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The Struggle to Maintain the Publication *Biserica și Școala* at the Establishment of Communism in Romania. A Chronology of the Facts (1944-1950)

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Abstract

This study presents the engagement of Bishop Andrew Magieru, together with his devoted counsellors and priests, for 6 years, to maintain the most important eparchial publication *Biserica și Școala*, with first-order implications in the life and history of the diocese.

Keywords

The Publication *Biserica și Școala*, The Diocese of Arad, Bishop Andrei Magieru, The Communist State.

Inter alia the legislation of the new state regime established in our country allowed the abusive interference of the communist state in the life of religious denominations. During this time, one of people's concerns was the issue of Church publications. From the point of view of the new governors, by their content these publications impeded the interests of the new regime and had to be removed from circulation.

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Then in the Diocese of Arad there were two Church publications, namely: magazine “Biserica și Școala” (1877), which belonged to the Eparchial Centre and “Calea Mântuirii” (1941), which was printed by the Theological Academy in Arad. In this study we will refer only to the first of the two mentioned that is to the eparchial magazine “Biserica și Școala” and to the struggle to maintain it. In this regard, we will present a sequence of facts from the archive of the Diocesan Centre, showing an entire correspondence between Bishop Andrei Magieru (1935-1960), the hierarch of Arad from that time and the Holy Synod, Patriarch Justinian Marina (1948-1977), Prime Minister Petru Groza (1945-1952), Ministry of Religious Affairs, Ministry of the Arts and Information, Ministry of Propaganda, the Prefecture of Arad County, the Press Department, the Provincial Press Service et.al.

- *December 21, 1944*, the Prefecture of Arad County send to the magazine “Biserica și Școala” an address no.14.088/1944, that notifies: “*In execution of the order of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) communicated by Ministry of Interior (MI) by order no. 14.435 from December 5, 1944, please find enclosed a copy of the circular of the Press and Information Department from MFA*”. On this request, the Episcopate gives a reply on December 30, 1944 through address no. 4455, drawing up a table in 3 copies, signed by Economos Stavrophore Caius Turicu¹.
- *September 10, 1945*, Bishop Andrei Magieru sends an address to Prof. P. Constantinescu Iași, minister of Propaganda, recalling that the Censorship Service from the Prefecture of Arad has suspended the publication of the magazine “Biserica și Școala” in mid-June 1945. The bishop asks the minister to investigate why it is not allowed to continue publishing the eparchial weekly magazine and asks for authorization to print at least one bulletin of the Diocese of Arad starting October 1, 1945, for the insertion of official publications².
- *November 15, 1945*, Bishop Andrei sends a telegram to minister P. Constantin Iași, mentioning that “*Biserica și Școala*” - *the official sheet of the Diocese of Arad was not published for five months, and we do not where to publish the official contests and notices*”³.

¹ The Archive of the Archdiocese of Arad (from now on AAA), Cota IV – 180 – 944.

² AAA, Act. nr. 3190/ 10 sept. 1945.

³ AAA, Act. nr. 3999/15 noi. 1945.

- November 22, 1945, Bishop Andrew complains to the prefect of Arad County, Gheorghe Voștinar, about the situation that the eparchy does not have the magazine “Biserica și Școala” and asks him to investigate this case and put an end to this abuse of power: “*We can no longer tolerate the situation that even after 5 months of silence we cannot communicate to our subordinates the orders and instructions that concern them closely*”. At the same time, the Deputy Councillor Prof. Caius Turicu is delegated by the Episcopate to participate in this investigation⁴.
- November 29, 1945, The Prefecture responds to the request of the Episcopate: “*we have the honour to inform you that your magazine “Biserica și Școala” may still appear*” and they also ask if there is a need for an investigation⁵.
- December 8, 1945, Bishop Andrew responds to the Prefecture: “*Please do the required investigation, because we must also justify to the members of the diocese why the eparchial magazine did not appear for 5 months*”⁶.
- December 10, 1945, Bishop Andrew requests a written statement to priests Tudor Demian, editor at “Biserica și Școala” and Petru Bogdan, editor at “Calea Mântuirii”, about how Censorship from the Prefecture of Arad County proceeded in June 1945, when it stopped the two magazines⁷. By address with no.4355/945, Bishop Andrei forwarded the declarations of the two priests to the Armistice Commission in Bucharest.
- December 11, 1945, The Armistice Commission asks the Episcopate to let them know “*which are the censorship bodies that suspended the appearance of the weekly magazine “Biserica și Școala”, as it is necessary to proceed with an intervention... and to know whether this measure was taken by the Romanian or Soviet organs*”⁸.
- December 14, 1945, The Ministry of Cults, the Cults Directorate, responds to the Episcopate at address no. 4045/945 that it was submitted an address no. 57.858/945, to the Allied Control Commission to resolve, but received no response⁹.

⁴ AAA, Act. nr. 4047/22 noi. 1945.

⁵ AAA, Act. nr. 16.625/29 noi. 1945.

⁶ AAA, Act. nr. 4155/8 dec. 1945.

⁷ AAA, Cota IV – 180 – 944, Act. nr. 4355/19 dec. 1945.

⁸ AAA, Act. nr. 033678/11 dec. 1945.

⁹ AAA, Act. nr. 60.008/945/ 14 dec. 1945.

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- *January 21, 1946*, The Prefecture of Arad County requests the magazine “Biserica și Școala” a whole list of data: authorization given by the Press Department; authorization of the Military Press Censorship in Bucharest; the name of the director or editor-in-chief; the character of the publication; periodicity; circulation; duration; property; the place of appearance; if the publication ceased appearing and the reasons¹⁰.
- *January 22, 1946*, in response to the Prefecture, the Episcopate listed all required¹¹.
- *January 22, 1946*, Rev. Economos Stavrophore Caius Turicu is delegated to take part in the investigation that will take place at the Prefecture. The delegated person draws up a report on January 29, 1946 about things discussed at the Prefecture¹².
- *January 28, 1946*, The Ministry of Propaganda, the Press Department, and the Provincial Press Service, ask the magazine “Biserica și Școala” to complete a questionnaire, similar to the one requested above¹³.
- *February 12, 1946*, The Prefecture of Arad County draws up a report which shows: “*By Order no. 299/May 22, 1945 of the Military Press Censorship in Bucharest, registered at the Prefecture under no. 7614/May 31, 1945, it is ordered that all newspapers and magazines appearing in Arad County take urgent steps to obtain approval from the Military Press Censorship and the approval of the Allied Control Commission in Bucharest. And if within 15 days from the receipt of the present order the people concerned do not take measures to make them legalized, the publications will be considered automatically suppressed*”. It is further specified that: “*The magazine “Biserica și Școala” did not notify the Prefecture about any action it would have been taken to meet the Military Censorship Order*”. To this accusation, Father Caius Turicu declares that: “*In its own time the Episcopate made these inquiries in Bucharest, even through a delegate who went personally and who brought a verbal opinion from there that the magazine might appear, but this notice was not communicated in writing to the Censorship Bureau of the Prefecture*”. Also in this address, the Prefecture mentions that it has no blame

¹⁰ AAA, Act. nr. 589/21 ian. 1946.

¹¹ AAA, Cota IV – 180 – 944, Act. nr. 284/22 ian. 1946.

¹² AAA, Act. nr. 291/22 ian. 1946.

¹³ AAA, Act. nr. 3092/ 28 ian. 1946.

for suppressing the magazine, but “*they strictly respected their legal duties and written orders received from the superior authorities, which they have executed*”¹⁴. But this statement of the Prefecture can be combated by Act no. 2647/November 27, 1945, issued by the Ministry of Propaganda, the Press Department, to the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad, which confirms: “*We have the honour to inform you that the Prefecture of Arad County was informed by the Press Department that the magazine “Biserica și Școala” may still appear until the approval of the Allied Control Commission*”¹⁵.

- In 1947, an address of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad to the Arad Security Service, recalled that the magazine “Biserica și Școala” appears weekly and the editor of the magazine is priest Demian Tudor.
- *February 6, 1948*, The Ministry of Information, the Arad County Inspectorate, requests the editorial board of the magazine “Biserica și Școala”, that by February 10, 1948, the following data should be provided: the title and subtitle of the publication; propriety; the date of its first publication; editorial / street and number / possibly phone no.; administration; the publishing house; the editor-in-chief; the editorial board; periodicity and day of appearance; circulation and page numbers; the language which it is written in; the distribution modality etc¹⁶. This request will be answered on February 12, 1948, because the address was received only then. Here it is mentioned that the responsible editor is Dr. Petru Deheleanu, helped by professors from the Theological Academy, “*all syndicalists and having a membership card*”¹⁷.
- *August 10, 1948*, Bishop Andrew sent a letter to Prime Minister, Petru Groza, to the minister of Religious Affairs, Stanciu Stoian and to the minister of Information, Octav Livezeanu, informing them that on July 9, 1948, on the basis of a simple telegram from the Ministry of Information, the Censorship of Arad suspended the appearance of the official periodical of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Arad “Biserica și Școala”, and of “Adușul pentru popor”. Bishop Andrei Magieru requested “*immediate measures for lifting the suspension*”. At the same address, Bishop Andrew mentions the difficulties of communicating with priests in the eparchy¹⁸.

¹⁴ AAA, Act. nr. 17.731/1945/12 feb. 1946.

¹⁵ AAA, Cota IV – 180 – 944, Act. Min. Propag. nr. 2647/27 noi. 1945.

¹⁶ AAA, Act. nr. 69/6 feb. 1948.

¹⁷ AAA, Dos. IV-180-948, Act. nr. 410/12 feb. 1948.

¹⁸ AAA, Dosar IV – 180 – 944, Act. nr. 2765/1948.

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- *August 16, 1948*, The Ministry of the Arts and Information writes to the director of the magazine “Biserica și Școala”: “*In accordance to the provisions in force, please send to the Press Directorate of the Ministry of the Arts and Information 15 copies of each issue of your publication immediately upon appearance*”¹⁹. Answer: “*At address no. 382 / August 16, 1948, asking for the 15 copies of the magazine “Biserica și Școala” to be sent, we respectfully let you know that the official eparchial organ was suspended since July 9, 1948 by a phone call given by you to the Cultural (censorship) Service in Arad. At least that was what the organs of Arad told to the Episcopate*”²⁰ (signed Bishop Andrei and Economos Stavrophore Caius Turicu).
- *September 6, 1948*, The Ministry of Cults submits another provision indicating that it agrees with the publication of the Arad diocese, but asks for the change of its title “*as it no longer corresponds*”, and the election of a “*more suitable editorial board*”²¹. The Episcopate of Arad complied with the decision of the ministry, announcing Adam Simion, County Cultural Advisor, that the eparchial organ would have the title “Biserica”: “*We respectfully let you know that in the future our eparchial organ will appear weekly, with a supplement for the people under the title “Biserica” and will be edited by the cultural advisor Economos Stavrophore Caius Turicu in collaboration with the priests of Arad, members of the Unique Union - Clergy Section*”. A favourable report is once again requested to the Ministry of Information for granting permission to appear²².
- *September 8, 1948*, Bishop Andrei sends an address to Prof. P. Constantinescu Iași, Vice-President of the Grand National Assembly in Bucharest, informing him that on July 9, 1948 the official sheet of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad “Biserica și Școala” was suspended, and presents the difficulties of communication they have faced for two months for this reason. An investigation is also required in this respect, considering that the official sheet – “*which was submitted to regular censorship*” – is unfairly accused, and “*we would like to defend ourselves*”. Also in this address it is mentioned that “*the eparchial sheet is in its 72nd year of uninterrupted appearance*”²³.

¹⁹ AAA, Act. nr. 382/16 aug. 1948.

²⁰ AAA, Act. nr. 382/21 august 1948.

²¹ AAA, Dos. IV – 180 – 944, Act. nr. 876/1948.

²² AAA, Dos. IV-180-944, Act. nr. 3033/ 1948, 21 sept. 1948.

²³ AAA, Act. nr. 3008/8 sept. 1948.

- *October 2, 1948*, Bishop Andrei sends an address to the County Cultural Advisor (Ministry of Information) in Arad, informing that: “*We let you know that our eparchial organ “Biserica” and „Aduasul pentru popor” has as editor Father Caius Turicu - eparchial counsellor, and the staff of this official publication consists of the following priests: T. Ungureanu, T. Herbei and Gheorghe Perva*”. This address calls again for intervention at the Ministry of the Arts and Information for further authorization of the magazine “Biserica” and “Aduasul pentru popor”²⁴.
- *October 12, 1948*, Bishop Andrei informs Patriarch Justinian Marina that on July 9, 1948, the official sheet “Biserica și Școala” has been suspended by the Ministry of Information without any explanation: “*For three months, our Diocese has no means of communicating to the clergy and believers the orders above, the contests, the events etc. We could not communicate anything of the great events that refer to the Church; the Law of Cults; Education reform etc; and today, when the transition of the Greek Catholics to Orthodoxy is happening, we are not able to transmit any guidance*”. Further, he asks Patriarch Justinian to personally intervene at the Ministry of Information in order to lift that interdiction measure; also he informs him of the intention to change the title in “Biserica” (as they were told), as well as the editorial board²⁵. He submitted a similar address to the Central Council of Church in Bucharest. This address also mentions that it was recommended as editor one of the priests: Gheorghe Perva or Ioan Ungureanu²⁶.
- *October 26, 1948*, Address of the Ministry of Arts and Information to Counsellor in Arad: “*We respectfully let you know that the Press Department does **not** grant the authorization for the official organ of the Orthodox Episcopate “Biserica” (editor in charge being Economos Stavrophore Caius Turicu). “Please report to the Orthodox Episcopate of Arad to designate another responsible editor. At the same time, you will give your authorization”*²⁷.
- *November 16, 1948*, Patriarch Justinian Marina also intervened, through the Ministry of Religious Affairs, at the Ministry of the Arts and Infor-

²⁴ AAA, Act. nr. 3245/2.X.1948.

²⁵ AAA, Act. nr. 3381/12 oct. 1948.

²⁶ AAA, Act. nr. 3661/1948/6 noi. 1948.

²⁷ AAA, Act. nr. 731/26 oct. 1948.

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mation, for the issuance of the authorization for the further appearance of the eparchial organ “Biserica”²⁸.

- *December 10, 1948*, The Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Department for Studies, Documentation and Religious Art, again expresses its favourable opinion for the monthly reappearance and the distribution of the eparchial publication under the name “Buletin Diecezan – organ oficial al Episcopiei ortodoxe române din Arad” (the address of the Minister of Cults no. 42.758/948, to ROB Arad, December 10, 1948)²⁹.
- *December 23, 1948*, Patriarch Justinian Marina sends an answer to Bishop Andrei: “*Answering to Your Right Reverend address no. 338/948, with brotherly love we let you know that according to the decision of the Holy Synod from October 18, 1948, by our address no. 1168/948 I intervened at the Ministry of Religious Affairs to approve both the re-publishing of the official weekly magazine of that diocese “Biserica” and of the supplement “Adaosul pentru popor”... Please find attached the copy of the address of the Ministry of Religious Affairs no. 42.758/948, received in response to our intervention no. 1168/948*”³⁰.

This address included the following answer: “*Concerning the address of the Holy Synod no. 1168/948, requesting the approval of the re-appearance of the eparchial journal of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad under the name “Biserica” and of the supplement “Adaosul pentru popor”, we have the honour to inform you that the Ministry of Religious Affairs gives a favourable approval for the monthly re-appearance of the periodical for the entire Orthodox Diocese of Arad under the name of “Buletin Diecezan – organ oficial al Episcopiei ortodoxe române din Arad” without the supplement „Adaosul pentru popor”. At the same time, we inform you that we have also intervened at the Ministry of Arts and Information with the request to approve the re-appearance of the magazine under the name specified above*”.

- *January 22, 1949*, Bishop Andrei submits to the Ministry of Information in Bucharest, an address requesting “*to approve the monthly appearance of the only official publication of the Diocese of Arad under the name of “Buletinul Diecezan – organ oficial al Episcopiei Ortodoxe române din Arad”*”, on the basis of the approval given by the Ministry of Religious

²⁸ AAA, Act. nr. 3626/1948, 16 noi. 1948.

²⁹ AAA, Act. nr. 4125/1948, 10 dec. 1948.

³⁰ AAA, Act. nr. 1359/23 dec. 1948.

- Affairs, communicated by the address no. 42.758/December 10, 1948³¹.
- *January 22, 1949*, Bishop Andrei sends a response to the Holy Synod and the Ministry of Cults where he informs: “*We have received the address of the Holy Synod no. 1358/1948 and of the Ministry of Cults no. 2758/1948, that informs us about the intervention of the Ministry of Information regarding the authorization for the reappearance of “Buletinului Diecezan – organ oficial al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din Arad”.* For two months we have been waiting every day for the arrival of that authorization from the Ministry of Information so that we can transmit to our priesthood the orders and contests that have been piling for months. Please kindly intervene again at the Ministry of Information in favour of the rapid re-appearance of our eparchial organ”³².
 - *February 15, 1949*, Cultural Counsellor of Arad County, to the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad: “*Please note the Order of Ministry of Arts and Information, Press Directorate No. 467/949, which gives the Diocesan Bulletin the authorization to appear, provided that it does not contain official material / decrees, decisions, communiqués, circulars, etc. / to subject the material to censorship and to send 5 copies of each number immediately after appearance to the Press Direction”.* This address contains a note of Bishop Andrew: “*The last issue of “Biserica și Școala” (and “Adausul pentru popor”)* was no. 25-26 from June 27, 1948” and he reminds the suspension of the sheet and of “*Adausul pentru popor*” on July 9, 1948, by the Council of Arad County, from the Ministry of Information³³.
 - *October 10, 1949*, The Council of Ministers, General Directorate of Press and Printing, asks the editorial board of “*Buletinul Eparhial*” of the Arad diocese, the following: “*Since recently your publication has not come to us, please send us your last issue. At the same time, please send us a situation with the circulation and structure of the editorial board. In the future, you are required to send 5 copies (at the address mentioned in the request)*”³⁴.
 - *October 20, 1949*, The Episcopate responds at the requested ones through the address no. 6164/17.10.1949.

³¹ AAA, Act. nr. 9/22 ian. 1949.

³² AAA, Act. nr. 9/4 ian. 1949.

³³ AAA, Act. nr. 919/15 feb. 1949.

³⁴ AAA, Act. nr. 3049/10 oct. 1949.

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- *February 20, 1950*, The General Directorate of Press and Prints, the Inspectorate in Arad, sends an address to the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Arad, “urgently” requesting the application for the authorization to change the authorization of “Buletinul Eparhial” which should specify the following: “*the title and subtitle of the publication; propriety; the date of appearance; editorial / street and number / eventually phone no.; administration; the publishing house; the editor-in-chief; the editorial board; periodicity and day of appearance; circulation and number of pages; the language which it is written in; distribution / subscriptions, storage, etc. as well as quantity. At the same time, we hereby notify you that the requests which do not meet all the data specified above will not be considered*”³⁵.
- *February 20, 1950*, The Episcopate answers as following: “*Please be advised to authorize or change your authorization for “Buletin Eparhial”, the official organ of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Arad. The title of the publication is “Buletinul Eparhial”, and its header: Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Arad. Owner: Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Arad. The first issue occurred in March 1949. Editorial and Administration: Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Arad, phone no. 3618. It is printed at the typography of Eparchial Enterprises “Diecezana” from Arad. Editor-in-chief: Ioan Filipaș, Technical Advisor at the Episcopate of Arad. The editorial board: Dr. Gh. Lițiu, Eparchial Vicar; Coriolan Iacob, Eparchial Referee Counsellor; Cornel Oros, Eparchial Referee Counsellor; Petru Vancu, Eparchial Secretary. It appears once a month, in the second half of the month. Circulation: 1000 (one thousand) copies in 16 pages. The magazine appears in Romanian. It is transmitted through subscriptions to parishes...*”³⁶. The documentary news about the appearance of the diocesan magazine from Arad “Biserica și Școala” stops here.

Some conclusions are self-evident:

1. In the context of the new political regime hostile to the Church, Bishop Andrew Magieru, together with his devoted counsellors and priests, fought with courage and perseverance for 6 years to maintain the most important eparchial publication with first-order implications in the life and history of the diocese.

³⁵ AAA, entry nr. 999/20.II.1950.

³⁶ AAA, Act. nr. 195/ 20 feb. 1950.

2. The figure of Bishop Andrei Magieru clearly stands out in the struggle with the state authorities, and to maintain the old structures of the diocese was a priority for the worthy and fighter hierarch of Arad.

3. The priests and those around the bishop who served at the Eparchial Centre stand up to the stature and call of their bishop, struggling with much courage and sacrifice to preserve the eparchial structures, especially the Eparchial Bulletin.

4. Through their perseverance, even at the level of correspondence, the priests of Arad, headed by the bishop, formed a defence wall against the red scare.

5. Their struggle was a form of resistance against the atheist regime.

I believe that once we know all these data and understand the struggle of Bishop Andrei Magieru of Arad with the new regime established in Romania to maintain the eparchial publication “Biserica și Școala”, the value and importance of the magazine grow exponentially. I have also tried to highlight those clergymen who sacrificed themselves for the protection of citizenship rights and freedom of faith during unfavourable time for the Church, becoming worthy for us to follow them today.