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RELIGIOUS PLURALISM – RELIGIOUS WARS AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Abstract: *One of the permanent paradoxes of human history is that during several thousand years religious pluralism was one of the major causes of conflicts and wars and a challenge for eventual religious tolerance, which seemed to be just a well-wishing attempt (that could not be permanently established, so far). Thus, one can follow two lines – the history of religious conflicts and wars, and the history of (religious) tolerance (or standpoints which advocate tolerance, in particular religious tolerance). Although one can find examples of ideas of tolerance in various times and cultures, one can also find religious conflicts and wars repeating in various times and cultures, from very ancient times, to present day.*

Key words: *Religious wars, religious tolerance, pluralism, fundamentalism, multiculturalism*

In many (or most) cases conflicts, or wars, which had religious excuses or labels, were not primarily motivated by religious motifs or ideas, but were (actually) fight for power, or economic benefits (although, in many cases, this was kept under the cover of "higher", religious goals, or labels). For this reason, someone might try to classify pure religious wars (where motivation had no other source), from religious wars which had also other motives. However, it seems impossible – in actual cases – to clearly make such division, because religion itself was intermingled with power politics, economy, ethnicity, culture etc.

The second peculiar issue is that religious conflicts and wars were:

- sometimes inflicted within the same religious traditions (Judaism, Christian, Muslim), related to some differences of belief,

- and sometimes between different religions, or members (nations, armies) of various religions.

The conflicts were lasting if the two sides had similar power, and shorter if one side was inferior in worldly power. Of course, this was also under heavy masks, since it was common (for the more powerful side), to claim that power (or winning the battle) was proof of Gods help to the right side.

In this paper we will mostly present the European history of religious wars and religious tolerance, with few examples from other cultures.

Reasons for religious wars – types of religious wars

The existence of religions, other than ours, seems to have been a sort of challenge for the religiousness of every individual, and for various groups, or states, which identified with one particular religion.

History of Europe, or India, or any other part of the world point to the same – that fanaticism, and tolerance were present in various times, from ancient times.

There is an inherent paradox related with religiousness itself. Almost all religions speak of peace, or forgiveness (peace of mind, or peace between people), but at the same time religion was one of the frequent excuses or reasons for wars, or limited conflicts, in various times of history.

1) First case was the conflict between the ruler (pharaoh, king, emperor) and the ecclesiastic order, or church establishment (priests, monks). The conflict would start over the issue "who is to be the boss?" – the ruler (head of the secular order), or the ecclesiastics (head of the holy order). In addition, the conflicts rose when the ruler wanted to be the boss of the holy order as well, or vice versa. Examples can be found as far as 14th. c. BC., in Ancient Egypt (time of Akhenaton). In Europe, in Christianity it starts during the iconoclasm period (conflict over icons) in Byzantine (8th. c.), and in the Western Europe the conflicts between kings and popes have their high tide between 1050–1300 – conflicts of emperor Henrik IV of Germany, with the pope Gregory VII (1075–6), Friedrich Barbarossa with pope Alexander III (round 1170), and Friedrich II, with Innocent III (round 1200).

2) Second type of religious war was between the members of the same ethnic group, who belong to the same religion (for example, Christianity), but to the various denominations (sects, or churches). Into this category fall the extermination of Bogumils in the Eastern Europe, and Albigenses in Western Europe (12–13th c.), and wars between Catholics and Protestants (16–17th c.).

3) Third type of religious war was between various ethnic groups, religions, races, or states. Examples are Moorish (Arab) conquests in the Mediterranean (including Spain) in the 8th c., Crusades against Arabs (11–15th c.), Turkish invasion of Europe (13–17th c.), *reconquista* in Spain (11–13th c.), colonial expansion of European countries: Spain, France, Holland, England (15–19th c.), which usually had as its "excuse" converting the barbarians (pagans), or primitives to Christianity, and–or civilized standards, etc.

Therefore, many local, continental, or intercontinental wars, were at the same time religious wars, or had religious excuses (fighting against "infidels"), beside other interests (fight for power, plunder, and colonialism).

Religious war in the Old Testament

Approximately at the time of Akhenaton in Egypt (14th c. BC.), in the Old Testament we are told that Moses fought a religious war against the idolaters. During a period when Moses was a bit longer absent on the Mount, a group of people asked Aaron to make them a visible sign of God's presence, which he did, casting a golden bull–calf (after collecting gold from people). God saw this, and was very angry and wanted to punish all people (said Moses). In order to appease God, and save some people, after coming back, Moses organized the punishing of the idolaters. He organized an armed group and told them that they have the God's mandate to commit fratricide, and punish the idolaters. They were very obedient and killed more then 3000 idolaters in a day.

Arm yourself, each of you, with his sword. Go through the camp, from gate to gate, and back again. Each of you kill his brother, his friend, his neighbor. The Levites obeyed, and about three thousand people died that day (*Exodus*, 32: 27).

With this action, Moses set up a model for religious war, as a holy cause, pleasing to God – which was later followed by Christians, and Muslims, alike.

Today you have consecrated yourselves to the Lord completely, because you have turned each against his own son and his own

brother and so have this day brought a blessing upon yourselves (*Exodus*, 32: 29).

It is interesting that much later (some 2000 years later) the issue of using, or not using icons, was one the causes of fierce conflicts in Byzantine times (the Iconoclastic controversy in the 8th c.).

Religious tolerance in India – 3rd c. BC.

Before managing to create a big empire in the 3rd c. BC., whose territory was close to the territory of contemporary India, emperor Ashoka waged wars, similar to Constantine six centuries later. Ashoka (reigned c. 265–238 BC), was the most powerful emperor of the Maurya dynasty. Ashoka's first years were marked by slaughter of thousands of people during the conquest of Kalinga. Having been exposed to the moral teachings (dharma) of Buddhism – based on nonviolence and compassion – Ashoka was moved to deep remorse for his actions. Therefore, he later (circa 250 BC.) committed to benevolent actions, and tried to create a supportive and tolerant society, including religious tolerance.

The principles of his rule were exposed to the public in Edicts, carved in stone. One of the Edicts deals with matters of religion. In the text of the famous 12th Edict, we find principles of religious tolerance.

The "king beloved of the gods" (Sanskrit: *Priyadasi*), *honors all forms of religious faith, whether professed by ascetics or householders; he honors them with gifts and with manifold kinds of reverence: but the beloved of the gods considers no gifts or honor so much as the increase of the substance (of religion):—his encouragement of the increase of the substance of all religious belief is manifold. But the root of his (encouragement) is this: reverence for one's own faith, and no reviling nor injury of that of others. Let the reverence be shown in such and such a manner as is suited to the difference of belief; as when it is done in that manner, it augments our own faith, and benefits that of others. Whoever acts otherwise injures his own religion, and wrongs that of others; for he who in some way honors his own religion, and reviles that of others, saying, having extended to all our own belief, let us make it famous;—he who does this throws difficulties in the way of his own religion: this, his conduct, cannot be right. The duty of a person consists in respect and service of others* (Cunningham 1961: 125).

Edict of Milan – 313. AD.

Fighting to gain power over the eastern and western part of the Roman Empire, Constantine I (later, the Great) invaded Italy in the year 312, and after a lightning campaign defeated his brother–in–law Maxentius, near Rome. He then confirmed an alliance that he had already entered into with Licinius: Constantine became Western emperor, and Licinius shared the East with his rival Maximinus.

Shortly after the defeat of Maxentius, Constantine met Licinius at Mediolanum (modern Milan) to confirm a number of political and dynastic arrangements. A product of this meeting has become known as the *Edict of Milan* (in 313), which promoted toleration to the Christians, and restitution of any personal and corporate property that had been confiscated during the persecutions. The *Edict of Milan* is an important document (usually related to Constantine – but actually it was promoted by him, and Licinius), because for the first time in European history, it proposed religious tolerance in general.

When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, fortunately met near Mediolanurn (Milan), and were considering everything that pertained to the public welfare and security, we thought… that we might grant to the Christians and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us and all who are placed under our rule. And thus by this wholesome counsel and most upright provision we thought to arrange that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, or that religion which he should think best for himself, so that the Supreme Deity, to whose worship we freely yield our hearts) may show in all things His usual favor and benevolence. (…)

…Any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. (…) We have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made we that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.

Moreover, in the case of the Christians especially we esteemed it best to order that if it happens anyone heretofore has bought from our treasury from anyone whatsoever, those places where they were previously accustomed to assemble… the same shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of

recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception, Those, moreover, who have obtained the same by gift, are likewise to return them at once to the Christians. Besides, both those who have purchased and those who have secured them by gift, are to appeal to the vicar if they seek any recompense from our bounty, that they may be cared for through our clemency. All this property ought to be delivered at once to the community of the Christians through your intercession, and without delay (*Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European history,* 1907, Vol. 4: 29).

Edict of Milan was an excellent example of religious tolerance. However, eleven years after the Edict of Milan, in 324, Constantine went into conflict with Licinius, and defeated him at Adrianople, in order to take power over the Eastern part of the empire. Licinius surrendered, was exiled to Thessalonica, and was executed the next year on a charge of attempted rebellion.

Europe and tolerance

If the European kingdoms which existed from the time of Constantine the Great (4th c.) until the end of 18th c., were able to keep and implement the principles of religious tolerance, Europe and its inhabitants would be saved of much trouble.

1) A lot of bloodshed happened in the process of conversion to Christianity and once it was installed, a lot of killing went on in the process of subduing, either the pagan religions, or in the process of inter–Christian strife (against heretics).

2) The two main splits in Christianity – between Orthodox and Catholic church in the middle of the 11th c. and later on (in the 16th c.) between the Catholic and Protestant church – also caused big trouble. The first one made Europe open and much weaker toward foreign invasions (Mongols in the 13 c. and Turks in a longer stretch of time, 12–17th c.). The second involved Europe into several centuries (16–17) of religious wars, with short lapses in between.

However, Constantine went beyond the joint policy agreed upon at Mediolanum – by giving priority to one religion: this time to Christianity. By 313 he had already donated to the Bishop of Rome the imperial property of the Lateran, where a new cathedral, the Basilica Constantiniana (now S. Giovanni in Laterano), soon rose. Constantine began issuing laws conveying upon the church and its clergy fiscal and legal privileges and immunities from civic burdens. As he said in a letter of 313 to the proconsul of Africa, the Christian clergy should not be distracted by secular offices from their religious duties – *"...for*

when they are free to render supreme service to the Divinity, it is evident that they confer great benefit upon the affairs of state."

Christianity, paganism, heresies, and religious wars

Constantine's chief concern was that a divided church would offend the Christian God and so bring divine vengeance upon the Roman Empire and Constantine himself. Schism, in Constantine's view, was inspired by Satan. Its partisans were acting in defiance of the clemency of Christ, for which they might expect eternal damnation at the Last Judgment.

With some modifications, this attitude was kept and developed in later times as well, and it was the basis of Christian religious intolerance – toward schisms in Christianity, and toward other religions (that preceded Christianity, or followed it).

In the centuries after the Edict of Milan, religious strife (in argument), or religious wars (by sword) in Europe happened on three fronts.

1) First, against former religions (paganism), in its steady shift from the South to the North of Europe, where Christianity came rather late – in the 12th c. (conversion of pagans in Scandinavian countries)

2) Second fight was against the Christian teachings, and groups which were condemned as heresies, on various church councils.

3) Later, during the Crusades (11th c. and on), and during the Turkish invasion of Europe (13–17th c.) – fighting with the Muslims (Arabs, and Turks), whose intolerance was of the same kind, since they shared the same principle – that their religion is the only right religion, while others are infidels.

The list of concurrent Christian teachings in early Christianity (2–9th c.) includes Aryanism, Docetism, Donatism, Montanists, Gnosticism, Monophysitism, and Nestorians. These were banished on various Councils, and usually developed and spread their activity, or had their churches, outside Europe – in Africa, and Asia. A full list of concurrent teachings in early Christianity would be hard to make (one should add to it Paulician heresy, and the Massalians), we mostly know about them from second–hand (or their opponents) sources, as "heresies".

Later (10–13th c.) come Bogumils or Cathari (Albigensians, Valdesians), who were active in large part of Europe – from the Black Sea (Bulgaria), to the Atlantic (southern France). Therefore, they were crushed in a set of crusades (from 11–13th c.)

During that time (1052) comes the schism between the Orthodox and Catholic Church, and the split (in the 16th c.) between the Catholic, and Protestant Church(es), followed by centuries (16–17th c.) of long religious wars, which tore Europe (and some countries) apart, with enormous killings, which were sometimes very fierce, like the battles between various countries of various religious background – like the Muslim wars with Hindus (10-12th c.), or Muslim and Christian wars (in times of Crusaders), of later, during the Muslim (Turkish) invasion of South–East Europe.

Crusades were military expeditions organized by Western Christians against Muslim powers in order to take possession of or maintain control over the Holy City of Jerusalem and the places associated with the earthly life of Jesus Christ – these were between 1095, when the First Crusade was launched, and 1291, when the Latin Christians were finally expelled from their bases in Syria. The peculiar episode of Crusades campaigns was that – although generally these were wars with different faith (Muslim position related to the Holy land), the Fourth Crusade (1202–1261) was actually an aggression against the state of the same faith (Orthodox Christian Byzantine). After that, rift between the Eastern and Western churches widened, and the Byzantine Empire, for centuries a bulwark against (Turkish) invasion from the East, was much damaged, and will definitely fall under Turks, in 1453.

The Iconoclastic conflict and war – Byzantine Empire (730–87, 815–43)

Iconoclasts (those who rejected icons) and iconodules (those fond of icons) agreed on one fundamental point: Christian people could not prosper unless assuming the right attitude toward the holy images, or icons. The two sides (iconoclasts and iconodules) disagreed on what that attitude should be, and started a religious conflict, which took a form of civil war (if we consider as civil war the conflict between members of the same faith, and inhabitants of the same country), and went on for 50 years (in the 8th c.), with several lapses, and repeated in the 9th c.

Each side could discover supporting arguments in the writings of the early church, and it is essential to remember that the debate over images is as old as Christian art. The fundamentals of Iconoclasm were by no means an 8th century discovery.

The ablest defender of the iconodule position was the 8th–century theologian St. John of Damascus. Drawing upon Neo-Platonist doctrine, John suggested that the image was but a symbol; according to that standpoint, the creation of the icon

was justified since, by virtue of the Incarnation, God had himself become man.

The iconoclasts responded by pointing to the express wording of the Second Commandment (*You shall not make a carved image for yourself nor the likeness of anything in the heavens above… You shall not bow down to them or worship them…* - *Exodus*, 20, 4–5).

The condemnation therein of idolatry seems to have weighed heavily with Leo III – in 730 he prohibited icons with an imperial Edict. His successor, Constantine V, followed the same policy against icons (supporting it at the Council, held in 754), under the influence of Monophysitism. Monophysites believed in the single, indistinguishable, divine nature of Christ, and painters and worshipers of icons were guilty of sacrilege.

Constantine V replaced the icons with imperial portraits and with representations of his own victories. In addition, under Constantine V, the struggle against the icons became a struggle against their chief defenders, the monastic community.

Not only was Iconoclasm a major episode in the history of the Byzantine, or Orthodox Church, but it also permanently affected relations between the empire and Roman Catholic Europe. During the 8th century, two issues alienated Rome from Constantinople: Iconoclasm and quarrels stemming from the question of who should enjoy ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Illyricum and over Calabria in southern Italy.

Even the restoration of icon veneration (in the year 787) failed to bridge the differences between Orthodox Byzantium and Catholic Europe, for the advisers of Pippin's son and successor, Charlemagne, condemned the iconodules as heartily as an earlier generation had rejected the iconoclast decrees of Leo III. Nor could the men of Charlemagne's time admit that a woman – the empress Irene – might properly assume the dignity of emperor of the Romans. For all these reasons, Charlemagne, king of the Franks and Lombards by right of conquest, assented to his coronation as emperor of the Romans on Christmas Day, 800, by Pope Leo III. No longer a barbarian king, Charlemagne became, by virtue of the symbolism of the age, a new Constantine.

The Byzantine chancery could not accept this. For, if there were one God, one faith, and one truth, then there could be but one empire and one emperor; and, surely, that emperor ruled in Constantinople, not in Charlemagne's city of Aachen. Subsequent disputes between Rome and Constantinople seemed often to center upon matters of ecclesiastical discipline; underlying these

differences were two more powerful considerations, neither of which could be ignored.

According to theory, there could be but one empire - but now there were two. In addition, between Rome and Constantinople there stood two groups of peoples open to conversion: the Slavs of central Europe and the Bulgarians in the Balkans. The challenge was, from which of the two jurisdictions would these people accept their Christian discipline? To which, in consequence, would they owe their spiritual allegiance?

Bogumils–Cathari–Albigensians–Valdesians

By the 10th c. the figure of Christ and various parts of his life–story were so complex, and variegated, that any one that anybody (a beggar, or a king) could identify with him. Christ is at one time a despised, whipped and tortured no–one, who carries his cross, on which he will die nailed, as other people carry their hard lives, unto which they are nailed without any hope of change, until death. However, both will be elevated and compensated in heavens. Christ is also Pantokrator (king of the world) and therefore kings are crowned by him, through the hands of the church, and dignified to power, which cannot be questioned. So, a beggar and a common person can identify with Christ, through Christ–the–victim, while kings can identify with him in his glory, as Pantokrator. However, since the poverty was rising, and the growing number of poor were trying to develop the ideal of the early poor church - as more close to the moral standards of Christianity - there arose a strong push toward defining poverty, as a monastic, and religious ideal.

The church managed to legalize some of these movements, and connect with its system and goals, like the order (Franciscans) formed round St. Francis of Assisi (in the 13th c.). However, many were considered as "outsiders", or heretics, for various reasons.

1) It is considered that the sect of Bogumils (or Bogomils) started in Bulgaria, round 930, with sermons by Bogumil ("Dear–to–the God"). The sect has spread in Bulgaria, and the Balkan region (Byzantine, Serbia, Bosnia, Dalmatia) during the next hundred years, and it seemed to have addressed mostly peasants (lower social strata), who were disappointed with the church, and mainstream Christianity, for several reasons. First, although Christianity verbally favored the poor and oppressed, Bogumils saw that it actually supported the rich and those in power, and helped them justify, and keep their riches and power. Second, the church and clergy shared the power and riches of the world, leaving the other world to the poor for compensation, and

consolation. In these matters, the church and the clergy showed spiritual corruption. For those reasons, dualist teachings (that the world is under the Satan's rule, and that the icons, church ritual and establishment is under Satan's guidance), appealed to the Bogumil sect more then the official power–wedded Christianity.

In a sort of diary written round 1110, by Anna Comnena (daughter of the Byzantine emperor) we find interesting notes. She describes the supposed wickedness of the Bogomils, and the tactics in defaming them.

When the repression against Bogumils rose in Byzantine, their missions moved to Serbia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Italy and even southern France. In Serbia, the extermination of the Bogumils was *en masse* organized between 1172–80, during the rule of Stefan Nemanja. There were three kinds of punishment: burning at stake, expulsion from the country and property confiscation. Special treatment was for the missionaries – their books were burnt (if any), and tongs pulled out (Dragojlović, 1982, II: 105).

However, it is not sure did the heresy spread from one source (Bulgaria and Black Sea region, westward and southward), or it rose independently, in various parts of Europe – i.e. Bogumils in the area of Black Sea, and Bulgaria, and Cathari (or Kathari) in the Southern France. It is also possible, that it was just later identified by the oppressors, as of common origin and doctrine, in order to make it more easy to identify, and condemn them (Bogomils, and Kathari) as evil. Eliade (1983, III: 156–158), and some other writers consider the first thesis as more plausible. However, the second thesis (of independent arousal of the Bogumil–Cathari teachings) seem also plausible. The main reason is that in the East, the Bogumil doctrine applied mostly to lower social strata, but in Southern France it was accepted by the nobility as well.

2) However, it seems that first victims of repression against Bogumils–Cathari were in the West (preceding the episode described by Anna Comnena by one century), since it was recorded that some 12 Cathari heretics were burnt at stake, on Dec. 28th, 1022, in Orleans, France (first heretics who underwent this type of punishment).

Cathari is derived from the Greek *katharos*, or "pure." The Cathari were also known in France (by those who had a positive attitude toward them) as "good men" (*bons homes*) or "good Christians" (*bons chrétiens*). The Cathari had similar teachings as the Bogomil Church of Thrace (historically Thrace embraced portions of Bulgaria, Turkey, Balkans, and Greek Thrace), the Paulicians, and the Waldenses. According to some sources, the Cathari movement first appeared in France in the early

11th century, between 1012 and 1020. It gained considerable influence in the south of France, protected by William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, and eventually by a great portion of the southern nobility. The movement was popular among the nobility, and the peasant folk and urban dwellers alike. In the 12th and 13th centuries the Cathari flourished. A Cathari Bishop was recorded in 1149 in the north of France and within a few years had established additional posts at Albi and Lombardy, and by the turn of the 12th century, there were 11 more posts in north of France, four in the south of France, and six in Italy. Name Cathari was also applied to the heretics known as Albigensis (derived from Albi, the present capital of the Department of Tarn, southern France), a heresy or sect that flourished in southern France in between the 12th–13th c. The name Albigenses, given by the Council of Tours (1163) prevailed towards the end of the twelfth century and was for a long time applied to all the heretics of the south of France.

The Cathari doctrines attacked the foundations of Catholic and Papal power and the political institutions of European Christendom. Ultimately, the authorities of both Church and State united to attack them. The Cathari were declared heretics, and the Cistercians and others were ordered to preach a Crusade - the Albigensian Crusade (1209-29) - against them. An army, led by barons from the north of France, marched against Toulouse and Provence and massacred the inhabitants. It was an army of twenty thousand Christians, knights and peasants, from all over Europe, eager to save their souls and get rich by legalized and sanctified murder and robbery. For the first time a pope was sanctioning a holy war against other Christians. Some Cathari undertook to be reconciled and converted like the Earl of Toulouse, but were still whipped and humiliated. In 1211, the castle of Caberet fell and the defenders were burnt at the stake, or murdered in other cruel ways. The lady of the castle was buried by stones in a pit and left to die by pressing and suffocation. When Marmaude surrendered, 5000 men women and children were massacred. Puritanical sects like the Apostolicals, who had returned to Essene habits – such as using white linen and going bareheaded like the apostles – were also tortured into extinction.

During the crusade an estimated one million persons were killed. Those whose lives were spared, had their eyes torn out.

The Albigensian heresy continued, though somewhat subdued. A later persecution, sanctioned by St. Louis IX, allied with the Inquisition, was more successful in breaking the power of the Cathari. In 1244, the great fortress of Montségur, near the Pyrenées and a stronghold of the perfecti, was captured and destroyed. The Cathari were forced to go underground, and

many of the French Cathars fled to Italy, where persecution was more intermittent. The hierarchy of the Cathari faded out in the 1270s, though the Cathari heresy lingered through the 14th century and finally disappeared in the 15th.

3) The social protest of deprived classes, and economic basis of Bogumil heresy, did not disappear once the heretics were wiped out. Therefore, five centuries later (in the 16th c.) – but this time in Central Europe – will appear another heresy: Protestantism, which (at the start) had the social protest at its basis, and was therefore related with peasant wars against the oppression of the high class, and church establishment. And then – two centuries after that, at the end of 18th c. – the same social protest will rise again in the great surge of French revolution, and the following revolutions in other countries, right up to 1848, but this time defined in political terms (political heresy, rather than religious heresy – since the protest was defined in political, rather than religious terms).

4) In his comment upon noticing the continuity of social protests in Europe, Eliade twists the argument, and comes to a weird conclusion: that Bogumils and Marxism–Leninism share the same source: Oriental millenarism (Eliade, 1983, III: 162). In this way Eliade hopes to denounce as non–European, and non–Christian both doctrines. But, it is true that both were created in Europe, and were pan–European, with their teaching and impact.

There were some local differences between the Bogumils, Cathari, Patarens, Albigenses, and Waldens. But, together they make up the first pan–European movement in the history of Europe, after the time when Christianity (in 1054) officially split into two churches (Orthodox and Catholic).

Turkish invasion and Cusanus on religious tolerance

In 1437, the Pope sent Nicholas of Cusa (Nicolaus Cusanus – 1401–64) to Constantinople, to improve the relationship between Rome and Byzantine. In 1439 a settlement was signed between Byzantine and the Pope, which also had a statement on Western help in case of Turkish invasion. But the agreement was not realized, and soon Byzantine fell to pieces, under Turkish blows.

Nicholas of Cusa was probably the first Christian author who wrote a study on religious tolerance, on peace between faiths (*On the Peace of Faith – De Pace Fidei,* in 1453), or interreligious harmony. After he heard the news of the Turkish invasion of Constantinople (in 1453), he wrote this imaginary dialogue, where he convened representatives of all at that moment known religions – an imaginary World Parliament of Religions, in 1453.

The participants of this imaginary dialogue realize that the truth which the different parties are defending by sword is the same, and that only the form – within which this truth is known, and experienced – is different. Cusanus uses the principle "one religion differing in ritual" (*una religio in rituum varietate),* considering that the ultimate truth (as he had already argued in other major works, like *Docta ignorantia*) cannot be known as it is, but can only be reached through various forms. Names of God are given by those whom he has created – by himself, God is unutterable: beyond any naming. Actually, there is "one and the same single religion presupposed everywhere" (Nicholas of Cusa, 2001: section IV).

Having realized this, humans can be in peace (or even "eternal peace" – *pace perpetua*) – no need to take arms, and wage war(s) in the name of truth, or to force others to accept another truth.

Cusanus offered possible basis for religious tolerance between various religions, and between various denominations (or the church and heresies) within the same religion, as well. But times were not yet ripe for tolerance, and the price to attain it would be very dear, in the next few centuries.

Protestantism

At the beginning of the 16th c., slightly before Martin Luther (1483-1546) put forward his *95 thesis* (in 1517), there was a liberal Catholic evangelical thrust, with representatives in various European countries: John Colet (1466–1519) in England, Jacques Lefevre (1455–1536) in France, Francisco Jimenez de Cisneros (1436–1517) in Spain, Juan de Valdes (1490–1541) in Naples, and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467–1536).

They were critical toward various clerical moral abuses, such as financial extortion (selling papers which forgive sins), and ridiculed the popular superstitions, associated with the cult of the saints, and their relics, religious pilgrimages, and the like.

But Luther gave to these issues new radicalism. Erasmus found nothing amiss in Luther's theses, except that he had been too radical in relation to purgatory, and when the case of heresy was raised against Luther, he wrote to Frederick III the Wise, Luther's prince, that as a Christian ruler he was obligated to give his subject a fair hearing.

Beginning in northern Europe, in the early 16th century – in reaction to medieval Roman Catholic doctrines and practices – Protestantism in time became, along with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, one of three major forces in Christianity.

After a series of European religious wars (in the 16–17 c.), it spread rapidly in various forms throughout the world.

There were several factors which ushered the rise of Protestantism. First was the doctrinal dispute over redemption. The second was the wish of sovereigns to assert their power against the papacy, and its domination over worldly affairs. The third was the rise of nationalist spirit. The fourth point was criticism of popular devotion, related to holy relics, icons, and superstition.

Thirty Year wars (1562–98 – 1618–48)

1) There were occasions when religious wars assumed the guise of a supranational conflict between Reformation and Counter–Reformation. Spanish, Savoyard, and papal troops supported the Catholic cause in France against Huguenots aided by Protestant princes in England and Germany. In the Netherlands (Low Countries), English, French, and German armies intervened; and at sea Dutch, Huguenot, and English corsairs fought the Battle of the Atlantic against the Spanish champion of the Counter–Reformation.

Germany, France, and the Netherlands each achieved a settlement of the religious problem by means of war, and in each case the solution contained original aspects. In Germany the territorial formula of *cuius regio, eius religio* (who is the ruler, his is the religion) applied – that is, in each state the population had to conform to the religion of the ruler. In France, the Edict of Nantes in 1598 embraced the provisions of previous treaties and accorded the Protestant Huguenots toleration within the state, together with the political and military means of defending the privileges that they had exacted. The southern Netherlands remained Catholic and Spanish, but the Dutch provinces formed an independent Protestant federation in which republican and dynastic influences were nicely balanced. Nowhere was toleration accepted as a positive moral principle, and seldom was it granted, except through political necessity.

2) Wars were always "dirty" – and religious wars are no exception. But, the confusion which prevails in wars (past and present wars) is rarely recognized. The two thirty year wars were a real confusion. They were as confusing and contradictory as two world wars in the 20th c. – the only difference is that they were limited to the territory (countries) of Europe.

Historians and winners try to make things plain, especially wars. But, that is far from true. We see that beside religious reasons, there were a lot of other interests involved, as well. Therefore, in the actual conflict we find several paradoxes.

For example, in many cases Catholics (or Catholic country) helped Protestants to defeat the other Catholic party in their country, and vice versa. Behind the religious (ideological) grouping of the powers, national, dynastic, and mercenary interests generally prevailed. For example: in the French conflicts, Lutheran German princes served against the Huguenots (although they should have been their allies, since both belonged to the Protestant party), and mercenary armies on either side often fought against the defenders of their own religion. Or, because of his desire to perpetuate French weakness through civil war – Philip II of Spain negotiated with the Huguenot leader, Henry of Navarre (afterward Henry IV of France). Finally, his ambition to make England and France the satellites of Spain, weakened his ability to suppress Protestantism in both countries (which was supposed to be his main goal).

Second thing to have in mind, is that the two thirty year periods are a historical comprising of several wars, which went on during those two periods. Each of the "thirty year wars" (the one in the 16th c. – 1562–98; and the other in the 17th c. – 1618–48) was actually compounded of several different wars, fought on different fronts, by different parties, and for different reasons.

Deism, natural religion, reason, and tolerance

After two centuries of religious conflicts and wars, Europe was exhausted, and many searched for consolation and basis of religious tolerance, that could stop future wars.

1) The proponents of natural religion – in England, and France – were strongly influenced by three intellectual concerns: a growing faith in human reason, a distrust of religious claims of revelation that lead to dogmatism and intolerance, and, finally, an image of God as the rational architect of an ordered world.

2) Deists argued that there is difference between religion shaped in history (historical religion), and natural religion (based on reason). This means, that behind the vast differences in modes of worship, piety, and doctrine of the world's religions (as well as between the Christian churches) lay a common rational core of universally accepted religious and moral principles (which make up "natural religion"). Deists asserted that superficial differences of ritual and dogma were insignificant and should accordingly be tolerated.

By the turn of the 17th century in G. Britain, a number of Deists (John Toland, 1670-1722; Anthony Collins, 1676-1729) began to apply reason to much of the piety and practice of orthodox Christianity. Deists rejected the elaborate liturgical practices and complex institutional schemes of Roman Catholicism.

By the end of the 18th century, in addition to becoming a dominant religious attitude among English, French, and German intellectuals, Deism influenced the religious views of upper–class Americans. The first three presidents of the United States subscribed to Deist beliefs.

David Hume (1711–1776) – in his *Natural History of Religion*, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, and *Essay upon Miracles* – reflected the growing Rationalism of the epoch, and rejection both of paganism and dogmatic Christianity, in the name of "natural religion."

3) In France, Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), was a champion of tolerance in the 17th c. Before he was born, two "thirty years" wars tore apart Europe. Thus, in his "Historical and Critical Dictionary" (1697) he questioned many Christian traditions. Bayle's plea for religious tolerance (even for atheists) eventually convinced some of his critics that Bayle was an atheist in disguise.

Voltaire (Francois Marie Arouet, 1694–1778) wrote his *Dictionnaire philosophique, in* 1764, in which there is chapter "On Tolerance", where he says: *What is tolerance? It is the consequence of humanity. We are all formed of frailty and error; let us pardon reciprocally each other's folly—that is the first law of nature. (...) Of all religions, the Christian is without doubt the one which should inspire tolerance most, although up to now the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men* (*Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary*, 1950: 302–3).

Denis Diderot (1713–84) in *On the Sufficiency of Natural Religion* explains that historical religions are in dispute which cannot be solved, since every religion has a pretense of being above all others, and having the monopoly on truth, refutes all other religions as false. Therefore, the basis of religious tolerance must be natural religion (as opposed to historical religions) – a primordial religious impulse in man, cultivated by reason.

4) Twenty years after Voltaire (in 1783) the Serbian author and representative of enlightment and rationality, Dositej Obradović (1742–1811), advocated religious tolerance in his autobiography *Life and Experiences* (first published in Serbian, *Život i priključenija* – in Leipzig, Germany, 1783), where he says that it would be very valuable to improve the understanding of good people, by telling them that they can belong to any church, but still be godfathers to each other, or friends, respecting and loving each other (Obradović, 1951: 68).

Modernization: secularization and rationalization

Secularization was a long process which started in Europe at the time (in 16th c.) when science and arts tried to get out of the grip of religion, and opened a long process which would still be open to set–backs even in the 20th c. After 1990, in many parts of the world – not only in post-communist countries – has started a process which many name as de-secularization. In order to understand de-secularization, we should first consider basics of secularization.

It has three basic aspects.

(1) Separation of the state and law, from religion, thus, creating a "civil society" - which means that all habitants in a society have equal, civil rights, no matter to which religion, race, or social group they belong to.

(2) Freedom of scientific research from religious dogma, and redefinition of many aspects of nature and humanity in scientific terms (different from religious framework). For example, the world and living world were considered as natural phenomena, and not as creation of god(s). And many aspects of human life were considered as natural – for example, a personal decease (or epidemic) was not (as before) considered as a punishment for sin(s), but as an encounter with some natural phenomena that causes a particular decease.

(3) Art and education are free of religious dogma, and prohibitions.

All three make up basic traits of a secular and civil society.

During the second half of the 19th c. it was considered that the European society has given an impetus to a process unique in human history whatsoever – to the process of modernization, which had two basic components: secularization, and rationalization. These processes manifested in three important fields: in the way humans understood nature, history, and main purpose of life.

Nature was now considered as a self–supporting system with its laws (not any more as a creation of God, subservient to his plan, or miracles). Second, history was not a transition time between two comings of Christ, but as a much larger time sequence, going back to pre–historic times, and stretching into future which will be more and more under human impact, and democratically chosen leading. Third, the aim of life in general, and of individual life is not salvation (in Christian or any other religious terms), but living life in its full potential, and saving the environment of the planet, for life of future generations.

World's Parliament of Religions (Chicago – 1893)

From the beginning of the 19th century, two groups of Protestants, who had their former origin in Europe, have merged in the United States. Universalists felt a close kinship with Unitarians, since they shared many views and practices. They generally rejected the miraculous elements of traditional Christianity, as incompatible with modern knowledge. Jesus is considered a great teacher and an example worthy of imitation, but he is not held to be divine. Although stressing their ties to the Christian tradition, they were exploring the universal elements of religion and seeking closer relationships with the non–Christian religions of the world. Therefore they were initiators and organizers of the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago (area called "White City", September 11–25, 1893).

It was one of the several congresses held in conjunction with the Columbian exposition (May–October, 1893), which (among other latest achievements in those times) presented electricity, and its applications (in particular electric light), invented by Tesla, and launched by Westinghouse.

Held in the center of American industrial culture – within the "White City," as the fairground was called – the World's Parliament of Religions was successful and widely attended. While the majority of presenters were American Protestant Christians, there were enough presenters from Japan, India, and China, to make it a world gathering. One of the most prominent was Swami Vivekananda, from India. Despite different religions which they advocated, most participants hoped that religious communities could work together to promote religious tolerance. Charles Bonney, president of the Parliament, said that when religions of the world recognize each other as the children of one Father, then concord will prevail. Another Parliament was planned for Benares, India, in 1900, but regular world religious gatherings did not take place as was hoped.

Parliament increased understanding, tolerance, and interest in other religions and a number of organizations sprang out of it. Also, this was one of the first times that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews – as the predominant religious groups in the U.S. – began an interfaith dialogue. In conjunction with the Parliament, a number of denominational gatherings were held.

Theory and praxis of religious tolerance

At the turn of the 19–20th century to many it seemed that the solution for religious tolerance and freedom will take three possible turns.

1) One possibility was that the trend toward secularization and rationalization will gain further momentum, and that religion would almost disappear as a social, political, and historical arbiter, or reason for individual, national, or state conflicts, or wars.

2) The other possibility was thought to be a tendency of blending all religions into one, or creation of a universalist religious creed, that would "eat up" all particular religions as narrow–minded one–sidedness.

3) The third possibility – which at the beginning of the 21st c. seems most plausible – is that religions will continue to play an important part in social and political life, and that their number will not decrease, but increase. With such perspective, the best way to search for tolerance is to find issues that are of common interest for mankind, aside from their religious affiliation, and to search for common action and goals in that direction.

For that purpose, inter–faith associations, on local, national, or international level, which bring together people of various religions, are important for contemporary societies.

Promotion of religious tolerance in the 20th c.

The IARF (Interantional Association for Religious Freedom) began in 1900 on May 25th in Boston, Massachusetts. Its original name was the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers. "The object of this council," its founders declared, "is to open communication with those in all lands who are striving to unite Pure Religion and Perfect Liberty, and to increase fellowship and cooperation among them." Proceedings were published under the title *Liberal Religious Thought at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century.*

The initial Congress was held in London in May 1901 in response to an invitation from the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. It lasted three days and as many as 2,000 persons attended its sessions. As a result, 770 individuals from 21 different religious groups and 15 countries became members of the Council. Most of these were from Europe and the United States. Proceedings were published under the title *Liberal Religious Thought at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century.*

In 1969 the IARF Congress returned to Boston and addressed the theme, "Religious Encounter with the Changing World." The 20th IARF Congress focused its discussions around four areas of concern: (1) "The Christian in the Modern World," (2) "The Religious Approach to the Modern World," (3) "Dialogue of World Religions," and (4) "Peace, Justice and Human Rights." In

Boston the name of the IARF was changed into its present name: International Association for Religious Freedom. Also in 1969 Japanese Shinto and Buddhist groups joined the Association. Since that time Japanese member groups have taken an active part in the work of the IARF, and in the 1980's and 1990's Indian IARF members also came to play a more important role.

The origins of WCRP (The World Conference on Religion and Peace) are in 1961, when a handful of senior leaders from the world's major faith traditions began exploring the possibilities for organizing a "religious summit" to address the need for believers around the world to take action toward achieving peace. The World Conference on Religion and Peace convened for the first time in Kyoto, Japan, on 16–21 October 1970. More than 1,000 religious leaders from every continent gathered in Kyoto.

The meeting concluded with the resolution that "the work initiated by Kyoto should be continued in the form of an inter–religious body called the 'World Conference on Religion and Peace.'" Delegates urged the establishment of an international office to support the organization; that office's work would include establishing national and regional bodies; convening and engaging religious communities on every level of their organizational structures; initiating inter–religious engagement with appropriate international and intergovernmental partners; and pursuing multi–religious dialogue and actions for peace.

WCRP enjoys consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, with UNESCO, and with UNICEF.

European section of WCRP had its meeting during May 1991., in Modling (near Vienna). I was also invited to the meeting, but could not afford to go, since the civil war in Croatia already started, and therefore during April I wrote a paper titled "Conflict and Ecumenism – Balkan and Europe", which I sent to the Conference. The paper was included in the meeting and read, however it was never published. In the concluding part of the paper I articulated the principles which I considered as valuable heritage of modern Europe, and which I considered as valuable for the Balkans. Here follows the concluding part of this paper.

a) Religions should be aware not to take sides in national, or religiously motivated antagonisms; on the contrary, they should do their best to pacify them, and induce peaceful stands, and solutions.

b) Religion should enhance feelings of togetherness, understanding and common interest for the overall destiny of

people in Yugoslavia, Balkan, and Europe. It can contribute to the healing of spiritual crisis, giving a new sense of worth, meaning, responsibility, and solidarity in years of economic and political disintegration, in the spirit of "The Princeton Declaration" (from the Third WCRP, held in Princeton, in 1979), that "the power of active love, uniting men and women in the search for righteousness, will liberate the world from all injustices, hatred and wrong."

c) Religion should not feed fear and hopelessness, or identify the overall crisis in Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe with the destiny of the "chosen people", doomsday expectations, or explicate it in the framework of the holy war against the infidels (in Muslim, or any other terms), which can propel masses of people into desperate actions, with dire consequences.

d) Religions and churches should support the goals and principles set in WCRP Declarations, help the founding of national chapters of the WCRP, and spread these principles in religious life and social actions. Each national tradition can discover principles and dictums of the same spirit in its own heritage (Belgrade, April, 22, 1991).

Some Personal Initiatives

1) In 1984, with a group of collaborators, I managed to start a quarterly "Eastern Cultures", published in Belgrade. The main goal was to spread religious tolerance, and understanding, through multiculturalist approach of each issue.

It had contributors, and readers from overall teritory of former Yugoslavia. The quarterly journal was published until 1992, when publishing business suffered breakdown, following the U.N. economic sanctions on Yugoslavia,and the publisher stopped it, as well as other publications. Now the issues of this journal are available on the web address: http://yu-budizam.com/knjige/#kulture

2) Between Nov. 15–17th, 1993 in Belgrade, I organized a meeting on "Religious Tolerance and the Role of Religions in the Balkans" – to mark the centenary of World's Parliament of Religions (1893–93). There were participants from Belgrade, representing various Abrahmic religious traditions in the Balkans, also Theosophy, and Buddhism. Participants invited from European countries sent their papers, (which were partly read at the meeting, an later published in the proceedings), because they could not come (in sanctions time).

In June 1994, I managed to publish the proceedings of this meeting, in the journal *Kultura* (no. 91-92, for 1993), including my paper, where I gave an exposition of the tolerance idea.

VERSKA TOLERANCIJA - PERIODICAL *KULTURA*, No. 91–92, 1993.

CONTENTS

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND THE ROLE OF RELIGIONS IN THE BALKANS

- THE DECLARATION OF A GLOBAL ETHIC FROM LACTANTIAE

Milan Damnjanović, IDEA OF TOLERANCE AND HISTORICITY OF VALUES

Vladeta Jerotić, SPIRITUALITY AND TOLERANCE

Dušan Pajin, RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Aleksandar Birviš, EDUCATING TOLERANCE TODAY AND FOR THE FUTURE

Lisa Palmieri–Billig, SPIRITUAL RESOURCES OF A MULTIRELIGIOUS CULTURE

Gordana Živković POSTMODERN CATACLISM –TEMPTATION OF TOLERANCE

Dragoljub Dragojlović, RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN THE BALKANS – MIDDLE AGES

Bojan Jovanavić, PAGANISM AND TOLERANCE

Radovan Bigović, ORTHODOX RELIGION AND TOLERANCE

Sinisa Jelusić, INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN SEMANTICS OF LITERARY TEXTS

Dragoljub T. Dordević, CONFESSIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND TOLERANCE

Robert Traer, FAITH IN HUMAN RIGHTS

Darko Tanasković, IDEA AND LIMITS OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN ISLAM

Tomislav Branković, PROTESTANTS, OECUMENISM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

Milutin Radović, THE BASICS OF THE RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE – ANTHROPOSOPHICAL APPROACH

Takashi Sudoh, BUDDHISM AND TOLERANCE

Branislav Kovačević, BUDDHISM AND TOLERANCE

Ivana Živković, BUDDHISM IN EUROPE AND IN THE BALKANS

Pluralism and fundamentalism – European perspective

Fundamentalism is nowadays an issue which is partly religious, and partly political (in Europe, America, or Asia – in Christian, or Muslim countries). It has several forms.

1) In most western and European countries it takes the form of religious (Christian) fundamentalism, or of neo–Nazi, or radical nationalist type of political fundamentalism.

2) In post–communist countries it takes a form of Christian fundamentalism when the ruling party tries to underline its anti–Communist stand, and involves church into government and education issues, thus nullifying the process of secularization, which is (for right or wrong) identified with communism.

Some contemporary authors try to explain globalism and localism, pluralism and tribalism, multiculturalism and monoculturalism, universalism and fundamentalism – as well as other opposites which mark contemporary culture issues – as sides, or pairs which go together; sometimes inextricably linked, or connected (the one going with the other).

So, I think that it is an open question – can we have one without the other. Can we have pluralism, and can we – so to say, transcend tribalism, and fundamentalism, with multiculturalism?

Or will they go together, like saintliness and witchcraft, orthodoxy and heresy, in the Middle Ages.

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РЕЛИГИЈСКИ ПЛУРАЛИЗАМ – РЕЛИГИЈСКИ РАТОВИ И РЕЛИГИЈСКА ТОЛЕРАНЦИЈА

Сажетак

Један од трајних парадокса људске историје је да је током више хиљада година религијски плурализам био један од главних узрока сукоба и ратова, а то био изазов за верску толеранцију, која је изгледала као покушај, или чин добре воље (који – до сада – није могао да буде трајно успостављен). Тако можемо пратити две линије кроз историју – историју верских сукоба и ратова и историју (верске) толеранције (или становишта која се залажу за толеранцију, посебно верску толеранцију). Иако можемо наћи примере идеја о верској толеранцији у различитим временима и културама, такође налазимо и верске сукобе и ратова који се понављају у различитим временима и културама, од античких времена до данас.

Кључне речи: *верски ратови, верска толеранција, плурализам, фундаментализам, мултикултурализам*

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