

RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE BALKANS: THE DRAMA OF UNDERSTANDING

Edited by
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Preface

This book is a collection of articles contributed by the scholars who participated in round tables, summer schools and seminars organized by the Center for Religious Studies of the Belgrade Open School in the period 2000-2003. The participants in these seminars (entitled *Religions of the Balkans* and held in various cities of this region) were some of the prominent religious studies scholars and theologians from Serbia-Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Germany and the United States.

The authors based their discussions on a starting premise that, during the last fifty years, insufficient attention was paid to an authentic, direct dialogue between representatives of various religious communities in former Yugoslavia. Before, and after the conflicts and wars that marked a greater part of the last decade, the gatherings of religious communities' representatives, as well as of scientists and religious experts from the region, were more "cosmetic" and, quite often, very politicized in the light of current events. In such a confused atmosphere, it happened that churches themselves did not make enough efforts to prevent, or at least react to the conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

Consequently, one may hear some scholars often raising the question whether religious communities *contributed* to this problem, or were at least part of it. Notwithstanding various perspectives and scholarly debates regarding this controversial issue, it was clear that churches and other religious communities could do much more in the field of reconciliation, as well as in healing the disastrous consequences of the most recent Balkan wars. In this sense, it is very important to refer to the historical and practical experiences of other European and non-European countries that had experienced similar ordeals in their past. All this, of course, demonstrates an immense significance of

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independent, non-political (non-politicized) and continual gathering of religious communities, scholars and other experts for religion, ecumenical dialogue and culture of peace and tolerance.

In the first part of this anthology, a greater attention was dedicated to the following issues: the theoretical and practical assumptions of inter-religious dialogue and tolerance in multi-confessional societies; religious implications of the conflicts in Southeastern Europe and the role of religious communities as agents of reconciliation; religions in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s; theology of ecumenism; the status of minorities in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies.

The articles published in the second part of the book tackled a number of additional issues and problems, such as the different levels and aspects of inter-religious dialogue; religions in the border areas; the roles and perspectives of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Serbia and Roman Catholic Church in Croatia; the revitalization of religion in the Balkans; Islam and the West; globalization and religious fundamentalism; presentation of religions in schools and media, etc.

The translation of this anthology into English was supported by a grant from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Kotor Network¹ and facilitated by the Department of Culture Studies at the University of Oslo. The book editors, as well as the Belgrade Open School, greatly appreciate the generosity of these institutions, which made possible the publication of this volume.

¹ The Kotor Network is an international academic exchange in the field of Balkans-based religious studies.

PART ONE

Đuro Šušnjić

THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF DIALOGUE

Let me start with a few thoughts regarding the meaning and significance of dialogue in general and especially of inter-religious dialogue. These thoughts are not for a single use, they are not for a single season!

What is the deeper meaning of dialogue than the one implied in everyday use of the term?

1. What is dialogue in terms of human development, from an ontological point of view?

Karl Jaspers rightly emphasizes that “one mind cannot encompass a whole”. Dialogue comes out of an incompleteness in a man; in order to deal with that incompleteness, he needs another man *who is different from him*. If I and you are exactly the same, nothing happens to us: we have nothing to talk about! The difference between me and you makes it possible for us to talk to each other! Apostle Paul emphasizes: “There are doubtless many different kinds of sounds in the world, and nothing is without sound” (1 Cor. 14:10). Whatever we do in life are, in fact, attempts to complement ourselves and fill the gaps, to become complete persons. F. Nietzsche cries out: “We are desperate to become whole.” A conversation with another is not in the service of an external goal, but for the purpose of personal development: a beautiful personality and a wise thought can be born only out of a conversation! Whoever is unable to talk, is unfit for development; to give up on a conversation with another means to give up on oneself! When you get to know someone else, you have expanded yourself by another life. Whoever the other person is, that person is

different from me: my opposite and my complement! One man, if he can really influence another, becomes part of his destiny: we are part of people we met! That is a conversation with consequences.

2. What is dialogue in terms of finding out the truth—a gnoseological point of view? Truth can be found where there are questions and answers. To be open for questions of another is to be open for another way of thinking. You and I start a conversation each with our own truth and end it with a new truth we were not aware of prior to our meeting. We emerge from a dialogue spiritually different: in our soul and our spirit we carry more than we used to! A synthesis of two different attitudes is gnoseologically more valuable than each individual attitude alone. If during a conversation we discover features of reality beyond us and within ourselves, characteristics we have not been aware of before, then we have to say that conversation can result in a discovery, if not in a revelation. There lies the truth of our meeting and our meeting in the truth. Our life happens as a meeting: it enables spiritual development! If someone thinks that he cannot learn anything from somebody else, he has then reduced the entire knowledge to his own experience. A conversation is the only way to prevent a thought from closing itself down in a system and a life from becoming a jail: a closed system/person, society, culture tends to end in decay. Such systems have no future because they cannot stand a different experience either from within or without. That which is coming from another, i.e. that which is different, ought not be taken as a threat, but as *an experience of a difference* that we use like a block to build our own life. As long as some people lack the opportunity to express their thoughts, a society lacks the perspective of which solutions are possible or real; it does not know about itself all that it could know provided it were open!

3. What is conversation in terms of value creation, from an axiological point of view? The final outcome, the fruit that, ideally, almost hangs beyond and can barely be reached in a conversation,

is a value. It can be a value of living together, truth as a value, etc. *In a conversation, my question and yours become our question. We are linked by those questions, and we are separated by answers.* A question is an intermediary that won't let interlocutors move away from one another: thus I prefer questions to answers! Whenever the two of us elevate ourselves beyond our initial viewpoints—because we managed to overcome them in a higher truth, which is superior to any one of us, and satisfies us both—we have deepened our togetherness and, at the same time, expanded our knowledge. *A degree of our knowledge depends on the degree of our openness to others: as much as we are open for community, we are open for truth! As much as we are distant from each other, we are distant from the truth!* In certain moments we realize that truth is not in a logical judgment, but in our meeting: that is how a spiritual conversation becomes a social event! Albert Camus put it very nicely: “If people cannot relate to a general value that is recognized by everyone in everyone else, then man is incomprehensible for other men.”

4. What is the situation with dialogue (today) in terms of understanding the meaning from a hermeneutical point of view? A true community is composed of people who understand each other well: they share a world of common notions! Words preserve experiences of a community, its view of the world breathes in them. People, of course, can understand each other even if they disagree about an issue: understanding does not imply agreement, neither does agreement imply understanding! Still, a commonly shared meaning makes understanding possible; specific and individual meanings make it harder. *The possibility of human community lies upon universal meanings; groups and individuals develop out of specific and individual meanings.* The creation of national languages and the so-called professional languages resulted in a growing distance from common meanings, which means that they opened a way to misunderstandings. That is why universal meanings are preserved in ancient languages: Sanskrit, Greek, Latin. Let me remind you: the Latin word *religio*, *religare*

means to connect, to link, to harmonize. If we cherish the memory of universal symbols and terms – we can oppose people who are constantly drawing the lines between us. If we fail to do that, the prophecy of Ivo Andrić, a Nobel prize winner, will become true: we will be able to hear one another from one end of the world to the other but we will not understand each other!

5. What is conversation in terms of community building from a sociological point of view? We can sense a controversy here: differences are a prerequisite for conversation and yet, if they are substantial, a sincere conversation is impossible. For a sincere and fruitful conversation about an issue, its participants must have equal social power. As long as there are substantial differences in terms of social power, little attention is paid to arguments, and much more to demonstration of power. But this is more about negotiations than about conversation: future relationships are adjusted with regard to power relations. *Only equals can conduct a conversation. We live in a society of inequalities. There is no real conversation here.* In a society with unequal distribution of power sincere conversation would be the greatest innovation. A true conversation inevitably moves along a horizontal axis while negotiations follow the vertical: the former is specific of culture and the latter of politics! Conversation remains more of a possibility for a future society than a reality of the current one. This fact, however, need not discourage us and make us give up on conversation. What is not *socially* possible can still be spiritually desired because that is how community shapes itself before it really takes a certain form. It is worth saving a sense of what people could do, want to do or ought to do independently of what is feasible at the moment and under the given circumstances.

6. What is conversation in terms of awareness rising regarding one's own identity from a psychological point of view? A conversation is an opportunity to see ourselves in the eyes of another and it is irrelevant whether we decide to adopt or

reject the image of ourselves: what counts, is that it is clear and comprehensible! A conversation is a process of adjustment of the image of me and you. You can become self-conscious only in relationship with the other because in that relationship you can reject, question or destroy the image you have of yourself. If you did not have an image of yourself, any other opinion about you would be equally un/worthy to you. The fact that you reject some opinions proves that you are self-conscious—you defend your own identity. Identity is strongly expressed when at risk. In a conversation, a man agrees to the notion of insecurity and limitation. But he is no longer ashamed of his own insecurity and limitation because that is how every man lives. If every speech requires an answer, then the later cannot be predicted. Thus, there is a certain uncertainty in a conversation and insecurity among interlocutors: a conversation unveils vulnerabilities!

7. What is a conversation in terms of limited group interests from an ideological point of view? Ideological language is closed: ideology is the speech a group delivers to itself when it opts for its own interest! Nietzsche would say: ideology is a useful way in which to misinterpret reality! Ideology does not care for truth; it cares for interest. That is why it is prone to defending a false claim if it finds it useful, and rejects the truth if it can harm it! Can an ideologue of a religion, therefore, speak on behalf of religion? Of course not because religion would be interpreted in an ideological key – in view of individual or religious community's interests. *That is why we need to make a sharp distinction between religion and religious ideology.* If we compare the world's religions, we will be able to establish that attitudes like understanding, tolerance and love predominate. If that is so, and it is, how come that there is hatred, conflict and war? Obviously, those phenomena are not coming out of religions. Where are they coming from then? They are coming from religious ideologies (clericalism, nationalism, etc.); they emerge when religion is put to service of limited interests. According to this, the holy words of founders

of world's religions contain nothing reminiscent of intolerance, hatred and war. If wars depended on religions, there would be no wars because religions, as a rule, believe in peace. All religions have adopted the golden rule "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire." Believers are praying for order and peace within themselves and in the world, which means that hatred and war contradict the meaning of faith. That is why St. Sava said: "If a priest is sinful, the prayer isn't." Is it not emphasized in Gospel According to Mark: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? But you have made it a den of robbers."

8. What is the meaning of dialogue in terms of power and rule from a political point of view? Human relations develop in two basic directions: as power relations and as relations of cooperation. Thus, a conversation can be conducted from either a position of power or that of cooperation. As long as we talk to each other from the position of power—there is no conversation. Every relationship that is not in the form of a dialogue is, inevitably, oppression and violence. To be ready for conversation means to reject even the slightest thought of violence and evil. *A true thinking and living through dialogue would mean that, by consequence, there would be no dogmatics among those who think, no fanatics among believers and no tyrants among politicians.* Dialogue is a real shift in conflict resolution and people are not fully aware of it although it could save them: it could take them from a violent world into a world of freedom! If we cannot live *with* one another, we can live *adjacent* to one another, but we don't have to live *against* one another. All large religious traditions and moral systems oppose evil (violence). It comes out of every religion that the world cannot be improved by force but only by grace and love. No religion in the world elevated war to the level of religious duty in the sense in which prayer, sacrifice and pilgrimage are elevated.

9. What is dialogue in terms of universal human possibilities from a cultural point of view? Where tolerant speech is customary, so is general cultural development. Conversation is exchange of experiences, thoughts and convictions. The term “exchange” implies a relationship between equal values. Every word exchanged directs us to a certain way of thinking, a certain way of living and a certain value system. *Nobody loses in a conversation and everybody can benefit from it* (if not what they want, at least what they can get out of it). “You received without payment; give without payment.” (Mt., 10:8) Truth, righteousness, justice, beauty, and sanctity are values that cannot be depreciated by sharing. If you share land, money, power and authority with somebody, then you will certainly lose. *Spiritual values are multiplied when shared: economic principles of distribution do not apply here because the spirit has its own parameters for distribution.* Conversation is like any other game: the outcome cannot be foreseen! If we knew the outcome beforehand, then there would be no need to play, because a game would lose its appeal and meaning.

10. Theological meaning of dialogue. *Conversation with God can be understood as a believer’s conversation with the missing part of his own personality, a part which is, to a great extent unknown to him and is badly wanted: it is a conversation with the best possibility of oneself!* The sacred book of the Christian religion says: “Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect.” A believer is open to an inaudible voice of a higher reality within himself: that, in fact, is his conscience, a godly spark in him! A pure prayer is a believer’s conversation with God, i.e. the recollection of the highest values and norms of virtuous life. Conscience is something sacred in consciousness, a voice of prayer, a sense of right and wrong, a human word for God within us: an inner court that sometimes presses charges against us and sometimes dismisses them. (Rom. 2:14). Conscience is the easiest encounter with God in us, the shortest way to him. It is the valuable part of a man, a burning candle in the heart, a light of self-consciousness, a law inscribed in our hearts. A possibly

good illustration of my words is the experience we all have when a conflict occurs between our instinct that seeks satisfaction and moral norms that limit it. Ethics prohibit what instincts demand: this is just a part of a broader conflict between body and soul, nature and culture! To talk about dialogue and not to warn that the Christian god talked to every one of his twelve pupils and everyone he met on his thorny path from the beginning, does not only mean to miss the essence of the Christian notion of love, faith and redemption, but it also means failing to understand the basis of God's relationship with man and man with his fellow man.

* * *

Conversation is proof that people can build bridges by words the way love builds bridges by glances and touches. When we communicate, walls between us fall apart and our hands are joined with other hands. There is no consciousness about *me* without the consciousness about *you*: our truths are born from this difference! Since every single creature is different from ourselves, we ought to respect it, not only for its own sake, but for our sake too; without it, we would be one life the poorer. A wise believer extrapolates the highest gains from a spiritual game with someone who is, in some way, different from himself: both of them can grow spiritually and realize the community of redemption! To the extent another religion is not accepted as an integral part of one's own view of the world, it is perceived as a potential threat. When one religion peacefully tolerates another, not only in spirit, but also in reality, it is a sign of strength of both religions and a guarantee of their future. A wise thought reached here coming from the eastern part of the world, a part from which, by the way, all Western religions originate: "*A man who respects only his own religion and underestimates other religions is like a man who respects only his own mother and despises everybody else's.*"

Even today we are not sufficiently aware of the meaning and importance that a conversation, as a spiritual meeting, has on the development of culture in the world; in its nucleus are world religions. *To refuse a conversation with another culture or another religion means to reject the possibility to learn something different, to enrich one's own culture and religion.* A person who identifies entirely with his own culture is blind to all other cultures—that is a person of a single culture, condemned to a lack of spiritual growth. That is why conversation is a feature of a developed culture, which is open and creative. A single culture cannot become self-aware, it cannot establish its own *identity* without a relationship with other, different cultures.

Vladeta Jerotić

**IS THERE AN AUTHENTIC DIALOGUE AND WHAT IS IT?
(ESPECIALLY AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH DIFFERENT
RELIGIOUS BELIEFS)**

*Mankind is threatened by great misfortunes deriving from:
the ignorance of priests, the atheism of scientists
and the irresponsibility of democrats.*
Pythagoras (27 centuries ago)

I will start from a fact so well observed by Đuro Šušnjić and Milan Vukomanović, that “during the last fifty years in the former Yugoslavia very little attention was devoted to an authentic and direct dialogue between the representatives of different religious communities living and acting in the same space”. Why? Primarily because there has always been a limited number of authentically religious people in the world and it is likely that their numbers shall continue to decrease. The second reason behind the absence of a direct dialogue between different religious communities lies in the insufficient will of their representatives, or more precisely, their lack of capacity to engage in a dialogue. The third reason for insufficient care given to meetings between the representatives of the Orthodox and the Catholic Church and both these churches with the Islamic religious community should, in my opinion, be sought in the atheist-Marxist rule in the former Yugoslavia as well as, if not more, in a covert and eventually increasingly overt manifestation of nationalism—occasionally even chauvinism—in all of its republics. I will explain each of the three reasons stated above in more detail in order to be able, at the end of this presentation, to open a window of opportunity for hope regarding the future of similar “inter-religious dialogues as means of reconciliation in Southeastern Europe”.

Is it at all possible to define an “authentically religious person”? It certainly is, provided that you honestly answer the following questions:

1. **Do you believe in what you are saying?** When it comes to an authentic Christian, the previous question gets the following extension: do you believe in the words spoken by Jesus Christ while he was on earth, the most important of which have been written down in the four Gospels, and do you believe that Christ suffered and died on the cross and resurrected three days later truly, as a man, not apparently, one time only, never before and never again in history, just as this miracle was recounted in all the myths of ancient peoples?

2. **Do you live what you believe in?** Are your acts in coherence with your faith, because only if they are and you are living what you believe in, can your dialogue, your conversation or preaching come to life and become active. If you have not yet adjusted your faith to your acts, be cautious and withhold yourself when you talk to others about faith, or speak solely about the contents and to the extent you are certain that you have made these beliefs part of your own life, and

3. **Could you testify to the authenticity of your faith through a tolerant and patient dialogue with a representative of another people, another religion or another confession of the Christian religion, or do you consider such a dialogue unnecessary, useless, or even harmful?** “O men! Verily we have created you of a male and a female; and we have divided you into peoples and tribes that ye might have knowledge one of another.” (The Koran XLIX, 13)

I have no doubts that honest answers by individual believers (on the territory of the former Yugoslavia—Christians, Muslims and Jews) to those three questions shall not be an easy task because it

is naturally expected of an authentic believer to be authentically honest. I repeat that the number of authentic believers of all religions in the world has always been small. The words of Jesus Christ, "Fear not little flock," could be (I am being audacious here) addressed to believers of all religions in the world who remain true to their faith, serene and certain, even when their religion is being persecuted and, apparently, disappearing. I never cease to be moved by the Jewish legend about the thirty-six righteous people (I think it originates from Hasidims) who, naturally unaware that they are the righteous ones, saved the whole world from disappearance by their constant prayers. They have been and still are, to use a Christian expression, "the salt of the earth" and without it, all religions would soon go stale.

The second, previously mentioned reason behind the persistent failure of representatives of different religious communities to engage in a dialogue, lies in their genuine weakness or inability for dialogue. Dialogue, as we ought to know ("let's agree to disagree"), means the willingness of a man with certain religious or other convictions to engage in an open and honest conversation (more precisely, a series of conversations which should not be limited in time), with another equally open and honest man whose convictions are different than his own, persistently wishing, hoping and believing that, after the dialogue, he shall be enriched and grateful to the person he had an authentic dialogue with. If we assume that there is only a small number of authentic believers in this world (and this assumption should not be perceived pessimistically by believers, because it can take a lifetime to learn how to conduct a dialogue), then it is natural to imply that these true believers should be able to learn such lessons more quickly and more successfully.

It is probably the hardest task to discuss nationalism and chauvinism as the third reason for the failure of past meetings of experts representing different religions, rightly characterized as

“cosmetic” because they reflected the actual policies of countries the participating religious leaders came from. Every expert in the field of anthropology (especially an ethno-psychologist and historian, sociologist and philosopher) is familiar with the historic preconditions, since the Slavs’ arrival to the Balkans, the tragic schism of a single Christ’s Church, followed by the Turkish occupation of the Balkans. Moreover, these experts are very well aware of the tragic forty-year long uprooting of the religious and national essence of quasi literally all peoples in the former Yugoslavia. The emergence of nationalism, immoderate at times (when nationalism transformed into chauvinism), in the formerly Yugoslav republics, was the natural reaction of peoples whose rulers, over a long time and in cruel ways, suppressed any expression of a normal national feeling. The strengthening of nationalism among the Yugoslav peoples went hand in hand with the revival and invigoration of one’s own religion (two Christian denominations and Islam). Why did this normal awakening of nationalism and religion have to harm other nationalities and religions? Because the creation of new nations and the revival of old ones, implying the homogenization of all individuals into a national mass, are always accompanied with a real or, more often, seeming frailty of these nations toward their neighbors, and a mythologized concept of national betrayal. This trend of political thinking and behavior in all national states, according to Professor Dragan Simeunović, “is but an aspect of the struggle for power of the competing political elites”. Is there any space for religion left there, for authentic believers and an authentic dialogue? It is not accidental that I mention those, as we are all aware (and this refers primarily to Christianity) of a deep antinomy in the relationship of the Church and the State throughout the many centuries of Christian history.

What is the likelihood and is there any hope for the beginning of a modified or an entirely different conversation and a dialogue between the representatives of religious communities on the

territory of the former and actual Yugoslavia? I will propose two radical hypotheses as I see them and think about them, which, I hope, might meet with the agreement of religious people who think alike and see religion the way I do (in the sense of the verb *religare, religere*), regardless of their Christian, Muslim or Jewish faith.

Namely, *homo religiosus* as the oldest archetype in the collective subconsciousness of all races on earth is older than the national, and especially ethnic being. If we have, at least once in our lifetime, succeeded in reaching our own religious essence, either through an authentic event, a feeling or persistent mental effort, like scientists or philosophers, we shall never be able to forget it. We will cherish it instead, through a process of individuation and deification, as long as we live. The discovery of a single and unique Essence, God, with a momentous knowledge that this same Essence is shared by absolutely all individuals in the world, opens before a messenger of God an authentic path for a dialogue with every human being who is, only formally speaking and on the outside, religious in a different way. Does that mean that such a man should be indifferent to whether he is a Jew, Croat, Serb, Bosniak? Of course not, because if the history of the earth and individual human lives is not ruled by coincidence but by God's will, it cannot be by chance that we are born into a given race and people, on a given geographic location and in a given time in history. We, as truly religious people, are fully aware that, according to the words of Georgi Florovsky, "there will be no nations in the Kingdom of God".

That is my wish, and if I may say, my suggestion to all of us: let us start a sharp and uncompromising battle with a nationalist and/or a chauvinist within ourselves. Let's remain patriots (is that not enough?) and listen to Nikolai Berdyaev: "Patriotism means love of one's own country, one's own land, one's own people. Nationalism is not love; it is collective egotism, will for power, violence against others. Nationalism is an ideology deprived of

patriotism. Christianity is an individualist and universal religion, not a national or a tribal one.” The Orthodox may be surprised to hear similar words spoken by Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović: “A nation cannot achieve much if it relies solely on national ideas, nor can we Christians talk about a national religion or national theology. We can certainly talk about national churches but by no means about a national religion. Individuals, even in our Christian times, mix those two terms.”

It is not my intention to underestimate, even less to deny the necessity for the creation of nation states in the former Yugoslavia. A process characterized first by the birth and then apparent weakening of national states in the 20th century Europe is a result of a more or less time progressive, extended development of certain European countries. The development of the Balkan peoples over the centuries had a different and much slower pace (a very relevant contemporary sociologist and philosopher, Helmut Plessner, wrote about the “delayed nations” without any intention to underestimate them). The spreading of nationalism today, not only in the Balkans but also on other continents (Africa, South America, Asia), and the unexpected and dangerous awakening of nationalism in European countries, come in consequence of two sizeable failures: of the Christian Church in earlier times and of Marxism in 20th century to impose Christian i.e. communist internationalism on all mankind. Once the fundamentals of the vertical line of the Cross - belief in God, king or tsar, Patriarch or Pope and then naturally, the father of the family - have been shaken the horizontal line (tribe, people, nation) takes over, trying to transform nation into an idol and push people into *idolatry*. Moses’ warning to the Jews to stop playing around the “golden calf” (a dead idol) has, once again, become topical throughout the world. Monotheism is being replaced by polytheism, neopaganism; isn’t that an alarming regress in the history of the world?

The second and last of my hypotheses, also related to a dialogue among different religions, refers to forgiveness. Forgiveness should not be equated with oblivion—although a 7th century Christian saint John Climacus, wrote the following memorable words: “Forgetting the evil is true repentance!” But forgiveness and revenge cannot go together. As a psychotherapist, I cannot forget that thirst for revenge is deeply rooted in human nature, it is part of our polytheistic, pagan being that lasted for many tens of thousands of years in human pre-history and history and still exists in us today, hidden but always ready for action, whenever our consciousness, our poor reason and immature religious self call upon it.

This should not be understood to mean that I am against the clarification of crimes and responsibility of criminals in the most recent civil war in the Balkans. I oppose attempts to cherish (consciously and subconsciously) a vindictive, tribal-archaic, pagan self that hides in us all; a long time ago, I proposed a hypothesis on a parallel presence of pagan and biblical man in each individual of our times.

A conscious or subconscious instigation of the vindictive part of us will once again, in (near or distant) future, lead to a new bloodshed in a civil war (as almost prophetically described in Ivo Andrić's essay, “A Letter Dated 1920”). Neither Cain nor Abel could exist alone; not in the Balkans, or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world. The time will come, and has already come, for God to ask Abel: “Where is thy brother Cain!” There are only 36 truly just, pure and innocent in the world (according to the Hasid legend referred to above). “We are all guilty of everything,” says Dostoevsky who will never cease to be relevant. Let's stop investigating who is more to blame because we will once again remain the only innocent! Let us remember often enough God's warning (Deuteronomy 32:35), “Vengeance is mine!” Who among people today takes no revenge and never forgives? The one person among the former Yugoslav

peoples who repeats persistently the old proverb: ubi bene, ibi patria. No religious person could ever approve of such an insolent way of living (that is so attractive to young people today).

In the end of my presentation, you could ask me: aren't my arguments too utopian, idealist, unreal? How numerous are religious people (in Islam, Christianity, Judaism) who have similar views and should they be the only ones to meet in future and conduct a dialogue we call authentic? I don't know. I myself certainly, and I believe many people here, stand for a higher quality and a more sincere, in brief, a more authentic dialogue involving the representatives of different religions than their previous discussions. A proverb from Valjevo says: hills alone can never get together.

In conclusion, I have a practical suggestion for our next meeting that will hopefully be held soon. Namely, we could split in small discussion groups on the second day of our conference. Representatives of all three confessions of the Christian religion should meet as a group first and then the Christian group could meet the Islamic and, possibly Judaist group. If we find that our religious beliefs differ more than we expected them to differ, general human postulates and basic foundations of all religions that consciously and confidently repeat the experience and the message of all world's religions—Do not do to your neighbor what is hateful to yourself—should prevail. Ivo Andrić is once again our common writer when he states: "You placed me in a dark spot where wind never ceases to blow, where restlessness fills the day and fear fills the night; a cloudy day and an eerie night. I was fighting man's old battle to which God invites us through mystery." Let that "man's old battle to which God invites us through mystery" remain our inner battle!

Ivan Cvitković

INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Few countries in the world are not faced with different religions and confessions. That is the result of numerous social factors: from historic reasons to contemporary migrations and different economic and political processes taking place around the globe. Sociologists (especially sociologists of religion) who study the impacts of religious or confessional denominations on social relations have become interested in this particular issue. Thus, the current review addresses inter-religious relations in a multireligious society from a sociologist's perspective. This approach has certain shortcomings as well as a few advantages. Theologians would probably take an entirely different approach, but one of the strengths of a sociologist's view is that his/her analysis of multireligiousness is not burdened by theological doctrines.

Over the last ten years, Americans have become almost obsessed by such issues as "multiculturalism" and "multireligiousness". They rightly point out that the United States is a "diversified society" wherein different cultures and religions enhanced (rather than hindered) the country's development. In general, sensitivity to diversity is a customary feature of liberal societies. When tackling these issues, a sociologist operating on the territory of ex-Yugoslav republics faces at least four types of the "multi" phenomenon: a) "multireligious"; b) "multiconfessional"; c) "multicultural" and d) "multiethnic". Naturally, it is difficult to engage in a strict classification of each of these "types" as multireligious is often

intertwined with multicultural and, in the local context, with multinational. However, this is not exclusively true of southeastern Europe. It can be argued that mixed environments in terms of religion, confession and culture are not only the future but the reality of the contemporary world. One should not ignore the lack of consensus among sociologists regarding the definition of each of the “multi” types. For instance, Dr. Josip Zupanov argues that multiculturalism derives from state nationalism where ethnic communities act as cultural rather than ethno-national identities. According to this author, the pressure to create a multicultural society from ethno-national communities can be counterproductive. For the moment, we shall set such controversies aside.

Up to this day, multireligiousness and multiconfessionality have always led to *coexistence* as a natural outcome of development (“O men! Verily we have created you of a male and female; and we have divided you into peoples and tribes that ye might have knowledge one of another.”—The Koran XLIX, 13). When using the term coexistence, as a sociologist, I do not imply (as some national and religious leaders announce) living next to the other, but rather with the other(s).

The time of religious and confessional imperialism has gone by, replaced by a period of religious and confessional *pluralism*. Pluralism implies that a number of different groups acting in a society provide its multiconfessional characteristics. “Religion” and “confession” transform into “religions” and “confessions”, homogenous religious and confessional entities become plural. If we study the Old Testament, the New Testament, or the Koran, we will notice that these holy scriptures contain evidence of religious pluralism. They see it as a contextual and contemporary reality, the same way pluralism (religious, confessional, political...) is perceived nowadays. It is clear that the time of “exclusion” of different views and other cultures is behind us. Instead of uniformity in intra-religious and intra-confessional relations, one

should seek legitimate diversity. Advocates of “pluralist theology” rightly emphasize past and current differences and disagreements in this field. Plurality of religions in a society is not inevitably conducive to conflict. It depends on the overall inter-religious and social relations. Pluralism can result in serious difficulties if one religion is promoted as the “official” (or placed on a pedestal by politics). The second danger emerges when religious pluralism attempts to close itself within the boundaries of the so-called “Abraham’s religions”. Instead, it must be open to all. One thing is certain, however: pluralism cannot admit imposed wisdom or majority vote in confessional or political traditions. Many contemporary societies consist of diverse ethnic, religious and confessional communities. Ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences all bear upon inter-religious relations. Is it necessary to remind people of the 1991-1995 war? It has become clear in the societies concerned that it is not good for them to adopt religious views as “supreme guiding principles”, anymore than to make them socially marginal. It is especially important to have a fair representation of (ethnic, religious and cultural) traditions of other groups within “our own” confessional community. We cannot expect “our representatives” to dictate inter-confessional relations. In this process of “representation”, it is essential to avoid the minimization or degradation of religious and cultural traditions of “others”. This should be taken into account by the designers of religious education programs in public schools and by the authors of textbooks intended for that purpose. Responsibility, of course, also lies with policy makers and institutions approving such programs and textbooks.

In this way, we can avoid *religious integralism*. Namely, the model of religious integralism typically emerges in the context of “fear” of domination by “another” religious or confessional group, i.e. when a desire for the preservation of one’s own religious or confessional denomination is coupled with the perception of deprivation. Integralism to a great extent reduces communication

to the membership of the same religious/confessional group and exclusivity is, in principle, defined in relation to the followers of other religious groups. A dogmatic lack of tolerance is being transferred to personal intolerance between believers.

Sociological models of inter-religious and inter-confessional relations can be classified in at least three groups:

a) *Exclusivism*: its sociological symptom is the attitude that one's own religion is the only "right" and "true" one whereas others are "bogus". This attitude fortifies religious and confessional boundaries and may lead to deterioration of natural ties with other religious and confessional groups and even result in a conflict. Hence, is it possible for religious exclusivism and religious/confessional pluralism to coexist? Certainly not. The words of a Spaniard Ibn 'Arabi come to mind: "To a man whose religion is different than my own I shall no longer say: My religion is better than yours". Of course, individuals living in southeastern Europe have not only embraced religious fanaticism and exclusivism—they elevated it to idolatry. One of the assumptions for ecumenism, trust building and reconciliation is to leave behind any religious and national exclusivism.

b) *Inclusion*: in sociology, it is diagnosed in the idea of a single world religion, ignoring the differences in the interest of a general sense of community.

c) *Pluralism*: people adhere to their own religious and confessional membership while fully respecting and understanding the beliefs of "others". This gave rise to a variety of ecumenical movements, dialogues and other initiatives. This idea is at the origin of the World Council of Churches, World Religions for Peace (with a branch office in Sarajevo), Inter-religious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina (actually limited to four confessions but expected to encompass other religious

communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina in future). Inter-religious services with representatives of different religious communities, each conducting a prayer in accordance with the specific religious traditions and rites are being introduced in Bosnia-Herzegovina. All of the above initiatives help strengthen the culture of religious pluralism among the population, either directly or indirectly. Naturally, these do not exclude further efforts in search of new forms and contents that can help reduce the religious and confessional distance left between the believers after the war. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia was not only among the Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, defined in terms of their ethnicity, but also among the members of different religious communities (Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim). Any attempt to list empirical evidence in support of this claim would take us too far away from the topic.

In order to eliminate the reasons for misunderstanding, let us return to the first model (exclusivism). To a greater or lesser degree, every religion considers itself the “true” one. Bhagavad-Gita (XVI, 18) talks about the “true religion”. “Surrender all your duties to Me – take refuge in Me” (XVIII, 66). Similar exclusivism can be detected in the Old Testament as well as in the Koran. Allah’s religion is “the right Faith, but the greater part of men know it not” (XXX, 30); that is the only true religion (XXI, 92), etc. From a theological or theoretical perspective, the attitude that “my religion is true”, and “the best one” is viable. A sociologist, however, is puzzled by such terms as “best” or “true”. Are we not implicitly imposing our criteria for the assessment of “the best” or “true”? A sociologist starts from the premise that life in a plural religious society requires us to abandon the debate about whose religious and confessional tradition is “true” or “good” or conversely embedded in “evil”. Were not the evils in the world (including those in the last century of the second millennium) committed in the name of almost every “living” religion?

I suppose that some believers will have a hard time accepting this claim. They believe that it is their duty to emphasize the “true” nature of their religion. They are not comfortable with statements that all religions are equal. Nevertheless, they need to get used to them. Intellectual honesty requires believers to acknowledge that it is impossible to hold any religious culture superior to others. If someone cherishes his or her religion and confession (as should be expected) it is not necessary to hate and persecute “others”. Conflicts are not the outcome of coexistence of different religions and confessions but of the “spirit of intolerance” which needs to be done with.

Having said this, we do not intend to neglect the similarities and dissimilarities between various religions. We are fully aware of the sociological differences resulting from different rites, places of origin and cultural dispersion, doctrines, ethical teachings, relation to the world around, etc. For example, consider the participation in communal services reflecting huge discrepancies in different religions. Another example is found in sacrifice: in some religions, people sacrifice animals; in others, they offer flowers, fruit, fragrances, food, etc. Certain religions require that heads be covered during prayers—others forbid that. In some religions, people pray with their hands clasped together, in others they stand with their hands by their sides, and in others still, they sit with their legs crossed, etc. These and other sociological differences, however, do not entitle anyone to disrespect the “other” and to consider his or her religious rituals less worthy. It is a nonsense, at least from a sociologist’s point of view, to debate which religion is superior to another or the others. This brings us to another sociological element relevant to coexistence: *tolerance*, acceptability. It existed in China, India, Roman Empire and Islamic states, to mention just a few examples. In his “Debate on Tolerance”, Voltaire describes tolerance with regard to other cultures and traditions. He uses an example from Athens where a shrine was dedicated to foreign goods. “Is there any stronger proof of care for all peoples than

respect for their cultures?” (Voltaire). Tolerance has never started a civil war, whereas intolerance covered the earth with corpses and blood. Tolerance is not about saying “I am tolerant”. Tolerance means being tolerant to another and different (ethnicity, religion, confession, way of thinking, political belief...). Tolerance is an assumption for civil society, not only one of its values.

Sociologists agree that tolerance makes no sense if its subject lacks political power (only if I have the power can I be tolerant towards the powerless). It is wrong to understand tolerance as endurance (that is why we do not call it ability to endure), because one endures what one must. It is just as wrong to reduce tolerance to indifference. Being indifferent does not mean accepting the differences while tolerance does. Self-control and care for the other are deeply rooted in tolerance. Tolerance is an ethic value. In ethnically and religiously heterogeneous societies, the question of ethnic and religious tolerance is of particular relevance. Being tolerant to other cultures, peoples, religions has eventually acquired a meaning of being civilized, well bred, courteous. Only in an environment of inflamed national and confessional passions (the “Bosnian pot” during and after the war) could a person favoring tolerance (or willing to participate in conferences like this one) be seen as “fighting against his own nation and religion”! Sociologists are right to point out that the freedom of confession granted to the members of different religious groups should not be equated with spiritual tolerance. Tolerance requires us to refrain from interfering in the actions and thoughts of others when they do not suit us. Tolerance is expressed precisely in our relation to the things we dislike.

The polar opposite of tolerance, intolerance in a multi-confessional society can spur a tendency to make the “holly” an integral part of the official social life. This causes the failure of reconciliation, and gives rise to conflicts and persecutions.

It goes without saying that there are limits to tolerance. We cannot tolerate nationalists, fascists, racist behavior and violation of freedoms. Hence, intolerance can only be justified in relation to behaviors hindering the practice of tolerance. Religious tolerance and equality of states have become the “sacred values” of modern times.

Our relationship with other and different is important for coexistence. The sociology of history warns us that there is nothing new in representing the barbaric other in opposition to one's heroic, human and just self. Insulting and degrading others leads to insulting and degrading oneself. This is especially obvious in social conflicts, which, among other things, exude ethnic and religious symbolism. Thus, even in the aftermath of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there was “fear of the other” along with the old and new prejudices concerning “others” as a result of wounds sustained during the war. Justifying oneself and blaming others for the horrors committed during the war in the 1991-1995 period was a sign of both “national” and religious ill-being.

The acceptance of “other” is an ethical commitment. “Living” religions impose respect and love for thy neighbor. Nowadays, this means taking a step forward and engaging in a dialogue with one's neighbors (we do not imply literally and solely the people living next door). We are referring to those we call (and who identify themselves as) “others” and “different”. We ought to be able to cooperate with and learn from the “others” and the “different”; not only talk to each other but also be ready to hear what these “others” and “different” think about “us”; listen to their arguments and be willing to adjust our own attitudes and opinions. In order to establish a successful inter-religious dialogue we need to admit in all honesty that our traditional beliefs concerning others act as obstacles. It is the responsibility of each individual to shed this part of tradition along the way.

The state of fear, social and ethnic distance after the war can be overcome through *dialogue*. Dialogue is becoming increasingly important at the beginning of the 21st century. It is therefore hardly surprising that a separate “theory of dialogue” is being developed. A sociologist could claim that there is no Islam or Christianity but only Muslims or Christians (thus people, not religious entities), which enables them to engage in a dialogue. Dialogue with other religions and pluralism which respects the integrity of different religious traditions “is open to the future of the world” (J. Polkinghorne). In other words, those among us living here who can understand what is common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam and their outcomes, they have a future.

In a plural society, religious communities will find sufficient grounds for dialogue: from joint assistance and initiatives aimed at mitigating the social problems, to ecology, drug abuse, peace and reconstruction of devastated religious shrines. The truth is that religious community leaders have not encouraged violence and devastation of shrines, but unfortunately, the perpetrators of those crimes were often adorned by religious symbols. To make things even worse, they believed that they were doing something “in the name of” and “benefiting” those symbols!¹

Participants in a dialogue need to be free to identify themselves (“we” should not decide who they are and what “they” represent). In a plural religious and confessional community, composed of people with different religious views, a dialogue can be conducive to harmony. Dialogue is always spiritually enriching for the participants. Each participant in a dialogue should be ready to “instruct” other participants as well as to “be instructed”. There are no predefined roles of “teachers” and “pupils” in a dialogue.

¹ Helsinki Committee in its Report on violation of human rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina (No. 34-12/99) warns of the still existent, occasional attacks on religious communities' premises and sacral buildings, desecration of graves, etc.

Everybody should play both roles simultaneously. An opposed scenario of dialogue, aimed at converting “others” or “raising their doubts” about their own religion is bound to fail.

Dialogue requires *trust*. Furthermore, trust is necessary in the process of reconciliation. “When there is abundant reason to hate in a state, religion must offer numerous ways to reconcile,” warned Montesquieu. A common aim of leaders of all three religions with the largest number of believers (Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic) who (possibly through no fault of their own) have been “drawn into” the war and loss of trust, should be to stand up against the abuse of religion and confession for nationalist or political purposes. They should rise above such primitivism if they wish themselves and their peoples well. One of the preconditions for reconciliation in southeastern Europe is self-criticism by religious communities regarding their respective roles in the conflicts. “Everything must be done in order to build trust, and everything that can hinder it should be avoided” (A. Einstein).

In multiconfessional environments where it is empirically true that confession matches nationality, like in the former Yugoslavia, inter-confessional relations can be harmed by deifying a nation². Unfortunately, the last decade has shown us that individuals belonging to any of the traditional confessional communities are equally inclined to doing that, although the tradition of Abraham

2 “One could think that creation of an official, national church, as was the case in many European countries, would strengthen the feeling of togetherness because it links national and religious identity and gives to citizens, in addition to political contents, common cultural features. In fact, it seems that the opposite occurs. In countries with an established church, where religious identity is more prescribed than voluntary, people often lean towards secularism and, in many cases, become truly anti-clerical. On the other hand, countries without an established, official church, often feel a high degree of an honest religious membership. That is also the case of the USA, where no official church was established and despite an increasingly secular public life, the country has continued to enjoy a much higher degree of religiousness than any European country with a national church” (Francis Fukuyama, *Pomirenje*, Zagreb, “Izvori” 200, p. 3000).

(Judaism-Christianity-Islam) leaves no space for national deification. All people are children of the same Father, to use theological terminology. Hence a true believer should adore his or her nation with moderation characteristic of a true democrat. Deifiers of nations keep forgetting that origin and nationality play no role before God. Instead, it is faith that counts (I am taking into account here only Christianity and Islam for their relevance in the events of the past decade). Originally, both Christians and Muslims rely more on unity before God, than on differences between nations.

The aftermath of the 1991–1995 war saw a—possibly even subconscious—spread of religious symbolism. Let us state two examples. Religious symbols were placed in parts of the Federation, in public squares and on surrounding hills! Since the state determines where and when its symbols can be displayed, religious communities should do the same when it comes to their own religious symbols. In principle, putting up religious symbols should not be irritating for anyone. However, if it is done in micro-social environments with multiconfessional characteristics and in a way that we witnessed (a domineering presence of a symbol of a single confession) then it gives us reason for concern. It is seen as religious exclusivism that cannot be recommended in modern social relations. In addition, members of all confessions have “laid their lives in the war so that their nation and confession could survive”. Ceremonies have been introduced on the Day of Shahids, Thanksgiving Day, etc. (elements of civil religion). But that is an issue for another discussion.

Let us return to inter-religious and inter-confessional social relations. Every relation of one religion to another, as a rule, is a relation of a “majority” to a “minority”. Social environments characterized by strong multiconfessional features are rare. Every religious community encounters this problem of “minorities”. Every religious community was a “minority” at the time of its

inception and maintains this characteristic throughout its history, sometimes in different geographical locations (and sometimes even in the very environment where it was initially created). “Minority” groups often live in separate areas in order to preserve their specificity. Usually “bordering” communities fear conversion to discriminated minorities and people are ready to keep a low profile about their religious and national identity to preserve their social status. For this reason, it has often been said that the relationship with other, “minority” communities is a mirror of cultural and religious open-mindedness of every—and thus also a religious—community. In other words, it reflects the state of inter-confessional relations.

Why should members of a “majority” religion make an effort, to show tolerance to “minority” religions? To support freedom of religious beliefs; tolerance of their holy scriptures; right to preserve a specific religious culture; right to preach their own religion; right of believers to organize family life in accordance with their religious affiliation; enable them to develop their own publishing and information structures as well as links with such services in their religious centers instead of objecting to it; enable them to write and disseminate their publications, translate their literature from other languages; create conditions for cooperation and unhindered communication of a religious “minority” with its kin state; create enabling conditions for the erection of shrines (as well as the right to acquire those shrines through purchase or endowment, etc.); right to establish and operate charity institutions; access to local and foreign schools for their representatives; respect for their religious holidays; respect for their diet, etc.

Multireligious communities throughout southeastern Europe need to raise the awareness that unity and diversity are not mutually exclusive but inclusive. Awareness of unity that includes and promotes diversity (M. Babić) leads to a full life. Religious pluralism implies the plurality of differences. Also required is

greater understanding of the need for peaceful coexistence, mutual responsibility and respect for different religions and confessions, including increased awareness that all religions and confessions are interconnected. To do so, it is necessary to have an ecumenical mind defined by Karl-Josef Kuschel as the “knowledge of each other, mutual respect, mutual responsibility and mutual cooperation”³.

This was a brief account by a sociologist regarding inter-religious relations. Of course, it is possible to view these issues from other perspectives.

³ Karl-Josef Kuschel, “Spor oko Abrahama”, *Svijetlo riječi* (Sarajevo, 2000), 217.

Srđan Vrcan

**LACERATED BETWEEN ENORMOUS CHALLENGES AND
INADEQUATE RESPONSES: RELIGION IN THE NINETIES
IN THIS REGION**

I

There is no doubt that current efforts aiming at promoting an inter-religious dialogue, particularly in this region, merit all our support. There is no doubt either that similar support is deserved by all efforts that may contribute to the stabilization of peace and to a more than welcome reconciliation in this region and in Southeastern Europe in general. However, my sociological demon reminds me that there has always been a necessary connection between an efficient therapy and a valid diagnosis. It is difficult to arrive at a competent and promising therapy if the diagnosis does not hold. It means that a sociologist, conceiving sociology and practicing it as an endeavor which, according to N. Elias' formula is a "myth destroying one", should, at the very outset of such a discourse, underline one crucial preliminary question: Is it plausible to initiate and open a discourse on inter-religious dialogue here and now by assuming that it is intellectually legitimate to merely turn the page of history forgetting everything that the nineties experienced and witnessed in this area. Namely, can we turn a new page in history and begin an inter-religious dialogue as if there were no yesterday to remember, or as if our yesterday were completely irrelevant for our today. It practically means forgetting two crucial and elementary facts highly significant for every inter-religious dialogue *hic et nunc* to have a minimum of credibility.

The first is the fact that the nineties witnessed an unequivocal and uninterrupted large-scale political mobilization of religious creeds and religious memories as well as of a large part of the available religious resources of meanings and, in particular, most directly, of

religious symbolism for the purposes of political strategies of an apparent orientation and nature. It means, of course, not for the purposes of any and all political strategies at large, nor equally of all political strategies available in the region here and now, but for the purposes of rather precise and deliberately selected political strategies of nationalist orientation. I would venture to maintain that, without such a political mobilization of religious resources of meanings and symbolism, the respective political strategies could not have obtained the support they did obtain and would have exhausted their political charge rather quickly.

The second is the fact that the same decade saw the leading confessional institutions—acting practically as politically legitimizing institutions of the first order—provide and grant political legitimacy to political strategies to be easily identified as basically pursuing identical, but under the present circumstances, diametrically opposed political ideals. Their ideals are, in sociological terms, best expressed by E. Gellner's formula "One nation, one culture, one state"; or, in political terms, by the well-known G. Mazzini's formula "One nation one state, and only one state for each nation"; or else by the 19th century German political formula: "Every nation one state, and the entire nation in one state". Ever since the beginning of the political crisis in the region it was evident that political strategies pursuing such a political ideal, would almost by necessity lead to vehement and lasting social conflicts likely to explode in armed conflicts and dirty wars to be waged as total wars of a kind, which would not recognize or respect the fundamental distinctions between the combatants and civilians, men and women, the armed and the unarmed, children, elders etc. Accordingly, no one was secured and guaranteed the protected status of a civilian. In substance, total war was conceived and planned not simply as a war between armed forces, but a war between peoples as such (*gentium*), and was, therefore, practically waged war with manufactured orgies of violence, war crimes, extermination and barbarism even at the level of everyday life.

It is an undeniable fact that religious institutions did supply such political strategies with some kind of legitimacy in strictly religious terms which means not just with common legitimacy from below, but with a peculiar type of legitimacy of a higher order—numinous legitimacy and legitimacy from above. It does not mean, of course, that the wars fought in the area were religious wars, or that the armed conflicts were basically conflicts of the established faiths. Quite the contrary, there is no doubt that wars waged in the region were political and produced essentially by politics, in accordance with the famous von Clausewitz's thesis that wars in general were but the continuation of politics only by other means and methods. However, it should be underlined that political strategies, leading to dirty wars and provoking armed conflicts on a mass scale almost everywhere (and motivating some of the most cruel orgies of violence and barbarism) have practically also obtained a kind of general legitimacy in religious terms. They were able to reckon with, and lean on a legitimacy of that type, albeit not all in the same manner.

This argument may be elaborated in a more precise way. Namely, it may be argued, with good reasons, that the nineties witnessed some of the more complex and more sophisticated interventions of religion and religious institutions into the sphere of social conflicts with an easily identified political background.

Firstly, they gave an important contribution to raising the level of credibility of political stratagems aimed at extracting the social contrasts and conflicts in this region out of their actual and historical context and surroundings, in order to project them against a background of quasi-ontological or anthropological nature, by depicting them as supra-political conflicts between radically different (basically irreconcilable, mutually incommunicable, totally distinct) types of cultures and civilizations, and, in the final analysis, between radically different and mutually opposed types of men.

Secondly, they have largely added to the credibility of efforts to introduce and normalize an almost total dichotomisation of society and of the entire social space, as well as of the social actors involved and engaged according to the well-known exclusivistic distinction between “an authentic son of the fatherland and an actual or potential national traitor”, or the “friend or foe” logic. In this manner, they helped to increase the legitimacy of the new emerging states, constituted upon the very principle of coherent social inclusion and very rigid exclusion. They operate by claiming to be based on the fundamental “friend or foe” distinction, creating an internal consensus by a constant use of enemy images, and political scarecrows of a kind.

Thirdly, they have, *volens nolens*, considerably reinforced the process of Manicheisation of the existing social and political conflicts by describing the opposed camps as the authentic representatives of Good as such, on one side, and, on the other, as the very incarnation of Evil. They therefore, depicted the current political conflicts basically as conflicts between the innocent and sinners, thus disregarding Niebuhr’s warning that political conflicts are always conflicts between sinners, and not between sinners and the sinless. It was religion that gave an important impetus to the systematic angelization of one side and satanization of the other.

Fourthly, religions themselves gave additional credibility and an allegedly unquestionable status of cultural normality to the current interpretations of national history, basically defined in very tragic terms, suggesting to the warring sides that the time had come to finally redress all the wrongs the respective nation and faith had suffered for centuries, as well as the time to settle the outstanding bills with history allegedly unjust and unfair to one’s nation and one’s faith, and to generations of their respective forefathers. This is the case with Croats, when their national history is being described as the Calvary of the Croatian people, or a series of Calvaries occurring for centuries (as, e.g., recently

pointed by a Catholic bishop in Dubrovnik). It is the case with Serbs when their national history is described as an authentic martyrdom of the Serbian people due to their allegedly sincere dedication to the Kingdom of God and celestial values. This is, finally, the case with the history of Bosniaks Moslems who have been described—e.g. by R. Mahmutćehajić—as permanent victims of a holocaust. The holocaust in this region had ostensibly lasted for centuries and was repeated in the nineties. There is no doubt that such interpretations of national history suggest to many that present conflicts are essentially a kind of the ultimate showdown requiring the mobilization of all the living forces of the nation and faith.

Fifthly, they played a very important role in the symbolic occupation of territories, mostly disputed ones, and of the entire social space with a parallel colonization of the geography of everyday life with religious and national symbolism ending in the elimination of all the differences between the state, politics and civil society, as well as between the public and private life. Such damage to the autonomy of civil society and the private sphere was more drastic in Republika Srpska and Krajina than in Serbia itself.

Consequently, the preliminary question whether it is possible or not to simply forget everything, and turn a new page when the nineties saw how quickly and easily the transcendent and the sacred could be practically captured in order to serve nationalist political objectives and purposes and to legitimize political strategies living and feeding themselves on hate speech, which almost by necessity led to easily predictable armed conflicts as well as to systematic recourse to violence, war, massacres and expulsions of mass proportions. The current inter-religious dialogue should somehow, doctrinally or theoretically, come to terms with such a tragic experience in order to have a necessary degree of credibility. It ought to face and consider the fact that

during the nineties this area saw the drastic emergence of two major trends of world dimensions, described by R. Robertson as the politicization of religion and religionization of politics. The first one manifested itself in the fact that mainstream politics almost everywhere obtained some kind of religious attributes and quasi-religious functions, pretending, on one side, that politics does not have to do only with the relative but is based upon, or ought to be concerned with, the allegedly ultimate points of reference which are, therefore, of transcendent, absolute, total and sacred nature, and have to be non-problematic and uncontested. The second trend has become visible in the shift in the religious sphere, turning religion—religious identity, religious belonging, religious symbolism etc.—basically into relevant political facts, and making it function practically as politics. Against such a background we could see a political instrumentalization of religion going on since important individual and collective religious options were taken with evidently political motivations and for political purposes, rather than religious, and still less spiritual. At the same time, we have been witnessing a parallel religious instrumentalization of politics as important political options were not primarily motivated by political reasons and for political purposes, but also by religious reasons and for confessional purposes.

I would argue that a further step in this direction ought to be made: for an inter-religious dialogue to be credible here and now, it is important that it happened on the level of social reality. This has already happened before in the social reality of Northern Ireland, as described by J. D'Arcy May. Religious institutions, in spite of good intentions, approved, in different social contexts, the causes of the conflict, and sided with their people, practically acting as "chaplains of the warring sides".

II

Let me now summarize some of my ideas and arguments.

1. The first substantial thesis is that the main events in the late eighties and the nineties in this region represented a major challenge to religion in general and, in particular, to the three world confessions persisting and operating in it for centuries: Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam (although not in the same manner and in the same degree). A combination of tremendous challenges did emerge owing to two parallel sets of circumstances: one of objective extra-religious, historical, social, political and cultural nature, and the other of subjective intra-religious nature.

2. It seems evident to me that some important challenges did arise when an area that had, for centuries, been a major meeting place of three world confessions—which, existing in close proximity and permanently facing each other, developed a modality of living together, side by side, and found some ways for a more or less peaceful coexistence in a large number of cities and villages—on the very eve of the third millennium blew up into dramatic violent political confrontations leading almost by necessity to a series of armed conflicts and cruel and dirty wars. It is an enormous challenge to religion caused by the mere fact that a kind of the past multi-religious concomitance—without being exhausted in permanent mutual confrontations, or resulting in extermination due to endless conflicts in times when nobody publicly spoke of inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism—now seems to have come to its ultimate end. It is a serious challenge to see that the former religious map of the area seems to have undergone a drastic change from a single multi-religious and mixed territory into three mono-religious and religiously cleansed areas. There is something both very distressing and very challenging in the fact that some arrangements, which for a long time used to function as a pure fact of everyday life, have practically died out at the end of the

twentieth century. It ought to be a disturbing fact that the believers and adherents of the present day generation have not been able to save what their ancestors and preceding generations had been able to create and practically implant into their everyday lives as a kind of social and religious normality, however unstable.

3. Even more challenging is the fact that the re-drawing of the religious map of the region was carried out in such a horrible and barbaric manner by victimizing and traumatizing a very large number of persons. For the sake of illustration, one may underline that a recent survey in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that 41,8 percent of Muslim and 36,9 percent of Catholic respondents declare to have lost some property during the war; 34,0 percent of Muslims and 19,7 percent of Catholics lost one or more family members; 11,8 percent of Muslims and 8,0 percent of Catholics were wounded, while 14,2 percent of Muslims and 12,9 percent of Catholics were expelled or had to leave their homes. If a person, following E. Gellner's comparison of the two maps of Europe - the pre-modern and pre-industrial one, resembling Kokoscha's confused paintings and the one of the modern and industrial Europe, like Modigliani's clean paintings—takes a look at the area of former Yugoslavia, he may come to the same conclusion of a radical change (i.e. from a Kokoschka-style map of twenty years ago to a map in Modigliani's style emerging today). One should not forget, however, that this change in maps was accompanied by a few hundred thousand dead, several hundred thousand wounded and injured, at least two and a half million of refugees, expelled and displaced persons, several hundred thousand homes destroyed and damaged, and billions of dollars in properties and resources ruined and wasted. This change in the "aesthetics" of the national and confessional maps of the region undoubtedly had a very high price in terms of human lives and sufferings. It may be plausibly argued that it certainly ought to represent a major challenge to the contemporary religion.

4. There is also an important challenging charge in the fact that the region of the former Yugoslavia may be considered as an area where some contemporary trends of wider world dimensions did emerge in their most radical and extreme forms. Basically, this region may be conceived of as a testing area in which the ramified consequences and outcomes of such trends have become very visible. These are, for instance, the consequences of a presumed world-wide shift from the politics of interest to the politics of identity and/or a turn to the ethnification of politics and politicization of the ethnic, as well as a shift towards a radical and total, politicization of culture, drastically changing the very nature of contemporary social conflicts from negotiable into non-negotiable (“either—or”, “everything or nothing”, “life or death”), and practically making the notion of culture “dangerous” alike the one of race in racist ideologies, as pointedly suggested by a recent biting remark of T. Eagleton that culture is no longer the music you put into your walkman and listen to, but what one is killed for in Belfast or Sarajevo. There is little doubt that the area of the former Yugoslavia may be seen as a privileged area to bring to light also the probable outcomes of a contemporary trend of de-privatization of religion (Casanova): it does not lead to some kind of a welcome re-normativization of politics and economy, but to a legitimization of nationalist political strategies in religious terms. At least some of the possible outcomes of such a trend are beyond any dispute. It is rather difficult to argue that a trend of this kind has not been in operation in the region or that its consequences and effects are hardly discernible.

5. Finally, it also seems that the mainstream of recent events in the former Yugoslavia has confirmed M. Weber’s well-known thesis of a possible resurrection of ancient gods in the modern world, but in order to renew their eternal battles ensnaring contemporary men in them, rather than to pacify and spiritualize their lives.

6. Let me now turn to my description of some intra-religiously motivated challenges. There is no doubt that the levels of presentday challenges to religion have been raised very high, owing primarily to some public declarations of important religious dignitaries stimulating enormous expectations. Basically, the region of the former Yugoslavia may be seen as a veritable testing ground for the degree of realism inherent to such expectations. Firstly, there can be no doubt that such challenges may be seen as deriving, for instance, from the public claim made by Pope Paul VI in his address to the UN General Assembly in 1976, stressing that the Catholic Church was “an expert in humanity” as well as from the more recent repeated claims by Pope John Paul II that this same Church has been the champion of “a new civilization of peace and love”. Recent developments in the former Yugoslavia may be legitimately analyzed by being projected against the background defined by such claims, and may be seen as a test to prove or disprove the alleged “expertness in humanity” and the sincere dedication to “a new civilization of love and peace”.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that such a challenge might, for instance, also derive from pope Woytila’s jubilant declarations in Rome in 1990 and in Prague in 1991 that “God has won in the East”. It is the winning side that ought to be somehow responsible for at least some of the direct consequences of its victory, or those arising in its wake. The area of the former Yugoslavia may be seen as the best possible testing ground on the European soil today to assess the reality of such expectations.

Secondly, one recalls the very high expectations, long cherished in regard to the probable and welcome role of religion in the formerly communist East and Central Europe, in motivating and stimulating the anticipated and welcome tidal wave of religious revival in the too-secular Western Europe, described recently, by P. Berger, as an area of “an actual Church catastrophe”. Such expectations were expressed in the recently recycled and emphasized formula “Ex

Oriente lux”. It is worth recalling that even cardinal König, many years ago, optimistically asserted that “Christians from the East would give a lesson to those from the West” (Riccardi).

The same may be repeated for Eastern Christianity in view of similar expectations generated by the fall of communism. To illustrate such expectations, one may quote the words of the Greek Theological Association’s president at the Association’s annual conference in 1990: “After the collapse of Marxist-Leninist regimes and the complete failure of capitalist systems to form human communities... Orthodoxy is the only possibility for United Europe to become a community with a human face”. The same may be illustrated by quoting D. Đorđević, who, in early 1991, optimistically wrote that “owing to an eclipse of the socialist ideology, a very favorable social, cultural and spiritual climate has been created not only for the re-birth of Orthodoxy, but also for its blooming”. Therefore, he expected that the Orthodox faith would initiate its march to the West, and that it would certainly offer “to millions of men love and peace, felicity and tolerance. It would offer the possibility to find the meaning of life and reason for living as well as the feeling of equilibrium and stability”, culminating in “a lasting emancipation of the inner man in his spirituality”.

One may also quote A. Izetbegović, writing that “Islam has never wanted to be only a nation. It has wanted to be a people inviting to good and preventing evil, performing, therefore, a moral function”. For future and practical human efforts “Islam means an invitation to create man as the keeper of harmony between body and soul, and a society, the laws of which would be elaborated so as to reflect and not erode that harmony”. It is legitimate to raise the question as to what has happened to such expectations.

Thirdly, it seems that the region of the former Yugoslavia has been historically so pre-arranged that it may prove the sincerity, as well as the feasibility of ecumenical public proclamations. It is an area

where ecumenical ideas and ecumenical practice could be best corroborated at the level of everyday life. If Ulster or Northern Ireland may be seen as a European testing ground for ecumenism in operation, then the area of the former Yugoslavia ought to be considered as far more relevant since the late eighties.

7. Therefore, it seems to be rather reasonable to argue that the challenges to religion in general have been almost immense, and have actually involved more than what usually concerns the degree and intensity of humanitarian and relief activity, traditional to all religious institutions and organizations in cases of armed conflicts and war.

To summarize: tremendous challenges to religion and religious institutions come from three crucial facts: a) the fall of communism that has opened new possibilities for religion and religious institutions by eliminating the previously existing institutional pressures on religion, and by turning religion from theism with no public functions into theism with some crucial public responsibilities, b) the emerging and dominating nationalist political strategies, so far characterizing the transitional processes and including politicization of religion as well as religionization of politics along with the politicization of religious belonging and religious differences, and c) very high expectations regarding the role of religion after the fall of communism including its function in transitional processes.

8. However, it should be added that in assessing the actual responses of the religions involved, the role of religion in the course of recent events should not be evaluated by taking into consideration only a few selected admirable feats and noble words of religious virtuosi, or some public proclamations, but also the words and deeds of institutions, governments, parties, movements, organizations, groups, outstanding personalities and others, identifying themselves as believers and adherents. They have been

interpreting, motivating and/or legitimizing their actual acts in apparently religious terms. In the same way in which the role of religion in the conquest of Latin America should not, for instance, be judged by Las Casas' noble words alone. Furthermore, one should take into consideration what religion indeed did in this region during the nineties, along with the things it did not, or would not, do. For instance, the credibility of a collection of documents of the church in Bosnia and Herzegovina referring to its attitudes to the war does not depend so much on what it did mention and state, as on what it systematically kept silent about (Ahmići, Dretelj, Počitelj and so on). At the same time, one ought to take into consideration the specific lesson of the long war in Lebanon, described by A. Beydoun, that is, the fact that many Lebanese intellectuals and some institutions were sincerely in favor of a stable and just peace and multi-confessional way of living together. They used to publicly condemn violence and armed conflicts, but were neither willing nor ready to accept the very principles upon which such a stable and just peace and their living together might be reached and secured. Basically, they were not able to recognize the intrinsic, but necessary relationship between the specific political goals and violent means used for their actualization. Finally, as the abundant historical and actual experience warns, it is obvious that there have always been ways to connect the public rhetoric of peace with the practice of legitimizing political strategies resorting to violence and armed conflicts.

9. The third substantial thesis is that the responses of religion and Churches to the challenges identified and described were not commensurate with the emerging challenges and were, at best, contradictory and ambivalent. It is very hard to come to a different conclusion taking into account the simple fact that they were facing political strategies which had deliberately opened Pandora's Box releasing the demons of hatred, violence and barbarism.

It is also argued that the dominant responses are not unique, but are more or less similar to religious responses already seen in the long-creeping war in Northern Ireland. There is a similarity in the fact described by Bradford: when one scratches a political supporter of the union with England in Ulster, one would, in nine of ten cases, find a fervent Protestant and, vice versa, scratching a man with the opposite political views, one would certainly uncover a Catholic. This is surely valid for our area too: for instance, if one scratches a fervid Croatian nationalist, in nine of ten cases one will find a devout Catholic, and the same would happen, vice versa, with a Serb nationalist, etc. It is suggested that Northern Ireland is a very relevant case because it is there that the limits to noble proclamations became very visible, just as in this region. It is worthwhile recalling E. Gallagher and S. Worrall's conclusion: "The Churches have consistently condemned violence on both sides; and there is no doubt that the vast majority of their practicing members support them in this and sincerely want 'peace': it is in the translation of this general will towards reconciliation, which they have effectively fostered, into practical steps that would be socially and politically effective, that the Churches have so far failed".

Appendix

I have to confess that I am interested primarily in a discourse on an inter-religious dialogue *sub specie temporis hic et nunc* and particularly in this region, which is the meeting point of the three major world religions. I feel that a discourse on a dialogue among them ought to take into consideration some elementary facts relevant for a welcome inter-religious dialogue here and now.

The first is the fact that the discourse on an inter-religious dialogue in this region has not been an absolute novelty, but, on the contrary, has been on the agenda already for more than twenty

years. In fact, one ought to remember that it has been the Catholic Church, at Vatican II, to open a doctrinal discourse on a dialogue as an important issue in the contemporary world (in the context of Vatican II, opening of Catholicism to the modern world). Therefore, a dialogue was not conceived and offered at Vatican II, and initiated only or primarily as an inter-religious dialogue, but as a dialogue with the modern world and modern culture, and in the first place with those components of modern culture that are secular in their nature and orientation. For that purpose, a specific secretariat was created in the Vatican under the significant title of the Secretariat for non-believers—*pro non-credentibus*. The Secretariat began to publish a review with a symptomatic title of “Atheism and Dialogue”. Consequently, it may be reasonably maintained that a dialogue was conceived of as a necessary instrument in what was, at that time, called a more general strategy of “aggiornamento” of Catholicism and of the Catholic Church to the modern world. Very convincing and acceptable arguments in favor of such a dialogue were elaborated and made public by Cardinal König when he was appointed the first head of that Secretariat. To this end, the Church organized and promoted a series of encounters. However, a dialogue based on Cardinal König’s considerations definitely belongs to the past. And so it has ever since the beginning of Pope Woytila’s pontificate. It belongs to the past not by chance, but consciously: the Catholic Church has deliberately abandoned the idea of an open dialogue of that type, reducing it to an interfaith dialogue only. This was a move set within a wider and more fundamental shift in the Church orientation: from the *aggiornamento* of Catholicism and the Catholic Church to a new evangelization or re-evangelization of Europe wherein Europe has to re-discover its genuine Christian foundations and its Christian, but basically Catholic soul. It is argued here that the first fact not to be forgotten today is that an important restriction of the scope of a welcome dialogue as a means of reconciliation and tolerance has already been introduced.

The second fact to be underlined with an emphasis on the current discourse on dialogue as inter-religious is that such a dialogue in this particular region has not been a radical novelty either. It has been initiated long ago and, with ups and downs, occasionally practiced for years. One should be aware that some high Catholic dignitaries used to boast that a kind of dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox Church went on uninterrupted during the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, at the beginning of this round of talks about inter-religious dialogue, it seems very plausible to raise the preliminary question about the hitherto effects and outcomes of the Catholic-Orthodox dialogue. It seems to me that the answer to such a question must be spelled in rather negative terms: it is evident that the worst armed conflicts were not prevented or alleviated. The very orgies of violence occurring frequently in the region were not eliminated nor was the dominant hate speech suppressed and religiously discredited. This, in turn, directly affects both the credibility of the present-day efforts to initiate and promote an inter-religious dialogue and as its potential efficiency. It seems obvious that, in order to make the present-day efforts more credible, one requires a rather critical re-examination of one's own consciousness, as well as of one's behavior in the previous decade.

The third is the fact that the credibility of a possible and promising inter-religious dialogue *hic et nunc* depends, to an important degree, upon the possibility to have a public intra-religious dialogue. This means that the credibility and authenticity of an inter-religious dialogue depend on acknowledging the legitimacy of the existence and persistence of differences within the same religious community. It pretends to be the promoter and actor of an inter-religious dialogue, without simply admitting the existence of an intra-religious dialogue. It is very hard to trust in a sincere inter-religious dialogue of different religious communities and churches when an internal dialogue is non-existent, or is practically banned. It is also very hard to trust in the efficiency of an inter-religious

dialogue without parallel intra-religious dialogues in the religious communities themselves. To put in a more direct way, if it seems clear that, for instance, Catholic or Orthodox believers respectively are not able to initiate a dialogue in their own communities about the burning problems and issues of contemporary life as such, then it is hard to assume that they will be able to conduct a genuine interfaith dialogue about the same types of problems (except as pure formalities and/or for show, without a possible outcome of any importance).

Finally, I would like to offer a possibility to ground the dialogue on some universal anthropological bases, fairly different from those mentioned or proposed here as the only legitimate ones. It is a possibility which I do consider not only very reasonable and feasible, but also very promising in regard to dialogue. I would express it by a specific definition of man as such, which underlines that man is basically *homo optionis* that is, a being which chooses and opts pro or contra. I would venture to maintain that *homo sapiens* is basically *homo optionis* to such a degree that this definition of his nature precedes all other definitions, *homo religiosus*, *homo faber*, *homo ludens* etc. It may be plausibly added that man in the contemporary world and under present-day circumstances, on average, has more occasions than before to affirm himself or herself precisely as *homo optionis*.

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ON THE PROSPECTS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS AND INTER-ETHNIC DIALOGUE: WHAT ABOUT MINORITIES?

When it comes to dialogue, it is reasonable not to expect more from it than what it can offer. Dialogue, however, means more than negotiations and outwitting in which negotiating sides strive to achieve their own goals by diminishing the aspirations of the other side and its results need not decisively influence the shift in social processes. Such processes are underlined by at least a minimum tendency to gain advantage for one's own group, even if interlocutors are convinced that their own approach is completely honest and motivated solely by their wish to produce public good. In a dialogue between individuals, participants' position is a bit more favorable, especially if they are not burdened by the prejudices of the "we" group. Nevertheless, since an individual position is blurred in the area of religion and nation, as both imply strong group-based assumptions, a fruitful dialogue gets easily transformed into a rigid form of communication and individual capacity to resist group *a priori* attitudes constantly faces the danger of slipping under the influence of group psychology laws.

Inter-religious and inter-ethnic dialogues should not be equated although they are sometimes similar, because certain features of the religious and ethnic, i.e. national lives are close to each other, especially regarding the attempts to preserve or strengthen group identity. Whether this is to be achieved through sacred or secular forms is not critical to this end. Religion and ethnic group do not belong to the same type of phenomena, but they are not so remote as to prevent us from noticing that they share similar aspects in striving to develop their own integrity. Hence, ethnic characteristics are easily transferred through religious contents and views, which carry the strongest tendency for surviving the other, and are often closely linked to national tendencies. It can be assumed that this

happens only in environments where an overwhelming crisis brought about an intense association of national and religious symbols, as is the case in southeastern Europe, but the rest of the world is not fully exempt from similar types of associations either. Thus, whenever the balance is shaken, it is likely that religious and national creations will come close together or that one will be substituted by the other. Western Europe, despite the widespread belief that it has irreversibly distanced itself from these phenomena, proves how easily they become attractive whenever a society faces a situation wherein conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms are in crisis.

Thus, inter-religious dialogue cannot be separated from national phenomena: many religious communities in the world, and particularly in these parts, bear in their names references to their respective national identities that reconfirm their existence. Consistently, distinctions among nations imply religious differences, while atypical cases are always treated as cases of special interest.

It is not easy to live in a society with different religious and national entities. Nowadays, however, living in a religiously complex environment is less difficult than before because religions, at least in their more civilized form, gave up on attempts to use all means available to achieve religious uniformity. Some religions may still persevere in their warnings that the only way to be saved is through their mediation or threaten those who adopt different beliefs with the loss of salvation, but they seldom inspire elimination of other believers. Although the holy scriptures rarely directly call to dialogue among believers of a particular religion with those of others, a conclusion can still be drawn that religions consider peace instrumental. People were able to survive religious differences in the past – although with major difficulties – but whenever national differences became the predominant factor of social life, survival was at stake. A sense of belonging to a nation

became an issue of life or death, much more than it had been the case in the earlier era of religious predominance, and infrequent attempts by religions to help adjust the aspirations of a nation-state with peaceful religious messages did not have much success.

Religions have some autonomy from society given their primary concern with the prospects of life after death instead of earthly preoccupations, but they cannot ignore the environment wherein they emerge and which sustains them. Considering that the 20th century world is one of hypertrophic national feelings and expressions of those feelings, religions, willy-nilly, had to take them into account. Not only were they taken by this overpowering shift in values but they also articulated it in ways they believed were coherent with religious foundations. Christianity was the first to interpret the national phenomenon as consistent with religion, while the same process in Islam occurred later and was, therefore, stronger. In most countries embracing these religions, religion remained the predominant component of life.

This shift in religion was in concordance with the development of young national states. Its authority was unquestionable; long ago, religion became the actor that could give a meaning to secular efforts and could act as intermediary in critical social moments. Now, as nation-states developed and strived to become unique, justifying all means contributing to their own promotion, the role of religion became more demanding and more complex. Representing a national state before deity, although such states did not shy away from “iron and blood” methods, religions found themselves in a delicate position. In the wars fought in Eastern Europe in the 20th century and especially in its last decade, religious communities, as spiritual representatives of their respective nations, as a rule, took the same paths their nations, whether in order to protect themselves from outside pressures or to expand their own territories. Thus, during the break up of the former Yugoslavia, religious communities, especially the larger

among them, drew nearer to “their” nations, disregarding the fact that the national leaders used to or still form groups whose antagonistic impulses suppress peaceful trends.

The tendency to intertwine religion and nation, weakened in the former Yugoslavia (which—rightly—suppressed clerical tendencies but was also—wrongly—suspicious of religion as a spiritual phenomenon) now grew out of proportions and started to replace religious messages. Wherever religion provided uncritical support to a nation, inter-religious dialogue could not start unless these harmful alliances were taken into account first. On the other hand, if ethnic groups, or today’s nations, have linked their identity to religion since time immemorial and, in consequence, consider themselves immortal, it is impossible to observe them in isolation from their own equations, which compose their second most important pertinent identity. At the same time, a religious community must face the reality of the nation, and resist the urge to stand by it no matter whether it is right or wrong, and also learn enough about its ups and downs in order to be able to face itself.

Lately, there have been attempts to establish a dialogue between religious communities, especially the Christian confessions, which have remained divided and mutually opposed for several centuries. It seemed that the promising sixties could also mark a change in the field of religion. Volumes were written to praise the formerly disliked communities. In his famous book “But There Is No Other Way”, a theologian expressed his optimism regarding a possibility to reach an agreement and those in other religious communities who thought alike replied with similar compassion. The small circle of advocates of a dialogue was entwined with zeal. It was shown that differences dating from an early source still existed and were not cherished by chance. The situation was all the more complex because religion was, on the territory of southeastern Europe, so interwoven with nation that tensions among nations, whenever they arose, inevitably reflected on inter-religious relations. The

degree of religious tolerance was a partial indicator of inter-ethnic relations. Since those relations were not synchronized enough, it was becoming increasingly clear that in order to reconcile them, it was not enough to make them closer but also to be able to separate them. To achieve this goal, national leaders were ready to take their people into a most remarkable uncertainty.

Can people survive despite all the differences among them? They obviously can and in some places so well that differences get artificially produced. In some environments, despite their religious and ethnic multifacetedness, conflictive situations resulting from different affiliations were overcome and even turned to their benefit. There is, however, a grain of truth in a widely spread belief that differences cause misfortune, but it is also true that misfortunes can be avoided and that, over time, differences that were once tolerated can become preconditions of social progress. There are reasons to consider Isaac's opinion that "it is becoming more and more clear that human beings cannot live in dignity with differences among them and they keep growing apart." (Isaac, 1989:2) but such a conclusion is better suited to tragic events when differences within a religion and a nation produce the most tragic outcomes. Another author stated that among people, just like among animals, to be different means to be unhappy. Although based on justifiable grounds, this assertion also emerged out of the dark periods of social reality, and cannot be applied to all epochs. Even if diversity can really cause the harshest of consequences, it is still more related to particular than to universal events.

Eric Hobsbawm argues that it was from these differences that a lot of evil has recently emerged in southeastern Europe. According to him, long-term problems resulted from the breakup of Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empires and no other solution was found but "massive killings and forced mass displacements" (Hobsbawm, 1993:180). He unambiguously asserts that only barbarians were able to achieve the desired homogeneity. In reality, barbarians have

made several attempts to simplify religious and national images; the latest and fairly successful attempt to this effect occurred in the previous decade of the past century. Yet, it was not entirely successful. Sooner or later, religious and national communities will get closer to each other again because their full separation is not only impossible to realize, but also impossible to imagine. Forces within a society, which tend to separate one community from others are at work, seeking to create impenetrable borders in an effort to strengthen religious and national identities, which are never solid enough to provide complete security. Carefully designed plans, such as instigation of hatred strengthen the process; a war goes even a step further in the process of solidification. At the same time, due to migrations and globalization, integrative processes take place and people search for a path that will enable them to survive and progress despite the differences.

Religion today rarely enhances misunderstandings, although this possibility should not be disregarded. Believers are part of society; they share its views, its likes and dislikes, its partialities, hates and hopes. They are not devoid of prejudice and do not look deep for the causes of schisms. Quite the contrary, when they point out that they belong to a single religion that can save one's soul, when they shy away from the rites which differ from their own, or engage in missionary activities, believers can inspire animosities toward their own religion but they will seldom start a war in its name. Even the crusades were more inspired by economic motives than religious reasons. We shall not go any further than to free religion from the responsibility of supporting tensions in a society. Wars waged in southeastern Europe throughout the past century had not been organized by religious communities but were fought by the more or less convinced Christian or Islamic believers whose arms were blessed, nonetheless. Even if this was not the case, it was enough for religious communities to remain silent about the atrocities committed by their members in order to establish a link between their religion and the momentous goals of a single group

and thus justify all national aspirations. Other than issuing very general statements regarding peace-building, articulated in line with selected parts of the holy scriptures, religious communities in the former Yugoslavia did very little in terms of unambiguous condemnation of those who had started the war, or helped it spread; they failed to distance themselves from national idolatry rapidly dispersing to embrace all actors of social life. It might be true that religions could not have done more in the midst of general turbulence but they, at least, could have helped sustain the hope that much more should be expected of religions in reducing the tensions. At present, the impression that religions have a decisive impact on national interests prevails, regardless of underlying ethical principles, and it seems that religions can do little to help in the moments of social paroxysms. Back then, it was not possible to talk about a functional inter-religious dialogue. Church leaders met to conclude that it was in compliance with religious principles for conflicts to end and for peace to begin, but they failed to unambiguously condemn the extreme attitudes promoted by national ideologies. Some would go a step further to say that believers should be able to distinguish between good and bad and reject the challenges imposed by ideologies. Expectations, however, were too high. How many Christians or Muslims could really fulfill them and how many of those who are not believers? How to avoid national phantasmagorias and recognize in oneself, and then also suppress the aggressive instincts that emerge in times like those? An author noted that “a war could never start if it were not for that instinct to fight which lies deep in human nature. Let’s not be naïve: people are no angels.” (Šušnjic, 1988, vol. II, p. 387). That instinct only needs to be awoken, by critical events. It is a much more serious thing when “fishermen of human souls” awoken it. That’s precisely what happened here.

The Balkans is not an oasis of evil in the world, nor is it a paradigm for the helplessness of religion in consistently naming earthly infernalities, but it is an outstanding example of unfortunate

divisions, multiplication of misunderstandings and the need to take revenge carried over to many successive generations. The famous essay by Ivo Andrić “A Letter Dated 1920”—often recalled these days because it supports the belief shared by some people that hatred is predestined here—reveals some interesting things. As much as it inspires reflection, this essay has a primarily literary character, and the writer was not motivated by the search for the whole truth. The story, therefore, ignores the times of a greater degree of tolerance among religions. We still have to assess what it means to live in an environment wrought up by religious divides. A character of “Travnik Chronicles” reflects: “Nobody knows what it means to be born and living on the verge between two worlds, to know and understand both worlds, and to be unable to do anything that would help reconcile the differences between them and get closer to each other, to love and to hate both of them, to hesitate and be drawn towards them throughout one’s life, to be in between two homes without having one, to feel at home everywhere and to remain a stranger forever; briefly, to live crucified, like a victim and a tyrant at the same time.” (Andrić, 1967:286/7) This verbal relief ends in the following way: “These are people from the border, spiritual and physical, from a black and bloody line that was drawn as a result of some large misunderstanding among people, those godly creatures among whom borders should not and must not exist.” (Ibid:288).

This expression inspires readers to remember what happened in the last hundred years or so. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars, an international committee wrote a report, asking the following question: “Can we allow the Balkan Wars to end without at least trying to learn something from them, attempting to realize whether they created benefits or evil, whether they would continue tomorrow and spread beyond our sight?” (Nedovršeni mir, 1997: 3). Very few lessons were learned, though. A few more times, wars shook the Balkans, not only by the regional ghosts of a nation’s own greatness but also by the interests of super powers, and we

are still looking for ways to preserve peace. What is the likely contribution of religions whose sources mostly call for love and forgiveness? To what extent can religious communities accept the truth that people were killed in the name of Christ and Allah, not only in self-defense but also in attempts to eliminate others in order to advance one's own group? Very few national endeavors have been undertaken without involving religion.

Religions and nations belong to phenomena that find little pleasure in facing their own unadorned past. They can easily give an idyllic pastoral character to their own history, where everything is linked in a continuum of uninterrupted fulfillments of the highest ideals. Rough turns and falls are omitted in order to create a "dense history" which claims to contain everything that is relevant for the religion in question and leaves little space for debate. In the spotlight, there is only a residue that cannot be questioned and which does not interfere with conscience. Human ability to suppress that which unsettles is huge; that is why religious and national excesses remain hidden under many layers of self-forgiveness or silence.

In the former Yugoslavia, we saw statements issued with the full authority of religious and national representatives that their respective sides adhered to the standards of international law as well as religious norms, although well aware of the other side of the coin. They seem to ignore the number of civilians killed, houses destroyed—often outside the conflict zone or during a cease-fire—graves devastated and concentration camps built. Deliberately induced oblivion spread amongst individuals otherwise prone to self-criticism and critical of their environment, which means that much more courage was needed to face the truth. Silence is still meaningful to them. Such groups call this attitude 'coherence' in their inability to open up in conversations which, although rarely, occur at times.

What is really the matter there? Why is it so hard to start a dialogue in which each side would have to abandon a monochrome image of itself? Why is it even harder to conduct such a dialogue beyond the borders that offend a vane national pride? Isn't it true that unreserved dialogue releases huge energy and that the same amount of energy needs to be invested in preserving the created image regarding oneself? Or is it that by preserving the image the group preserves itself? Delusions, reconstruction of history and justification of any act of one's own religion or nation may well be the only way to sustain a group? Is this perilous pride, which is so often seen as virtue, guarding the group's vitality, extracting from its members the features they would not be aware of otherwise? Could it be that this conscious or, more often subconscious, oblivion of a religion or nation's dubious acts plays an important role, overlooked by its critics? Nietzsche wrote that nobody wants to acknowledge mistakes. People may remember disgraceful acts but when remembrance faces pride, the former gives up—he claims. What is the nature of pride? Is it fake, morally dubious, or does it simply contribute to group coherence and, as such, should not be disaggregated?

Still, the future of religion and nation lies more in discourse than in ignorance. The time will come when it will be impossible to remain untouchable, when attempts to suppress the unpleasant facts about one's own group will add to a crisis instead of reducing it, and the group will then start to invest efforts, modest at first, to unveil the reasons that prevent it from discovering the unpleasant reality and make it fill in the gaps artificially. Whether that time has come yet is difficult to assess because nations here are undergoing self-examination. At times when nations feverishly seek to adjust their interests to the new circumstances, they expect assistance from religious communities. Regardless of the direction of this process, it cannot be said that national phenomenon is subsiding, as is the case in the West. The golden bolt of nation-state, according to Andrei Ivanov, "has just begun to roll in the Balkans and, ironically

enough, the so-called international community has become an active participant in these processes.” (Ivanov, 1996:168)

If this claim, at least partially, captures the situation in the Balkans, we should not expect a very successful dialogue among those nation-states and, by consequence, among their leading religious communities. These communities cannot easily distance themselves from the secular trends of their respective nations and stick to them even when nations are heading in a direction opposite to peaceful religious teachings.

An authentic dialogue will not start while nations and religions accept the intentionally blurred reality. While all acts of a religion or a nation concerning another are articulated as though they were in harmony with positive religious or secular norms, it is an illusion to expect positive outcomes of a dialogue. Likewise, it does not help to keep silent about unpleasant past events. Every group should examine its own acts in an attempt to separate those that harmed others from those which can stand even the harshest scrutiny. In this way, sources of hatred which are passed from one generation to another can be reduced.

It is not easy to acknowledge one's falls; it is in fact one of the greatest challenges that a group can face. Although it appears to undermine sustainability, unless this is done, the chances that then inherited pattern of one's own righteousness and the responsibility of the other will be changed are meager. Unless we accept the guilt, an avalanche of mutual accusations shall continue to roll under its weight, and future generations will be sacrificed. There is no religion that in practice abstains from all the things it condemns in its purified religious tradition. If a nation has, ever since its inception, turned religion into an intermediary that justifies even its most controversial acts, or at least attempts to do so, given that religions usually respond positively, then religions have to examine to what extent this kind of compliance coincides with

the verified religious approaches. By doing that, both the religion and the nation concerned would purify and create more realistic preconditions for a dialogue. As far as Christianity is concerned, it is not impossible for it to uncover the truths about itself because, "Christians will find the weakest justification of all in ignorance given that they have two thousand years of experience, the world and their own Church behind them." (Jukić, 1997:480)

Yet, individuals who can understand the tricks and skills used by their own group in order to hide, omit or annihilate past activities will not do when it comes to changing a general mood. An apparent change occurs when the majority becomes aware of the traps hidden in group psychology, which sometimes turns into pathopsychology. What other name can be given to the collective oblivion of a majority which fails to remember the events that played a decisive role in issues of life and death for certain communities, or should we call it confusion they are not responsible for? Helmut Dahmer called such states collective amnesia that threatens to come back along with the executors who, in the name of majority, engage in religious and ethnic cleansing of those who think differently from the mainstream. Controversies in some parts of southeastern Europe (former Yugoslavia) cannot be dealt with in a satisfactory manner unless past and current events are clarified to the majority and assessed as an attempt to prevent everything that was incoherent with the momentous religious and national standards and preferences. "Our only chance lies in creating a majority from a minority." (Dahmer, 1993:105) How do we create such a majority? For, it tends to recognize and affirm itself through myths that create bonds and is suspicious of everyone who tries to remind it of other possibilities in social life. Religious or ethnic groups in a modern society can no longer cherish self-sufficiency at least not without the highest costs. Wherever their partisans turn, they notice a confusing, diversified reality that weakens the feeling of self-importance and blurs the mission that previously seemed crystal clear. Mixofobia is strengthened

as the roots of traditional society, in which the role of religion is to preserve a social framework, get weaker. Occasional attempts by religious (and national) communities to open up are opposed, and even when it seems that the necessary steps have been made to alter a community's behavior, the process of change can be halted or moved backwards. Thus, the Second Vatican Council announced a major shift within Catholic Christianity in the sixties, especially with regard to other religious communities. From that time on, attempts have been made to make its spirit more relative and to diminish the basis for dialogue and reconciliation.

Inimical approach or, to say the least, misunderstandings that, in reality, alternate with periods of tolerance and respect, can hardly inspire hopefulness. It should be noted that religions here have been suspicious of one another and their willingness to accept others was always shadowed by their wariness or dislike. And, whenever nationalist tones became predominant in an ethnic group, misunderstandings were deepened. An author, in a rather touching description, claims that he does not know of people more unhappy than those in the former Yugoslavia. "There are other unhappy people in the world, maybe equally unhappy, but hardly more so. All of us here are fragmented and we do not love each other or else we would not have gone through so many misfortunes... I am not sure how much hope is there to brake the circle." (Sbutega, 1999:18) In terms of love and hate there may be little hope. Freud explained why believers of one religion couldn't have equal love for the believers of another. Playing on this thought, Karl Popper claims that natural reactions divide people into friends and enemies. We think, Popper says, with our blood, our national inheritance, class consciousness, God's mercy, etc. We cannot build equality on sympathies and the lack thereof, nor can we base it on love and hate. Emotions do not suffice to avoid conflicts in social relations. Popper concludes that "emotions, even love, cannot substitute the force of institutions controlled by reason." (Popper, 1995:236).

While it is clear why there is not much love between the members of different religions, one must note an increasing inclination towards dialogue. It is based on the realization that misunderstandings can be overcome through dialogue, and sometimes participants feel enriched by the experience. Hence, a dialogue does not imply attempts to corner one's interlocutors in a position of inferiority and use their weak spots to one's own advantage; it means accepting others as they are and trying to influence only those constraints that make the exchange of views harder. Such a dialogue also means accepting the responsibility for past actions, aimed at religious expansion at all cost, defamation of different beliefs and attempts to prove that only one side can be the savior. A promising dialogue means a resolute admission of the fact that every religion, and especially every nation, bears a potential inclination for violence. Unless this course of events is taken into account, we would agree with a conclusion that "what must not be cannot be" (Grunfelder, 1999:42).

As long as the majority of believers or community members feels the need to present the world as a place that exists to preserve their role of the chosen, dialogues will keep turning into monologues and the first opportunity to impose one's own views will be grasped. In order to halt the repetition of this practice and stop negating the responsibility of religions and nations by suppressing the unpleasant memories, we need to deny defenses of this kind. That is not easy because it is not only about a "cunning mind" but also about the subconscious deletion of the otherwise burdening parts of our past. A more likely solution to problems caused by our past and present actions emerges when we give up irresponsible behavior and when, as Dahmer said, "we admit mischievous acts of a national collective body we are part of (even if we do not wish to be) as a historic reality." (Dahmer, 1993:104). Since religion is closely linked to nation and is even its revitalizing element, it must have an appropriate place in the process of de-mystification of national reality. Failing that, everything will be constantly repeated, while

religion and nation will continue to be safe havens for narcissism and sources for the perpetuation of conflicts emerging from the need to prove one's own advantages and others' disadvantages, and claim the rights denied to others.

Whether such steps forward are possible—given that it is not certain if religion and nation can come to life without selfish tendencies—needs to be verified. We can only guess whether the absence, or weaker presence, of self-worth along with lesser pride would have a negative impact on nation and religion. It is certain, nevertheless, that when formed in the current manner, they remain a source of tensions, occasionally even fanaticism, instead of understanding and tolerance. As long as this is the case, dialogue, as a civilized mechanism, shall be unsustainable and liable to interruptions, often at the very beginning, as is the case in this region.

Dialogue, however, remains an unparalleled means of communication because it is based on respect for one's interlocutors and, what is more, on efforts to look for their good sides. It means communication wherein one side would not seek self-promotion at the expense of the other; it shows that an approach which is not prejudiced can move things forward even in the case of most complex conflicts. Even if there are doubts regarding the outcome, tensions are relieved and a more solid path for conflict resolution appears. This is why efforts need not be spared when it comes to preserving a dialogue even if the participants are not convinced of its success. We need to remember the age-old experience that sometimes, when this is the case, we need to advocate something as if our efforts will be fruitful and work on it as if our work will produce results. However tiny our hope may be at that moment, we need to undertake everything in order to change the pattern in which religion and nation are the causes of conflicts and to turn them into chances for acceptance. It is not possible to discuss dialogue without reference to numerous minority groups in

this region. Majority groups often try to reduce this complexity through assimilation wherever possible by giving lesser or greater rights, but hardly ever equal to those they enjoy, and in extreme cases, even resort to forced displacement as a pressure mechanism. In these different ways, the situation is simplified to the extent of creating uniform societies in terms of religious and ethnic identities; but is, still, not resolved. As much as certain religions or nations try to homogenize the population and, to a degree, even succeed in their efforts, minorities definitely remain a legacy of the past and an introduction to the future, in line with the prevailing global trends.

Ever since the minority issue emerged as a problem at the beginning of the past century, and international organizations started to deal with it, various measures have been used to resolve it, but to little avail. States often fear religious and national minorities, while the minorities, on the other hand, feel disrespected and can even lose respect for themselves. An author says that the one who succeeds in resolving relationships between minorities and a majority “might save the world from a catastrophe.” (Tatalović, 1997:30).

Even if only partly true, this claim shows both the importance and the tragic character of this relationship. Majority attempts to either get rid of minorities or to keep oppressing them. Sometimes, this is mirrored by an aggressive minority tending to transform itself into a majority and proceeds with ruthlessness similar to that of a previous majority. But, this is a difficult task and when minorities manage to avoid apathy, they ought to advocate their minimal rights.

In environments where civic rights are a first-rate issue, minority problems are less expressed and people are not judged by their inherited religious, national and similar features, but by their adherence to civic ideals. Rare cases where this model was successfully applied convince us that majority religiocentrism and

ethnocentrism prevail in the world today. In such environments, human rights can be circumscribed, especially those related to smaller groups which are, with rare exceptions, only marginalized groups that provide an alibi for the intolerant acts of a majority. While minorities exist, the majority clusters in order to transfer its own responsibility to another and refuses to reexamine its role in turning a segment of society into pariahs. Through ignorance, contempt or bogus sympathy for the minority, the majority derives its supremacy and, at the same time, flatters itself in triumphant rhetoric. It takes the subordinated position of others as given, forgetting that it is a historical relationship and that relations between majorities and minorities are not fixed forever. Small religious communities are “dry branches” on the trunk of the right religion, and their status can change from recognition to denial, depending on the needs of the majority.

Religious communities are not used to conducting a dialogue with them and do not want to exclude a possibility for them to go back to where they came from. At best, they are “believers in another way” but still lack the preconditions that would enable them to participate in a dialogue as equal partners. Or else, they are treated without respect and are practically segregated. That is why a person, who became a minority member with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, can say: “It was easier to come through the war. I have to be frank—nobody touches us now. But nobody notices us either. We do not exist! We are alive but not living! (Lovrenović, 1999:43). Unexpectedly, many people here have found themselves belonging to minority groups due to the war; Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosniaks and others (not to mention the minorities of long-standing) are left exposed to whatever treatment those in power may choose, just because they happen to be a minority on the territory of a constitutive or majority nation. How can a dialogue unfold between people whose starting point is sheer power and others whose helplessness is enough of a burden to transform the dialogue into a meeting of unequals.

Neither can they express their religious beliefs freely, despite the legislation praised as an example of highest freedoms. Religious activities, therefore, become covert. It is illusionary to expect that relations between religious communities can improve unless everyone enjoys similar religious freedoms. The first step forward on that path is to understand that freedoms are not equally distributed; that supremacy of the majority is mirrored by the fear of the minority; that the status quo promoted by a majority is mirrored in the minority's desire to change it. Consequences can be unfortunate for everyone. Small and, especially, large religious communities have a lot to contribute to redefining their relationships, although they first have to strengthen their own legitimacy because it is only then that they can take the side of good and reject evil. Their success depends on their ability to distance themselves from nationalistic preoccupations, which is, objectively speaking, very difficult, as revealed by the successful experiences of a few individuals. With rare exceptions, in newly formed states of the former Yugoslavia, a "probation" of people who happen to belong to a non-dominant religion or nation is under way. Religious or national monomania is still prone to presenting itself as a blueprint that can only be approved or those who are in disagreement will be left to the capricious responses of the majority religion or nation and their pride.

Religious servitude to a nation in embryonic democratic governments (in which religious communities also regain the will to reconstitute social power they once had) shows all of its weaknesses here. If religion continues to lower itself to the level of collusion with the regime that can be sustained only in chaotic times, it will be accepted but will distance itself further from its high moral standards. To reduce the danger—and people can advocate something even if chances for success are rather thin—we can use dialogue, even with groups we perceive as odious, often because they are just slightly different from us, to help us choose the paths with less prejudices along the way.

Notes

1. This is not an opportune time to discuss terms like religion, religiousness, religious community, secular, sacred, mystical, ethnic, people, nation, nation-state, identity, majority, minority, etc. It is assumed that there is at least a minimal consensus regarding those terms. Additionally, it seems that even if more attention was devoted to those terms, it is unlikely that they would become any clearer. When we study them, they are like a Snowman melting away—as humorously noted by an author.

Conclusions

Religious communities that engage in active dialogue with other communities, manage to recognize trends that can cause envy by emphasizing one's own advantages and minimizing the features of the other. A relationship with smaller and less influential communities is always an indicator of the capacity for dialogue. The lack of trust in them and the belief that they are an impotent product of religious life, on the other hand, form an inadequate part in the history of large and usually privileged religious communities in Southeastern Europe.

The capacity of religious communities—as religious offsprings—is severely limited by the capacity for dialogue of nation-states which now have prevalent influence in the region. If these states are not ready for an inter-ethnic dialogue, religious communities, too, tend to stay away from each other. Whether a religion will become an additional source of conflict or an intermediary in an enhanced understanding depends, to a significant extent, upon the character of those nations. In the last decade of the 20th century, religious communities in the former Yugoslavia have not succeeded in separating themselves from the extreme features of the respective nation-states in a timely and clear fashion. Their voices were not always loud enough in opposing the brutal violence against the

people of other nations and different religious creeds. If religious communities have not grasped every opportunity to demonstrate the peaceful intentions of their respective religions, it does not mean that they are destined to follow in the footsteps of nation-states. Even when there is not much hope, and despite the challenges, religions are rightly expected to promote the spirit of dialogue and tolerance.

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David Steele

**PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO INTER-RELIGIOUS
DIALOGUE AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF RELIGIOUS
COMMUNITIES AS AGENTS OF RECONCILIATION**

How can religious communities become agents of reconciliation? What is the potential for positive input? What are the problems or obstacles in the way? These are the questions that I will address in this paper.

First, it is important to recognize that religion has often been a significant contributor to the escalation of conflict. One can look back over centuries and observe this phenomenon—The Crusades in the Middle Ages, The Wars of Religion in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and present day fundamentalist assaults on secularization.

In the modern era, however, religion has played a different role than in centuries past. There are few holy wars today, carried out explicitly in the name of religion. Instead, in today's world religion has often become the boundary marker separating ethnic or racial populations. It functions as a mark of identity by which people distinguish themselves from each other. What distinguishes a Serb from a Croat from a Bosnian Muslim other than the culture that has grown up around religious differences?

The use of religion as a marker of identity is not necessarily bad. Because religion touches on ultimate loyalties, religious identity is, of necessity, frequently a central defining element of who we are. The problem comes when one's own identity is formed over against the other, when one's own identity is formed out of fear and the other is demonized. Religion can get sucked into this pattern if there is an unhealthy connection with nationalism. This

can happen when a legitimate desire for collective self-esteem or self-protection leads to intolerance and deligitimation of the other. Intolerance is usually the result when nationalism or ethnicity is sacralized into the highest and ultimate loyalty, replacing allegiance to God.

Yet, even when nationalism has replaced God, I want to affirm that all is not lost. In every religious tradition, there is the affirmation that God's creation is good, that human beings are valuable, and that believers are called to love one's neighbor and to give hospitality to the stranger. This affirmation is present alongside any narrow assertion of truth and any nationalistic identity. Very often I find strong voices within each religious tradition calling their own people to recognize the call to love that is at the heart of their own faith. Sometimes there are contradictory voices, in which case there is the tendency for outsiders to charge people or groups with hypocrisy. I see such moments, however, as opportunities to utilize cognitive dissonance to challenge people to move toward greater degrees of self-awareness regarding their own faith tradition. The central question, therefore, is how to help religious people utilize their own basic religious beliefs in order to move themselves from hostility to becoming agents of reconciliation.

In order to facilitate this transformation, we must begin with people's experience. We must begin with people where they are, not where we might wish them to be. In the context of war, this means beginning with the experience of being a victim of aggression. We must find creative ways to deal with everyone's sense of victimization.

For the past six years I have led numerous seminars designed to assist religious people in the former Yugoslavia to creatively come to terms with their own sense of victimization. We have helped people from each of the religious communities to examine together ways by which they can get out of a cycle of revenge. To

facilitate this exploration, we have developed a diagram depicting both trap of victimization and the possibilities for escaping out of this cycle.



The inner circle depicts the traditional cyclical nature of victimization and revenge. It describes the common tendency for victimhood to lead to further aggression, which, in turn, leads to new victims, thus creating a cyclical spiral of violence. The first stage in this process is the experience of "injury and pain." At this stage, it is very common for people to initially be in a state of shock or denial. Many people I have met in Bosnia told me that they could not believe, at first, that they were really in the middle of a war. They had so many friends among all ethnic groups that they simply could not accept that war was happening. The second stage occurs when it becomes impossible to deny that war has started. This stage is called "realization of loss." There are numerous levels

of possible loss, with severe injury or death of loved ones being the most extreme. However, one can also experience loss of home or other possessions, loss of nation or identity, loss of life style or culture, or loss of job or any other aspect of future well being. The third stage in this inner circle is “suppression of grief and fears.” The attempt to avoid pain is a common survival mechanism in the midst of traumatic experience. Parents, for example, will hardly take time to process their losses while the lives of their children are in danger. They will simply flee. The fourth stage is one of “anger” when one asks “Why me?” or “Why us?” Suppressed grief and fear turn into anger that is frequently so strong that it is directed not only at the perpetrator, but at anyone associated with him/them—family, neighbors, national or religious group, etc. The fifth stage is a “desire for justice or revenge.” In this stage, the sense of betrayal typically leads to a projection of anger at all who do not perceive the situation as the victim does. Often the whole world is blamed for being indifferent to one’s suffering. Consequently, the sense of victimhood, isolation, abandonment and helplessness continues to grow, as does the desire to destroy the perpetrator and his group. At this point the victim is absolutely convinced that he is justified to strike back in order to injure the aggressor as much as possible. The quest for justice has turned into a crusade of revenge. In the sixth stage the victim “creates myths, heroes, and the right conflict history” in order to further justify the act of revenge. The victim needs to become convinced that he is absolutely right in his own eyes, the eyes of his community, and the eyes of the world. Therefore, the aggressor is portrayed as inhuman, evil, and deserving the worst punishment. So the victim creates his own version of the history of the conflict, complete with heroes, villains, legends, and myths. Actual events are separated from their context, deprived of their complex nature, and mixed with popular beliefs and stereotypes. Many stories recounting the other side’s past and present brutalities are retold and published. The history of the other people is presented as a chain of examples of violent aggression. It is a black and white mentality that prevails,

excluding the possibility of hearing any other voice or recognizing any other perception that might reflect the complexity of the issues or the interests of other parties to the conflict. The seventh and last stage is “an act of justified aggression.” After the mobilization of moral justification, the victim is ready to strike back. If this justified aggression is performed successfully, the enemy is severely injured and the moment of triumph has come. However, the previous victim has now become the aggressor. Although from his perspective it has all been justified, there is no justification for this action from the perspective of the other. Thus this act becomes the initial experience of the conflict for the “new” victim, who may or may not be exactly the same person or group responsible for the initial aggressive action. The new victim traces everything back to this moment in order to justify his own subsequent retaliation. The cycle has been completed and the roles are now reversed.

The basic question confronting us is how to break out of this vicious cycle. I would like to suggest a series of steps that can be taken. Before delineating the stages in the outer circle, I want to stress that, unlike diagrams, life is not linear. Real people will not get out of this cycle at one point and continue along some orderly path to reconciliation. Real people will oscillate in and out of the two circles at many points. It is, however, instructive to explore the various stages that will need to be navigated at some point in the process.

After the point of initial injury and pain, the first stage in the outer circle is “mourning, expressing grief, and accepting loss.” In the seminars that I lead, the *modus operandi* is story telling. People need to share their experience with one another across the divisions. When people share their personal pain and reflect together on their common or different experience, they begin to build bonds. Yet, there is more to this process than just sharing with one another. At the very heart of it is a sharing of the trauma with God. The lament motif in the Jewish scriptures is instructive at this

point. In certain Psalms we find injured and hurt people crying out to God, requesting God's protection, and recalling the ways in which God has been faithful. The purpose of such ritualization in ancient Israel was to offer up to God all injury and hurt so that God could heal the pain and God could bring justice. I personally have witnessed people from different communities sharing the ways that God has helped them through their trauma. Sometimes this has culminated in people writing their own laments, sharing them with the whole seminar as they offer up their prayer to God.

The second stage is to "confront fears" in much the same way that people are encouraged to mourn their losses. The same story telling process naturally can lead from sharing past grievances to fears of the future. I am reminded of a Bosnian woman who, with her children, spent time in a concentration camp during the recent war. After detailing the horror of her experience in that camp, she closed by saying that it was her belief in God that had helped her to control the fear. People in the midst of war are legitimately afraid of many things: personal safety, social transformation, economic crisis, political manipulation, etc. All of these fears need to be explored and lifted up before God.

The third stage involves "identifying needs and re-humanizing the other." The main question here is "Why them?" "Why did *they* do this to us?" In one way, this is the same question as the one asked in anger in the inner circle, except the emphasis is different. Here the question is honestly being asked about the motivation of the other. It is not easy to ask this question due to the existence of persistent stereotypes. Yet it is possible to admit that the actions of even the worst enemy are motivated by very human needs. The alternative is to view them as crazy and their actions as totally irrational. Such an explanation, however, brings no sense of security for the future. Fears that the other could victimize us again are still present. The only hope is to begin to understand the other's fears and needs. Very often we have found that people discover that their needs are

similar if not the same. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (delineating a ladder beginning with security and moving upward to include identity, community and self-actualization) can help different communities identify likely needs within any community's experience at a given time. During a seminar in Sarajevo, held in the midst of the war, an imam from Žepa shared how he began to ask, sincerely, what were the needs of the Serbs who were shooting at his Muslim people. Even though his people were struggling to survive, he turned his attention also to the needs of the enemy. He remembered times in history when the Serb people had suffered at the hands of Muslims and concluded that both people were struggling to satisfy the same basic need for survival. This Muslim man was still angry over what had happened to his people. He still viewed the act of aggression against his people as evil. But the aggressor was now humanized.

The fourth stage is "acknowledgment of wrong-doing, truth telling and re-writing history." If we begin by acknowledging each other's pain, then we must be prepared to admit that someone is responsible for inflicting this pain, not only from the *other* side but from *our* side as well. The Jewish scriptures are also helpful in opening the eyes of the victim to this reality. The same lament motif found in the Psalms can be found in the prophets of the Old Testament. However, this motif is paralleled by another motif of confession of sin. Jeremiah, for example, identifies the suffering of his own people but also asks them to examine themselves and the Israelite people as a whole. These prophets implore the people to ask God for salvation from their own sin and to remember God's forgiveness offered to both them and the enemy. I find that people from war-ravaged societies in the former Yugoslavia easily identify with the losses suffered by the Jewish exiles of Jeremiah's time - loss of country, language, Temple, all of the normal identity markers of their society. Yet they were challenged to examine the condition of their own hearts and the actions of their own ethnic group as a part of the healing process that God would perform

in their midst. I have seen courageous people from all the faith communities in this region begin to examine themselves instead of simply hurl condemnation at the other side. I have heard people admit the hardness of their own hearts and the grudges they have held against other groups. I have seen two different ethnic groups share lists of atrocities that they know that *their* group committed against the other. To do this conscientiously is to speak the whole truth and to participate in re-writing a more accurate version of history.

The fifth stage is “the choice to forgive.” I define forgiveness as giving up all hope of a better past. Thus far in this outer circle we have spent much time dealing with the past—grieving it, confessing it. At this stage it is time to ask if we can let go of our hope to make it better. The biggest problem we face in dealing with forgiveness is the sense that people fear that someone will force it on them. We need to allow people to approach this sensitive topic at their own speed. However, it is very important that people understand what forgiveness is and what it is not. It is not absolution. It is not an act of freeing other people from the consequences of their actions, including any kind of amnesty from punishment for criminals. Forgiveness is not done for the sake of the other person, but for oneself. It needs to be viewed as an individual’s own journey out of the grip of the past and into an open and promising future. In the words of Jeremiah, it is the choice to live and not to die. Personal forgiveness, offered for the sake of the victim himself, does not mandate it for society where issues of justice have to be faced. Though it may open up the possibility for these issues to be faced more honestly.

The sixth stage is “envisioning restorative and operative justice.” Here our attention rightly shifts from the individual to society. If someone has been able to acknowledge the wrongs committed by one’s own group and enter into a forgiveness that truly frees him from the victimhood syndrome, then he is ready to examine the

question of justice in society. However, the justice being examined will be far greater than the focus on punishment and revenge that we saw in the inner circle. Punishment will be only one aspect of justice. Justice in all its fullness will be seen as the restoration of right relationships between people. It will involve coming together with other “changed” individuals from all ethnic groups, in order to examine all the needs of all people in the society. This full picture of justice is positive in focus, not negative. It envisions a society in which the needs of victims, as well as perpetrators, and indeed the whole community, are taken seriously. There is no longer an attempt to delegitimize some needs because the person or group is deemed to be unworthy. Yet, there must be some kind of selection process. Meeting all the needs of any society is unrealistic. Achieving perfect justice is always a utopian ideal. One way of determining a strategy for operative justice is to select the most basic level of need that has been thwarted at that moment of time in a given society, and to ask how this group of people might work together to address the obstacles that block its fulfillment.

We are now ready for the seventh stage, that of “problem solving or joint planning.” If good groundwork has been laid—identifying needs and fears, clarifying perceptions, acknowledging wrongs, and envisioning justice—then a group is ready to begin a problem solving process. Problem solving involves working together with participants from different communities to resolve a dispute. It necessitates working together on the problem rather than attacking each other. One of the basic techniques in such a process is joint brainstorming regarding very specific problems. People from different communities can work together to create options for overcoming obstacles and eventually resolving conflict between them, thus advancing one concrete aspect of justice within their society. By utilizing this methodology I have seen participants in mixed religious seminars in Bosnia develop very creative approaches to complicated issues such as corruption and refugee return. The results have included a prime time TV program on

corruption in Republika Srpska and a refugee return program in which six thousand Croats have returned to a previously Muslim dominated Fojnica.

Finally, we end the outer circle with an arrow pointing toward reconciliation. All of the above is part of the process leading toward reconciliation. Full reconciliation, though, is an unending process. In real life, groups will continue to be in conflict and will go back and forth through this diagram many times. The most important task is to be willing to work toward reconciliation by addressing whichever issue is on the table at the moment.

Andrija Kopilović

THEOLOGY OF ECUMENISM AS A JOINT PATH

Introduction

The Catholic Church, together with Orthodox churches (Greek, Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbian and Albanian), ranks among the most important religious communities in the Balkans. The long history they shared suggests the basic conclusion that, in view of the religious diversity—if to the above-mentioned believers we add the followers of Protestant churches (Evangelical, Reformed, Adventist, Baptist) and the very numerous members of the Islamic community, along with the coexistent Jewish community—the only possible mode of life in these parts is the one of tolerance-ecumenism-coexistence. These three words are therefore the key to the possibility of joint life in the Balkans.

At its Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church irrevocably undertook to follow the ecumenical path and thus obey the words of the Holy Ghost instructing us to attentively read “the signs of the times”. Everything we have been experiencing these years in our search for unity only heightens the identity of the Church and its mission in history. The Catholic Church admits and confesses *the weaknesses of her sons*, aware that their sins amount to just as many betrayals and obstacles to the achievement of the Redeemer’s goals. And, since it feels permanently called to renewal in the evangelical spirit, it continues repenting. At the same time, it recognizes and increasingly praises the power of the Lord who—by endowing it with sanctity—draws it to him, conforming it to his suffering and resurrection.

Taught by the diverse events in its history the Church seeks to shed every reliance on purely human reality, in order to live a deeper evangelical law of blessedness. Aware that “truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power” (The Second Vatican Council, Declaration on religious freedoms—*Dignitatis humanae*, 1), it seeks nothing but freedom to announce the gospel. Its authority is actually confirmed in the service of truth and love.

Tolerance – coexistence – ecumenism

Hardly any age in history, in so short a time, could have placed so many changes, dramatic conflicts and insoluble problems on the agenda of culture, society and politics, as had the past century in the Balkans. Times like that also require a theological approach to the evaluation of the epoch and its events.

The time man has been offered to pass on this earth carries a task. Namely, man is not a being who could live a life without having to answer the question of what he has made of it. He received a gift of life and a proposition for his life task. Having in mind what he bestowed on each person as an unique individual, the Creator is giving everyone the possibility to realize himself as he has been created. Had the Creator failed to offer this to his creatures, he would have been unjust. Theology therefore with the deepest conviction accepts that everyone's life is unrepeatable, unique and meaningful, but equally claims that everyone's life is planned, although not determined but rather invited, to cooperation with the Creator. Therefore the answer to the question as to which is our time, the response is always the same, THE ONE WE ARE LIVING IN NOW. A person aware of these categories cannot say, “If only I lived in another time, I could realize myself”. That is a contradiction. Your time is yours, and my is mine, the one in which I live this unrepeatable life. Therefore, my time is for me

the OPTIMAL TIME, because I am realized in it. Within this theological reflection—time as a task and life as a task—even for so difficult a time as this theological ways may be found so we could live it and realize our life path, without crossing it with that of another.

By its very nature, Christianity has through history been a faith that considers tolerance to be a virtue; namely, if we acknowledge the unrepeatability of every person and time, we must also acknowledge the necessity of differences and diversities. To accept another as different and other is not easy. We tend to circumscribe, simplify, group, select and then reject the other and different according to some prearranged categories. However, this very fact, this very danger, must prompt the man of the present day to think that the other, being different, is to him a source of enrichment and not of impoverishment. If he claims his right to be and to realize himself, he must recognize this same right to every other person. The rights and duties are often intertwined to the extent conducive to confrontation. Whenever these rights and duties are wrongly interpreted, tolerance is again called to solve the conflict, by giving both space and time and possibility to accept - even if without approval—an occasional misuse of rights and duties up to the limit which does not endanger the basic human rights backed by divine authority. Tolerance is not a compromise, but an ethical position of acceptance, and even of enduring the different and other. The motive which ethically sustains this position in a man of good will gives him the courage to be a man, the more so the higher and wider he goes in his acceptance of greater differences and greater riches without judging, and especially without condemning, the other only for being different. Tolerance indeed becomes a moral category, since God does not give man the power to pull cockle with the wheat, but leaves it until the harvest, which is reserved for the knower of man—God, to separate the cockle from the wheat . Thus, in these times of tensions and conflicts, tolerance is the moral way of a Christian towards building a higher category.

Coexistence is also a moral category for a believer, since it “directs” his relation with the other and different, but not only in terms of endurance and patience, but also in terms of encouraging cooperation. At its Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church spoke clearly on the categories of coexistence and cooperation with everything offered for the overall promotion of mankind and considered a value, no matter where it came from. Namely, a value is always positive and if turned negative immediately loses its worth. That is why a Christian is called to give his contribution to the promotion of all values building this world into a more perfect and better society. He should in particular do that by responding to the uneasy questions of the sense of life and conscience building, construction of a true human community, by contributing to building the peace and a sound society and, in particular, by his devotion to human labor as a means to fulfill the mission of life. Coexistence is thus the active ethics of a Christian whereby he cooperates with those who may be out of church but still travel the same path of life and build the same society, so that by sharing a life and enriching one another with values, they may promote the general good of all. That, again, is no compromise, but a true valuation and promotion of differences, which leaves full autonomy to the peculiar fields of science, culture and politics.

Ecumenism, made a norm for Catholics at the Second Vatican Council, defines the heights of coexistence with other Christians who have inherited the faith and the graceful life of Christ. The principles supported by catholic ecumenism are the following:

- First, all attempts to remove the words, judgments and acts which in neither justice or truth match the positions of other Christians, and therefore make mutual relations difficult;
- A dialogue in all Christian communities, with highly informed experts, where everyone may provide a deeper explanation of his community's teachings and clearly reveal

its characteristics. In a dialogue of that kind, all participants acquire a more authentic knowledge and more just opinion about the teachings and lives of both communities. They thus achieve a lively cooperation in the performance of all duties required of a Christian conscience for the general good.

- Re-examination by all of their devotion to the will of Christ with respect to the Church, followed duly and consequently by resolute engagement in renewal and reform.

Thus ecumenism becomes a theological postulate of Christian conscience and the moral obligations to make the church shine before all in the truth it inherited from Christ. Everything the Holy Ghost does in other Christians, may be for our edification. Whatever is truly Christian, never goes against the true values of faith. On the contrary, it can always help a fuller grasp of the mystery of Christ and his church.

Theology, therefore, becomes a task in the renewal of the church, conversion of hearts, joint prayer, interlinking with other people, ecumenical upbringing, expression and presentation of religious teachings and cooperation with all religions for the general good of the human community.

To be a Catholic inspired by the theological teachings of the church, means to be a man facing a task essentially defined as MUCH BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF THE TEACHINGS OF ONE'S OWN CHURCH, ENGAGEMENT IN A DIALOGUE WITH BELIEVERS OF OTHER CHURCHES AND PROMOTION OF THE GENERAL GOOD OF ALL PEOPLE, which is a moral obligation in order to become and remain a Christian today.

Ecumenical dialogue as a task of the Church today

The efforts to establish an ecumenical dialogue, emerged at the time of the Councils, are far from being the privilege of the Apostolic See and concern every local or particular church. The episcopal conferences and synods of Eastern Catholic Churches have established special commissions for the promotion of ecumenical spirit and acts. Individual dioceses have developed the relevant structures as appropriate. Such initiatives reveal the specific and overall engagement of the Catholic Church in the implementation of the Council's guidelines, which is an essential aspect of the ecumenical movement (cf. Code of Canon Law, 755: The Code of Canons of the Eastern Church, 902-904). Not only has the dialogue started, but it has been proclaimed a necessity and given priority by the Church, which is why the "technique" of conducting a dialogue was refined and support provided to encourage the spirit of dialogue. In this context, it is primarily a dialogue between Christians of different churches or communities, conducted by highly knowledgeable experts, where everyone provides a deeper explanation of the teachings of his community and clearly reveals its characteristics (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 4). Yet, to know the method of conducting a dialogue is useful for every believer. Ecumenical dialogue is vitally important. Namely, through this dialogue, everybody may acquire a more truthful knowledge and more just opinion on the teachings and life of both communities, which then achieve a lively cooperation in the performance of all duties required of every Christian conscience for the general good, and, within the permissible limits, meet for unanimous prayer.

According to the conciliary understanding, an ecumenical dialogue has the characteristic of a joint search for truth, especially concerning the Church. Namely, the truth forms people's consciences and directs their acts in favor of unity. At the same time, it requires that the consciences of Christian divided brothers

and their works are subject to Christ's prayer for unity. Owing to ecumenical dialogue we may speak about the greater maturity of our mutual and joint prayer. That is possible if a dialogue at the same time acts as a test of consciousness. At this point we cannot but recall the words of John's first epistle: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar: and his word is not in us" (John, 1:8-10). This radical invitation to confess our sinfulness must also characterize the spirit of approach to an ecumenical dialogue. All sins of the world are encompassed by Christ's redemptive sacrifice, including those committed against the unity of the church: sins of Christians, shepherds and believers. Even after so many sins which contributed to historical divisions, the unity of Christians is still possible subject to the humble awareness that we have sinned against the unity and the conviction in the necessity of our conversion. Not only personal sins should be forgiven and overcome, but also the social ones, meaning the very structures of sin, which brought about the division and may yet reinforce it.

Dialogue is also a natural way for confrontation of different views and in the first place for the examination of those differences that act as obstacles to the complete unity of all Christians. The Decree on Ecumenism is, in the first place, concerned with moral stands a doctrinary discussion should face. The love of truth is the deepest dimension of an authentic search for full Christian unity. Without that love, it will be impossible to confront the objective, theological, culturological, psychological and sociological difficulties encountered in researching the differences. This internal and specific dimension should be inseparably joined with the spirit of love and humility: love of one's interlocutor and humility for truth which is revealed and may require the revision of one's claims and views.

Today, it is necessary to find a formula which will enable us to overcome the practice of fractional reading and to erase false interpretations by encompassing reality in its entirety. The advantage of ecumenism is revealed in the fact that through it Christian communities are supported to uncover the unexplored wealth of truth.

Finally, a dialogue faces the participants with real differences concerning the faith. These differences should be approached with the true spirit of brotherly love, respect of requirements of one's own conscience and that of one's neighbor, and the profound humility and love for truth. Confrontations in this matter have two reference points: the Holy Bible and the rich tradition of the Church. The Catholics may always draw on the help of the living master teachers of the Church.

Fruits of dialogue

Rediscovered riches

Everything that has been said about dialogue ever since the council is the reason to thank the spirit of truth, promised by Lord Jesus Christ to the apostles and the Church (cf. John, 14, 26). For the first time in history the efforts for Christian unity have assumed so large proportions and covered so large a space. That alone is an immense gift of God which merits all our gratitude. From Christ's fullness we receive "grace for grace" (John 1:16). To admit what God has already given us is a condition that prepares us to receive those gifts still necessary to complete the ecumenical work of unity. A glance at the past thirty years gives us better understanding of numerous fruits of joint conversion by the gospel, while the Holy Ghost made the ecumenical movement the means for that conversion.

Thus for instance—in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount—it so happens that the Christians of one confession no longer consider Christians of another their enemies and strangers but look upon them as their brothers and sisters. On the other hand, there is today a trend to substitute the term “divided brothers” with another which better reflects the depth of their communion—related to Christian nature—nurtured by the Holy Ghost, despite the historical and canonical divisions. Namely, there is talk about “other Christians”, or Christians of “other communities”.

Solidarity in the service of mankind

With increasing frequency the responsible people in Christian communities, in the name of Christ, take common views on the problems of human freedom, justice, peace and the future of the world. By doing that, they are “interlinked” by one of the fundamental elements of the Christian mission: to remind the society, if possible in a real way, of the will of God, and to warn the authorities and citizens against following the path conducive to the trampling of human rights. Naturally, as experience shows us, the joint voice of Christians in certain circumstances carries further than that of an individual.

The responsible people in the communities concerned are not the only ones who join their efforts for Christian unity. Numerous Christians in all communities, true to their faith, jointly participate in daring projects aimed at changing the world and supporting the victory of respect for the rights and needs of all, and in particular of the poor, humiliated and defenseless.

Agreement in the word of God and religious services

The advance of ecumenism is also important in yet another sphere. It has to do with the signs of agreement concerning different aspects of sacramental life. Surely, due to the differences of faith it

is not yet possible to jointly celebrate the Eucharist. In this respect, I gladly recall that Catholic officials in a number of specific cases, may administer the sacraments of Eucharist, reconciliation and anointing of the sick to other Christians who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church, but are eager to receive them, ask for them of their free will and pronounce the faith that the Catholic Church professes in these sacraments. And, vice versa, in certain cases and under specific circumstances, Catholics seeking these sacraments may also turn to non-Catholic ministers *in whose Churches these sacraments are valid*.

Acknowledgement of good in other Christians

A dialogue does not revolve only around the teachings, but encompasses a whole person: it is also a dialogue of love. The Council affirmed: “Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments from our common heritage which are to be found among our separated brethren. It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood. For God is always wonderful in His works and worthy of all praise” (The Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism—*Unitatis redintegratio*, 4).

Relations established by the members of the Catholic Church with other Christians, after the Council reveal what God works in those who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities. This direct contact between the shepherds and community members at different levels has made us aware of how other Christians bear witness of God and Christ. In this way, wide space has been opened for full ecumenical experience, which is also a challenge for our present times. Was not the 20th century the time of great testimony going “all the way to bloodshed”? Does not this testimony also apply to different churches and ecclesial communities named after Christ crucified and resurrected?

This joint testimony on sanctity as faithfulness to one Lord represents an ecumenical potential extremely rich in grace. The Second Vatican Council stressed that the good present in other Christians may contribute to the edification of Catholics: "Nor should we forget that anything wrought by the grace of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of our separated brethren can be a help to our own edification. Whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what genuinely belongs to the faith; indeed, it can always bring a deeper realization of the mystery of Christ and the Church" (Ibidem). Ecumenical dialogue, as a true dialogue of salvation shall not fail to encourage this process, already initiated in itself, to continue advancing towards a true and full communion.

Growth of communion

A precious fruit of interrelationship between the Christians and the theological dialogue they are engaged in is the growth of communion. Both have made Christians aware of the religious elements they share, which, on its part, served the purpose of a still further reinforcement of their efforts to achieve full unity. In all that, the Second Vatican Council remains a powerful center of motive power and guidance.

Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium* links the teachings of the church with the acknowledgement of redemptive elements existing in other churches and ecclesial communities. This does not mean the consecration of static elements, passively present in these churches or communities. If the elements concerned are the goods of Christ's church they, by their nature, tend towards the establishment of unity. This suggests that the search for the unity of Christians is not an act left to someone's will or opportunism, but a requirement deriving from the very substance of the Christian community. In a similar way, theological dialogues with larger Christian communities also start from the recognition of the already existing degree of communion to continue progressively

discussing the differences existing in each one of them. The Lord has presented the Christians of our time with a possibility to diminish the traditional disputes.

Dialogue with Eastern churches

Bearing that in mind, we must first, with special gratitude to Divine Providence, note that the age-long damaged link with Eastern churches was once again reinforced by the Second Vatican Council. The observers from these churches attending the Council, together with the representatives of Western churches and ecclesial communities, in that solemn moment for the Catholic Church publicly manifested their join willingness for dialogue. The Council, on its part, considered the Eastern churches with objectivity and deep affection, pointing to their ecclesialism and objective links of communion connecting them with the Catholic Church. It acknowledged the large liturgical and spiritual tradition of Eastern churches, the special nature of their historical development, the discipline followed and confirmed by holy fathers and ecumenical councils from old times as well as their own way of professing the teachings. All this was done in the belief that the legitimate differences do not actually oppose the unity of the church, but rather increase its reputation and make no small a contribution to the realization of its mission. It is a slow and difficult process, which has however still been the source of great joy; it was also fascinating since it enabled us to gradually rediscover brotherhood.

Reestablishment of contacts

As for the Roman Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the process of opening towards one another was launched by popes John XXIII and Paul VI, on one side, and the ecumenical patriarch Atenagora I and his successors, on the other. This was followed by return visits of the above-mentioned

church dignitaries. These regular contacts, among other things, enable a direct exchange of information and views for brotherly harmonization. On the other hand, our joint participation in prayer habituates us to once gain live next to one another and leads us to joint acceptance and practicing of Lord's will for the unity of his church.

Sister Churches

In the spirit of that tradition, after the Second Vatican Council, the term "sister Churches" was reintroduced as referring to particular and local churches gathered around their bishops. A very important step on the road towards full communion was the abolishment of mutual excommunication, which removed the painful obstacles of canonical and psychological nature. The structures of unity before the division are the legacy of experience which directs our walk towards full communion. Naturally, during the second millennium the Lord did not stop bestowing on his church ample fruit of grace and growth. But, unfortunately, the progressive mutual distancing of the Western and Eastern churches deprived them of the riches of mutual gift and help. With God's grace we must make a major effort to reestablish full communion among them - the source of so many goods for the church of Christ. This effort requires all the good will we have as well as humble prayer and persistent cooperation, which must not be discouraged no matter what. The traditional term "sister churches" should be our permanent companion on that road.

Advance of dialogue

A mixed international commission for theological dialogue between the Catholic and Orthodox churches has, ever since its establishment in 1979, been fully committed to intensive work, gradually channeling its research towards the jointly agreed prospect of establishing full communion between the

two churches. This communion, based on the unity of faith, in continuity with the experience and tradition of the old Church, shall be fully manifested in the concelebration of the Eucharist. In the positive spirit, and taking as the basis the things we have in common, the Commission could make substantial progress and express what the Catholic and Orthodox churches can already profess as joint faith in the mystery of the Church and the link between faith and sacrament.

Relations with old Eastern churches

After the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has in different ways and with different speed established brotherly relations even with the old Eastern churches, which contested the dogmatic formulae of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. All these churches sent their observers to the Second Vatican Council; their patriarchs honored us with their visits and the bishop of Rome could talk to them as to brothers, joyously encountered after a long time. The establishment of brotherly relations with old Eastern Churches, which bears witness to the Christian faith in often hostile and tragic situations, shows that Christ unifies us despite the historical, political, social and culturological obstacles. Precisely with respect to the christological topic we were able, together with the patriarchs of some of these churches, to state our joint faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

Dialogue with other churches and ecclesial communities in the West

In its widely conceived plan for the establishment of unity of all Christians, the Decree on Ecumenism, equally takes into account the relations with churches and ecclesial communities of the West. Intending to establish a climate of Christian brotherhood and dialogue, the Council made its points within the framework of two general considerations: one of historical-psychological and

the other of theological-doctrinary importance. On the one hand, the above-mentioned document claims: "Churches and ecclesial Communities came to be separated from the Apostolic See of Rome. Yet they have retained a particularly close affinity with the Catholic Church as a result of the long centuries in which all Christendom lived together in ecclesiastical communion" (19). On the other hand, it equally realistically notes: "It must however be admitted that in these Churches and ecclesial Communities there exist important differences from the Catholic Church, not only of an historical, sociological, psychological and cultural character, but especially in the interpretation of revealed truth" (19).

Joint roots and, despite the differences, similar orientations guided the development of the Catholic Church and the churches and communities resulting from the reform in the West. They therefore share a feature that is specifically Western. The above-mentioned "differences" although important, do not rule out mutual influences and complementarity.

Church relations

We must thank divine providence for all the events testifying to the advance in our search of unity. Along with theological dialogue we must also mention other forms of meetings – join prayer and practical cooperation. Pope Paul VI gave a powerful impetus to this process by visiting the seat of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Geneva on June 10, 1969, and by his frequent meetings with the representatives of various churches and ecclesial communities. These contacts make an efficient contribution to the improvement of mutual knowledge and to the growth of Christian brotherhood. Pope John Paul I, during his ever so brief pontificate expressed his wish to continue along that path. In just the same way pope John Paul II tirelessly seeks to establish and maintain contacts with most churches and ecclesial communities, not only in Europe but also on other continents, thus on a world scale. Another reason for

great joy is the conclusion that ever since the Council we have seen many initiatives and actions in favor of Christian unity in certain local churches, which are being expanded and realized at the level of bishops' conferences, individual bishoprics, parish communities, as well as church areas and movements.

Realized cooperation

“Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Mt, 7:21). Consistency and righteousness of intentions and statements is, in principle, attained when applied in real life. This cooperation inspired by the Gospel itself, is never only a humanitarian action for Christians. It has its reason for existence in God's word: “For I was hungry and you gave me to eat” (Mt, 25: 35). Joint and public Christian action in society obtains the value of a clearly joint testimony when done in the name of God.

The continuing existence of doctrinary differences affects and limits cooperation. However, the already achieved communion of faith among Christians provides a firm foundation not only for their joined action in the social sphere but also in the one of religion. This cooperation shall advance the search for unity. The Decree on Ecumenism notes that all believers in Christ can, through this cooperation, easily acquire a better knowledge and appreciation of one another, and so pave the way to Christian unity.

Conclusion

Now, in conclusion, based on all of the above, we may ask ourselves how long a road still separates us from the blessed day when the full unity of faith will be achieved and we shall become able to celebrate God's Eucharist in harmony. The already improved knowledge of one another, along with the doctrinary agreement,

which resulted in affective and effective growth of communion, are not sufficient for the conscience of Christians who profess one, holy, Catholic and apostolic church. The ultimate objective of the ecumenical movement is the establishment of full and visible unity of all christened people. The Catholic and Orthodox churches are not the only ones in the ecumenical movement which have a demanding understanding of the unity God wants. The aspirations for such unity have been manifested by others. Ecumenism also implies mutual assistance of Christian communities so that they would always truly include all contents and requirements of the “heritage handed down by the apostles” (14). Failing that, full communion shall never be possible. This mutual assistance in the search for truth is the highest form of evangelical love. In this brave advance towards unity, the clarity and wisdom of the faith command us to avoid noncompliance with church norms. And conversely, the same clarity and wisdom bid us to avoid tepidity in efforts for unity, and even more so the preconceived opposition or defeatism which tend to take a negative view of everything. Maintaining the understanding of unity, which takes all demands of the revealed truth into account, does not mean putting a halt to the ecumenical movement. Quite the contrary, it means non-reconciliation to the seeming solutions that would not be conducive to anything permanent and firm. The demand for truth must go to the end. *Thus, in brief, the dialogue must be continued and intensified. Is it not the Evangelical law?*

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Jakob Pfeifer

ECUMENISM - INTERCHURCH - INTER RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING AND(OR) WORLD GLOBALIZATION

In this paper, I would like to draw the attention to the differences, advantages and riches as well as to the deficiencies and dangers for man, inherent in the two, let us say, above-mentioned movements.

Ecumenism, has already acquired a reputation and become a terminus technicus in church, inter-church, inter-religious and theological deliberations (especially after the signing of Charta Oecumenica between the Conference of European Churches [CEC] and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences [CCEE] in Strasbourg on 22 April 2001), but we could just as well use another term, like the Taizé community, and simply refer to "unity"; we are, thus, essentially speaking about working-acting for unity.

The next term used in the title is globalization, something that is these days increasingly becoming the subject of discussions, writings and propaganda. It is the earthly, "material" globalization of this world, the "unity" of politics, economy, banking—that of the expansion and "erasing" of borders.

Ecumenism (having to do with churches, religious-confessional communities, i.e. God's grace or the supernatural-spiritual world)—implies the work for unity of all believers, not in terms of making them all "the same", but rather in the sense of enriching them with differences, so that "we become one" in the diversity of liturgies, rites, traditions, languages, cultures, etc.

The latter world movement of material and interest nature—globalization—has its supporters as well as its opponents.

Positive about the two movements are their efforts and strivings for unity in every respect - who would not wish that?

Their negative aspects might be seen in the “destruction-disappearance” of different religious denominations through unification-uniformity, or the “destruction-disappearance” of the existing wealth of diversity of peoples, cultures-ethnoses and own identities, and finally also of the individual who would become an anonymous, only a number, in favour of the large, the majority, the strong and rich concerns and companies.

Based on this brief introduction we can ask ourselves which of these undertakings should be given priority, what should we opt for, which of these endeavors is superior and ensures us at least a somewhat better, nicer and safer future?

At this point of time and line of thought I recall an event from the times of Apostles, written in The Acts of the Apostles:

“Then went the officer with the ministers and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying: Commanding, we commanded you that you should not teach in this name. And behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine: and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us. But Peter and the apostles answering, said: We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging him upon a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be Prince and Saviour to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. And we are witnesses of these things: and the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all that obey him.

When they had heard these things, they were cut to the heart: and they thought to put them to death. But one in the council rising up, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, respected by all the people, commanded the men to be put forth a little while. And he said to them: Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do, as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, affirming himself to be somebody, to whom a number of

men, about four hundred, joined themselves. Who was slain: and all that believed him were scattered and brought to nothing. After this man, rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolling, and drew away the people after him. He also perished: and all, even as many as consented to him, were dispersed. And now, therefore, I say to you: Refrain from these men and let them alone. For if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God.

And they consented to him. And calling in the apostles, after they had scourged them, they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus. And they dismissed them. And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. And every day they ceased not, in the temple and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus (Acts 5:26-42).

Therefore, it is the question of whether something is from God, or not? Are we men after our own or God's interest? Do we seek our own glory or that of God?

We, the believers have faith and know that by living and working for the glory of God, we are simultaneously working for the benefit, dignity and salvation of every man.

The Church has, with its structure, and especially its missionary role, entered all pores of every individual—every single person. Jesus says, “Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature,” and so on.

Therefore, it is important to distinguish between God's – spiritual “globalization” and the one of this world.

Naturally, in God's globalization man is realized as man, because God's love is for every man—for God man comes first. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Thus, what comes first is MAN—THE LOVE OF GOD. "Thou shalt love thy God above all, and thy neighbor as thyself." On the other hand, foremost in the earthly globalization is the GAIN—the profit and that is why in that system a man is worth his earnings or, in other words, man and humanity are rendered worthless.

Therefore, in order for the earthly globalization to succeed, it must take the side of man, it shall have to embrace God's principles, Christian values: unfortunately we do not see that happening yet. Those who dictate the earthly globalization of this world do not reckon with the Lord and Creator of all things and thus forget that God only entrusted man with this world, as the Bible says, to guard it. Therefore, God is the Creator and Lord of all things and man is God's representative—his administrator, and should therefore behave accordingly. Bearing in mind that some men behave like Gods, i.e. wish to establish their order, instead of conforming to God's order, it is only natural that all sorts of disorder are created.

That is why we also have the protests and rejection of the earthly globalization, as presented so far, by the ecclesiastics. On the eve of the Genoa summit of G8 the holy father John Paul II himself appealed, "Hear the cry of so many poor peoples of the world," "we should allow globalization to continue, but bearing in mind justice and solidarity". On another occasion, the pope said, "Globalization yes, but globalization of solidarity, globalization of love."

This kind of earthly-worldly globalization is also criticized by the archbishop of Genoa and Cardinal Tettamanzi, quoting the Holy Father, "Globalization, a priori, is neither good nor bad, it shall be what people make out of it."

“The process of globalization must increase the respect for dignity of every person,” said Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, the envoy of the Holy See to the United Nations Office in Geneva, speaking at the annual session of the OUN Economic and Social Council.

Every state, and the government in it, accepting “globalization”—“togetherness” should be aware that it must relinquish something specifically its own, in order to gain more in “globalization – “community”. Accordingly, I may be rich myself, but is it not a kind of selfishness—egotism, while joining a community—embracing togetherness, accepting the community and being accepted by it, already make me “rich”. Along the same lines, (naturally I am now referring to “spiritual globalization”), we can say that this, too, and much more, is spelled out in the Letters, only it needs to be found and identified.

For instance, St. Paul says, “Examine everything, and keep what is good,” while the Bible, at the very beginning clearly reads, “And God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good”. (Gen, 1:31) “They were very good,” so why is it that now, in our times, we find that a lot of things are not good? Perhaps because they are “old”—unfashionable, because they were “set for all times” and have therefore become boring?!

A number of times I heard people say that we need something new, that what we have is already old! I am wondering should we change the “old” at all cost, only because it is old and unfashionable, although it is good? If we were to do that, we would easily come to the conclusion that everything should be changed, no matter.

What a miraculous term—“globalization”. The world is becoming a village. Modern media and business erase the borders of national states. But, gains are often made at the expense of others. A blessing to some men, globalization has proved to be the curse of others.

“We of the Catholic Church should not look upon globalization as a predestined or devil’s doing, but should consciously create and shape it. The Church is from the very beginning, in its origins, its essence—ontologically supra-natural and therefore also supra-cultural, etc. Look at the whole world. .. and at the same time, the Church has never been only a large organization, but also a household-family church, a church with a lot of local colors, a lively local community.

Our joint task is to introduce into the debate on globalization the human dimensions and ethical principles of the Bible, the Holy Scriptures, the Gospel. Missionary work means partnership—partners’ engagement for a new, more just world under one God. With a long breath and a lot of small steps.” (P. Dr. Hermann Schalük, president of the Pontifical Mission, Aachen).

Let me conclude by saying that every reader of this paper should sincerely judge and accept the undertaking which will be to the benefit of every single individual, so that good individuals may create good local communities, and the local communities a good “global” world community—not a village, but a worldwide family.

PART TWO

Refik Šećibović

THE BALKANS – A RELIGIOUS BORDER AREA

A discussion about the geography of religions in the Balkans requires a previous answer to the question of what the geography of religion really is. It is a young geographic discipline, which started to develop at the beginning of the 20th century, although the spread of religions has been the subject of geographic studies from ancient times. Geography of religion is a branch of the geography culture, a scientific discipline that forms a part of social geography within the system of geographic sciences. We may, therefore, conclude that the *geography of religions is a scientific discipline concerned with the diffusion of religion and the influence of this phenomenon on the life and work of people in a given territory.*

Theoretically speaking, there are three essential parts of the geography of religions:

- 1) relationship between a religion and its natural base,
- 2) diffusion and distribution of a religion,
- 3) the functioning of religion in space.

There is no doubt that the element of religions' diffusion and distribution has the largest importance for religious research. The distribution of religion is the spread of specific religious teachings at a specific (especially present) moment of time, on a specified territory. While horological approach is of particular importance in researching the distribution of a religion, of largest importance for the study of its diffusion is chronological approach. That is because the diffusion of a religion is a historical process unfolding in space with major influence on the structure of the society concerned.

In order to be able to recognize these processes, it is necessary to underline the importance of spatial diffusion as the basic element of religious diffusion, the consequences of which are reflected in the distribution of religions. Particularly important for the geography of religions is the knowledge of the two basic types of spatial diffusion:

1) continuous (expansion) diffusion

- where information and things spread from one region to the other – which may itself be further subdivided into:
 - contagious diffusion – implying direct contacts of subjects transmitting information or things;
 - cascade diffusion, implying the transmission of information and objects through a hierarchical system; and

2) relocation diffusion

- a process where information and things are diffused to far off and separate areas (Haggett).

Distribution and diffusion of religions are the main processes influencing the spatial structure of religious systems comprising the following elements:

- holy territories,
- holy places,
- religious centers,
- circulation within religious systems,
- border areas of religions,
- spatial functioning of religions.

Of largest interest for this paper are border areas of religious systems' distribution. *Religious border areas are those where individual religious systems converge and the influences of two or*

more religions intermix. A few larger areas of this kind include the Caucasia, Transcaucasia, Kashmir, Central Asia, the Malay Peninsula, Sahel in Africa, West Ukraine, Transylvania in Romania, etc.

The Balkan Peninsula, too, is one of such religious border areas.

Religious border area in the Balkans

The Balkans is the most complex border area in Europe, where Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam converge. That is why it has a remarkably mosaic structure, although in most general terms it could be divided into two main parts (zones). These, conditionally speaking, parts of territory are in the first place the meeting places of religious systems in specific regional entities. The first border zone has to do with the boundary between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. It was created in the area where the spheres of influence of Rome and Constantinople crossed and essentially represents the line dividing the East and West Roman empires. The links these two large centers of Christianity maintained with the Balkans were very strong, it being the shortest direct land route between them. This border line today stretches from northern Albania to Montenegrin littoral, Dalmatia and Zagora, Herzegovina, Banija, Kordun, through the Sava valley to the Danube, into Bačka all the way to the Tisza, to continue further north and northeast through Romania. In the conflicts of 1990s the zone was substantially reduced in many of its elements, but all efforts notwithstanding, its fulcrum failed to shift either eastward or westward.

The second zone of the Balkan border area reflects the division between Islam and Christianity with special areal variants. It is the only place in Europe (with the exception of the Russian Federation) where Islam has remained a traditional social element, through the population which embraced Islam in the Middle Ages and continued adhering to it to this day. This is for instance the

case of parts of Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, the FR of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the 1878-1918 period, after the Turkish Empire had been defeated by the newly created states, the Islamic element failed to retain its continuity. That is why Islam may be described as having more of an areal¹ character in the religious border area of the Balkans.

The complex distribution of religions in the Balkans is accompanied by a diversity of ethnicities which, although not necessarily, may coincide with confessional communities. All this complicates the relations in these parts still further, giving them a rather specific mark in wider European frameworks.

Modern churches in the Balkans in the new millennium

The position of religious communities in the religious border area of the Balkans at the beginning of the new millennium is substantially different than it was half a century before, immediately after the Second World War. The wars waged in the Balkans during 1990s did not leave the religious communities outside the globalization process, but quite the contrary, brought them in to the maximum extent. In this way, the position of religious communities in the western part of the Balkans was fundamentally changed by the very fact that the conflict outgrew its regional proportions. And while the isolation of the states kept increasing, the relations of religious communities in these parts towards wider religious structures gained strength. That, I may say, equally applies to both the Christian and Islamic religious communities.

That was, in the first place, brought about by the territorial administration of the church, which follows a different spatial

¹ Areal (Lat.) – area of natural distribution. In the geography of religion, areas appear in closed communities spread in the form of several separate units (spot-like, in a more illustrative description).

logic from the state. On the other hand, the very fact that the Balkan area is part of Europe, with a large economic and transport importance in terms of links with the Near East, increased the visibility of conflicts in it compared with those in Caucasia, around the Caspian Sea and in Central Asia (which, its natural wealth notwithstanding, is still a periphery).

There is no doubt that the conflict in the western part of the Balkans disrupted the relations among religious communities, with the largest repercussions precisely in the border zone. Ethnic and religious cleansing of these territories during the wars drew greater attention of the world public to this border area, resulting in larger influence of different religious communities (including some that, traditionally, were not numerous in these parts). Major population migrations precipitated by the war and conflicts in the Balkans (actually the largest forced migrations in Europe after the Second World War) changed the relations among religious communities, as well as the religious border area itself.

In that period, the religious border area underwent the largest changes:

- in Bosnia and Herzegovina two entities were formed reflecting a tendency to separate the Catholic and Muslim population from the Orthodox;
- in eastern and central parts of Croatia and the western part of Vojvodina, the balance between the Orthodox and Catholic population was upset;
- in Kosovo and Metohija, disruptions resulted from the outflow of the Orthodox population (after the 1999 war); and
- the border between the Muslim and Orthodox population was substantially accentuated.

Conflicts incited by quasi-religious systems, and actively joined by parts of religious communities, brought about the *segmentation* of the religious border area in the Western Balkans. Geographic

segmentation of a border area² means the creation of sharp divisions among religious groups, which thus find themselves become separated from their natural mainstreams and unable to communicate with them, and in most cases also become mutually antagonized.

The first reason for the segmentation of the border area was the creation of new state borders, due to the disintegration of the FRY. Mutually antagonized states emerged and it was only normal to expect that just as sharp boundaries would be drawn between the religious systems in the border area. Which are then the main phenomena of segmentation in the border area?

- Communism, as a spatial quasi-religious system, attempted to ideologically disregard³ the existence of the religious border area as a spatial structure of the region. This was done on an exclusively ideological basis, with attempts to substitute, space-wise, the geographic elements of the religious border area (by drawing the former republics' borders, creating mixed urban zones, suppressing the importance of religious differences existent in the public sphere, ideologically persecuting the religious officials, etc.);

² Segment (Lat.), in geographic sense is part of a territory separated from its natural body. Segmentation in the geography of religions is the division of a territory into parts separated from their natural hinterland by insurmountable obstacles preventing the movement of believers and diffusion of religious influences.

³ Ethnic and religious problems were solved in a centralized and ideological, rather than democratic manner. "Modern democratic processes, especially in multinational and multi-confessional states, are also stabilized by enabling various *autonomies*. Through them the society and state achieve better integration of higher quality. With the help of autonomies, the power and authorities are decentralized and demonopolized and the needs and interests of special groups are met in a better and more rational way. Links between people become more sincere, their respect for agreements more binding, their mutual respect more serious and mutual adjustment more natural" (Čedomir Čupić, "Politički poredak i interreligijski dijalog", in *Interreligijski dijalog kao vid pomirenja u Jugoistočnoj Evropi*, 247).

- Objective existence of another spatial quasi-religious system, which in addition to ethnic differences, also drew on the existence of religious differences to establish its own spatial borders. By contrast from the religious boundaries these borders were sharp and carried a firm legal and political subjectivity with clearly established homogenous structures within them, to facilitate the governing of a single entity, linked with the homogenous hinterland;
- The 1991-1995 conflicts in the Balkans caused the segmentation and typization of the religious border area, resulting in a compromise between the administrative division of socialist times and the border divisions sought by the quasi-religious system of nationalism. Thus today, the religious border area is in a *frozen or transitory stage* between the heritage of socialism from the period of the former Yugoslavia (persistent character) and the aspirations of nationalism to govern the territory. This situation is now sustained owing to the international (military and civil) role in the territories of Western Balkans.

What is the present situation of the religious communities in the religious border area? Generally speaking, all religious communities have sustained major losses, primarily in terms of institutional weakening and a major outflow of young believers from their respective territories. In addition, the formation of small (closed) nation states made the administration of church territories difficult. Immigration and emigration both contributed to the cooling of relations among the religious communities and believers and their mutual distancing, and had a negative effect on the processes of cultural and civilization's transformation in the post-industrial society. Civil wars and conflicts revealed the need to further analyze the characteristics of the religious border area in the Balkans, while serious analyses of the church management of this space do not exist. These analyses are necessary since they should provide the answer about the future of parts of this

border area in democratic conditions, linked with the European integration processes of the 21st century.

Politicians who started the war in these parts, lacked sufficient insight into the characteristics of the religious border area, which is why all they did had the nature of half-way measures. They changed a lot of things, without solving a single one. The present situation definitely does not suit the religious communities, or politicians, and still less ordinary people. It will have to be changed in some way before all actors become aware of changes in the space. That precisely is one of the characteristics of border areas; disruptions may change the structure, but cannot stop the processes unfolding in it. The present characteristics of the border area in the Balkans are the following:

- a shift is possible, but the consequences of existence of a border area are generally felt for a long time and are difficult to eliminate in short intervals;
- the process of church de-territorialization implies that in the long run the size of the territory administered by a church will not necessarily correspond to the number of believers or its spatial influence;
- international migrations shall, in time, change the role of religious communities and bring about the inclusion of new and different influences;
- all this shall provide a different explanation of spatial categories and their mutual conditioning in the religious border area.⁴

⁴ “For traditional religious communities this globalization probably means that they will be forced to compete, much more than so far, with other religious communities previously unknown in these parts. Urs Altermatt rightly said that the American model of the ‘free market of religions’ shows Europe the road for the future, since it is best suited to the modern achievements of the world, where people have increasing possibilities to learn something outside their own tradition” (Klaus Buchenau: “Religije na jugoistoku Evrope u 21. vijeku” u *Interreligijski dijalog kao vid pomirenja u Jugoistočnoj Evropi*, 108 -109).

This will particularly apply to religious border areas that will, in addition to preserving their own characteristics, as *traditionally persistent structures*, also obtain new communities organized in different forms. All that will be intensified with the application of new technologies in the management of religious communities, and the combined effect will give them a certain translocational character. This translocational character of religious communities shall, on its part, actualize the problem of religious border areas even more, since this phenomenon will no longer be limited to the physical encounter of different religions. But that is a problem to be addressed by new research efforts in the field of geography of religions in the 21st century.

Klaus Buchenau

**RELIGIONS IN THE EUROPEAN SOUTH EAST IN THE 21ST
CENTURY: CHANGE OF IMPORTANCE
(THE CASE OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AMONG THE CROATS)**

I am a historian and deal with the past, while the topic of my paper concerns the future. Therefore, please, do not expect a professional futurological methodology. You may take my brief presentation as reflections of a man who has, for some time already, applied himself to the study of religious issues in the former Yugoslavia, i.e. their most recent developments, but past nevertheless. In Germany, when I speak about my research of the past decades, the interests of the audience is generally quite similar to the subjects of this paper: the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the present situation and the possibility of religious communities to have a favorable influence on the future coexistence of nations. I am thus, in my reflections, always a bit of a futurologist, but a historian-futurologist whose imagination is considerably weighed by his involvement in the past. Ironically, this makes me resemble the subject of my interest, namely the Catholic and Orthodox churches, with their centuries long presence in these parts, so that their “historical memories” occasionally push them towards the past precisely where fresh initiatives for the future should be developed.

In order to be able to make any prognosis of the importance of religion in South-Eastern Europe in the 21st century we must first say how we ourselves envisage this new century and the future in general. What awaits us? I decided to propose a scenario, which does not take a lot of imagination, as we can read about it in the newspapers and hear politicians discuss it on everyday basis. That is the road of gradual integration of these parts into the European community, which inevitably implies a further penetration of the

world, most often originally Western trends in culture, economy, political system, etc. I opted for this scenario since it appears to be the most probable of all. In addition, only this particular scenario can ensure at least a measure of stable development, with a clear direction, while all other alternatives are less predictable and certainly less stable, thus rendering any forecasting very difficult.

I, therefore, start from the continuing pressures of Western Europe and America to attain the following political, social and economic objectives on the territories of the former Yugoslavia:

- marginalization of all political movements which cannot reconcile themselves to the existing state borders and aspire towards a hitherto lacking “national integration”;
- modern Western-like understanding of the term democracy, denoting not only the majority rule but also minority rights;
- economic reforms along the lines of liberal capitalism;
- opening of society towards the cultural and economic globalization. For the traditional religious communities this globalization probably means that they will be forced into a stronger competition with other religious communities and movements previously unknown in these parts. Urs Altermatt¹ rightly said that the American model of the “free market of religions” shows Europe a new road to the future, being the best suited to modern achievements of the world where people have increasing possibilities to learn something outside the frameworks of their own tradition. In brief: whether we liked it or not, I am not inclined to make too much of a distinction between Europeanization, Americanization and globalization at the present moment, and even more so in the future.

¹ Urs Altermatt, *Das Fanal von Sarajewo. Ethnozentrismus in Europa* (München /Wien: Paderborn, 1996), 107.

Of essential importance for our forecast is not only this external framework but also the social reactions to it. Societies in the southeast of Europe already incorporate discussions with the “international factor” into practically all public debates, where churches as public institutions naturally participate. Social reaction to the external challenge depends—and I apologize for the banality of this statement—on the concrete performance of the proposed American/West-European concept in certain transition countries, or if not directly on its success, than at least on the hopes placed in it. Very important in this context is the socio-economic factor, i.e. the feeling and proof that “Europe”, in economic terms, has a place for candidates from its southeast. That is perhaps where the main problem of the complete process of integration lies, since there is no such place on the international and European waiting to be occupied by the formerly socialist countries. Naturally, while there is no problem with Serbia and Croatia being markets for our exports, it is much more difficult for them to find their niche as producers and exporters. And as long as the southeast, economically speaking, remains on the margins of Europe, anti-Eastern trends of the national, popular or religious type will be sustained.

With the problems so defined we finally come to the main object of our prognosis for the 21st century: religious communities, or more specifically our illustrative cases of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church among Croats. I will define the main issue in the following manner: What kind of a relationship will these churches, which—at least potentially, encompass the majority of the Serbian and Croatian nations – assume towards the anti-Western trends automatically emerging in consequence of the difficulties of integration into the European and global structures? To the extent that both churches are in historical memory closely linked with the creation, enlightenment, building up and preservation of “their” nations, there is a possibility that they will become involved in nationalist movements opposed to European

integration, globalization, social and cultural pluralization etc. However, on a more detailed level, both cases have a few specific scenarios. As for the Croats, I would say that the potential for an alliance of anti-Western movements and the church is lower, for the following reasons:

- The very fact that the Croats obtained “their” state relieved Croatian Catholicism of a major part of its national-integrative function, at least in Croatia proper. Naturally, it is a different matter for the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The Catholic Church has from the beginning been part of the Western world and shared the pace of Western development. It has a long experience of reacting to social trends, from Renaissance through secularist enlightenment to globalization of our times. As demonstrated by the Second Vatican Council, it is capable of theologically adopting some modern principles it did not conceive itself, such as political democracy. The Catholic Church, therefore, does not fundamentally reject globalization either, but tries to make sense of it and give it a Catholic direction;²
- Due to its global organization Catholicism is itself largely a part of globalization and may recognize in it something similar to its own understanding of Christian universalism. Antiglobalism is, after all, incompatible with this kind of ecclesiastical structure.

On the other hand, a different scenario is also possible:

- If a fair number of traditionally Catholic countries turn up losers in economic globalization – which is not inconceivable in the case of formerly socialist or Latin American countries—

² See, e.g., the May issue of a German Catholic journal *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio* (god. 29, 2000) completely devoted to globalization. Substantially more conservative, but along the same lines, are the views of the commentator for *Glas Koncila* (NO. 48, 26 November 2000).

the Catholic Church shall be more inclined to appear as a vocal critic of this process. In doing that the Church could rely on certain localisms, traditionalisms and nationalisms. Should that happen, the Catholic Church could have a surprise in store for us, similar to that of the communist regimes' times when it, regardless of its universal organization and ecclesiology, offered certain nationalisms stronger support than the local ("national") Protestant or Orthodox churches—because it had its ecclesiastical center in the West, as well as greater independence from the state and more efficient organization;³ - Catholicism is controversial in the sense that it, is, on the one hand, fairly largely included in modernization processes, and, on the other, in the traditional resistance to that same modernization. In many catholic parts of Europe, priests function as kingpins of "rural resistance" to urbanization, pluralization, etc.⁴ They may invest the cultural capital deriving from the still efficient system of catholic education into their anti-globalization struggle, using broadcast media as well as other means of global communication.⁵

Regardless of the direction Croatian Catholicism will take, the conduct of the Catholic Church is still very important, in view of the traditional authority of this institution, which may be declining but certainly cannot be neglected.

As concerning the Serbs, I also start with two scenarios. The first implies a strong connection between the Orthodox Church

³ Peter F. Sugar, "The Historical Role of Religious Institutions in Eastern Europe and Their Place in the Communist Party State", in: Pedro Ramet (ed.) *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics* (London: Durham, 1989), 46.

⁴ See, e.g., Esad Ćimić's research into religiousness in Bosnia and Herzegovina: "Socialist society and religion. Examination of relations between self-management and the process of overcoming traditional religion" (Sarajevo, 1970).

⁵ See, for instance Drago Imundža's in many respects negative attitude towards globalization (Drago Imundža, "Vjerski odgoj i hrvatski identitet", *Glas Koncila*, no. 43, 20 October 2000).

and anti-western nationalist movements, primarily due to the following factors:

- The Serbian state-building project suffered a complete failure at the end of the 20th century. What Serbs today have as “their own” state are only two creations without a clearly defined international status and territorial borders: the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska. The political future of Yugoslavia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Republika Srpska and the Serbs in Croatia may still be open, but the possibility to integrate these territories into a more or less homogenous Serbian state simply does not exist. In a situation of this kind the Serbian Orthodox Church is the single institution more or less present everywhere where people declare themselves as Serbs. The starting position is such that the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) can and must be the thing best suited to its known historical memory: “the mother and guardian of the Serbian nation”. It is unlikely that in a situation of this kind it will show greater inclination towards religious pluralism among “its” Serbs. Because a nation can only have one mother...

- The SPC may reject globalization not only as a local, regional institution. All Orthodox churches of East and Southeastern Europe include members who reject the concept of a “national church” as being at variance with the universal mission of the Church. But, this does not mean that all are open to everything coming from the West. At work here is not nationalism, but anti-occidentalism. It is manifested in a fierce publicist struggle of part of the Orthodox public against the “new world order” understood as global Americanization or occidentalization. Globalization is perceived as something Western, deriving from an alien developmental logic opposed to one’s own—in the same way as the rationalist enlightenment in the 18th or communism in the 20th century. According to this pattern one’s own denotes a symphony of the church and the state, an all-comprising religious view of the world and perhaps even

a closed religious rural environment; while the alien stands for secularization, rationalist enlightenment, positivist science, consumer society and, ultimately, globalization with its mixing of cultures, identities, faiths, etc. At this point I must emphasize that I am not partial to Huntington's "conflict of civilization" which anticipates an inevitable conflict of Orthodox and Western-Christian countries⁶, but I admit that Orthodox theologians like Justin Popović doubtlessly contributed precisely to this interpretation of modern development in Europe, although this does not mean that the factor of Orthodox anti-occidentalism will be decisive. Compared with the Catholic Church the influence of Orthodox churches on the public opinion is certainly lower, as is also their authority in society in general.

In addition, the Orthodox Church seldom speaks with a single voice. Quite the contrary, it has become a fairly pluralist institution where different opinions are as numerous as its bishops. Therefore, the socio-political influence of anti-occidentals may be substantial only if they make an alliance with influential secular nationalists or a political regime of anti-western orientation. Failing that, the Orthodox Church shall probably experience the globalization of the 21st century in the same manner as the secularization of the 18 and 19th centuries. In one part it fights the modern trends, in another it closes itself into monasteries and churches, and in another still seeks adjustments, but on the whole it remains without a major influence, not only due to inefficient organization but also its deference to state interests.

The second scenario is much more favorable. I start from the fact that the European Union is after all capable of offering the countries with predominantly Orthodox population a real

⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *Der Kampf der Kulturen - Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert* (München und Wien: Schuster, 1996), 25.

prospect of integration and socio-economic development. If the Balkan governments and countries make proper use of this chance, collective trust in the future may win over the longing for a better past. In that case, Orthodoxy will, too, have a possibility to take a different look of the modern world, its historical traumas, etc. I think that particularly important in this respect may be the experience of this church outside “Orthodox territories”. Notwithstanding the fact that Orthodox Churches in Western Europe, North America and Australia remain generally attached to ethno-national collectives they still have an intimate experience of religious pluralism, separation of the religious and national consciousness and everything else brought about by the recent history of the West. I do not wish to say that this experience is in all cases fruitful or positive, since there is also the phenomenon of traditionalist insulation of emigrant municipalities. But the example of the Orthodox Church in America, which is today - regardless of its Russian roots - multinational and attracts people of most diverse religious and ethnic origins, clearly reveals that the national principle of one nation, one state, one church, does not have to be attached to Orthodoxy for all times.⁷ That is where the solution of yet another problem lies—that of the perpetuated Orthodox fear of the Catholic, Protestant, sectarian or any other “proselytism”. When the Serbian or the Russian Orthodox Church today object the proselytism of other religious communities, most often it is not the case of winning the Orthodox believers over for another faith, but of winning the religiously indifferent people for a religious community their ancestors did not belong to. I think that this is no proselytism in the narrow sense, but something quite old and natural in the history of Christianity—a mission. The response to the mission of others is, I believe, only one: a mission of one’s own. I wish the Orthodox Church the experience of so much friendship and peaceful development in the 21st century that will

⁷ C.J. Tarasar, J.M. Erickson, *Orthodox America 1974-1976* (New York, 1975).

allow it to promote its mission. In this way alone shall it be able to join the inevitable religious competition and shed the unwarranted sponsorship and control of the state. And only thus shall it be able to reveal to the world the spiritual riches of Orthodoxy.

Radmila Radić

THE STATE, SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM 1946 UNTIL THE MID-SIXTIES

One of the main questions historiography has been raising for years is the one of ascertaining which of the churches endured greater sufferings under communism, and the response is usually linked with the position of the nation accounting for the majority of its believers. This paper shall try to respond whether the policy towards the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church pursued by the party and the state in that period actually reveals some differences resulting from specific tendencies, or whether their different position was the outcome of other circumstances.

Generally speaking, there are three basic motives which influenced the Yugoslav party and political elite in articulating its policy towards religious communities throughout this period. These were in the first place the ideological premises of Marxism and Leninism, the historical memory and, finally, the leadership's authoritarian aspirations. These three motives gave rise to three principal objectives: to limit the influence of religion and activities of religious communities in society, to control their work and to apply pressure on their representatives in order to ensure their loyalty to state bodies. The period from 1945 until the early 1970s could be conditionally divided in two stages. The first, from 1945 until 1953/4, and the second from 1954 until the late 1960s. As of 1945 up until 1954/5 the Yugoslav state was strictly centralized and its party and state apparatuses were actually merged, although this symbiosis was not acknowledged. Theoretically, the state supported the view that individual believers should be treated as equal citizens, but in practice tolerated quite a lot of departures from this principle, especially on the local level.

The Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC), autocephalous and independent, and closely knit with the state throughout its history, was much more susceptible to state pressures in view of its financial dependence and inferior educational structure of its clergy. The losses this church sustained during the war were large in real as well as psychological terms. After 1945, without international backing, disoriented by war, with its ranks depleted, its material basis destroyed and without a head in the country, additionally burdened with the legacy of being the proponent of Serbian hegemonism, the SPC was faced with a major challenge. It wanted to renew its world, just as it had been before, but the conditions for that no longer existed. The SPC could, tactically, be accepted as a patriotic institution, but it posed a direct threat to the consolidation of the new order, partly as a Christian institution and partly as a component of the Serbian identity. Serbian nationalism, always close to the church, was marked not only as the adversary of the new Yugoslavia, but also the main enemy of the Serbian people itself. Furthermore, the church was also a challenge for the new party moral and its attempt to be the exclusive interpreter of the popular interests.¹ The Yugoslav communist party wanted a tame and cooperative church, which would not oppose but rather support the party and state's policy. The Patriarchate was prepared to cooperate with the state, but not to be used by it.

By contrast, the Catholic Church, depending on its institutional structure and its center in the West, strictly centralized, materially independent, with educated and experienced clergy represented a far more dangerous and difficult opponent. In addition, its losses during the war were much smaller compared with the SPC. It was not ready to be reduced to the performance of religious rites and suppressed to the margins of life. The main points of state attacks were the role of the Catholic Church during the Second

¹ S.K. Pawlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and Its Problems, 1918/1988* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988), 102.

World War, its aversion towards the idea of Yugoslav unity, powerful anticommunism, reluctance of the Catholic hierarchy to undertake any independent action without the permit of the Holy See,² Vatican's support to the Italian foreign policy, etc.

Immediately after the war, the authorities avoided stronger attacks and attempted to find a *modus vivendi* with religious communities, primarily in order to ensure internal consolidation of the order and to obtain international recognition for the new Yugoslavia. One of the first measures of the new authorities in May 1945 was the adoption of a law prohibiting the incitement of national, racial and religious hatred and dissent. The situation changed after the inauguration of the 1964 Constitution. The separation of the church from the state, and the school from the church, left the religious communities the freedom to conduct their religious affairs and prohibited the abuse of religious feelings and manifestations. However, the relevant terms have never been clearly defined, enabling the political authorities to interpret them as they saw fit.

State measures, generally undertaken in the early stage, such as the agrarian reform, expropriation and nationalization of church estates, revaluation of church funds, ban on the collection of donations for religious requirements, transfer of marriages and registry books within the competence of the state, dealt a major economic blow to the Orthodox as well as the Catholic Church. Proscription of religious schools, limitation of religious instructions, seizure of printing shops, control of religious press and the prohibition of religious festivities, along with the freedom of anti-religious propaganda and dissemination of atheist literature, substantially narrowed the space for church activities.

² R. Radić, *Verom protiv vere. Država i verske zajednice u Srbiji 1945-1953* (Beograd, 1995), 233.

Still, despite all these measures, religion kept playing an important role in the lives of the Yugoslavs for a long time after, as indicated already by the first censuses.³ After the political opposition was eliminated, religious communities remained the only institutions outside the full control of the communist party. It was therefore necessary to render them harmless before a degree of their toleration could be allowed. The key role in controlling the functioning of religious institutions was played by the State Security Administration (UDBA) and the police, often relying on insiders.⁴ The control was intensified with the establishment of the central and republican commissions for religious affairs and their organized work since 1948-9.

The resistance offered by religious communities' representatives to the political will of state bodies was sanctioned by court trials to the members of church hierarchy, discontinued or strictly dosed state subsidies—used as a means of differentiation—severed communications, etc. The trial to archbishop Stepinac was a political process, as testified by the power holders of that time, and was a response to resisting the change as much as a warning. It was a symbolic act, which defined the nature of relations between the state and the Catholic Church for the next fifteen years or so. A similar effect was achieved by trials to bishop Varnava in Sarajevo in 1948 and metropolitan Arsenije in Podgorica in 1954, as well as by bodily attacks on Orthodox and Catholic bishops and their banishing. On the basis of the evidence existing today it is difficult to establish the total number of the arrested and convicted priests of both churches and say whether their detention and sentences were justified, and if so to what degree. The data provided by religious communities and state bodies are scant, unreliable and difficult to verify.

³ Arhiv Jugoslavije, Savezna komisija za verske poslove, 144-8-131.

⁴ J. Popović, ed. Četvrta sednica CK SKJ – Brionski plenum (Beograd, 1999), 118.

In addition to external pressures through legal and administrative measures, the relevant state bodies also applied different forms of internal pressures, ranging from interventions with individual members of the church hierarchy to outright interference in the internal affairs of the church (e.g. the election of a bishop or patriarch), establishment of loyal priests' associations, attempts to break up the church organization, etc.

The law on the legal position of religious communities passed in 1953, provided the legal form for the state concept of separation and reduced the strictly defined sphere of church activities to religious rites, but it did not prohibit the authorities to intervene in religious affairs. Republic decrees for the enforcement of the law were passed as late as 1961 in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, and still later in Serbia.

An important task of the state in those years was to eliminate the influence of the so-called enemy emigration both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches maintained secret but continuing links with. However, it became clear that religious communities might help the efforts of the state to improve its contacts with the outside world, if their activities were channeled in line with the state's wishes.

The next ten-odd years were a period of almost invisible change, obvious only to the knowledgeable. The roots of this change go way back to the events of 1948, the search for a new road to socialism and introduction of self-management. All that outlined the framework for future liberalization and decentralization. In mid-1950s circumstances were changed on the general level. The pressure of the USSR on Yugoslavia was gradually receding, and the country also started to receive economic and military assistance from the West. The dispute over Trieste was settled in 1954. Despite the break of diplomatic relations with the Vatican in 1952, communications were not discontinued for so long a time

as it appeared to the public. In September 1954, Dr. Franjo Šeper was appointed archbishop coadjutor of Zagreb.⁵ His appointment showed Vatican's acceptance of the fact that cardinal Stepinac could no longer function as the archbishop of Zagreb and its understanding of the need to establish visible leadership of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia.

The position of the Orthodox and Catholic churches did not change over night and attacks, pressures and persecutions continued for a few more years in parallel with a slow general improvement. These phenomena were not necessarily opposed. The authorities sincerely wished to improve their relations and were prepared to grant certain concessions, but did not stop supporting parts of the clergy prepared to cooperate with them and to attack what they considered to be the centers of hostile activity. Still, anti-religious struggle in the early 1950s became much more sophisticated. It was waged on several fronts, including the associations of priests.

After 1953/4 the authorities still paid a lot of attention to the associations of priests and continued to enlarge their membership to the extent possible and suppress the opposition of the church hierarchy. The associations of priests were envisaged as a kind of a substitution as well as control of the church hierarchy. Although these associations were the creations of state bodies, their activities in Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were somewhat different. The position of the Croatian association was aggravated by the opposition of the powerful Catholic hierarchy, which kept the clergy away from the association making it the weakest in Yugoslavia. At the same time, the association of Orthodox priests

⁵ Dr. F. Šeper was appointed coadjutor of the archbishopric, and not of archbishop Stepinac himself. That made the appointment somewhat less provocative. In March 1960, he was appointed apostolic administrator *ad nutum Sanctae sedis*. S. Alexander, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945* (Cambridge, 1979), 227; D. Živojinović, *Vatikan, Katolička crkva i jugoslovenska vlast 1941-1958* (Beograd, 1994), 401.

gathered about 85% of the total number of Orthodox clerics in Yugoslavia, despite the fact that the hierarchy of this church also disapproved of this kind of organization.

The second front was that of catechism. During the 1950s efforts were made to introduce Marxist education into schools. A decision to that effect, taken at the Third Communist Party Plenum in 1952, was implemented during the school year 1952/3. Religious instructions, permitted until that time (although usually obstructed in practice), were banned. The third front was the one of the churches' struggle for the construction of religious facilities, equalized taxation, collection of contributions, etc.

In time, trials to priests grew fewer and prison sentences shorter. Pressures in the everyday life of believers decreased and public attacks on the hierarchy and clergy in general became less frequent.⁶ Open manifestation of religious feelings was still dangerous, especially for the teaching staff, although even that was gradually changing. The situation differed from one region to another, but the issue of education of the young was a sensitive one for state bodies throughout the country. The press was full of articles describing church attempts to lure the young with various leisure activities (choruses, sections, sports), visits to religious schools, monasteries and cloisters, as well as features about the rigid discipline in religious schools, etc. In cases involving religious schools, the authorities, in addition to charges of hostile propaganda, also invoked the provisions anticipating equal position of all religious communities, which enabled them to close the seminaries on grounds of abuse of religious instruction, which constituted a criminal offense. Later on, these provisions were forsaken and left out of the Law revised in 1965 upon the insistence of the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

⁶ AJ, SKJ, 507, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II/2-b, 149 (1-10).

The Vatican kept giving high publicity to the troubles the church encountered in Eastern Europe and encouraged Catholics in communist states to fight persecution. The Yugoslav state bodies interpreted that as calls to sedition against the authorities and proof of Vatican's fear that the centuries long blind obedience to its hierarchy started to give in to the advance of socialism, which liberated millions from conservatism and mysticism. The second half of 1950s brought some improvement in the atmosphere. At that time, the state authorities appeared satisfied with having neutralized the Roman Catholic Church, and some high officials even stated that religion could not be resisted by force.

At the same time, a struggle was going on to preserve the unity of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The Patriarchate, the symbol of unity established in 1920, found the attacks against it hard to sustain. The SPC had to give up its jurisdiction over a number of its eparchies abroad, and face the simultaneous awakening of separatism in the country. The Macedonian schism, apparent since the mid-1940s, was strongly supported by the authorities, drawing on the Balkan tradition which looks upon the church as one of the main attributes of nationality. The SPC resorted to canons in its defense, while the Macedonian Orthodox Church (MPC) based its rights on the precedents of the 19th century. The creation of the MPC had to do with the importance of the Macedonian factor, due to unrelenting aspirations to this territory of the surrounding states. By making the MPC autocephalous (using the state-language-church formula) the Yugoslav state bodies wanted to draw Macedonia to the federation to the extent possible, and away from Bulgarian, Greek, Russian and other pretensions. The establishment of church municipalities in the diaspora had the same purpose - to break up the Macedonian, pro-Bulgarian emigration and make it converge on the MPC, i.e. Yugoslavia.

The SPC was not prepared to grant this concession, but neither could it show open resistance. The matter was dragged out for years until 1958 when patriarch German became head of the church. That same year, at a church and popular convention in Ohrid, the MPC promulgated its Constitution, which the SPC synod adopted in 1959, subject to a few amendments. The Patriarchate considered the case closed, but Macedonia saw this only as a step towards becoming autocephalous. For a short time, it seemed that the SPC was finally on the mend and emerging out of a difficult situation revealed by all relevant indicators in the late 1950s. But, it did not take long for a conflict in the diaspora to break out and push the problem of the MPC into the background for the next few years.

At that time, it seemed that the state bodies would manage to obtain the desired results in all aspects of their relations with religious communities. The first visits of catholic bishops to the Vatican after the war, in the late 1950s, according to the reports of the Embassy of the Federal People's Republic in Rome, almost invariably produced favorable consequences for the country. The bishops demanded the normalization of relations with Yugoslavia, mentioned the insufficient numbers of clerics in the country and suggested some concessions for Yugoslavia, so they could ask a return favor and send local students to Rome. All bishops criticized the work of clerical emigration in Italy and elsewhere abroad and demanded the depoliticization of the Institute of St. Hieronymus.⁷ Most bishops visiting Rome did not come in contact with the emigration, and those who did (like, for instance the bishop of Mostar Čule), limited their talks to technical arrangements related to material-financial assistance.

A change in the Vatican after the death of Pius XII in 1958 and the arrival of John XXIII arose the suspicions of the Yugoslav authorities. Nevertheless, both sides made the initial steps to

⁷ ASMIP, PA, 109/31, no. 41313.

carefully sound the ground. The press continued criticizing the Catholic Church for refusing to normalize its relations with the state, but Catholic dignitaries—bishop Akšamović⁸ in 1959 and archbishop Ujčić in 1960—received state decorations of the highest order. In December 1959 Josip Broz Tito told a group of Slovenian priests that the relations between the Catholic Church and the state were improving, and that the bishops were becoming increasingly realistic, which gave hope that any future misunderstandings would be resolved through negotiations.

The authorities were satisfied with the cooperativeness of bishops in Slovenia and certain other republics, but the behavior of the Catholic hierarchy in Croatia, especially Dalmatian bishops, was a cause of permanent concern. The annual governmental report on external and internal affairs submitted to the Parliament in 1959, described the conduct of the Orthodox Church in positive terms and stressed that the Catholic Church had understood the need to maintain normal relations with the authorities and operate within the frameworks of constitutional and legal regulations. This period also registers a certain relaxation in party discipline. After the VII Congress of the Yugoslav communist party the ousting of party members decreased and they were no longer persecuted if they had a churchgoer in the family.⁹

A year later, a recommendation of the Federal Government addressed at the republics' committees for internal policy, noted that the church had been prevented from acting as an organized political and reactionary force and that its work was limited to the performance of religious rites and affairs. The recommendation still warned of a reorientation of church activities seeking to expand religious life by means of religious instructions, rites, gatherings, intensified assistance from abroad, etc. Bearing in

⁸ Akšamović was decorated by King Aleksandar, Ante Pavelić and Josip Broz. AJ, SKVP, 144-34-229.

mind that problems of that kind were, until then, generally solved by administrative measures and left exclusively to authorities concerned with internal affairs to deal with, the relevant republic bodies were recommended to adjust their operations accordingly.¹⁰

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the first comparative analyses of the respective positions of religious communities were made. The findings spoke not only of the complete dependence of the SPC on state assistance, but also of a critical situation in almost all spheres of its life.¹¹ By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church used the twenty post-war years to gradually resume the position it had before the war, and even improve it in certain aspects.¹² In addition, financial receipts of the Catholic Church from abroad were in time equalized with those of all other religious communities.¹³

Responding to certain signs of good will manifested by Yugoslav state bodies, Vatican made a couple conciliatory gestures. It removed a long-standing reason for misunderstandings with the country's authorities by appointing a number of apostolic administrators as resident bishops in Yugoslavia.¹⁴ The state bodies were not completely satisfied. Before making the bishopric appointments

⁹ AJ, (A) CK SKJ, V. k-x/l-22; *Borba*, 20 February 1960.

¹⁰ AJ, SKVP, 144-31-322 and 323.

¹¹ ASMIP, PA, Jugoslavija, 57/4, no. 443553; AJ, SKVP, 144-67-524.

¹² AJ, SKJ, Ideološka komisija, VIII, II (2-b-149 (1-10).

¹³ AJ, SKVP, 144-54-444.

¹⁴ At the end of 1960 and the beginning of 1961 bishops Nežić, Bukatko, Alaupović, Držečnik and Vovk were appointed (*Official Journal of the Archbishopric of Zagreb*, no. 5, 1960; AJ, SKVP, 144-55-445). Delimitation of Yugoslavia's borders after the First World War, according to the treaties of Saint-Germain, Trianon, Neuilly and Rapallo, also implied the delimitation of dioceses along state borders (Italy, Hungary, Romania, Albania). Despite the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Vatican failed to delimit the dioceses, or form the catholic church hierarchy in the country. The drawing of state borders left a number of parishes on the Yugoslav side, cut off from their dioceses and under the jurisdiction of foreign ordinariate. This state of affairs continued even after the Second World War. ASMIP, PA, 104-21, no. 49 554.

Vatican did not try to consult the Yugoslav authorities. In addition, they thought that Vatican deliberately appointed the more extreme, Germanophile elements to positions of administrators, and, on the other hand, punished, replaced or retired the bishops with loyal attitudes towards the government (Akšamović, Dobrečić).

The last serious obstacles for the improvement of relations between the state and the Catholic Church and the normalization of relations with Vatican were removed with Dr. Krunoslav Draganović's demise from the Institute of St. Hieronymus in Rome in 1959,¹⁵ and the death of cardinal Stepinac in 1960.¹⁶ Celebrating a special mass in honor of Cardinal Stepinac, Pope John XXIII spoke of his hope in civic and religious peace in Yugoslavia, which the other side interpreted as indicating a possibility for further rapprochement. At that time, western countries signaled that settled relations between the state and the Catholic Church would substantially contribute to improving their links with Yugoslavia.

Meeting for their annual conference in Zagreb in 1960, the bishops issued a letter promising to encourage their clergy and believers to fulfill their civic duties and cooperate with civil authorities in building the country's future. In return, they asked

¹⁵ Dr. K. Draganović, former professor at the Theological Faculty in Zagreb, was an important figure in the Croatian emigration. He was refused residence in Italy in 1963. Draganović came back to Yugoslavia, without any official notification in 1967. Although under surveillance, he lived in Sarajevo and even enjoyed some freedom of movement. The mystery of his return has not been solved. *Oslobođenje*, 13. November 1967; AJ SKVP, 144-67-524.

¹⁶ A lot of things were written about Alojzije Stepinac, and evidence offered both in his favor and against him; he was beatified thirty years after his death, but numerous controversies still remain. However, there is no doubt that Stepinac was an anti-communist and ardent supporter of Croatian independence even if it came under the auspices of the Ustasha regime. His dogmatic belief that all Orthodox believers were schismatics who should be returned to the true church, remained unchanged over the years (G. van Dartel, *Nationalities and Religion in Yugoslavia, The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, Yearbook of European Studies, 5, ed. M. van Heuver and J.G. Siccama, Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA, 1992).

the authorities to show good will towards the church and ensure the enforcement of the Constitution and the law regulating the legal position of religious communities in a more liberal spirit.¹⁷ The authorities responded positively. They still hoped that the bishops would be able to negotiate directly (the previous attempt to reach an agreement through the associations of priests was at that time already abandoned), although they understood that this was impossible without Vatican's consent. The government's response was received on November the 3rd, and already on the 8th archbishop Ujčić was on his way to Rome with a report.¹⁸

The Government's response insisted on the fulfillment of the following conditions as crucial for the settling of its relations with the Catholic Church: recognition of the social and political order of the new Yugoslavia; acknowledgement of the separation of the church and the state; cessation of hostile propaganda against Yugoslavia; territorial adjustment of border bishoprics to coincide with the state borders; noninterference of the church in the internal affairs of the state; resolution of specific issues of interest for the church in cooperation with popular authorities; discontinuance of actions against the socio-political order within religious schools; termination of any assistance to the Ustasha emigration; depoliticization of the Institute of St. Hieronymus and the forgoing of the Stepinac beatification.¹⁹ The Vatican rejected the possibility for a commission of bishops to engage in talks with government representatives and, instead, suggested that the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs should request from the Vatican to send to Yugoslavia a delegate competent to negotiate.²⁰ After that, the Yugoslav authorities accepted that they cannot bypass the Vatican and made no further effort to persuade or make

¹⁷ AJ, SKVP, 144-44-396.

¹⁸ AJ, SKVP, 144-52-442.

¹⁹ ASIMP, PA, Jugoslavija, 64/29.

²⁰ AJ, SKVP, 144-52-442 and 144-57-448.

the bishops negotiate directly. From that time on, the occasional misunderstandings, especially in relation to Radio Vatican's programs in Croatian and Slovenian, as well as for other reasons, generally did not affect the overall trend in mutual relations.

On the other hand, differences between the views of the state and the SPC kept increasing during the next decade. The outbreak of the conflict about the issue of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, as well as numerous other problems in relations with the state over the next few years revealed that the SPC was not after all completely taken over. It was still financially dependent and insufficiently influential, but aware of its weaknesses. The fact that the SPC was a self-proclaimed guardian of all Serbs and Serbian national interest, and its nationalism manifested in different ways during the past decades presented a challenge for the state policy. However, the fact that the church embraced the national mission carried numerous negative connotations for the SPC as a religious institution, including the risk of philetism, quite clear to many theologians in the church, who later on kept warning against it. The sensitivity of the church to attacks revealed its psychological vulnerability originating from its changeable destiny in the 20th century. The decline of the church power on a number of fronts, loss of jurisdiction, dissent, continuing obstruction of church building and pressures on the clergy all produced a kind of pessimism manifested in the image of the church as a victim and the belief in a special mission.²¹

In April 1961 pope John XXIII appointed G. Bukatko, the Greek-Catholic bishop of Križevci, coadjutor in the archbishopric of Belgrade, and in December that year published the encyclical *Aeterna dei sapientia* designed to interlink all Christian churches

²¹ P. Ramet, "Christianity Under Stress", *The Serbian Orthodox Church, Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, P. Ramet (ed.), Vol. I (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1988), 232-248.

under the leadership of Rome. It brought about the establishment of contacts between the Catholic and Serbian Orthodox churches, practically non-existent until the early 1960s. Archbishop Ujčić lived in Belgrade for over twenty years but never visited the patriarch of the SPC, while the patriarch believed that the Catholic Church owed the SPC a kind of apology for what had been done during the war. The state bodies were not overjoyed with this rapprochement, considering it a screen for pressuring the SPC to moderate its policy of cooperation with the state bodies and expanding the influence of the Catholic Church in eastern parts of the country.

Documents and papal encyclicals of the Second Vatican Council, opened in October 1962, convinced the Yugoslav authorities that some changes were indeed taking place within the Catholic Church and, especially, that its views about world peace and the Third World match their own. In 1954, both sides sounded the ground for negotiations. Finally, towards the end of 1962, the Yugoslav ambassador in Rome, Vejvoda, contacted a personal friend of the Cardinal of Milan Montini, Nikola Jeger, who acted as a mediator in arranging the negotiations. After that, negotiations were conducted in strict secrecy for the following few years.²² The negotiations opened on May 23, 1963 in Rome (until mid-1964 they had the form of informatory talks), and thereafter alternated between Rome and Belgrade. The Vatican's side was headed by undersecretary Casaroli and the foreign minister of the Holy See, Samorè. In the meantime, the cardinal of Milan Montini became pope Paul VI and on the occasion of his enthronement gave Ambassador Vejvoda a message for J.B. Tito telling him that Yugoslavia was close to his heart.²³

²² In addition to Yugoslavia, Hungary also conducted negotiations with the Vatican. The exchange of experience between the two countries remained confidential.

²³ AJ, SKVP, 14-66-523.

In mid-1963 Ambassador Vejvoda met the papal nuncio K. Gran and asked the Vatican to take measures to stop the anti-Yugoslav campaign in Latin American countries launched before the visit of Josip Broz.²⁴ Vejvoda said that this would sustain the good atmosphere in the negotiations and would also have a favorable effect on the decision of the SPC leadership concerning its presence at the Second Vatican Council.²⁵ The Council sent out a circular letter instructing the Catholic Church to refrain from interfering in the issue of the Yugoslav President's visit, while Pope Paul VI later on, ordered the dispatch of another instruction spelling concrete measures to that effect. Favorable views about this visit were offered by six bishops from Yugoslavia along with a number of prominent representatives of the Catholic Church. However, some, like archbishop Šeper and bishops Franić, Garković, Alautović and Pogačnik, declined to state their views in public.

In parallel with the negotiations, a debate on Christian unity unfolding at the Second Vatican council opened the way for dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox Church. A group of students of the Theological Faculty in Belgrade visited the Theological Faculty in Ljubljana in 1963, and then next year went to Zagreb and once again to Ljubljana.²⁶ In Zagreb the students were welcome by the bishop of Banjaluka Pihler, but the Franciscans in Zagreb took it badly. A similar fate befell the Christmas message of the bishop of Banjaluka in 1963, where he acknowledged that in the past war, brothers of Orthodox faith had been killed only because they belonged to Orthodoxy by people who called themselves Catholics. On the other hand, the meeting between Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras next year, failed to elicit too much enthusiasm of the Orthodox Church. Still, contacts between the Orthodox and Catholic clergy and hierarchies in

²⁴ Yugoslav authorities feared demonstrations of the emigration in LA countries, taught by the experience of the Yugoslav economic delegation visiting Uruguay, Chile, Peru and other countries in mid-1950s. AJ, SKVP, 144-53-630.

²⁵ AJ, SKVP, 144-67-524.

²⁶ AJ, SKVP, 144-81-569; *Glas koncila*, 29 March 1964.

Yugoslavia were intensified, especially during 1966, resulting in the meeting between patriarch German and cardinal Šeper in 1967. Still, the SPC retained a good measure of caution. The change of climate in the Catholic Church expressed at the Second Vatican Council, was accompanied by the proclamation of the new constitution in Yugoslavia in 1963, which legally articulated liberalism and decentralization in Yugoslavia. At the same time, the process of neutralizing the so-called enemy emigration was unfolding. Regardless of the growth of positive processes in emigration circles, its extreme part continued to pose a danger and threatened the operation of Yugoslav diplomatic and consular offices abroad. In addition, this activity seriously impaired the reputation of Yugoslavia in the world. During negotiations with the Vatican, one of the key issues had to do with neutralizing the Croatian emigration, which operated in connection with the Catholic Church. On the other hand, a decision was made to take the SPC eparchies abroad from the hands of the extreme emigration and thus blunt the edge of the anti-Yugoslav campaign of the Serbian emigration as a whole.²⁷ The process was completed to the satisfaction of state bodies in 1964.

The Yugoslav authorities were pleased with the progress of negotiations with the Vatican, but on the other hand, feared that the Catholic Church might try to use the settling of mutual relations to reinforce its position in the country.²⁸ They also feared some misunderstanding on part of the domestic public, and especially the

²⁷ AJ, SKVP, 144-81-569.

²⁸ Already in May the federal bodies prepared a report on the relations between the state and the SPC and the Islamic Religious Community after they had settled their relations with the Vatican, noting that the position of the Catholic Church had been reinforced in almost all spheres. The report went on that the Catholic Church applied sustained pressure on the SPC and the Islamic Community in order to weaken their cooperation with the state. In that sense the Catholic Church imposed wide-ranged contact on the Orthodox clergy and offered material assistance. According to the state bodies, the Catholic Church intended to expand its activity to predominantly Orthodox territories, planning the forming of new bishoprics in Vojvodina, Serbia and Macedonia. AJ, SKVP, 144-91-618; 144-97-634 and 144-100-648.

reactions of the SPC and the Islamic Community. They therefore tried to advance their relations with both these churches offering financial and other assistance and also kept them abreast of the state's negotiations with the Holy See.²⁹ Some representatives of the Orthodox Church and the Islamic Community expressed concern that once relations with the Vatican were settled, the position of the Catholic Church would be reinforced to the detriment of the two other religious communities. The behavior of local authorities, who took their time addressing the churches' requests, added to this concern. At a government session held on May 27, 1966, Prime Minister Petar Stambolić emphasized that the reliance the state bodies had in the Orthodox Church and its deportment in general made talks with the Catholic Church possible. He added that the issue of further relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Islamic Community should be considered, manifesting greater readiness to address their problems.

At that time, the Catholic Church started to pay increasing attention to mass attendance at religious celebrations (in Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Zadar, Đakovo, etc.). The celebration of Our Lady of Sinj in Sinj in 1965, which gathered over 50 thousand people was indeed perturbing for the state, since only a week before a mere 8 to 10 thousand people turned up for the traditional chivalry contest "Sinjska Alka", attended by the president of the republic himself and, moreover, after a full year of preparations.³⁰ Representatives of the Catholic Church were invited to attend celebrations of various state holidays with increasing frequency, as well as meetings organized by institutions of diverse character. The state bodies also registered an increase in chauvinist provocations and nationally intoned speeches by the Catholic clergy.

²⁹ During 1964, the SPC received assistance of 464 million dinars (part of which went to the MPC), compared with 427 in 1965 and increased subsidies in 1966. AJ, SKVP, 144-91-618.

In mid-1960s the number of requests for the construction of new church facilities submitted by the Catholic Church largely increased (Split, Skoplje, Novi Sad, etc.), although a gradual recovery of the SPC could also be felt. What is more, 20 churches in the eparchy of Zagreb were repaired and two chapels constructed. During 1964 seminars were opened in Sremski Karlovci and in Krka Monastery.

In June 1966, a Protocol on the talks between the representatives of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Holy See was signed in Rome.³¹ Among other things, it guaranteed the freedom of religious functions and rites and, within the legal frameworks, recognized the Vatican jurisdiction over the Catholic Church in spiritual, religious and church affairs. The Vatican agreed that its clerics would not abuse their offices for political purposes and condemned all acts of political terrorism and similar criminal forms of violence, promising to react in any such case indicated by the Yugoslav authorities. The Protocol enabled mutual exchange of envoys who, initially, did not have a formal diplomatic rank. The Slovenian prelates welcomed the Protocol, as did the bishop of Belgrade Bukatko, while the Croatian bishops remained reserved. Cardinal Šeper stated that he supported the arrangement, but still had serious objections concerning the matter of religious instructions.

Gradual relaxation of party control in the second half of 1950s and early 1960s gained momentum, after the downfall of Aleksandar Ranković. The Yugoslav communist party was, at that time, deeply divided into supporters of the federation's decentralization

³⁰ AJ, SKVP, 144-93-630.

³¹ The second stage of negotiations was headed by P. Ivičević, B. Kocijančič and V. Dobrila on behalf of the Yugoslav government and A. Casaroli and L. Bondanino on behalf of the Holy See. In contrast to a concord the protocol had a less formal structure and formalized an agreed formula for the type of relationship between the state and the church.

led by the party ideologue Edvard Kardelj, and supporters of centralization represented by Aleksandar Ranković.³² Ranković's defeat in 1966 changed the state's relation towards the SPC, and vice versa. Ranković used rough means to ensure the Church's compliance, but the Macedonian issue was kept under control.³³ A change noticeable in catholic areas, especially in Croatia, coincided with the signing of the Protocol. At the same time manifestations of Croatian nationalism became increasingly overt. This nationalism had a lot of liberalist tendencies, and had the backing of the Croatian communist party representatives as well as wide public support. The nation was unifying and the church had a powerful role in it. This alarmed the Serbian population in Croatia and not without a reason. Slovenia still harbored long-standing suspicions of clericalism, but enabled substantial freedom for the expression of different ideas. In addition, the separation of state authorities from the party in Slovenia went far ahead of any other republic.

The session of the Federal Commission for Religious Affairs held in July 1966 clearly revealed the differences in attitudes towards the SPC between the opponents of the "Orthodox policy" and those who believed that pressures on the SPC should be relaxed.³⁴ The conclusions of the session noted that the position of the Catholic Church in the country was favorable, that it had managed to consolidate its ranks and operated under better conditions than other religious communities, and also that the bishopric of the Catholic Church in its contacts with the authorities demanded more than it offered and received more than it gave. This conclusion automatically provides the answer to the question

³² J. Pirjavec, *Jugoslavija – Nastanek, razvoj ter razpad Karađorđevićeve in Titove Jugoslavije* (Koper: Založba Lipa, 1995), 238-260.

³³ The protracted resolution of the Macedonian church issue by the central state bodies until the year 1966 was not the outcome of sympathy for the SPC. At that time work on the plan to cause dissent in America and work out an agreement with the Vatican was already under way.

³⁴ AJ, SKVP, Minutes of the SKVP session of July 6, 1966, 144-95-632 and 144-81-569.

put forward at the beginning of this paper. Already in mid-1960s the Catholic Church managed to come out of the conflict with the Yugoslav totalitarian regime recovered, in contrast with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Similar developments took place in other East European countries. This was not due to the fact that this church was favored or spared by the state bodies, but rather to its structure, its manner of operation and abilities to adjust to international circumstances with a non-negligible role of the Vatican.

Summary

A general plan to eliminate the influence of religion in communist-dominated areas after 1945 did not exist, but numerous instruments used to limit church life were the product of Stalin's era. The Yugoslav communist party members from the very beginning looked upon religion as a political problem and considered religious communities their competitors in the struggle for influence in society and objective factors obstructing the process of building socialism. The new authorities, in principle, made no difference between the (30 or so active) religious communities. However, differences did exist in the approach to some of these communities, deriving from their internal structures, objective strength, historical heritage, size, material power, etc. At first sight it seemed that the conflict with the Catholic Church and the pressure on it were the strongest and had the worst consequences, and not only in Yugoslavia. The Catholic Church, dependent on its institutional structure and the center in the West, was also a public institution engaged in education and charitable work. By contrast from the Orthodox and protestant communities which apparently found it easier to adjust to the restrictive regime (or lacked the power to resist it), the Catholic Church concentrated its power to renewing the ranks of the clergy and the hierarchy, improving the enforcement of legal regulations and expanding its influence in

society. Orthodoxy, traditionally turned towards transcendental contemplation, looked upon man in terms of eternity more than in temporal terms. It failed to build internal mechanisms for defense and independent action, enabling the authorities to exercise almost complete control of its activities, all of which produced more serious consequences.

In addition to the specifics of each of the churches, the state policy was also largely dependent on the internal as well as international developments. Until the early 1950s theoretical and practical similarities with the state policy pursued in the USSR and some other East European countries were evident, although with quite a lot of pragmatism and adjustment to specific circumstances. This period is followed by some liberalization, but the Yugoslav state bodies continued to carefully monitor the processes in East Europe and the experiences of these countries, increasing or decreasing their ideological pressure, as required.

Milan Vukomanović

THE WEST AND ISLAM

I must first explain what the concepts of *West* and *Islam* mean in this paper. Islam for me implies not only a monotheistic religion originating from the revelation and announcement of Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century, but also the community of this religion's believers (*umma*) and the civilization it gave rise to. On the other hand, West is in effect a civilization, and also a community of nations and states that have created and continue developing this civilization, but it is not a religion. However large and perhaps even decisive role Christianity may have had in the emerging of the medieval and modern Western civilization, the West is today a multicultural and multi-religious space. There, in addition to Christianity, Judaism and Islam as well as certain other religions have had their place throughout the centuries. And, finally, we should not forget to mention the pre-Christian heritage of Europe, the Hellenic and Roman spirituality and the religious pluralism, which represented one of the major characteristics of the old Roman Empire.

I shall not, in this paper, advocate the view claiming the unity of the West, or the homogeneity of the Muslim world. Moreover, I do not believe in the homogeneity of Christianity as a religion. As for Islam, it is somewhat more homogenous, although not entirely. I would, in fact, like to tackle a dichotomy increasingly imposed by literature and the media, and within its frameworks propose a few theses. However, I must say forthwith that I do not see this dichotomy through the prism of relations between the "liberal" West and the "non-liberal" Muslim society. When human rights are concerned, problems appear in both the East and West. Generally speaking, I am opposed to "Westernism" as a uniform way of observing the Western civilization, as well as against

orientalism and Balkanism as it subspecies. Despite the frequent attempts to uniformize Western and Islamic civilizations, I myself support the diversity of the modern world and see this polyphony and the cultural, religious and ethnical wealth as the advantage of civilizations that have survived the twenty centuries of the new era.

I

Let us first take a look at the European southwest. In the Islamic Spain of the 8-15th century, Jews, Christians and Muslims all lived together and created a superior culture in the world. Continuing conflicts in the Near East and terrorism of the Islamic, as well as certain Jewish radical groups, occasionally make us forget that the Jews attained the height of glory and intellectual achievement precisely while living next to the Muslims in Andalusia, Baghdad, Damascus and other Arab-Islamic centers of the Middle Ages. For Arabs, from Morocco to Egypt, the great mosque in Cordoba was almost equally important as Kaaba, since those who did not reach Mecca, could celebrate Islam in this large mosque of the Western hemisphere.¹ It is interesting that the Muslims reached the furthest western point of their advance already in the 8th century. Until the 16th century that point was, in Europe, symbolically marked by the "Pillars of Hercules", i.e. the straits of Gibraltar, named after a Berber general Tariq,² who lead his seven thousand soldiers into victory over the Visigoths, killing their king Roderick. The Maghreb, land of the setting sun, covering the territory of the present-day states

¹ In this part of the world, in the Moroccan city of Casablanca, the construction of a large mosque (of Hassan II) was completed in 1993. It has a 200-meter high minaret and can easily accommodate the Roman basilica of St. Peter's. Its interior can hold 25 thousand believers, and its outcourt another 80 thousand. It is situated on a promontory near the harbor and has a floor of thick glass, allowing the believers to see the ocean while praying.

² Gibraltar or *Jabal al-Tariq* in Arabic, literally means the Rock of Tariq.

of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, until Columbus' voyage to "India" remained the westernmost area of the world enclosed within the borders of the once great Roman Empire.

The rulers of Spain from the dynasty of Umayyad transformed Cordoba, a somewhat dormant and provincial Mediterranean town into one of Europe's medieval capitals. In the 9th and 10th centuries, this city undoubtedly became the most civilized European center, the "belle of Andalusia" as well as the "ornament of the world".³ Moreover, the Muslim Spain of that time was also the most progressive and cultured part of Europe. In it, for the most part, religious and inter-ethnic tolerance prevailed and free philosophical discussions were encouraged, as well as construction of libraries, faculties, public baths and parks, along with poetry and architecture. While the present day metropolises of Europe, like Paris or London, were at that time only small undeveloped cities, Cordoba had a population of about a hundred thousand and a library with approximately half a million books, along with hundreds of shops, mosques and public baths. In addition, a palace and a bridge spanning the river Guadalquivir were built. The city itself was clean, paved, well lit, with abundant supply of running water. The Umayyad caliphs exchanged ambassadors with Byzantium, Baghdad, Cairo and the Saxons. Universities were established in Toledo, Cordoba, Seville and Granada, and literature, astronomy, philosophy, algebra, geography and medicine flourished, especially in helping to preserve the Hellenic heritage.

Therefore, Islam experienced its golden era in Spain of the 8-13th centuries. All in all, Spain had almost eight centuries of Islam, although its inhabitants have until recently rarely referred to their Islamic past as an important period of their history, outside a purely artistic context, although the three monotheistic religions

³ See M. Vukomanović, "Andalusia – 'The Ornament of the World', *Vreme*, no. 629 (January 2003), Supplement – *Islam*, 12/13.

– Islam, Christianity and Judaism—all added to this thriving of culture and civilization. The re-conquest of Seville, Cordoba and Granada in the 13th and 15th centuries (after an almost five-century rule of two Berber dynasties of Almoravid and Almohad in Spain), placed the Muslims, as well as Jews in this country, into an almost impossible situation. They had to either convert to Christianity or else leave their homeland. Thus in 1492, immediately before Columbus' expedition, about 200 thousand Sephardic Jews were ordered out of Spain. Some of them soon settled in other parts including ours. Later on, the same measure was also applied to the so-called *Marranos*, Christians of Jewish origin who could not offer proof of “pure blood”, i.e. show that they did not have a Jewish *converso* among their ancestors. Even the Muslims who stayed in Spain and embraced Christianity (called *Moriscos*) were banished somewhat later—in 1609. Many were killed. The Islamic religion was officially prohibited until Franco's times. The old law banishing the Jews was not officially repealed in this country until 1968, while the Jews and Protestants obtained rights equal to Catholics as late as 1990!

Not only Sephards in south Europe, but also the Ashkenazi in western and Eastern Europe suffered persecution and pogroms, and then also a horrible genocide during the Second World War—a holocaust wherein six million Jews perished. Their destiny was naturally much better further on to the west, in the U.S.A., and they are today the most educated religious and cultural community in America with large influence in politics, business, finances and entertainment business.

What are these examples telling us? Whenever the West in its history manifested a tendency for religious, ethnic or racial *homogenization* (through its religious wars, re-conquests, Holocaust, ethnic cleansings), the result were immense tragedies, wars and human sufferings.

II

As for the attitude towards Islam in southeast Europe where Islam and West historically converge, I shall try to illustrate it in brief terms using a characteristic example. In the Balkans, just as in Spain, an independent, authentic “European” Islam was developed (in the first place, I think of a *civilization*, rather than theology) during a total of over five centuries in Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, Albania. Leaving aside Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania, let us see what has been left of this heritage in certain large South-European towns.

Belgrade today has only one mosque—the Bajrakli Mosque in Dorćol. In 1865 the city had about ten mosques, one located in the present day Students’ Park, the other near the restaurant “Proleće” in the city center, and a few more in Dorćol and at Kalemegdan.⁴ However, a single one has not been built since the Ottoman times, while the local Islamic Community estimates that Muslims in Belgrade number about 200,000, which is indeed too large a *jammāt* for one mosque. The situation is not much different in Greece either. Only a few years ago a permit was given to build the first new mosque in Athens since the Ottoman period, while in Thessalonica a few buildings once used as places of worship now house cobblers’ shops. In Sofia, too, only one mosque is active. A museum in the center of this city has a large number of exhibits from the pre-Christian and Christian periods, including various statues, icons and fresco paintings. The museum used to be a mosque, as clearly revealed by the remains of a knocked-down minaret. But, there is no sign indicating that this was once a house of worship and no Islamic exhibits, or even a plaque on the wall to identify it as a former mosque.

⁴ Belgrade of that time had six tekkes, while in 1688, the town had over 70 Islamic places of worship (51 mosques and 22 masjids). See Divna Đurić Zamolo, *Beograd kao orijentalna varoš pod Turcima 1521-1867* (Beograd: Muzej grada Beograda, 1977), 57 ff.

Unfortunately, there is a trend, noticeable from Bulgaria and Greece all the way to Spain, including the major part of Serbia, to neglect the Islamic past or to speak of it predominantly in negative terms (like, for instance, we do referring to the “Turkish yoke” and other stereotypes recognizable even in school manuals). These societies have of late, started to alter this approach, but even Slovenia—otherwise attracting wistful looks of peoples from the Balkan south—became engaged in a debate whether to permit the building of the first mosque in that country!

III

I would now try and point out a few reasons for this centuries-long mistrust between the West and Islam, as well as to the complete lack of knowledge of certain facts which could contribute to a more fruitful dialogue between the two large world civilizations.

Western views of Islam

Let us first, in the religious sphere, point to the joint theological roots. I do not have in mind only monotheism as the common denominator of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, although that, too, is sometimes forgotten,⁵ but also the joint origin from the biblical Abram/Abraham/Ibrahim. Occasionally people also forget that Allah is only an Arab word for God with capital G, i.e. the Biblical and Koranic God. The Muslims, in the first part of their *shahada*, their confirmation of faith, say “There is no God but Allah (*illah* and *Allah* respectively). Arab Christians also call their one Christian God Allah, only for them Allah is Jesus Christ. That is where theological differences between these religions begin.

⁵ The *Koran*, for instance, explicitly states: “Our God and your God is – one” (29:46). The sura on the disbelievers (*Al Kāfirūn*, 109:6) at its very beginning offers the following view of toleration of other religions: “To you – your religion, and for me my religion”.

Speaking of the Holy Scriptures, we should note that the only *European* language of the Bible was Greek. *The Old Testament* was written in Hebrew, with parts in Aramaic, and many early translations of the biblical texts were composed in other oriental languages: Syrian, Coptic and Arabic. Moreover, for a long time Arabic was the language of European science and philosophy, since many Hellenic writings were preserved only in translation to Arabic. Europe and the West owe this language a great deal for preserving their spiritual heritage. The West also had a lasting humanist and romantic *curiosity* concerning the East, manifest during the renaissance, reformation and enlightenment periods. That is when Europeans discovered and studied the works of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Al-Farabi and others, as part of their own culture and heritage.

But at this point we should mention the reasons for mistrust and fear, which, after all, contributed to the present antagonisms.⁶ Ever since the 7th century Europe has known the fear of conquest and conversion, the same one Europeans instilled in others in the colonial era. But in Europe from the 7th century until the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, a meeting with Islam in the first place, meant a battlefield, conflicts with the Moors, the Saracens (during the crusades) and the Osmanlis. The European southeast experienced the downfall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 as a huge tragedy, and the relative indifference of the West can only be explained by the major dissent between Catholicism and Orthodoxy particularly intense in that period.

However, Christianity met Islam even before these encounters in the battlefield. The Muslims acquired their first knowledge of the Christians in the East where Monophysites and Nestorians

⁶ See Bernard Lewis, "Povjest drugih naroda", *Znakovi vremena*, Sarajevo, no. 2, vol. 1, spring-summer, 1997, 18.

lived. In the Byzantine Empire this inter-religious contact was first expressed in numerous *polemics* (an euphemism for insults!) on both sides. As usual, the sources of information on the other religion were mere rumors. In the Byzantine Empire anti-Islamic polemics started in the 8th century when the Christian apologetics insisted that Muhammad was a false prophet, and the *Koran* an untrue book. A Byzantine rite of conversion to Christianity, the written description of which has been preserved, contains the total of 22 anathemas against Muslims. Namely, the new convert was required to anathematize Muhammad and all his relatives by name as well as all caliphs until Yazid (680-83). Other anathemas were aimed against the *Koran*, the teaching about the paradise, polygamy and predestination. The central theological problem for the Christians was certainly the consistent monotheism of the Muslims, which could not reconcile itself to the Christian concept of the Triune God. For instance, John of Damascus classified Islam among the Christian heresies similar to Arianism, bearing in mind that the *Koran* recognized the nature of authentic revelations to both Judaism and Christianity. In his work *On Heresy* he claims that Muhammad was in fact the first Arian who negated the divine nature of Logos and the Holy Spirit. This probably explains the legend that Mohammed was instructed by an Arian monk. In the field of ethics, moral, the Christians stressed the superiority of the Christian monogamous family compared with the Muslim polygamy, which they most often presented as an expression of pure hedonism. This was substantiated by the understanding of the Islamic teaching of paradise as a place of enjoyment and pleasure. Another argument of the Christians had to do with the defense of their teaching about free will as opposed to the Islamic belief into predestination. Islam, on its part, aimed its criticism of Christianity towards the polemics against religious arts, iconography and objected the Christian division into numerous races: nations. It also attacked the Gospels as secondhand accounts, rather than direct announcements of the Word of God.

The initial more systematic attempts of the European side to understand Islam apparently were not made before the period between the two World Wars and were, moreover, short-lived. New prejudices and conflicts were incited by the Islamic revivalism and the Iran Revolution of 1979. Paradoxically or not, the sales of Koran in Britain increased only after the events of September 11, 2001. The West finally started to acquire an entirely new experience with Islam (and the Muslims with the West) during the second half of the 20th century through the emigration of Muslims to West-European countries and America. Today over 40 million Muslims live in those countries and the problem of their identity, both for the non-Muslim westerners and the Muslims themselves becomes a new topical issue in the relations between two civilizations.

Islamic views of the West (The Western challenge)

There are over 50 Muslim national states in the world today. Regardless of the fact that Islam, as a religion, has an important role in all these states, they are highly heterogeneous in terms of their economic, demographic, social, ideological and political status. This group includes poor countries like Bangladesh, as well as rich, like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Politically, they range from democracies to dictatorships, secular states and sultanates, republics and monarchies, etc. Demographically, there are densely populated states like Indonesia and Nigeria, and small ones like Maldives or Brunei. In this pluralism of states and nations another large similarity—in addition to Islam as the leading religion and source of identity—is the *colonial past* shared by many among them.⁷ Namely, in a period of about a hundred years the countries concerned were European colonies. The British and the French held he Muslim territories in Africa, Asia and the Arab world, the Dutch

⁷ For more see S.V.R. Nasr, "Evropski kolonijalizam i nastanak modernih muslimanskih država", in *Oksfordska istorija islama* (Beograd: Clio, 2002), 583 ff.

ruled Indonesia, the Germans, Spaniards and Portuguese were in east Africa and southeast Asia, while the Russians controlled the Caucasus and Central Asia.⁸

The common experience of colonialism in approximately the same period resulted in the fact that most Muslim countries, their other differences notwithstanding, have covered similar historical paths in establishing their national states. In addition, their fight against colonialism gave rise to a large number of liberation movements, both secular and Islamist, including some political and religious groups who chose to define their liberation struggle as jihad, linking it with Islam. Western hegemony in former colonial states thus contributed to a specific perception of the West as an imperial and conquering power in Muslim societies.

Speaking of modernization and globalization as the second challenge, I would, in the first place, like to point out two issues: the advantages and disadvantages of technology and mass communications and the so-called secularist challenge to Islam. For example, to what extent do Western inventions pose a challenge to Islam? We are today aware of the negative Wahhabi response to modernization, partly expressed in the policy of Afghanistan's Taliban before the country was bombed by the U.S.A. However, that is a minority position within Islam. The advantages of technique and technology are obvious: let us only mention easier transportation to places of pilgrimage and increased awareness of the *umma* in the global community of believers. But, that is also where a specific challenge lies. The global village links Muslims of different schools, options and orientations in the same Western European countries. This somewhat resembles the difference between Catholics and Protestants in the U.S.A. at the time of their settling in America.

⁸ Ibidem.

I think that Islam has clearly become a world religion, as well as a global phenomenon. I shall mention only a few data related to *hajj* - the Muslim pilgrimage. This collective and global event today gathers close to two million believers. About a million of them come from all over the world: approximately 50% are Arabs, 35% Asian Muslims, 10% sub-Saharan Africans, while only 5% come from Europe, U.S.A. and South America. Other pilgrims are from Saudi Arabia, mostly foreign, seasonal workers in this country. The travel to Mecca is today much easier, owing to air transport and the advantages of modern technology. The new international airport of King Abdul Aziz near Jedda (covering about 100 square km), is larger than even the international airports in Paris, Chicago and New York. It has a special hajj-terminal with two tent-covered arched halls and is the largest covered space in the world, receiving 5000 pilgrims per hour or about a million in the brief season of pilgrimage. On the eve of the hajj, jumbo jets landing at this airport are spaced five minutes apart!⁹

In earlier times, the journey to Mecca took a few months or even years. The pilgrims took jobs along the way to earn the money they needed to reach their destination. At that time, becoming a hajji carried much more prestige. In view of the conditions of travel that is today much easier. But, only some fifty years ago Mecca was, at the time of Zul-Hijja visited by only about 30 thousand hajjis or one in 10 thousand Muslims in the world, compared with two in a thousand today.¹⁰

Secularization presented a special challenge for Islam. In Muslim countries, by contrast from Western democracies, the division between the religious community *ulama* and the state, i.e. between religion, politics and society is not so clear. Speaking of human rights in Islam, it is important to note that *umma*, the collective,

⁹ See M. Ruthven, *Islam in the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

community, comes before the individual and has the highest status. Islam does not have the equivalent of the Western secular theory of natural rights as individual rights¹¹ presented as requirements. The idea of the autonomous subject as a master of his destiny and holder of inalienable rights is, essentially, the idea of Enlightenment developed in Europe also as an anti-clerical view. Namely, its source was not religion—Christianity.¹²

In its encounter with Islam, the Islamic law, this European concept is facing a serious quandary: how to reconcile the requests for universality of human rights with cultural and religious pluralism? Namely, there are societies with autochthonous cultures and their own understanding of human rights. That is where we see a kind of a clash of two democratic principles—the demand for human rights and respect for pluralism as a democratic principle. That is why a reputable Syrian scholar Bassam Tibi rightly points out that a kind of a future concept of international morality in order to be accepted in the Muslim world at all, must not be imposed, but rather adopted on Islamic bases and in line with Islamic ethic, although in a wider secular framework. The road towards this system is, according to Tibi, only glimpsed through the cliffs of intercultural dialogue.

In the end, it remains unclear whether in the new century the relation between the West and Islam will develop as one of increasing and irreconcilable differences following Huntington's projection or else as a relation wherein the meeting of two civilizations will offer a new quality, directly reflecting mutual influences and dialogue. I believe that this other perspective has

¹¹ See B. Tibi, "Ljudska prava u islamskoj civilizaciji i na Zapadu: internacionalna moralnost kao međukulturna podloga", *Zapad i islam ka dijalogu* (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 2001), 63-76.

¹² It would therefore be at least unusual to expect that something derived from a non-religious context in Europe be accepted as autochthonous and domestic in Islam.

greater chances to succeed. In any case, we must not lose sight of the major importance of the Muslim diaspora. The forty odd million Muslims who are today living in the West and represent the “people of the third culture” are fully aware of their autochthonous identity, as well as of the advantages of Western civilization. They, in a way, resemble the Monophysites and Nestorians who in the Byzantine times made the initial contacts with the Muslims in the East conveying their, true somewhat different, understanding of Christianity.

Ljubiša Rajić

FUNDAMENTALISM – ENDS OR MEANS?

Fundamentalism in time

In 1950, there was no entry for the word *fundamentalism* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Giddens 1994:6). Neither is it found in the 1978 multiple-volume Norwegian encyclopedia *Pax leksion* of 1978. But, over the past twenty years it entered the dictionaries throughout the world, and literature addressing fundamentalism grew abundant. During 1980s when the republican political conservatism, neoliberal economy and the New Christian Right started their advance in the U.S.A. (see, e.g. Sirevåg 1994), the largest attention was focused on Christian fundamentalism such as emerged in the U.S.A. in the early 19th century, especially in Baptist and Presbyterian environments. Namely, one could see a glaring similarity between the old and new ideas and demands. In 1990s, when fundamentalism gained momentum in other religious communities as well (see, for instance, Martin 1993), and various types of social conflicts mixed with fundamentalism erupted widely in the wake of globalization, interest in this phenomenon expanded to other religions, but mostly Islam (see a major work Martin & Scott Appleby 1993, Marty & Scott Appleby 1991, 1993a, 1993b). Once it became clear that the fundamentalist way of thinking, not necessarily involving religion, could be found in other spheres of life, attention shifted in that direction.

As a result, “the usage of the term fundamentalism has become inflated and vague and covers a disparate range of phenomena. What is more, it is suffused with understandable biases and prejudices and, as fundamentalism deeply threatens our way of life and interests, also with deep fears and crude political considerations” (Parekh 1994:106).

Outside professional circles in the West fundamentalism is nearly equated with Islamic fundamentalism. If you ask anyone what it consists of, the answer will almost invariably be: holy war, anti-Western and antidemocratic views, Mujahedin and Talibans, Iran, terrorists, oppression of women and, after September 11, Al-Qaida. This indicates that various elements, most of which have nothing to do with religious dogmatism, have been thoroughly mixed up and that fundamentalism is understood as something clearly negative, while the word itself has almost become an insult. Parekh (1994: 105) refers to the term so applied as a “polemical hand grenade”. This, in many respects, reminds me of the way the concept of fascism was brandished some thirty years ago: what you don’t like you call fascism. But this kind of using this particular term also reveals that fundamentalism is understood as relevant outside the sphere of religion. This opens up a series of questions, some of which I shall try to address in this paper.

What is fundamentalism?

I shall not attempt to offer a definition of fundamentalism—or fundamentalisms—since that would be too pretentious, bearing in mind that men, far more learned than I, have failed to agree about it. I shall only point out some common elements of the fundamentalist way of thinking. Fundamentalists, as their name tells us, wish to revert to the fundamentals, the source, that which had been there at the beginning and was subsequently corrupted. This means that in the religious theory and/or practice they identify something they consider a deviation. No matter where they find it or how they define this deviation, they claim that a single interpretation of their holy scriptures—if we stick to Judaism, Christianity and Islam—is true. In addition, they demand hegemony of this interpretation over others. Leaving aside the three above mentioned religions, all of which have a central holy scripture and act on its basis, we can see that all forms of fundamentalism maintain that one, and only one, interpretation of the sacred and the real is right, regardless of

how lame or controversial it may occasionally turn out to be. In other words, fundamentalism is exclusive (opposing any form of plural interpretation), hegemonic (affirming the importance of its own interpretation in all matters that may arise within the given religion), totalitarian (extending its validity outside the religious domain to all relevant spheres of social life), and frequently also fanatic in its attitude (demonstrating the wish to oppress and even physically destroy those of different mind).

Furthermore, fundamentalists are not concerned over the controversy of their positions. As Gellner says (1992:75) Islamic fundamentalists accuse the West of both the tolerance for what they themselves do not like and intolerance for their own rules. Fundamentalism is targeted, and in that context fundamentalists accept the slogan that ends justify means. Still, this dual moral is not their exclusive domain, it is a lasting component of the official policies pursued by large Western countries and that precisely accounts for the little credit other countries give to their criticism of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism – old or new phenomenon?

Is fundamentalism a new phenomenon, or can it be found in earlier times as well? Parekh (1994:107) claims that fundamentalism is a modern occurrence and has its historical analogues, but not parallels. The answer really depends on the definition of the relation fundamentalism has towards the external world—the reality beyond the religious-dogmatic. Religious fundamentalism may be roughly divided into two categories – introvert and extrovert.

Introvert fundamentalism is in the first place a historical phenomenon. All Christian groups Parekh mentions (1994:117, footnote 10) belong to introvert fundamentalism. Fundamentalists of older times could withdraw from the surrounding world and

build a barrier between it and themselves, such as e.g. hermits did, because the earth was large enough for that. Furthermore, they had hardly any interest in changing the external world. This kind of barrier was still possible to build even in the modern world. The Amish and Lestadians were two typical examples in the post-war era.

However, the world today is too small for something of that kind and, although people may not have the wish to start a dialogue with their surroundings, they are forced to do that (see also Giddens 1994:85). Reformation could be considered the first major, extrovert and comprehensive fundamentalism within Christianity.

The thing which, in my view, characterizes modern fundamentalism the most is its reaction to changes in the external world. When Parekh (1994:117) refers to Caplan (1987) to support his statement that fundamentalism is deeply secular and rational, he is wrong, however strange this may sound: fundamentalism does not accept the secular picture of the world, and reacts to any form of secularization that does not fit into its hegemonic interpretation of reality. Whatever is not in conflict with this image, including among other things a good part of modern technology, is not perceived as dangerous. Quite the contrary, fundamentalists use modern technology a lot (Parekh: 1994:116). Just as the early Protestants used the modern technology of the 16th century – printing.

If fundamentalism is caused by the crisis of identity and authority in instable and, religiously confused societies, as Parekh (1994: 109, 111) claims, it is then a historical phenomenon, because crises of that kind are no novelty. Naturally, there are also deep differences between the different forms of fundamentalisms, caused by the nature of individual religions in a specific society, but fundamentalism as a response to crisis is a phenomenon both old and new.

Fundamentalism or fundamentalisms?

Does fundamentalism exist only in Christianity and Islam, and possibly Judaism, or can it be found in all world religions? The view that fundamentalism is universal, advocated in Caplan (1987) is correct, in my view. It is only natural that a social phenomenon should take different forms under different circumstances. The point is, however, to find out what it is that they have in common and therefore forms the core of fundamentalism. The rest are but variations.

Parekh (1994:119) claims that “fundamentalism arises when a fractured, corrupt and nervous religious tradition fears for its survival”. That fear is noticeable in all religions and thus the only question is whether we shall “recognize” different answers as fundamentalism, or shall name them differently. Naturally, that is not the reason to lump together the Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Sikh or any other religious fundamentalism. I can only offer one answer—religious tolerance.

The first surge of Spanish Catholic intolerance destroyed almost everything Arabic and Jewish. That tells us nothing new, because manifestations of Christian intolerance have been known, especially within Christian fundamentalism. But it is often denied, being one of the pillars of so-called Western values. By contrast, Islamic intolerance is often mentioned, although it actually did not exist until modern times. The Ottoman system of millets was tolerant. Those who doubt that should only try to visualize a Mecca existing next to Madrid after 1500, in the way Christ's grave stood in Jerusalem under the Ottoman rule, or imagine an “ecumenical ayatollah” having a seat in Paris, like the one that the patriarch of the Orthodox Church had in Istanbul.

There is a lot more here requiring consideration. For instance, Gellner (1992:6) rightly wonders why one particular religion –

Islam—proved so resistant to secularization. A closer look at many things in the Christian world shows us that secularization is a thin, transparent layer over deep intolerance, built either on Christian values or on their false understanding. Turkey was, for instance secularized under the Young Turks, but as soon as the political elite accepted the European ideas of the national state, it also accepted the extermination of those who could not be included in the state-building nation, e.g. Armenians around the year 1920, or Kurds today.

Anyway, the old multireligious (and multicultural) Balkans was until modern times, just as tolerant as the modern multireligious Scandinavia, but in a more natural, and I would even say organic way, created through centuries of joint existence with “others”. Intolerance came with the large powers, their wars and their crises. The tolerance of the Ottoman Empire grew as it expanded and decreased when it shrunk and declined. But that is another aspect of this issue, which shall be discussed later. The point I wish to make now is that there is a whole series of different forms of religious fundamentalism and fundamentalist views, something that Giddens (1994:252) calls “a world of multiple fundamentalisms”.

What is the social basis of fundamentalism?

Even a cursory look at current writings reveals a wide agreement of researchers that fundamentalism is a product of crisis, or, more precisely, a response to a state of crisis. But religious crises are rarely, if ever, isolated from the rest of society. The question is then whether a particular religious crisis is caused by external or internal factors. If its causes are internal, religious factors, it can be explained on that basis and fundamentalism becomes an internal religious issue. But religious crises are, as a rule, the consequence of more comprehensive social crises, and thus a religious crisis must be the outcome of external factors.

Namely, there is a significant time-wise overlapping between a general social crisis and the religious crisis which gives rise to fundamentalist ideas or religious movements within or outside the dominant religion in the society concerned.

Similar overlappings are noted in the early 16th century Europe, when Protestantism emerged, and in Scandinavia after 1820 when the religious movement Internal Mission appeared as counterbalance to liberal ideas, or again in Europe in the aftermath of destruction of the First World War and the remission of the large economic crisis, as well as today in the crisis brought by globalization on large parts of the world population.

A social crisis of that kind can be quite comprehensive, like the one of early 16th century and the advent of Protestantism, but it can also affect a limited society, such as the Lappish in the second half of the 19th century, when a priest called Lestadius started his missionary work. It may assume a variety of forms, starting from the conflict with the liberal society in America at the outset of the 20th century (see, e.g., Marsden 1980), to internal colonialism in the above-mentioned example of the Lapps, and to Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction to certain elements of modern society, mostly liberal ideas and Western hegemony.

Yet, the reasons are not so easy to account for, as it may seem. A person wishing to explain the historical or modern social processes becomes inevitably involved in all basic problems of historiography and sociology. To put it simply, it is not the same whether a man has an indeterministic or deterministic view of history, a functionalist or Marxist view of society, a positivistic or hermeneutic approach to explanation in general. Therefore, instead of discussing the reasons, I shall rather apply myself to the social basis of fundamentalism.

FUNDAMENTALISM – ENDS OR MEANS?

The groups most affected by a general crisis in society are also those that embrace, or themselves produce, fundamentalist ideas the most. Parekh (1994:112) links the social basis of fundamentalism to middle strata, saying that everybody else in the world researching fundamentalism does the same. This should not be surprising, if we think about the social basis of fascism or Nazism. An apparently orderly “Biedermeier” world of small citizens’ notions of religion, nation, family, sex, youth, as well as their life values, is the first to be wrecked in crises. And it is wrecked by their own society. Just like the fascists and Nazis, they, too, look for the culprits in the same groups. According to Giddens (1994:41), the fundamentalists of the New Christian Right assign the culpability for family ruin to intellectuals and the activities of the political left. This type of mistrust, aimed primarily at the humanist and partly social science intelligentsia, may also be found among the old communists and social democrats. Therefore, intellectuals are to blame, thus those who ask questions and demand a dialogue instead of simple answers.

No matter what the reasons may be, the answer is the protection of the old, that which is, in their view, about to be deconstructed and decomposed. For Giddens (1994:48, 84, 85), fundamentalism is tradition protected in a traditional way, but by using modern means of communication. I shall, however, formulate that in a different manner:

Fundamentalist reactions to crises have, in time, obtained different external religious forms, determined by religious and social relations, but religious fundamentalism has basically always been the means for problem solution or attainment of certain objectives external to religion. The sphere of activity of modern fundamentalism is actually determined in the political sphere; in the end it always turns into a political program.

What is fundamentalism used for?

What is the function of religious fundamentalism outside the religious domain? Parekh (1994:113) formulates it as follows: “In the fundamentalist view religious ought to be the basis of both personal and collective life and guide all areas of human conduct. The fundamentalist rejects the separation between politics and religion. For him, every religion necessarily seeks political articulation, and all sound politics is religiously grounded.” If we accept the definition of politics as an activity aimed at governing all other activities, the consequences of a fundamentalist understanding of social life become remarkably comprehensive, and its totalitarian character clearly visible. This relation may be observed on two levels, the historical and modern. Historically speaking—still within the Christian cultural circle—we have political ambitions of the church weaving through ever since the establishment of the church state in Rome. Within this ideology, the realm of God was the same thing as the papal state. The ambition was a complete match of the state and religion, which meant that, in addition to its role of a mediator between believers and God, the church should have assumed the role of a mediator between the subject/citizen and secular power, or else become secular power itself. In Northern Europe this happened after the Reformation with the appearance of the established church, which with its slogan *God in heaven, king on earth and father at home* practically accomplished the fusion. I would not dare to claim that the Catholic times in Scandinavia were more secular than those of fused absolutism and pietism, but in any case conflicts between the church and the state were more numerous in the Middle Ages than during absolutism. More or less the same thing happened with the relation of the Orthodox Church towards the state since it is, just as the Protestant churches, a national church without a supranational head. In a modern perspective, fundamentalism was compared with three ideologies: fascism, Nazism and communism.

Fascism and Nazism are built on sheer will for the use of power and in effect do not have a systematic ideology, and still less a philosophy, as a point of departure. At best, they have fragmentary claims, which do not require justification and explanation, and appeal directly to emotions. That is why they cannot be changed from within, but can only be repeated in technologically more modern or adjusted forms. In other words, Nazism without *Mein Kampf* is possible. Religious fundamentalism cannot survive without Holy Scriptures, but still offers a possibility for a different interpretation of the sacred starting from within. This is most clearly the case of Islamic fundamentalism, which proved to be remarkably capable of adjusting not only to the modern (excepting liberal ideas), but also to changed social structures.

By contrast, communism is, on the one hand, based on a comprehensive system of philosophical, macro-economic, historiographic and sociological views, and, on the other, on a specific political program. When these ideas are interpreted in a fundamentalist manner—remember Lenin's and Maoist showdown with revisionists—they reveal doubtless similarity with religious fundamentalism and its relation towards the Holy Scriptures. But, since communism is not monocentric, i.e. it does not have a center of interpretation—the Internationals and Cominform were rather political centers of power—it possesses a possibility for a different interpretation from within, as already happened on numerous occasions in both theoretical and political domains. The strongest elements tying all four views together are the will for power and a totalitarian attitude. But the totalitarian and anti-democratic in religious fundamentalism is, in a way, more efficient when it is indirectly political. While the ordinary political use of power is direct and is explained in political or economic terms, the religious fundamentalistic use of power is explained by factors outside political and economic interests: religion and moral. This makes it less transparent than open demands for power of the three above-mentioned political ideologies.

This is perhaps the most clearly seen in the modern American mixing of politics and religion. As Giddens (1994:9) says, neoliberalism is contradictory, it destroys tradition by promoting market forces and aggressive individualism, but it simultaneously depends on tradition as part of its own legitimacy conservatism where nation, religion, gender roles and family occupy the central place. It is not difficult to see how easily purely political demands are transformed into acceptable images of so-called Western values. I deliberately say “so-called” because they are referred to as something generally known and indisputable, without being sufficiently or explicitly explained as operative concepts. Furthermore, they are understood as hegemonic moral values above all others, whereby the one who invokes them obtains the right to impose his political will, without explicating it as political, or still less a result of economic interests.

This mixing of religious and political elements may also be seen outside the Christian cultural circle. Parekh (1994:110) shows that Hinduism, by contrast with Christianity and Islam, is more concerned over conversion to other religions than the loss of faith, since Hinduism, to the extent that it is based on the caste system, justifies this system in return. Conversion to another religion undermines the very social and political basis Hinduism rests on.

Parts of literature addressing fundamentalism refer to the use of religious fundamentalism in politics as political fundamentalism. The reason should be self-explanatory. Religious fundamentalism has a number of features in common with conservative lines; they are mutually supplementary and may even partially overlap. This is clearly visible in the image both the Croatian and Serbian nationalists have of themselves as of bulwarks of Christianity in the Balkans.

Despite the historical misunderstandings between the Orthodox and the Catholic churches, as well as the long-lasting proselyte

efforts of the Catholic Church and Austria–Hungary aimed at the Orthodox population, both nationalisms, first the Croatian and then also the Serbian, each defended its nation as the one that saved Europe from Islamic barbarism. With that, actually erroneous conception, they seek a privileged status in relation to Europe, but in a way that only one of them can get it, thereby excluding the other. Croatian nationalism builds on the claim that Turks have actually never conquered Croatia and that the Croats are Catholics (the “right” form of Christianity), while Serbian nationalism hinges on the fact that most wars between Austria-Hungary and Turkey were waged along the Military road cutting through the center of Serbia end to end, with the Serbs as defenders of the frontier in the bordering areas of the two empires.

Naturally, it is possible to discuss whether this is a boundary or peripheral phenomenon since both are characterized by a tendency to be more catholic than the pope, but what is specific in this context is that the religious border and the concept of the “just war” against the infidels, long devised by Catholics, are used for political purposes. What we have here are border area fundamentalisms, but it is precisely in such gray areas of contacts between religion and politics that fundamentalism thrives the most. How so complicated a historical picture from parts of Europe can be used for political struggle in other parts of this continent and the U.S.A. when sufficiently simplified, is shown by Jardar Seim in his article “How can a historian understand the lines of conflict in the Balkans” (Seim 1998).

State and economic fundamentalism

Looking at Islam at the time of the Ottoman Empire, we see that it encouraged Islamization, because Muslims were subject to “military conscription”, which was important for an expanding state such as Turkey, but forcible Islamization was much less widespread than usually believed, since the non-Islamic population, by contrast with

the Muslims, paid taxes and other charges (see for instance Mørk 1998). Religion, politics and economy were closely interlinked. Serbia was religiously tolerant in the early 19th century despite the fact that the struggle for national liberation was waged against the Islamic Turkey, and notwithstanding the continuing pressures for conversion to Catholicism applied by Austria-Hungary: trade interests of the young state dictated tolerance. When economic interests changed, tolerance disappeared. Just as Venice changed its relation towards Turkey and the Christian population in the Balkans in line with its variable trade interests.

Characteristic of these older times is that the current political and trade interests were not hidden (although the crusades were publicly justified as struggle against the infidels or missionary work). Only in modern times, especially after the Second World War have the political and economic interests been shrouded in a religious veil. Earlier, there was no need for such a justification. Olaf Trygvason, a medieval Norwegian conversionist king, openly acknowledged that his zeal for conversion into Christianity reached as far as Norwegian trade interests.

West-European expansion with genocide against the Indians in America, slave trade, opium wars in China and similar cases of brutal imposition of economic interests for the most part were not justified at all, or at best invoked the fact that “pagans” were not human. Until the First World War, war was a legitimate means for solving the problems between states, and the West practically considered it normal that class differences should exist as natural and God given, and therefore could and had to be sustained in order to maintain God-given order on earth. Ideas of that kind are rejected only after the Second World War and that is when the need arises to justify acts incompatible with Christian morality. That is the most consistently implemented in the American policy. With some reservations, I would call this phenomenon national (or nationalistic) fundamentalism.

The specific way in which the U.S.A. was created gave rise to a unique form of the cult of state wherein the state is even called a nation, a term that proved highly “contagious” for the language of Europe. Or, as Gellner (1992:5) summarizes W. Herberg’s analysis, “Religion celebrates a shared cult of the American way of life, rather than insisting on distinctions of theology of church organization as once it did”. In the American self-understanding, a person is primarily an American, true preferably a white Protestant. The “melting pot” metaphor was substituted by the “salad bowl”, but others are still no more than spices in it. American politicians like to invoke Western, Christian values, creating an atmosphere of a crusade, but they never forget to incorporate the vital American interests in its justification. These are, as a rule, economic and military interests, but that is never said so openly. And if Christian values are incongruent with economic interests, the latter are given priority. The state and economy are rated the highest and that rating is largely accounted for by Christianity.

That has been happening for about twenty years now against the background of the new public religion: neoliberalism. Certain researchers call it capitalist fundamentalism, while the well-known financier George Soros in his remarkably sharp criticism of neoliberal ideas (see Soros 1998) uses the term “market fundamentalism”. There are many things which can be analyzed here, but I shall settle for one. Laissez-faire capitalism and free competition form the core of the neoliberal economic theory. To offer models at least 150-200 years old and claim their unique correctness and their blanket validity amounts to a fundamentalistic way of thinking. The problem is that this kind of a free competition no longer exists, having been replaced with larger or smaller monopolies. About three years ago a Swedish magazine *Ordfront* wrote that out of 100 largest world economies, 51 are states and 49 multinational companies. This ratio is today probably altered in favor of multinational companies.

Despite the controversies inherent in the neoliberal economy, indicated by Giddens (1994:6, 9) it seems that it fares quite well regardless of the destructive effects it has on society and state (see, for instance, Martin & Schumann 1996, Ehrenberg 1998). Furthermore, neoliberalism also has a destructive effect on the largest contribution the West has made to a more humane world—the welfare state (see Israel & Hermaansson 1996) and the entire basis of life (see, e.g., Wright 1986). It has so much power in the American way of thinking about economy and politics that any criticism of neoliberal ideas is automatically interpreted as outright anti-western. Thereby the U.S.A. obtains the status of West incarnate, and I see that as the strongest manifestation of national or nationalistic fundamentalism: the U.S.A. and its values are the right, fundamental and exemplary. To claim that a person's attitude is anti-American but at the same time pro-Western, would be very difficult, and in a way also impossible, especially if Christian values are invoked. They are now almost inseparably linked with vital American interests, and it is no longer the case of fundamentalism but of falsifying Christianity.

Still, we should not forget that neoliberalism today survives also due to its enormous ability for adjustment; printing the image of Christ on tee-shirts is not an expression of Christian fundamentalism, but of his uncontrolled commercialization. Just as Christmas has become the merchants' holiest day.

Closely related to the issue of economy is what Giddens (1994: 11, 48) calls ecological fundamentalism. I consider that wrong. Demanding that man should return to nature means returning to something that is no longer feasible in its initial form. The ecological movement is highly complex, but although its reactions may be quite strong, it is incorrect to call it fundamentalist. Its main view is that resources are depletable and so is earth itself. I would therefore sooner use the term fundamentalist speaking of reactions to ecological criticism of the social-democratic and

neoliberal ideology of growth, which generally function as the creed of western capitalism. Just how strong these reactions could be is aptly revealed by Wright (1994) in his analysis of reactions to his latest book (von Wright 1986).

Ethnic, racial and cultural fundamentalism

Another aspect of fundamentalism is revealed in responses to the problems of ethnicity, race, culture and gender. At the very beginning of national romanticism close links were established between the language, nation and state, and somewhat later the people. There are two types of forming the chain which are partly different in their nature. The first is based on the need for one nation to have one state with one language, and it belongs to the stage of nation-state building. The second requires a special relation between a nation, the race this nation belongs to and its culture, which on its part includes language and religion. That is a deeply fundamentalist manner of thinking, akin to nationalism even in its weakest forms. Still the two ways of thinking are not always identical. While the German form of Nazism was not linked with religion, Croatian nationalism was deeply embedded in Catholicism of the crusades as its ideology.

Precisely in this mixing of politics and religion, religion may surface in place of ethnic and religious differences. Croats, Muslims and Serbs have the same ethnic origin. The borders between them were made in line with religious borders and sometimes even at a very late date, only after the Second World War, when the last Catholic and Muslim Serbs and Muslim Croats disappeared and Catholics became Croats, Islamized Slavs became Muslims (calling themselves Bosniaks today), while the Orthodox became Serbs. Thus with the ethnic difference missing, and with a single linguistic diasystem wherein borders between dialects and variants of standard language do not seem to follow national borders, religion and parts of culture deriving from it become the only possible line

of demarcation (a case which partly resembles this is the border between the Catholic and Protestant Germans).

That is why present-day nationalism on the Serbo-Croatian language area had to be the means of delimitation; we are not the same, but others are different from us. In a debate I was engaged in a few months ago, I asked the opposing side to formulate a positive definition of the Serbs, thus a definition containing something that only Serbs possess, which therefore functions as a *differential specifica*. I have never obtained it. I had to do the same thing in Croatia and with the Slavic Muslims. That is why nationalists always recourse to religion and refuse to go back into the past more than a few decades, because earlier this demarcation line did not apply. That is why the Croatian ethno fundamentalists launched the theses about the Croats originating from the Harauvata of the Code of Hammurabi, or from the Goths, or insist that if Croats are Slavs, then Serbs must have come from the Caucasus, meaning that they are not Slavs. Something similar goes on with the Muslims in Bosnia who claim to be direct descendants of the Bogomils, a Christian religious community persecuted as heretical by the Orthodox and Catholic churches in the Middle Ages, who, under a popular assumption, largely converted to Islam, a new and, at that time, tolerant religion. But, that is in part a highly doubtful claim, bearing in mind the actual (later) times of widespread Islamization, antroponymic data and other sources. Meanwhile, the Serbian ethno-fundamentalists (and the Serbian Orthodox Church) are content with a simple statement that Serbs are Orthodox (a claim which over time drove away numerous Muslims and Catholics who experienced themselves as Serbs), but consciously disregard the fact that being Orthodox cannot be *differentia specifica*, since there are several Orthodox peoples.

Once all that is used up without a visible result, everybody goes back to religion and what it means for the culture and language. Ethnos and culture are then based on religion and

fundamentalism, unfortunately symbolized in the slogan *bow or be gone*, which describes the relation towards the other better than anything else. As usual, the final solution is that individuals and groups disappear, occasionally literally—physically.

Taking a look at all the things said about Norwegian temperament, specifics or way of life, or so many books on Swedishness (the Danes are somewhat more reserved in that respect), my impression that it is close to impossible to give a positive definition of what, after all, a Norwegian or a Swede may be is, if anything, intensified. In the end the safest thing to say is that a person is Norwegian if he/she feels like one. Genuine Norway may only be found in the old national-romanticist literature; in principle, there is only the linguistic and locational continuity between Norwegians of the time of the 1814 constitution and the present day. I do not say this to deny that something that may be described as Norwegian does exist, although that is not so easy to do as two hundred years ago, or as simple as describing Yanomani or Lapps and some other small ethnic group with at least a clearly different language. I say this to make another point.

Imagine a situation where a fundamentalist Norwegian parliament accepts a request that Norwegian citizenship requires proof of Norwegian spirit—as was the case in Slovenia where a person had to demonstrate his/her Slovene spirit to obtain citizenship. I do not know if any one of you could manage to do that; I am convinced that I myself could not, no matter what I read, saw or experienced. Precisely that remains specifically undefined in the fundamentalist way of thinking, and creates an insurmountable obstacle for those who would like to climb over but are not wanted. But, there are ways to internally homogenize and create Scandinavians from non-Scandinavians other than the request for demonstration of the right spirit (see part of articles in Ehn, Frykmann & Løfgren 1993).

At this point we should perhaps mention that certain researchers, for instance Giddens (1994:48), say something about sexual fundamentalism, but insufficiently defined. What he says on this fundamentalism is sooner a part of ordinary patriarchalism of old times, which has always been a component part of fundamentalism as masculine phenomenon, and has an important function outside the man-women relation: to establish a hierarchy where the lower position of the woman is only part of a pyramid. On the other hand, we see a certain tendency of developing feminist fundamentalism and fundamentalism of minorities, as they are occasionally referred to, and could be nicely illustrated by the old slogan, *God, she is black*. I do not consider that fundamentalism either. Statements of this kind and their underpinning ideologies are not totalitarian and do not require hegemony over other views. In principle, these are merely reactions to fundamentalism or inferior relations in society.

Quasi-scientific fundamentalism

Still, there is an important area that merits special attention, namely fundamentalist ideas aimed against science: social Darwinism and its modern variants like socio-biology, eugenics, biology of races, and the so-called scientific creationism.

Sociobiology, creationism and eugenics have always been extremely important supporting pillars of the fundamentalist ideology (see, e.g., Tarasjev 1999, Tucić 1999). The so-called scientific creationism advocated by the New Christian Right movement, led to the expunction of evolution biology from instructions in elementary schools in quite a few places, for instance, some American states and Croatia.

Quasi-biological theories advocating higher intelligence of men or the white race, war as a natural state, biological basis of class differences, pollution of the white race etc, grew deep roots and

generally became an important part of expansionist ideology. This is also true of Serbia. Immediately before the war broke out, a lot of sociobiological and creationist literature was written, many half-baked and semi-intelligible claims were stated and the media carried a lot of quasi-biological stupidities and eugenic nonsense about Serbian ethnic purity. One of the most important bishops of the Orthodox Church appropriately accused the communists and evolutionists for the present predicament of the Serbs. The city with its modernity was also looked upon as a source of decay (and all that without knowing that Konrad Lorenz, already before the Second World War accused the cities for spoiling the German race).

The cause for these attacks is the close link between science and modernity and between religious fundamentalism and anti-modernity.

In the various debates we can here that Marrism (a Soviet quasi-scientific theory of language, so called after the man who created it, Nikolai Yakovlevich Marr and eventually terminated by Stalin), Lysenkoism (Soviet quasi-scientific teaching of heredity formulated by a biologist called Lysenko, which ruined large parts of Soviet agriculture), the positivistic concept of unique science and similar forms imposing the hegemony of one theory, are indeed examples of the fundamentalist way of thinking, but they still do not amount to fundamentalism. Their hegemony is claimed only within limited areas and, although they may be supported by political decisions (Marrism, Lysenkoism) or institutional culture (positivism) they are not integral parts of specific political programs. Naturally, this does not diminish the damage inflicted by their generalization, but it is not “fundamentalist damage”.

The situation is somewhat different with Marxist sociology, which had the status of politically correct and desirable, as well as hegemonic pretensions, or with the American functionalist

sociology, which still has that kind of status in many circles of social scientists. What we have there are elements of fundamentalist ideology. But, neither derives its postulates from religion and they can therefore be defined as supportive of already formed state ideologies, in the form of compulsory Marxism in the Soviet Union, and, in the U.S.A., the idea of market capitalism without conflicts and the American technological and scientific domination.

Gellner (1994) gives a deep and well-thought out analysis of anthropological relativism and post-modernism, which in many ways show the ambition to take the role of universal scientific means and models of explanation in social sciences and humanities, but they cannot be discussed in this paper. Suffice it to mention that the threshold of fundamentalism is crossed once someone starts stating the universality and hegemony of a view and then makes it part of a political program. This has not happened in the case of either anthropological relativism or post-modernism, although they do have some political relevance. Quite the contrary, the post-modernist idea of destruction, as Gellner rightly pointed out, represents a clear refutation of fundamentalism, but it is completely politically and scientifically unbinding, and therefore cannot be incorporated into a fundamentalist program, least of all one based on religion.

Countermeasures

If we accept the definition that religious fundamentalism is a political program based on religion, but with actual objectives out of it, then it must be countered by an alternative political program with the same objectives. This means that alternative solutions must be offered.

First off, it would be necessary to see whether certain parts of the fundamentalism concerned contain something emancipatory,

e.g. in reaction to the destroyed social structure, family relations or alcoholism. This kind of a social program formed the core of Lestadianism until it grew into a rigid and confining dogma. Secondly, other means must be offered to restore the ruined solidarity, as Giddens (1994:12) puts it. He thinks that “the combination of capitalism and liberal democracy provides few means of generating social solidarity” (Giddens 1994:10), and has still less confidence in the faith of the new right that multinational capitalism would make war disappear (p. 40). He is right on both counts. This solidarity, signified primarily by the welfare state in the West, has been completely, systematically destroyed. The Nordic welfare state did not come out of the blue, of its own; it is a result of long years of struggle and may again be created through such a struggle, but not with still more globalization and commercialization. The same applies to Islamic fundamentalism. If it is caused by globalization and fear of losing authority and identity, it cannot be cured by offering more globalization, neoliberalism and Americanization. The result is completely the opposite in both cases. But, people easily fall for fundamentalist ideas: they are not binding and as a rule have simple explanations, they do not require any special externally oriented action, they transfer the problems to (charismatic) leaders to deal with and last but not least, they create a semblance of security which is difficult to see through.

Giddens (1994:19) sees four possible ways of reacting to the conflicts of values: geographic separation of the conflicting parties, moving out of one party, dialogue and use of force or violence. He opts for dialogue (p. 243) as a solution for violent conflicts and ethnic and cultural differences and calls it democracy through dialogue (pp. 131-132). That is nothing new in the Nordic way of thinking: I would only like to recall the book of blessed Hal Koch *Hvad er demokrati?*—What is democracy? (Koch 1945). But, precisely dialogue and tolerance are essentially alien to fundamentalism and are at the same time its main enemies.

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Zorica Kuburić

**ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR DIALOGUE
AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN PROTESTANTISM**

The possibilities for dialogue and religious tolerance can be discussed at several different levels and in different ways. Most often we are offered the level of theory as a starting point to explain that dialogue is possible, and even desirable, while at the same time the manner of presentation is dogmatic and avoids to critically address one's own practice. Theoretical considerations always tempt us not to distinguish the really achievable objectives from the unattainable, albeit nice wishes. Problem concretization enables scientific analysis and inevitably develops critical approach. Scientific research into religion demands appropriate knowledge of the processes and internal dynamics of religious life, as well as a methodological distance allowing objective and impartial consideration of the phenomenon of religion in its social context.

Characteristic of every religion is the need not to be verified. Therefore, tolerance in religion is paradoxical. The stronger the faith the lesser the doubt in the correctness of one's belief and thereby also the tolerance of doubting it. Dogmatic thought stands no criticism, which is why it appears paradoxical to speak of freedom in faith.

Thinking about tolerance manifest in certain religions we ask ourselves which specific indicators we may use to recognize a higher or lower degree of tolerance? Are sects the outcome of religions tolerance or intolerance? Is the absence of sects and persecuted heretics a sign of religious tolerance, or is tolerance greater where dissenters and possibilities for religious organization on other than dominant bases are more numerous? Is the liberty of religious affiliation proof of freedom and tolerance, or weakness of the church to win its believers in time? Who decides on the

religious affiliation of an individual: the state, church, family, an individual? Is the possibility to abandon a certain religion an indicator of religious tolerance and dialogue, or merely the case of wrong religion? And, finally, is tolerance present in places where religion has lost its power, in secular societies that do not care much for religion, or tolerance derives from the maturity of a religious system and its believers, its stable identity and firm faith?

One of the indicators of tolerance is the possibility to opt for or give up one's religious belonging without consequences. Collectivism and individualism as characteristics of certain religions may also be analyzed in terms of the possibility for tolerance within the religious system concerned. Rigid religious systems do not recognize the developmental dimension of life and thus make development more difficult. Chaotic systems, lacking clear limits, represent the other extreme by offering a semblance of tolerance, but are actually impotent to introduce order into their own lives. How do we recognize the values of religious systems and their functionality? If religious tolerance indicates the flexibility of religious systems, then it is highly important to recognize it, not only in the holy scriptures, but also in the messages of religious leaders and the life of believers.

In view of the large numbers of religious organizations it is clear that the religious life of individuals as well as religious organizations develops in stages and initially supports a dogmatic, intolerant and firm position enabling the formation of a religious identity, which is of necessity somewhat different from the previous one. In time, this identity becomes stable and allows critical doubts and greater freedom giving rise to heretics and apostates who, on their part, look for a new identity. Mutual relations of differently minded people within a system are belligerent and result in open conflicts, the more intensive the lesser the differences. The curse of small differences brings about stronger conflicts in mutual relations of only slightly differing beliefs.

Two millennia of Christianity mark a period of time allowing us to plot the complete development of a stout system of belief, with initially a strong charismatic power of God the Son and few followers who resisted a powerful traditional religion and still more powerful military-state to form their own teaching, and then a sect and finally a strong church. The charismatic power of an individual was once again captured by a firm organization and turned into the political power of an institution, untouchable for centuries.

Protestantism took a critical attitude towards the powerful organization and individuals again assumed the right to doubt, criticize and exercise power. At the same time, reliance on the sources was retained. Protestantism insisted on the importance of belonging to a faith (what one believes in) rather than to an organization (who one belongs to). Commandments became the subject of discussion and heteronomous moral lost its power faced with the criticism of autonomous morality. Dialogue became possible. Differences, in fact, enable dialogue, and Protestantism contributed to differences the most. Introduction of faith among the people, the principle of universal priesthood of believers, enabled both a dialogue between believers and individualism. Does a person reinforce or lose his/her faith in a dialogue? Are doubts insulting or fortifying? Naturally, doubt spells crisis but at the same time also a chance for higher quality religiousness, a more stable identity and firm faith which alone enable a dialogue without fear, with complete understanding deriving from the experience of one's own development.

Protestantism is a movement for theological and moral reform of the Western Christian Church in the 16th and 17th centuries. Theologically, it is an attempt to go back to the original teachings of the Bible and early Christianity. The authority of the Bible was superior to tradition. Salvation is attainable through faith, not deeds. Religious services were simplified, monasticism and clergy

attacked, and laity elevated to universal priesthood of believers. Religious changes caused by the Reformation went hand in hand with social and political rebellions leading to permanent divisions in Western Christianity and the establishment of new churches.

Protestantism cannot be discussed independently from Catholicism, since it is a movement relative to Roman Catholic practice. Protestantism succeeded in the Christianity of the West, but not of the East. Was that due to the lack of motive for reform or lack of opportunity to carry it out? What happened with the Bogumil movement? What is the contribution of Islam to the Eastern church, the possibility for dialogue and development of religious tolerance? Every religious tradition had a chance to see its reflection in the confronted, rival religion. Dialogue and tolerance or mutual wars. The choice was usually made by whoever wielded greater power.

Characteristic of Protestantism is a lively discussion about doctrinary, theological truths. Organizational partitioning is a consequence of disagreements concerning the interpretation of individual Biblical texts. However, disagreements in dialogue did not build stakes, they merely divided power. An ever-increasing number of people had the opportunity to acquire theological education, to develop their own spirituality and also try their hands at power.

Belief in salvation by faith, which forms the fulcrum of Protestantism, is a precondition to develop tolerance among believers. Namely, how can one help religious people to be good and show love for one another if not by revealing to them the love of God who forgives all and accepts man as he is? Orientation to salvation by deeds calls for responsibility but instills fear by constantly pressuring the human nature. Reckoning with the feeling of guilt, the need to obtain forgiveness for one's sins through confession and material donations appear as spiritual

exploitation. Faith, not deeds and merits, eliminates the need to look for the culprit and use a defense mechanism of projecting one's own weaknesses to the other, thereby also eliminating inferior interpersonal relations. However, the problem appears where people prove incapable of abstract thinking. Protestantism gives preference to cognitive over emotional. Faith is nourished rationally, and is less fearful.

Religiousness is developed in the process of socialization, based on the influence of the social environment, primarily through the family, which selectively transfers the adopted system of values to its descendents. Still, we should point out that religiousness and non-religiousness do not reflect passive submission to the influences of one's living environment, just as they are not always a personal choice deriving from the internal motivation of an individual. According to research findings (Kuburić, 1998; 1996; 1999) religiousness is primarily a factor of family choice, which seeks reproduction from generation to generation.

However, the failure of a family to transfer the adopted religious system, on the one hand, begins with the failure of this system to satisfy a child's requirements. Thus if religious families transmitting their religious values forget the emotional component of their children's personalities and fail to link the religious with the pleasant and that which, either directly or indirectly, satisfies the children's needs, they pave the way for the rejection of religion. Insistence on salvation by deeds leads towards perfectionism, mostly reflected in psychological defense mechanisms, in the first place that of projection, which sees its own sins in others and thus intensifies intolerant behavior.

On the other hand, families that are not religious and have not satisfied the emotional needs of their children for love, pave the way for their religiousness as a quest, emotional sanctuary and only safety they have left. The degree of success of an individual

in translating the cognitive understanding that God is love into emotional safety depends on his/her experience with the right persons, with the important other. The vicious circle can only be broken by personal experience of unconditional love and acceptance. A large number of religious communities within Protestantism are organized in a way resembling a family, which by fostering unconditional love and belief in justification by faith alone reduces the feeling of guilt, anxiousness and depression, and restores self-respect by emphasizing God's love and accepting the centuries-old message that "the just man liveth by faith" (Eccl. 2:4, Rom.1:7).

The substance of morality lies in the balance of relations I-you; I-another. A man should look another man in the eyes, with the feeling of equal importance. That is a precondition for tolerance, the awareness of equality. However, temptations on road to tolerance are twofold. Sometimes a man wishes to be God to another, to place himself above the other and dispense justice. Does that happen when God is not among people or those who believe that they have God may also be so tempted? Many people have been disappointed in others. From generation to generation the words "*Homo homini lupus est*" are repeated. Until when will the "other be hell"? Where are the "cities of refuge"?

Deliberating on religious tolerance we shall first define what tolerance stands for in general; is it about feeling, thinking, behavior or personal characteristic, a part of temperament or character? After that we shall try to answer whether putting up with everything is a virtue or fault? Why is it necessary for a person to be tolerant? Does tolerance have limits and if so, where are they? Is it a virtue to endure even the behavior we consider inappropriate, wrong or even dangerous? How tolerant are individual religions? Was Jesus Christ tolerant or intolerant?

The meaning of tolerance

Tolerance is a word of Latin origin (*tolerare*—bear, endure) denoting the capacity to put up with other opinions and beliefs, consideration, permissible departure from customary rules, reconciliation to a phenomenon, getting used to something (Klaić, 1985). Tolerance implies difference, “Because we cannot be tolerant of something we agree with, but only of the thing we do not” (Šušnjić, 1997: 199).

Talk of religious tolerance is somewhat specific. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance”. In order to adopt a view or belief it is necessary to enjoy the freedom of information revealing their variety. It is necessary for a man to be free to change his belief, without his decision subsequently causing discrimination that would affect the development of his personality, his job, his future (Lanares: 1997).

How did all this start? Lanares tells us that first the need appeared for a state to permit the profession of other religions to foreigners on its territory, in order to maintain friendly political and economic relations with others. This form of religious freedom was particularly developed between Western and Muslim countries, dating as far back as the 9th century when Charlemagne worked out the protection for pilgrims traveling to Palestine. After that, at the time of the Reformation, religious freedom was expanded. Freedom of religious profession was granted to princes and rulers. And finally, over the centuries, the protection of religious minorities was also, more or less, obtained (Lanares, 1997).

Is tolerance a weakness or a virtue?

Duro Šušnjić asks: “If I don’t like something, I don’t agree with it and don’t approve it, and yet I am still ready to put up with it all, doesn’t that mean that I am essentially weak, spiritually and otherwise?”

The dilemma concerning the value of toleration may be extended to the question of values of the same or different phenomena. The natural state of life implies differences. Our awareness of that may have been heightened by the phenomenon of cloning. The possibility of reproducing the same! Copies of life without the existence of equal combinations enabling variability. Has God planned men to be the same or different? Life is reproduced in invariably unique individuals. But, that is the rule of biological reproduction. What happens in the process of socialization? Is it necessary that sons should have the same thoughts and beliefs as their fathers? The advance in culture development is accompanied by the merging of different cultural patterns. In the development of religions we see syncretism. Layers of the old are, in a manner, always present in the new. However, it seems that perpetual struggle between the need for the same and different, for being alone and with others, for autonomy and belonging, is inherent in human nature. Extremes do not exist for us to conquer them but to move between them in freedom. That I think serves the purpose of variability and richness of life.

Therefore, tolerance is a virtue on the theoretical level of meaning. Observing tolerance as a value, a rule, a norm, it is quite clear that being perfect means being tolerant of the existence of good and bad and being above events.

Can intolerance be suppressed by intolerance?

Looking at historical relations between different religious groups we may conclude that they have often spelt intolerance and conflict. A minority group, endangered and persecuted, would start persecuting others once it gained power. Let us recall the Jews who crucified Christ and persecuted Christians. The Jews had multiple persecution rebounded on them. The pagans persecuted Christians, called them atheists, watched them entertain the masses fighting in the arenas. When Christians gained power, they persecuted the pagans. Power alternated with powerlessness. The oppressed became oppressors. As if there was no end to the game of fearing the other and different. "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from a religious conviction" (Pascal, 1965:397).

Conflicts did not break out only between highly different beliefs; history offers ample examples of fierce persecutions for only slightly different views. Heretics of all times and religions paid the price of difference, ranging from non-acceptance by their environments to burning at the stake. If freedom exists, why is it so difficult to let the others have it? Intolerance begets enemies.

Why intolerance appears?

It seems to me that prejudices are the main culprits for intolerant behavior. Prejudices which assign individuals and groups different characteristics, incite the feeling of fear or contempt, are a ready model of emotional reaction. Acting like a filter that bars everything arising fear, they exclude confrontation with facts in favor of the other. For tolerance it would suffice to have an approach free of prejudices or at least the knowledge of what prejudices are and an ability to recognize them in oneself. I wonder what kinds of personalities are more inclined to prejudices and stereotypes, how they emerge and how can we be rid of them?

In societies that have a multitude of different religions and a weak or no religious education and upbringing at all, religious and cultural pluralism may have different effects. The stability of religious identity is linked with family influence, with how homogenous it is and how emotionally stable environment it offers for identity formation. Those who are immature are often uncertain as to the truthfulness of their religious belief, and often stick to what they know out of fear, without inquiring about anything. Opposite to the rigid and fanatic believer stands the one who is flexible, free and confident, whose firm views are reinforced by encounters with people of different creeds. Development of one's own spirituality, maturity in religion, implies universal values and the understanding of those on lower levels of spiritual growth.

Absolutization of one's own truth gives yet another possibility for the emerging of intolerance. If an idea is absolutely true, the other, somebody else's idea is untrue. Is it possible to speak of absolute truth in religious experience? Is there only one way to salvation? Is it possible to have monopoly over the means of salvation? Here again we can foster competition and fight for power or cooperation and mutual respect. Radovan Bigović (1955) believes that when someone absolutizes his truth, his knowledge and beliefs, and thinks he has the monopoly of truth, we have a kind of confessionalism. By its nature, confessionalism separates from others and not only that; it is, in effect, most often the cause of conflicts with others.

Although we know that there is no disputing individual taste, a difference in tastes formed through upbringing, often gives rise to intolerance. No one has the right to oppress the other only because his presence insults somebody's taste. One should not take the position of the supreme god and judge. Looking for the roots of intolerant behavior we can speak about personal characteristics and psychopathology and defense mechanisms. Erich Fromm (1993)

in his book *The Art of Love* writes about narcissism, which distorts even his own image of himself and paints the picture of others using wishes and fears, one that is not objective and the reality of which is inside itself. Inferiority and superiority complexes both preclude communication. One's own superiority is obsessed by the inferiority of others, which serves as justification for intolerance of "inferior beings" who do not deserve equal treatment.

In a situation of strong repression, when people are scared and have to hide a part of their own identity deep inside themselves, a mechanism of defense called identification with the aggressor is activated. I wonder how is God, as the absolute and mystical power, presented to the believers of different religions and how they experience him. Is god POWER instilling fear? What happens with believers who fear God and out of fear of sin, by the principle of projection, start to persecute other believers seeing sin in them. Perhaps these psychological mechanisms can help us understand so strong a presence of religious intolerance for centuries now. People were only spontaneously trying to reduce fear and guilt, some by negating God's existence, others by perfectionism, trying to be faultless, and others still by changing the image of God, wishing him to be more of a protector than a judge.

Authoritarian personalities tend to trust authorities and adopt conformism and dogmatic thinking. Authoritarian consciousness submits to power and tramples on the powerless. This submissiveness when in danger and riding roughshod over others when in power is only a seesaw that reveals the problems of a man incapable of being his own. It seems that man, in order to be capable of tolerance must be a mature person, integral, his own. It is not only a problem of individuals, the one of groups is much more complex. How many mature persons are required in a group so it could function maturely? Intolerance manifested by the smaller towards the larger is an interesting issue. Zoran Jovanović (1966) thinks that it is only the expression of fear of a possible

danger coming from the stronger and the larger. The smaller have the need for self-confirmation and thereby also for intolerance. Fear may intensify self-protection or else paralyze and passivize behavior. Manipulations with fear always backfire.

And, finally, a few words about deliberate abuse of religion. "Using religion as an excuse for injustice and violence is a horrible abuse and must be condemned by all who truly believe in God" (Eterović, 1993:209).

Should Christians be tolerant?

The answer to this question may be found in the words of Jesus Christ: "You have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: That you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? The publicans. These were the gatherers of the public taxes: a set of men, odious and infamous among the Jews, for their extortions and injustice. And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt., 5: 43-48).

The rules are completely clear. Apostle Paul concisely says, "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good" (Rom., 12:21). To be a Christian, a child of God, means to be similar to one's God. How tall a man is measured by the possibilities and potentials to be realized. A man is like his God. The principle of perfection, developed spirituality, implies the ability to control one's own instincts even in the most difficult life situations. The possible human reactions to enmity can take the attitude of "ten for one",

“an eye for an eye” or “give bread to him who gives you a stone”, graduating from injustice, to justice and grace.

Looking at religious teachings we admire the beauty of every word and wish to be close to that merciful God. But seeing life around us we are confused. “I turned myself to other things, and I saw the oppressions that are done under the sun, and the tears of the innocent, and they had no comforter; and they were not able to resist their violence, being destitute of help from any” (Eccles., 4: 1). A query over three thousand years old, written in the Book of the Ecclesiastes. All injustices done to people and no one to protect and comfort them! People usually blame God, asking why he should permit that? In response some believers recognize the need for suffering as the means for purification leading to perfection. Is there an alternative? Can suffering be avoided?

“Not to fight intolerant behavior by action and thought means to participate in evil” (Đuro Šušnjić, 1997: 219). If the tolerant did not exist neither would the intolerant, they enable one another, recalls Šušnjić, calling even the powerless to account. Drawing the limits to one’s own and others’ behavior is a task for every person.

Are there limits to tolerance?

If we have managed to defend tolerance from intolerance, can it continue endlessly, or are there some limits? In order to answer to this question we have to observe the tolerance-intolerance issue as a dimension with the excessively tolerant on one extreme and the insufficiently tolerant on the other.

“Tolerance as a norm is something absolute and supra-empirical, while tolerance as a relation is something relative and empirical: a matter of moderation” (Šušnjić, 1997: 201).

Moderation is a virtue; it is the middle point between two extremes.

Where is the limit between tolerance and intolerance?

The Christian god in the life of this world asks, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" (Mark, 9:19/41). This is sufficient to conclude that limits do exist. Further questions lead us towards the concretization of problems. Who did Jesus Christ suffer and whom he opposed? Jesus Christ tolerates the sick but not the frauds, oppressors, Pharisees (Mt., 21: 12-17). At the same time, the chief priests are angered by children crying in the temple of God.

A rule or man? A conflict in the system of values. "And it came to pass again, as the Lord walked through the corn fields on the sabbath, that his disciples began to go forward and to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said to him: Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful? And he said to them: Have you never read what David did when he had need and was hungry, himself and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God, under Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the loaves of proposition, which was not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave to them who were with him? And he said to them: The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath. Therefore the Son of man is Lord of the sabbath also (Mark, 2: 23-28).

These examples allow us to conclude that Jesus Christ does not tolerate spiritual violence. We note flexibility rather than rigidity and the substance of religious norms, the meaning of which is revealed through values. The largest value in the theology of Christianity is man, for whose salvation God himself died. However, looking at the behavior of Christians we note that they were often prepared to condemn and persecute other man and to protect religious teachings and rules of conduct. This rigidity of the legalist level of religiousness often precipitated intolerance.

If we ask ourselves what it is that we should tolerate, we could agree on a few points: toleration is required for the beliefs of others we do not agree with, for a different view of the world, thus indicating the respect of what the other is, what he does and thinks. However, we certainly cannot tolerate violence which releases aggressiveness endangering the other. Violence has countless variants, physical, psychological, sexual. Violence is even more horrible if committed against children who are incapable of resisting or opposing it. Others, especially children, may be frustrated through neglect, systematic stupefaction or abuse. How can a person not oppose continuing fraud? Limits have to be drawn on the inside with a view to self-protection and must inform of the internal strength of self-respect. But, before one's own strength is attained it is necessary to place external limits, those posed by others for protection, which occasionally resemble prohibitions and restrictions of freedoms, but are actually only an obstacle for evil, like thorns to a cactus, armor to a soldier, house to a man.

Human nature doubtlessly requires symmetry and reciprocity. Sometimes we are not aware of our dual nature. Human relations in all religions of the world, at the theoretical level, reveal the rule of respect for others as for oneself. The example is found in the Holy Gospel according to St. Mathew (7:12; 22:36-40): "All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets"; "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". That is the highest principle of active offering of the self, of active love. Equality is also reflected in the avoidance of the negative by doing to others as you would have them do unto you. The principle of reciprocity existed in the Old Testament: "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth", but it was a principle of revenge, struggle for justice. A higher level of morality demands forgiveness and active offering of good. Vengeance is left to God.

Apostle Paul knew full well what eagerness meant for the house of God. Sometimes a man can sincerely fight for justice and truth with means of intolerance. However, according to Christian rules of life the instruction is clear “Revenge not yourselves” (Rom., 12: 1-21).

In the end we may conclude that tolerance can be tackled at two levels. One is the theoretical level where tolerance is an absolute value to be supported and advocated, while religions, as symbolical systems accounting for earliest reflections of basic human values, send the message of the importance of good interpersonal relations. However, speaking about tolerance on the practical level, it obtains a dimensional nature where we can speak about it in terms of moderation. In order for man to be able to balance and weigh his own conduct in any situation in life, he must have a fulcrum. The point of departure of our weighing, and even our own measure of tolerance, can be man’s supreme value. For some that is God, love, justice, for others their own person. Being tolerant means having the power to control oneself in order to overcome the destructive. The tolerant have the power which sets the limits to their own behavior; they do not lower themselves to the level of the intolerant and prevent the dissemination of violence.

Who can be tolerant?

Vladeta Jerotić wrote about many selfish, pathologically narcissistic people, both among the religious and nonreligious; the truly upright have always been the fewest. They are the ones who had the good fortune to stand as religious persons before the “holy” unburdened by their past, or those who through major efforts and struggle cleansed themselves of the dregs of the past and developed authentic love not only of God but also of their neighbors, loving them for themselves and not in a narcissistic way for their own sake or out of felling of duty to “love one’s neighbor”. Love is the last, but not the most important thing a man can reach on his road

to integration and maturity. We cannot delude ourselves too long, Jerotić says. Love of God, as well as love of man, one's spouse or friend, cannot result from the fear of God, but from man's freedom (Jerotić, 1994).

Naturally, the spiritual level of all believers is not the same. The spiritual development of believers follows the same path characteristic of all regardless of their confession. The simplest classification includes the legalistic type of believer and the one who has overcome the stage of fear and reached maturity of freedom in religion. We can also speak of different levels of spirituality (Scott Peck, 1995; Fowler, 1995, Kuburić, 1996). At the bottom of the ladder is a chaotic/antisocial stage accounting for probably about twenty per cent of the population. People who are at that level are chaotic, unprincipled and lack the mechanisms to govern their actions. The second, formal/institutional stage accounts for the majority of believers attached to an institution which supervises them. The skeptic/individual stage begins when people move away from institutions to look for the truth and substance themselves, dissatisfied with the formal observance of religious rules and still less with external supervision. But only the overcoming of uncertainty and reexamination leads to mature religiousness of a communal level. People at this level see an underlying connectedness, they speak about unity and community, about the paradox. Characteristic of all large world religions is their ability to address people at both these levels. Each of the levels interprets religious teachings in its own way.

Relations between people at different spiritual levels are marked by misunderstandings. Chaotic people are puzzled by those who conform to the rules of institution, while people of the formal order fear the skepticism of truth-seekers who, on their part, cannot understand the depths of internal peace and freedom of those who have reached the communal, higher level of spiritual development. The higher the level of spiritual development the

better people understand others and are more capable of dialogue and tolerance, as aptly put by Njegoš: “A man who stood on top of the mountain, even if for a short while, sees more than the one at its foot”.

The future of a society's development enables dialogue and tolerance in two ways. The process of secularization leads towards tolerance out of the lack of concern for religion and its teachings. Many people will be tolerant because religion is on the margins of their interests. On the other hand, believers who choose the path of spiritual values and truly live the essence of their religion will be sincerely tolerant and at the same time deeply religious. Every religion offers the possibilities for spiritual maturity to its believers and each one of them has different levels of spiritual maturity. Still, relations among organizations shall largely depend on religious leaders and the autonomy of spiritual and secular authorities.

Conclusion

Positive orientation is one of the assumptions for the cultivation of dialogue and tolerance, which is why my observations in this paper are aimed at those values I recognize in Protestantism as enabling dialogue. Free interpretation of the Bible has given rise to countless variations, which may have undermined the “truthfulness” of religious truths, increased doubts and made numerous discussions possible. Tolerance that has enabled this kind of freedom simultaneously carries the risk of the loss of truth and a chance to find it.

Protestantism gave precedence to salvation by faith to the one by deeds and thereby relieved the believers of the obligation to be good, by enabling them to be what they are. Autonomous morality was given preference to heteronymous morality. Reduced distance between Heaven and Earth, the sacred and the profane, theory and practice, enabled the integration of life here and now. The

opportunity was offered to all. The hierarchy of power is reduced to equality of relations. What was asked for oneself had to be given to others, at least to some extent. Power was no longer so powerful and authority so unreachable. Still, although turned towards spiritual values and more inclined to asceticism than to hedonism, materialism was the consequence of spiritual aspirations. The energy so released was manifested in the work which gave momentum to the development of Western society.

Still, good intentions are not always accompanied by good outcomes. The negative side is always present, like a shadow. Dialogue between the different enables understanding and tolerance. However, there is some fear that excessive tolerance may result in the loss of ability to distinguish truth from lie and good from evil as well as the ability to react to the abuse of power.

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Mirko Blagojević

REVITALIZATION OF RELIGION AND DIALOGUE

The increasing credibility of religion and church on the territories of the former Yugoslavia apparent in all three confessions, Islamic, Catholic and Orthodox, in my view, cannot be explained outside the social and political context of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Back in mid-eighties Srđan Vrcan noted that the process of revitalization of religion and the church, already under way at that time—first in Catholicism and somewhat later also in other confessions—should not be viewed as religious revitalization *per se*, but rather as a synthesis of the religious and the temporal, in the first place ethnocentric and national aspects. The ensuing events, initially triggered by the demands for autonomy, sovereignty and independence of the existing republics from the federal center, as well as the impotence of this center to check the process of disintegration leading to a cruel war, proved Vrcan's anticipation correct. Dragoljub Đorđević from Niš was one of the sociologists of religion in Serbia who, in the early 1990s, had similar views of religion as a potential factor of disintegration. My empirical survey of people's attachment to religion and church conducted in a religiously homogenous Orthodox region in 1993 went along the same lines. The findings of this survey could generally be summarized as follows: despite the doubtless revitalization of religion and religiousness in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, which could be explained by a differently motivated increase in the people's internal need for God, as well as their quest for a firm and autonomous religious moral in a situation marked by an obvious loss of credibility of secular morality, the indisputable fact of this revitalization (desecularization) is the definition of religious changes in the above-mentioned manner: namely, the revitalized religion and faith appear in a firm synthesis of the traditional, religious-church complex with the temporal and secular—in the

first place political, ethnocentric and more of a nationalistic than national element. This is only expected and understandable since in a situation marked by the downfall of a global, and until that time prevalent, social system as well as the increasingly weaker presence of the ruling, generally accepted values in people's consciousness, the identity crisis, which was bound to emerge, could not last long. Nationalism, no novelty even in previous times, mostly incited by national political elites in an incredible political instrumentalization, became the foremost homogenizing principle of national collectivities and newly created states resulting in disastrous conflicts among nations. Without confessional homogenization, this national integration for war could not have been carried out, or would have at least been much more difficult to accomplish. In other words, both of these elements that have always created a symbiosis, at least with the Serbian nation, have powerfully contributed to the above-mentioned process of religious change on the territories of the former Yugoslavia in what one may call the most important segment: that of reaffirming the importance of the social, or more precisely political function of religion and the church, compared with their previously fairly decreased social and political credibility. I therefore, in addition to the environmental context of a deep social crisis, look upon the emerging of nationalism as a highly important and, I dare say, even decisive factor of religious changes on the territories of the former and present-day Yugoslavia. Just as the previously dominant secularization was not an "organic", but to a large extent politically supported process, the reverse development in the early 1980s was not devoid of visible admixtures of political contrivance serving the momentary practical political needs of homogenizing and legitimizing the newly created states. I refer to the momentary political needs, because later on, when states had been formed and the internal as well as external socio-political circumstances changed, these sources of legitimation were generally abandoned in favor of others. Vrcan believes that this political homogenization and mobilization was based on two essential deficits: first, the

deficit of legitimacy of current politics, which failed to be ensured even with the strict adherence to the democratic procedure and the balance of systemic inputs and outputs; and, second, the deficit of renewal incentives of purely religious nature and motivation.

What may bring us closest to the explanation of desecularization on the above-mentioned territories, in the part where nationalism provided the largest contribution to the force of the movement, is perhaps the understanding of religion and the church as superposed marks of rival national collectivities, along with e.g. different traditions but joint origins and language, and even different physical characteristics, for instance of the Albanians and Serbs. Starting from Weber's definition of nation as a cultural community with joint memory and joint political destiny fighting for prestige and territorial political power, Veljko Vujačić inspiringly underlined the importance of this definition for the interpretation of conflicts on a specific territory and in a specific historical context. The superposing of the above-mentioned status marks is accompanied by the change in the power status situation, which revives the negative historical memory and simultaneously reinforces internal solidarity of rival groups. Perhaps the best example Vujačić quotes is the one of the endless cycle of change in the status situation of Albanian Muslims and Serbian Orthodox population in Kosovo. Under the Ottoman Empire the Albanian Muslims were a privileged group, while the change of the power status in favor of the Serbs came after the Balkan wars (1912-1913) and the creation of the first Yugoslav state (1918). The Serbs retained this position until the Second World War when Kosovo once more became part of Greater Albania under Italian sponsorship. After the Second World War the Serbs, under the auspices of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, again obtained a more favorable position until the year 1974 when Kosovo became a province with full autonomy (practically a republic). That is when the Albanization of the Communist Party is noted along with the already known high birth rate of the

Albanians. With Milošević's rise to power in Serbia (1987) the Serbs again become the dominant status group in Kosovo, while the arrival of KFOR and UNMIK marked the fourth, and perhaps the most tragic, change in the status situation of the Serbs in the past century, with their full-scale exodus from Kosovo.

The dominant tendency of developed societies is marked by detraditionalization, secularization, individualization and privacy of decision-making, pluralism and differentiation. One could hardly speak of tolerance and dialogue in states where retraditionalization, recollectivization and retotalization are under way and where religion and church come forward or are abused as institutions with public functions. If to this fact we add the inevitable reality of the accumulated historical experience and unpleasant collective memories harbored by members of rival religions in these parts, it is easy to see that dialogue and tolerance as a respectable manner of thinking and behavior of most people cannot be achieved only, or primarily, by the efforts of individuals or prominent religious workers and dignitaries, or by emphasizing the spirit of tolerance found in the religious messages of Orthodoxy or any other confession, but only by a thorough reorientation of the social and political establishment and the development of modernity which will, without any consequences, give a man the possibility to make a free choice of spiritual, including religious, gifts regardless of the dogma of the confession or any other institution. That is a long and strenuous process with an unclear and uncertain outcome, knowing that in the Balkans—as ample historical evidence tells us—nothing has ever been easy, tolerant and unproblematic.

**Religiousness of the Yugoslav population
(Partial review of empirical research)**

On the basis of several empirical research works addressing the religiousness and attachment of people to religion and church especially over the past ten years, the author has outlined five relevant points as follows:

- 1) The late 1980s and early 1990s witness a change of the religious situation in religiously homogenous Orthodox territories. While in the 1970s and 1980s respondents who declared their religiousness accounted to barely ten percent, the same percentage defined the share of non-religious respondents in mid-1990s. People's readiness to identify themselves as religious, to acknowledge their confessional affiliation and believe in god increased;
- 2) The change of the religious situation was the most conspicuous in the sphere of traditional attitudes towards religion and church primarily of urban population, since rural population has even before been more attached to traditional church rites;
- 3) Somewhat less visible was the change in the so-called actual attitude towards religion and church concretized in religious behavior such as e.g. liturgical attendance, fasting, taking communion and praying;
- 4) Some authors explain the shift towards religious revitalization or more precisely desecularization as resulting from a deep socio-economic crisis and the current socio-political events through the emergence of nationalism, with the religion and churches providing a strong contribution to the national homogenization and political legitimation of the newly created states and regimes on the territories of the former Yugoslavia;

5) Along these lines, they estimate that the surge of religiousness will weaken subject to its decreased use for the purposes of political homogenization and legitimation. The processes of (de)secularization are reversible and largely depend on the changeable political context wherein a specific church and religion exist.

Branimir Stojković

**RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS A BASIS
OR OBSTACLE TO RECONCILIATION
IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE**

Somebody said that on road to god some ride in a Mercedes, others in a Fiat—ostensibly thinking about the size and power of individual churches. Mindful of small religious communities, I would add that god can be reached riding a bicycle as well as going on foot. My position about that is secularist—thus I am concerned with religion, but do not belong to it—and I therefore observe the overall religious traffic from the sidewalk without personally participating in it.

I intend to tackle the problem of identity and religious and cultural diversity. If I had to single out the key words of my presentation at the very beginning I would say that they were identity, diversity, globalization and small religious communities. I deliberately avoid using the word sects in view of the remarkably stigmatizing meaning it has obtained here.

First about identity. Others have already pointed out that the surplus of identity is harmful and that over the past ten years or so, we may note a phenomenon called the scourge or rage of identity by attentive researchers. Gyorgy Konrád in his text “Identity and hysteria” says that identity is the spiritual prosthesis of moderately clever, transformed into a bait in the hands of politicians; namely, it turned out that the identity policy in the epoch of national states, as Eric Hobsbawm calls our times, has led to mutual conflicts often ending in civil wars. That these insights have already given rise to certain conclusions is revealed in the simple fact that, for instance, the European Union, which among its few cultural priorities in the pre-Maastricht period (1992) included the European cultural

identity (along with national cultural identities), ever since the mid-1990s started to replace the word identity with diversity in its program documents.¹ Thus, it shifted the stress from sameness (*idem*=same) to diversity, for the simple reason that it became quite clear what sort of things a politics of identity exclusivism has managed to create in the Balkans, on the territory of the former Soviet Union, as well as outside the European continent.

Suffice it to recall Rwanda and the brutal civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi—a true war of identities produced in an absolutely arbitrary manner. The truth about the emerging of the two nations, which became nearly mutually extinct, is almost incredible.² The territory of the present day Rwanda was under the colonial rule of Belgium which, some time in 1930s, decided to make a population census and call all inhabitants in possession of less than ten cows, thus the poorer part of the population, Hutu and to enter this name into their identity cards, as opposed to the richer part of the population (in possession of more than ten cows) who were called Tutsi in their IDs. This entirely arbitrary decision of the colonial authorities—probably due to the cunning of a colonial mind—took firm hold in a world where ethnicity was the basis for identification and differentiation. The Hutu and the Tutsi, although dissimilar only in terms of property, started to experience themselves as completely different. At that, they all speak absolutely the same language, belong to the same religion and live intermixed, as any other moderately stratified society in our parts of the Balkans. During this forty or fifty-year period they managed to create two communities which experience themselves as mutually confronted peoples. Moreover, they have even started to look upon themselves

¹ Kerremans, B., The Limitative Significance of the Cultural Articles in the Treaty on European Union, paper for presentation at the III Congress on European Culture, University of Navarra, Pamplona (Spain), 26-29 October 1994, 20

² The source of information is an article authored by A. De Wall and published in *Anthropology Today* in 1994.

as racially different and produced stereotypes whereby one group, the poorer Hutu, had darker skins, while the Tutsi were higher and of lighter skin. It is even believed that the Tutsi came from the north to conquer the local Hutu population, although there is no relevant historical evidence to substantiate that claim.

From these antagonizing differences a multiethnic war broke out in the early 1990s, turning into a mass slaughter with machetes. One of the main actors in this interethnic hostilization was a radio station operated by the radical Hutu with a pleasantly sounding name of “Thousand Hills”, and a call to massacre: root the weeds but save the powder, thus use the machetes. The bloodshed testifies to the fact that in the case of close ethnic groups an enormous level of aggressiveness has to be induced to beget actual physical violence. It seems to me that this is analogous to the fission of the helium nucleus and the ensuing chain reaction leading to atomic explosion. If something that is firmly joined is to be split an awful lot of energy is required to make an elementary particle such as atom disintegrate. The same applies to societies composed of similar ethnic groups intent to separate. That cannot be done without violence, since it is necessary to cause the fission of not only the joint social institutions but also of elementary particles such as families where spouses belong to different ethnic groups.

One of the reasons for the European Union’s changeover of priority from the policy of identity towards that of diversity was the awareness that excessive exclusivist understanding of identity started to create trouble on the European as well as other soil. This is substantiated by the EU slogan of “Unity in diversity”. However, it should be distinguished from the American *Ex pluribus unum* since it does not support the undifferentiated one coming out of a melting pot, but rather the sustaining of differences within the European Union.

Nevertheless, the politics of diversity is not entirely innocent. It is closely related to globalization. And that is the process of creating a world market. Global multinational corporations want to ensure the economic and cultural space for their activities, and to make it as clear, as wide and as homogenous as possible. Therefore, they seek to create the largest possible market, which is why I would like to somewhat relativize what Professor Joseph Julian has referred to in a positive context. Instead of limited national identities, multinational companies try to create corporative identities where the framework for orientation and also loyalty is set by a Sony or Microsoft. According to some, true not entirely precise estimates, the world today has about six thousand different ethnic, i.e. linguistic groups, with about 188 of them in the UN, while the number of nation states is far below a hundred. Large multinational companies number perhaps fifty in all spheres of economy, and some of them employ hundreds of thousands. Taking into account cross-ownership forms of conglomerate type, the bulk of these companies have over a million employees in different parts of the world. Each one of them is incomparably more powerful than the large majority of existing states and seeks to impose its interests drawing precisely on the rhetoric of diversity, i.e. the politics of cultural differences, paradoxically defined with the mediation of the global market. This fact was first and best noted by the French. Already at the negotiations for the general agreement on tariffs and custom duties within GATT, they opposed the idea to consider culture a commodity and supported the so-called cultural exception. They have partly succeeded in their effort because they have somewhat postponed and relativized the imperative of a prompt market globalization in all spheres. Interestingly enough the French government called upon the assistance of the most prominent French intellectuals, some of whom are simultaneously the government's overt political opponents. One of those who addressed the owners of multinational companies in the media sphere was the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, ostensibly one of the main critics of what he calls the neo-liberal conservative

revolution. He addressed the media moguls with a direct question: "Lords of the World, do you know what you are doing?"³ arguing that the steamroller of globalization leads to a uniform world, creating only a semblance of choice within the same, and called upon those who truly care for cultural diversity to oppose the trend of globalization where the media are one of the main vectors.

However—and that is the point of this talk of cultural diversity—it turns out that the most efficient container of cultural diversity is precisely the nation. A nation, owing to the characteristic identification of its members with its history, territory, language... appropriately preserves this diversity, while at the same time it pursues the policy of cultural assimilation, but going only up to the national borders, without global ambitions of the kind cherished by multinational corporations.

And, now about the problem of religious diversity. Professor Julian has discussed the position of religious communities in Russia and the fact that according to the country's new law only the four large traditional religions are given the freedom of action, while all other religious communities are outcast. That is an oligopolistic logic. The large players divide the market and everybody else wishing to appear on that market is automatically discriminated. Just how good or universal the ideas of newcomers may be is a matter of no concern and the fact that they are new is sufficient reason to discriminate against them. The things I have described may be characterized as conservatism, which looks upon any innovation primarily as competition. However, I can understand the reasons of those who adopted this law. The fact is that the Soviet Union, and then Russia, sustained a series of defeats which have actually reduced the necessary quantity of trust and identification in the hearts of its nationals, and that the country is facing a breakthrough

³ L'intervention de Pierre Bourdieu, «Meitres du monde. Savez-vous ce que vous faites?», *Liberation*, 19. October 1999, 16.

of new religious communities, which in different ways, seek primary infiltration into the discontent population. Their target groups are the poor, the young, the unemployed, in general those who cannot find a job... Moreover, as can be seen in our case, the new religious communities operate much more efficiently than the Orthodox Church. Orthodox churches are, unfortunately, largely organizations of church officials and bureaucrats of faith, officiating for the church – in prayers, burials, weddings, baptisms—and collecting the relevant fees, without being truly concerned with the existential problems of their congregation. To that extent Orthodox priests are mostly unprepared to cope with the new missionaries (arriving from abroad or trained in Russia) ready to devote their job of conversion not only their working hours but also the whole day, going from door to door, from man to man. If a country, faced with religious competition, does not manage to re-orient its large religious organization to act in this manner, the only course left to it will be the one of administrative measures and bans on operations of newcomers. That is the other side of the story of diversity.

No one has the exclusive right to be active in a certain religious and social space since every religious teaching, unless openly destructive, is welcome to demonstrate its possibilities, its power and its differences. If by any chance it turns out to be destructive, as is occasionally the case, it is never too late to limit or even prohibit its activities. Here is an example from Western Europe. In mid-2000 France adopted a law on religious sects. The legislation has a different name, but practically boils down to it. The French had tried to solve the problem for some twenty-five years, and submitted to the national assembly a report including several proposals to deal with it. The French national assembly then adopted a law, which in principle, gave a green light for all religious communities. They may be prosecuted or banned only if proved harmful for individuals, by endangering their psychophysical and mental abilities or manipulating with their

vital needs. Scientologists were the first to come under the attack of the new law. It has been argued that they are not a church, i.e. religion at all, but a manipulative technique ostensibly aimed at optimizing the ability of a human being to work more, think deeper and know better. Scientologists originally emerged as a psychotherapeutically technique and, unable to obtain a license, made a switch (presumably advised by a lawyer) and registered as a religious group. Thereby they immediately acquired the right to invoke the provision of the First amendment to the US Constitution, which, in addition to the freedom of expression, also protects the freedom of religious expression and association. A religious group has a wider sphere of operation and greater freedom than a lucrative psychomanipulative technique promising the release of superior hidden possibilities to everyone who joins the group and naturally pays for it. The French and the Germans have seen through them and concluded that it is not enough for something to considered itself a religion; what matters is that its practice and performance do not endanger the freedom of choice and personal freedom. That precisely is the limit for the action of one man—the freedom of another.

Milica Bakić-Hayden

**ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR A DIALOGUE
BETWEEN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS**

A precondition for an inter-religious dialogue in general, thus including the one related to the territory of the former Yugoslavia, has to do with the process of understanding as an activity linking reflections on reality with the experience of reality. What kind of understanding is that? First, it is the understanding of the *context* wherein a dialogue takes place and, secondly, of *differences* as such, and then also of the specific differences characterizing the religions we are dealing with.

Understanding the context of an inter-religious dialogue implies the awareness of one's own situation. This awareness is manifested in two ways: on the one hand, as the awareness of the times we live in, where the traditional forms of religious manifestations (rite, myth, mystical theology) are in the dominant perspective of a modern secularized society most often experienced as outdated responses to the questions of contemporary reality and, consequently, in a dialogue on religions display the essential misunderstanding of its phenomenology. On the other hand, mindful of precisely this newly-created context (developed in the Euro-American framework at least since the 18th century), it is imprudent to try and revert religion to a dialogue about itself relying or calling upon the pre-critical forms of religiousness. As noted by a modern phenomenologist of religion (Paul Ricoeur), we are now in a stage of the so-called second naivety where we must critically reflect, or rather mediate a symbolic religious consciousness, because a direct and indisputable/undisputed link between the symbolic religious system and everyday practical life no longer exists.

The image of the world in the modern era has undergone complete revision: once we spoke of a holy cosmos, today we speak of an endless universe (David Klemm). Theologically speaking, a theocentric world has turned anthropocentric. In the language of socio-economic sciences, hierarchical social systems of the past are replaced by egalitarian; economic liberalism and the increasingly accelerating technological development direct the course of most countries in the world, emphasizing reason (understood as antithesis to faith) as the verifiable and tested prime mover of man's progress. Modern man no longer looks for his image in the transcendent sphere, and neither does he see in it an opportunity to realize his true being. Not only is religion something originally out-of-this-world, but it has, through these processes, become the "alien", "other" for the Euro-American man. However, hermeneutics and post-modern thought introduce language as a medium in a dialogue between the "self" and "another". In this dialogical relation an opportunity is created to understand and interpret religion as the "other", inseparable from the understanding and interpretation of one's self (one's own preconceptions, prejudices, etc.).

In a dialogue the secularized society is conducting with religion, where secularism is often understood as neutral in terms of ideas and ideology, and therefore also objective, post-modern hermeneutics has created theoretical assumptions for a fresh approach to religious phenomenology. By introducing the above-mentioned concept of "second naivety" in the approach to religion as a "post-critical equivalent of pre-critical hierophany" (Paul Ricoeur), it interprets the religious and theological language pointing to the ability of the religious symbol to reveal to man, even today, the purpose of his existence and relation with God. In a situation where a modern man of the Euro-American civilization circle no longer has the sense and sensibility for religious symbolism, this shortcoming must be compensated by education. Thus, with a conscious effort to revive a forgotten language, but no longer in a pre-critical way of the believing subject who does not

see himself outside the transcendent (religious) “text”, and does not ask questions beyond it, but in the way of a man who has gone out of this “text” and is returning to it because once left without it he was, at a particular moment, also left without his purpose—because he recognized the purpose of the text as that of his life.

Religious education referred to here is neither the catechism of the past nor theology, but a special academic discipline known under such titles as the history of religion, comparative religion, phenomenology of religion or religious studies. In order not to limit the dialogue and mutual understanding to religious officials, but to expand it to the believers and population at large, basic knowledge is required of the religious traditions of both one’s own circle and those where historical contact points and intertwining existed, and even the ones we learn about indirectly through increased interlinking by means of mass communications. The advantage of introducing (into secondary schools or at universities) a teaching subject such as for instance “a review of world religions” is in the fact that it does not give rise to social divisions into believers and those who declare themselves as atheists or agnostics, and neither does it confront the members of one (majority) religious community with those of other, minority religions. On the other hand the pupils/students learn about the basic concepts of the leading religions, including their own, whereby a basis is created for a more successful dialogue, understood not only in verbal but also in wider terms of communication with those who belong to other religions and cultures.

The second above-mentioned precondition for dialogue is the understanding of differences between religions. It is preceded by the understanding of differences as such. By themselves, they cannot be questioned since they constitute every identity, religious included. Identity itself is in the first place defined precisely through differences from the other, and less frequently as an identity itself susceptible to self-differentiation. For instance, when

we speak about the differences between Christianity and Islam as characteristic of two religious entities we, for a moment, disregard the fact that each one of them is differentiated within itself (Shiite and Sunni Muslims or Orthodox believers, Catholics and various Protestants). Therefore, the problem, in principle, cannot be in the existence of differences but rather in the way they are presented and/or mutually mediated: are they valorized (“superiority” of one religion to another), or essentialized (“insurmountable differences”), or else manipulated so that certain differences are defined as “crucial” and then used to judge others. Differences between religions do not exist in vacuum: they are revealed in wider historical and political circumstances, where individuals or groups take upon themselves the role of interpreting them and their meanings, and in the process, may instrumentalize them for their own purposes.

Therefore, in order to conduct a successful inter-religious dialogue it would not be good to artificially mitigate or eliminate the differences in the name of good will. They should be accepted as facts forming the starting point for a dialogue. The aim of inter-religious dialogue must be real: it therefore, cannot be the overcoming of differences, but rather the perception of sameness, or at least similarity, deriving from the fact that the center of any religion is *homo religiosus*. This evokes a parallel with the old Hindu understanding of artistic experience. Namely, in the Sanskrit esthetics, the concept of *beauty* has never been considered in its external diversity and variety and it does not seek to find the objective criteria of beauty. The differences in the understanding of beauty were implied, as well as the comprehension that the mechanism of human reaction to *beauty* will be the same. In other words, equalization of external differences is attained in the internal, experiential sphere.

Applying this model to religion, it would mean that the differences couldn't be overcome from without, especially in

view of the historical forms of manifestation of these differences as inter-religious conflicts. By shifting the accent from negative experiences and past testimonies to those belonging to the so-called internal tradition, a space is opened for an inquiry into man's relation towards the Supreme reality (God), and his experience of it, however defined. For Christians, e.g. God the Son Jesus Christ is Logos, for the Muslims it is Koran. However, both the non-personalized Logos of Islam and the personalized Logos of Christianity enable man's sanctification and his transformation called *theosis* by Eastern Christianity. Similarity in the cultivation of this process is reflected in the practice of heart's prayer, especially as we find it in the experience of the Sufis and Hesychasts. Prayers which revive the heart and love of God are not similar due to historical influences and interpenetration—although that, too, may be an interesting thing to study—but due to the similarity of concepts of spirituality in Christianity and Islam and the very makeup of man's microcosms.

Thus, the focusing on the internal dimension of problems related to disputable historical relations of religions is replaced by their phenomenology, while learning about the spiritual practice and theological concepts of the *Other*, indirectly sheds new light to one's own religious tradition.

Members of different religions relate to each other in three ways: 1) *exclusion*, most explicitly revealed in different kinds of fundamentalisms or, in milder forms, in the difficulty to accept the values of another religion as "equal" to one's own (most often due to the intensity of personal experience); 2) *inclusion*, based on general human principles seeking to create a new, universal religion or movement, like the *Baha'i*, accepting all forms of serving God; and 3) *pluralism* as a relation where individuals hold on to their religious tradition, but keep an open mind to knowledge about others and are prepared to tolerate them in theory and practice, i.e. as long as they are not endangered by anyone trying

to impose his/her own identity. Pluralism is, the competent believe, the true context enabling the successful unfolding of an interreligious dialogue and promotion of tolerance, although it is clear that different religions in different times and under different circumstances, as well as at different levels, have had and still retain relationships of all three types.

In conclusion, if we ask ourselves whether it is worth starting an inter-religious dialogue when the road to it is so winding, the response must be positive. Because, one does not necessarily stand to gain something in a dialogue, but can certainly lose a whole lot without it.

Jelena Đorđević

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

I believe that except in theory i.e. in conceptual terms, religion is difficult to interpret and understand outside the social context and the entirety of the social and spiritual experience it belongs to. I must admit to feeling at ease hearing the scholars and believers argue that religion is a specific self-enclosed phenomenon, positioned outside the reality in a system of values as an expression of aspiration to absolute good. Opinions of this kind are most often based on great religious writings and special pure religious experiences of so-called absolute believers. From that point of view religion is essentially the polar opposite of ideology, an absolute antipode of politics, negation of pagan particularism reflected today in nationalism or racism and, above all, the fiercest agent in fighting the human selfishness, greed and will for power. Religion is all that in its concept, but in the social experience it is just as much everything this concept negates.

The pure notion of religion derives from the power of human thought to classify, compare and define. In reality it is deeply intertwined with all other aspects of humanity and sociality and therefore also with the frailty of human nature and knowledge, interest, will for power, corruption, indoctrination, exclusivism, hate, war, racism, genocide. Religion is not only contained in the holy scriptures and the enlightened experience of those who can see better and know more, it lives a normal everyday life, different in different times and for different groups, and specific for different cultures.

That is why it seems to me that inter-religious dialogue cannot have effect and importance if understood exclusively as a dialogue between believers or institutions that represent them. It is created and should be continuously sustained in the practice of everyday life, on the level where it is really possible to establish mutual

understanding of differences and cooperation among people. Paradoxically, inter-religious dialogue may best be attained by means external to religion, namely by creating the social conditions providing the room to receive a religious message.

In that sense it is possible to suggest the ways to establish this dialogue in the extra-religious sphere:

- A dialogue starts in active economic contacts between members of different religious groups. Doing business with people of different faith and sharing earthly interests, necessarily implies getting to know each other and mutual opening;
- It continues and is expanded in cultural contacts since religion assumes its manifest and distinct face only in culture understood in the widest sense of the word: the culture of speech, clothing habits, handshaking, living quarters, preparation of food, songs, rites, literature, painting, architecture, myths, festivities, sayings, customs of all sorts. Culture is the flesh and blood of religion; it is real and tangible, and through it religion is presented and expressed. To get to know somebody else's culture, to experience it even in small segments, is a more reliable way to reach the other than any official institutional commitment;
- And, finally, inter-religious dialogue may be effectively realized only if coupled with political interest, which, as history shows us and the present times confirm, may bring together as well as separate, confront and reconcile at will. That is why we have so much talk about democracy today, as it proved to be the most efficient political principle in establishing inter-religious understanding. In that context we must take into account the good intentions and resoluteness of church institutions to participate in creating this kind of politics.

I would like to add that the problem of inter-religious dialogue is the most pressing in environments that are religiously and culturally reliant on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is known that the wise East has found quite different ways for inter-religious understanding, especially due to the nature of religions emerged in those parts. There democracy was not necessary for different religions to worship what each of them held sacred in the same temple. This leads us to the ever-recurring question of why the Judeo-Christian and the Islamic areal needs the talk of dialogue so much, while it is superfluous in China, India and Japan. Every time we invoke the Christian messages of love we have to ask ourselves why do they have so much difficulty reaching the hearts of believers? That accounts for the post-modernist wave with its pronounced insistence on the other. And it does that precisely because the so-called meta-narrations, Christianity included, assigned the other an altogether inappropriate place. That is why we cannot be satisfied with declarative statements of tolerance as the substance of Christian and, generally, religious behavior and understanding in the world until tolerance is confirmed in everyday life, and until it proves to be the firm view of those who are largely responsible for the destiny of people and nations.

In view of all the points, which I have only briefly outlined, I think that inter-religious dialogue must develop between ordinary people who belong to different religions no matter whether their faith is absolute, or simply conditioned by their culture and birth. In this sense a dialogue starts with cooperation among neighbors, school friends, colleagues at work; with an invitation to participate in the rites of another religion, hear somebody else's wisdom, taste differently prepared food, see a performance or join a dance of a group belonging to another and different religious cultural circle.

In that sense the right way to reestablish connections on the territory of the former Yugoslavia would be to reopen the ways for communication and exchange; to see that the books translated into Serbian or Croatian language become the shared cultural wealth of

the nations who speak the same language; to establish a political dialogue, replacing the bestiality of an already consumed state nationalism with the aspiration to install the principle of openness. That is why talks of democracy, dialogue and tolerance should not be taken for mere clichés of the world powers, or tricks in the latest fashion, although it is the fact that these notions are subject to strong manipulations transforming a great principle into a bargaining chip. This political principle shall, however, remain ineffective without the support of religious communities. If, as has been the case so far in the changeable realities of history, they remain always and primarily the principal guarantors of the national factor and, consequently, attached to quite a specific political concept, then the establishment of not only an inter-religious dialogue but also of political, economic and cultural links will continue to be difficult.

And finally, I would like to underline the importance of *education* as the main precondition for any well-founded dialogue. This education in the first place implies the necessity for a complete substitution of mythical national clichés, often supported by a religious discourse, with analytical knowledge starting from elementary schools to high education. Secondly, it should focus on the knowledge of cultures with different religious prefixes and encourage the understanding of beauty they have managed to create. Recognizing an Orthodox icon or a Botticelli's painting as a thing of beauty, or revealing the religious depths of Dante or Dostoyevski will not allay the suspicions of the historically warring Christian confessions but will certainly reduce the gap and—more clearly than any sermon—reveal the joint origins in the ability to create beauty. I therefore believe that it is very important to organize a specific type of secular education about religion/s open to teachers and scholars of different religious institutions so that the knowledge of the other may facilitate the start up of a dialogue. The establishment of such educational and research centers on the entire territory of the former Yugoslavia, and especially in the parts where multi-confessional communities exist, followed by their

coordinate cooperation and exchange of students and professors is, in my opinion, another worthy effort to launch an inter-religious dialogue. All the more so since a dialogue inaugurated in this way would unfold among the younger generations, which should now and irrevocably take a different path towards the future.

Joseph Julian

LIVING WITH RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

It is clear that there are people in a variety of social systems struggling with both ethnic and religious identity. But there are other forces at play. The conversation I had with the former Syracuse University student reminded me of these very significant movements. He is with an Internet company in Silicon Valley, and we recently spoke on the telephone after he returned from a conference in Hong Kong. It was an event which attracted a number of young people from different parts of the world who are interested in Internet technology and computer information science. In the conversation I asked him “what did you learn?” He said “I learned that Marx and Engels were right.” I said “Tell me about it”. He said “The state is withering away”. He went on to say that he found it fascinating while at this conference how young people from different parts of the world identify themselves. He said Helmut introduced himself, but Helmut did not say ‘I am Helmut, I am from Germany.’ It was ‘I am Helmut and I am with Ericsson’. Or ‘I am Giuseppe I am with Microsoft’. Igor didn’t say ‘I am Igor, and I am from Finland’, but ‘I am Igor and I am with Nokia’.

I find it fascinating that we have these movements taking place at a time when it’s so important also to look at how religion has been both generous in enriching our lives, but also at how it has brought about tragedies of great consequence. It’s very important, I think, to ask ourselves how do we prepare young people to live in the world they are going to be living in? Will the person who is in Banja Luka be working in Banja Luka ten years from now, or is it possible that the person from Banja Luka will be living and working in Buenos Aires? If so, how do you preserve cultural identity and historical heritage? I’ll say more about this in a minute.

Right now I want to mention that the theme, the need for inter-religious dialogue, obviously is important for South-Eastern Europe, but I think what we are beginning to understand that it is of great importance for people who are committed to religious freedom and religious tolerance the world over. Therefore what you've undertaken here is the leadership role.

Let me elaborate on this. Before I arrived in Belgrade in September 2000, I wanted to look at how religion is incorporated into the reports by contemporary media. Since English is my principal language of communication, I looked at some English newspapers. On Monday, 18 September 2000, The International Herald Tribune reported that the Voronezh city government in Russia has prohibited the exercise of religion by Baptists and Lutherans, and several Pentecostal groups. It goes on to say that last week in the city of Kostroma, Russia, a panel of university professors, local government officials, a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a lawyer met to ponder whether or not two local Pentecostal churches should be legally registered. They concluded that the churches should not be registered, and therefore they should not be permitted to exercise their religious beliefs in that city. As a result these Pentecostal groups have been prohibited from distributing their literature and from renting or owning a building. The group in Kostroma said they were simply adhering to the law passed by the Russian Duma in 1997. That law recognized only four official religions in Russia: the Russian Orthodox Church, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. After that decision, the Orthodox Bishop of Kostroma praised the local government, saying that he was concerned because the Orthodox Church is now in competition for Russian souls with foreign religions.

That was on Monday. On Tuesday, another English language newspaper ran an editorial called 'Dark Temptations.' It was an editorial about a Catholic Cardinal in Bologna, Cardinal Biffi. He had organized a meeting at his residence and called for what he

referred to as “a crusade against Muslim immigration”. He went on to say “I have never had anything against the word crusade personally. We have to be concerned about saving the nation.”

On Wednesday an Internet news service said that the Human Rights Watch had sent a letter to President Eduard Shevarnadze of Georgia, asking why Georgian authorities have not taken any action against groups there who have been persecuting religious minorities.

On Thursday, The International Herald Tribune reported that an 81 year-old Roman Catholic Bishop in Southern China, who spent more than thirty years in prison for his loyalty to the Vatican, had been rearrested because of his ongoing commitment to the Catholic faith. He has been incarcerated once again after having served 30 years in prison for his religious beliefs.

On Friday, The International Herald Tribune reported that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had ruled out Islamic sovereignty over a Jerusalem shrine sacred to Muslims and Jews alike. In so doing he had rejected a Palestinian proposal. Also on Friday, Muslim cleric, Moshen Kadivar, had been rearrested in Teheran. He had said that “the rule of clerics in Iran has become as tyrannical as the rule of kings in previous times”. He had been rearrested after having served eighteen months in prison.

So, the theme of this conference while of obvious concern to South-Eastern Europe, is also of concern to those who strive for pluralism and respect for religious difference. And what you are doing here is in keeping with what Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan announced just a couple of months ago. He called for the year 2001 to be a year for dialogue among civilizations. He said: “As I see it, this conversation next year must enable people of different faiths and cultures to appreciate both what makes them different and what they have in common”. In keeping with this

objective a publication called “Civilization” carried an article by President Khatami of Iran. In the article President Khatami said this dialogue should take place not in the world of science, but in the world of art and religion since they are the provinces that are most important for this kind of dialogue. What I really appreciated this morning was the insightful observations of the presenters on how to further this dialogue. Do you just bring people together and say “let’s talk”? You can have that kind of conversation in a bar room or a restaurant. But what we learned this morning is how important it is that we are discussing an issue in which we have a common interest. In this kind of dialogue the goal should be to find some sort of common ground with regard to the theme of this conference, Living With Religious Differences.

I am associated with a foundation in the United States called The Kettering Foundation. For the past thirty years the Foundation has been concerned with how you bring people together to determine not only how they differ on issues, but how they can find some kind of common understanding. What the Foundation has learned is that this kind of dialogue must be organized. There must be a clear definition of the topic of discussion, the options associated with that issue, and the strengths and shortcomings of those options.

My university is engaged in a process of creating a dialogue on religion in the public schools. That’s also a point that was made by Ms. Jelena Đorđević. She is absolutely right that it’s important not only to have this kind of dialogue among people in this room, but with our fellow citizens generally if we are to generate respect for ethnic and religious diversity. My university is beginning to experiment with how we can incorporate dialogue among civilizations into the school curriculum. As for religion, let me be clear we are not advocating the teaching of religion in the public schools. What we are advocating is teaching about religion. Our premise is that it is difficult for a young person to understand

today's world unless they understand the significant role played by different religious beliefs. How is one to understand the strife in Ireland, or the Middle East, or to understand why pro-choice people in the United States have been murdered by religious fundamentalists. The same applies to South-Eastern Europe. How are we to understand strife here unless we understand how religion shapes public life.

The dialogue we call for in our curriculum addresses three questions. They are: why is religion important to people; what is religious freedom; and why is religious freedom important today. As for the first question, we're persuaded that it is difficult to move toward open societies if we rely only on stereotypical knowledge of religion. As a result, classroom dialogue calls for an understanding of beliefs that are central to major religions. But with regard to why religion is important, we also believe it is necessary for young people to understand what the different faiths have contributed to music, literature, and cultures the world over. That's what we deal with in regard to why religion is important to people. As to the second question, what is religious liberty we have students looking at what we call the three R-s in English: Rights, Respect, and Responsibility.

The third part is why is religious liberty important today. Here we look at the controversies that I referred to a few minutes ago, but we also look at contemporary problems such as the transition of a theocracy like Iran, and the role of religion in dictatorial societies like China. The thesis of this section is this: when the state exercises control over religion we run the risk of losing our religious freedom, but when the church exercises control over the state we run the risk of losing our political freedom. And it is in this context that we think it is important for students to understand how to balance the relationship of the church to the state and the state to religion.

I tried to elaborate on this approach to religious freedom and religious literacy in this July's issue of *The European Intercultural Education Journal*.

I think the point made with regard to religion and education is more important now than it has been in a long time. I can't speak for my other colleagues here who have also taken a position on the need to educate for religious literacy, but I would like to emphasize a major point. What we are advocating is not the teaching of religion, but teaching about religion. So this is not a matter of inviting a representative of a certain religious faiths into the classroom, but actually preparing a new generation of teachers to teach about religion. Think about the teachers you've had and I've had, are they prepared to teach about religion? It is complex, and a very important dimension of learning. My view is that those who are to teach about religion should have as much preparation as the teacher of science, or those who teach mathematics, languages or literature.

Our position is that if education is designed to help young people understand the world as it was, the world as it is, the world as it is going to be, religious education is of vital importance.

Let me speculate about this for a moment. Much has been said recently about globalization and the sovereignty of the state. Think about it for a minute. Religion has survived many different national identities, and many of these national identities are going through a period of transition. Yesterday I mentioned a conversation with a young man who said the state is withering away because people now identify with their corporations, such as Ericsson, Nokia, Microsoft, etc. But there is more to today's association of young people to the state.

I've been doing research for the past year or so through a series of interviews with young people in different parts of the world. I find it instructive to listen to their comments. I remember talking with

a young woman who was working on a master's degree in business administration in Beirut. Her comment essentially was this, 'I appreciate the opportunity to become educated, but I don't know what I can do with my education here'. She felt frustrated about the kind of life that she was going to live in Beirut. I spoke with a young man named Denis in Moscow, and he said 'I want a normal life, and I don't know if I can find a normal life here'. And here in South-Eastern Europe everybody in this room knows better than I do that thousands of young, bright, intelligent, well-educated Serbs have left this country. Many are waiting on tables in Greece and elsewhere. A bright young woman from Jordan probably summarized the dilemma best when she said 'I love my country but I don't know if I can live here anymore'.

What these conversations suggest is that we're going through an age in which today's younger generation has a multiplicity of identities. No longer do they identify just with a state. They identify with people around the world who share their professional interests. Of course they identify with their country, and in many instances with their adopted states. And many continue to identify with religious institutions. In short, we are looking at a generation of young people who have a multiplicity of identities. In this respect I would suggest that their religious identities may be far more important in the future than their identity with their state. The nation state is of recent origin. Over the years we've seen identities with tribes, with kingdoms, and with empires. Therefore given the erosion of the sovereignty of the national state today, I think there's going to be an even more enduring identity that relates to one's religious beliefs, among other identities. And if that is to be enduring it underscores the ongoing importance of encouraging and sustaining the inter-religious dialogue.

Čedomir Čupić

POLITICAL ORDER AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

A well-arranged democratic order is an external guarantee for the establishment and functioning of an inter-religious dialogue in multi-confessional and multinational states. Experience proves that without a democratic order prerequisites for a dialogue in a society do not exist. A dialogue is only possible among equals—without equality there can be none—and only a democratic order enables equality and guarantees commensurate legal conditions for a dialogue to take place. A community where people converse, discuss and seek agreement with each other runs no risk that possible disputes and misunderstandings will be inadequately addressed and resolved. Where reason and common sense point the way, actions are most often responsible, rational and efficient.

Differences form the basis of life and therefore should not be used to deepen the conflicts leading to destruction and ruin. Quite the contrary, the interfacing of differences should be ennobling, adding depth and breadth to life, in a word—enriching. That is why the existence and converging of different religions and religious communities in one state should not be seen as a possibility for confrontation, but rather as their chance to get to know and complement each other, or at least to live side by side, interfering with no one. To learn not to obstruct or endanger the other and to warn this other against endangering you is wise, reasonable and rational. That kind of approach, i.e. thinking, feeling and behaving that way, offers a chance for the coexistence of differences, religious in this case. That is the way to show sincerity and gain the others' confidence. A sincere conversation is a precondition of trust and gives a chance for reconciliation, even among until recently conflicting and bitterly opposed parties.

Modern democratic orders rest and are build on the notions of *citizen*, *civil state* and *universal solidarity*. The place, role and importance of a citizen in society and state reveal the degree of democratic development of their order. Democratic orders, which respect and realize individual rights, also guarantee other, collective rights—religious included. Individual rights mark the span of all collective rights. In any other case, especially when a collective right is placed above the individual, there is a serious danger that individual rights will be jeopardized. That is also true of religious rights as a class of collective entitlements. They should be guaranteed, under condition that they do not encroach upon the rights of other individuals and collectivities. This attitude towards rights reduces the possibility of their abuse or the outbreak of conflicts. That is also a guarantee to diverse religions and their communities that they will not be jeopardized and also that their (and their respective believers') teachings and actions—harmless to other collectivities and individuals—will not be threatened. In this way, that order safeguards the differences and reduces the possibility for them to become sources of conflicts. This external environment substantially contributes to good relations and links among different religious communities. And conversely, it may also cause and precipitate the deepening of differences until they become obstacles for co-existence and normal dialogue. Naturally, the external religious milieu may be conducive to dangerous strains, which could easily grow into a religious conflict and even war.

There is no doubt that a system, which offers *order* instead of chaos, *security* instead of insecurity, *stability* instead of instability, upholds inter-religious understanding, respect and cooperation. It also guarantees that religious extremists and fanatics will be stopped. In an order of that kind, their likes will not have the chance for expansion and domination. Naturally, authoritarian policies often encourage or use them in order to achieve their unrealistic and evil projects.

Preservation of life rests on order, since disorder spells danger, fading, disappearance of life. Both religions and politics concerned with preservation are based on and invoke order. They are the creators and prescribers of law and order. Order enables safety as well as stability. The human need for safety is rooted in man's survival and evolution, and is the basis of his sensitivity and morals. A man who feels unsafe is emotionally unstable and morally unfounded. He is unfree and unable to make a free choice. Alternatives are closed to him. That is why defenselessness leads to disappearance. Defenselessness is the symbol of Tanatos, and protectedness of Eros, i.e. life.

A political order which is open, accessible and transparent is based on *publicity*, i.e. on expression and public action. In it decisions are taken through a dialogue of all political subjects. A dialogue weighs the reasons, arguments and still better arguments. This kind of politics is marked by reason, i.e. moderation, responsibility and determination. On the other hand, when secrecy is the dominant characteristic of a political order self-will and surprise practiced by the holders of power and authority prevail. In that case there is no conversation but only announcements—no dialogue but only monologues. Anti-political states—impotence, fear, anxiety, indifference and waiting are imposed on the political community. Descartes already pointed out that the main cause of fear is surprise. Where surprises are common there can be no sincerity or trust. Where duplicity and mistrust rule there is no chance to encourage a dialogue of different groups and their respective communities, especially if they are so sensitive as those of religious and ethnic type. "In conversation people may be deluded, but they must not be insincere, if one wishes to embrace the experience of another" (Đuro Šušnjić).

Modern democratic orders, especially in multinational and multi-confessional states, are also stabilized by enabling the establishment of different *autonomies*. Through them the society

and state are integrated in a better and more substantial way. By means of autonomies, the power and authorities are decentralized and demonopolized, while the needs and interests of special groups are met in a better and more rational way. Links among people become more sincere, their respect of agreements more binding, mutual respect more serious and mutual adjustment more natural. Free people and free collectivities show greater readiness for cooperation and compromise. "Free people are civilized, attentive. They like other people" (Gyorgy Konrád). That is why autonomies should be made possible and interlinked in order for integration to be firmer and coexistence more supportable. That is one of the frameworks a political order may offer to encourage an inter-religious or any other dialogue of collectivities, especially in countries where conflicts have broken and become inflamed, where bad and evil things were experienced and where individuals and collectivities have to be reconciled.

In order to have a fruitful and safeguarded life of differences it is not enough to establish only individual, well-arranged democratic political orders. A larger and more universal guarantee is also required and that is the world order. The idea of the world order in modern times came from Kant who supported a cosmopolitan idea of a world civic order, which will secure eternal peace for the whole world. One day, "after many revolutionary changes, finally the highest purpose of nature shall be attained, a state of *universal civil order* (author's italics), as a bosom where all primordial gifts of human nature shall be developed," Kant pointed out.

Kant's idea of the *world order* obtained the support of two great men in the 20th century—physicist Albert Einstein and philosopher Karl Jaspers. After two horrible World Wars, concerned that a new one might break out, Einstein wondered if one should fear a world government, answering that indeed one should and that every government was "evil to a degree". But he still preferred the evil of a world government to the "far greater evil of war, especially now

when its destructive power has been hugely increased". Einstein knew of the tyranny of majority and therefore believed that the world government should and ought to interfere if in a specific state "the majority oppressed the minority". That provides the grounds to "depart from the principle of noninterference, since only thus could peace be preserved". Karl Jaspers, a philosopher who had a painful experience of nazism, both because of his views and his Jewish wife, in a lecture delivered in 1965 pleaded for the establishment of a world order headed by the U.S.A., claiming that had it not been for the U.S.A. in the Second World War the Bolshevik totalitarianism would have spread and descended on the waves of the Atlantic. That is why he believed it vital that U.S.A. embraced the world politics—which it entered against its will to decisively influence the course of history—forever and firmly, instead of continuing its old tendency with the policy of isolation in defense of American interests alone.

That is why all who eagerly oppose the world order, cosmopolitanism, universalism, pacifism, should stop and ask themselves what is going on—have they become the slaves to the partial, the parochial, provincial, closed, dogmatic, exclusive, extreme, fanatic, poisoned, evil, false, hateful and ugly. They do not accept the life of differences, the riches of the world and its expanse. The other is their border—the source of mistrust, hate and hostility. They reckon that in isolation alone may they ensure salvation and survival. Their logic is detrimental for them and for life. Self-satisfaction leads to isolation and loneliness, i.e. disappearance. Isolation is the dream and the reality of a despot, a tyrant and dictator: isolated individuals and isolated collectivities for them are the best subjects.

Where everything is the same, and there are no differences, neither can one find dialogue—boredom and emptiness prevail. That is why all sorts of dialogue should be started, supported and nourished. Dialogues ennoble and enrich life.

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