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POLITICIZATION OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS AS ONE OF FACTORS OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM DEVELOPMENT

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The article describes the current trends in the development of State-Church relations in Russia. The author points out that the politicization of religious associations is a major occurrence factor of religious extremism.

Keywords: religious associations, religious extremism, Orthodoxy, Islam, policy.

Analysis of the legislation of the Russian Federation on the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations in general leads to the conclusion that it being based on the relevant provisions of the RF Constitution created the necessary foundation and conditions for the activities of religious associations and implementation by citizens the inalienable rights and freedoms in the ideological and religious spheres.

However, a deeper study of the activity of religious associations shows that there are still remain unresolved problems, caused by the presence of legal gaps and institutional weaknesses.

The most important of these is the fact that a characteristic feature of the contemporary religious situation in Russia is a politicization process of a number of denominations and religious associations. This process inevitably leads to confrontation of religious associations involved in politicization, a conflict of interest forms between them, which in the extreme forms of its manifestations may develop in the formation of extremist ideology based on religion

Most clearly the process of politicization is seen in the activity of the “traditional” Russian confessions – the Russian Orthodox Church and Muslim religious organizations. Along with active participation in public life, social and other programs, their activity often goes far beyond the limits of religious relations, goals and objectives, for which were created these religious organization, outgrows in settlement of political tasks in the field of positioning both their own, and other corporate interests.

Involving into such processes representatives of faith-based associations happens, in our view, for two main reasons:

1) Internal - related to the fact that separate people acting within of a religious community, who are proclaiming distancing from politics, have their own career or other ambitions and by their public statements and activities try to influence political processes, enter the circle of the political elite.

Similar trends so dramatically approve themselves in the early 1990s, that the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church issued a resolution from 08.10.1993, which prescribed priests not to participate in elections as candidates of deputies of representative authorities of Russia. As a result of non-compliance with the said resolution some clerics were deprived of priestly dignity. It should be noted that the examples of such a serious violation the principle of separation of church from state were noted earlier in domestic practice, when the priests practiced their election to the Council of People’s Deputies in the post-perestroika period.

At this, it should be emphasized that the only conscious actions of the religious functionaries, who use the religious factor to solve political problems, is of concern, because it is obvious that the above does not apply to such persons’ participation in the political life of the country as “ordinary” members of civil society. In this it is difficult to disagree with the words told by the Patriarch on February 24, 1991 at Epiphany Patriarchal Cathedral on Sunday of Orthodoxy: “Orthodoxy is a search for the life with God, and every state and national dispensation of life is secondary for us. Christians can engage in politics, but that does not mean that religion is engaged in politics” [1, 58].

2) External – namely, that many political forces (political parties, movements, leaders, and so on) realizing that hundreds of thousands of believers stand for religious organizations, who are at the same time voters, are trying to “benefit from” the religious factor for their own purposes in the struggle for power.

There are a lot of examples of such trends. So, “in Moscow from 25 to 27 May 2011 took place XV World Russian People’s Council (WRPC), at which Patriarch Kirill spoke of pluralism and diversity of social forces in our country, and in view

of the forthcoming elections, in December 2011, the Patriarch assured people that the Church was not going to support any political party, but would maintain relationships with all the political forces. Objective of this partnership is an inculcation politicians and society “basic values” (the most important of which is faith) that should unite Russians and serve to their national identity. Reasoning from this fact, the attempt of the “United Russia” (*Edinaya Rossiya*, in Russian), in spite of the constitutionally secular nature of the Russian state, to call Orthodox religion “the moral basis of modernization”, seems interesting. February 13, 2011 at a meeting of party clubs of the “United Russia” on the issue of morality was accepted official document “The moral basis of modernization”, where for the role of the state ideology was suggested Orthodoxy” [6, 213].

The other side of this same coin is the fact noted by A. Mironov and Yu Babinov “Non-Religious part of society in Ukraine and Russia, and it is very high – up to 50% of the population, also feels uncomfortable. Religious freedom is perceived as an aggression, violence against their conscience. There is a distributed conviction, that modern society is being artificially clericated by certain forces. The symptoms of this phenomenon are clearly seen in the media (especially television), in education, army, public administration. This is evidenced by a demonstrative display of religiosity on the part of government officials; widely spread all kinds of “consecration” of state institutions, military installations, regimental flags, warships. Feeling of deprivation in these circumstances of non-religious category of people is exacerbated by the fact that there are no opportunities to promote non-religious views and beliefs of the population. Thus, the growth of national tension is added to the existing in society political and social stratification” [4, 56].

Currently, obviously you can trace the dynamics and characteristics of the politicization of the largest denominations in Russia, which can be affected neither the federal legislation nor the political will of the country.

So, the condition of church-state relations in Russia indicates a tendency to “governmentalization” of Orthodoxy and the use by the political institutions of Church authority to implement their political interests. At this, the process of politicization is occurring not going beyond the legality defined by the current law norms. Politicization of Islam manifests itself in various forms, including in the form of a radicalization of its individual currents. Manifestations of militant, politicized, criminal Islam are well within the term “Islamism”, which in turn is synonymous with the most dangerous to date form of extremism – Islamic extremism. Also of great concern regional trends of building Islamic religious traditions into social and political systems that affect the general legal and general social situation

in the Russian Federation. Politicization of Buddhism in modern Russia is due primarily to its use in opposition of some political elites and for demonstrating before the federal center readiness of revival “traditional” Buddhism to strengthen the cultural and moral foundations of individual nations in Russia.

An even greater problem than the politicization of “traditional” religions is the political orientation of new religious associations of a destructive nature. PhD in Law N. Krivelskaya in her book “Sect: the Threat and Search for Protection” rather accurately lists policy goals of such associations. She calls the following political objectives of their activities:

- “1. The destruction of the Russian Orthodox Church as a factor of stability in Russia;
2. The undermining of the spiritual foundations of Russian society, in order to weaken the Russian State;
3. The establishment in the face of religious sectarianism, mostly of destructive nature, powerful potential political lever of pressure on power;
4. Developing an interconnected network of some destructive religious organizations to gather intelligence information;
5. Creation of a reserve fanatically devoted performers in the case of the need to organize for any political purposes riots and other anti-social actions in the cities of the Russian Federation;
6. Instituting control over various government officials through the influence on them by the leaders of destructive religious organizations (bribery, blackmail, lies, controlling the mind)” [2, 58].

Doctor of Philosophy, Professor N. A. Trofimchuk in his book “Expansion” [7], also analyzes in detail the issue of the invasion of foreign missionaries in Russia, as well as calls to draw attention to the activities of destructive religious organizations. The author, based on the enormous amount of factual material regards the invasion as a serious destabilizing geopolitical factor.

From the point of view of law enforcement activity new religious associations of destructive and occult nature carry the following risks:

- a) *extremist and terrorist activities, including the seizure of state power* (for example, Sun Men Mun, founder of the Unification Church promoted the following: “When our time comes, we must bring to power over the world automatic theocracy (which is the rule of God through his earthly representative (Sun Men Mun). So, we cannot separate politics from religion. Separation between religion and politics – is what Satan likes most ... When we come to power in America, we will have to amend the Constitution and introduce death penalty for anyone found having

a physical contact with any other person, except one, which was prescribed to him or her" [5, 303]);

b) *ordinary crimes, including inducement to suicide* (greatest scandalous fame acquired the emerged in 1967 in the U.S.A. sect "Children of God", founded by former Protestant preacher David Brandt Berg. The sect included a large number of teens who were forced into begging and were constantly transported from place to place; followers were forced to pedophilia, parents were forced to have sexual relations with their children. In Russia, most often "the representatives of The Hare Krishna Movement, Scientologists, followers of Satan, esoteric and eschatological cults have problems with the criminal law" [5, 272]. The highest public outcry in the world got cases of mass self-sacrifice in anticipation of the end of the world. Here is a few list of such acts: 1900 – the end of the world according to the teachings of the sect "Red Death" in Russia, about a hundred members of which committed self-immolation; 1993 – the day of doom, in anticipation of which the followers of the Ukrainian-Russian sect "White Brotherhood" of Marina Tsvigun, who declared herself Maria Devi Christos, had to commit self-immolation; 1995, then 2000 – shifted days of the end of the world according to the teachings of the sect "The movement for the revival of the ten commandments" of Kredonii Mverinda in Uganda, hundreds of whose members were killed in an act of self-sacrifice; 2008 – the end of the world in anticipation of which the followers of the sect of Peter Kuznetsov locked up themselves in a cave in the Penza region.

PhD in law A.N. Listkov in the study of the considered issue concluded that: "More often cult members are brought to legal responsibility for murder (ritual or to respect the confidentiality), for incitement to suicide, torture, kidnapping, violation of the graves, the turnover of psychotropic drugs and narcotics, sex crimes, organizing mass disorder, extortion, and the creation organizations encroaching on identity and rights of citizens; the illegal use of psychotechnics, fraud and abuse of trust, manipulation of sensitive information about citizens" [3, 78].

c) *violation of information security, informational victimization* (mainly activity of sects is rather personalized and directed against representatives of public authorities, representatives of the "traditional" religious organizations. An important role is played here by the publication and distribution of extremist literature among its followers, use of the Internet for such purposes);

d) *penetration of representatives of sects in government at various levels, attempts to communicate with law enforcement bodies;*

d) *the destruction of family values;*

e) *refusal to perform civil obligations, political and other rights.*

Listed by us problems of state-confessional relations of modern Russia dictate to the state an urgent need to implement in its religious policy dialectical pairing of implementation the constitutional principles of freedom of conscience and the equality of all religions before the law, with the ensuring interests of national security in the spiritual realm, with the priority to the preserving, revival and development of historical and cultural heritage, spiritual values of the peoples of Russia. One of the steps on the way to solution of the problem would be the adoption of the Concept of church-state relations, which would be able to formulate design principles of countering the process of religious associations' politicization.

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