 and June 1941, there were also two refugee priests from Bassarabia, two from Bukovina, two from the county of Bihor and one from Maramureș²¹.

Besides the refugee clerics from the northern Transylvania, during the war there were also cases of expulsions and refugees from Transnistria, Bassarabia, Bukovina and Moldavia, increasing the total number of refugees in the Vicarage (1943-1944 were the years of the expulsion of Romanians from Moldavia, Bukovina and Bassarabia²²). Thus, in a questionnaire filled sometime after December 31st 1942, it was mentioned that in the space conceded to Hungary (the northern Transylvania) remained 206 priests, of which 79 sought refuge in Romania. In Vicarage, the total number of refugee priests from Bassarabia, Bukovina and northern Transylvania reached 127²³. In 1944 there occurred a new arrival of refugees and expelled people; in the spring of this year²⁴, 15 priests and 4 church singers were received in the Vicarage from Transnistria, Bassarabia, Bukovina and Moldavia.

16 *Ibidem*, p. 3.

17 Gheorghe Moga PhD, Nicolae Băilă, *Raport general despre activitatea „Asociațiunii” pe anul 1943/1944*, in "Transilvania", Year 75, administrativ number (supplement for the year 75), 1944, p. 20.

18 AAC, Fund ROVAI, doc. no. 1512/21 December 1940; see also Rev. Prof. Archdeacon Constantin Voicu, *op. cit.*, p. 243 u. – the data is incomplete.

19 AAC, Fund ROVAI, doc. no. 2557/14 July 1941.

20 *Ibidem*, *Tabloul preoților refugiați din Nordul Ardealului și plasați în Vicariatul Ortodox Român Alba Iulia*, no. 2941/27 July 1942, p. 1.

21 *Ibidem*, *Raportul despre activitatea Vicariatului de la înființarea lui (6 septembrie 1940), până la 30 iunie 1941*, unregistered, p. 14.

22 *Ibidem*, *Raportul despre activitatea Vicariatului pe anul 1943*, unregistered, p. 7.

23 *Ibidem*, *Chestionar...*, filled by the Vicarage after December 31st 1942, unregistered.

24 Only in the spring months of 1944, for in the next months there were new cases of refuge in the Vicarage; see *Ibidem*, „Proces verbal din 18 mai 1944”, in *Registrul de Proces verbale...*, vol. III, p. 27-28; „Proces verbal din 1 iunie 1944”, in *Quoted register*, p. 37-38; „Proces verbal din 8 iunie 1944”, in *Quot. reg.*, p. 51-52, 56-58; „Proces verbal din 23 iunie 1944”, in *Quot. reg.*, p. 75-76; „Proces verbal din 21 iulie 1944”, in *Quot. reg.*, p. 88; „Proces verbal din 27 iulie 1944”, in *Quot. reg.*, p. 92-93.

Using the minutes of the Vicarage, Rev. Fr. Prof. Alexandru Moraru managed to identify 134 servants of the Church (most of them priests, a few deacons and Church singers) out of all these refugees²⁵.

As concerns the refugee clerics used in the parishes of the deanery of Alba Iulia, their total number could not be identified in any table, in a global statistics because these reports are few and sequential, recording partial situations, sometimes superposed and incomplete²⁶. Therefore, recovering all the names of the refugee clerics – even of those who functioned very little time in the deanery of Alba Iulia, or in some cases not at all, being appointed to some position and detached elsewhere – was possible only by studying carefully each document that could offer as little information as possible in this respect.

The total number of the refugee clerics used in the parishes of the deanery of Alba Iulia was 32 (22 priests, 6 hieromonks, a monk, a hierodeacon and two deacons), out of which, 12 came from northern Transylvania, 20 from Bassarabia, Bukovina, Moldavia and Maramureș.

Those from Northern Transylvania were the following: Vasile Maximinian, Vasile Hodoș, Nicolae Gherman, Petru Timișan, Sabin Truța (Truția), Ioan Neculoiu (Niculoiu), former priest at the Institute for rehabilitation of minors in Cluj, Simion Vasinca, former confessor at the Central Prison in Cluj and teacher of religion at various colleges here (1920-1940), Gheorghe Suciu (his sufferings in the Cojocna parish and in the refuge, truly dramatic and disturbing, are presented in a statement from July 12th, 1942²⁷), Ioan Gh. Trandafir, the

25 Rev. Fr. Prof. Alexandru Moraru, *Slujitori ai Bisericii noastre străbune refugiați în cuprinsul Vicariatului Ortodox Român de la Alba Iulia (1940–1945)*, in „Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Theologia Orthodoxa”, LIII, 2008, no. 1, p. 35-46.

26 Drawing up precise statistics was difficult for the personnel at the Vicarage, even for a short period of time, because of the refugees' great mobility. The refugees tried to find better conditions for survival, depending on factors related to the family (some refugees had relatives in a certain area) or related to various situations (a better offer in a different eparchy, finding a job for the wife, children starting school, etc.). Given this mobility, determined by a great number of factors, some priests were appointed by the Vicarage in a parish, but they did not go there, or if they did, they moved to another place shortly after, in another deanery or eparchy. Therefore, drawing up a precise list of the refugees was a rather difficult task.

27 The priest Gheorghe Suciu remained in his parish, Cojocna, situated in the ceded territory, until July 7, 1942, when he was forced to take refuge in Turda in extreme conditions, which he evoked in a statement from July 12, 1942. Between September 1940 and July 1942 the priest's house was searched by local authorities 12 times. On 14 September, 1940 priest Gh. Suciu was arrested and taken to City Hall where he was held for 3 and a half hours under the pretext that he held weapons. Although he wasn't beaten, he was cursed and threatened by soldiers that he will be shot like a dog. On June 25, 1942 there was a search of the Gendarmerie, when some incriminating items were found in the rectory: two hunting cartons, the paintings of King Ferdinand, Queen Mary and the entry of Michael the Brave in Alba Iulia and three painted eggs with the Romanian flag. Given the imminence of condemnation, the priest with his wife - their four children were placed in Romanian territory since September 1940 - fled across the border on the night of 7-8 July, 1942, bribing three Hungarian border guards. Hungarian authorities' reaction was terrible: the trustee Vasile Nemeș, the church singer Florian Baciu, the sexton Vasile Bojan, the faithful Simon Maier, Traian Țiplea and Anthonie Suciu from Cojocna were arrested and beaten because they were suspected that they knew the priest's intention to flee abroad. Moreover, 45 other people were taken to the police station, but these were, later, released. The Hungarian Fosto Iosif, who was charged with overseeing and spying the priest Gh. Suciu, was arrested, and the border guards and gendarmes patrols were reinforced. After recalling these personal experiences, the statement of the priest ended with the illustration of the general picture of Northern Transylvania, with "the plan of ruining the Romanian element", and with particular observations about the sufferings of the Romanians in Cojocna and the surrounding areas;

graduate theologian Aurel Puia, Gheorghe Cojocnean, hieromonk Basil Cipcigan.

The refugee clerics from Bukovina, Bassarabia and Moldavia used in the parishes of Alba Iulia deanery were the following:

- Gheorghe Olariu - his drama is quite touching! Here are some excerpts from the report of this priest addressed to the Vicarage of Alba Iulia on 28 November, 1940:

"I fled from Mihuceni Parish - Dumbrava Roșie, Storojineț County, on June 29, 1940, I could not save absolutely nothing from what I had, except the cassock and 5 shirts. My wife who delivered a baby on June 5th that year was still sick from the birth that was hard; during the refuge I had no means of transport so that both of us with the baby who was only three weeks old and kept in our arms walked down to the Siret, for a distance of 43 km. From this long journey on foot my wife has been suffering to this day [...] I came to Petrila with my suffering wife and the baby who was only five weeks old without anything; I had neither money nor anything to eat or to sleep on. We walked from house to house to people, irrespective of being Orthodox or Greek Catholic. I wanted them to help me with what they could and wanted. And they helped me, seeing the state I was in, some believers more compassionate helped me, one with bread, another with flour, another with potatoes, the other with milk... I asked some of them to borrow me some things to sleep on and cover with. From others I borrowed a spoon, a bowl, a lamp, a pot; from the headmaster of the school I got a bed, a table, chairs, pillows and many other things I needed and which I haven't returned to this day, not having money to buy my own. I suffered and grieved a lot; many times I went hungry all day and I slept the night also hungry. I suffered and I endured as only good God knows [...] Since I have lost everything I once had, saving only my life and that of the innocent child and of my wife, I cannot in any way and for any reason go back on the roads without clothes, food, shelter, bed, pillow, with nothing, and, moreover, I cannot go to a parish where there is no rectory..."²⁸.

- deacon Ioan Andrioaie, hieromonk Irodion Maxim-Mereanu, the priest Gh. Poiată and deacon Alexandru Muntean, Dumitru Gândiceanu, Ștefan Bărbosu, hieromonk Nicolae Gorcea²⁹, Constantin Ghenvarschi, Vasile Râpa, Vitalie Bocănescu, Sergiu Grigoriță, hieromonk Ioachim Barbos (Bărbosu), archpriest Andrei Porcescu, Leonid Bolfa, Vasile Colesnic, hieromonk Serafim Butnariu, hierodeacon Constantin Cristea, monk Paisie Spinei, Moisei Gorcea.

Besides the clergy, 6 refugee church singers were used in the parishes of the Alba Iulia deanery, especially in the years 1944-1945: Simion Moldovan, Dumitru Todoran, Vladimir Jovmir, Ioan Cărăușu, Simion Grecicosei, Andrei Pali.

AAC, Fund ROVAI, doc. no. 3513/4 September 1942.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 1190/1940.

²⁹ The situation of this hieromonk is surprisingly dramatic and unusual: born on May 1st, 1903 in Nimoreni village, Lăpușna County, entered the monastery at the insistence of his bigoted mother in 1924, without the slightest inclination, Nicolae Gorcea "squirmed for 19 years" in the monastic life, until his mother died and war broke out. He wanted to enlist as a soldier on the front to fight against Bolshevism that "he seriously hated". He failed to do so, but he could enlist as a military priest, reaching Transnistria (July 23, 1942 - January 15, 1943). He took refuge in the Vicarage of Alba Iulia, he was appointed at Valea Geogelului (Lupșa deanery), then at Sărăcsău (Alba Iulia deanery), where he could not cope with problems, being "exposed to a terrible poverty" and "the population was a real source of sectarianism which he could not draw to the right way". Under this pressure, Nicolae Gorcea resigned the clergy on April 28, 1943, to volunteer on the front. We do not know what happened next to this hieromonk, who had the misfortune to live this terrible spiritual struggle; AAC, Fund ROVAI, doc. no. 1942/5 April 1943; no. 2302/1 May 1943; „Proces verbal din 9 aprilie 1943”, in *Registrul de Procese verbale...*, vol. II, p. 41; *Cerere către Cercul de Recrutare Chișinău*, 22 April 1942, kept in AAC, Fund ROVAI, unregistered.

Finally, it's worth mentioning two separate cases related to the phenomenon of refuge.

At the end of 1941 (or 1940³⁰), in the urban parishes of Alba Iulia there were considerable demographic changes, in the parish Alba Iulia I Centru the number of parishioners reaching 1655 (with 265 more believers than at the beginning of 1941) and in the parish Alba Iulia II Maieri, 1420 (with 260 more parishioners). The report cannot be explained by natural increase, but only by external factors, in this case by the arrival of many refugees in the town who were integrated into these parishes. The great number of these refugees is also proved by the existence of a magazine in Alba Iulia, entitled "Refugees' Tribune", which had archpriest counsellor Nicolae Vasiu as collaborator³¹.

The second case dates from the end of the war, when in Șard (near Alba Iulia) there was an entire Romanian community of 400 people displaced from Iași. On May 16, 1944, the archpriest vicar Alexandru Baba from Alba Iulia together with the Bishop Policarp Morușca visited the Minister of Culture and Cults, Ioan Petroviciu in Orăștie, and they mentioned the case of the refugees from Șard, for which they asked the building of the Reformed Church of the village, abandoned for many years, in order to change it into an Orthodox chapel³².

The refuge phenomenon, with all its implications of national, social, professional, family or other nature, represented a gloomy reality for the ones involved, as well as for the whole country.

After the political events in the summer-autumn of 1940 (the Hungarians raped a part of Transylvania, which is a Romanian region), numerous Romanian Orthodox priests from northern Transylvania took refuge in free territory, half of them settling in the Vicarage of Alba Iulia, the rest in other eparchies of the country.

The Vicarage Council reacted promptly, initiating fund raisings and a special help fund, interceding with the Patriarchate and the Ministry of Cults for subventions and, the most important, seeking solutions for placing priests in parishes and in the administrative body of the Vicarage. The Vicarage then also offered assistance to the refugees from the northern and eastern part of the country (Bukovina, Moldavia, Bassarabia), especially in the last years of the war, although it was obliged to receive only the ones expelled from the eparchy of Ismail and although this gesture also involved inconveniences determined by the pronounced mobility of the refugees or even annoyances, caused by the complaints of some of them.

The same solidarity towards the refugees, the same material and spiritual assistance for their integration in the local community can be noticed in the parishes of the Alba Iulia deanery, the number of the people placed here being very high, compared to the

30 The figures we have given in the text, indicating the number of believers in the two urban parishes in Alba Iulia are listed in a table dated November 6, 1941 (*Ibidem*, *Tabel despre numărul familiilor și sufletelor din cuprinsul protopopiatului Alba Iulia*, no. 3845/6 November 1941), but in *Statisticile bisericești* these figures appear not at the end of 1941, but at the end of 1940 (*Ibidem*, *Statistica bisericească la 31 decembrie 1940. Protopopiatul Alba Iulia*, p. 8, 10 March 1941, unregistered). The latter version is probably correct.

31 *Ibidem*, doc. no. 319/29 January 1941. Nicolae Vasiu's name is often found as the author of different national-political articles, in „Alba Iulia” magazine after August 30, 1944.

32 AAC, Fund ROVAI, „Proces verbal din 18 mai 1944”, in *Registrul de Procese verbale...*, vol. III, p. 35.

total number in the Vicarage. For example, in the meeting of the General assembly of the Alba Iulia deanery, held in April 30th 1942, the present members expressed their satisfaction and gratitude towards the understanding and hospitality that the priests of the Alba Iulia deanery had manifested in the cause of the refugees³³.

Summing up the statistic data, in the years of WWII, in the Alba Iulia deanery were placed 32 clerics and 6 refugee church singers³⁴, out of which 12 clerics and two church singers came from northern Transylvania and 20 clerics and 4 church singers from Bassarabia, Bukovina and Moldavia. The majority in the last category came in 1944. It is worth noticing that the monks (hieromonks, monks and hierodeacons) all came from Bassarabia, Bukovina and Moldavia, none from northern Transylvania. They were placed in the monastery "Saint John the Baptist" in Alba Iulia or in two of the parishes from the deanery of Alba Iulia, which, being very poor, could not have priests who had families.

Beyond its dramatism, the episode of the refuge in the years of WWII, especially the case we are interested in - that is the Orthodox clergy placed in the Vicarage of Alba Iulia and in the deanery of Alba Iulia – also dwells a lesson of solidarity and actual assumption of the national and evangelic ideal, by protecting the brothers sharing the same blood and the same faith.

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33 *Ibidem*, *Proces verbal luat în ședința ordinară a Adunării protopopești din tractul Alba Iulia ținută la 30 aprilie 1942*, p. 2.

34 The number of the layman refugees, which we do not know, should have been very large, since only in Alba Iulia and Șard were mentioned 900 refugees. However, this is not the object of our study, we confined at listing the members of the orthodox clergy and the church singers.

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СЛУЧАЈ ИЗБЕГЛОГ РУМУНСКОГ СВЕШТЕНСТВА ТОКОМ ДРУГОГ СВЕТСКОГ РАТА – ПРИМЕР ЧОВЕКОЉУБЉА И НАРОДНЕ СОЛИДАРНОСТИ

Избегличка криза проузрокована Другим светским ратом на просторима Румуније је пре свих погодила румунске свештенике на северу и истоку Румуније, које су и Мађари и Руси сматрали "најватренијим заступницима румунске народне идеје". Због тога се око 40% православних свештеника из северног дела Клушке епархије, насељених на територији окупираној од Мађарске, бежећи пред мађарским злочинима, склонило током 1940-1941. године у Архијерејском намесништву у Алба Јулији, а затим је половина њих населила и друге епархије у земљи. Током 1943-1944. године Архијерејско намесништво у Алба Јулији је примило у своју службу многе клирике избегле из Транснистрије, Басарабије, Буковине и Молдавије. Савет Архијерејског намесништва је покушао да свима изађе у сусрет, било кроз пружање финансијске помоћи и намештење клирика на различите позиције, било кроз прикупљања средстава и посредовања код државних органа у њихову корист.

Ова студија показује румунску солидарност са избеглицама, као стварну претпоставку остварења народног и јеванђеоског идеала, нудећи такође и нове статистичке податке о случајевима избеглих свештеника у Архијерејском намесништву у Алба Јулиа, посебно у Црквеној општини Алба Јулиа.