

Religious tolerance, modernization, civilization and problems of security.

By Xhavit Shala

For us Albanians,¹ religious tolerance is considered a national treasure with century old foundations. But, what is religious tolerance in general and how has it evolved with the two main religions, Christianity and Islam?

How is tolerance related to the relations of the state with religions, with modernization itself and with the civilization of a people?

What place do Albanians hold in this civilization and what place will this factor play in Albania's integration?

What role does tolerance play in security in a global level, regional and national?

1.- Tolerance. Its meaning

The word tolerance, although widely used today in the Albanian language, it is a borrowed one. **It comes from the Latin word: "Tolere" which means to carry, to endure, endurance.**

1.a -Tolerance, the individual and the society, freedoms and rights.

Tolerance must be a quality of every individual and a necessary trait of a society. It is related to issues of freedom and the rights of a person, with the relations between them and with the state itself. Without tolerance there is no religious freedom, freedom of conscience and thought.²

1.b -Tolerance does not mean indifference

Tolerance is a civic virtue, which consists in respect for the individual freedom, and the their manner of life. It's different from indifference. While the tolerant person does not give up his judgment on the other people's opinions and does not take a passive stand with regard to disagreements, the indifferent person behaves

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² - Dr. Tomas Klestil, President of the Federal Republic of Austria.

in a manner that does not seek reasoning and that often goes along with an attitude of skepticism to moral values.³

The issue of tolerance is a very broad one; it is connected with a complex relation existing between individuals, society and state.

The object of this study will be religious tolerance.

2.-Religious tolerance

Religious tolerance means to abstain from oppressing and discriminating individuals whose religious faith differs from yours, and to respect the rights of the others to hold another religious faith from yours.

By the way the people consider other faiths with regard to theirs, we can distinguish three currents:

2.a-The current of religious exclusivism

The people that belong to this group consider their faith as the only true one. According to them other religions are not true. They stand as rivals to their religion and are forms of Satanism.

The representatives of religious exclusivism find their inspiration on wrong interpretations of passages of holy books. Such passages are numerous in all the holy books.

2.a-1 The Bible and religious exclusivism

On the holy books of the Christian religion one apart from messages of love and peace foresees repressive measures against those who do not embrace the faith:

In the Bible, John 14/6 states:

“... Jesus answered: I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the father except through me ...”

“He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters” (Mateu, 12:30)

“...Whoever welcomes me, welcomes him who send me...” (Luka, 9:48) or

³ - Benoit Mercier, Andre Duhamel- “La Democratie ses fondements, son histoire et ses pratiques” published in Tirana, in 2003 with the title: Democracy, foundations, history and its applications” pg. 107.

“ He who rejects you, rejects me, and he who rejects me, rejects him who send me ...”
(Luke10:16)

“... And obliged them to enter...” (Luke14:15-24)

Out of these texts from the New Testament it results that the Church and the religious authorities have the right to forces other into Christianity. According to these texts, the Church had the right to oppress and terrorize the human spirit,. Those that resisted the church were declared heretics and were burned in the stake.

They used fire, because the Church despised the sword, although the sword has not legged much behind in the crimes committed during the history of the church.⁴

Such types of behavior and actions are typical of the medieval Church

2.a-2 The Koran and religious exclusivism

In the Islam's holy book besides the message of love and peace one finds numerous messages that inspire the contrary.

The Koran divides the people into groups: into Muslims and Non-Muslims. The Muslims form the Islamic community and the territory where they live is “Dar al –Islam” (abode of Islam) an area under the operation of Islamic law.

The Non-Muslims are inhabitants of "Dar –al – Harb" (place of war). They must obey Islamic law and in order for them to preserve their religious faith and protect their properties, they must pay taxes.

2.a-3 Religious exclusivism exist also within the same religion.

The exclusivist spirit exists also within a religion in order to reflect the veracity of religious sect compared to another.

If supporters of religious exclusivism are left with a free field, they can incite hatred of other faiths and religious communities' members.

2.a-4 Religious exclusivism leads to civil war, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Religious exclusivism is the main cause behind civil wars, crimes against humanity and genocide. This has happened in the Middle Ages with the crusades and also in our times, such as the conflict in Bosnia.

2.a-5 The consequences of religious exclusivism when turned into a state policy.

⁴ - Nexhat Ibrahimji- Islam in Illyrian –Albanian Lands during centuries- Logos –shkup-1998, Part 1, pg10

It is even more dangerous when religious exclusivism becomes a ruling ideology and a state policy. In this case we are dealing with theocratic states, having existed mainly in the Middle ages, but which have began to re-appear again, mainly in the Middle East.

The transformation of religious exclusivism into state policy is associated with political consequences.

a-On the internal policy

Such states, by not permitting the existence of other religious faiths, carry out a systematic violation of the freedoms and rights of men. They become shelters for militants of the same religion from other countries.

b-On the foreign policy

These states become real concerns for the countries in the region, inciting and exporting religious based terrorism, thus undermining regional security. "Afghanistan" is a fitting illustration to this.

2.a-6 The Afghan case. Problems for internal, regional and global security.

The victory of the Taleban in Afghanistan is a typical case of Islamic religious exclusivism becoming a state policy, but even within Islam itself exclusivity belongs to the Sunni sect.

2.a-6.a The Religious exclusivism of Taleban and Internal security

The religious exclusivism of the Taleban had consequences in the internal security of Afghanistan. After they invaded Kabul, in October 1996, they immediately enforced the Holy Law, the Sharia law, and considerably curtailed the rights of the people, especially of women.

But what were the Talebans?

The word Taleban comes from Arabic language Talab- student, student of religion. They were poor people, that came mainly from the villages. Their parents did not have financial means to give their children an education and that's why they send their children to Madrasas, religious schools, where the education, food and accommodation were free.

Under the direction of their teacher, Imam Mullah Omar, they rose against the corrupt muxhahedins that were in the power.

The Islam of the Taleban is a very provincial and narrow version closely related to the clan nature of the Afghan society. It was their priority to enforce their version of Islam

over the Afgan society. This was the top, middle and last agenda that the Taleban had. Contrary to Iran, the Taleban policy recognizes no moderators. In Afghanistan the concept of democracy is not known.⁵

Immediately following the victory of the Taleban, we notice the creation of training camps for Islamic militants coming from different countries, militants that had been brainwashed to fight and sacrifice themselves in the name of Allah.

The exponents of Islamic terrorist organizations such as “Egyptian Islamic Jihad,” “Xhamaja Islamija,” some Islamic groups from Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as Arab Muxhahedin following the war against the Russians, found in Afghanistan a new residence. They settled there based on an agreement with the Talebans that opened their territories for such elements.

The campaign to bring the extremists and terrorists in Afghanistan, was lead by the Jihadi Press Committee centered in London, that published a series of 12 pamphlets of the cycle "Meet the Taleban"

In 1997, Ajman Zavahiri and his brother Muhamedin arrive in Afghanistan. During that time Zavahiri was emir of the Xhahadi organization, while his brother Muhamedin was the Head of its Military wing. Muhamed Zavahiri was also the principal manager of the Relief Islamic Organization in Tirana. Its central offices were in Xhedah.⁶

This period marks the second campaign of religious militants arriving in Afghanistan. The first campaign was immediately following the Russian invasion of Afghanistan.

According to the French analyst Alexander del Valle, on the first campaign the Muxhahidins won the support of US in their war against the Russian occupation.

William Casy, the Head of CIA, and Princ Turki Bin Faysal, head of Saudi secret services, not wanting for Washington and Riadi to closely involve themselves with the operations in Afghanistan, commissioned the Pakistani Secret Service (Inter Service Intelligence) to recruit Islamic fighters and to distribute financial support among the Muxhahidins. They entrusted a part of their work to the Arab Muslim Brothers and the Pakistani Islamic Party.

On March 1985, President Regan decided to go to the aid of the Muxhahidins that were by now baptized by the media with the name “Freedom fighters”. He signed the directive

⁵ - Roxher Hard- correspondent t BBC –20.09.2001

⁶ - Excerpts from the testimony of Shavki Atija, arrested in Albania on June 25, 1998 and deported in Egypt some days later. He was a senior member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad cell in Albania. - Albania, December 2, 2001, pg. 6.

of the National Security Council – NSDD- no.166 that authorized the dispatchment of 1000 anti-aircraft “Stinger” rockets.⁷

The American support of that time aimed at and was able to draw the Russians into the Afghan trap that caused them to suffer many losses and a difficult exit after about ten years.

During that time the militants from all Muslim countries were encouraged to go and wage Jihad against the Russian invaders in Afghanistan and they trained together with Afghan Muxhahidins. If by the early 1980's, in Afghanistan there were fighting 3000 Arabs, some years later their number reached 16 000, with Hakmatyar⁸ and Bin Laden⁹.

With the end of the war against the Russians, the training camps in the tribal Afghan areas not only were not closed but they continued to host and train militants for other war fronts, such as Bosnja, Kashmir, etc.

Out of the “Afghan Schools” came a good part of the figures that were later to become leaders of terrorist networks, such as Osama Bin Laden, and Ajman Zawahiri, responsible for the terrorist act of September 11, in America, and Muhamed Abdel Rrahmane, who with his group carried out the massacre of Luksor, against the western tourists in Egypt.

2.a-6.b-Religious exclusivism and regional security

The rise into power of the Taleban in Afghanistan, immediately brought disorder in the countries of region.

Russia was the first to grow worried by the rise of religious extremism in the region because it could spread to Tajikistan, a former soviet republic with a Muslim population.

The Talebans became a factor of destabilization for Central and South Asia. In this situation, Russia and the States of Central Asia, hold a meeting in order to come up with a strategy to control the borders with Afghanistan.

The presence of Taleban in Kabul increased the security concerns for Kirgistan, Taxhikistan, and Uzbekistan. They feared the exportation to their countries of the religious extremism that would bring about the destabilization of their fragile governments.

⁷ - Alexander del Valle – Genesis and the actuality of pro-Islamic strategy of USA

⁸ - Gulbidin Hakmatyar, Chairman of the Hezh- Islam Party in Pakistan, known internationally as a narco-trafficker.

⁹ - Alexander del Valle – Genesis and the actuality of pro-Islamic strategy of USA, cited source

Although itself an Islamic State, Iran created reservists unit and followed from very close the actions of the Taleban, because it feared the religious exclusivism of the Sunni Pashtun Taleban.

2.a-6.c The religious exclusivism of the Taleban, September 11, and global security.

The consequences on security of the Taleban coming into power in Afghanistan were soon to be felt globally.

Muxhahedins, based on the agreement with the Taleban, were invited to come to Afghanistan but they were denied the right to form separate groups. Everything had to be organized under the umbrella of Bin Laden. Individuals and families that moved to Afghanistan were to take a 100\$ wage from Bin Laden.

In March 1998, the Taleban announced the creation of a new group, the Front for the Liberation of the Holy Sites with Bin Laden as their chief.¹⁰

This organization was to be joined by a good part of the terrorist organizations. The goal of the group was the liberation of the Islam's holy sites and the targeting of Jewish and American interests all over the world.

In order to achieve this final goal those that arrived to Afghanistan received military training in camps. The merging of Islamic terrorist groups under the leadership of Bin Laden would solve a very important problem for them, the financial support, which was taken over by Bin Laden.

Bin Laden also would benefit much from these groups coming under his tutelage. In this way, his attacks would easily achieve the objective in any country and that would make the Front very effective.¹¹

This new organization of Islamic terrorist Groups, under the leadership of Bin Laden, named "Al Kaeda", had objectives that once targeted would threaten the security of the world.

Afghanistan became the headquarters for the terrorist organization "Al Kaida" and its leader Bin Laden. From here, he planned and ordered a series of terrorist acts that shocked the world.

¹⁰ - Excerpt from the affidavit of the accused Ahmet Ibrahim Al Nagar given before the Egyptian justice. He was arrested in 25.6.1998, in the Institution "El Hagri" and extradited to Egypt. – Albania, cited source, date 2 December 2001, pg 5.

¹¹ - Excerpt from the affidavit of the accused Ahmet Ibrahim Al Nagar given before the Egyptian justice. He was arrested in 25.6.1998, in the Institution "El Hagri" and extradited to Egypt. – Albania, cited source, date 2 December 2001, pg 5, cited source.

It was 8:45 o'clock, New York local time, September 11, 2001, when the first plane hit the Twin Towers. It was proved that this attack was carried out by the "Al Qaeda" organization, with its center in Afghanistan.

Once the momentary shock had been absorbed, the international reaction was immediate and this was considered as a war situation. This attack showed that terrorism was a real threat to global security, especially when supported by states, be that even a single one.

"We are in a war, the terrorist declared war to America and we will respond to it" – President Bush said in a message addressed to the American Nation a few days after the terrorist act.¹²

The terrorist attacks in USA are tragedies of "an epoch making dimension" – Tony Blair said in an urgent session of the British Parliament.¹³

The terrorist organization of Al Qaeda, by attacking the US, attacked the leader State of NATO. Lord Robertson, General Secretary of this collective security organization declared that the attack on one country was an attack on all of them.¹⁴ For the first time after 52 years, NATO's Steering Council, turned to Article 5 of the Alliance's Treaty, an article that commits all members of the alliance to come to the aid of the country that has come under attack.

The United Nation "licensed" the USA to react militarily against those that had carried out the attack. Kofi Annan himself said "it is the duty of 189 member countries of the UN to assure that the war against terrorism be successful"¹⁵

Therefore, the "Afghanistan" case having become a threat to global security required a global solution.

2.b- The religious current of inclusiveness

Just like the exclusivist, the inclusivists consider their religion as the only true faith. Unlike the exclusivists, they do not consider other religions as false. To them these religions are not complete and partially developed.

2.c-The current of religious pluralism

¹² - George Bush, President of USA, -Message to the Nation , September 16.2001

¹³ - Albanian Service of the BBC - 14.9.2001

¹⁴ - BBC, cited source, -dt. 13.9.2001

¹⁵ - BBC, cited source, -dt.3.10.2003

According to the representatives of this current, religions are all legitimate, valuable and true when seen from within their special culture. All religious traditions are worthy of respect. This is also referred to as religious diversity.

Exclusivism and religious pluralism are two opposing currents in the way they see the religious world and their religion.

3.- Historical evolution of religious tolerance and its relation with the state.

From the political aspect, the religious tolerance represents the public policy that guarantees the freedom and equality of the faith in relation with state. This is linked also with some other concepts, which have to do with the relation of religion with the state and politics, such as laicity, secularity, etc.

But how has the concept of religious tolerance evolved historically within the two main religions, Christianity and Islam and what has their relation with the state been?

3.1-Christianity and the evolution of its relations with the state.

a. The Catholic Church- the real power in the Middle ages

The war between the Church and the Roman Empire was very brutal. The Pope Innocenti III, elected in 1197, tried to play a role in the appointment of the emperor of the Roman Empire.

During the XIII Century, Frederic II, Emperor of the Roman Empire, was in a continuous conflict with the Papacy. He was excommunicated in 1227 for having shown weakness in commanding a crusade, but was reinstated one year later when he gloriously invaded Jerusalem. But his problems with the Church continued and he was excommunicated twice in the course of 20 years.¹⁶

“The Pope, the Church dispersed the crowns to the Kings, the Emperors would be crowned and consecrated by the Pope. The Pope was the Emperor of Emperors...”¹⁷

As a result of continuous contradiction with the Emperors in Roma, from 1309 until 1377, popes were compelled to live in Avignon, in the Southern part of France, under the possession of the French monarchs.

In medieval times the kings, on the other side, have tried to merge their political power with spiritual power. This, for the only reason that they had only political power, where as the spiritual power belonged to Roma.

¹⁶ - Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002

¹⁷ - Mehdi Frasher- The ancient History of Albania and the Albanians . Pg 29.

At around this time, Martin Luther went out openly criticizing the church. He protested against the church by saying “ The pope has not the right to call himself infallible, without sins, and that everyone should be free to read his gospel, and to interpret it himself. The followers of Luter were called **Protestants**.

After this, Europe was engulfed in bitter a war between Catholic Christians and the Protestants, in a climate filled with religious intolerance. In spite of this, Europe continues to develop. The XVIII century produced many distinguished personalities that with their works made a great contribution to religion, government, and other areas of human activity.

b.-The Orthodox Church; a symbioses with the State

During the Byzantine period, the Eastern Church gained it full stature. After the century-old conflicts, on July 16, 1054, the Church split for good from Rome. Now, the church was headed by the Patrick of Byzantium.

Since its conception, this Church was closely linked with the state. The Basileus (the head of Byzantine State) considered it his duty to interfere on issues of Church discipline. Constantine himself, the founder of the Eastern Empire, was the one that gathered the Council of Nice in 325 and laid the dogmatic and canonic foundations of the Orthodox Church.

The Patric interfered on issues of Emperor's inheritance as well as on secular justice issues, whereas his subordinates, the archbishops and bishops, saw themselves as heads of cities.

We notice nothing similar to the western dualism Pope-Emperor that produced the power conflicts. The Orthodox Church had taken over itself a part of the attributes of the Byzantine State. There existed a strong symbiosis between The Orthodox State and the Orthodox Church.¹⁸

3.2-Factors that contributed to the weakening of the Church's power.

There were a series of factors that contributed to the weakening of the Church's power, some of which were:

1.-The penetration of Islam, first up to Spain and later in the Balkans and the failure of the Church's crusaders to liberate Palestine from the Muslims mark the beginning of the waning of its power.

¹⁸ - Georges Castellan- History of the Balkans – pg 37

2.-The tendencies of the Papacy to exercise political power alongside spiritual power. This was first noticed in the tendency that Pope Innocent III, wanting to play a role in the appointment of the new Emperor of the Roman Empire after the death of the Emperor Henri IV.¹⁹

3.-The great division within the ranks of the Catholic Church and the tendencies of decentralization of spiritual power contributed to the weakening of its power. The flight of the Papacy to Avignon, France during 1309-1377 led to a great division, or as it was called “ great Schism” of the Catholic Church that lasted from 1378 till 1417.

4.-The great scientific discoveries, contributed to the toppling of many of the Church's dogmas and as a result to the gradual weakening of its power. The discovery of America proved the fact that the land was round. Galileo also proved that the earth circled around the sun and was declared a heretic.

5.- The occupation of Constantinople by the Ottoman Invaders in 1453, led to the flight of a great intellectual force of ancient Greek philosophical schools to Western Europe. They contributed to the enrichment of the intellectual, philosophic and scientific environment, thus contributing to the weakening of the influence of church dogma and of its authority.

6.-The development of trade, the creation of city-state kingdoms with their own laws lead to the total loss of the politic authority of the Pope outside of the church. These States acted as fully independent and sovereign considering themselves only spiritually part of the community of the Christian kingdom.

7. The Birth of Protestantism – lead to the weakening of the power and of the Church's authority.

The proclamation in Wittenberg, in October 1517 by Martin Luther of his 85 famous theses, set the signal of the Reform, which was to lead to the second great splitting of the Tunic of Christ following the schism with the Eastern Church in 1504.²⁰

In all the European countries during the XVI century there spread a growing animosity towards the power of Rome and various Kingdoms began to create their own churches proclaiming their independence from the Holy See.

¹⁹ - Papacy was weakened and discredited because of its concentration on political control more than on spiritual problems, and because the Papacy fell more and more under the French Influence. Between 1309 and 1377, the Papacy was forced to move to Avignon in South of France that was under the possession of French lords. The return of the Papal court to Rome was quickly followed by the so-called “great schism” which extended from 1378 till 1417. During the major part of this period, three pretenders competed for the title of Pope. When the council of Constance created Papacy in 1417, with the lection of Martin V, the political authority of Pope, out of the church, had finished

²⁰ - Georges Castellan- History of Balkan – pg 107

The Birth of Nations, the use of national languages and the development of national culture lead to the weakening of church authority.

During the time of the absolute power of the church, Christians were known as Latin people and the Latin language was known as the language of the church but at the same time as the language of knowledge. The invention of the printing press and the blooming of cultures created out of a Latin people as recognized by the Church, different nationalities that now continued their development with their own languages and cultures. The progress of each nation contributed to the general progress of all of Europe.

The fall of the Holy Roman Empire and the weakening of the Papacy, the two major players of medieval politics, had prepared the climate for and made necessary political changes in Europe.

3.3- Some of the steps that led to and that defined the beginning of the political renaissance in Europe.

The beginning of political renaissance in Europe were defined by some important developments, like:

1.-The growing of the independence of the city – states.

The city –states exploited the opportunities created by the war between the Papacy and the Emperors to increase their power and independence. During the 14 century some of these cities included also major parts of the surrounding areas and they also expanded the implementation of their laws.²¹

2.-City state alliances as an aspect of the equality of political power

One of the modern aspects of the states of Italian Renaissance was their relation with each other. They acted more like independent and Sovran states than as members of the community of Christendom. In order to maintain diplomatic action and promote this new idea they invented the institute of resident ambassadors.

3.-The Consolidation of new monarchies in Europe, with new laws– a step toward the modern States.

During the second half of 15 century in France, England and Spain there were new rules and laws adopted. These rules were more successful than the rules of ancient monarchs. However, their Kingdoms marked the beginning of the evolution or development toward a modern state.

4.-Remodeling of the monarch's position

²¹ - Italian City-States gradually consolidated their powers and from the 15century, 5 states controlled the whole peninsula.

The monarch began to play more the role of an administrator, rather than that of the leader of aristocracy's constant wars. They began to develop the profession of byrocracy backed by the people of the law

5.-The Tendencies to put down the conflicts between Kingdoms and the desire for permanent peace.

These were important political steps that were giving to the kingdoms opportunities to mold themselves into modern states.²²

Intellectuals, humanists and utopians began searching for ways to improve the art of governing.²³

These developments would naturally accelerate the political reforms and the activity of medieval states as a function of their modernization.

The statesman and Italian writer Nicola Machiavelly gave a significant contribution. He is considered as on of the most important political thinkers of Renaissance.²⁴

The political philosophy “without morals” of the Machiavellian type has come in opposition with another political and philosophic current on democracy, that during the XX century in particular has also incorporated a Christian religious vesture. Many Christian Democratic political parties have leaned on this religious interpretation of democracy, parting ways with a series of concepts that we come across with in the secular political philosophy.²⁵

Here it seems lies the base of the appeal that Pope John Paul II addressed to the European law makers to make mention of the Christian roots in the first Constitution of the European Union.

²² - So, acted Henry VII of England in 1485. His marriage with Elisabeth of York after one year , noted the termination of the war between the Yorkers against the family of Henry of Lancaster.

²³ - During the Middle Ages the historians have used their moral structures to study the past. They described the events as part of an inevitable fate of the Christian world. Quite the opposite was the story with humanists, such as Leonardo Bruni,, who understood the progress of the world as a part of a political evolutions.

²⁴ - In his best work “Prince” Makiaveli examined thoroughly the art of leading and the way that a ruler can learn in order to keep the power. According Makiaveli the policy must be free from every kind of difficult situation, which could come from the necessity of respect of the moral. The objective of the policy and politicians is not to build a human society but to keep their power. In order to keep their power, the politicians are free to abandon their moral. They are free not to be transparent, to lie, to deceive, to promise and later not to keep the promises, and to make all these things in function of keeping their power. Only strong exercising of the power can make people leave in peace and respect the State.

²⁵ - Artan Fuga- “the Policy without moral”. published in “Koha Jone”, dt.2 August 2003, pg 12.

I would like to once again, - the Pope said, call on those that are drafting the future European Constitution to incorporate in it a reference to Europe's religious heritage, and the Christian one in particular.²⁶

Islamic Philosophical thought on democracy is also in opposition with Machiavellian political thought. Islamic concepts on property, liberty, human rights, and moral are a long distance away from Machiavellian philosophy.

In view of these developments in Europe, the old relation between the state and religion had been undermined and there was a need for a concept of the role of religion in politics and of the relation between the state and the Church.

3.4-The philosophers that reshaped the report between the State and the Church and that laid the foundations of religious tolerance.

In 1689, the Philosopher John Locke in his work "A Letter on Tolerance" declares and asks for a new type of agreement and report between the state and religion. According to him, all must be permitted and guaranteed the right of religious faith and of free discussion of all theological and philosophical subjects. Obedience can not be created by use of force. Salvation and moral truth can be achieved only through individual conviction and approval. Therefore, religious issues are personal issues and must be treated as activities of the private life, provided that they will not cause unlawful influences on others, and that they do not violate other people's rights.²⁷

In 1713, Pierre Bayle published: "Treaty on Universal Tolerance" and in 1763 Voltaire published "Treaty on Tolerance." Both authors elaborated further on the ideas of Locke.

3.5-From a philosophy to a Constitution.

While the philosophy of tolerance was born in Europe, it was the Americans that first put into practice the idea of the separation of the church and state. In 1786, under the initiative of Thomas Jefferson, the idea of the tolerance and the principle of the separation of the Church and the State were sanctioned in the Constitution of Virginia.

Beginning with 1777 and many times after that, Jefferson submitted to Virginia's Assembly the draft law that would sanction the freedom of religion. Its approval in

²⁶ - Published in the newspaper "Panorama" , dt 30 June 2003, pg 19.

²⁷ - Benoit Mercier, Andre Duhamel- "La Democratie ses fondements, son histoire et ses pratiques" published in Tirana , in 2003 with the title: Democracy, foundations , history and its applications" pg 74.

1786 strongly inspired the statesman not to favor or mention any particular religion in the American Constitution.²⁸

Europe in the XIX century as a result of momentous political, philosophical, scientific, and ecclesiastical developments had once and for good left behind the period of religious fanaticism of Christian Europe and had stepped into the irreversible road of modern developments.

“... The victory of the brain over the fanaticism, brought three things to Europe:

It brought:

- i. Development of nationalities and national languages.
- ii. The introduction of personal and political freedoms
- iii. The separation of the church from the government and the state.²⁹

4. Laicity and secularity– the foundations of a modern state.

In order to depict the momentous development that took place in Europe during XVIII-XIX centuries in the report of the Church with politics and the state, there have been used the terms Secularity and Laicity.

The word “Laic” in the Albanian language means: “not religious or not related to the church, not related to religion, that does not pertain to religion or the clergy”³⁰ **But laicity is used more to depict the process of separation between the church and the state.**

The word: "Secular" used in the Albanian language stand for "to separate from the care and influence of the Church, giving it a laic and stately character, make laic"³¹

This word is usually used to express the separation of politics from religion.

Often, secularity is considered the period in human history that man entered into the age of reason, development and progress and in this view secularity is identified with modernity.³²

²⁸ - Benoit Mercier, Andre Duhamel- Cited work , pg 75.

²⁹ - Mehdi Frasheri- cited work , pg 33

³⁰ - The Dictionary of Today's Albanian Language- Tirana 1980, pg 937

³¹ - The Dictionary of Today's Albanian Language – Cited work , pg 1823

³² - Nexhat Ibrahim- Religion and secularism in modern society – t “Dituria Islame” no.150

Secularity does not mean atheism. Atheism itself means:” the denial of the existence of any kind of god, the renouncing of any religious faith ...”³³

5.- Islam and the State

With the separation of politics from religion and of the Church from the State, the Christian Europe entered the way of modernization. But what happened with Islam during this period?

5.1 The introduction, rise and contraction of Islam

The founder of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, is thought to have been born in the year 570 in Mecca, and to have died in June 8, 632. ³⁴

His Prophetic teachings, encompassed by political, social and religious principles, form the bases of Islamic civilization and have had a broad influence in the history of the world.³⁵

The introduction of Islam in Arabia was followed by a swift spread of this religion in broad territories extending from the Caucasus in the North, to India in the East, and in Europe up to the borders with France.

The birth of Islam in Arabia is associated with three main achievements:

- ❑ The proclamation of the oneness of God and the spread of Islam.
- ❑ The Creation of a strong state
- ❑ The preservation of human knowledge.³⁶

5.2- Islam is a monotheist religion.

Islam had as a foundation the dogma that God is great and he is one and this was what Muhammad proclaimed. In order to spread this dogma to the whole world, Mohammed

³³ - The Dictionary of Today's Albanian Language – Cited work, pg 69.

³⁴ - He belonged to the clan of Hashimi, a poor but a respected branch of the prestigious tribe and with influence in Quraysh. His father died before he was born, and after the death of his mother when he was six years old, his uncle, Abu Talib, took over raising him. With his perceptive and thoughtful temperament, he expressed an acute moral sensitivity while still very young. Just like the other persons of his tribe he became a merchant and traveled often to Syria. It is possible that here he met and talked with with Christians. Later on, he began to manage the business of an older widow, called Khadija. She was very much impressed by the honesty and the ability of Muhamed. Khadija asked him to marry her, a request that he accepted when he was 25 years old.

³⁵ - Fazlu Rahman- Muhammad (prophet) – Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002-cited source

³⁶ Mehdi Frasheri- The ancient History of Albania and the Albanians. Cited work, Pg 41.

created and directed a strong state and for this purpose he directed the invasions to spread the faith.

In the year 630, Muhammad subdued Mecca by war, but he treated it with magnanimity declaring a general amnesty. The tribe's delegation arrived from all Arabia and very soon these tribes were converted into Islam. Muhammad, by now the most powerful leader in Arabia, consolidated the principles of Islam and built the foundations of the Islamic Empire. He ordered the destruction of idols in Kaaba, a traditional place of pilgrimage in Mecca, which became the holiest site in Islam. He granted Jews and Christian religious autonomy as "people of the book" whose appearance had taken place before him.

In his last visit in Mecca, in the time of pilgrimage, he delivered a sermon ³⁷ in which he spoke briefly for his reforms, **declared the brotherhood of all Muslims, and rejected any discrimination on the basis of race, class and color.**

His descendants for a period of 110 years spread this religion in nearly half of the then known world.

Muhammad died in the year 632, leaving behind no instruction on the how the Muslim community was to be governed. A group of Islamic leaders met in Medina, (a city in today's Saudi Arabia), then the capital of Muslim world. They elected Abu Bakr, father in law and a close relation of the Prophet to lead the community. Abu Bakr was bestowed the Caliphate Rasl Allah, (in Arabic: the heir of God's Messenger) hence comes the title Caliph (in Arabic = heir).³⁸

One of the longest lasting caliphates was that of the Emevit family (Umayyad), which lasted from 661 until 750. The Umayyads were descendants of aristocratic caravan

³⁷ - In this meeting Mohammed among the other things said: " People, listen some explanation, because I don't know if we will meet again in this place after this year ... the blood and the property between you is prohibited (haram) till the death, as if it is prohibited in this place and on this day... killing and the shedding of blood as well as laying hands on someone's property is prohibited; you must not receive interest of money you lent to each other, there must not exist revenge against each other, because justice is are carried out from the Tribunal according to Sharia, ... help each other, and do not be divided because all people have the same origin. Although the races change, as well as the colors and the places, all have come from the same dough, that is Adem. I call on you to live as brothers in the land and not in enmity... ." Islamic History- II-page 70, Tirana 1995.

³⁸ - In 634, Umari I became the second Caliph. On his deathbed, Abu Bakri had designated Umar as his heir. All the important members of the Muslim community accepted immediately the rule of Umar. During his leadership, took place the first expansion of Islam out of Arabia. Egypt, Syria and Iraq, and the Northern part of Mesopotamia became Islamic territories, and the armies of Persian Empire. Umar added the title **amir-al-mum-inin** (in Arabian language "the commander of the pious") to the title of Caliph. After the death of Umar in 644, Uthman ibn Affan, son in law of Muhammad and one of his first converts, was appointed by group of 6 members in Mecca as the third Caliph. Although he was an older man, he continued the policy of Umar concerning the extension of territories. Uthman too, opposed the Islamic preachers, by issuing an official text of Koran, with an attached order to destroy all other versions. The rebelling Muslim troops from Al Kufah (Iraq) and Egypt surrounded Uthman in Medina and killed him in the year 656.

traders, Umayya. Muavi ibn Ebi Sufjani that ruled from 661 until 680 the first Emevit caliph belonged to them. During his reign, Muavi stabilized the Muslim community following the assassination of Ali,³⁹ he greatly enlarged the Muslim Empire and created a capable byrocracy to administer it. During the Emevit rule (Umayyad), the Muslim armies occupied wide, on the East up to the borders of India and China, in the West through North Africa up to the Atlantic Ocean, in the North through Spain and over the Pyrenean mountains inside France. In 732, the French infantry under the leadership of the ruler Karl Martel (Sharl) repelled them near Poitiers.

5.3-The enlargement of the Islamic Empire in Europe and its coexistence with other religions.

In 711, the Muslim invaded Spain. Musa Ibn Nusair headed the government of North Africa in behalf of the caliphate of Damask. His armies lead by Tyariq Ibn Ziad, crossed the Gibraltar, killed the King Roderick and occupied the Iberian Peninsula.

Islam, Christianity and Judaism bloomed together in Spain. The mutual push of Spanish Muslims, of Christians and Israeli intellectuals brought about a cultural boom. The tolerance existing during the Muslim rule came to an end with the Christian crusades (1063-1492).

Beginning from the year 750 with Abu al Abbas, caliphate of Abbasid, extended 5 centuries, it was the most resistant and the most Islamic famous dynasty.

Beginning in 750 with Abu al-Abbas, the Abbasid's caliphate lasted for five centuries. This was the most famous and stable of Islamic dynasties. The Abbasids became patrons of learning and encouragers of religious rites. They were the first Muslim rulers to become leaders of an Islamic civilization and protectors of religion. In the course of their caliphate, Baghdad replaced Medina as a center of theology, and of growing industry and trade, and the Islamic Empire reached the climax of material and intellectual achievements.⁴⁰

5.4-The State and the Islamic law

³⁹ - The inhabitants of Medina recognized Ali, cousin and son in law of Muhammad, as the fourth Caliph. But the Governor of Syria, Muaeiyah, the first Umayyad caliph, refused to recognize him as a caliph and made a call to avenge the death of Uthman (who was a cousin of Muaeiyah.). In the year 657, the rival parties were fighting in Siffin, in a field of North Syria, near the place of the modern city of Ar Raqqa. There, after a battle, which was not decisive, they agreed to arbiter the conflict. Ali considered himself as the most rightful candidate for the caliphate with equal rights with Muaeiyah. The Kharijites, a group of Ali's followers felt humiliated and promised to kill both Ali and Muaeiyah. But they achieved to kill only Ali, and there was Hasan that later (in 661) claimed the caliphate for himself but within few months under the pressure of the supporters of Muaeiyah, abdicated. Muaeiyah's supporter were more in number than the supporters of Ali, the Shiite.

⁴⁰ - The Abbasid Caliphs (750-1258) – Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

The state created by Mohammed and his followers, had intertwined religion with politics and the law. After the death of Mohammed, this state organization was called a Caliphate.

Caliphate was the seat as well as the Kingdom of the Caliph, the supreme leader of the Muslim Community and heir of the Prophet Mohammed. The Muslim state created by Mohammed was a theocracy, a state built upon religious and moral principles of Islam. The Caliphs, heirs of Mohammed, were religious and laic leaders at the same time. There were not authorized to issue new doctrines, because it was accepted that Mohammed had fulfilled the proclamation of the faith.

In this form of Government, the courts ruled on the basis of truth, that was based on the word of God and in the Koran, in the words of the Prophet, in the hadith, on councils' advises (ixhmaiument), and the analogy (kias). Islamic law is otherwise known as Sharia law.

The Islam State was a theological state that was based on an Islamic ideology. This state was to incorporate only those that had wholeheartedly embraced Islamic ideology and principles. Those that did not accept this ideology but still lived within the borders of the state, the Islamic state guaranteed the civic rights that other enjoyed, once they respected the laws and paid the tax.

5.5-The big division within Islam

During the course of Islam's history, the issue of the Caliphate has created more disagreements than any other thing in the faith. Among other things, this has caused the big division between the Sunni and the Shiia.

The Sunni (the followers of the Sunna, followers of the Islamic tradition, of the way of the Prophet), which made up the majority of Muslims, drafted the requests that a person had to fulfill in order for him to be a caliph. The caliph had to be an Arab of the tribe of the Prophet Mohammed, a Qyrash. He must be elected to office and approved by a council of elders that represented the Muslim community; he would be the one responsible for upholding the divine law and for spreading Islam by any means necessary, including war.⁴¹

Shiite, on the other side, believed that the Prophet had preordained his son in law, Ali, as heir of the world and as his spiritual heir. Therefore they accepted only the descendants of Ali as the rightful heirs of the caliphate.

6.- Knowledge and science in Islam

It is said that Muhammad told his followers that the “Knowledge is the property that the Muslim have lost, when you find it, lay hold of it,.. the wise one is in the light, the unwise

⁴¹ - Caliphate – Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

in darkness. Mohammed's son in law, Ali, that later on laid the foundations of Bektashism, said: "Seek after knowledge from the cradle to the grave"⁴²

Mohammed, the founder of Islam, although illiterate himself, from the creation of the Islamic state paid special importance to the education of Muslims. He ordered that all war captives that knew how to write and read could gain their liberty once they had taught ten Muslims in Medina how to read and write.⁴³

It seems that in the Islam State there had been established the right report between knowledge and religious dogma. People believed in religion but they did not reject knowledge. Generally speaking, the caliphs, the religious and state leaders promoted knowledge.

That was the reason why science, education and culture took witnessed an unprecedented growth in all the Islamic caliphates. The discoveries made in this period made epoch and served all mankind.

This "Islamic revolution" was carried out in these directions:

a.-In the economic field

Mohammed in his campaign to increase the number of the supporters for his new religion preached social and economic justice.

Insisting on the need for social reforms, Mohammed promoted the improvement of the fate of slaves, orphans, of women and the poor and the prevalence of Islamic brotherhood over tribal allegiances. This disposition for equality and reform very quickly arouse the enmity of the rich merchants that dominated Meca. This forced Mohammed to move to Medina, where as the first head of the state that he created, he began implementing the programs of political and social reforms and to set up the ritual practices of Islam.⁴⁴

During the years 700-1100, economy in Islamic countries underwent a dynamic development. The export of agricultural products to the west in particular grew sensitively.

This was the green Islamic revolution. Supported by a wide transportation and communications network, the Muslim merchants brought their agricultural products to Europe. These products included eggplants, sugar cane, wheat, spinach, lemons, bananas, mango, cotton, watermelon, etc.

⁴² - Mehdi Frasherli- The ancient History of Albania and Albanians. cited source .Pg 40.

⁴³ - Prof. Mahir Hasani, Prof Nuredin Ahmedi- Islamic History, II, pg 99. Published by the Islamic Council for Eastern Europe and Humanitarian Society of the Third world. Tirana 1995.

⁴⁴ - Fazlur Rahman, Muhamad (prophet) – Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

Another great achievement of the Islamic world was the production of paper. In 794, the Chinese's artisans captured in the battle of the Talas River, were sent to Baghdad. The capable artisans began producing paper for their new Muslim patrons. It was these one that later spread the production of paper to Asia, Africa and Europe.⁴⁵

b.-In the construction of the infrastructure for the development of education, culture, etc.

The Islamic caliphs invested greatly in the development of infrastructure that was to have an impact in education, culture, etc. They were laying this infrastructure not only in their countries but also in the countries that they had occupied.

Hence, Al-Mansur, one of the greatest caliphs of the Abbasid's dynasty, in 762, established in Iraq the new capital, Baghdad. This city was a military and administrative center, but it was also transformed into a center of flourishing commerce and of great construction planning, of new schools, mosques, and irrigation systems.

The caliph Abdullah al Mamur in 830 established the house of knowledge dedicated to the translation of Greek philosophical works into Arabic. Since translators focused on works of practical importance, they contributed to the preservation of knowledge, of this heritage from the past.

New Universities were established that served prepare many generations of Muslim intellectuals and scientists.

In 968, in Cordova of Spain was established the University of Cordova. Among other things, one of its objectives was to promote the study of mathematics, sciences, and medicine. Cordova became the most important economic and cultural center of the Islamic world.⁴⁶

In 988, in Cairo was established the University of Al-Azhar. This educational center was dedicated to the study of Arabic sciences and mathematics. There were students of different ages studying in it.

Meanwhile, Baghdad continued to shine as one of the greatest centers of world education. In 1067 the Academy of Nizamija was established to promote education and learning.

b.-In the field of science and philosophy.

The golden epoch of Islamic intellectual life encompasses the period from 830 – 1300. Many scientific discoveries that served the whole mankind were made during this period. Significant advances were made in math especially.

⁴⁵ - Paper –Making inroads in the Islamic world– Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

⁴⁶ - Cordoba University Founded – Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

In 760, the Arab Mathematicians were working on the basis of Hindu numerical system, thus simplifying the teaching and study of math. From the Hindus they also borrowed the concept of the *zero*.

Mohammed Ibn Musa al – Khvarizmi, an Arab mathematician (living during the years 780-850) was the first person to introduce the term al-jabr (in English algebra) in mathematics. He wrote an educational book on Indian Algebra that was translated into Latin in the XII century. This translation enabled the medieval Europeans to understand mathematics.⁴⁷

Philosophy took an unprecedented development

Philosophers such as Al- Kindi and Al – Farabi studied Greek philosophy. They wedded together philosophy and theology in a period rich with tolerance. Al-Farabi became the first scholar that promoted the power of reason. He tried to make Islamic theology universal. Many consider him as the greatest scholar of logic in the Islamic tradition.

The other Iranian Philosopher Avicenna (Abu-Ali-al Husayn ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina Avicenna 980-1037) endeavored to integrate the Islamic theology with Greek philosophy and held that faith is simple philosophy in a metaphoric shape.

7.-The manner by which Islam spread

This is an issue still debated today. **However, a distinction must be made between the manner by which the Islamic Empire expanded and the manner by which Islam spread.**

The expansion of the Islamic Empire, first founded in Medina, by the prophet Mohammed expanded by war. By the end of Mohamed's life, in 632, all the tribes of the Arabic peninsula had submitted to his authority.

The armies, lead by the Arabs, within less than one century invaded territories that extended from Spain to India. On the countries that they invaded, they would set up a governing administration, the caliphate, preserving for themselves most of the power and privileged positions.

Many Arabs understood their military success as a proof of the superiority of their new religion. They profited a great deal by the wealth and the new unimaginable status they enjoyed in the occupied lands. The Arabian appropriated huge quantities of the booty as well as new positions in the governments of the Caliphate. In the occupied lands they controlled the commerce, thus creating a very favorable situation both for the Arab merchants and for the government officials that collected the taxes.

⁴⁷ - Al-Khearizmi, A Pioneer of Algebra— Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

These great profits encouraged the idea of new invasion and expansion of the Islamic Empire.

7.1- The establishment of the Islamic Empire's rule over a wide territory where people of different religious faiths lived, **created the “necessary infrastructure” for the propagation of Islam.**

7.3 - The Caliphates according to the Koran, “had no obligation on religious issues”.

Mohammed himself after establishing his rule in Medina, granted Jews and Christians as “the people of the Book” religious autonomy.

The occupied people, part of Islamic Empire, enjoyed the protection of Muslims in accordance with the Koran. They could not be forced into the military services because Islam prohibited their participation in the Muslim military. In compensation, the non-Muslims had to pay the tax of *khizja*.

8.- Factors that contributed to the spread of Islam

In the diffusion of Islam first in the Arab world and then beyond, have contributed a series of factors

1.- The geographic factors have had a visible influence in the propagation of Islam. Islam first triumphed as a ruling religion in Medina. It then spread to Mecca and to the whole Arabic peninsula. The Islamic Empire through invasions continued to expand reaching into Spain, China, etc, thus creating the opportunity for Islam to spread.

2.- The material profits that accompanied the conversion into Islam have played a significant role in the propagation of this religion.

The government officials under the Arab domination saw an opportunity to strengthen their power by converting. They foresaw that once Muslim their relation with their superiors would be improved and that they would be in a more secure position.

Merchants understood the benefits coming from the expansion of the Muslim domination that lead to a growth in world trade and favorable concessions. By converting into Islam they hoped to share into these benefits:

Intellectuals hoped to gain legitimacy for their ideas, introducing them as Muslim ideas.

By converting into Islam, the professional soldiers could fight in the Muslim army, hoping to benefit from the war plunder and other benefits in the continually successful Arab campaigns.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ - Richard Foltz- Internationalization of Islam— Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

3.-Tax Exemption

Tax exemption, especially that from *khizja*, is one of the factors that has contributed to the propagation of Islam.

In any case, these taxes were smaller than the heavy taxes levied during the Byzantine and Persian Empires.

4.-The teaching of the Prophet Mohammed on social and economic equality, of the Muslim brotherhood, of a society without class differences, contributed to the growth in numbers.

This is a factor that has contributed to the propagation of Islam not just in its first centuries but even in our days.

5.- The preservation of existing governing institutions by the Muslim invaders

Muslims, in the course of expanding their empire, generally preferred to preserve the “status quo” in the governing institutions of the territories that they occupied. This tolerance contributed to the growth in the rate of conversions of these populations into Islam.

As a tribal people, the Arabs did not have sufficient experience or their own models in running an empire of non-Muslims. That’s why they chose to leave things as they were by taking over the key power positions and final authority on important decisions.⁴⁹

Similar self-administrative systems people groups based on their religious laws had existed the West during the middle ages.

The Turks applied the same self-administrative institutions in our country. It was called the institution of the “Milet.” It was a religious community recognized by the Ottoman power. It was headed by a chairman and it ran its own affairs in areas related to theology and morals, but it operated in keeping with the laws of the empire on other issues.

This was a very delicate separation, because on this pre-laic society, Sharia law on one side and the canon law on the other tended to regulate all issues pertaining to personal and collective life.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ - Administrative registers were kept in Greek, or Persian during the seventh century and further more in East. The moneys gradually took Arab inscriptions. The tax systems remained un-changed, and the local communities within new Arabian territories in many cases were left under the legal jurisdiction of their leaders. In central level were designated Moslem judges, or Cadi, which examined only the main issues. In general the officials kept their positions under the formal Arabian bosses. In education, the Christian teachers, Jews and not Moslems, continued to give lessons on the main institutions (such as medical schools in Gundeshapur in the South-West Iran) by instructing the Arabian Moslem students. – Richard Foltz- Internationalization of Islam. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source

6.-Tendencies of Moslem leading elite to profit more from the cultural inheritance and the support, which were given to intellectual of the tribes, which they invaded, would influence on the converting growing on Islam religion.

Caliph Umayyad allowed and encouraged the emigration of capable individuals, such as doctors, astronom, and mathematicians from the Byzantium world. Many of these emigrants were members of non orthodox Christian sects were non converted pagans which suffered the persecution under Byzantium and which found the invaded lands from Arabian with too much hospitality. The Arabian were too open to learn from the intellectual tradition of classic Mediterranean world, by including the acts of Greek and Latin philosophers and scientists, which were avoided from Christina Byzantium. As a result of this interest, many classic acts were translated into Arabian language and later this Arabic translation were transmitted on Middle Ages Europe, mainly through Spain.

7.- The Shiite and Iranians growing influence on the Islamic Empire contributed to the spread of Islam

The increasing influence of the Shiite,s as more liberal variation of Islam, and that of the Iranian, with a rich cultural heritage contributed to the spread of Islam.

Umayyad were overthrown due to joint action by the Shiites, the Iranians, and other Muslim and non-Muslim group that had grown disenchanted with the regime of Umayyad. The rebels were lead by the Abbasid family, descendants of the Prophet's uncle, Abbas.⁵¹

Beginning in 750 with Abu-al-Abbas, the Abbasid Caliphate lasted for five centuries. This is the longest lasting and famous of Islamic dynasties. The Abbasid were the protectors of learning and encouragers of religious rites. They were the first Moslem's ruler that became the heads of an Islamic religion and religion's protectors. During their caliphate, Baghdad substituted Medina as a center of theological learning and business activities.⁵²

⁵⁰ - Georges Castellan – History of Balkan – pg 125.

⁵¹ - The problem of legitimacy served as an explosion point against the Ummayyad. For many of the opponents of the Umayyad, a natural alternative was to support the leadership of the Prophets House, or to support the Shiites. In Khorasan – in the Eastern extreme of the Iranian Empire, an area where the power of the caliph was the weakest, the opposition agasint the rule from Damascus grew. In a cooperation with the prevailing pro-Ali sentiments in the local army, they incited a revolt that in 751 was able to overthrow the Umayyad. The movement was under the direction of Iranian general Abu Muslim fighting in the name of a the Prophet's uncle, Abaz. From here comes the name of the new dynasty, Abbasid

⁵² - The Abbasid caliphs of the eighth and ninth century, Harun al –Rashid and his son Abdullah al – Mamun, are especially famous for their achievements in encouraging intellectual thought and increasing the splendor of their courts. During their rule, various scholars would be invited to the court to debate different themes; works in Greek, Persian and Syrian were translated. They also exchanged Ambassadors with Charlemagne, Emperor of the Western Europe,

9.-The end of political, economical and religious splendor of the Islamic empire.

After the flourishing, the Islamic Empire, as a result of the influence of a group of factors began its gradual decline. There are many political, economical and religious factors that contributed to this end. Some of them are as follows:

a.-Conflicts between the caliphates.

Some successful revolts in the eastern provinces, at the end of the 9-century lead on the creation of independence and caliphates, which were created later in the North Africa and Spain. Finally, the power of Abbasid was weakened.

Also, during this time, the caliph Abbasid began to delegate administrative responsibilities to state ministers and to other government officials and to loosen his control over the implementation of policies. While giving up personal political power, they emphasized more their role as protectors of religion. This lead to an increase in the level of persecution against heretics and non-Muslims.

The Caliphate of Abbasid was at war with the dynasty of Fatime. This dynasty was founded from Ubayd Allah that declared himself Caliph in Tunis in the year 909. The Fatimid was Shiite, which claimed they descended from Fatima (that's why it was called Fatimid) the daughter of Mohammed, that was married to Ali, the fourth Caliph. The Fatimid Caliphate became a serious threat for Abbasid in Baghdad. The Fatimid invaded most of North Africa, from Egypt to today's Alger, and at that time, Sicily and Syria. Their dynasty fell to Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt, in 1171.⁵³

b.-The eastern attack against Islamic civilization.

The final defeat of Abbasid's dynasty came from outside, when al – Mustasim was sentenced to death by the Mongolian invader, under orders from Hulag, the nephew of Xhenghis Khan.

After plundering Baghdad in 1258, the Mongolians began their attack against all of the Islamic intellectual wealth created during the course of centuries. Hulag threw into the river Tiger most of the old books and burned the rest.⁵⁴

⁵³ - The Fatimid Dynasty and the Umajads of Spain.

⁵⁴ - Mehdi Frasheri- The ancient History of Albania and the Albanians - cited source - Pg 44.

The invaders of Baghdad, though accepted the religion of the vanquished, they embraced the most fanatic variant and rejected the philosophy of development.

The fall of Baghdad marks the beginning of the end of political, economical and religious splendor of the Islamic empire.

During the fall of Abbasid's power, there were created two rivals caliphates, one in the North Africa and the other in Spain.

Ubayh Allah, who declared himself Caliph in Tunis in 909, created the first caliphate. He claimed to be a descendant of the dynasty of Fatimid. Fatimid were Shiites, that claimed that they descended from Fatima (that's why it was called Fatimid) the daughter of Mohammed, married to Ali, the fourth Caliph. The Fatimid Caliphate became a serious threat to the power of Abbasid in Baghdad. The Fatimids invaded most of North Africa, from Egypt up to the today's Algeria, as well as Sicily, and Syria. Their Dynasty fell to Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt, in 1171.

c.- The attack form western Europeans crusaders against Islamic civilization.

The Islamic civilization took a great stroke also form European crusader attack against the caliphate in Spain. This caliphate was created by Abd-ar-Rahman III, which declared himself caliph in Spain in 929. He was a descendant of an emevit prince (Umayyad) who escaped the massacre against his family carried out by Abbasid. He settled in Spain in 755. The dynasty of Emevit in Spain was the source of a brilliant period on Spanish History, with its capital in Cordova, till the year 1031, when the caliphate split into many insignificant states.

The small Moslems states created, as a result of the end of Cordova's dynasty were finally moved out together with Islam by the European Crusaders.

After the destruction of the Arab caliphate the Turks created a very powerful political and military state, but they didn't restore the golden epoch of Islamic intellectual life. Now Islam fell in a state of decadence.

10.-The ottoman caliphate and its slip into fanaticism

If Arab caliphs invaded Spain and aimed at Europe from the west, the Turkish sultans aimed at Europe from the Balkans, through a war of nearly 100 years (1362-1451).

As a military and fighting people, the Turks showed many values but they didn't move forward the Arab civilization in view of the European civilization. Because of fanatics they rejected it and were left behind and became weaker.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ - Mehdi Frasheri- The ancient History of Albania and Albanians - cited source - Pg 44.

During the time that the Turkish consolidated their victory in the Balkans, in Europe the political power of the church was weakened and the wind of the renaissance was blowing.

There were very visible signs of the beginning of the political changes. Efforts to reform Ottoman Empire began in 1791 by Sultan Selim. First, he tried to make a reform on the army, by destroying the system of Jeniçer. The reaction by the Jeniçers forced the Sultan to leave power.

A strong resistance against the efforts for reforms on the bosom of the Empire came especially from Ulema.⁵⁶ They embodied the religious sciences, theology and law, and they had too, the monopole of the education. In Istanbul Ulemaja represented a force, which was nearly the same with that of Jeniçer. They had also a strong financial power because they could control nearly the half of empire by use of the holy sites.

At the end of the XVIII century, Ulema were turned into a conservative backward factor with an old vision of the world. It was them who in collaboration with Jeniçer triumphed over the efforts for western type reforms.

The creation of two Christian states in the territory of Dar al-Islam, (Serbia and Greece) the necessity to save the Empire from the further weakening, created the necessary conditions to undertake the reforms.

The Sultan Mahmud decided to begin the reforms (tanzimati) first with the army. He changed the tactic. In order to escape the fate of Sultan Selim he planned to integrate the Jeniçer into the reorganized army. On June 18, 1826 they attacked the palace of the Sultan.

As Sultan Mahmud knew the danger of the alliance of the jeniçar with the ulema, he consulted with the later ones and after securing their allegiance, he attacked the barracks of jeniçer killing 6000 of them. 1800 of them were sent into exile. The troop of Jeniçers, after a history of 500 years, no longer existed.

The religious order of the jeniçery, Bektashism, was banned and Bektashis were expelled from Turkey. Many Bektashis of that time came and settled in the Southern part of Albania.

Some other reforms were carried out on ottoman foreign policy. For the first time, there was created the Ministry of Foreign affairs as a structure. From here they send the ambassadors in the main centers of European politics of that time.

⁵⁶ - Ulema- ulem in Arabic means savor. According to Sharia law and in the traditions (adetet) of Sunni Islam, ulema composed a hierarchy of people with sheh ul-islam and imams that made interpretations, the cadis applied those rules in the law cases, and the mydezir lectured Islam in the schools. In the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan was faced with a whole a category of people, product of an education based on the Koran as taught in the Medrese. These were the Ulemas.

The other Sultan Abdyl Maxhiti, who spoke French, (1839-1861) tried to push further the reforms especially in the field of legislation. On November 3, 1839, he guaranteed to all citizens of the Empire: "The security of Life, honor and property in spite of their religious affiliation".

There were carried out also many changes in the administrative organization of the Empire, which was divided in 36 provinces, from which 15 of them were in the European part. In 1840, the Civil Code was passed, which was based on the French model. Many other reforms were performed also in the educational system.

After all these changes, Sultan remained the only carrier of the law and the only one entitled with executing it. He was helped by the grand vizier as well as by Sheh ul Islami, as they had the same hierarchy level. The grand vizier had the responsibility to run public affairs; he kept the seal of the Sultan, and headed the Divan⁵⁷. Sheh ul Islam had the power to give his opinion by his fatwa whether the laws were in agreement with the Quran before the Sultan promulgated them.⁵⁸

But it seems that all these reforms were carried out more as a face show to the west and to its citizens and as a means to preserving power than from the internal pressure for progress.

On 1876, the Sultan Abdyl Hamide agreed to pass a Constitution, which he violated himself after one year. In order to face the pressure of the West he began to lean more on the Muslim religious hierarchy presenting himself as a Caliph of 300 million Muslims, faithful to the Prophet. He did it more of wanting to scare the West and to gain the support that lived in his Kingdom.⁵⁹

It seems that the Sultan Abdyl Hamiti thought that he would win by restoring the old sources and practices of Islam. The Sultan's aim was represented also on the government policy. There began a campaign of censorship on the media and restriction of studies in the West.

This provoked the movement of the opposition "Young Turks", and a Congress in Paris in 1902. The Congress didn't come up with any results because "the projects of these

⁵⁷ - The Divan, first created as a private council, in the coming years increased the number of its members with traditional heads of the army, finance, commerce, foreign affairs, naval forces, etc. Now, they took the title of a Minister. After the reforms, the Minister of Police and the chairman of State Council were included in the Divan.

⁵⁸ - Georges Castellan – History of Balkan – pg 292

⁵⁹ - Nearly since the 13-th century, rulers from all over the Muslim world, and especially Ottoman sultans, adopted the title of caliph without any criteria. They were not successors of the bloodline of Muhammad and did not meet the requirement to be caliphs. During the last years of the Ottoman Empire the title was of no real importance for the sultans. Source: The Ottomans and the modern period. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002- cited source.

emigrants were not in conformity with each other. The various national programs of Albanians, Kurd or Armenians, were confronted with the dreams of the Ottomans which saw the future of the Empire as a symbioses of different people.”⁶⁰

The Young Turks movement was finalized with the Young Turks revolution of July 24, 1908, after gaining the support of a group of officers of Salonika’s corps.

But the Ottoman Empire, the last one in the history of Islamic Empires, in spite of the internal political movement, was headed towards its inevitable decomposition.

The Ottoman Empire was destroyed during the World War I (1914-1918). After the war, the Turkish nationalists overthrew the Sultan, and in March 1924 the Great National Assembly of Turkey did away with the caliphate.⁶¹

11.- Islam, Albanians and tolerance.

On the first part of this book we spoke on details for the manner and the factors, which influenced on the spread of Islam in Albania. But how was the Albanian Islamism and what were the consequences of this religion spreading in Albania.

Islam in the Balkans as well as in Albania came through Ottoman Invasion. In reality, the Islam of the Ottoman Empire had lost the dynamism and vitality that it possessed in the previous Islamic Empires in which there was developed the science, culture, and the education, and which had been the centers of world culture. But it was not their fault. In the previous lines we treated the factors, which lead to the loss of political, economical, and religious splendor of the Islamic Empire.

Unfortunately, - said Mehdi Frasheri- the Albanians took Islam from their hands, together with fanatics, without philosophy and knowledge, this last form of Islam, which came from the ottomans, was called sunism, ... this is a Islamism without the spirit of prosperity, which has brought the death of many nationalities, ... this sunism saw every kind of prosperity, every change etc, as something against religion, as it has not the necessary light to judge it. Bektashism is a kind of protest against this misery.⁶²

Among the developments that put Europe in the way of modern developments are: the birth of nationalities, the use of languages, the development of national cultures, the separation of religion from the state and the creation of a secular society.

⁶⁰ - Georges Castellan – History of Balkan – pg 292

⁶¹ - There was hold an international congress in Cairo in 1926 in order to choose the acceptable heir for caliphate but it resulted unsuccessful, by following an appeal for the Moslems of the world in order to work together to re-built a caliphate.

⁶² - Mehdi Frasheri- The ancient History of Albania and Albanians - cited source - Pg 44 -45.

What direction did these issues take for the Albanians after the Ottoman occupation?

a.-The issue of nationality.

The Ottoman Empire operated on the bases of the Sharia law. For the Ottomans religion was equal to nationality. Mohammed himself in his reforms declared as paramount the brotherhood of all Muslims and he rejected any division based on class, color, and race.

The Albanian that had been converted to Islam were no longer recognized as Albanians but as Turks, and this population made up nearly 70% of the Albanians.

The same applied for the Albanian orthodox. The Albanians that belonged to this religion, were considered by the Greek Church as Greeks and by the Turks as part of the Rum millet community, that included the Greeks, Serbs, Romanians, and Bulgarians.

Taking advantage of the privileged status given to the Orthodox Patriarch by the Ottomans, the Greek Church undertook a campaign of hellenization of the South of the country.

The Albanians that remained faithful to the Catholic Church were considered as Latins and they maintained their spiritual relationship with Rome, in spite of the Ottoman wishes.

As it can be noticed, the Albanian nation was officially not recognized. This had a negative effect on the future of the Albanian people.

b.-Linguistic issues

During the 500 years of Ottoman occupation the Albanian Language was officialy not recognised.

The schools (the madrase) tought only in turkish. The Turkish language was used also by the administration. In the mosques, Arabic was used as the official and political language of Islam.

There were no schools were the Albanian Youth could learn to read and to write their national language. ABC in the Albanian language could not be published or distritibuted. A person could suffer banishment and be treated as a criminal if found involved in such activities. A small number of brochures would be considered by the Turks as worst than dynamite.⁶³

The Orthodox churches used Greek as the official and political language of the orthodox. Their educational network employed Greek language. Their books made no mention of

⁶³ - Carls Telford Erikson – “Five years in Albania” (1908-1913) , pg 28.

Albania as a state or a people. They taught that nationality was determined by religion, that's why the Albanians were Greeks, while according to them the Albanian language was a barbarian language, not understood even by God, and that's why, they taught, Albanians should pray in Greek.⁶⁴

The Catholic churches used Latin as the official and political language of Catholicism. Their schools employed Latin too.

That's why the Albanian language had survived only as a spoken language. A long time would go by till the Congress of Manastiri in 1909 where the Albanian patriots agreed to unify the alphabet of the Albanian language..

This 500 years of delay in the development of the Albanian language would naturally have its impact in the general development of the Albanian national cause.

c.-The cultural issue

As a result of consequences, which derived from the Islamism of the major part of Albanians, on the development of Albanian National, have had many debates. Some of them consider it as the misfortune of our nation. The other as rescuers and protectors of the ethnical character of Albanian People.

It is of a great interest to treat this problem very carefully especially after the growing of the “temperature” in Europe against the culture and Islam civilization.

In order to understand this better it is necessary to know closer that what does the culture and civilization represent for a country.

12.- Culture, civilization – the meaning and its component elements.

In Albanian language the word culture is: the field of social development which includes the general activity of language, art, literature, in science and in the whole spiritual life...”⁶⁵

Civilization according to the Albanian language dictionary means: “ the entirety of the achievements in the field of material culture and spiritual one as well as in the social development, which characterize a social economical formation or a people or a defined country, the highest level of this development...”⁶⁶

⁶⁴ - Carls Telford Erikson – “Five years in Albania” (1908-1913) , pg 28.

⁶⁵ - The Dictionary of Today's Albanian Language- Tirana 1980, pg 909

⁶⁶ - The same , pg 1624.

As you can see in a general meaning, in Albanian language, the civilization includes the highest level of cultural achievements, but materialized and which distinguish a social economical formation, a country or a people, where as with culture we understand the spiritual life.

In reality, today the civilization has received a meaning, which is more practical.

a.- Civilization- the widest level of cultural identity.

A civilization is a highest cultural grouping of civilization and the widest level of cultural identity of the people, which have briefly the characteristic, which distinguish them from, the others.⁶⁷

So, if Italians have different cultural characteristics from Germans or English people, all of them have common cultural characteristics, which distinguish them from Arabian, Chinese or orthodox-slavians. They cannot take part in a widest cultural ethnic themselves. These are civilizations.

The civilization identity of today is not an identity, which is created in modern times. It is an ancient one and it is created during the period of passing from polietism to monoetism.

This identity, on this beginning of millennium, has gained a new shape and content, as a result of the great technical and technological developments and the fastest exchange of different values, which give great possibilities of the progress and cooperation with a wide extending, but which possess the risk of crashes.

Due to technical and technological developments, the human being observed more easily that his people compared with some other people has less national, and religions differences, which also exist in the language and some other ones, with some other people he has more differences. He has seemed also that with some other he differs especially. This identity is not more stressed, or with much influence than the religion or national identity, although the civilization identity has a widest extending.⁶⁸

The people have different identity levels: one inhabitant of Rome can define himself with different level of deepness as Roman, Italian, and catholic, European, Western. The civilization to which he belongs is the widest level of identification, which with he is deeply identified.

b.- The differences between the civilizations.

⁶⁷ - Samuel P.Huntington – The Clash of civilizations.

⁶⁸ - Faton Abdullahu – Dimension of civilizing Identity.

Civilizations differ between them from History, language, culture, and traditions. And what is more important from the religion. The people of different civilizations have different opinion concerning the relation between God and People, between the individuals and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, the husband and wife, but at the same time differs also the relative point of views of the rights between the rights and responsibilities, freedom and authority, equity and hierarchy. These differences are products of centuries. They are far and more essentials than the differences between political ideologies and political regimes.⁶⁹

c.- The main civilizations of today.

The most identified and important civilizations of today are: western civilization, which includes the Western Europe, England and North America, the orthodox civilization with Russia as a leader state, the Islamic civilization which is extended from Indonesia to Maroc, the Chinese civilization or as it is known in a different manner the Confucian civilization, the Japanese civilization, the Hindu civilization where there is the main India, Latin-American civilization and African civilization, which is a civilization in the process of consolidation.

The people can do the re-defining of their identity and as a result of this the building and the borders of civilizations change.

d.- Characteristics of civilizations.

-The civilization can include o great number of people such as Chinese civilization.

-A civilization can include dome state with national base, such as the case of western civilization, Latin –American civilization, Islamic civilization, or a civilization of one state such as the Japanese civilization.

-The civilizations can be divided on sub-civilizations. So the western civilization has two main variants, European one and that of North American one. The Islamic civilization has its main sub-divisions, which are Arabian, Turkish and that of Malaysia.

-The civilizations are dynamic, they arise and fall, they are divided and joined, and they are disappeared and buried.

13.- The complicated position of Albanians between civilizations.

⁶⁹ - Samuel P.Huntington – The Clash of civilizations.

As we have treated in the first part of this book, the separation of the Roman Empire into the Eastern and Western Empire in 395AD, marked the beginning of the clash between two religious rites, of Catholicism with center in Roma, and of the orthodox one with the center in Constantinople. These clashes lead to their final separation in 1054. The border separating both Empires passed exactly over our country.

If the majority of our country was under the control of Rome from of religious spiritual part, the political part of Albanian lands were totally under the East Empire, the Byzantium one.

Since that time, in the Albanian lands we notice overlapping of two civilizations, the western roman civilization and the eastern orthodox one. It seems that the big dilemma of Albanian begins here, a dilemma much discussed even in our days. The dilemma is: Do we belong to the eastern or western civilization.

The Balkan invasion form Ottoman Empire after the efforts of nearly 100 years, (1362-1451), created another environment inn the Balkan and in the Albanian's territories. Keeping of this invasion for 5 centuries, and the Islamism of the greatest part of Albanian population, made possible that the Albanian lands would be a present element of a third culture and civilization, the Islamic one.

The consequences of a great part of Albanians were:

1.- It changed the structure and deepened the religious diversity of the Albanian people.

In the eve of Ottoman invasion in Albania only one religion was present, the Christian one, with its two branches, the catholic and the orthodox one. The Ottoman invasion introduced another religion, Islam, with its two forms; the Sunni Moslems and Bektashi.

The changes in the religion structure made more evident the risk of religion dissension. In fact there did not happened something like this because:

a.- The Islam religion which was embraced from the Albanian just like the Christian religion, in general remained a popular religion, especially in the peasantry part of the population, too far from intolerance and doctrine of fanaticism.⁷⁰

b.- In spite of the fact that the Albanian took the islamisation in the variant suni, in Albanian land there was the Bektachian variant, which belonged to the Islam religion, and that experienced a flourishing ground. The Bektashi variant was closer with both the two other religions: Christianity and Islam. This influenced evidently on the diminishing of religion tension in our country and in the preservation of our national unity.

⁷⁰ - History of Albanian People-I- Pg 602, Tirana 2002

2.- It brought changes on the economical, social and cultural life of Albania.

The society was divided in military class and in raya. On the group of soldiers there were included all of them which were in a direct service of Sultan, and which were not involved with the production.

According to the function the militaries were divided in the people of Sword and pen. On the People of pen were included the ulema, cadis, and the finances clerks. On the people of sword were included the possessors of Timare (which are small fief granted for cavalry service under the ottoman Empire).⁷¹

After some times, different changes were made also in architecture, in spiritual culture, in the habits and customs, in the educational system and in the literature's creation. In a certain manner we have to do with an orientalism of Albanians life.

3.- Distanced in a certain manner the Albanians form the west civilizations, in spite of the later Islamism, geographical position and western tendencies of them.

Considering the fact that the Albanians were left out form the western civilization, caused them to loose any kind of support especially when the Ottoman Empire began to be decomposed. They were seen as wastes of Turkey, and were not treated as the other peoples, that came out of the ottoman yoke such as Serbians, the people of Montenegro, Greeks etc. According to Bismarck, Albania was a simply geographical expression, and its borders were crippled for the account of orthodox neighbors.

14.- The identity of Albanian civilization, an identity in redefinition.

The ottoman invaders, created in Balkan a model of administration, society and culture, which came out from the Turkish, or the Iran-Arabian inheritance. Joining of these two models prolonged nearly 5 centuries and gave to the peninsula that specific which was called "Balkan" – said the French historian Georges Castellan.⁷² In such manner there were known the Balkan's people from the West after the falling of Ottoman Empire

The major part of Balkan's people such as Serbians, the people of Montenegro, Greeks etc in order to profit their independence and later they felt the warmness and the support of their "Tribe".

⁷¹ - History of Albanian People-I- Pg 525, Tirana 2002

⁷² - Georges Castellan – History of Balkan – pg 122

Albanians did not a support from the “tribe” not only to profit their independence, but not later, too.

But to which “Tribe” and civilization belonged Albanians?

After the creation of Independent Albanian State on 28 November 1912, it seemed that the Albanian began a long way concerning the redefinition of their civilization identity.

The main goal of Albanians was to attach to western civilization, its “tribe” with which the relation was frozen for nearly 500 years.

a.-The demands concerning the redefinition of the civilization identity.

To redefine the identity of its civilization – said the Professor Samuel P. Huntington, Director of the Institute of Strategic studies of the Harvard University of USA-⁷³ a country must fulfill three demands:

First: Its political and economical elite must support the movement in general

Second: Its public must be ready to accept in silence the redefinition.

Third: The dominating groups in the receiving civilization must be ready to embrace the convert ion.

b.- The steps of Albanian to redefine its civilization.

1.-The Albanian political and economical elite have had in generally a European and western orientation during all periods.

a.- Political elite.

The western orientation of Albanian political elite was visible when George Kastriot Scanderbeg came in Albania. Together with his sensational rebellion against ottoman state- said the writer Is mail Kadare – this leader declared a new idea and a new ideal: the separation from the East and alliance with the West. This changing in the histories wing, this new program of it was for the Albanian the core orientation of their life.⁷⁴

⁷³ - Samuel P.Huntington – The Clash of civilizations? Cited source

⁷⁴ - **Ismail Kadare- Albanian in search of a new fate-** This orientation was so strong- continues the author- that the long centuries of the Turkish presence did not kill it, neither dust and sleepiness of “pax ottomana”. The distinguished Albanians made mistakes and turned crazy, nevertheless they did not turn their back to the kastriotian (Scnaderbeg) ideal. Even when they changed their religious and motherland, in an angle of their conscious remained as an obscured candle the memory of the catholic prince, which taught them that their freedom was apart of the freedom of Europe. – Edition Onufri. Pg.10.

After the proclamation of the independence Albanian politicians, insisted to build a state with a western model. They sanctioned the division of the state from the religion and equity of the religion faith in relation with the state.

During the Invasion of King Zog, the Albanian state took the outlines of a western state. There were compiled the penal and civil law according to the French model. There were contracted political alliances with Italy and there were undertaken, reforms of western type. It's a fact that the marriage of King Zog with catholic Countess Xheralidina Aponji showed that the King wanted to make alliances with the west.

After the Second World War, in Europe there was a separation-East-West not in the concept of civilization but an ideological separation. Although Albania was listed in the winners of the War, it remained on the communist camp.

The Albanian politician class orientated the country toward the Communist East and everywhere there was oriented a fierce propaganda versus all western things. The capitalist West for many years was considered as the main danger for our country.

Breaking off of the relation of the Albanian political leaders with Communist East in 1961, isolated it also from the Communist East. The Albania was isolated from the external world as a result of its leadership.

Falling of Communist system in the East Europe and in Albania was accompanied with strong political changes and with the allowance concerning the politic pluralism. In nearly all programs of political forces, there was expressed clearly the European-western orientation of them and of all Albanian political class.

b.- The economical elite.

After the proclamation of the independence the Albanian economical elite was composed mainly from the great owners of lands, land baron, the forefathers of which had inherited these lands since the time ottoman invasion. A part of them were engaged and made part also in political elite of that time.

Also, during the regime of King Zog. The economical relations of Albania were developed more with Italy. This is a fact, which speak too much for the western orientation of Albanian economical elite.

During the period of building of socialism in Albania, there was something natural that the economical exchanges had to be greater with the Communist East, and it was impossible to speak for an economical elite in the condition of an economy deeply centralized.

The economical elite, which began to be created after the year 90, in spite of the obstacles, oriented its activity to develop the trade with the west and it has supported the western orientation of Albanian Politic.

2.- The Albanian people in general have been ready to accept the European civilization.

2.1 There have been many personalities from Albanian People, which have given a valuable contribution to western Christian civilization.

a.- Emperors of Illyrian origin in Roman Empire have played a great and important role on the triumph of Christianity.

Albanian is defined as one of the Mediterranean countries where the Christianity penetrated since the first centuries and Illyrian-Albanians are included in the group of the people, which embraced the Christianity since its very beginning.

On the year 268 AD, in the front of Roman Empire came a caste of Emperors with Illyrian origin, which protected the borders of the Empire from the barbarians, respected it and put it in new bases.⁷⁵

The first Illyrian Emperor in Roman Empire was Klaudio II (268-270), who died from an illness only two years after he was chosen emperor. He would prepare a quiet state for his nephew, Constantine Klori and his father Constantine the Great.

Diokleciani (285-305) was another famous Emperor with Illyrian Origin. He played an important role in the re-organization of Roman Empire transforming it into an absolute monarchy.

The Nishi of today, Illyrian territory gave birth to another Emperor for Rome. He was the Constantine the Great (306-337). From the year 324-337, Constantine would be the only Emperor of the Roman Empire, which would continue to complete the act of Diokleciani. He put the system of Dynasty and divided the military power from the civil one. During the years 326-330 in the antic country Bizanciano, he built the capital, to which he put his name Constantinople. Constantine the Great is known as the first Christian Emperor.

With an edict of 324 and directed to the eastern part of the Empire, Kostandini, the unique Emperor, was declared Christian and obliged all his dependents to be converted into Christians. He declared the Sunday as a feast day, in the favor of the churches, and he introduced the idea that the officials had to be elected among the Christians. With his own power, he influenced on the preservation of the Christian unity.

⁷⁵ - Gazmend Muka – “Illyrian leadership in Roman and Byzantium Empire” – Edited in “Koha Jone” dt.27.07.2003

The other Byzantine Emperor, with Illyrian and Albanian origin Justiniani (527-565), recognized the jurisdiction of the Rome to the church of Ilirik. Further more under his invasion, the Italy was joined with Byzantium Empire and the control of the Emperor included also the territories, which were under the juridiction of the Pope of Roma.⁷⁶

We are not wrong– said the historian Gazemd Muka- if this glorious period of passing from one stage of the Empire into its Christian stage, is achieved as a result of the personality of Illyrian Emperors, who gave to the Empire a divine versant directed to Christian embodiment, without changing the roman destination.⁷⁷

b.- Personalities with Albanian origin, which had leading position in the Ottoman Empire, have played a great role in the reforms and its western orientation.

b.1- Mehmet Ali Pasha – armed supporter of European civilization in Arab countries.

Mehmet Ali was born in Kavalle in 1769 in an Albanian family. After a brilliant carrier in the Turkish army, in July 5, 1805, he was appointed as Vali of Egypt (governor of a vilayet under the ottoman Empire). Later on, he split from Turkey and established his own dynasty, that ruled Egypt till 1953, with Faruk as the last King.

Being influenced from his French adviser, Mehmet Ali undertook important reform of western type in the economic field, military field etc.⁷⁸

As a result of these economic and social changing, Mehemet Ali was estimated also from Marx, who said the Mehmet Ali was the person who achieved to change the Turkish feudal head in a “more lively head” and that Egypt was the most lively country in Ottoman Empire.⁷⁹

Mehmet Ali desired to develop the Egypt according to the European type. For this purpose the Poet La Martin called Mehmet Ali “ an armed supporter of European civilization in Arabic countries”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ - History of Albanian People-I- Pg 202.

⁷⁷ - The same, pg 11.

⁷⁸ - For the defense of Egypt, Mehmet Ali tried to establish a modern army. The establishment of this army required the existence of a strong economy. The manufactures became modern factories for meeting the necessities of the army. He used a special style also for the development of economy to stimulate the production growth. By an order that he issued, he made known that 50% of the enterprise’s profits had to be distributed to the textile’s employers.

⁷⁹ - Dr. Muhamed Mufaku- Albanian in Arabian world, pg 110, Edited: Rilindja, Prishtine 1990.

⁸⁰ - Dr. Muhamed Mufaku- Albanian in Arabian world, pg 111, cited source

Today the Egyptians declare with pride that the Albanian Mehmet Ali is the founder of the Modern Egypt.⁸¹

b.2- Ibrahim Mehmet Pasha, The Albanian which put the peace between the Israel and Palestinians since 175 years ago.

Ibrahim Pasha, being ordered by his father Mehmet Ali, in the years 1831 –1841, came in control of the Egyptian dynasty, and of Palestine, Syri, and Lebanon. He left these territories only under the intense pressure from the great powers.

It's very interesting to mention that compared to his times, Ibrahim preached and upheld a level of religious tolerance comparable to European levels. He was personally interested on issues of religious equality, respect towards the rights of Christians and Jews, allowing them to move freely Jerusalem.

In a letter, which Ibrahim Pasha sent to the Muslim imam of Palestine, he says: “as you know the Holy Jerusalem has temples and monasteries that are visited by Christians and Jews coming from various countries and nationalities. Because of the problems they experience on their journey due to different taxes we ordered, that for the sake of the coexistence of the people, taxes be taken off from all streets”.⁸²

Besides these three personalities, which we mentioned, there have been also others who have influenced in the “europeanisation” of the Ottoman Empire. Naturally they have inherited something from the European spirit of Albanian People.

b.3- Kemal Ataturk – Founder of the modern Turkey.

Kemal Ataturk was born in Thessalonica on 1880. His father Ali Riza Bey, a small clerk in Thessalonica's custom, was from Kosova. His mother Zybejde was from Toskeria.⁸³

This great personality of the Turkish Nation, which had Albanian blood, played an extraordinary role on the foundation of the Modern Turkey. Ataturku identified for the first time that one of the main problems for introducing Turkey on the way of modern developments, after the proclamation of the Republic was the separation of religion from the state.

⁸¹ - In the autumn of 1998, with a group of colleges we were in a training course in Cairo. The theme of this course was “the war against terrorism”. We felt a kind of satisfaction when we took lectures from single persons as well as by generals, which accepted with pleasure that the Albanian Mehmet Ali was the founder of modern Egypt.

⁸² - Dr. Muhamed Mufaku- Albanian in Arabian world, pg 64, cited source.

⁸³ - Ismet Toto- Gazi Kemal Ataturk, 1993- re-edited Toena 2002, pg 8.

On March 3, 1924, The National assembly, with the proposal of the President of the Republic Ataturk, agreed to pass the law that expelled the caliphate from the Turkish State and established its secular nature.

Ataturk was very determined to join Turkey with the West. He undertook important reforms in the political, economical and military fields. Decisions were taken to adopt Latin letters instead of the Arabic letters, the code dress for women.

2.2- Albanian, European and Western since the time of Scanderbeg.

The desire of Albanian people to be part of the of western civilization dates very early, at a time when our civilization was being shaped during the war against the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of Scanderbeg.

During the years of the wars against the ottoman invaders, the political, military, economic, religious relations with the western countries were intensified. Because of this the Albanians felt, more than any other region in he Balkans, as part of the Western Europe.⁸⁴

During that time there were created a mutual spiritual connection with many Italian states and other countries of Western Europe because with its war, Albanian people obliged Turkish to fight for a long period in its territory, being so a impassable obstacle for passing toward the West.

In spite of the long time of the ottoman invasion, the Albanian's feeling in favor of the west was not vanished. They were reconfirmed during the Epoch of Albanian Renaissance (1850-1908), the war for the Independence, etc.

2.3-The Communist regime was not able to consolidate an anti-western spirit in the people.

During the period of nearly 50 years of the proletarian dictatorship in our country, in spite of the propaganda to create "the new person", they were not able to instill the anti western spirit into the masses.

The Albanian western affiliation was demonstrated by many peculiar forms, like imitation of the western fashion, following of western TV programming, desire to travel

⁸⁴ - The Albanians by their war provided a barrier to ottoman armies moving into the Western Europe and by this they offered a valuable help to the defense and prosperity of European civilization. This fact is acknowledged not only by many distinguished European personalities of that period, but also by many others during the course of the following centuries. There have been many works of art and literature dedicated to Scanderbeg and to the Albanian struggle under his leadership. There was created a valuable tradition, of reciprocal spiritual connections between Albania and Western Europe. - History of the Albanian People-I- Pg 484-485

and live in the west that was finalized with great exodus that took place in the last agonizing years of the communist regime.

2.4-The motto “We want Albania just like Europe” – an expression of western spirit of Albanians.

The motto, which accompanied the democratic changes at the end of 90’ “We want Albania just like Europe”, was an expression of the western spirit of Albanians. Today, there is no one that doubts their western predisposition.

The Albanian people may be is the only people in the region which desired unanimously the integration on the Euro-Atlantic structures, and which has not dilemma for this problem. We know- said the British Ambassador David Landsman- that this is a point of view nearly unanimous of all Albanians and that is not any group of opinions, which support another alternative direction.⁸⁵

The Albanians have not accepted only in silence their western redefinition, but they are doing it in a loud voice and it seems that they will punish on the election boxes the political forces, which will delay its euro-western integration.

3.- The readiness of the western civilization to accept Albanians – a complex issue

The readiness of the dominating groups in the western civilization to embrace Albanians plays a complex role in the definition of our civilization.

3.a - Albanians in the eyes of west, an ally or a “Turkish remnant”

The readiness of the West to accept the Albanians is an early phenomenon that has gone through many zigzags.

When Western Europe was being threatened by the Ottoman invasion, the Albanians "served as vanguard of European defense." The fight of the Albanian under the leadership of Scanderbeg, was propagated by the countries of Western Europe as a part of their spiritual war to defend Christianity from Islam and that's why the Albanian hero was called “Athleta Christi” (Fighter for Christ)⁸⁶

Later on, with the exception of the period of the Albanian Pachaliks (region governed by pasha) and the spasmodic concern for the catholic population, during the Turkish

⁸⁵ - David Landsman- Six Albanians myths for EU. A speech held in the Albanian Forum of International studies. – Albanian 12.,07.2003 . In the following lines the ambassador continues: “... Now after the experience of Albania in the last halve of a century, there are fewer voices heard in favor of isolation. This open and progressive point of view is much appreciated in Europe.”

⁸⁶ - History of Albanian People-I- Pg 484, Cited work

invasion, we notice a abatement of European interests on Albanians. This was mainly due to their massive conversion into Islam.

This lack of attention reached its peak during the decomposition of the Ottoman Empire. The Great powers treated Albanians as a Turkish residue and the Albanian lands were being used as money change for the non-Muslim neighbors of Albania.

Rather than being rewarded for its resistance, Albania was punished for its opportunism.⁸⁷

Nonetheless, the Great powers could not pass by the “the Albanian issue” all together. On July 23, 1913, the Great Power, in spite of the fact that the Albanians had proclaimed their independence, decided to create “The Sovran Principality, inheritable, and neutral under the guarantees of the great Powers,” appointing the German Prince, Wilhelm fon Vid, (1876-1945) as its head. They also sent German experts, experts from Netherlands, Austria, Italy and Great Britain to work on setting up the structures of public order in Albania. On September 3, 1914, the Prince was forced to leave Albania as a result of the internal pressure and instability and the loss of support from abroad.

3.b-The hostile propaganda, carried out against Albania by its neighbors has contributed to a sense of reservation in the western perception of Albania.

This hostile propaganda was systematically carried out since the ottoman invasion, by the Turks themselves, and by the Greeks, Serbs, and others.

According to this propaganda, Albanians were evil; they were murderers, barbarian, given to blood revenge, criminals, etc. This was an organized propaganda with well defined goals, aiming at discrediting the Albanian Nation in the eyes of west.

The Turkish had understood that by fixing these ideas in the Europeans’ minds, they could protect more easily their western border and it would be less likely for the west to react to their violent acts against Albanians.

The Greeks too at that time, carried out a denigrating propaganda against the Albanians. The Greek magazines, which were circulated in USA, compared the Albanians with Indians komanncos and they used the expression: "The only good Albanian is a dead Albanian". They said that they wanted to change these barbarians into Christians and in this manner to liberate the peoples of Europe from the last remnants of ancient barbarism.⁸⁸

Serbs and Montenegrins intensified their anti Albanians propaganda, especially after they won their independence from the Ottoman Empire.

⁸⁷ - Ismail Kadare- Albanian in search of a new fate, Cited work, pg 12.

⁸⁸ - Carls Telford Erikson – “Five years in Albania” (1908-1913) , pg 28, cited source

The Anti Albanian propaganda of Turkish, Greeks, Serbs and Monte-Negro, kept Albanian away from the attention of western civilization and was used to justify in a certain manner their military acts against the Albanian population.

3.c The American attention for Albanian; Noli's dream for a willsonian democracy

After Prince Vid left, the Albanian state seized to exist; its territories became battlefields for their neighbors and objects of bargaining for the Great Powers. At that time, the president Willson declared all the terms of secret treaties on Albania as void and without any power.⁸⁹ In January 1920, the Congress of Lushnja elected the new government and declared Tirana as capital of Albania.

In December of 1920, Albania is internationally recognized as an independent country and against the French position, is admitted as a member of the League of Nation.

During this period is worth mentioning the Democratic Revolution of June 1924 that brought to power the Government of Noli. His program aimed at establishing a Wilsonian type Democracy, with a pacifist and human character.⁹⁰ This Government was unacceptable for the local feudal lords and was not recognized by the neighboring states that feared this type of democracy.

3.d The King Zog and the Italian trap.

Led by his desire for a swift modernization of the country, Zog, since the time he was president, signed an economic agreement with Italy that was governed by Mussolini.

After this economic agreement, upon the request of Italy, in October 1926, was signed the Pact of Tirana, which recognized to Italy the exclusivity in the areas of defense and security of the country.

The King Zog's later efforts that sought to link himself with the western civilization through the economic and political collaboration with Italy, was exploited by the fascist government of this country to bring our country under submission, an act that was finalized with military invasion of Albania in April 7, 1939.

3.e Albania in the eastern civilization and subsequent isolation

After the end of Second World War, the meeting of "The great" in Jalte, seems to have been decided that Albania would remain in the Communist East, while the western powers insisted that Greece was to remain on their side.

The "neutral" position of Albania during the period of the Cold War, especially after leaving the Treaty of Warsaw, and the removal of the Russian Military bases from our

⁸⁹ - Georges Castellan – History of Balkan – pg 451

⁹⁰ - Po aty,faqe 451.

country, were some of the services that Albanian unintentionally providing for the West in general and Italy in particular.

3.f Kosova and the western attention on Albania

The support provided by the USA and other European western states to solve the problem of Kosova, made us Albanians feel part of the western civilization.

The Euro-Atlantic alliance decision to attack Serbia was very difficult one.

All of us thought that after the establishment of Democracy in 1990 and the beginning of work to set up a western type democratic state Albania had become part of the western civilization. But the problem was more complex than what it appeared in the beginning. The Calvary of efforts to become western citizens seems that will last for long.

In the previous paragraphs we presented arguments testifying to the support that the political and economical Albanian elite gives to the movement to re-determine our western civilization predisposition and Albanians support for this. We also submitted several arguments that reveal the close ties and attention of the western civilization for Albanians.

Although, practically today it could be said that the dominating groups of western civilization will demonstrate their readiness to accept the re-determining of Albanians toward the western civilization when the Albanians become members of the Euro-Atlantic structures, of the European Union and NATO.

4.- The perspective of our accession into EU and NATO

As we explained above, civilizations are distinguished between them by history, language, culture, traditions and what is more so, by religion. On the foundations of western civilization stands the western Christianity, Catholicism.

But will the religious affiliation of Albanians, influence on the their accession into the European Union and NATO and in the final resolution of the Albanian National issue in the Balkans?

4.1 -The religious affiliation and EU membership

With the fall of the communist politic system in Eastern Europe, the epoch of the Cold War and of the ideological division in Europe comes to an end. With the disappearance of the ideological division in Europe, the cultural division of Europe between western Christianity on one side and Orthodox Christianity and Islam on the other reappeared again.⁹¹

⁹¹ - Samuel P.Huntington – The Clash of civilizations- Cited source

All Eastern European and Balkan countries wish to be integrated into the EU. But it is very unlikely that all will be treated the same and in this religious affiliation will play not so small of a role.

In our days, much discussion is made regarding a possible clash between civilizations and the most important element of the civilization is religion. The expected crash is that between religions.

Different analysts, American and Europeans, whose voice is heard by their states, have defined separating line between these civilizations in Europe, as well as the possibility of the clashes along this line.

Samuel Huntington states that: "The most significant separation line in Europe could well be the eastern border of Western Christianity in 1500. This line goes along the border that today separates Finland from Russia, the Baltic States and Russia, cuts through Byelorussia and Ukraine, by dividing the Catholic Western Ukraine from the Orthodox Eastern Ukraine, making a zigzag towards the West by dividing Transylvania from the other part of Romania and then it cuts through Yugoslavia (this article is written in the summer of 1993- *my note*) almost exactly along the line that now divides Croatia and Slovenia from the other parts of Yugoslavia..."⁹²

But, where do the Balkans and Albania itself stand according to Huntington: "Naturally in the Balkans, this line coincides with the historic border between the Hapsburg and the Ottoman Empire. The people in the North and in the West of this line are either Protestant or Catholic, ... generally speaking, they are better economically than the people that live in the east, and they can now look forward to an incorporation in a common European economy and towards the consolidations of democratic politic systems. The people in the East and South of this line are either Orthodox or Muslim, historically they belonged to the Ottoman and Tsarist Empires, and were only slightly influenced by the shaping events that shaped the rest of Europe. In general, they are less advanced economically and it is less likely that they will develop stable political democratic systems."⁹³

Although European politicians do not admit the influence of the respective religious affiliation in the integrating processes of western Europe, ten years after the book of Professor Huntington, the facts show that the Catholic part of the Eastern Europe in the eve of the integration. First priority was given Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Malta, states that were to finish the negotiations in 2003.

The Balkan countries, mainly in the Orthodox and Muslim parts (here the West includes Bosnia, Albania, Kosova and a part of Macedonia and Turkey) have weak democracies and unconsolidated economies.

⁹² - Samuel P.Huntington – The Clash of civilizations- Cited source

⁹³ - Po aty.

The Balkans is the zone where three religions, Catholicism, Orthodox and Islam meet and as such has experienced there have been conflicts the zone of the confrontation of the civilizations that they represent, (the conflicts between Serbia - Croatia, Serbia - Bosnia, Serbia - Kosova). In view of these conflicts, naturally there exist difficulties in the European integration of the states of this region.

Among the Balkan states, Turkey appears to have been the least preferred country for accession into the EU. In spite of the fact that it has signed the SAA since 1963, it had resubmitted the requests in 1987 and again in 1996, it is said to begin its negotiations only in 2004. The European states have expressed their reservations “for the danger of the of Turkish workers flux into EU countries”.⁹⁴ In truth, it may be that the fear has to do not so much with the numbers of Turkish workers, rather than with the their Muslim religion, although as the British Ambassador, Landsman, assures, “the EU does not violate its principles and does not exclude the states where the Christian population is not predominant”⁹⁵

There have been reservations about the enlargement of EU, respectively, on the issue of admitting the countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe into EU. Some European politicians have warned in advance about the danger of European dis-integration because of the EU enlargement, and it becoming a free trade zone. The Former German chancellor, Helmut Shmid, thinks that it is impossible that in the 20-25 years to come, to fully integrate 27 states, that why, he says, it is necessary to create a core “Euro-Europe” nucleus. Around that nucleus could be established a system of states connected with the Union through a new type of a great association treaty. These would be states that desire to enter the Union, but that for different reasons could not. Thus, the former Chancellor announced his vision of “ an Europe with three speeds”⁹⁶

The EU in the East and South East will be present in the form of “Processes of stabilization and association” and by encouraging various forms of integration, be them regional ones, or Mediterranean.

Albania, as a country with three religions that represent three civilizations, Islam, Orthodox and Catholicism, upon entering in the long course of stabilization and association, regardless of how long it will take, has all chance to be welcomed into the European civilization. But in order to become a member with full rights in this civilization, Albania must meet some necessary political and economical conditions.

The political conditions are: institutional stability, rule of law, a democratic political regime and the respect of human’s rights and minorities.

⁹⁴ - Paskal Milo- European Union –pg 234

⁹⁵ - David Landsman- Six Albanians myths for EU – Albanian . 12 July 2003, pg 8.

⁹⁶ - Paskal Milo- European Union –pg 340

The economical conditions are: creation of a viable market economy, and ability to compete within the EU economy.

While we are able to notice progress in the political arena, it will take decades for Albania's economy to be able to compete in the EU economies.

It is enough to mention the number of the population employed by the agricultural sector. In the EU countries, agriculture employees less than 5 % of the active population, while in Albania we are many years away from this figure.

Nonetheless, let us get to work and keep our hope.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMANDATIONS

1. Illyrians, our ancestors were polytheists. The Illyrian polytheism began to make room for Christianity, which became our official religion with Edict of Milano in 313. About this time, we witness the establishment of the first Christian community in the Illirian land.
2. The division of the Roman Empire into the Eastern and Western Empire, in 395 AD, marks the beginning of the collision between the two Christian rites, the Catholic one with center in Rome and Orthodox with center in Constantinople. This led to their definitive separation in 1054. Our country found itself located in the division lines between the two empires.
3. It looks like at this time the big dilemma is born. Do Albanians belong to the culture and civilization of the East or of the West, a dilemma very much being debated in our days as well.
4. The spread of Islam in the Albanian lands is linked with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and with the invasion of Balkan's principalities. At this time a new culture is introduced in Albania, that is the Islamic culture.
5. During the ottoman invasion, the Orthodox Church enjoyed a special status, while the Catholic Church was treated with detestation. This was a reaction against the primary role that the Holy See played in the planning of the anti-ottoman military campaigns.

6. The conversion of Albanians into Islam took place gradually in the course of centuries. It spread to today's proportion due to the Ottoman occupation, of indirect violence, and of the acceptance of this religion by a part of the Albanian population.
7. A series of factors contributed to the conversion into Islam. The economic factors, geographical position, insufficient levels of education, the encouraging role played by Bektashism as a liberal variant of Islam, the reduction of Rome's support for Albanian Catholics and its rigid attitude towards Crypto-Catholics.
8. By the end of the XIX century, when the religious demography of Albanians had been delineated, began a forced de-islamization of the Albanian Muslim population left outside the Albanian borders under the occupation of the Serbian and Montenegrin Kingdoms, and the Greek one in the south, into Orthodox faith.
9. The proclamation of Albania's Independence with regard to their membership found the Albanian religious communities consolidated. In Albania there were consolidated two religions, Islam and Christianity, divided in 4 communities, the Sunni Muslims, the Shiite Muslims (the Bektashi), the Catholics and the Orthodox.
10. The Albanian statesmen and patriots of that time, aware of the danger that the foreign dependence of the religious communities presented to our national security, encouraged the national spirit and set up independent national centers for the Muslim Sunni community, in 1923, for the Bektashi community in 1922 and for the orthodox church in 1937.
11. For the first time in 1923, the Albanian statesmen drafted the law "On the religious communities" that defined the relations of the state with religion in line with the western model. The sanctioning of such principles, like the state's laicity,

freedom of religious faith and the right to change it, the equal treatment of religions, the detailed regulation of their funding, would have a positive influence in the consolidation of religious tolerance of our people, and in the strengthening of the Albanian state itself. These principles were re-sanctioned by the Kingdom in 1929.

12.The stance taken by the Albanian state against religion and religious institutions during 1966-1990 is unprecedented in the practice of any other state in the world. Albania became the first country in the world without religious institutions. This position went against the Marxist-Leninist strategy on the relation between the state and religion in the conditions of socialist construction. This strategy provided for an ideological war only and excludes the possibility of a forceful closure of religious institutions.

13.The closure of religious institutions, among others, created an irreparable deficiency of religious cadre. The interruption in the cycle of training for about 23 years would create an impoverishment of religious hierarchy and a vacuum of religious leaders. After 1990 this created many problems in the election of the first religious leaders and would open the way for the arrival of foreign clergy in Albania. The arrival of foreign clergy does not exclude the existence of representatives of extremist religious currents in their midst, and this presents a potential danger for our national security.

14.The law of 1923 "On religious communities", the Law of the Kingdom of Zog of 1929, and that of the socialist government of 1949, defined clearly the procedures for the election of the heads of the religious communities, financial supports of the communities, etc.

After the year 1990, with the freedom of religion, there was no legal regulation passed that would define the manner of election of the heads of our religious communities, and their funding. This situation is creating problems that are yet to

be repaired and that can be of consequence for the future of these communities, for our religious tolerance and our national security.

We recommend a swift drafting of a law on religious communities that can use as its basis the laws of 1923 and 1929.

15. Religious tolerance means to prevent the discrimination against any person with a different religion faith from yours, to respect the right for others to have a different religious faith.

In the political aspect, religious tolerance represents the public policy that guarantees the freedom and equality of the faith in relation with the state. This is related to some other concepts, which have to do with the relation of religion with state and politics, such as laicity, secularity, etc.

16. The total lack of the religious tolerance or the existence of religious exclusivism undermines internal security and can lead to the disintegration of a state; it is the cause of civil wars, of the crimes against mankind and genocide. This has happened in the Middle Ages, with the crusades, and also nowadays in some countries such as Lebanon or Bosnia.

For the Albanians, the religious tolerance is a national asset, created in the course of centuries by the people. There is recommended this be treated not as a untouchable asset.

17. When religious exclusivism becomes a ruling ideology and a state policy it becomes very dangerous. Such states present a threat to regional and global security. The case of Afghanistan is a concrete example.

18. Historically, the Catholic Church has lived in a permanent state of rivalry with political power. While the Orthodox Church on the contrary, has taken over a part of the attributes of the Byzantine State and lived in a strong symbiosis with it.

- 19.**The developments in Europe during the Renaissance encroached on the old relations between the state and the church and made necessary a new regulation of the role of religion in politics and remodeling of the relations between the church and the state. With the separation of the church from state, the Christian Europe legalized religious tolerance, and entered its course of modernization.
- 20.**When during the middle ages the Church was the real power and fanaticism and inquisition condemned to the stake anyone that went against religious dogma, the Muslim countries developed their culture and science. The Islamic golden age of Islamic intellectual life lasted from 850-1300.
- 21.**The end of the political, economical and religious splendor of Islamic Empire came as a result of the conflicts within the caliphates and the attack by the Mongols from the East and of European crusades from the West.
The invaders from the East, while embracing the faith of those they defeated; they followed the most fanatic variant and attacked the civilization and the philosophy of the development.
- 22.**The Ottoman Empire, the last of Islamic caliphates, headed by the Turks, while showing military valor, were not able to uphold the Arab civilization and when European civilization bloomed, because of their fanaticism they were not able to embrace it hence were left behind and became weaker.
- 23.**Islam came to Albania through the Turkish occupation. The Ottoman Islam had lost the vitality and dynamism of former Islamic empires that had developed science, culture, education and that had become centers of world culture.
The main changes that entered Europe in the way of modern developments, like the birth of nations, the use of languages, the development of national cultures, the separation of religion from the state and the creation of secular society were

denied to the Albanians during the rule of the Islamic caliphate causing serious problems in the affiliation and civilizing identity of the Albanians.

- 24.** Civilizations are distinguished from each other by their history, language, culture, and tradition and in major part by **religion**. The most identifiable civilizations and the most important ones are: *The western civilization*, which includes the Western Europe, England, Northern America; *the orthodox civilization*, with Russia as a leader state; *the Islamic civilization* that extends from Morocco to Indonesia; *the Chinese civilization* otherwise known as *Confucian civilization*; *the Japanese civilization*; *the Hindu civilization*, with India as its HQ, *the Latin-American civilization* and *the African civilization* that has still to be consolidated.
- 25.** Generally speaking, civilizations have served and do so again in our days as the main bases for various political, economical and military alliances and the axes of state integration.
- 26.** While European politicians do not admit the influence that religious affiliation plays in the EU integrating processes, it is a fact that the first countries that have been integrated or that are on the eve of integration are states of the Catholic part of Western Europe.
- 27.** In spite of the complicated position Albanians hold in the border crossing of civilizations, and while the Ottoman occupation distanced them from the western civilization, the identity of the Albanian civilization is an identity in a process of redefinition moving towards the west.
- 28.** The religious structure of Albanians today, which tilts more on the Muslim side, presents no obstacle to the redefinition of our civilization, because the Catholic faith, that forms the basis of the western civilization, since the declaration of our independence, has always enjoyed an equal status with the other faiths.

29.The western redefinition of Albanian civilizing identity has the support of our political and economical elite and of the Albanian people as a whole. This will be fully realized once Albania will be accepted in the western civilization, that is to say, when it becomes a member of NATO and EU.

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