THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN INCITING RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE BALKANS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA[1]

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Abstract: Even though religious organizations do not fall into political institutions, yet throughout history, religion has quite frequently served as a cover behind which certain political interests have been concealed. The increased connection among religion, religious communities and politics has been especially typical of the regions of former Yugoslavia after the fall of socialism, when religion and the culture it affects became the main feature of the collective and the personal identity. In this context, on the territory of the Balkans, religiously oriented political parties began to emerge, and they evidently fall into two types. This paper will attempt to answer the following questions: To what extent do the statements and activities of the political parties and the religious leaders contain elements of religious ideology? In what way does this practice affect the stimulation of religious fundamentalism, i.e. the rejection of all forms of contemporaneity and secularism; and ultimately, to what extent does this practice affect the adherents of Christianity and Islam in regard to their attitude (tolerance / intolerance) towards members of other religious groups and their worldviews.

Keywords: Political parties, religious leaders, religious tolerance, religious intolerance, religious fundamentalism

The relationship between religion and politics

Even though religious organizations are not considered to be political institutions, still, throughout history, religion has often served as a cover behind which certain political interests have been concealed. The connection between the sacred and the secular in the Christian religion has existed since 313 (with the Edict of Milan) when the church and the state entered into an "illicit" relationship lasting to this day. In the past, these harmonious relations between the Christian

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Church and the state have enabled the realization of a mutual interest: the socio-political organization received moral justification, and the religious organization – protection and safety from internal and external dangers. The situation is similar with the Islamic religious tradition, where there is a strong connection between the secular and the spiritual, and the religious community is still a significant force in the social and political life. This connection between politics and religion can cause serious problems in society as a result of politicized religion, which leads to confessional homogeneity, and ideologized religion, leading to fanaticism, which, in turn, could result in terrorism towards religious opponents.

In modern societies, the idea of the process of secularization has been increasingly imposed, as a model which features clear separation of the secular from the spiritual. In such a secular society, religion is politically powerless because it is limited only to the private sphere. This model tends to deconfessionalize politics, which means not to use religion and religious communities for any political purposes. Problems and conflicts can arise in a certain society only if the government attempts to misuse religion and religious communities for their own personal interests, and vice versa, if the religious organizations attempt to misuse the government in order to meet their own objectives. In modern multicultural and multi-religious societies, such alliance among religion, religious communities and politics could lead to an increase of interethnic and interreligious tensions and creating opportunities for open clashes and conflicts among adherents of the different ethnic and religious groups.

The contemporary globalization trends lead to a situation of an increased interaction among various religious and ethnic groups. Unlike before, when nations, cultures, states, and civilizations were more or less isolated from one another, in the present, they increasingly and inevitably influence one another. This kind of intensive interaction could lead to two opposing effects. On the one hand, there is a greater danger of clashes among the different ethnic and confessional groups which are currently part of the same society because it might result in misunderstanding and hostility. On the other hand, all closer contacts among the different cultures and religions could bring about a reduction of the differences among them, thus reduce the danger of clashes as well. The increased interconnectedness among religion, religious communities and politics has been especially typical of the regions of former Yugoslavia after the collapse of socialism, when the religion and the respective culture became the main feature of the identity of individuals and groups. After the fall of communism, an identity crisis has arisen among the members of former Yugoslav societies. The members of the different ethnic groups simply felt the need for an identity which would distinguish them from the others. During the transitional period, the members have largely found the need to belong to a certain group and to identify themselves with that group in terms of religion.

According to Ivan Cvitković, ethnic conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia have culminated mostly among Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks. Within

each of these three nations, the religions and confessions have (sometimes more, sometimes less) been a factor of social integration. Under these circumstances, the national communities have also been implementing the religious values within their own value systems. Thus, they have paved the way for sacralization of the nation, and religion and confession have emphasized their integrative function and role among the members of the same national community, but also their disintegrative function in relation to members of other national communities. The disintegration has been especially apparent when hostility among religions and confessions has emerged. In circumstances when religious and national identity overlap (Croats belong to Roman Catholicism, Serbs to Orthodox Christianity, and Bosniaks are adherents of Islam), religion represents a significant force which influences interethnic conflicts as well.[4] In such circumstances, religion plays a role of some kind of national ideology, and in this regard, the dominant position is the one about the unity of the confessional and the national, as well as the one which argues that the strengthening of religion and confession also strengthens the nation.

Religious organization and political parties in the Western Balkans

After the collapse of communism and the introduction of pluralism in the political sphere, religiously oriented parties have begun to emerge in the Western Balkans. In this regard, two types of religiously oriented parties could be identified. The first group includes parties whose name shows a connection to a certain religion, whereas the second, the parties which, with their programs and activities on the field, show that the realization of religious objectives is an especially important part of their ideology and practice. The Bosnian political community is the most explicit example of the influence of religion on politics. On the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina simultaneously exist three religious and ethnic groups: Croats, who adhere to Roman Catholicism, Serbs, who adhere to Orthodox Christianity, and the Bosnians, who adhere to Islam. It is an interesting fact that during communism, the Bosnians, i.e. the ethnic group which accepted Islam during the domination of the Ottoman Empire in this region, were called Muslims as a separate nation within former Yugoslavia. This product of the communist authorities (Muslim nation) has absorbed all adherents of Islam, regardless of whether they were true believers or merely members of that culture. The most typical example of a party in which an especially important part is the realization of religious objectives is the party of Muslims, SDA (Party for Democratic Action), established in Bosnia. Its founder and first president was Alija Izetbegovic. Under his influence and the engagement of his supporters in Bosnia, the idea was born of establishing one party which would be called "Yugoslav Muslim Party"; however, this initiative collided with the then-ruling political view in Bosnia and Herzegovina that the establishment of political parties which indicate religion is unacceptable, hence the election of a new name

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[4]Ivan Cvitković, Sociologija religije, DES, Sarajevo, 2004 p. 207

of this political party "Party for Democratic Action", abbreviated – SDA, which enabled its registration. However, it is immediately evident from its program declaration that it is indeed a religious party. In this respect, Article 1 reads: "The Party for Democratic Action is a political union of the citizens of Yugoslavia who belong to the Muslim cultural-historical circle, as well as all other citizens of Yugoslavia who accept the program and the objectives of the party". The party was founded in 1990 and the cited Article 1 clearly shows its pan-Islamic orientation, i.e. the unification of all Muslims of all Yugoslav republics (Albanians, Turks, Roma), and not only Bosnian Muslims.[5]

Alija Izetbegovic is considered the founder of the pan-Islamism in former Yugoslavia. He published these ideas of his in his work "Islamic Declaration", printed in 1970 and reprinted in 1990. The main idea in this work is reduced to the notion that modern societies have occurred in Western Europe based on Christian religion and culture, hence they are not suitable for the adherents of Islam. It is especially emphasized in "Islamic Declaration" that: "There is no peace and coexistence between Islam and non-Islamic societies and political institutions", and the author particularly advocates not only the revitalization of Islamic principles, but also a legal and political rule based on the Sharia legal system.[6] One could argue that between 1990 and 2000 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was a period of radical political mobilization of the religious communities, religious beliefs and symbols for political purposes. The most significant religious institutions rendered legitimacy to the policies which followed almost the same ideal: one nation, one religion, one state. In this country, religious affiliation essentially means having a number of other indicators. In post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, if you know one's religious affiliation, then you know their nationality too (Bosnian, Serb, Croat), what daily newspapers they read, what neighborhood they live or would like to live in, and what political party they would vote for (SDA, HDZ, SDS). The Serbs, Croats and Bosnians in Bosnia and Herzegovina use their religion and confession for self-identification.

The second significant ethnic group in former Yugoslavia in which Islam is the dominant religion is the Albanians who populate Kosovo and Metohija. Among the political parties operating in Kosovo, there is one small political party called "Party of Justice". It is defined as a party which has religious conservatism as a foundation and fights for the interests of Muslims. This party strongly supports the action to build a central Pristina mosque which would be able to gather as many Muslims practicing their faith as possible; they also advocate the introduction of religious teaching in public schools and providing the possibility for the girls to wear headscarves at school, as well as introduction of religious

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[5] For more details see: Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proučavanje religije I versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2012

[6] Alija Izetbegović, Islamska deklaracija, Jedan program islamizacije muslimana I muslimanskih naroda, Sarajevo, 1990

education in schools.[7] Albanians in the Republic Macedonia are adherents of Islam; however, no significant political party of the Albanians in Macedonia has some religious association in its name. The reasons for this is that even at the beginning, the existing political parties (in Macedonia and Kosovo) have interweaved their activities related to Islam with the idea of Albanian nationalism. Hence, any reference to Albanian nationalism is a reference to Islam. In R. Macedonia, the most powerful Albanian political parties are "Democratic Union for Integration" and "Democratic Party of Albanians". Likewise, among the powerful political parties which gather the Orthodox Christians, there is no political party with an indicator of religion. It is known that there used to be an active "Demo-Christian Party" in Macedonia; however, since it has failed to collect a more significant number of adherents, it has seized to exist in the political life of R. Macedonia.[8] The connection between religion and politics can be clearly seen in the doctrine of the ruling Macedonian political party VMRO-DPMNE which includes a whole chapter dedicated to faith, stating that: "As a conservative party, VMRO-DPMNE considers the Church a significant support of the state".[9] In Article 7 of the party's Statute, it is emphasized that "VMRO-DPMNE is a people's party with demo-Christian orientation, based on the Christian understanding of man and provides ethical foundation for responsible politics".[10]

According to the census of political parties in Montenegro, it could be concluded that there is no political party which has religious elements in its name. The largest percentage of people in this country are members of Orthodox Christianity, and the difference among them is whether they declare themselves Serbs and belong to the Serbian Orthodox Church or declare themselves Montenegrins and are members of the still unrecognized Montenegrin church. Therefore, in the programs of the most influential political parties there is information referring to this issue. The ruling "Democratic Party of Socialists" is a party in which Montenegrins are members in very large numbers, and the opposition party "Socialist People's Party," primarily gathers the Serbs in Montenegro.[11]

There are no strong political parties in Serbia which would primarily fight for religious purposes. There have surely been attempts to form such parties, but they have quickly ceased to operate because they could not gather a sufficient number of members. One of these parties has been "the Serbian Saint Sava Party," established in 1990, in whose program guidelines it was stated that

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[7] Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proućavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2012, p.120

[8] For more details see: Dushka Matevska, The Relationship Between the Political and Religious Elite in Contemporary Macedonian Society, *Politikologija religije, no. 1/2011, Year 5*

[9] www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk doctrine

[10] www.vmro-dpmne.org.mk statute

[11] Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proućavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2012, p.123

the purpose of the party was "aimed at spiritual (religious, moral, and cultural) restoration of the Serbian people. The best results in the tendency for establishing political parties on religious grounds have been achieved by "the Christian Democratic Party of Serbia". Here it has to be pointed out that "the Christian Democratic Party of Serbia" is not a classic religious party, but it is a typical party of Christian Democrats, well known in the European political life.[12] Since the beginning of the multiparty system in Croatia, it has been evident that the connection of Croatia's population with religion could not but be reflected in the political organization. In that period, a number of parties were established whose program and ideology were based on faith. "The Croatian Christian Democratic Party," "the Croatian Christian Democratic Union" and "the Christian Democratic Union" are the parties registered in Croatia which have dominating religious concepts in their names.[13] One of the most influential parties in the Croatian political life, "Croatian Democratic Union" (HDZ), over time, has increasingly emphasized its Christian orientation, and this tendency has been declared in the party program in which there is an entire chapter entitled "State of Social Justice and Christian Values". "Slovenian People's Party" and "New Slovenia-Christian People's Party" are political parties the ideology of which is based on Christian democracy, and have their seat in the Parliament of Slovenia. The program of "Slovenian People's Party" reads: "Our policies are based on responsibility and the Christian democratic values" and: "Slovenian People's Party respects the fundamental principles of Christian culture".

"New Slovenia-Christian People's Party" represents the strong Christian conservative position: "It stands for traditional social values and represents the position of the Catholic Church in relation to moral issues".[14]

Unlike the more liberal position towards religion during communism in former Yugoslav republics, in Albania, Enver Hoxha's rigid anti-religious position left a deep impact on this country's religion. Albania is an interesting example of the domination of national identity over religious identity, enabling perfect communication and understanding among the three religions existing in the region. In Albania, the Muslim community is dominant by number, followed by the Orthodox Christian community, and the least number of people adhere to the Catholic religious community. Only one smaller political party shows a connection with a certain religion in its name, and that is the Demo-Christian Party of Albania; however, this party stands for universal values, thus the religious objectives are not included in their ideology, or in practice.[15] In Greece, more than 95% of the population are adherents of the Greek Orthodox Church, and of the numerous parties which exist in the region only the Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) includes religious elements in its name and ideology. According to

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[12] ibid, p.123

[13] On the ideology of these parties whose programs include the social and moral values of the Catholic Church, see more extensively in: Jevtić Miroljub, cited work

[14] ibid, p. 130-131

[15] www.pdk.al

this party, the Greek society would function better if it relied on the universal moral values of Hellenism, Humanism, and Christianity. It is particularly known for its position that Turkey does not belong to Europe either geographically, or culturally, and it opposes its membership in the European Union.[16]

In Bulgaria, with the fall of communism, pluralism has also emerged in the political sphere. Even though Article 11, Paragraph 4 of the Constitution of R. Bulgaria of 1991 prohibits the establishment of political parties on ethnic, racial or religious grounds,[17] and the parties in Bulgaria today do not show any connection with a certain religion in their names, nevertheless, with their statutes, programs or practical action they lean towards a certain religion, and some of them, with their practical actions show a tendency to realize certain religious purposes. More moderate in their positions are the political parties GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria) and SDS (Union of Democratic Forces). In the political framework of the former it is stated that GERB is a party which adheres to the Christian democratic principles and that their roots are in Christianity, family and traditional values, which are exceptionally important in today's insecure world.[18] It is emphasized in the statute of The Union of Democratic Forces that one of its basic goals is "to be a party built on the traditions of the European Christian civilization".[19] The membership of the political party DPS (Movement for Rights and Freedoms) is composed of mainly ethnic Turks. It is a liberal party which primarily defends the rights of national minorities.[20] Even though it is not indicated in its program, yet in its practical action, this party is oriented towards the realization of the interests of the ethnic Turks and other Muslims in Bulgaria. According to the leaders of the nationalist Bulgarian party Ataka (Attack), it is an antithesis of the ethnic, Turkish, anti-constitutional and separatist organization Movement for Rights and Freedoms. The political party Ataka stands for the legal establishment of Orthodox Christianity as the official religion in Bulgaria, in accordance with the Synod in regard to all social problems, and introduction of religious education in primary education.

Politics and Islam with fundamentalist elements in the Western Balkan

Fundamentalist tendencies exist in a certain number of adherents of all religions. What is typical of the adherents of religious fundamentalism, regardless of whether it is Islamic or Christian, is that their basic source of identity building is not nation, but religion. The basic idea which emerges is the teaching of the inextricability of religion and religious communities, and state

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[16] www.laos.gr
[17] Constitution of Bulgaria, 1991, Art.11
[18] www.gerb.bg
[19] www.sds.bg
[20] www.dps.bg

and politics. The fundamentalist teaching emphasizes the doctrine of rejecting modernity, and its adherents are largely intolerant towards the adherents of other religious groups and their worldviews. The renowned sociologist of religion, Cvitković, distinguishes the following sociological indicators of fundamentalism:

- Belief in the literal infallibility of the Scriptures,
- Rejection of all modern, scientific, and technical achievements if they are not in line with the beliefs expressed in the Scriptures,
- Those who deviate from the previous two principles are not true believers ("true" Christian, "true" Muslim, etc.),
- No policy which is not consistent with the fundamentalist religious principles is permitted.[21]

Islam is a complex way of life, with detailed instructions for the moral, economic and political behavior of individuals and social groups. When it comes to Islamic fundamentalism, which is also characterized by a certain level of anti-Western political orientation, it aims at restoring original Islam; Islam as an entire social-economic, political-religious system. Within Islam emerges the term "Pan-Islamism". Pan-Islamism is a teaching of the unity of all adherents of Islam, regardless of the place of the world they live in; it is about the existence of one ,"Muslim nation", but at the same time, it is a movement for collaboration of all Islamic states and adherents of Islam and their political-spiritual union in accordance with the teachings if the Quran pertaining to the Islamic community. The Pan-Islamic ideas have been brought to the countries of former Yugoslavia through the Middle East, and the emphasis is placed on the supranational significance of Islam and the creation of Ummah – world community based on the principles of the Quran. Therefore, the adherents of Pan-Islamism have never favored the development of national consciousness among Muslims since, according to them, identity based on language and ethnos weaken the ideal of solidarity and unity based on Islam.

When studying religion as an influencing factor on the overall social relations, the influence of Islam is treated more than the influence of Christianity. The reason for this is that in a great number of countries with Christian tradition, the process of secularization is much more powerful; hence, in these countries, faith is a private matter of the individual. In contrast, in the majority of Islamic countries, with constitutional norms or with practice, Islam is established as a state religion, more accurately, as a sole source of legislation. Today, Muslims are settled in more than 120 countries in the world. They constitute the majority of the population in 35 countries, and in 28 countries, Islam has been declared an official religion. This has influenced the introduction of Islam in the constitutions of many Muslim states. This has been usually achieved by emphasizing that Islam is a state religion, but also many of the legal-political acts have more specifically defined the role of Islam as a source of all laws. This basically means that no regulation can be adopted if it is contrary to the provisions included in

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[21] Ivan Cvitković, Sociologija religije, DES, Sarajevo, 2004, p. 268

Islam, i.e. Sharia.

Given the fact that, according to the Islamic teachings, this religion is for the whole world, it is a duty of any Islamic state to carry out the Islamic mission during its entire existence. The main goal of this mission is to preach Islam until the whole world becomes a single state. When talking about Islam and politics, we cannot help opening the issue related to the Islamic understanding of sovereignty. The widely accepted conception of popular sovereignty is completely rejected in Islam as it is believed that only God has the right to legislate and that each human action in that respect would be blasphemy. In this regard, it has to be emphasized that the idea in the Islamic teaching of God as a legislator and a sovereign has existed both in the Jewish and the Christian past; however, in Islam, this theory is still in effect today, unlike Christianity, where this idea has been overcome as a result of the process of secularization. For the Christian world, the separation of the state and religion has constituted a necessary condition for development; hence, the reinforcement of the idea of the people as the bearer of sovereignty. However, Islam has remained tied to the medieval tradition according to which God rules directly with the Islamic state through the laws announced in the Quran, and this holy book represents both a Constitution and a basic source of law in the Islamic countries.

According to the renowned political scientist of religion, Miroljub Jevtić, the Islamic states can be divided in three groups according to the analysis of their constitutions and the practice based on them. The first group includes the Islamic countries whose Constitution clearly determines that God, i.e. Allah, is the bearer of sovereignty. The second groups are the countries in which the sovereign is either the people or the state, either as independent bearers of sovereignty, or in communion with the head. However, in this case too, the Constitution emphasizes that the people could enjoy their sovereign rights only in accordance with the laws provided by the only genuine bearer of sovereignty (God). Finally, the third group of states are those in which the sovereignty and its bearer is determined in a way which is closest to the conceptions of sovereignty in Europe and USA; and yet, with the constitutional provision on Islam as a state religion, a great number of things could be concluded in regard to people's sovereignty and its scope.[22] Modern civilization lies on secularist ideas according to which religion is shifted into the private sphere of the individual. We cannot talk about elements of religious fundamentalism in a certain religion if the expression of religious feelings of the individuals remains in the private sphere and does not impede normal life and that same kind of freedom of adherents of other religions. A certain religion is transformed into fundamentalist when there is a demand for an establishment of social relations according to the interpretation of some religious teaching, while violating the rights guaranteed by the General Declaration on Human Rights.

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[22] For more details on the three groups of Islamic countries see: Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proućavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2009,p.177-205

With the revitalization of religion in the Western Balkans after the fall of communism, and especially with the revitalization of Islam, the very conception of the understanding and preaching of Islam has been changed too. Unlike in the past, when Islam in these regions used to give the impression that it accepted modern worldviews (especially in terms of secularization), now it has been changing its view. These changed views were first propagated by the head of the most powerful Islamic community in the Balkans – the Islamic religious community in SFRY, Reis ul Ulema, Jakub Selimovski, in the publication of BiH's IRC of November 15, 1991, in which he clearly states: „From a religious point of view, nobody should be irritated that in places where Muslims constitute a vast majority or a hundred percent of the population, their religious duty is to return to organizing all social relations on the basis of Islam as it has its own views related to the social-political, economic, social, and even financial system."[23]

A year later, Reis ul Ulema Selimoski, i.e. the IRC through the World Islamic Organizations proposed a rearrangement of Yugoslavia in order to create an Islamic religious state from which Islam would spread further to the neighboring regions, i.e. "the members of the Islamic conference to achieve a political, economic and other type of cooperation with BiH and to recognize its independence, to take active participation in resolving the Kosovo issue whereby the Albanians in these regions would create their own independent political community, then recognition of the autonomy of Sandzak, and a common sovereignty of the Albanians and the other Muslims with the Macedonians in Macedonia".[24] This position clearly shows the commitment of the head of all Muslims in Yugoslavia, wherever they constitute a majority, to create a state governed by Muslim principles in which non-Muslims would have limited rights. Considering the fact that the greatest numbers of Albanians who live in the territory of former Yugoslavia are Muslims (over 90%), according too many theoreticians, the process which would take place in the territory of the Western Balkans would be Albanization, instead of Islamization. Demographics experts believe that if the current birth rates are maintained, in 70 years, in the countries of former Yugoslavia, 60% would be Albanians. This means that Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia would practically be a new Albania.[25]

The tendency of preaching Islam with fundamentalist elements is present in Macedonian society as well, and this type of Islam is widely accepted by the Albanian population. According to the sources which we have at disposal, about 80 ethnic Albanians from R. Macedonia have been theologically educated at faculties in countries which practice original, i.e. radical Islam. Unlike 2010,

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[23] Cited from: Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proućavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2009, p.262

[24] Preporod, 02/15/1992, p.10, cited from: Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proućavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2010, p.248

[25] Jevtić Miroljub, Problemi politikologije religije, Centar za proućavanje religije i versku toleranciju, Belgrade, 2009, p.264

when in the Islamic corpus there was a particular war for supremacy and a greater impact in terms of what kind of Islamic teaching should be preached and practiced in R. Macedonia, and who would be in charge of the IRC, today, all theologians who have been labeled by the IRC as radical Islamists or Wahhabis are integrated within this religious institution. Today, all theologians who have been educated at Islamic faculties in Saudi Arabia and Turkey are being engaged by the IRC as priests, hatibs, librarians and teachers in primary schools for the subject of Religion and Ethics, which is in essence religious study. For such activities, these theologians used to receive financial support by Islamic non-governmental organizations, which are numerous in R. Macedonia and dictate the course of the teaching and preaching in religious buildings, as well as in public schools.[26] Preaching the kind of Islam which contains a large amount of political overtones to Albanian believers can rekindle nationalism, convince them that they are marginalized within Macedonian society and mobilize them for a certain social action. In the context of rekindling Albanian nationalism is also the statement of the head of the IRC on the occasion of the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Albania's independence and the Albanian flag, in November 2012. In an interview for a newspaper in Albanian, "Zurnal Plus", the head of the IRC, Sulejman Rexhepi, said: "The unification of the Albanian countries is God's will; therefore, we are obligated to return them as they had been before. The unification of the forces of the Albanian people at all levels will become reality, and Albania will have a single border, the one created by God. The IRC with all its capacities is prepared to contribute to the national cause and to respond to any kind of call aimed at the unification of all Albanians. We cannot live in 5 countries. It is unacceptable for you to live here, the father to live in the mother country, and the brothers - outside the borders".[27] According to analysts, such statement coming from a religious leader is inappropriate and irresponsible, and represents a classic attempt to manipulate religious sentiments.

A similar view has been recently presented (April 7th 2015) by the Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, who in a joint interview with the Kosovo Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hashim Thaçi, said for the Pristina television station that the unification of Kosovo and Albania has two alternatives: "The first is unification within the European Union, but if the Union continues to close its gates to the integration of Kosovo, then the two countries will be forced to unify in a classic manner". This idea has also been supported by Hashim Thaçi; however, subsequently, after the fierce reactions of Brussels and Belgrade, he said that the idea of a Greater Albania has been planned by the Serbs and has nothing to do with the Albanians. This rhetoric by the religious and political leaders is particularly dangerous and leads to deepening the gap between Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonian society, as well as rekindling ethnic extremism and separatism, which have already been largely reinforced among the

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[26] Dushka Matevska, Zoran Matevski, *Natonal and religious identity in Republic of Macedonia in the global age, In Anthology:* Globalization and sovereignty decline, Kosovska Mitrovica, 2013 p. 561-576

[27] Dushka Matevska, Zoran Matevski, ibid.

Albanian population in R. Macedonia after the separation of Kosovo and its declaration of independence. Finally, it can be concluded that a great number of Balkan countries have not found the true measure in terms of the relation religion-politics. Transitional societies have to learn that the choice and practice of a certain religion is a personal matter, not a state or political party issue, as well as that religious communities should look to their adherents, preaching the universal values which are accepted both in Islam and Christianity, which, in turn, would emphasize the similarities among the adherents of the two religions, resulting in a great positive effect on interreligious dialogue and tolerance.

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УЛОГАТА НА ПОЛИТИЧКИТЕ ПАРТИИ И ВЕРСКИТЕ ЛИДЕРИ ВО ПОТТИКНУВАЊЕ НА ВЕРСКИ ФУНДАМЕНТАЛИЗАМ НА БАЛКАНОТ СО ПОСЕБЕН ФОКУС НА РЕПУБЛИКА МАКЕДОНИЈА

Душка МАТЕВСКА

Апстракт Иако верските организации не спаѓаат во политички институции, сепак, во текот на историјата, религијата многу често служела како вел зад кој се криеле одредени политички интереси. Зголемената поврзаност меѓу религиите, верските заедници и политиката е особено типична за регионите на поранешна Југославија по падот на социјализмот, кога религијата и културата врз која влијае станаа главните карактеристики на колективниот и личниот идентитет. Во овој контекст, на територијата на Балканот, почнаа да се појавуваат религиозно ориентираните политички партии и тие очигледно спаѓаат во два вида. Во првата група спаѓаат политичките партии со име што покажува поврзаност со некоја религија, а во другата политички партии чие име не може директно да се поврза со одредена вероисповед, но преку нивните програми или активности во практика, покажуваат дека исполнувањето на верските цели е многу важен дел од нивната идеологија и практика. Во изучувањето на религијата и нејзиното влијание врз севкупните општествени односи, повеќе се зборувало за влијанието на исламот отколку за влијанието на христијанството. Причината за ова е тоа што во голем број земји со христијанска традиција, процесот на секуларизација бил многу посилен, со што верата станала приватна работа во овие земји. Наспроти тоа, во повеќето земји од исламскиот свет, преку уставни норми и практики, исламот станал државна религија, па дури и поконкретно, главен извор на законодавството. Кога се зборува за исламот и политиката, невозможно е да се пренебрегне прашањето за исламското сфаќање на суверенитетот. Широко прифатениот концепт на суверенот на луѓето е комплетно отфрлен во исламот затоа што се верува дека само бог има право да донесува закони и дека каква било човечка постапка во овој правец би била богохулење. Овој труд ќе се обиде да одговори на следниве прашања: До која мера изјавите и активностите на политичките партии и верските лидери содржат елементи на верска идеологија? На каков начин ваквата практика влијае врз стимулирање на верски фундаментализам, т.е. отфрлање на сите форми на современост и секуларизам; и, најпосле, до кој степен оваа практика влијае врз приврзаниците на христијанството и исламот во однос на нивниот став (толеранција/нетолеранција) кон членовите на други верски групи и нивните погледи на светот?

Клучни зборови: политички партии, верски лидери, верска толеранција, верска нетолеранција, верски фундаментализам