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THE GLIGOROV REGIME IN FORMER YUGOSLAV MACEDONIA
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION

The position of religion and religious institutions in Republic of Macedonia/FYROM in 1990 cannot be understood without reference to the very complex, and immediate recent history of their position under Yugoslav communism after 1945. The history of religion in Titoist Yugoslavia was, in the most part, little studied in the West during the Cold War². In the aftermath of the end of communism in 1991, the absence of open persecution on religious grounds in Macedonia caused the US State Department to regard it as a country without serious issues concerning religion³. After a difficult period in the 1940s and 1950s, the churches and mosques of the Yugoslav territory appeared to enjoy much better conditions than similar religious institutions in Russia and the Warsaw Pact countries, with an absence of open religious persecution⁴. If individual Christians or Muslims

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² An exception was the work of the English scholar Nora Alexander, whose book, *Church and State in Yugoslavia since 1945*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, is the only serious study of this subject published in the Titoist period.

³ See John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece*, North Carolina, McFarland, 1997. This interesting and serious book gives little space to religion, although it makes the ideologically significant distinction between "Christianity" and "Macedonian Orthodoxy" in its analysis and has virtually no material at all about the origins and nature of the Macedonian Orthodox church in the 20th century. The same is true of the main academic work of the 1990s that took the Skopje side in the bitter polemics with Greece over name and recognition issues, *The Macedonian Conflict-Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995, by the anthropologist Loring M. Danforth.

⁴ For a European perspective on that time, see the very important new book by ex-German

were in difficulties, exiled, or imprisoned, it was generally seen in the outside world as a result of their espousal of local ethno-nationalist agendas, such as the Muslim clerics of Sarajevo who wished to “recover” Islam, or more nationalist Roman Catholic priests in the Croatian or Catholic Albanian communities in Montenegro. The distribution of believers in Macedonia – with about 59% belonging to the Macedonian Orthodox Church, 26% or so Muslim⁵, 4% Roman Catholic, and 1% Protestant – had been stable for many years, and in the majority confessions, was and is almost entirely based on ethnicity⁶. The Roman Catholic minority had a wider significance than its small numbers might suggest, as it included the Albanian Catholic community in and near Skopje, Ottoman Uskub, which was the birthplace of Mother Teresa in 1910⁷ and then the capital of the Ottoman administrative vilayet. Then, in late-Imperial times, about 10% of the Skopje population is thought to have been Catholic.

In this apparently stable atmosphere, the most decisive regional link between religion and nationalism, in Serbia, which produced much of the eventual “Greater Serbia” agenda of the late 1980s and early 1990s, went mostly unnoticed, as it was subsumed under the “Yugoslav” framework of understanding that predominated in the West for so many years. Observers in the West who saw the recovering influence of the Serbian Church did so in an intellectual mind-set, a result of the “liberalism” of Yugoslav communism, as opposed to the “repression” of other Eastern European countries. Thus, reviving Serbian Orthodoxy was rarely understood as a social factor of particular significance, let alone with some links to the “Greater Serbia” project⁸.

Within the different Yugoslav republics, the detailed position of the churches and mosques was little studied, with the single important exception of Croatia.

Ambassador to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Geert-Hinrich Ahrens, *Diplomacy on the Edge*, John Hopkins Press and Woodrow Wilson Foundation for Scholars, Baltimore-Washington D.C., 2007. It contains the first comprehensive account of international diplomatic efforts to democratize Macedonia in the 1990-93 period and outlines the many clashes between German perspectives and those of British mediator Lord Carrington at the time of the 1991 London Conference on Yugoslavia.

⁵ Macedonian Muslims are in the main Sunni. The number of Bektashi and other sect adherents is proportionately much smaller than in Kosovo and in Albania itself.

⁶ The small community of ethnic Albanian Orthodox believers in the Reka area of the Mavrovo mountains in the west was scattered and largely destroyed in conflict in World War II. There is also a very small Jewish community, mainly in Skopje, and about 11,000 Uniate Greek Catholics, in the Apostolic Exarchate for Macedonia in Strumica and Gevgelija, and about 3,700 Roman Catholics in the Skopje diocese, mainly ethnic Albanian.

⁷ For background on Mother Teresa, there are many books available, but some are unreliable on Balkan history and misleading about the world in which she grew up. For a good objective account, see Anna Sebba, *Mother Teresa 1910-1997- Beyond the Image*, London, Orion, 1997.

⁸ As, for instance, in the extensive church building and restoration projects in Kosova in the 1980s and 1990s, the so-called “Karic” churches.

The "Croatian Spring" reform movement of the early 1980s was intimately linked to the possibility of greater freedoms for the dominant Catholic Church⁹ and the Vatican had for some years watched with interest the revival of the church and the development of popular adherence, as expressed through new shrines like Medugorje¹⁰. It appears from anecdotal material, although documentary evidence is lacking, that the Vatican decided, in view of the difficult history of the collaborationist church in World War II, to eschew any attempt to create a Polish-type oppositional movement to communism. Instead the church supported local nationalist politicians within the legal political structures of Yugoslavia, a decision that was to have far reaching consequences after 1990. The situation of religion in more economically backward and politically less important areas such as Kosovo and the Socialist Republic of Macedonia were little known, even to regional specialists. These republics were at the bottom of the Yugoslav heap in terms of education, economic achievement, and cultural life and were hardly seen as existing as political subjects within the Yugoslav debate by Western opinion compared to the industrialized areas to the north. An exception, in the case of Macedonia, was with the Greek Orthodox Church, which, because of the shared history, had always had a keen interest in all religious developments in Titoist Yugoslavia and was generally well informed about what was happening.

The foundation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church in the Titoist period had always been seen in Athens and on Mount Athos as a major insult to the traditions of Greek Orthodoxy. It also served to distinguish the state-approved Christianity in the Macedonian Socialist Republic from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which, after the foundation of the Exarchate in 1878, had been the most dominant expression of Orthodoxy in much of what is now the territory of the Republic of Macedonia for most of the twentieth century. A popular tag in Greece was that the Macedonian Orthodox Church was the only Christian institution in human history to be founded by a communist party. In essence it was founded as a way of reinforcing anti-Serbian and anti-Bulgarian feeling within the old, second, Yugoslavia.

As Stella Alexander writes, on the origin of the policy in the World War II period:

The strongest attack on the unity of the Serbian Church came from Macedonia, and was directly connected with the recognition by the Yugoslav communists of the existence of a separate Macedonian nation. The Bulgarian occupation of Macedonia in 1941 was accompanied by intense efforts to Bulgarianise the population. The

⁹ In institutional form, this issue had also come up earlier, in the 1972 crisis in the Croatian communist leadership and associated power struggles.

¹⁰ See Ahrens, *op. cit.*, for a penetrating analysis of how Vatican influence was seen in the early conflict period, post-1990.

Bulgarian Orthodox Church assumed jurisdiction over the three dioceses in the territory and the Serbian priests and bishops were expelled. About eight hundred Bulgarian schools were established and six hundred teachers were trained in special courses held in Bulgaria; all Bulgarian teachers were obliged to spend a year, and Bulgarian priests four months in Macedonia. A national theatre, a library and the King Boris University in Skopje were founded¹¹.

Before World War II, the Serbian Church had been a major landowner and the completely dominant Christian religious body on the territory of the modern republic, after the expropriation of Islamic estates and Greek and Bulgarian Orthodox monastic lands in the aftermath of the Versailles Treaty and the construction of the first, Royalist Yugoslavia. With the revival of religion within the Titoist state, it was important for the Belgrade government to delineate boundaries of influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as part of the wider general policy of the Yugoslav League of Communists to weaken Serbia by comparison with the other republics¹². Yet it never fully succeeded in doing so, and in the eyes of the World Council of Churches, and other official bodies, the Macedonian Church was (and still is) part of Serbian Orthodoxy.

Although having a legal local existence, and a pattern of slowly growing influence, mostly linked to the physical restoration of monasteries in the post-1970

¹¹ The basis for the Bulgarian efforts was in essence deeply embedded in the Sofia view of the Bulgarian Christian contribution to the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire and the lack of rewards Bulgaria had received from the Balkan Wars and the Treaty of Versailles, compared to Greece and Serbia. See Simeon Radeff, *La Macedoine et La Renaissance Bulgare au XIX Siecle*, Sofia, Imprimerie de la cour Royale, 1918. Radeff was a respected professional diplomat and his views are representative of those held among the Bulgarian ruling elite. The Bulgarian administrators of the Axis occupation of Macedonia twenty five years later held similar views and did not see themselves as creating something new but as restoring the "legitimate" Christian tradition. In Radeff's time, the "usurping" elite seen from Sofia were the Greek Phanariote origin families who controlled the church in the major towns such as Veles. After the Versailles Treaty, they were replaced by the "foreign" Serbian clerical authorities. This historic background explains the importance of the rural and monastic tradition in the "new" Christianity institutionalised by Tito in the 1950s – it could be presented, ideologically, as "pure Macedonian", and unsullied by foreign urban/elite-based Christian influences emanating from neighbouring states. It is also useful background in understanding the apparently irrational and vehement reaction by not only the Macedonian church leadership but the political leadership in Skopje in 2005-07 to the pro-Serbian challenge posed by Bishop Jovan (see text and footnote 24 below), which is not only difficult ideologically but involves a contest for control of key Ohrid diocese monasteries and rural religious institutions. For a Skopje view, see Alexander Trajanovski, *L'Activité Politico-Educatrice de L'Exarchate en Macedonie dans les Premiers Années avant et après la Fondation de L'Organisation Révolutionnaire Macedo-Ohridienne Secrète*, in Macedonian, Skopje, Goce Delchev, Skopje, 1981.

¹² An underlying difficulty, was, of course, the religious tradition in many localities, and not only those within the modern republic. A nineteenth-century traveller such as Tozer, an Oxford University cleric and scholar with a wide knowledge of Balkan religion, usually describes the Slav Christian peasants he meets on his journeys after 1853 as "Bulgarians". See H.F. Tozer, *Researches in the Highlands of Turkey*, London, John Murray, 1869.

period, under communism, the main dynamic for growth of the Macedonian Orthodox Church was in the diaspora, with particularly strong development in Canada and Australia, where conflict with the Greek Diaspora was endemic¹³. It was also seen by Tito as a useful barrier against Islam. Although reliable statistics are not available, and the data is a highly controversial matter, the Socialist Republic of Macedonia has one of the largest proportions of at least nominal Muslims of any ex-Yugoslav republic, perhaps 30%, comprising ethnic Albanians, people of Turkish descent, Muslim Roma, and Slav-speaking Muslim minority groups such as the Gorani and Torbesh¹⁴. Thus, in the clever traditions of Titoist ethnic management in the old Yugoslavia's better years, the apparently "liberal" reform measure to allow the creation of a new "Macedonian" Church was also designed to limit Muslim influences in the region, as well as Serbian and Bulgarian factors, and any possibility, however remote, that a Bulgarian government might have renewed designs on the traditions of Christianity in this part of the southern Balkans¹⁵.

In these circumstances, where the new Macedonian Church owed its whole existence, like the Macedonian Socialist Republic itself, to Yugoslav communism, it is not surprising it led a controlled and cowed existence for much of its early life¹⁶. It nevertheless received major support from the government. A site was made available in 1967 for a large new cathedral in the middle of republic capital Skopje, resulting in the extraordinarily assertive modernist structure that exists today. Its priests were all seen as "patriots" who played an honorable part in the anti-Axis resistance in World War II (as many actually had). Some had attended the founding conference of ASNOM in 1942¹⁷. In contrast, Greek Or-

¹³ See Archbishop Mihail, *Our Holy Orthodoxy*, Skopje, 1996, for an official Macedonian Orthodox Church view of its history and development. The key event, internally, is seen as the decision, in 1958, to re-establish the Archbishopric of Ohrid in order to set the church free from Serbian tutelage. Archbishop Mihail wrote, "The leadership of the Serbian Orthodox church was unrelenting towards the reestablishment of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, and towards the organizing of the Macedonian church. As a result of this denial, the Steering Committee, supported by the clergy, passed a resolution on July 23rd 1958 calling for a Second National Church Assembly. The Assembly was held in Ohrid, the see of the Ohrid Archbishops since time immemorial, in the Church of Saint Sophia, where the decision was reached for the restoration of the Ohrid Archbishopric. This was followed by the election of a Macedonian Metropolitan as the head of the Macedonian Orthodox church, who bore the title of Archbishop of Ohrid".

¹⁴ See for more detail, Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?*, London, C. Hurst and Co, 1995.

¹⁵ For a Greek view of the recent history of the Albanian community in the west, see S. Sfetas and K. Kentrotis, *Oi Alvanoi ton Skopion*, Thessaloniki, 1995; also Apostolos Glavina, *The Orthodox Autocephalous Church of the Albanians*, Thessaloniki, Ekdoti, 1992.

¹⁶ For political background, see Stephen Palmer and Robert R. King, *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question*, Hamden, Connecticut, Archon, 1971. Both Palmer and King had worked for the US State Department, and their views are a good guide to US official thinking.

¹⁷ See issues of *Macedonian Times*, Skopje, 1991-2005, for relevant background material.

thodox priests were presented as “collaborators” who had betrayed the communist-led ELAS/EAM anti-Axis resistance and had worked with the monarchofascist authoritarian regime that had emerged from the debacle of the Greek Civil War after 1949.

The situation of Islam in Macedonia was much less happy. Most of the strongest opposition to the construction of Yugoslav communism had come from the most “Islamic” regions of ethnic-Albanian and Turkish western Macedonia, where the ethnic Albanian nationalists had continued armed resistance to the Yugoslav Partisans of Tito almost as long as in Kosovo. Violence in some communities i.e. rural areas around Dibra and Gostivar, continued until about 1949, as it did in the central Kosovo region of Drenica¹⁸. In the immediate aftermath of “pacification”, many imams fled to Turkey in the early 1950s, in some cases taking whole Islamic congregations with them¹⁹. The important Bektashi monastery at Tetovo, the Tekkia of Baba Arabati, went into steep decline, and by the 1970s was little more than a tourist site²⁰. It was difficult to obtain Islamic books or reading materials, and the official Council of Mosques became little more than a cipher for the communist regime. Right up to the end of communism, Macedonian Muslims looked to Turkey for succor and financial support, both at family/community solidarity and the institutional level²¹. Links with the Arab countries were few and intermittent, and it was difficult for devout Muslims to make the Hajj pilgrimage. All Islamic institutional land had been nationalized by the communist state, in contrast to some Christian institutions, particularly in Serbia and Montenegro, which had been allowed to keep small and much reduced but economically vital estate holdings after 1945. Land and property issues remained at the heart of many difficult relationships between the new Macedonian Church and its Serbian antecedent, particularly where, as in institutions in the Sar and

¹⁸ For this period, see Reginald Hibbert’s paper in “Albania, Macedonia and the British Military Missions 1943-44” in James Pettifer, *The New Macedonian Question*, London-New York, Macmillan, 1998; also Reginald Hibbert, “Albanian National Liberation-the Bitter Victory”, Pinter, London, 1992.

¹⁹ For data, see unpublished University of Istanbul Ph.D. thesis by Nurcan Baklacioglu, *Devleterin Dis Acisindan Goc Olgusu: Balkar Dan Turkiye’ye Arnaut Gocleri (1920-1990)*, Istanbul, 2003.

²⁰ It has recently revived, although it is no longer the centre of world Bektashism, as it was between 1926 and 1939. See James Pettifer, *Blue Guide to Albania and Kosova*, London-New York City, Norton-A and C Black, 2001.

²¹ This became less important after 1966, with the fall of Tito’s vehemently anti-Islamic secret police chief Alekandsar Rankovic and the 4th Plenum of the Yugoslav League of Communists held in July of that year. The hopes of reform in culture, religion, and education were not fulfilled, though, and led to the violent demonstrations in the minority communities of autumn 1968, which in turn led to the foundation of Prishtina University. See Peter. R. Pifti, *Confrontation in Kosova*, Boulder, East European Monographs, 1999. It is important to bear in mind that in this period, there was no international border between western Macedonia and Kosovo, and to all intents and purposes it was one cultural and religious community of interest.

Karadak mountains, old monastic land holdings lay on both sides of the new international border that was established between Serbia and Macedonia in the aftermath of the independence referendum in September 1991²².

Thus, after 1990, the religious institutions were intimately bound up with ethnic identities and tensions within Macedonia that were to surface at intervals in the next ten years, culminating in the conflict of 2001²³. The first post-communist Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO-DPMNE) government constitution had, in 1991-92, avoided over-explicit determination of the position of the Macedonian Orthodox Church as an "official" church but it did define the Macedonian identity and citizenship rights as almost wholly based on the Slav-Christian majority tradition in the country. Although the VMRO government did not last very long, it did enough to open the doors to a considerable expansion of church growth and civic influence in the next ten years²⁴.

New buildings were constructed in many places, particularly in eastern Macedonia where Christian feeling had always been strong. Ostentatious and perhaps intentionally provocative massive concrete crosses were built on many hill-tops and prominent geographical positions, some overlooking Islamic majority areas²⁵. Under the VMRO government, Skopje-clerical relations with the Bulgarian and Russian Orthodox churches had improved considerably, and in an unprecedented development since World War II, a delegation including clerical representation came to Sofia from Skopje in April 1994; it included Ljupcho Georgievski, the VMRO President. They had meetings with representatives of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. This development alarmed

²² In the early crisis period post-1990, the situation was complicated by the emergence of ethnic-based minority parties among the Serbs which were closely linked to nationalist movements in Belgrade, i.e., the Democratic party of Serbs in Macedonia, led by Bora Ristic, was essentially an offshoot of the Serbian Radical party of Vojislav Seselj and drew much of its support from the Serb community in and around Kumanovo in northeast Macedonia. These people were, in origin, mostly Serbian Royalist settlers in the pre-World War II period, and post-1990, some were unwilling "Macedonians", Kumanovo had been a stronghold of Serb nationalism in the late Ottoman period after the Battle of Kumanovo in the Balkan Wars (1912-13) and for a time the Serbian clerical irredentist Society of Saint Sava, which aimed at integrating all of geographical Macedonia into Serbia was based there.

²³ See Phillips, *op.cit.*

²⁴ British and French secret services were active in trying to destabilize this government and reinforce the ex-communist party of Social Democrats led by Kiro Gligorov. See James Pettifer, *Kosova Express*, Madison-London, C. Hurst and Co-Wisconsin University Press, 2005, p. 63 ff.

²⁵ In Macedonian popular and folklore tradition, Kyril and Methodius, the founding saints of Slav Christianity made some of their first baptisms around the town of Stip, medieval Simion. Stip in modern times is a wellhead of the Slav-Macedonian identity and both Georgievski, 1990s President Kiro Gligorov and other Skopje political elite figures have come from in or near Stip. For a general perspective, see Hakan Wiberg and Biljana Vankovska, *A Special part of Europe: Nation, State and Religion among Orthodox South Slavs*, DIIS Working Paper 2005/15, Copenhagen, Danish Institute of International Studies, 2005, <http://www.diis.dk>.

the leadership of the Greek Orthodox Church in Thessaloniki and within months longstanding restrictions on visits by priests of the Macedonian Orthodox Church to Mount Athos monasteries were dropped and a centre for inter-Orthodox dialogue began work on the Halkidiki estate of wealthy Greek businessman Costas Carras. A campaign started, initiated by the Greek Foreign Ministry in Athens, to engage with the VMRO leadership, and this took place in a religious context on Halkidiki²⁶. Georgievski was also a regular visitor to Russia and took part in pan-Orthodox conferences in the Crimea.

At the time, this seemed no more than part of the process of the reengagement of the Macedonian Orthodox Church with the wider world, but it also represented a potentially radical interaction of religion with pan-Slav nationalism, something that had a marked influence on aspects of Georgievski's political leadership during the violent crisis in spring-summer 2001²⁷. Although in World War II the church had come to life as a child of the Serbian Orthodox tradition in Macedonia, it was now strongly rejecting that parentage and opening itself to influences from other and more Eastern traditions, where, given the nature and origins of Macedonian Orthodoxy, it would be impossible to avoid new political agendas of renewed Slav nationalism²⁸. On the ethnic Albanian side, religion did not enter into the 2001 conflict at an explicit level, and the insurgent National Liberation Army (NLA) was careful to reject offers of help from Islamic sources, whether domestic or external, for fear of alienating key American sympathy. The insurgency was nonetheless often described as "Islamic" in Slav-Macedonian popular and media discourse, and the Macedonian army that was fighting the insurgents at this time was an almost exclusively a Slav and nominally Orthodox Christian force²⁹.

In the aftermath of the conflict, the Ohrid Accords came into force and were signed on 31st August 2001. These do not address matters of religion, but are focused on cultural and educational and political democratizations³⁰. In the main, their implementation has been reasonably successful, and the social and political atmosphere has improved in the Republic in the last five years, although many problems remain, particularly in the area of the economy³¹. The principle recent

²⁶ James Pettifer, interview with senior Greek foreign ministry official, 1999.

²⁷ Thus the military assistance the government received from Ukraine during the 2001 conflict was justified on "Slav solidarity" grounds in some parts of the Skopje press, and in Kiev also.

²⁸ It should be noted that although some Macedonian priests visited and stayed on Mount Athos in the mid-1990s, recent contact appears to be much less significant.

²⁹ For background, see Ed. Kahl, Maksuti, and Rama, *Die Albaner in der Republik Makedonien*, Vienna, 2006. On Islam in the western Macedonian communities, see Clayer, Bruinessen and Bougarel, *Le Nouvel Islam Balkanique-Les Musulmans, acteurs du postcommunisme 1990-2000*, Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001.

³⁰ As a result, the reconstruction of religious buildings damaged in the conflict can best be described as uneven. Most churches have been restored, but important mosques and Ottoman secular buildings, such as the Central Mosque in Prilep, remain in ruins in 2007.

pressure on the Macedonian Orthodox Church has come from Serbia, with serious internal conflicts between pro and anti-Serbian factions among the clergy and laity leading to the arrest and imprisonment in 2006 of a Bishop, Jovan, the seizure of some church assets by the public prosecutor in Skopje, and various attempts by different groups to secure control of particular shrines and monasteries³². Jovan has based his dissident position on objections to the 1967 decision of the Macedonian Church leadership to declare that the church was autocephalous, something unauthorized by the Patriarch, and the 2002 Nis Accords, which were supposed to regularize all relationships between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Macedonian Orthodox Church³³. It should be borne in mind that strictly speaking, the Patriarch does not have the personal power to declare a church autocephalous. This power is vested in a full council of the church, although in reality one has not been held for hundreds of years. Some observers believe these problems are merely the latest manifestation of tensions that have always existed within the church since its foundation, and part of the traditions of radical, schismatic behavior that have always been part of Macedonian Orthodoxy, particularly in the large Australian Diaspora³⁴. Others see them as a disturbing sign of renascent Serbian designs on the church, perhaps conceived as a long-term strategy to secure control of at least a major part of it in the event of a future division of the Macedonian Republic between the Albanians in the west, and the overwhelming Slav-Christian majority in the east and south.

The situation with the Islamic institutions is, as elsewhere in the Balkans post 9/11, one where a majority rural and either Bektashi or Sunni community with

³¹ These economic difficulties do not seem to have affected the physical development of new churches, perhaps most clearly signified by the controversial demolition of a historic mosque on Ohrid fortress hill in 2004-05 and the rebuilding of an Orthodox church on the site of Saint Klement's church, incorporating some Byzantine-period foundations. It did, though, have the fortunate side-effect of permitting an excavation program of the very early and large Christian Baptistery and other ancient buildings nearby. In the same context, of the construction of a "legitimate" Christian narrative of the past, the interior of Saint Sophia church in Ohrid town near the lake has been equally locally controversial, with the removal of all architectural material from the time when it was a mosque under the Ottoman Empire. Further massive excavations currently in progress in 2007 indicate the intention of the Church and state to create a major Christian archaeological site and tourist centre on the Ohrid hill. For general background on Byzantium and Orthodoxy, see Averil Cameron, *The Byzantines*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2006.

³² At a popular level, in Ohrid, for instance, it has been noticeable that some churches have become places of pilgrimage for Christians from Serbia. This was no doubt always the case to some extent, even under Communism but seems to have become a more visible phenomena recently.

³³ For background, see *South Slav Journal*, London, Vol. 26, Nos. 3-4, Autumn-Winter 2005, pp. 101-2. It is unclear what proportion of local monks has followed Jovan in his open opposition to the decisions of the Macedonian Orthodox Church leadership. Abbot David, from one of the four monasteries in the diocese, has claimed that about forty monks were expelled from their monasteries at the same time as Jovan was arrested.

³⁴ Archbishop Jovan was eventually released from gaol in Spring 2007.

moderate and tolerant traditions is struggling to preserve those traditions in a climate of increasing religious tensions and problems of proselytism by radicals and fundamentalists from outside those communities. In the main, the latter problems have been very minor, and until the arrests of alleged Islamic plotters at Fort Dix in the United States in May 2007, there have been no Macedonian connections found whatsoever with terrorism or extremist activity. The pattern remains in Republic of Macedonia religion in recent years of an underlying pattern of faith adherence based on ethnicity, which, in the main, is highly resistant to change and is likely to assist the forces of social and political stability³⁵. It is, however, impossible to avoid consideration of the dangers to this religious stability caused by local ethno-nationalist forces and externally-sponsored fundamentalism, of many kinds³⁶.

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³⁵ It is worth noting that although Evangelical Protestant organizations have been free to operate in Macedonia for a generation, they do not seem to have made very much impression on the religious landscape, less than in neighboring Bulgaria and Albania.

³⁶ There are believed to be over 50 organizations based on religious belief currently engaged in proselytism of one form or another in Macedonia in 2007.