

**Situation of the “Religious Sects” in the Province of Bukovina.
A Study Made by the Regional Inspectorate of the Police Cernăuți
from September 1943
(Abstract)**

Viorel ACHIM

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The years 1940-1944 were in Romania a time of unprecedented persecution against neo-Protestant denominations that previously functioned legally (Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Brethren), and against other religious “sects”. This policy included a whole range of legislative, administrative and police measures, which culminated with the banning of these religious organizations, the closure of their houses of worship and the punishment of all public expression of faith. In the Province of Bukovina the persecution against the religious “sects” had a more comprehensive character and took more violent forms than in other parts of the country, the situation here being matched only by what happened in Bessarabia. The terrible persecution in Bukovina and Bessarabia has been related to the special status the two border provinces had in those years and to the project of the Antonescu government to achieve here a rapid homogenization of the population, not only in terms of ethnicity, but also under the confessional aspect.

In the present article an unknown archival document is published, i.e. a report (a study) of the Regional Inspectorate of the Police Cernăuți, from September 1943. The report, which was written at a moment when the persecution was at its peak, presents the situation of the religious “sects” in the Province of Bukovina (which included not only the proper Bukovina but also the counties of Hotin in Bessarabia and Dorohoi in the Old Kingdom) and lists the measures the authorities have taken against them in the period 1941 – September 1943. The following organizations have been considered here: the “Baptist sect”, “Seventh-day Adventist sect”, “Brethren sect”, “Millennists (Russelists) sect”, “Jehovah’s Witnesses sect”, “Penticostalist sect”, “Lipovenism” and the “old-calendarists”. For every “sect” information is given on its history in the region, organization, number of pastors, number of believers (in some cases nominal lists of members are given), religious publications, activity etc. The measures taken by the authorities against “sects” are noted. The report speaks of arrests made by the police, indictments and convictions that these people have had in the years 1942 and 1943. It also deals with the forced conversions to Orthodoxy of neo-Protestant believers to which they have been subjected under the said policy. It is also shown in detail how the informative work of the inspectorate was organized regarding each “sect”. We have thus a comprehensive array of the religious persecution in the Province of Bukovina, made by the institution that managed this issue.

The study from the first part of the article analyzes the content of the report from September 1943 and makes an overview of the context in which this was elaborated, introducing in the discussion further archival materials with the same content.