

The Situation of Monastic Houses in Soviet Moldova

Author **ION XENOFONTOV**

Professor, Faculty of History, The Moldova State University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova , ion.xenofontov@gmail.com

Abstract:

In 1944, after the withdrawal of the Romanian authorities from Bessarabia, some members of the monastic community, priests, deacons, cantors, especially those with higher education and high hierarchical positions, took refuge. The number of monasteries was considerably reduced. If in 1945 in the new Soviet republic - the Moldovan SSR - 25 monasteries and hermitages were registered (16 - monks and 9 - nuns), in 1956 - 15, of which 7 - monks and 8 - nuns. The only continuously functioning monastery was that of Japca. The cruel mechanism of liquidation of places of worship was part of the strategy of the Soviet authorities to eradicate all forms of spiritual expression and resistance. These radical actions of the Soviet state had a boomerang effect on religious sentiment. It is therefore no coincidence that the collapse of the Soviet Union was inextricably linked to the widespread religious movement in the present-day Republic of Moldova, followed by the reopening of the places of worship dismantled by the Soviets.

Keywords: Monasteries, Soviet policy, militant atheism, Soviet Moldova.