

From Double to Triple Minority Romanian neo-Protestants from the Serbian Banat in the United States and Canada

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“Although immigrant religious communities can support a form of socio-cultural integration, they are found to have a clear desire to retain, as long as possible, what they feel is their own culture.”

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Introduction

NOWADAYS MOBILITY has become a ubiquitous phenomenon, while the issues of emigration, immigrant integration and the relations of the homeland to the diaspora are crucial for understanding the migration processes. Thus, the questions of identity of people belonging to different diasporic communities are increasingly attracting research in the area of the humanistic sciences. During the last two decades, sociological and anthropological studies have placed at the center of their interests the phenomena related to migration, diaspora, foreign workers, the acculturation of ethnic communities in diaspora and transnationalism. However, the complex issues related to diaspora

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and migrations also need to be studied and analyzed from a historical perspective. It is the historical and socio-political circumstances that were often the cause of migration, especially in the communist countries of Southeast Europe. The diversity of the emigration to North America was especially prominent after the Second World War. The causes of migrations were mostly economic, but also social and political. Although the topic of this paper is a special type of migration—religious migration, it cannot be considered in isolation, but only in the broader context of migrations and of the significance of religion for immigrant communities. In the context of (im)migration, according to anthropologist Wouter Dumont, religion can constitute a basis for extensive network formation and becomes an important marker of identity and a significant instrument for self-categorization.¹ Different forms of immigrant religiosity in new societies have affected the lives of migrants, both historically and in the present. Sociologists Yang Fenggang and Helen Rose Ebang argue that “some immigrant religious communities emphasize their members’ religious identity more than their ethnic core, whereas others stress ethnic identity and use mostly the religious institution as a means to preserve cultural traditions and ethnic boundaries.”² Transcending the strict barriers of belonging to a particular ethnic community, neo-Protestants represent a true example of “worldwide brotherhood” having believers with different ethnic origins. Relying on the aforementioned distinction, our case study in this paper features the Romanian neo-Protestant immigrants in North America who show a complex ethnic and religious identity relation, becoming a triple minority—an ethnic minority twice over and also part of a religious minority.

Most neo-Protestant communities were founded in the late 19th and early 20th century. Emigration within the frame of neo-Protestantism was especially prominent during the First and Second World Wars. After the Second World War, the unfavorable position in which all neo-Protestant communities found themselves in communist Yugoslavia led to significant migration waves to North America and Australia. Some studies show that Romanian emigrants were 95% Orthodox, while the rest were mostly Greek-Catholic and Baptist.³ However, the results of continuous qualitative field research on the religiosity of the Romanians in Serbian Banat, which has been conducted since 2008, indicate that other neo-Protestant communities were also prone to migration (e.g. the Nazarenes, Adventists).⁴ The material collected for the purposes of this paper came as the result of preliminary research on the Romanian neo-Protestant diaspora, based on interviews with pastors from the Serbian Banat and the believers in the United States and Canada, and on the available literature. Starting from the hypothesis that the conversion of the Romanians from the Serbian Banat to neo-Protestantism is closely related to issues of emigration, whether the conversion

happened while living abroad or they were, for religious reasons, forced to leave their homeland, the main focus of this paper are Romanian neo-Protestants, originating from the Serbian Banat, as a triple minority in North America.

The paper is divided into two thematic areas. In the first part, we present a brief historical outline of the Romanians in the Banat region. The second part is devoted to the issues of emigration to overseas countries—the United States and Canada and to the integration of Romanians abroad. The issue of emigration of the Romanians to North America has occupied, so far, a number of researchers who have been trying to explain the reasons for emigration in recent history.⁵ At the beginning of the 20th century, after the Romanians from the Serbian Banat joined and formed a large number of local neo-Protestant communities, they found themselves in the position of a double minority—ethnic and religious.⁶ As the position of the neo-Protestant communities in different social and political circumstances was unfavorable, some religious groups (such as the Nazarenes), began to emigrate very early on, not only for economic reasons, but mainly in search of religious freedom. By going to the New World, now as a triple minority, the Romanians joined the already existing neo-Protestant community or they established new communities, which would greatly affect their integration into the new environment.

The Romanians in the Serbian Banat

AFTER THE end of the First World War and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, when Banat was divided between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the Kingdom of Romania and the Kingdom of Hungary, due to the fact that on the entire territory of Banat the population was mixed, it was inevitable that on both sides of the state borders there were people who found themselves in the position of an ethnic minority on the territory of the state whose component they had become. Thus, in the western parts of Banat, which now belonged to the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, there were about 40 villages with a Romanian population, living either in ethnically compact, homogeneous villages, or mixed with the Serbs and other ethnic groups. After the completion of the demarcation of Banat, the position of the Romanians became much clearer than it had been in the first years after the war, when there had been some problems in terms of recognition of their civil rights in the Yugoslav state.⁷

After the Second World War, the position of the Romanians in the Yugoslavian Banat, which by the constitution of 1946 became part of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, changed. The cultural, educational and, in general, iden-

tity-related component concerning the Romanians, as well as other minorities, were orchestrated by the state government. Both in the interwar period and after World War II, in socialist Yugoslavia and currently in the modern Serbian state, the Romanian minority in the Serbian Banat has been trying to preserve its national identity, culture and language as well as the relationship with the mother country. In terms of the religious identity of the Romanians in the Serbian Banat, during the twentieth and early twenty-first century significant changes are notable, as will be discussed in the remainder of this paper.

An Overview of the Confessional Situation of the Romanians in the Serbian Banat

THROUGHOUT RECENT history, the religious identity of the Romanians in the Serbian Banat has undergone various changes. In the multi-ethnic and multi-religious area of Banat, the Romanians became members of different neo-Protestant communities, which largely contributed to the enrichment of the confessional life within this ethnic community. Members of the Romanian ethnic minority to a large degree belong to the Romanian Orthodox Church, which is the dominant confession, then to the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church and to various neo-Protestant communities—the Nazarene, the Adventist, the Baptist, or the Pentecostal community. The official statistical data from the census show that the number of Romanian Orthodox Christians has been gradually decreasing, as can be seen from the decreasing percentages. In 1953, out of 57,236 Romanians in Vojvodina, 87.9% were Orthodox Christians, in 1991 from the total of 42,316 Romanians, 82.4% were Orthodox, while in the year 2002 out of 34,576 Romanians 81.9% remained Orthodox. On the other hand, the number of neo-Protestants increased from 0.7% in 1953 to 2.6% in 1991 but then decreased to 2.1% in 2002.⁸ However, despite the declining trend, the number of Orthodox Romanians remains dominant in relation to the other confessions.

Conversion to neo-Protestantism has been more prominent within the Protestant population, Germans and Hungarians, but, over time, the majority Orthodox ethnic groups, such as the Serbs and the Romanians, joined the neo-Protestants. As the oldest neo-Protestants, the Nazarenes in the Serbian Banat villages were mentioned in the second half of the 19th century. Because of their pacifist beliefs and refusal to take an oath, during the First and Second World Wars, a large number of Nazarenes was sentenced to prison, while a number of believers emigrated to the United States, Canada and Australia. Although after the Second World War, freedom of religion was guaranteed and the government did not re-

quire the Nazarenes to take an oath, conflicts arose when the Nazarenes refused to participate in voting, also opposing the collectivization of property. For these reasons, in the 1950s, the Nazarenes were condemned to serve prison sentences.⁹ The disadvantageous position of the Nazarenes, from the moment they appeared on this territory, as well as during the period of communism, led to a large wave of emigration of believers, especially after 1960. The emigration peaked between 1965 and 1973 when the “open borders policy” allowed people to travel freely and legally go to work abroad.¹⁰ Thus, the once numerous Nazarene communities became nearly extinguished in the Serbian Banat.

The expansion of Adventism among the Romanians began in the early 20th century, when missionaries from Transylvania came to Banat. The biggest rise of Adventism was recorded between 1910 and 1920. The first Seventh-day Adventist community was established in Banatsko Novo Selo in 1910, having 13 believers, and their number was on the rise starting with the following year. Adventists in Romanian villages gathered in homes and baptisms were performed in nearby rivers or lakes. During World War II, the Adventists became officially banned, their churches were closed, and their publications prohibited.¹¹ Conflicts of the state with the Adventists, according to historian Radmila Radić, were related to their demands that their children should not be obliged to attend school on Saturdays, and the workers released from their work-related duties. The Adventists whose children did not attend school were fined and imprisoned.¹² Then there was a wave of emigration to Western Europe and North America. A more organized form of missionary work began in the fifties, by evangelizing and establishing Saturday schools in which work with children was especially cherished.

Ever since the establishment of the first community, the conversion to neo-Protestantism was associated with the mobility of missionaries and preachers. In accordance with this, German Baptist missionaries also established their first communities among the Romanians in the early 20th century. Most Romanian Baptist churches on this territory were established after World War II. For the establishment of a local Baptist church, the existence of twelve baptized believers was necessary. In some villages new churches were founded by the people returning from the United States who had converted to Baptism there. By the decision made in 1930, it was possible to cross the border between Yugoslavia and Romania with special passes, which had consequences on the contacts with Baptist communities in Romania. The communities in the Serbian Banat received the necessary literature and Bibles in the Romanian language.

The first Romanian Pentecostal community was founded by a former Nazarene believer, Ilija Brenka, in 1932 in Uzdin. Brenka held his first gatherings in his house, but he soon came into contact with believers in Romania.¹³ The

community in the village of Uzdin had about sixty believers, who in 1933 began their missionary work in the surrounding Romanian villages. A more numerous community was established in Vladimirovac, where there had already existed a Nazarene and a Baptist community. In 1933 among the Nazarenes in the village of Margita there was an expansion of Pentecostal teachings and a new community was established. The prayer house was purchased as late as 1955, thanks to the help of the believers who came back from America, after which more than fifty people were baptized. The early post-war years mark the rise of Pentecostalism among the Romanians. Although small in number, the Romanian Pentecostal communities in the Serbian Banat had frequent contacts with the communities in Romania.

Emigration to the West

THE FIRST mass departures of the Romanian population originating from the area of the Serbian Banat to the United States can be found at the turn of the 20th century. The process of emigration has continued almost without interruption until the present day, caused by a variety of factors. The course of emigration itself took place in several stages, which are defined according to the socio-economic and political conditions that prevailed during the twentieth century:

1. the period from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the First World War;
2. the interwar period;
3. the first period of communism in Yugoslavia (1945–1965);
4. the period from 1965 to 1975;
5. the economic prosperity of Yugoslavia;
6. the breakup of Yugoslavia and the economic crisis (from 1991 to the present day).¹⁴

In the first phase, the Romanians from Banat left en masse to the United States in search of work, largely independently, and in rare cases entire families went to the New World. This, of course, applies not only to the Romanian population from Banat, but also to the population on the whole territory of Austria-Hungary, as well as the greater part of Europe, as they witnessed the economic growth of the United States. After a break of several years during the Great War, the process continued in the interwar period, but this time, in addition to the US, Canada, partly Argentina and Brazil, and even Australia became attractive as well. The largest number of emigrants leaving for Canada at the end of the twenties and during the years of the Great Economic Depression

went through difficult times, desperately looking for a job in a situation where a large number of workers were unemployed worldwide. The Romanian language press that was active in the Serbian Banat asked the fellow Romanians not to go overseas, especially not to Argentina,¹⁵ and also pointed out the problems emigrants encountered in Canada.¹⁶

Once again, the main reason for leaving the Banat village was the economic factor, because mostly poor peasants emigrated. As a non-Slavic people, the Romanians were exempt from the agrarian reform, which was conducted at the beginning of the 1920s in the Kingdom of Serbs, but there were also members of the middle peasant strata in search of a better life. More massive emigrations than before the Great War began to significantly affect the demographic situation of the Romanians in the Yugoslav Banat. After the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, due to the fact that the peasantry were first in line to be attacked by the new regime, a large number of Romanians sought to leave the country and move to the US or Canada, or to some other Western country. The illegal crossing of the Yugoslav-Italian border was one of the ways to reach the desired goal. In the mid-1960s, the Yugoslav communist regime, realizing the economic situation and the problem of the lack of jobs in the country, decided to allow all citizens to travel freely around the world and go looking for jobs in countries that were in need of manpower. It was then that the largest wave of emigration of citizens of the former Yugoslavia to the West started, and among them there was a large number of Romanians from Banat. The Romanians mostly immigrated to the countries of North America, which provided them with job opportunities and a better standard of living. Finally, the last phase of emigration to the West began in 1991 with the outbreak of the war in Yugoslavia and its collapse, and following the consequences these events had on the security and economic situation of the citizens. Numerous emigrants flocked to western countries during the 1990s, due to the difficult political and economic situation of the country.

The population belonging to a national minority, first on the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then on the territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and later in socialist Yugoslavia, who went to the US and Canada, as well as to other Western countries, has built over the decades a separate identity, specific in many ways. This “multiple” identity of Romanian immigrants in different countries, regions and cities where they settled was different, and it had the clearest outlines where the population was most numerous and where to some extent they resided in communities which were more or less compact. We must mention here mainly New York City, Chicago and Detroit in the US and, for Canada, Hamilton and Kitchener, as the cities where the Romanian immigrants originating from the Serbian Banat are mostly concentrated.

In the places where they are present in greater numbers, they established various national, cultural and sports associations. The most significant is Banatul in New York, which initially included Romanians and Serbs from the Serbian Banat. In Canada, the most famous association is Banatul in Kitchener, and the Association of Romanians from Vladimirovac founded in 1954.¹⁷ We must not neglect the importance of the Romanian language for immigrants, which is very specific for more than one reason—it is a dialect of Romanian spoken in Banat with many borrowings from the Serbian language, brought by the immigrants from the homeland, but also containing borrowings from the English language. Different linguistic calques are especially expressed in the spoken language of the younger generation, where the language shift is also present.

Religious Communities and the Identity of the Romanian Immigrants in the United States and Canada

WHETHER THEY left as members of neo-Protestant communities or they joined one of them in North America, the Romanians from the Serbian Banat had a significant role in the establishment of the first Romanian congregations. The most numerous emigrants, of course, were the Orthodox, who in the early 20th century united into parishes, relying on the Protestant model. The Orthodox religion was an important element in the collective identity of the Romanian diaspora overseas, and therefore a large number of Orthodox parishes have been established.¹⁸

When it comes to neo-Protestants, mostly Romanian Nazarenes and Seventh-day Adventists emigrated. We can assume that the reason for an increased emigration among the members of the two communities, in addition to economic factors, was their religious principles, which had been challenged by the state. Many, in search of a “free” society, fled from the severe religious and political persecution. Because of their manifest conscientious objection, the Nazarenes were a community most exposed to persecution. In order to avoid military service, many Nazarenes tried to cross the border illegally. For refusing to work on Saturdays and to send their children to school on Saturdays, the Adventists were also sentenced to prison.

Back in the late 19th and early 20th century, Nazarenes from Germany and Switzerland established communities in the United States and Canada, so the emigrants from the German-speaking countries were the main protagonists in establishing relations with their brothers in faith in overseas countries.¹⁹ Soon, the Serbian, Romanian, Hungarian and Slovak Nazarenes would follow the German Nazarenes in search of religious freedom. There they joined the Apostolic

Christian Church, which is the official name of the Nazarene community in the United States and Canada. With the arrival of an increasing number of Nazarene emigrants from Europe, the Apostolic Christian Church split into the Apostolic Christian Church of America, the Apostolic Christian Church and the German Apostolic Christian Church. The division of the community was due to some specific religious practices of the European Nazarenes (separate seating for men and women, a certain manner of dressing, etc.), as well as the use of the German language, which, according to historian Bojan Aleksov, was the official language of the Nazarene congregations in America and Canada until the mid-20th century.²⁰ As the more conservative branch of the Nazarene, the Apostolic Christian Church received the emigrants from Eastern Europe. In general, the Nazarenes remained closer to their ethnic group and worshiped in their own language after emigration. Where possible, the Nazarenes in the United States and Canada formed communities alongside members of their own ethnic minorities (Germans, Romanians, Serbs). In the cities where there were not enough members, the community would be composed of believers of mixed ethnic origins. Such is the case with certain communities in Australia, in Adelaide, where the community consists of Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian and German Nazarenes. It is interesting to compare the communities in North America and Australia. Many communities in Australia were founded by emigrants from Yugoslavia after the 1960s. Although Nazarene communities exist in major cities such as Perth, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, the number of Nazarenes has been stagnating and is between 400 and 500 worshippers. Unlike the communities in North America, in Australia the Nazarenes remained more attached to the “model” of the conservative European communities. They stayed closer to their Serbian, Hungarian and Romanian roots. From a global perspective, the Apostolic Christian Church became less conservative considering that it operated in environments different from those in Yugoslavia or Romania. However, in both the US and Canada there are communities that are considered conservative by the Nazarene diaspora. A few years ago, the Nazarenes in the US divided into the “Western Conference” (liberal) and the “Eastern Conference” (moderates and conservatives).²¹ In an environment of considerable religious diversity, as well as because of the presence of less conservative communities, the members of the Apostolic Christian Church in the United States and Canada do not have much success in recruiting new members, the reason being their non-proselytizing practice. The more liberal Apostolic Christian churches promote their religious teachings to people outside the community, and some of them have also carried out missionary work. The Romanian Nazarene communities, as a triple minority, remain committed to the ethnic model of congregational organization, practicing worship in Romanian and English. Many churches in North America were influenced the German Nazarenes from Yugoslavia that immigrated to Canada in

the 1950s and 1960s; they are more pragmatic, flexible and moderate than the Romanian Nazarenes. Globally, the beliefs and practices of the various branches of the Nazarenes are no longer homogenous. They now encompass conservative, moderate, and liberal theologies and practices with respect to their original teachings. Larger Romanian Nazarene communities in the United States are located in Ohio, New York City, Detroit, and Los Angeles. The Nazarene diaspora is relatively well integrated into the new society, although they strive to maintain their mother tongue in their communities.

Emigration within the Adventist community is also linked to the period between 1950 and 1960. Adventist believers, often looking for jobs that do not involve work on Saturdays, went to Western Europe, primarily to Germany, but also to North America. Romanian Adventist emigrants from the Serbian Banat were not organized into separate churches in the United States and Canada, but went to the Canadian (American) churches, where sometimes there are sermons in the Serbian language and, where there are not, they listen to sermons in English.

The Romanians within the Baptist communities of the Serbian Banat began the migration by going to Australia in 1959. Before World War II there were no Romanian Baptist emigrants to the West, because the movement was only founded in 1930 and there was no opportunity until the war for a significant number of Baptists to emigrate to the West. Thus, emigration within the Baptist communities began only in the sixties. In 1962–63 Baptists began to immigrate in large numbers to America, first to be housed in camps in Italy, after which they continued on. According to our informants, there were almost no Romanian Baptist churches in North America at that time, not until the Romanians from the Serbian Banat left. In 1922 in Canada, only two Romanian Baptist Churches were recorded, alongside one Adventist and seven Romanian Orthodox churches.²² With the help of the American Baptists, the Romanians founded smaller communities and built prayer houses. In the eighties, Romanians from Romania began arriving, and especially after the Romanian Revolution of 1989, so today in these churches 95 to 98% of the Romanians are from Romania. The number of churches increased, while the number of Romanians originated from the Serbian Banat remained the same. They are integrated into the community of Romanian Baptist Churches in the us and Canada, worship taking place in the Romanian language. The Romanians from the Serbian Banat make up a small part of the Romanian Baptist communities in the United States and Canada. For example, in Kitchener, Canada, there are about 300 Romanian Baptist families and among them only 4 to 5 families are from the Serbian Banat. The situation is similar in Hamilton, Detroit, and New York City.

Similar to other neo-Protestant communities, the Romanian Pentecostals emigrated in the 1960s.²³ After having gone to America, many believers helped the communities in the Serbian Banat to build prayer houses or buy church

buildings. An interesting fact, stated by Pentecostal pastor Marinike Mozor, is that the first songbook in the Romanian language was printed in New York in 1972 by two Romanian believers who sent it to the Serbian Banat.

Conclusion

THE MAJORITY of historians consider that the Romanian emigration to America was essentially an economic phenomenon.²⁴ In this paper we have tried to show other aspects of the Romanian emigration, from the perspective of the religious migration of the Romanian neo-Protestants. The conversion of the Romanians to neo-Protestantism in the Serbian Banat is closely related to the issues of migration, since the conversions often took place abroad or through the mediation of pastors from abroad.²⁵ Having gone abroad, the Romanians remained committed to the religious communities to which they belonged, which was an important basis for a better integration in the new society, but it also showed an expression of unity. After the arrival in a new environment, they often received assistance from the existing neo-Protestant communities to raise their churches or to join existing ones. In the secular society of the United States and Canada, in a variety of different religious communities of Protestant origin, despite having a triple minority status, the Romanian neo-Protestants were free to exercise their religious practices with no restraints within the new communities. However, what is paradoxical, in addition to the commitment to supra-nationalism and the openness to the inclusion of different ethnic groups, the Romanian neo-Protestants in the diaspora remain quite isolated within their ethnic congregations. We can assume that the tendency toward organizing a community based on ethnicity represented a way of preserving their mother tongue and culture in a dislocated multi-ethnic and multi-religious space. As Dumont argues, “although immigrant religious communities can support a form of socio-cultural integration, they are found to have a clear desire to retain, as long as possible, what they feel is their own culture.”²⁶ The conservatism of certain communities, as is the case with the Nazarenes, in some way contributes to the slowing down of the process of assimilation and acculturation. Therefore, we can conclude that the processes of assimilation and integration of communities in the diaspora are closely related to issues of identity of certain groups, whether ethnic or religious.



Notes

1. Wouter Dumont, "Immigrant religiosity in a pluri-ethnic and pluri-religious metropolis: an initial impetus for typology," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 18, 3 (2003): 369–384.
2. Yang Fenggang and Helen Rose Ebang, "Religion and Ethnicity among new immigrants: the impact of majority/minority status in home and host countries," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, 3 (2001): 367–378.
3. Gabriel Viorel Gârdan and Marius Eppel, "The Romanian emigration to the United States until the First World War: Revisiting opportunities and vulnerabilities," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 11, 32 (2012): 263.
4. The research is being conducted within the project of the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA (Belgrade, Serbia).
5. See Stelian Popescu, "Emigrația română în America de Nord," *Acta Musei Apulensis—Apulum* (Alba-Iulia) 15 (1977): 479–496; Dumitru Vătcu and Gabriel Bădărău, "Political implications of the Romanian emigration to America up to 1918," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* (Bucharest) 3, 4 (1992): 255–273.
6. Aleksandra Đurić-Milovanović, "'How long have you been in the truth?' Expressing new forms of religiosity: Romanian neo-Protestants in Serbia," *Ethnologia Balkanica* (Berlin) 16 (2013): 167–177.
7. Andrej Mitrović, *Razgraničenje Jugoslavije sa Mađarskom i Rumunijom 1919–1920* (Novi Sad, 1975).
8. Aleksandra Đurić-Milovanović, Mirča Maran, and Biljana Sikimić, *Rumunske verske zajednice u Banatu: Prilog proučavanju multikonfesionalnosti Vojvodine* (Vršac, 2011), 17.
9. On the island of Goli Otok there was the most notorious prison in communist Yugoslavia, where mostly political prisoners were sent. Testimonies of the Nazarene believers on Goli Otok, who later emigrated to the United States, were published in the study: Kathleen Nenadov, *Choosing to suffer affliction: the untold story of Nazarene persecution in Yugoslavia* (San Diego, 2006).
10. Dragana Antonijević, Ana Banić-Grubišić, and Marija Krstić, "Gastarbajetri—iz svog ugla: Kazivanja o životu i socioekonomskom statusu gastarbajtera," *Etnoantropološki problemi* (Belgrade) 4, 6 (2011): 983–1011.
11. Branko Bjelajac, *Protestantizam u Srbiji*, vol. 2 (Belgrade, 2010), 130.
12. Radmila Radić, *Država i verske zajednice* (Belgrade, 2002), 626.
13. Bjelajac, 2: 165.
14. Mircea Măran, "Românii din Banatul sârbesc în Occident," *Europa* (Novi Sad) 4 (2009): 11.
15. *Graiu românesc* (Pančevo), 19, 1 (1923); 20, 8 (1924): 1–2.
16. *Ibid.*, 20, 16 (1924): 3; 20, 38 (1924): 3.
17. Societatea Românilor din Petrovasila. <http://www.petroviceni.org/>
18. The history and role of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the United States and Canada, where there are the highest number of immigrants originating from the Serbian Banat, is beyond the scope of this paper. Gabriel Viorel Gârdan and Marius

Eppel argue that “the Orthodox Romanians from Canada have been pioneers of the church life. In 1901, they built the first Romanian Orthodox church in North America. The first Romanian Orthodox parish in the USA was founded in 1904, in Cleveland, Ohio.”

19. Bojan Aleksov, *Nazareni među Srbima: Věrska trvenja u južnoj Ugarskoj i Srbiji od 1850. do 1914* (Belgrade, 2010), 289.
20. *Ibid.*, 290.
21. E-mail correspondence from Peter Szabo, 24 January 2013. We would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Peter Szabo, who gave us very detailed and precious data on the Nazarenes in North America and Australia and the inspiration to start this research. We also owe our gratitude to the Baptist pastor Đorđe Barbu and the Adventist pastor Petru Trifu from Vladimirovac, for very useful information and suggestions, as well as to all of our informants.
22. Popescu, 487.
23. Marinike Mozor, *Istorija pentekostalnih crkava među pripadnicima rumunske nacionalnosti u Banatu* (Novi Sad, 1998), 13.
24. Gârdan and Eppel, 206.
25. Biljana Sikimić, “Românii din Banatul sârbesc între est și vest,” *Anuar* (Zrenjanin) 2013: 144.
26. Dumont, 375.

Abstract

From Double to Triple Minority: Romanian neo-Protestants from the Serbian Banat in the United States and Canada

The paper is devoted to issues of emigration to overseas countries such as the United States and Canada, and of the integration of Romanian neo-Protestants from the Serbian Banat into the Diaspora. Since the position of neo-Protestant communities in different social and political circumstances was unfavorable, neo-Protestant believers began to emigrate, not only for economic reasons, but mainly in search of religious freedom. The emigration of Romanian neo-Protestants was particularly intense from the mid-sixties onwards, when the Yugoslav communist regime allowed its citizens to travel abroad. By going to the New World, the Romanians from the Serbian Banat joined existing neo-Protestant communities or established new communities, which would significantly affect their integration into the new environment, but also the creation of a separate and in many ways specific identity of a triple minority.

Keywords

emigrants, Romanian neo-Protestants, triple minority, identity, the Serbian Banat, the United States, Canada