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KHOMEINI'S POLITICAL-RELIGIOUS APPROACH OF THE 'IRANIAN NATION'

Abstract

The geographical position of Iran as a transit country between the Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus, makes the Islamic Republic of Iran a new geo-strategic factor with main influence to the future of the Islamic world and international world system. The *Welayat-e-Faqih* imposes serious changes in the government and society. Renovation of Islamic dogmas and their adaptation to changing conditions of the social-political life is the challenge to the Shiite clergy, who firmly follow the practices established by Imam Khomeini. His revolution carries not only the spirit of the Iranian modernization but also the pathos of social democracy. The "Theo-democratic" government is based on both the Islamic and democratic principles, and it can be said that due to the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini, a unique new project – the national-Iranian project is arguably developed. There are the three aims of this project: the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and national prosperity of the country, intended to protect Muslims and establish Islamic government based on the Shi'ite principles. The Islamic revolution is an important event not only for Iran but also worldwide. It makes the people to rethink the current relation religion – politics, giving the first serious notice of taking political power by Islam.

Keywords: Khomeini's approach, politics, religion, Iranian nation

The year 1979 is essential for both the course of history (the epoch of market-conditioned globalization starts from this time) and the international relations and intellectual landscape of the Old Continent. The quick distribution of the Marxist ideas and regimes after the World War I is aimed to offer people a new type of faith – the faith in a justice, egalitarian and possible political order. However, in the middle of the 70's of the last century people are already disap-

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pointed from promises and resent the mechanically planted foreign models and values, which have nothing to do with the traditional ones. The revolution in Iran is based on the desire for the preservation of the traditional values and not the utopian ones. Ayatollah Khomeini is a political phoenix. The records of his speeches in Paris during his expulsion cause an emotional response among the exalted crowd in Iran. He appeals for effectiveness, the return to tradition and common sense, an enlarged role of state and a social state. However, the idea for moral renovation stands above all. The Islamic revolution is a drive for Iran – the country with functioning theocracy together with democratic practices, a secular middle class (which is actively included in the cultural life of the country) and the population, which firmly believes in the ideas of the Ayatollah Khomeini. Modernism and reforms go together with conservatism and deeply rooted traditions, and a society, which is thirsty for knowledge and open to new ideas and thinking, is developed.

The Oriental concept of Shi'ite system *Siyasat* differs from the western concept of politics that is a mainly administrative affair aimed at the preservation of current state. The Shi'ite system of government includes the concept of leadership, and the Islamic realities – *Umma* and *Imamat* – fit the Oriental tradition of understanding of politics. The Shi'ites consider themselves defenders of the *Oneness of God* (*Tawhid*) and the *God's justice*.² The God's predestination has to be viewed as preset – God knows the people's acts provisory and they are written in the book of human destinies. The dogmas of the need of the Imam presence and his impeccability are also based on the *Mutazilit* preconditions: following the principle of the God's justice, it is concluded that He is responsible for the provision of a spiritual leader of humankind in each epoch, and the latter cannot make mistakes leading people to the correct way of salvation. The Shi'ite exegesis³ proposes a replacement of the word *Umma* (religious community) with the graphically similar Arab word *A'imma* (Imams) in some places in *Qur'an*. Thus, the Shi'ite exegesis turns into a protest aimed to the establishment of the Imam's authority.

The concept of the *Imamate* radically differs from the Sunni understanding of the *Imam-Caliph*. This is the very concept of *Imamate* that is key for the *Shi'ism*. In the Sunni, the *Imam-Caliph* does not have sacred qualities and is not an authoritative teacher; for the Shi'ite, the *Imam*, with the embedded in him divine qualities, is a spiritual leader and teacher, the successor of the Prophet's dignity. Also, impeccability – *Isma*, in speech and actions is immanent for him.⁴

The Shi'ite theologians underline that the question is for the godlike reflection in the *Imam* rather than the *Imam* deification. Ordinary people, who are too far from the details of theological debates, perceive this as a complete deifica-

2 Ignac Goldziher, *Lectures on Islam*, Moscow, 1912, p. 209.

3 Exegesis – a section of theology that refers to the establishment and interpretation of the texts of holy books, i.e., the Bible in Christianity and *Qur'an* in Islam.

4 Ignac Goldziher, *Lectures on Islam*... p. 192.

tion (Hulul) of the Imam. This view is followed also by the extreme Shi'ites. Thus, the Shi'ite Imamites require a belief in the Imam as a specifically chosen by God, a carrier of a divine particle and an impeccable teacher, who leads believers to eternal bliss, from their followers. In the Shi'ite, the knowledge of the real Imam and the adherence to him is a necessary condition for salvation. Even if the Imam opinion differs from the people's internal persuasion, they must choose the former as an obvious and unquestionable truth. Human feelings are changeable and unstable. Even the achievement of *Idjmaa* proceeds upon the Imam's will and assistance. Goldziher characterizes the difference between the Sunni and Shi'ite Islam comparing the former with a church, which is based on *Idjmaa*, and the latter – with the church, which is based on authority.⁵

The Shi'ites believe that the Imam should possess a secret knowledge, which covers religion, esoterica and world history. This knowledge was revealed to Ali, and then it is delivered also to other Imams. It comprises both the hidden meaning (Batin) of Qur'an and all secret events in human history, from Adam to the Day of Resurrection. The Imam is familiar with the future events and actions. Accordingly, the Imamites develop the concept of the so-called *gayba* – a state, in which the chosen by God Imam lives in a hidden mode, which can continue for long, whereby he is allowed to become evident from time to time, however, only for selected people (e.g., religious tutors) so as to give them advice and messages. By doing so, a hidden Imam monitors the destiny of his own religious community and manages it invisibly. According to the majority of the Shi'ites, especially in the Imamites, the idea of the return *Raj'a* of the hidden Imam overlaps the idea of the coming of Mahdi, who will come with the end of the world. In the Shi'ites, coming of Mahdi is turned to an important dogma. Mahdi must continue the Prophet's work, restore Islam in its original form and the oppressed by the Sunni Caliphs theocracy. Parallely, his mission is to restore justice and peace on the earth, remove tyrants and tyranny as well as violence people against the people. For this reason, Mahdi is called *Sahib as-Seif*, or the "*master of sword*".

The Islamic modernists want to create a new worldview (*Weltanschauung*) that is open to modern social challenges and regenerates religion. The religious modernists answer this sociocultural trend. They increase the Islamic component towards the Islamic national identity and rely on a social-economic development and modernization without dependence on the West. Religious modernism provides a framework for analysis of the problems of the time.⁶

The Shi'a "rational-epistemic" scheme used reason to extend the law to the

5 Ibidem, p. 200.

6 For detailed remarks about specifics and characteristics of Islamic modernism see: Hamilton A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam*, Octagon Press, 1972; John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, Syracuse University Press, N.Y, 1984, pp. 32-59; Rahman Fazlur, *Islamic Modernism: Its scope, Method and Alternatives*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1970, pp. 317-333; Rahman Fazlur, *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism*, Oneworld Publications, Oxford, 2000; *The Cambridge History of Islam, Islamic Society and Civilization*, P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds.), Vol. 2B, Cambridge University Press, reprint 1982, pp. 632-656.

new territories and for rationalizing existing jurisprudence. Logic was used as instrumental in grounding legal theory within a system of knowledge, a system that was already recognized in the discipline of theology. Shi'a jurisprudence is an effective instrument of changes. Shi'a Islam produces various legal solutions and trends regarding the place and the role of religion in the modern world.

A distinguishing feature of the traditional Ulemma is the minimization of the role of the political Islam at the account of the authoritarian notion of government. The Islamic traditionalism appears due to the need of an explanation of correlation between Islam and different aspects of modernity in the Shi'ism. The Islamic traditionalism defends the Islamic legal tradition and opposes the European influence. Their task is to impose the Islamic legal system instead of harmonization of religion and modernity. The Majlis is defined as „...the great Islamic house of consultation established through the efforts of hujjat al-Islams (*hujjat-al-Eslām*, the proofs of Islam)”.⁷ Traditionalists avoid the use of modern words such as worldview and hermeneutics as neologisms for Western terms but they adopt them in order to confirm their traditionalists arguments. For example, Motahhari treated the concept of “tawhid” and “worldview” from the point of view a theologian where Tawhid refers a priori to the Essence of God in His unity and where the attribute are considered as a means to perceive and know the Essence of God.

To understand better the Ayatollah Khomeini's philosophical-political views, the ideological heritage of the so-called „architects of the Islamic revolution”, who formed the period 1953-2000 – Bazargan (1907-1995), Taliqani (1910-1979), Tabatabai (1903-1981), Morteza Motahhari (1920-1979) should be presented.

The political work of Mehdi Bazargan *Prophetic Mission and Ideology*⁸ is a reflection of the 1979 ideological struggle, in which the author shows arguments from the sphere of the traditional Islam, the Islamic modernism and liberal discourse. The creation of an alternative ideology, which is not a pure imitation of foreign ideologies and thoughts, is very important. For him, a similar alternative is the divine ideology, which is based on the prophetic mission of the Prophet Mohammed. The divine law warrants human salvation; it determinates the main laws, through which the Muslim community must be governed. Thus, a perfect state is based on the Islamic ideology, which in turn is based on the divine law and the people's democratic participation. The guarantor of order and legality in the society is the good government of the Divine Kingdom on the earth and therefore, he shows examples from historic events in Shi'ism such as the Imam Ali's fight against Amr (The Battle of al-Khandaq).

This ideology must capably combine Islam with the principles for democratic government. For him, Islam, since its beginning, is based on faith, the social and political actions. The Shi'ism entire history is the history of resistance to despotism, which will be stopped with the appearance of the twelfth Imam.

7 Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent. The ideological foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, Routledge, New York, 1993.

8 Mehdi Bazargan, *Bi'that wa Idi'uluzhi* (Prophetic Mission and Ideology), Mashhad, Tulu, 1345/1966, p. 80.

Religion defines the goals and principles of government and its manipulation by politicians to fulfil foreign goals should not be allowed.⁹ The Umma must care for the participation in political life, government and power (*welayat*). The legitimacy of the Islamic state is based on the notion of "*Welayat*" which for Bazargan meant the delegation of authority from the people to their representatives.¹⁰ The legislative activity of the people is limited to the implementation of these basic rules in everyday life and to legislating secondary and executive laws. While people select their rulers, the latter should justify the trust that is placed in them. However, the people's participation is not reduced to this and they must actively participate in decision making.¹¹

These Ayats witness the solidarity and cooperation that are expected from the Islamic community. The Qur'anic prescription of "*mashwarah*" (consultation) and the idea for shared rights and responsibilities have key roles.¹² This concept is certainly not in contradiction with the principle of "*Welayat*". Qur'anic verses were adduced to prove the necessity of the principle of Shura: "...and consult [them in affairs]. Then when thou has taken a decision put thy trust in God." (3:159; 42:38) Those verses are the basis of a ruler's duty to consult. A specially chosen body including clerics (who are selected by people) fulfils the role of a consultative authority. Its decisions must follow Qur'an, the Hadiths and reason to prevent contradictions between government and the Umma, the executive and judicial authorities. This idea is inspired by the first Iranian Constitution, which warrants this role to the Ulemma. People must be united and cease any efforts for division, since Islam is a fixed, unified entity.¹³

The necessity of establishing a consultative system of government as well as the role of the community in decision-making were emphasized by the Muslim modernists.¹⁴ What is the place and role of the people and local committees in decision-making?

Taliqani is the figure who develops social-economic problems and constitutional limitations on authoritarian power. For him, democracy and constitutionalism are successive steps for the Islamic ideal achievement. He criticizes concentration of power as a form of idolization, which is adverse to Tawhid (the God's Oneness). The goal of all prophetic missions was to free man from the slavery of obeying other human beings.¹⁵ Any school of thought, any social program and

9 Mehdi Bazargan, *Marz-i Miyan-i Din wa Umm-i Ijtima'i* (The Borderline Between Religion and Social Matters), Book Distribution Center, Houston, 1355/1976, pp. 29, 33.

10 Bazargan Mehdi, *Bi'that wa Idi'uluzhi*... pp. 115-116, 159.

11 Qur'an 42:38, 3:159.

12 See Holly Quran, Surah Aal Imran, Verse 159, S., 1997

13 Mehdi Bazargan, *Bi'that wa Idi'uluzhi*... pp. 168-169.

14 Fazlur Rahman, "The Principle of Shura and the Role of the Ummah in Islam", in: *State, Politics and Islam*, Mumtaz Ahmad (ed.), American Trust Publications, Indianapolis, 1986, p. 92.

15 Abdul-Hady Hairi, *Shi'ism and constitutionalism in Iran: A Study of the Role Played by the Persian Residents of Iraq in Iranian Politics*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1977.

platform, which limits the power and will of the tyrants is one step closer to the aim of the prophets and Islam – establishing Tawhid on Earth.¹⁶ The developed by him levels of legitimate power in Islam are intriguing – the first one is universal and belongs to God, the second one belongs to the God’s Will, which is expressed under the form of rules and laws directing the physical world, the third one is the will of prophets and Imams, whose plans should be subordinated to the God’s Will. These are gifted with “*spiritual infallibility*”.

The fourth state of authority is to be exercised by the just “Ulama” and just believers who must be knowledgeable in both the primary (usul) and secondary (furu) principles of religion and in whose hands rest the affairs of the society.¹⁷ His primary goal was the ideological and revolutionary mobilization of mass sentiment¹⁸ and Divine Sovereignty and the unity of divine laws which rules the whole universe. His theory of political power is based on philosophical fundamentals. Policy is an integral part of Islam and the Umma participation in it is a necessity. The community of Muslims must be governed by qualified persons who are able to develop their potential “*to become the vicegerent of God on earth*”.¹⁹ He believed that earthy sovereignty resides in the masses of Muslims under the guidance of the Ulama. After the God, the rightful rulers were the Prophet Muhammad and the Twelve Imams. All men are responsible for executing the divine law.²⁰ The only legitimate political authority is one which is religiously defined.

He had developed understanding of certain democratic measures manifested in God opposition to one-man rule both in politics and religion (A part titled *Centralization and De-centralization of Religious Authority and the Fatwa* to the comments to the collected book “*Baḥthi dar barah-i marja’iyat wa ruhaniyat*”). He reminds Mujtahid-i a’alam (the most learned jurists) that they are responsible for providing the legal representation and solution of ongoing problems. Ijtihad (ejtehād) constitutes the *raison d’être* of the clergy (ruhaniyun) in Muslim society.²¹

Supreme religious authority might function on 3 ways: (1) Centralization of this authority in one or few high-ranking mujtahids; (2) Absence of any kind of centralization and organization, and (3) Centralization of the authority in a committee that works through consultation.²² He rejects the first and second variants but supports the idea for Ijtihad and Fiqh, which are confirmed with the Ayat.²³ In fact, he supports the idea for a council (variant 3) of religious leaders who con-

16 More detail how to establishing “Tawhid” in Islam see Taliqani’s introduction to Na’ini’s *Tanbih al-Ummah*, p. 10.

17 Ibidem, p. 9.

18 See: Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent. The ideological foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New York University Press, New York, 1993, p. 232.

19 *Some Rays From the Qur’an*, Vol. 1, Instishar, Tehran, 1350/1971, p. 118.

20 *Jihad wa Shahadat* (Struggle and Martyrdom in Islam), The Institute for Research and Islamic Studies, Houston, 1986, pp. 65-66.

21 *Baḥthi dar Barah-yi Marja’iyyat wa Ruhaniyyat*, Tehran, Intishar, 1341 AH (solar), 57, cited in: Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* . . . pp. 201-202.

22 Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* . . . p. 203.

23 Qur’an 9:122.

duct the affairs of the Shi'a community through consultation and on the basis of their collective consensus.²⁴ His main concern – to establish a practical mechanism through which lower-ranking Ulama and those clerics in remote provinces could make their particular concerns and opinions heard and participate in the making of the final collective consensus.²⁵ Being driven by the idea for diffusion of political power also in the periphery, he prepared a plan of local administrative committees, known as “shuraha-ye mahalli”, which function as autonomous executive bodies in every settlement and represent the needs of small social groups to the government.

The first Islamic modernists such as Mehdi Bazargan and Mahmud Taliqani presented Islam in general terms as a way of cultural self-realization and a cure for the moral decay caused by modernization. How to rule, what kind of government the Islamic Republic should be? Mortaza Motahhari is a leading name in the ideological preparation of the 1978-1979 revolution in Iran. In his book *Ashina'i ba 'olum-e islami. Osul-e fiqh wa fiqh*, he provided perhaps the first general introduction to the subject of legal theory in modern Persian. His goal was to prepare a new outfit for traditional religious beliefs which would be competitive with modern Western ideologies but preserve the faith of youth in the struggle with secularism. He believes that society needs a leader to govern and to administer it (the best model is Imam Ali's government) and to guide also to perfection (hidayat). In his book “*Imamat wa Rahbari*” describe political authority to be an indispensable part of the doctrine of Imamate.²⁶ Democracy, rights of individuals, freedom were all inherent in Islamic government but Islamic democracy means freedom of humanity and associates the concept of political freedom with tawhid.²⁷ Applying the Qur'anic verse 3:64, he mentions tawhid as freedom in both the individual and social aspects of human life.²⁸ In this way he justified Ayatullah Khomeini's opposition to the suggested name for the country, i.e. Islamic Democratic Republic of Iran and his insistence on Islamic Republic of Iran. He advocated intellectual tolerance because equality is a synonymous with justice, especially social justice preached and practiced by Imam Ali.

Does “*welayat*” belong to all Muslims, to the just believers or to the faqih?²⁹ Tabataba'i does not politicise and ideologise Islam and finds that Islam should

24 Dabashi Hamid, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* . . . pp. 207-208.

25 Ibidem, pp. 210-211.

26 Mut'ahhari Murtadhā, *Imamat wa Rahbari* (Imamat and Leadership), 7th ed., Sadra, Qum, 1367/1988, pp. 46-63, 67-85; Murt'adhā Mut'ahhari, *Insan-i Kamil* (The Perfect Man), Intisharat-i Islami, Qum, 1362/1983, pp. 20-37.

27 Murt'adhā Mut'ahhari, *A Collection of Master Mut'ahhari's Notes, Speeches and Interviews*, 2nd ed. Intisharat-i Islami, Qum, 1361/1982, p. 78. The book is a collection of lectures delivered in the early 1978 during the first 2 months following the Iranian Revolution.

28 Murt'adhā Mut'ahhari, *Insan-i Kamil* (The Perfect Man) . . . p. 35.

29 According to Allameh Tabatabai by faqih he means the person who is learned in all the primary and secondary religious sciences and in ethics (which was the original sense of the word in early Islam) as opposed to the current sense of the word applied to one who is learned only in the secondary sciences.

not be identified with socialism, which, according to him, puts a great emphasis on the material side of human life omitting the most important component of humanism – spirituality (ma'naviyyat).³⁰ Community needs government (welayat) [Persian language – sarparasti], and the ruler's will and intelligence prevail his own ambitions for governance. The Islamic society is the society of virtues and knowledge, and it cannot choose its desires instead of truth and justice. It is important who will govern but not how. The governors must follow the Prophet's model of government and the leading person must be a devotional, good manager and have required knowledge for the society; these ideas approximate him to al-Farabi. That is why, he puts an emphasis on 3 specific aspects of the Prophet Mohammed's political practice: the denial of "class privileges"; all people are equal before law; the laws are applied by governors after consultation with the Advisory body (Shura).³¹ The knowledge of modern norms of equality and public participation is set in Islam. Nevertheless, the spiritual freedom leading to godliness is important, rather than political freedom in its modern scope. Only Islam is capable of leading humanity on the road of progress, satisfying both its material and spiritual demands. This can be achieved through the system of government – "welāyat-e faqih", which is the "only soul through which a society is alive".³²

Imam Khomeini forms the vision of the political leadership, which should be in the hands of leading religious scholars, since they are the people who are able to fight against corruption and social stagnation. Having a clear vision for the future of Shiism and Iran, he speaks about a Shi'ism of a new type, as a person who received a direct knowledge of the truth. With his way of thinking and under the influence of the illuminated, following the tradition (Sunna), Islamic law (Fiqh), Khomeini uses moral philosophy in conjunction with a logical notion to solve current problems, initiating practical changes in government. For many decades, the powerful secular ideas such as pan-Arabism, Baathism, and revolutionary Marxism, dominate policy in the Middle East, and their policy rhetoric turns to a second nature of the regional intellectuals.

The Khomeini's unique effort to implant an Islamic theocracy on the body of a modern national state is supported also by the trends, which are accumulated in the Islamic world for many years. They erupt in 1979 to turn into an irreversible reality. The events from 1979 teach us that people are always ready to adopt a new inspiring idea for the future, especially if it is represented as a moral cause against dark forces, which plot against the identity traditional sources, against the „natural“ order of events. Without trying to form a new theological-philosophical ideology, Khomeini uses dogmatics to extract theoretical heritage, as an additional charge for changes, from it. The science of "Kalam" facilitates the revival of moral spirit, which represents a return to the spirit of philosophy,

30 Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran*... pp. 91-93.

31 Ibidem, pp. 98-99.

32 Ibidem, pp. 93-94.

which draws its notions from the “pure thoughts”, the component of a moral awakening of nation and restoration of the sensation of belonging to history, in accordance to the moral spirit. His concept of nation is linked with the evolution of “Kalam”. He uses Qur’an since the latter follows a way that differs from other sacred books and provokes the development of deep conviction in its veracity and rightness. Religion is reduced to two main principles: the God’s Oneness, which does not divide people, and the unity of belief and reason, referring this unity within the frameworks of tradition. In Khomeini, a new attitude to religion, which is not simply a system of beliefs, but the system of the theoretical and practical principles for the achievement of a moral and historical truth about Islam, is found. Islam supports all the virtues, which are developed in the course of global history, practically resurrects forgotten moral rules and norms, and hence, it is not in contradiction with the norms, which give rise to order, legality and justice. Otherwise defining, Islam is an assembly of moral virtues, order and benefit, which induces people to create a wise and fair world as the God’s creatures. Therefore, Qur’an and Sunnah are fundamentals and the main sources of knowledge, which warrant the ideal life at the social, public, governmental, cultural and political levels, setting the required norms, to which the believers must adhere.

The Shi’ite clergy relies on the committed to policy Islamic dogmatics for unifying and integration of Muslims and the protection of moral-legal norms. The “Rahbar” (Governor of IRI) must care for the justification of taken decisions from the point of view of the moral and spiritual aspects, which will have a creative force to unite people, build the inter-religious and international relations, in which moral justice takes a central place. This is achievable only when the God’s origin, which ensures spirituality of human steps, according to which people will be judged in the after-world, is present in human behavior. The Shi’ite theologians openly speak about the hypocrisy of the West and America, the lack of spirituality in western politicians, which is the main defect of western civilization. Modern Shi’ite theologians criticize western consumption society, satisfying its material demands at the account of the spiritual, and completely rely on religious-philosophical theory for the God’s Oneness (Tawhid) and „Welayat-e-Faqih“ as the key points of the heritage of Imam Khomeini, for whom purification of spiritual world is a basis of real knowledge. They refer to the slogan that was elevated by Imam in the course of the Islamic revolution (1978-1979) that all acquired knowledge is harmful until human soul purifies by the God’s grace and wisdom. „*When speaking about great spiritual men, not only their social and political behavior or their lessons to the others are important, but also their way of life as the model for imitation*“,³³ is written in the preface to the collection of reports on Khomeini “*The Life of Ruhollah*”, which is dedicated to the life and work of Imam and his family as the model for the people, who search for inspiration.

The merit of Imam Khomeini is in the liberation of hidden energy of the gen-

33 Akbar Ali Sabzian, *The Life of Ruhollah*, transl. B. Todorova, ed. Cultural Department of Islamic Republic of Iran, 2016, p. 9.

eral population and its mobilization in the struggle with foreign influence. The downtrodden classes are the drive of the Iranian revolution. In the center of this revolution, Imam sets the problem of the modern Iranian citizen and the issues associated with his social care. All of this is set on a religious plane where Islam assumes the factor of subjectivity and acquires a universal significance for other sociums and cultures. Around him a circle of lawyers and theologians, who are competent on religious-philosophical questions and similarly to Khomeini apply asceticism in their private lives being an example for mass population, is formed (Ayatollah Motahhari). The practical and theoretical school of Imam Khomeini on construction of the Iranian society based on the principle "Welayat-e-Faqih" and the role of Islam for global policy are best systematized in the work of the Iranian ex-president Khatami *From an Urbanized World to the Global City: Evolution of West Political Thought*.³⁴ A defender of administration of Islamic Fiqh is the famous culturologist and historian of Islam Abdolhossein Zarrinkoob, who works in the direction of a new codex of Islamic doctrine, at the bottom of which the theory of Imam Khomeini is set. The Islamic law system Sharia „introduces order and justice in the large spaces of Islamic world, which are not known in the West during the Middle Ages“.³⁵

Being organically united in the image of Imam Khomeini, Islam and traditional concept of culture forming the spiritual image of the Iranian people, enable the appearance of Imam as the precursor of the "Hidden Imam Mahdi" in the eyes of the believers and his retention as a fighter for truth, justice and the values of the God's revelation in Iranian history. One of the driving force of the sociopolitical changes in modern Islam is the so-called "pure Islam", which is revived thanks to efforts of Imam Khomeini and his supreme religiosity.

Building the Iranian state as the Islamic theocratic republic (1979) required the use of the preserved during centuries traditions and political culture, the economic and political mechanisms, which can address the modern challenges of the time. The main factor in this process is the political flexibility of clergy as the governing social power. The best way for defence of Islamic values is to be shown that Islam can guarantee respect of human rights, and the Islamic Revolution gives the Iranians a great mission – to establish a religious system in modern world and propose humanity more logical and attractive ideals.³⁶ Khomeini believes that if the society wants to develop and advance, people should direct their intentions and actions to that direction, and the term "society"³⁷ has a full mean-

34 Mohammed Khatami is a president of Iran, a shining theologian and politologist, an active participant in the establishment of IRI, Head of the Islamic Center in Hamburg, a minister of culture, Head of Iranian National Library for five years.

35 Abdolhossein Zarrinkoob, *Islamic Civilization*, Moscow, 2004, p. 178.

36 *Fear of the Storm*, Mohammed Khatami (ed.), Moscow State University, Moscow, 2001, p. 9.

37 "Islamic society is an intentional and not an accidental society. It has come into existence by the will of the people on the basis of the choice of a definite goal of life. It is a society all the systems and laws of which pay full need to the individual and to the relative role of his will and conscious choice as well as the social system and the educational, political and economic conditions of the environment and their inevitable role in moulding and building the individual character. Paying attention to these two points is

ing, unlike the famous statement of Margaret Thatcher "There is no such thing as society".³⁸ The society should rather stimulate the evolution of some traditions and customs than block them. Personal liberty should not endanger the freedom of the others and the individual liberty should not harm the social liberty. A man must serve humbly the God's orders and hence his behavior will acquire a God's image. According to Imam Khomeini, human socium as well as the essential relations within it influence the ideas and actions of all its members. This influence is carried out to the highest degree by the formation of a definite opinion of any individual about the ultimate aim of the individual existence. Based on its values a society structures certain ambitions in human souls and directs human actions to their realization. Religion becomes a leading factor of social systems since it is aimed at comprehensive human well-being. A truly recommendable system of human relations will appear as soon as human values become a factor for estimation of people based on their devoutness and immaculacy and society discards nonsense and barrenness. However, relations between individual societies, which should be in accordance with the aims of creation and religious foundations, composing human wholeness, are also of importance. The human substance is aimed to service and acquisition of the God's grace. The aspiration for service is a result of human responsibilities and religiosity and the grace is rooted in the individual and social stabilities and independences. Every time when the established through religion human freedoms are under threat, the social and divine responsibilities require a revolt for their restoration.

Khomeini uses terminology that is used in religious texts to describe enemies of the Twelfth Imam such as taghut (a false God) and mofsidin fi'l-arz (corruption). He defines himself as Na'eb-e Imam (Deputy of Twelfth Imam). If this title means a leader, who leads Friday prayer in a local mosque for the Sunni, for the Shi'ite this term has an emotional charge calling the images of Ali and his eleven followers. The choice before the Iranian nation is set between the absolute good and the absolute evil, the Twelfth Imam and his enemies. The cult to martyrdom and sacrifice in the name of faith become a distinctive marker of the revolutionary Shi'ite policy. Readiness to die for the Shiite cause is a turning point also in the policy of the Middle East. It gives the Islamic regime in revolutionary Iran the required incitement to pursue till the end its internal and international aims associating extremism with a "martyrdom mission".

The Khomeini's ambitions go beyond Shi'ism. He wants to be acknowledged as the leader of the Muslim world and his direction to power is the Shi'ite change in the leadership on the Islamic world. He defines the revolution not simply as Shiite but Islamic. The Islamic Republic of Iran should be the basis for the deployment of a potent Islamic movement, similarly to Lenin who consider

essential for the correct understanding of the social, economic, moral aspects of Islam and their difference from what is preached by other school of thoughts". See: William G. Millward, *Aspects of Modernism in Shi'a Islam*, *Studia Islamica*, Vol. 37, 1973.

38 Cesar Rendueles, *The Big Setback, Criticism & Humanism*, 2017, p. 262.

Russia a global communistic power. Khomeini grows quickly to the leader of the Shi'ite community; however, his transformation to the leader for Sunni is difficult. Among Sunni there are activists who admire his ideas, but also are not ready to accept him as leader. Khomeini focuses rather on secular problems, which can unite Muslims, than the religious problems, which can divide them. He is an ir-reconcilable enemy of the imperialism and Israel and his aim is the direct Arabian activism to the battle rather against external enemies than internal problems. His anti-Americanism is a co-product of his ambition to be recognized as the leader of all Muslims and the desire to find a cause that unites Sunni and Shi'ite. Regrettably, in the eyes of the western world this anti-Americanism is transformed into fear and distrust to the Islamic world.

The influence of Iran can be significant globally, especially given its current position in the geopolitical redistribution of the world and the suggestion of Ali Akbar Velayati, ex-director of Strategic Research Committee of the Expediency Council, to pursue a strategy of "Look to the East"! Arshin Adib-Moghaddam also says Iran has the potential to reap benefits from both the West and the East. He added, "In a functional foreign policy that is politically mature, the national interest of Iranians would be maximized in accordance with a new rationale: *ham gharbi ham sharghi, jomhuri eslami* (both the East and West, Islamic Republic)."³⁹ The geographical position of Iran as a transit country between the Middle East, Central Asia and Caucasus, and the aim of Iranian government to reopen its economy, gives me a chance to speak about Islamic Republic of Iran as a new geo-strategic factor with main influence to the future of the Islamic world and international world system. Against the background of the new phase in the crisis of neo-liberally transformed capitalistic system of countries, on which philosophers and sociologists apply the Gramsci's concept of "interregnum" or the period with undefined duration, where the old order is destroyed but the new order still cannot form itself, meaning that surprising events replace predictable structures.⁴⁰

The most important Khomeini's aim is to form a united Islamic nation (Iranian) and establish modern Islamic culture. This idea is clearly contrasting to the cultural division that is characteristic for neo-capitalistic societies today. Many Iranian thinkers urge that the development of united society depends on adherence to the modern Islamic culture – a culture in which science accompanies morality and politics accompanies justice. His aim is to build a modern, ethical society.

39 Arshin Adib-Moghaddam is a Professor of Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies, Centre for Iranian Studies, at SOAS, University of London; Geopolitical situation allows Iran to establish cordial ties with all powers, *Tehran Times*, 9 January 2014.

40 Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?*, Verso, London & New York, 2016, pp. 35-46.

Conclusion

Iran is a country, in which the religious and democratic powers function simultaneously thanks to the person of Ayatollah Khomeini – the people's leader and leading figure of the religious government. This is the man who succeeded to resurrect the role of religion in a time when both the East and the West believed that its time is over and it fades. Following is the most valuable lesson of Imam Khomeini: one should transform one's thought into an action so as not to be a blind imitator. The Imam Khomeini's work is to shift the spirit of epoch in a unique way – not only with political changes but also through moral catharsis, which is opposed to all things that lead humanity to the "end of history". His revolution carries not only the spirit of the Iranian modernization but also the pathos of social democracy. Khomeini changes the ongoing paradigm and radically rethinks social existence. He develops the idea for an „ideal ethical society“, a new type of collaborative society, which is based on knowledge and morals.⁴¹ Moral values reflect the association man – society – nature, and not the interests of a definite privileged group of individuals.

The Islamic revolution is an important event not only for Iran but also worldwide. It makes the people to rethink the current relation *religion – politics*, giving the first serious notice of taking political power by Islam. An effort to establish a country unifying the civil and religious power took place for the first time globally. A unique political system functioning in two different planes was created: the democratic and theocratic levels. Occurring as a result of the successful Iranian revolution, the theo-democratic government is based on both the Islamic and democratic principles, and it can be said that due to the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini a unique new project – the national-Iranian project is arguably developed.⁴² Following are the three aims of this project: the territorial integrity, national sovereignty and national prosperity of the country, intended to protect Muslims and establish Islamic government based on the Shiite principles.⁴³

The difference between the Iranian state's rule and western type of democracy is that it is not based on liberal values (individualism and secularism) but on Islamic canons (for Shi'a historical process is the return of man to Allah, at the individual level and at the community level as a whole). The future of Iran and the Islamic democracy will depend on whether the Iranian government will deal with internal contradictions and will skillfully balances between religious and democratic principles and structures of power.

Khomeini tries to subordinate modernism to the idea of the God's Oneness

41 The Qur'an lays great emphasis on reason (aql) and knowledge ('ilm). 'Ilm also includes spiritual knowledge ('ilm alladunni), wisdom (hikma), gnosis ('irfan), thought (tafakkur), science ('ulum), the science of history ('ilm al-tarikh), the science of ethics and morality ('ilm al-akhlak). 'Ilm denotes the certainty of knowledge regarding God and his signs.

42 Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism. Essays of the Islamic Republic*. I. B. Taurus, 1993, pp. 14-15.

43 Mahmud Seriolghalam, *Theoretical Renewal in Iranian Foreign Policy, Discourse*, Vo. 3, No. 3, 2002, pp. 73-79.

using a political approach. The examination of the concept of the „*God’s unity*“, has a fundamental significance for him and here the spirit of the philosopher manifests itself. In his idea for practical action we find the new theoretical and practical approach. He manages to overcome also the abyss between history and modernity and uses Kalam⁴⁴ with its traditions to formulate a new system of ideas and values, which can serve as fundamentals of the modern political, social and moral consciousness of Muslim Umma. In Khomeini, a new attitude to religion, which is not simply a system of beliefs, but the system of the theoretical and practical principles for the achievement of a moral and historical truth about Islam, is found. Stability of the Islamic society depends on the ambition to rectify defects in the society. This, in turn, supposes appearance of the self-consciousness of the nation that makes this desire for moral improvement the prologue to establishment of unity in diversity and views it as a modality of the vitality of Islam. The idea of unity in his political vision is not bound to certain mercenary goals, interest or bias, but it is a unity based on the “law on the consensus between people”. He determines an ontological and existential meaning of the concept of unity.

The “unity in religion” and the “power of Qur’an” are the most eminent formulations for the revival of Islamic unity. According to Khomeini, on the basis of its values a society promotes definite ambitions in people’s souls provoking people’s actions to their completion, hence, influencing the people’s fate, happiness and even unhappiness. As far as religion is aimed to comprehensive human well-beings, it turns to a leading factor also for social systems. In parallel, religion brings forward the individual and social structural components, assuming the responsibility of the satisfaction of all social demands, while material dogmas are limited only to a related life sphere. According to the views of Imam Khomeini, a truly recommendable system of human relations will appear as soon as social values become a factor for estimation of people based on their devoutness and immaculacy and society discards nonsense and barrenness. This is a society that struggles against evil and tyranny, and builds its immunity against depravity, moral degradation and deviation from the God’s essence.

44 We should note the historical separation of pure Islamic kalam (free of the terms and concepts of Greek philosophy), from that kalam, which mixed with the pre-Islamic philosophers, following the translation of philosophical books from Syriac and Greek into Arabic. The pure Islamic kalam was a pure intellectual and philosophical current, derived from the Holy Qur’an. With the attempts made by Khwajah Nasir al-Din Tusi, kalam found its philosophical shape.

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ХОМЕИНИЈЕВ ПОЛИТИЧКО-ВЕРСКИ ПРИСТУП 'ИРАНскоЈ НАЦИЈИ'

Сажетак

Географски положај Ирана утицао је да ова земља постане транзит-на рута између Блиског истока, Централне Азије и Кавказа. Из тог разлога, Иран је постао гео-стратешки фактор који има важан утицај на будућност исламског света и света уопште. Међутим, институција заштитника ислама (*Welayat-e-Faqih*) представља важан изазов за друштво и државу. Обнова исламских догми и њихова адаптација на друштвено-политичке промене била је изазова за шиитске вође, који стриктно прате учење ајатолаха Хомеинија. Његова револуција не носи само дух исламске модернизације већ и клицу социјалне демократије. „Тео-демократски“ модел владања заснован је на исламским и демократским принципима, и захваљујући ајатолаху Хомеинију, развијен је посебан пројекат – пројекат иранске нације. Овај пројекат има три циља: територијални интегритет, национални суверенитет и напредак земље, који штите исламску димензију владања на шиитским принципима. Исламска револуција је важан догађај не само за Иран, већ и за цео свет. Она утиче на мењање тренутних односа религије и политике, у којем ислам преузима политичку моћ.

Кључне речи: Хомеинијев приступ, политика, религија, иранска нација

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