

ISSUES ON RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE TOLERANCE IN ALBANIA (1912-1945): BASED ON THE PRACTICE AND CLERGY SERMONS

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ABSTRACT

The religious tolerance is one of the rarest values of the tradition of the Albanian people. It is widely accepted that Albanian people are well known about these values, about an excellent coexistence among the believers of different religious communities that are in Albania, mainly Muslims and Christians. In this study we bring the essentials of this phenomenon, promotional roots of these values, while viewed from a previously untreated point of view, and in an attempt to answer the questions: Where does it stem from the religious coexistence in Albania? What are the main promoters of this phenomenon? What has been the attitude of the religious clergy in Albania? Have they been and are the imams and priests, the promotion of tolerance and religious coexistence in Albania? These are some of the questions answered in this modest study, focusing on how nice and with how much delicacy the lectures of the Clergy have addressed this issue to the faithful or to the world in general. Since they enjoyed undisputable reputation and influence in the majority of the population, in the most critical moments of national history, the leaders of Muslims believers, not only have promoted tolerance and religious coexistence, but they have considered the believers of other faiths as “brothers” preaching this conviction in front of their Muslim believers. These preaching’s were firstly begun by Vehbi Dibra, who was the first Chairman of the Muslims and all clerics without exception to this day. Also unforgettable are the sermons of priests like: Fr. Gjergj Fishta, Fr. Shtjefën Gjeçovi, or Metropolitan Visarion Xhuvani to conclude with pearls of Orthodox priest, Fan S. Noli, who amazed the world with his three speeches in front of world leaders, the League of Nations, being representative of all Albanians, although Orthodox believers were only 20% of the population.

Key words: Tolerance, coexistence, clergy, nationalism, Albania.