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FUNDAMENTALISMS AND EUROINTEGRATION: THE CASE OF BULGARIA

This text lays no claim to offering a political analysis. Its aims are:

- to describe the actual state of religious coexistence at the Balkans and, more specifically, in Bulgaria following the accession of the country to the European Union in 2007; and
- to outline certain tendencies in the progress of the relations between the State and the Church, on the one part, and between the different religious communities, on the other.

So, when fundamentalisms are concerned, we should always specify the meaning of this notion. We all know that it has been coined by the radical Protestant circles in the USA toward the end of the nineteenth century but, of course, the religious phenomena it encompasses have their long-standing historical prototypes (not only these of Christianity but of Judaism and Islam as well – to restrict our subject to the three most popular monotheistic religions). Most schematically stated, **fundamentalism should be viewed as „a religious way of being” determined by a strategy according to which believers encircled by alien religions attempt at preserving their distinctive identity as a people or religious community under the menace of modernity and the transition to a secular way of life**¹. Early manifestations of fundamentalism can be traced as far back as the time of the Babylonian Exile (Deuteronomy 7), and after, the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah for the first time held extremely orthodox attitudes bordering upon xenophobia. (Ezr.10, Neh.) Defending religious identity that has been shaken during the Exile justified itself as a reason for aggressive inculcation of the norms of everyday behaviour in the believers which (for the first time in recorded history) exemplified the confrontation between own and alien in respect to religion and matched the Infidel with the Enemy.

In fact, without entering into historical details, we may summarize that such fundamentalist movements always emerge in situations of identity crisis when shattered identity strives for consolidation through the expressions and instruments of religion. This has been valid for the situation in pre-Reformation Europe when the profound

¹ М. Рутвен, (M. Ruthven) *Фундаментализъм*, С. 2006, с. 18 сл. [Cf. also the English original: M. Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: The Search for Meaning*, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 247].

crisis within the Catholic Church paralleled the tendency of differentiating the society from the influence of the Church. The Reformation itself (and in a way, the Counter-Reformation as well), in this sense, represents an attempt of Christianity to regain its lost positions and establish itself in the context of upcoming modernity.

The situation in the Arab World has also been similar when during the first decade of the eighteenth century Abd ul-Wahhab started his reformatory preaching with the aim to turn Islam to the purity of faith from the times of Mohammed and emancipate it from the influence of sufism that (in his opinion) has led believers off the right way to Allah and has engrossed them in pagan and polytheistic deviations².

The forms in which religious fundamentalism manifests itself in various religious contexts show definite „familial similarities“. In the beginning, it refers only to defending the purity of faith from various deviations that are inescapable in the course of entering any religion into everyday life and folklore. The criticism in this case is addressed primarily to the faithful and their imperfect or insufficient faith³. While in homoreligious context, fundamentalists – with their entire radicalism – remain rather confined within ultraconservatism.

Things change when such views get into an alien confessional circle. In the Pentateuch (Numbers, 25), strict adherence to religious duties was identified with rejection of any variant faith, and this has led to direct aggression upon the carriers of otherness. The idea that God's commandments propagandizing tolerance and love for fellow creatures are valid namely and only in respect to these fellow creatures (i.e., the faithful in the closest sense) but are not binding in respect to representatives of other religions, has its expressions both in the Judeochristian tradition and the Islam. The adherence to the fundamentals of faith proved to be related with aggressive rejection of otherness, and this is precisely where the problem of contemporary religious fundamentalisms lies.

However, today I have no intention to bother you with the various historical and contemporaneous manifestations of religious fundamentalism. I will outline only the situation at the Balkans, and more specifically in Bulgaria, in order to make an attempt at explaining how eurointegration enters into disaccord with some of the important tendencies in the religious life of its citizens.

It is obvious that modern Europe has set itself to the important task of finding and regulating the „right“ place of religion in the life of various communities. The traditional view of religion as an institution separated from the state and, therefore, irrelevant from the viewpoint of its regulatory mechanisms, has obviously yielded to the pressure of actual realities⁴. If after signing the Treaty of Rome in 1957 it seemed that

² <http://www.sufi.it/Islam/wahlast.htm> Breve storia del movimento wahhabita; <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/gulf/wahhabi.htm>

³ For example, Wahhabis instituted the principle of „takfir“, i.e. the right of a Muslim to accuse another Muslim of defection – to declare his apostasy: a sin which according to the Sheriat is subject to death penalty without charge or trial. The most conservative interpretations of Wahhabi Islam view Shiites and other non-Wahhabi Muslims as dissident heretics. Only two years after their alliance, Ibn Saud and Wahhab accused all neighbouring Muslim tribes of apostasy and initiated a djihad against these – See CRS Report RS21695, *The Islamic Traditions of Wahhabism and Salafiyya*, by Febe Armanios; as for the acute clashes of various Christian branches, there is no need to admonish of these here, I think.

⁴ Cf. J. C a s a n o v a, *Religion, European secular identities, and European integration*, Eurozine, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2004-07-29-casanova-en.html>

*western European societies have undergone a rapid, drastic, and seemingly irreversible process of secularization*⁵, today it is hardly possible to deceive ourselves any more – religion is at all not on the way of extinction from our „civilized”, „modern”, and „integrated” societies but, on the contrary, it acquires more and more influence and paradoxically proves out to be of dramatic importance in modern world. Where does the paradox come from?

The place of religion in any of the EU countries is regulated by the respective constitution; there are also specific auxiliary laws regulating the rights of the citizens to confess their religious beliefs and perform the related rituals. In the first decades of EU development, when the major goal has been to establish a common market economy to the profit of all participants, one of the necessary „victims” has been the past full of conflicts and disputes, including religious ones. The design of EU as a space, artificially and purposefully „deprived” of common historical memory – a space where the common (interests, goals) is highlighted, and the variance (history, identities, values) is kept silent – proved to be an extremely successful economic experiment. It proved out that history and the related (contradictory) identities could only shake the common ambition of Europeans to produce and sell more and better. However, the „fathers of Europe” – having started from the market, indeed – have always aimed something more than just a market. By definition, united Europe should be a space of common values – and when speaking about values, the presence of religious ethics can be hardly neglected.

So, the question is whether there are indeed common values that should make a whole of Europeans, and to what an extent these values have been prompted by religion?

The first thing we can note is that, at least for now, the community of market has not proved itself as a sufficient condition for the emergence of a common identity. The social tissue intertwined in trade and business has not at all turned into a European people; the growing bulk of populist and nationalist movements anywhere speaks rather in favour of the reverse tendency.

On the other side, the accession of the ten new EU members in 2004 for example confronted Europe with the interesting problem of how to manage the religious radicalism of Polish citizens who showed themselves as greater extremists in their Catholic confession than the moderate „old Europeans” who had long ago secularized their thinking and behaviour. And if such a problem (although charged with relatively minor conflicts) could exist within Catholicism, then how do things look like from the perspective of Orthodox Bulgaria?

Bulgaria is the second Orthodox country that has accessed to the EU, following Greece that had its accession in 1981. Of course, the terms of the Greek accession at that time strongly differ from these of the present day; the accession treaty of Greece has been aligned with the Greek constitution. Article 3, section 2, of the Greek constitution reads as follows:

„Every *known* (?) religion is free and the forms of worship therein shall be practiced without any hindrance by the state and under protection of the law. The exercise of worship shall not contravene public order or offend morals. Proselytizing is prohib-

⁵ Ibidem.

ited.” *The 1975 Constitution, which is consistent with all of its predecessors, identifies only the Orthodox Church, and the Jewish and Muslim religions as known religions, or as „legal persons of public law.” All other religions are considered „legal persons of private law,” and as such, they have no legal personality; indeed, the Catholic Church was not extended the status of „legal personality of private law” until 1999*⁶. The unequal status of all non-Orthodox religions in Greece has led to a continuous and very ardent debate regarding religious liberties and the options for practicing these liberties⁷.

And while Greeks try to assure Europe that they do not restrict the rights on non-Orthodox churches, but *the Greek case helps to specify the nature of Orthodoxy’s ambivalence towards pluralism, in the form of a gap between support for the legal-constitutional, or formal(ist) rights of freedom of religion and conscience, on the one hand, versus contradictions in the interpretation and application of those rights in a substantively expansive manner, on the other*⁸, the next two Orthodox countries – Bulgaria and Romania – accessed to the Union. In their cases, the accession treaties were also aligned with the constitutions. But how are things arranged in my country? I will consider only the case of Bulgaria.

After the fall of the Communist regime in 1989, as in most former socialist states, we were also witnessing an intensive come-back to Christian religious values, institutions, and traditions. But as the Bulgarian Orthodox Church was going out of the decades of totalitarianism with a heavy burden of accusations of collaborationism with the authorities and for more than a decade was struggling to overcome its own schism⁹, for long it was not successful in taking the lead of these processes. Thus, the re-Christianization occurred mainly at the level of everyday life and was often a form of expressing a political (equal to anti-Communist) stand. Even the leaders of the Socialist Party were quick to re-orientate and began to show at the temples during major church festivals in an attempt at re-integrating themselves within the currently adopted forms of socialization. All this happened at the background of the rapid intrusion of all kinds of previously unknown for the ordinary believers Christian (but non-Orthodox) and non-Christian preachers who aggressively and successfully disseminated their teachings thus giving ground to the talk about the religious diversity not ever seen in the

⁶ Е. Продрому, Православното християнство и плурализъмът [В:] И. Мерджанова (съст.), *Религия и политика на Балканите*, С., ДЕМОС, 2004, с. 191–228; с. 199. [Е.Н. Продрому, Orthodox Christianity and Pluralism: Moving Beyond Ambivalence? [In:] *Religion and Politics in the Balkans*, I. Мерджанова (ed.), DEMOS Foundation, 2004, pp. 191–228] I wish to express my gratitude to the publishers who granted me the chance to use the English original.

⁷ see summarized results from the discussion in: Е. Продрому, *Some Notes on Religion, State, and Democracy: The Unexceptional, Yet Instructive, Case of Greece*, January 23, 2002 – <http://www.bu.edu/cura/programs/working%20papers/Prodromou%20lecture.htm>

⁸ Е. Продрому, *Православното християнство и плурализъмът*, с. 191–228; с. 194. [Е.Н. Продрому, *Orthodox Christianity and Pluralism: Moving Beyond Ambivalence?*, p. 194].

⁹ The schism within the Bulgarian Orthodox Church began in 1992 with the dispute on the legitimacy of the election of Patriarch Maxim and the accusation of collaborationism with the totalitarian regime laid against him. The establishment of an alternative Synod led to a severe conflict on all levels in the Church, and also to disorientation and religious scepticism among the laity. The schism formally ended up with the decisions of the All-Orthodox Council of all East Orthodox patriarchs held in Sofia in 1998 but the conflict endured. The adoption of the new Law on Confessions in 2002 did not solve the problems because of ambiguous formulations. For details cf. http://www.pravoslavieto.com/docs/razkol_chronology.htm#71 (used on 25 September 2007).

Bulgarian setting till those days. Naturally, the traditional massive presence of Islam also underwent a peculiar development which I will discuss in more detail.

First and foremost, it is necessary to note that Islam has been present in the religious mosaic at the Balkans since the end of the fourteenth century and, what's more, in a quite specific form. As far back as the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, there are data for a significant „coupling” among the everyday, popularized confessional forms of Christianity and Islam. The lacking conditions for controlling the „purity of faith” on the part of the subordinated Christian church led to a large-scale decline of clergy literacy at all levels and made impossible the administration of a strict norm in respect to the dogma and ritual practices. Thus folklorized Christianity at the Balkans entered into various, in respect to forms and results, interactions with similarly „leveled down”, folklorized Islam (often represented by semi-Orthodox Dervish and Sufi orders with quite a significant presence of Shiitic elements allowing of cults that in their forms and meaning bordered upon Christian ones¹⁰). The resulting „alloy” of folkloric Christianity and folkloric Islam presents one of the explanations both for the success of the century-long „creeping islamization” at the Balkans and for the relatively peaceful co-existence of the two otherwise confronting religions in the region. Only the radicalization of religious preaches both on the part of the Orthodox Church and the Islam, used most frequently as an outer cover for genuinely political purposes, will lead – in present days, regrettably – to a real religious confrontation. (Ethnoreligious conflicts in former Yugoslavia are a dismal example of that.)

In the years following 1989, the attitude toward Muslims in Bulgaria is bearing the sign of the depressing memory of the so-called „renaissance process” – the attempt at forcefully renaming Bulgarian citizens of Islamic confession initiated at several time points from 1970s to 1990s and terminated dramatically with a large-scale emigration of approximately one million Bulgarian citizens of Turkish descent during the summer of 1989. Experiencing probably a somewhat collective sense of guilt before their Muslim countrymen and facing the requirement to prove their belonging to modern democratic Europeans, politicians allowed of the establishment of the so-called Movement for Rights and Liberties – a political party of ethnic and religious background that since the first free democratic elections in Bulgaria, in 1990, is always presented in the Bulgarian Parliament and is acting as a protector of the confessional rights of Bulgarian Muslims. MRL possesses serious political impact and, as a coalition partner, is playing a key role in the two most recent Bulgarian cabinets. Along with political representation, **Islamic religious preaching of a new type** made itself evident. Replacing the everyday Islam that has been for so long traditional for the Balkans, a rather more radical modification of this teaching began to spread out. Often this is realized with the

¹⁰ cf. details on the specificity of Islamic presence at the Balkans in: Н. Граматикова, *Ислямски неортодоксални течения в българските земи* [В:] Р. Градева (изд.), *История на мюсюлманската култура по българските земи*. (= *Съдбата на мюсюлманските общности на Балканите*, т. 7) С., 2001, с. 192–285. [N. Gramatikova, *Islamic non-orthodox trends in Bulgarian lands (Based on written sources and Fieldwork)* [In:] *History of Muslim Culture in Bulgarian Lands*, R. Gradeva (ed.) (= *The Fate of Muslim communities in the Balkans*, Vol. 7), Sofia 2001, p. 192–285.] as well as in: Р. Градева, С. Иванова (съст. и ред.) *Мюсюлманската култура по българските земи*. (= *Съдбата на мюсюлманските общности на Балканите*, т. 2) С., 1998 [*Muslim Culture on Bulgarian lands*, R. Gradeva, S. Ivanova (ed.), (= *The Fate of Muslim communities in the Balkans*, Vol. 2), Sofia 1998.]

financial support of certain Arab countries sponsoring the construction of a multitude of mosques¹¹ and the establishment of schools for young Islamic theologians in remote Bulgarian regions where these schools often function without regulation and control on the part of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. The graduates from these schools are granted the option of a free-of-charge extension of their education at higher theological schools in the Arab World from where they come back to initiate their activity as imams in the Rhodopes or Northeast Bulgaria, the regions with the most compact Muslim population in the country. It is quite interesting that there they often clash with their adult fellow Muslims while accusing them of insufficiently strict adherence to the norms and canons required from the faithful. A specific generation gap is on the way, and the tendency there is not toward religious tolerance such as it is expected from „secularized Europeans with democratic thinking” but rather gravitating to religious fundamentalism that, for the time being, fortunately remains within the Muslim community and does not develop into aggressive acts upon „infidels” outside this community – at least at an official level.

As for the Orthodox Church, it spends too much energy in mastering its own intrinsic conflicts and is practically a passive observer of what is going on in the society – the altered character of Islamic religious preaching, the dissemination of non-Orthodox and non-Christian teachings. But is this passivity a sign of the secular attitude of the Church in respect to the State that is so much desired in Europe?

The Bulgarian constitution adopted in 1991¹² states that (Art. 13, 3) „Eastern Orthodox Christianity is considered the traditional religion in the Republic of Bulgaria” thus preserving a privileged position for Orthodoxy and relieving the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of the requirement to register according to the stipulations of the Law of Religions. This overemphasis on Orthodoxy does not correspond to the principles of democracy and pluralism adopted by the European Union. Similarly to the Greek case two decades ago, this provokes reactions on the part of the Council of Europe as well as of various human rights organizations.

The new Denominations Act adopted on 20 December 2002 intended to solve the problem¹³. It really made a step forward in the religious sphere. At the same time, its Art. 10 did not bring reconciliation in the religious sphere. It grants *ex lege* recognition to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, while prescribing court registration to the other religious denominations. According to Art. 10,

(1) The traditional denomination in the Republic of Bulgaria is Eastern Orthodoxy. It has a historical role for the Bulgarian State and is of actual importance for the state life. Its voice and representative is the autocephalous Bulgarian Orthodox Church that under the name ‘Patriarchate’ is the [legitimate] successor of the Bulgarian Exarchate and is a member of the United, Holy, Ecumenical and Apostolic Church. It is governed by the Holy Synod and represented by the Bulgarian Patriarch, who also is the Metropolitan of Sofia;

¹¹ Also in regions inhabited predominantly by Alevites who, in general, do not perform their religious ceremonies in mosques.

¹² Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (Official Gazette of the Republic of Bulgaria, No. 56/1991) <http://www.hri.ca.partners/forob/e/INSTRUMENTS/europe/bulgaria.htm>

¹³ Law of Religions (Official Gazette of the Republic of Bulgaria, No. 120/2002) <http://dev.eurac.edu:8085/mugs2/do/blob.html?type=html&serial=1042646751401> An English translation of the Denominations Act of 2002 is available in: www.religionandpolicy.org/show?p+1.1.292

(2) The Bulgarian Orthodox Church is a judicial entity. Its structure and government are established by its statutes;

(3) Clauses 1 and 2 shall not serve as a ground for offering privileges or any advantages by a law.

Despite its objection by the Council of Europe and various human rights organizations¹⁴, the mentioned article had the support of most Bulgarian statesmen. They also referred to the interpretation given by the Constitutional Court on February 18, 1998 that „the traditional nature of Eastern Orthodoxy expresses its cultural and historical role for the Bulgarian state, as well as its present significance for the state life and especially by its impact on the system of official holidays¹⁵.” The defenders of the *ex lege* recognition, however, have omitted the different meaning that the new bill gives to the mentioned constitutional text. It is no more Eastern Orthodoxy that is defined as „traditional religion” in accordance with the 1991 Constitution, but the Orthodox Church, i.e. a particular religious institution¹⁶.

In the comfortable situation of being the only privileged religious institution in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church shows still more astonishing passivity regarding its proper involvement with believers and society. Onlookers might take that as a „correct” and „European adequate” secular behaviour but, in practice, Orthodox flock undoubtedly would prefer having a church expressing a more unambiguous attitude both on dogmatic and on confessional or charitable aspects of Orthodoxy. Elementary catechization is acutely lacking, and most Bulgarians declaring their belonging to the Orthodox confession have quite a vague or no idea of the religious doctrine essentials as well as of the required behaviour of an Orthodox believer and of the canonical forms of the cult. In a word, Orthodoxy in Bulgaria is existing in the form of semi-paganism, semi-folklore, semi-canonically liturgy – all this in spite of the fact that 82.6%¹⁷ of the Bulgarians state with conviction their Orthodox confession and declare their adherence to Eastern Orthodoxy because of its undisputable historical contributions for the differentiation and preservation of the ethos. I would say that Bulgaria is the last place in the world where the emergence of Orthodoxic fundamentalism could be expected (at the moment, unfortunately, there is no time to consider the very interesting features of the Russian, Greek, and Serbian models of Orthodoxy).

Within this setting, it is still more surprising that in the course of the last several months officials of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church demonstrated extreme religious intolerance (I wonder why such a behaviour should not be termed „fundamentalism”) both in the estimate for the behaviour of their own flock and in respect to non-Orthodox Christians.

¹⁴ See the PACE Resolution 1390 (2004) available in: <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/AdoptedText/TA04/ERES1390.htm>.

¹⁵ Prof. Nenovski, *Our Church Is 'Registered' by the Constitution*, *Trud* [newspaper „Labor”] from December 23, 2002, p. 26.

¹⁶ For more details on the subject see S. Devetak, L. Kalčina and M.F. Polzer, *Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in South-Eastern Europe*. Collection of articles, selected relevant legal texts and other sources, Ljubljana–Maribor–Vienna 2004, as well as И. Мерджанова (съст.), *Религия и политика на Балканите*. С., 2004. [Religion and Politics in the Balkans, I. Merdjanova (ed.), DEMOS Foundation, 2004].

¹⁷ cf. Appendix – data of the National Statistical Institute for the confessional structure of the population in Bulgaria according to the 2001 census. <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Census.htm>, used on 25 September 2007.

On 7 March this year, Bulgarian media announced the unprecedented decision of a priest from the town of Sliven who excommunicated a female gynecologist because of the abortions she had performed. Purposeful abortions are, of course, prohibited according to the canons of the Orthodox Church; as far back as the end of the nineteenth century, all kinds of medicine-women and healers who performed abortions with the aids of traditional medicine have been sanctioned for that. But till present, the Church has never entered into polemics on abortions with the official modern medicine. This subject is a (tolerant and secular) taboo in modern Bulgarian history, and in the second half of the twentieth century Bulgarian healthcare had much greater achievements in this field than most of the other „secularized” European countries. Violating the taboo, the Church for the first time – and, moreover, inappropriately – tried to actively play the role that till present it had abandoned in all circumstances – that of a universal sanction of the everyday behaviour of the believers.

Still more alarming are the rude acts of intolerance demonstrated at an official level toward Catholicism and its supreme representative, the Pope. In the first half of February, the newly ordained metropolitan of Plovdiv – Nickolay – gave a series of interviews in the media in which he qualified the Pope as an heretic and thus explained the fact that during the visit of the Pope John-Paul the Second in Bulgaria, in 2002, he (Nickolay) had withheld the Pope from entering into the temple of Saint Alexander of Neva because, according to him, this would have required a new consecration of the temple thus desecrated.

Of course, it is easy to say that here it refers to an unweighed expression of personal opinion although the significance of its public announcement by a clergyman taking an important administrative position within the Church could hardly be denied. Moreover, the Catholic Church with its traditional presence within Bulgarian territories¹⁸ is maybe the least aggressive and is undoubtedly the most tolerant of the non-Orthodox churches disseminating their teachings in Bulgaria at present. It has directed its efforts almost entirely in organizing charitable activities thus (paradoxically), at least to a certain extent, filling in the social vacuum due to the passivity of the Orthodox Church. If the long-awaited „awakening” of the Orthodoxy and its taking an active stand on the actual topics of the time will be manifested in such unacceptable acts, its former lethargic passivity may appear preferable to someone, for this passivity, looked from the outside, successfully camouflages the calm, distant, and secularized religious institution expected by the EU. Furthermore, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in no way stands against the really dangerous for the society forms of religious propaganda in the country but is transferring to the State the entire care and responsibility to do so...

To summarize: at this stage, the successful eurointegration of Orthodox countries requires from both sides to diminish the differences between Orthodoxy and the tradi-

¹⁸ cf. a review of the opinions and reference texts in: В. Г ю з е л е в, *Кратък очерк върху отношенията между Римската църква и Българското царство през Средновековието (IX–XIV в.)* [В:] *Католическата духовна култура и нейното присъствие и влияние в България*, С., 1992, с. 71–84 [V. G y u z e l e v, *An Outline of the Relations between Roman Catholic Church and the Bulgarian Kingdom during the Middle Ages (IX–XIV c.)* [In:] *Catholic Ecclesiastical Culture and Its Presence and Influence in Bulgaria*, Sofia 1992, pp. 71–84] as well as recently in: С. Е л д ъ р о в, *Католиците в България 1878–1989*, С., 2002 [S. E l d a r o v, *Catholics in Bulgaria 1878–1989*, Sofia 2002].

tional confessional forms for Christian Europe (Catholicism and Protestantism). This is manifested as a „denial of conflict”, i.e. tolerance is replaced by diligently „beating around the bush” and keeping silence about possible controversies, all this leading in the long run to the disregard of Otherness – maybe nurtured by the illusion that unnamed realities are less real. And all this is happening in the context of increasing global tension between Christianity and the Islam. The search for „political” solutions is once again made with painstaking avoidance of direct religious formulations of the problems and reduction of the variance to „cultural” and „ethnic”, but – for God’s sake! – not religious differences, because religion has been led away of political institutions as far back as the end of the eighteenth century.

I believe it is high time to admit that what is acutely lacking in Europe of today is precisely the dialogue between religions. An enduring and good-willed dialogue, without aggressive inculcation of opinions but also without disregarding the variance; a dialogue in which every side would have the chance to formulate its proper position in respect to the believers and society just here and now, and namely in the perspective of the desecularization of the world that we are presently witnessing. If Peter Berger is right saying that modernity brings about not secularization but pluralism¹⁹, then the attempt of the EU to force Orthodox World into the niche of (silent) secularism is doomed. Our chance is in learning to speak about our religious differences and in preparing to live with these.

APPENDIX

Population according to confessions and years of census

Confession	1910	1920	1926	1934	1946	1992	2001
	Count						
Population Total	4 337 513	4 846 971	5 478 741	6 077 939	7 029 349	8 487 317	7 928 901
Eastern Orthodoxy	3 643 918	4 062 097	4 569 074	5 128 890	5 967 992	7 274 592	6 552 751
Islam	602 078	690 734	789 296	821 298	938 418	1 110 295	966 978
Catholicism	32 150	34 072	40 347	45 704	–	53 074	43 811
Protestantism	6 335	5 617	6 735	8 371	–	21 878	42 308
Judaism	40 067	43 232	46 431	48 398	43 335	2 580	653
Armenian-Gregorian	12 259	10 848	25 402	23 476	–	9 672	6 500
Other	706	371	1 456	1 802	79 604	15 226	7 784
No affiliation	–	–	–	–	–	–	308 116
	Structure – %						
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Eastern Orthodoxy	84.0	83.8	83.4	84.4	84.9	85.7	82.6
Islam	13.9	14.3	14.4	13.5	13.3	13.1	12.2

¹⁹ П. Б ъ р г ъ р, *Десекуларизацията на света*, С., 2004, КХ. [Cf. also the English original: *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, P.L. B e r g e r (ed.), Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, s. 135].

Confession	1910	1920	1926	1934	1946	1992	2001
Catholicism	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	–	0.6	0.6
Protestantism	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	–	0.3	0.5
Judaism	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.0
Armenian- -Gregorian	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.4	–	0.1	0.1
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.2	0.1
No affiliation	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.9

FUNDAMENTALISMS AND EUROINTEGRATION: THE CASE OF BULGARIA

Summary

Object of the study are contemporary manifestations of religious fundamentalism at the Balkans under conditions of concurrent eurointegration (the case of Bulgaria is considered in particular). Followed are the major synchronous and diachronous factors determining the specificity of fundamentalist phenomena in the context of the Balkans, Orthodoxy, and Europe. The conclusion is that both historical merits and current regulatory and legal realities suggest rather a peaceful picture of interconfessional communication. An attempt is made at getting behind the curtain of official political discourse where alarming trends toward religious intolerance are found both on the part of Islam and of the Orthodox Church.

Secularism which is always inherent in the European talking on religious phenomena is conceived as inadequate and futureless in the interpretation of realities stageably existing in the „presecularity” of premodern time – like the Orthodoxy and Islam at the Balkans.