

“We are not Marxists, but Christians”. The Founding Documents of the Romanian Christian Committee for the Defence of Religious Freedom and Conscience (1978)
(Abstract)

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Romania experienced a rebirth of religious spirit in 1970's which coincided with rising dissent against the party-state monopoly over this aspect of social life. In Baptist circles, nine believers – Pavel Nicolescu, Traian Bogdan, Emerich Iuhász, Ioan Brisc, Petru Cocârțeu, Ioan Moldovan, Nicolae Rădoi, Ludovic Osvath and Dimitrie Ianculovici – founded in April 1978 an organization affiliated with Christian Solidarity International which they called the Romanian Christian Committee for the Defence of Religious Freedom and Conscience (familiarily known by its Romanian acronym ALRC). The ALRC drew up a number of memoranda which they submitted to Romanian communist authorities as well as the Baptist Union of Romania. By July 1978, the ALRC had expanded to 27 the number of signatories to these documents. The aims of the organization were summarized in six points: „affirmation of the moral and spiritual values of the Christian religion; defense of religious freedom and conscience; protection of and assistance to all those persecuted for their religious beliefs; promotion of interfaith relations between Christians in Romania and those abroad; informing public opinion in Romania and abroad concerning religious persecution in Romania; and analysis of the religious phenomenon in the context of the socialist society”. This study publishes the founding documents and the initial appeals of the ALRC from private collections.