

RELIGION AS A MARKER FOR ETHNIC GROUPS IN CONFLICT AND OF POLITICAL NATIONAL CONFLICTS

Abstract

The links between religion and ethnic and/or political dividing lines has manifested itself in many different ways in contemporary conflicts. In this paper I present briefly the following two forms: religion as a cleavage line of groups in ethno-religious confrontations: struggles between Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims in the Balkans; of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; of Sunni and Shia and Iraq; of Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka; of Muslims and Catholics in Indonesia; and religion as a mechanism for legitimizing power in the form of State Religions: National-Catholicism in Francoism, which is likely to generate the formation of the internal religious enemy.

Keywords: Politics, Religion, Ethnic groups, Nation, Political conflicts

Introduction

Since the years of the French Revolution, the transfer of the group psychology to the nation culminated in an irreversible process of a religious nature. The concept of the nation acquired an emotional charge which allowed it to demand enormous sacrifices, including that of one's own life, as religions do, when national sovereignty had to be defended against "the enemy", either internal or external (Shafer, 1964).

In fact, in modern societies the relation between religion and politics has not disappeared. An archaic Weberian mechanism of legitimation surviving in current states is that of sacralization. It consists of a fusion between the sacred and political power (even justice and the law in the West retain the imprint, in its language, symbols, form and rituals, etc. (Soulie, 1985), of the period in which law was the invention of priests. Power is the attribute of the majority group and, as such, it also therefore constitutes the sacred centre of society in the nation-state. According to Balandier (1981), "In every society, political power is not completely desacralized ... Whether it is visible or hidden, the sacred element is always present in the core of power. It is through this that society is conceived of as a unit." When the relation with God and salvation was desacralized by modernisation and societies became secular, the sacred did not disappear, rather it

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was displaced.

Let us look at peripheral national groups and their relation with religion. In Western Europe, three successive reactions have been produced related to the identity of ethnic groups. The first was the legitimist-reactionary mobilisation that began at the end of the XVII century in the United Kingdom with the Jacobites (from 1683 to 1750), it continued with the *chouans* of Brittany in the era of the French Revolution, and fostered, in the first half of the XIX century (from 1833 to 1876), the Carlist movement that took up arms against the weak liberalism of the Spanish nation-state (Seiler, 1996). The big chronological gaps are related to the differing dates in which the respective National and Industrial Revolutions were initiated in the three abovementioned states.

The second reaction, which took on a populist nationalist form, consisted in the use of the arsenal of nationalism by the periphery in its struggle against the centre. This phase produced the emergence, towards the end of the XIX century, of autonomist-nationalist parties, which aimed to obtain a self-governed ethno-territorial community.

The third form of identity mobilisations, the progressive-nationalist one, relevant in the 1960s and 1970s in different areas of the West, was born out of the combined effects of the economic expansion of those years and the repercussions for Europe of the de-colonisation processes. It was therefore the consequence of contradictory factors: the discrediting of racist nationalism provoked by fascism, the peak of the Third Worldist mimesis, European Federalism... This mobilisation was fostered by the post-industrial values of the generation of May 68 and the alternative movements -ecologist, feminist, and anti-militarist- born in its midst.

Religion was a powerful element of mobilisation in the first and second phases of ethnic reactions and was defended by the first ethnic mobilisations. In the second phase, the nature of centre-periphery national conflicts depended on their intersection with other rokkanian cleavage defined by Rokkan(1983) and Seiler (1989), mainly the state-church cleavage. This emerged when the secular state attempted to take away the church's monopoly of education.

We can also see religion at work in the current third phase of European national mobilisations. Although Western societies have become intensely laicised over the past half-century, religious factors continue to mark out differences in Protestant and Catholic civilisations. This historical religious division marks out ethnic groups in conflict even when religious practice is considerably diminished. This happens in Northern Ireland, where Republicans and Unionists continue to be identified, and to identify each other as Catholics and Protestants, despite many of their activists being personally agnostic. In Western European terms however, Northern Ireland is an exception to the rule in Western Europe, as linguistic differences tend to outweigh religious factors in national conflicts.

Examples include the conflict between the Walloon and Flemish groups in

Belgium, the Catalan, Basque and Galician nationalisms against the Spanish centre, and the Welsh and Scottish nationalisms against the British centre. The use of ethnic languages is widespread in Catalonia and Galicia, moderate in both parts of the Basque country, weak in Brittany and Corsica, considerably reduced in Occitania, Scotland and Wales, and non-existent in the Canary Islands. In Italy the ethnic consciousness of groups in South Tyrol and the Aosta Valley is based on German and French (Occitan) respectively, this is also the case in Sardinia with Sardo, although this language is less widely spoken. Northern Italy is experiencing efforts to revitalise the native languages in the ancient area of city states known as "Padania." In the conflict between Québec and the Canadian state, linguistic and religious differences run together in the confrontation between the French speaking Catholic and English speaking Protestant societies (Letamendia, 1997).

On the contrary, religious differences are more important in national conflicts in Eastern Europe. The official atheism of the former Soviet Union exacerbated their use as identity-markers. Whilst Lithuanian Catholicism, Estonian and Latvian Lutheranism and Georgian and Armenian paleo-Christianity have become factors in differentiation, Islam is the most important element of identity in the now independent former Federal Republics in the South and the East of the former Soviet Union. This is also the case in many of the non-Russian autonomous Republics.

In the Balkans, it is religion, matrix of frontiers with their origins in old civilisations, rather than language, that divides up the "Southern Slavs": see the conflict among Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats in Muslim Bosnia.

Interaction between religion and nationalism may be also real where shared religious beliefs and loyalties to the same Church are used in opposite ways concerning national identifications. This was evident during the Spanish Civil War in the conflict between Spanish national-catholicism and the very religious nationalism of the first Basque Nationalist Party.

Typology of Religious-Political Movements

The relation among religion, ideology and identity can provide us with a criterion for establishing a typology of these movements (Letamendia, 2013). It is well known that religious creeds are, along with political philosophies and theories –and often even before them–, inexhaustible quarries from which ideologies extract the pieces with which they construct their thought for action. It is equally clear that religions are a very important mark of identity for groups and individuals. This connection of the religious with ideology and identity has manifested itself in many different ways in modern and postmodern times:

- in ideological reelaboration of the religious as a sign of identity of a group that aspires to build a new state (for example, Zionism);

- in religion as a mechanism for legitimizing power in the form of State Religions (e.g., the link between Protestant fundamentalism and a certain conception of the State in the USA, or the Spanish National Catholicism in the Franco regime opposed to the popular Catholicism of the Basque nationalists);
- in *sensu contrario*, in religion as a factor to challenge a power considered illegitimate (seen in very distant cases as the Shiism in Revolutionary Iran, or the Liberation Theology);
- in civilizational religious reactions against foreign cultural domination (Islamic fundamentalism versus the West);
- in religion as a delimitation line of groups in ethno-religious confrontations.

Contemporary history is full of these cases: struggles between Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims in the Balkans; of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; of Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq; of Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka... These conflicts, emerged or exacerbated in postmodernism, are the negative and violent form of a phenomenon which in any case they confirm: the multicultural and plurinational nature of many of the present nation-states.

It can be noted that, with some exceptions (such as Zionism, sui generis fruit of modernity), political-religious conflicts have emerged, or have taken on an unprecedented intensity, in recent decades. These are times when, in the West, the weakening of the great secular ideologies of class struggle have left the field free to religious subjects as factors of mass mobilization. This disappearance of the Great Enemy (Old Regime and Tradition, class struggle and capitalism) fuels the multiplicity of ethno-national religious conflicts. In the Third World, religious fundamentalisms fill the void created by the end of the Revolutionary Wars (though anti-imperialist, inspired by finally Western ideologies), which takes place after the Vietnamese victory in 1975. Not a few of these movements are now directed not only against Westerners but also against the old native elites, now accused of corrupting the revolution.

The great variety of these movements imposes a selection of cases, whose order derives from the typology outlined above. Their presentation is not intended to describe the evolution of the historical processes that have led to today, but to explain (in a schematic way) the origin and nature of political-religious conflicts that have generated such movements (Letamendia, 2013).

Case Studies

Zionism

Political Zionism emerged as a response to European anti-Semitism, which was promoted by ideologies like Pan-Germanism. In 1896, Theodore Herzl, a Hungarian author, wrote "The Jewish State, in search of a solution to the Jewish

question.” He argued that the integration of Jews in nation-states had not got rid of anti-Semitism and that in reality quite the opposite had occurred. Accordingly, it was necessary to group the Jewish people into a territory, and create a Jewish state, which would be Palestine. Herzl admitted that this would confer in the Holy Places of Christianity a statute of extra-territorial nature, although he made no mention, from his closed centrist-Western perspective, of either the Arabs that inhabited the land or the Islamic religion. Zionism was officially born in 1897 at the World Constituent Congress of Bale. The Jewish community itself protested at Herzl’s ideas, but Nazi extermination camps soon eradicated such reservations. This led to Arab resistance (Chatelet, 1986).

The Jewish creation of the state of Israel through the physical act of occupying the Biblical lands inhabited up until then by Arabs (the Zionist justification for this occupation is not very different from that which encouraged the English puritans to establish the “Promised Land” in North American territory) represents the model for the foundation of a modern “national homeland”. The need to establish the new territory as Israeli explains the policy of purchase and colonisation of Palestinian land carried out by the Zionist organisation Keren Kayemeth Leisval (KKL). This organisation categorically denied Jews the option of transferring the land acquired, which became national property, in order to ensure that the land did not revert back into Arab hands.

Israel was so not formed as the state of its Jewish or Arabic citizens, it was rather the state of an unspecified Jewish people, the majority of whom did not live in it. The result was that it favoured Jewish immigrants and discriminated against Arabic citizens (Diner, 1987).

Spanish National-Catholicism versus Basque Nationalist Catholicism

At the end of the XIX century, the religious program of Sabino Arana, the founder of Basque nationalism, included three points: the independence of the Church and the state -priests, who should remain politically neutral, could not become affiliated as active members of the nationalist movement-; harmony between the Church and the state; and the subordination of the state to the precepts of the Church. This program was summarized in the slogans “We for Euskadi and Euskadi for God”, and “God and the old laws [*Jaungoikoa eta lege zaharrak*]” (Corcuera, 1979).

At the start of the Second Republic, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) put forward a synthesis in which “statutism” predominated. Its social policy consisted in denouncing the excesses of capitalism, the defence of industrial and agricultural private property, and proposing, on behalf of the working-class, a programme of social reforms based on the social doctrine of the Church; although during these years the PNV demonstrated, with regard to the Church hierarchy, a heterodoxy that was as clear as it was involuntary.

Indeed, during the II Republic its Catholicism made the PNV into the natural enemy of the Spanish right, whose ideology was already based on considering the national-catholic tradition as the essence of Spain. In 1931, Maeztu launched the theory of the Anti-Homeland (Anti-España) on the intellectual market: the Homeland is Spanishness, traditional catholicism in permanent action (Morodo, 1985). The Spanish forces grouped in the National Bloc displayed open enmity towards the peripheral nationalisms. In 1935, in the Spanish parliament, their leader, Calvo Sotelo, aggressively told José Antonio Aguirre, the Basque nationalist leader and future president of the Basque government, that, "... While you are concentrating there, with that uncouth sense that you often wish to mystify with Christian invocations, with invocations to God, which on your lips are an authentic blasphemy, because the sacred name of God can only protect the universal and the infinite, and that is Spain... I declare that to give you the Statute, in whole or in part, would be an authentic crime against the nation" (Díaz Plaza, 1969).

In 1936, the Francoist rebellion failed in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa. The singularity of the Basque government at the time of the Spanish civil war, in the course of which the Nazis bombed Gernika, was due to the hegemonic position the PNV occupied within it. The government opposed the execution of the rebels and was an ardent defender of the Church. Its social programme was, without doubt, the most moderate in the Republic. During the early days of Francoism the PNV strengthened its position in exile within European Christian Democracy, close to "catholic-regionalist" ideas, coming to occupy a predominant position within it.

The Spanish ecclesiastical hierarchy gave its blessing to the Francoist uprising from the beginning, defining it as a Crusade against atheism; this included the Bishop of Vitoria, Mateo Múgica. But the repression to which Basque priests and believers were subjected led him to first protest, and then shortly afterwards to go into exile. Numerous Basque priests detained in Gipuzkoa were executed, and even tortured before being killed; such was the case of father Ariztimuño "Aitzol". Bishop Múgica wrote a letter to Cardinal Goma in which he stated: "What is this? The parish priest of Mondragón and the other priests I knew so well murdered? Everyone in the army of Franco, from the supreme General downwards, should instead have kissed their feet" (Thomas, 1967). Perhaps because of these reports, Pope Pious XI, in spite of his support for the Francoist cause, refused to publicly condemn the Basque priests.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Church was the refuge of the Basque language and culture. Not the official Church: during these decades Francoism continued to base itself on national-catholicism, and until the late 1960s the Church hierarchy was one of the main supports of the regime. As is well known, the Concordat of 1953 institutionalized what had been a fact since 1941, that is, the episcopal appointments made by the Spanish government. Until the year 1968, the Bishops appeared as Ecclesiastical Governors of the Francoist regime.

The lower Basque clergy, on the contrary, preserved the memory of the per-

secution that many of its members had suffered during the Civil War, precisely because of their nationalist convictions: 16 priests had been executed, 278 imprisoned, 1,300 banished to distant dioceses. The imprisoned Basque priests who did not recognize that they were guilty of anti-patriotism and separatism were sent to concentration camps.

During francoism, the nationalist faithful's abhorrence of Spanish national-catholicism gave rise to a lower Basque clergy in open disagreement with the Vatican during the conservative papacies, and there have been frequent episodes of rebellion against the ecclesiastic hierarchy in the XXI century. This paper does not deal on the conflict between the Spanish State and ETA, since no religious motivation could be found on it. But its consequences have provoked often the following situation: Basque clergy versus Spanish State /Spanish Church sharing identical points of view on the Basque troubles.

At the start of the XXI century, coinciding with a hardening of the positions of the Spanish government of the Popular Party (PP) and the hegemony of Cardinal Rouco Varela's positions in the Spanish Episcopal Conference, a national-catholic integrism, updated and freed of its fascist adherences, once again became the instrument of a certain dominant conception of Spain. This found reflection in the reactions to the Pastoral Letter "Prepare peace" of the prelates Blázquez, Asurmendi, Uriarte and Etxenagusia of May 2002.

The Political Parties Act, which was introduced as part of the Anti-terrorist Pact in February 2002, was the most noticeable result of the hardening of positions. When the Act came into force it was instrumental in outlawing Batasuna, the party of left-wing Basque nationalism. Its authors claimed that the Act was merely aimed at preventing the complicity of a party with terrorism, by means of declaring it to be illegal; but the vague terminology and large number of articles of the Act were drawn up in such a way as to ensure that such relations could always be found when needed. The Act was opposed by the Basque Autonomous Government and reflected the opinion of the democratic majority of Basque society, but both therefore came under suspicion of being accomplices of terrorism.

The Bishops expressed the feeling of the Basque church regarding the Political Parties Act. Their concern regarding the impact that the Act could have on "the already seriously disturbed society of the Basque Country", an impact that "should be avoided", were common sense points of view that were shared by believers and non-believers, by the members of the nationalist parties but also by a substantial number of members of Basque non-nationalist parties.

The Bishops clearly defined ETA's terrorism as being "seriously negative", together with the fact of "collaborating with terrorist actions, harbouring them or defending them". They expressed their solidarity with the victims and the people being threatened, and explicitly mentioned the PP and Socialist Party (PSOE) municipal councillors: attacking a councillor, they said, was "a hard blow against democracy". But the President of the Spanish Government Jose Maria Aznar accused the three Bishops of being "morally perverted" (Letamendia, 2014).

The Pastoral Letter of the Basque Bishops affirmed: "Neither the aspiration for sovereignty nor the adhesion to greater or lesser self-government, nor the preferences for a more or less close integration in the Spanish state, are in principle political dogmas that require unconditioned acceptance".

The accession to the papal throne of the open-minded Pope Francisco might open the way for experiences that it is still premature to specify (Ezkerra Perujo, 1985; Iztueta, 1981; Lipuzkoa, 1985; Letamendia, 2014).

Protestant fundamentalism

"Fundamentalism" is a relatively recent term that was first used in the United States. Fundamentalists feel hostility towards the moral permissiveness of modern societies: gratification, emancipation of women, divorce, birth control, secular values to the detriment of religious in school education... Since the late 1960s they have entered politics in order to defend moral and religious values that they believe are threatened.

Protestant fundamentalism is rooted in the cultural fact that the United States made Protestantism (for a period that spreads remotely in time) a self-legitimizing ideology. From the arrival of the pilgrims to New England, powerful currents of Calvinist inspiration considered WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) a nation sponsored by God. From a biased reading of the Bible they saw as enemies to illustrated men, Darwinists, Freemasons, Jews, Catholics; and later, in the twentieth century, also to communists, homosexuals and feminists.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, theological controversies have appeared in public opinion: the United States, defender of Christianity against corrupt Europe, had to rescue it from Darwinism and Marxism. Expressions as "God's will" and "new kingdom of Christendom" were disseminated; fundamentalism presented a battle against Darwinian evolutionism in teaching. The tycoon Lyman Stewart financed from 1910 to 1915 the publication in 12 volumes of "Fundamental", work that tried to concentrate the essence of the Christian doctrine and that gave its name to fundamentalism. After World War I this epithet was impregnated of the fear that inspired the Bolshevik communism.

Until the decade of 1970s Protestant evangelists remained depoliticized. But some "liberation" movements started in the 1960s led them to bring the defenders of feminism and the rights of homosexuals along with drugs and por-

nography into the same bag, provoking their entry into politics. The New Christian Right created by this strategy gained enormous media power, controlling television networks, radios, newspapers, magazines, and creating universities and charities. Each group was autonomous but coalitions were formed, such as Moral Majority and The Christian Voice. Its aggressive and propagandistic format was intended to capture audience: the messages evolved from the invocations to God and Jesus to the rants on urban criminality and the threats against the nuclear family. They asked for money on television, fomenting the typically North American manifestation of the tele-evangelist, that is, the preacher who threatens, prophesies, and performs miracles on TV. The funding came mainly from the Biblical Belt formed by the poorest and deconsecrated states, the urban nuclei escaped their influence. Their political ideal was that of a strong government fearful of God.

Their discourse insists on the decline of American society, so that rights that go against God and tradition must be prohibited. For them, the path is in the Bible and they believe in a Manichaeian struggle of good and bad. While supporting the Reagan Republican party, Carter was identified with the advocacy of homosexuals. The Protestant religion encourages religious individualism not dependent on any hierarchy, as well as personal interpretation of the Bible, which is well suited to American television needs. But many Protestant groups (Methodists, Lutherans) have denounced the appropriation by the New Christian Right of the Bible, their populism and self-righteousness (Cañeque, 1998).

Theology of Liberation

It is a call to action developed over the last four decades and assumed by bishops, clergymen and laymen of the Catholic Church addressed to the poor and disinherited of the Third World in order to straighten out in the name of Christ the evils that afflict them: misery, illiteracy, exploitation, lack of power... Their inspiration came from the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and from a number of papal encyclicals and initiatives that called Christians to political action: the 1969 Medellín Encounter, the Charter Addressed to the Peoples of the Third World of 1976, the Council of Latin American Bishops in Puebla in 1979... However, liberation theology has promoted new forms of organization that question church hierarchies.

It has had particular impact on Indo-America: Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Nicaragua, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala... There, theories of "modernization" adopted by oligarchies and military dictatorships ended up being an instrument in the service of the economic dependence of these countries on North American capitalism. The Liberation Theology postulated that the cycle of dependency could not be broken except by undertaking deep reforms of the economy and society of a socialist character.

Traditionally, the Church conceived history as a moment in the lives of human beings, transient compared to eternal life. Orthodoxy, the maintenance of true faith beyond historical circumstances, was its main concern. Liberation Theology sees the Church as a vital agent for changing historical conditions: the Gospel and the role of Christ are seen as the historical basis for change. Orthodoxy, the correct belief, is replaced by ortho-praxis, the correct action. True faith, says Gustavo Gutierrez, stems from actions aligned with the teachings of Christ.

Liberation Theology holds that the poor, in Latin America and in the Third World in general, are the majority of the citizens: peasants, indigenous people, marginalized workers, suburban inhabitants, all of them illiterate and disorganized. Evangelization overlaps with the idea of social service, facing problems such as the lack of schools, hospitals, food or housing, as well as the exactions of civilian or military power. Religious tasks are thus associated with social tasks.

After the Second Vatican Council and its calls for social reform, *Christian* (or ecclesiastical) *grassroots communities* were developed –only in Brazil, 50,000 communities served four million Brazilians– which made the poor aware of the need to organize them by sectors: “Unions”, “Indigenous groups”, “peasant movements”, “feminist groups of action”, etc. Since the 1980s the Vatican has shown growing concern about the Marxist commitment of the clergy, supporting the option of Christian Democracy and its preference for the political struggle of parties and ballot boxes (Lois, 1986).

Islamic fundamentalism

Pan-Islamism emerged as both a defensive and political-religious reaction from a civilization, the Islamic one, that had been extremely powerful for centuries. Al Afghani was the first Pan-Islamic thinker in 1880, at a time of European imperialist advancement. Afghani’s criticisms of the Western ideas of industrial modernity and progress as barbarity and total amputation of the human being were similar to those that would be elaborated by the Frankfurt School half a century later. Afghani and his followers defended the preservation of Islam as a religious faith and as a historical-cultural coincidence of Islamic peoples, who should become brothers against the West. In 1928, the Muslim Brothers emerged in Egypt, and later extend themselves to the near East, striving for a return to the tradition of Islamic societies.

A new Islamism emerged from 1979 onwards. It was promoted by the Iranian Revolution, Shiite in nature and impregnated by the subversive and heterodox values of Shiites. The new Islamic tendency argued that the Caliphs, who succeeded Mohamed, became illegitimate by perverting the purity of Islam which had been preserved by Ali, the fourth Caliph, assassinated by the Omeyyan usurpers. Ali was the son-in-law of the prophet of which they were followers (whilst the followers of the Omeya, the majority, were the Sunnites). The Imams

succeeded Ali; and according to Shiite authority, the twelfth Imam, hidden by God from human sight, will return to earth at the opportune moment to restore God's Kingdom.

Therefore, whilst the Sunnis have historically been defenders of the established order, which they conceive as an emanation of the will of Ala, the Shiites consider all authority as essentially perverse, meaning it must only be obeyed if there is no other option. Moreover, their insistence on the martyrdom of the legitimate Caliph and on the future return of a hidden Imam (a dual thematic reminiscent of Christianity) has made Shiite the religion of the poor, who aspire to liberate themselves from an oppressive power; it is also the messiah-type dream of those who have nothing to lose and a lot to gain from radical social change.

Historically, Shiites have lost all their battles against Sunnite armies. The only country in which they triumphed was Iran, through the Safevies dynasty of Turkish origin. They brought with them the Shiite erudite, the Ulemas (or Ayatollahs), whose opinions on Islamic law – that make no distinction between religion, politics and society- achieved general respect. From 1892 the Iranian Ulemas headed all the mass movements that mobilised to oppose any alliance of the Iranian Kingdom with a foreign power, and especially opposed the Pahlevi dynasty, whose last Shah transformed the traditional monarchy into a modern pro-Western dictatorship.

The victorious Iranian revolution of December 1978 headed by Ayatollah Khomeini consecrated the triumph of the Ulemas. Khomeini was inspired by the philosophies of Chariati, also an Iranian theologian, who was assassinated in London in 1977. Chariati, who had made contact with the Algerian FLN in France, assimilated the Frantz Fanon concept of cultural alienation, and developed a political version of Shiite beliefs in the future appearance of Imam. Their wait would not be passive, but would consist in the revolutionary installation of a just society animated by the fear of God. This explosive cocktail of crypto-socialist ideology and subversive, pure and triumphal Shiism, that had become the dominant reference point for dispossessed Muslims, was relaced by a new cultural Islamic revolution.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, three events announced to the world the beginning of a new phase of political Islam: the Iranian revolution; the death of Egyptian leader Anwar-el-Sadat in 1981, who had signed the 1978 Covenant with Israel at the hands of the Islamic Jihad created in 1973, whose leader will be Al-Qaeda's future leader in the 1990s; and the coup d'état of pro-Soviet military personnel in Afghanistan, which triggered the Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union. The product of all this has been the Islamic cultural revolution which have been joined by groups from positions often radically opposing each other, such as Sunnis and Shiites. There are three social forces that support it:

- a pious bourgeoisie that finances it and gives it social weight when it sees in danger the culture and Muslim traditions, although it does not hesitate to ac-

cept the cultural changes that guarantee the continuity of those in a world that has become problematic;

- an unemployed radical youth: decolonization has led to their access to the education system, generating social and economic expectations that have been frustrated in almost all non-oil countries, making it a quarry for radical movements;

- Islamic intellectuals, Arabs or not, who have broken their ties with the traditional Ulemas, becoming the engine of cultural change, notably standing out Shiite Khomeini in Iran, as well as the Sunni Quotb in Egypt and Mawdudi in India / Pakistan.

The defeats of pan-Arabism in the wars against Israel of the years 1967-1973 have left the field free to political Islamism. The victory of the Saudi Arabian petro-dollars and the consequent expansion of Wahhabism in the Islamic world contribute to the expansion of the cultural revolution. Their successive violent expressions, some radically terrorist, the Taliban, Al-Quaeda, the DAESH, have shocked the world (Bruno, 1996; Chatelet, 2008; Djait, 1991; Letamendia, 1997, 2014; Lewis, 1991; Lopez Garcia, 1998; Rashid, 2001).

The Balkans

Slavs descended on the Balkan peninsula from the 7th century onwards. Up until that time the region had been occupied by the Greeks, Ilirios (the ancestors of the Albanians), Dacios (the ancient Romanians), and the Slav tribes of the Croats, Slovenians, Serbs and Bulgarians. The ancient division drawn up by the Roman Emperors in 395 between the eastern and western Roman Empires became the dividing line in the territory. Religiously, the destiny of Croats and Slovenians was tied in with Latin civilisation (which enveloped both Catholicism and Protestantism); politically, their destiny was first associated with the Charlemagne, then with the House of Hapsburg, and latterly with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Serbs and Bulgarians constructed their kingdoms in the territories of the Byzantine Empire, adopting its orthodox culture and religion, and became part of the Ottoman Empire in the 14th and 15th centuries.

Within the Ottoman Empire Muslims were the only citizens with full rights; initially they set up a military oligarchy that soon became an urban governing elite, that lived off the taxes charged to non-Muslim peasants. However, the Ottomans did not impose an ethnically exclusivist policy, and were more tolerant than the Christians of the age who created aberrations such as the Holy Inquisition. The Ottomans respected the life and religious beliefs of "The Men of the Book" (Jews and Christians). Across the region and especially in cities, the Ottomans reached an understanding with the respective religious authorities who, in accordance with the *Millet* system, were recognised as the political representatives of the ethnic communities.

Following the defeat of the Turks in 1683 at the entrance to Vienna, Ottoman political power declined. In the 19th century the Turks became the "West's sick man." Mid-century the Serbs became the first Slav people to gain autonomy from the Turks and, supported by the pan-Slavism of Russian Tsars; they defended the *Nacertanje*, a union of all Slavs in the Balkans against the Ottomans. "Yugoslavism" (the Union of Southern Slavs) was in reality a project of Croat intellectuals of the Austrian Empire, driven by the ideas of the French Revolution and the German *Aufklärung*. The project promoted both political unity and Serbo-Croat linguistic re-unification.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Bosnia-Herzegovina was 50 per cent Muslim (mainly concentrated in urban areas), 40 per cent Orthodox, and 10 per cent Catholic. Contrary to Serbs and Croats, Bosnians did not have their own project in the era of nationalisms. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, which occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1877 onwards, initiated a process of *Croatization* of the western zone, with numerous Catholic churches being built in Sarajevo. From this moment, associated identities of being Catholic and Croat, and Serb and Orthodox, emerged. The new project of Greater Croatia also emerged, opposed to Yugoslavism as the Greater Serbian project. The two projects were tied in with two respective "Big Brothers"- the former to Austria-Germany and the latter to Russia.

Following the defeat of the Austrian and Ottoman empires in the First World War Serb, Croat and Slovenian Kingdoms were set up, with Slav territories within each. However, intellectual Yugoslavism was quickly stifled by the Serbian centralism of King Alexander, who simultaneously provoked the emergence of the Croat Fascism of the *Ustachis* of Ante Pavelic. The Nazi occupation of the Balkans allowed the formation of the Greater Croatian satellite of Pavelic, which took in a large part of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Communist resistance group in the territory was the only group in Eastern Europe to defeat fascism without outside assistance. Accordingly, it subsequently challenged Stalin as much as it did the Western powers. The movement was led by Tito, a Croat and fervent follower of *Yugoslavism*. As a result, the Yugoslavian Constitution of 1946 was based on the equality of rights of the Federal Republics.

Tito's death in 1981 and the subsequent crisis of state socialism over the whole decade, pulled *Yugoslavism* back into a process similar to the fall of *Sovietism* of the former USSR. In the 90's direct confrontations followed between Croatia and Serbia, and between Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Catholic Croats, and Bosnian Orthodox Serbs. Ethnic cleansing became an interminable terror, because of the ethnic mixing of two historic processes: first the secular coexistence of ethno-religious groups in the Ottoman period, and, second the contemporary mobility of citizens promoted by Titoist development.

It would be unjust and incorrect however to put the disasters down "exacer-

bated nationalisms” on their own. When the Iron Curtain collapsed a new dividing line emerged in Europe, a line that separated Western-Latin civilisation from eastern and Orthodox civilisation. The guardians of the former were Germany and the Vatican, and of the latter, Russia. It was this re-establishment of the ancient dividing line that split the former Yugoslavia in two, left Muslim Bosnia with no clear leading ethnic group, and provoked the disaster of the 90’(Castellan: 1991); (Guezennec:1991; (Samary: 1993; (Palau: 1993; Vodopivec: 1994).

Northern Ireland

Ireland was Britain’s oldest colony. In the Modern Age “plantations” were the property of Protestants, Catholics were subject to a range of legal exclusion measures; however, what the English had established was a colonial economy for the exclusive benefit of the metropolis, to the equal detriment of Catholics and Protestants. For this reason, the 1798 rebellion, which took place in the wake of the American and French Revolutions, was led by Protestants.

But the struggles in the 19th century in favour of Catholic emancipation and, above all, for ownership of the land, which was in Protestant hands, made Irish nationalism into a Catholic movement. In mid century, the first armed group, the Fenians, emerged simultaneously in Dublin and New York, where thousands of Irish had emigrated, decimated by the Great Famine. Out of this armed tendency, supported by a strong Catholic peasant movement, Sinn Féin, initially a conservative organisation, emerged at the end of the century. The support of British Liberals for “Home Rule,” or Irish self-government, led to a reaction on the part of Unionist nationalism of the Protestants of Ulster, the industrial north-east of the island.

During Easter 1916 there was a rising led by Sinn Féin, allied to James Connolly’s Marxists; the British sent sixteen of the leaders to the firing squad. This brought about the electoral victory of Sinn Féin, the proclamation of the Republic of Ireland, the formation of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the military wing of Sinn Féin, and to the start of the War of Independence. This culminated in partition, that is the division of Ireland on the basis of an artificial border, drawn up to separate the Free State of the south from six of the nine counties of Ulster, in the north-east, dominated by a clear Protestant demographic majority. While the south became a Republic, in the north, Catholics were discriminated against in their civil rights and access to employment. The IRA continued to maintain a strong presence in the north although its campaign lacked widespread Catholic support.

At the end of the sixties, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and the repression to which it was subject by loyalist paramilitary groups, the Unionist police and the British army, deployed in 1969, radicalised the IRA and led to the suspension of Stormont, the regional Parliament. The nationalist com-

munity diversified; the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), led by John Hume, became the majority Catholic party. Unionism also became fragmented, with anti-Catholic terrorism emerging that was destined to intensify its activities from 1985 onwards, the year in which London recognised Dublin's right to intervene, to some degree, in those Northern Irish affairs that were of common interest to the whole island.

These developments, added to pressure exercised by the European Union, and above all, by the powerful Irish-American lobby in the United States, gave rise to a joint SDLP-Sinn Féin initiative in 1993. This was followed by a new London-Dublin Agreement, which recognised the double right of self-determination of both Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland in its entirety. After the end of the IRA ceasefire in February 1996, the new Stormont Agreement May 1997 opened the way to the beginning of the conflict resolution (Freres du Monde: 1972; Coogan: 1987; O'Dowd: 1990; J. Lee: 1992; Garvin, 1994; Letamendia, 1997).

The Buddhist Singalese versus Hindu Tamils conflict in Sri-Lanka

The Buddhist Singhalese majority has maintained hegemony over Sri Lanka since independence in 1948, and had discriminated against the Hindu Tamil minority, which included Tamils indigenous to the isle and Tamils from Dravidian southern India who were forced to migrate there by the British in the 19th century. The institutionalisation of populist Singhalese Buddhism in the 1972 Constitution was the catalyst for the emergence of radical Tamil nationalism. This bolstered the post-1975 formation of a number of radical armed groups, of which the Tamil Tigers was the most well known.

The ethnic polarisation that followed, the establishment of Tamil bases on the northern Jaffna peninsular, the anti-terrorist measures adopted by the government of Sri Lanka, and the mass exodus of Tamil refugees to the Indian province of Tamil Nadu, provoked Indian Government intervention through the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987. The Accord forced the establishment of territorial Provincial Councils in Sri Lanka with the objective of addressing Tamil demands. However, the establishment of a Tamil state in these provinces led to its dissolution by the government of Sri Lanka, and the withdrawal of Indian troops, who had been besieged by both sides. The conflict continues today (Bastian, 1994).

The Punjab Sikhs

The Indian sub-continent provides a good example of a civilisation that has suffered discrimination at the hands of the West. Indian political destiny, however, has been very different to that of the Arab world, due to the sub-continent's early and exclusive colonisation by the British, which prevented the fragmenta-

tion common in such cases. The Indian state-civilisation, which is made up of numerous Indian and non-Indian linguistic groups, is integrated by the multi-ethnic denominational Congress Party. Religion is the only divisive factor in the state.

A number of ethno-national movements have emerged in post-colonial India, the most violent of which shook the Punjab, a region of Sikh denomination. The Government's refusal to grant the moderate religious and socio-economic demands of the Akali Dai, a Sikh denominational party, provoked a more radical approach and led to the occupation of the Golden Temple in Amritsar by the movement's most extremist wing. In an effort to win-over the Hindu majority Indira Gandhi sent in troops to take the Temple in 1984, massacring its occupants. Following the assault Gandhi herself was assassinated by Sikhs among her own bodyguards. A pogrom against all Sikhs in India ensued, and a full-blown conflict commenced in the Punjab (Bianco, L.(1984; Gupta, 1995

Conclusions

With some exceptions (such as Zionism, *sui generis* fruit of modernity), political-religious conflicts have emerged, or have taken on an unprecedented intensity, in the postmodern years. These are times in which, in the West, the weakening of the great secular ideologies of class struggle have left the field free to the religious as a factor of mass mobilization. This disappearance of the Great Enemy (Old Regime and Tradition, class struggle and capitalism) fuels the multiplicity of ethno-national religious conflicts.

In the South, religious fundamentalisms fill the void created by the end of the Revolutionary Wars, anti-imperialist, yes, but inspired by finally Western ideologies; Which took place after the Vietnamese victory in 1975. Not a few of these movements are now directed not only against the Westerners but also against the old native elites accused now of having corrupted the revolution.

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Франциско Летамендиа

РЕЛИГИЈА КАО ОЗНАКА СУКОБА ЕТНИЧКИХ ГРУПА И СУКОБА ПОЛИТИЧКИХ НАЦИЈА

Сажетак

Веза између религије и етничких и/или политичких разлика се показала у неколико облика у савременим конфликтима. У овом раду аутор кратко представља две форме: религију као линију распеца међу групама у етно-религијским сукобима: борбе између католика, православаца и муслимана на Балкану; католика и протестаната у Северној Ирској; сунита и шиита у Ираку; будиста и хиндуса у Шри Ланци; муслимана и католика у Индонезији; али и религију као механизам легитимације моћи у облику државне вере: национал-католицизам за време Франка, који сам формира свој унутрашњем верског непријатеља.

Кључне речи: политика, религија, етничка група, нација, политички конфликт

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