



## **ISLAMIC SECTS AND PARTIES DEVELOPING, USED TO DEVELOP AND NON-DEVELOPING ACTIVITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Attempts and processes have been observed to disseminate radical Islamic ideas among the Muslim population under the cover of missionary activities of various Muslim organizations. In connection with the above, the report explores the existing Islamic sects and parties on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Islamic foundations, radicalism, extremism, enmity, intolerance, re-Islamization, Muslim community, minorities, risky groups, national affiliation and national identity.*

Considering the essence of modern religious cults the following fact shouldn't be ignored that sects' development of active religious and missionary activity is often accompanied with infringements of texts of Bulgarian constitution that abundance guarantees national security, rights and freedoms of citizens and their life. The basic law in Republic of Bulgaria doesn't indicate concrete religious organizations as anti-constitutional. The constitution doesn't have such a task but it strictly defines the indications that categorize a particular religious community as anti-constitutional as this supports the necessity of indicators' understanding which corresponds to national security of Republic of Bulgaria.

### **ISLAMIC SECTS:**

- *The sect „Wahabin”* has a doctrine diffusing the ideas of fundamentalism [1]. In Bulgaria Wahabin is spread in the region of Kardjali. In 1996 a representative of the sect lived in the village of Diamandievo for several months who attracted native population into structure. At this period of time the members of the sect attended the region of Kardjali.

The members of the sect penetrated into circles of Bulgarians professing Islam in order to make propaganda of Islamic radical ideas through Qur'an courses. Such courses were organized in the village of Sarnitsa, region of Pazardjik, Madan and Smolyan district as they were financed by the sect of Wahabin [2].

**- The sect „Djamaat Ahmatiya”;**

The establisher of „Ahmatiya” Mirza Gulam Ahmad Kadriani was born on February 13, 1835 in the city of Kadiyan, India and died on May 26, 1908 in the city of Lahor as he was buried in the city of Kadiyan. He created „Ahmatiya” movement on May 23, 1889 [3].

The ideology of „Ahmadiya” is based on the idea of their last prophet who they call caliph. Their leaders are the same and their country where one Ahmadiya must live is caliphate. This means theocratic Islamic country that contradicts to Bulgarian constitution [4].

The basic emissaries of „Ahmadiya” in Bulgaria are these two with unknown origin - Rifat Ara ( In 1994 an attractive family of Pakistani arrived in Blagoevgrad with legend that they are political refugees. The strange thing with Ziya and Rifat Ara is that they neither work, nor use unemployment benefits but they have much money coming from Germany, the sect „Ahmadiya”. The books were printed into Bulgarian there) [5] and the Imam of the mosque „Little river” in Madan – Shefket Murad [6] (Shefket Hadji was regional Mufti of Smolyan two mandates in period 1997-2003. After that period until now he is the director of hafiz courses in mosque of Madan. From 2006 till 2009 he is a member of Supreme Muslim council [7]).

In Bulgaria „Ahmatiya” started to develop activity in the circles of religious-ethnic minorities in 90s of 20th century when its Pakistani emissaries attended the Alliance and Tatar villages dislocated in Northeastern Bulgaria as well as among Muslim community in four villages in Teteven Balkans – Galata, Gradeshnitsa, Glogovo and Babintsi. The recruitment of gypsy population in Pirin Macedonia was brought to the fore [8] as the sect tried to gather pilgrims in the region of Razgrad [9].

Till 2003 „Ahmadiya” in gypsy neighbourhood in Pazardjik was managed by Ahmed Musa like Imam who „pronounced himself a leader” [10]. At the time of preaches and kurbans „Qur'an is constitution. The Shariah is a law. The Islam is a country.”, he called [11]. In relation to the above criminal proceedings against him was instituted as regards preaching anti-democratic ideology and violent change of state apparatus as well as instigating religious hatred. Musa did this during his sermons in the cities of Pazardjik, Haskovo, Nova Zagora, Karlovo and Chirpan. He was financed by organization „Calophate” of Turkish millionaire Metin Kaplan extradited from Germany to Turkey where he was arrested and prosecuted for preparation of attacks and attempt for violent change of constitutional order [12].

Emissaries started spreading the ideology in pointed areas taking advantage of the fact that:

- Although Alliances and Tatars are Turkish speaking they are not well accepted by the majority of Turkish population in Northeastern and Southeastern Bulgaria.

- Muslims from villages Galata, Gradeshnitsa, Glogovo and Babintsi are also alienated by other Muslims mainly because of their Bosnian origin [13].

After 2000 years the attention of sect's representatives was attracted by gypsy population in Pirin Macedonia. The above derives from the fact that in general gypsies are always and everywhere inert mass inclined to follow every benefactor with financial capacities [14].

In 2004 the directorate of religious denominations under Council of Ministers denied registration of denomination „Ahmadiyan Muslim organization Muslim Djamaat Ahmadiya” with chairperson – Emil Andreev Filipov as regional court of Sofia denied registration with verdict of company case 182/2004. Although this the regional court of Blagoevgrad registered association „Ahmediya” in 2005. Thus, the activity of Muslim denomination was hidden behind association and several gypsies and two Pakistani were included in organization management [15].

- *The sect „Uskakalar”* – it is discreetly tolerated and financed by Turkey. The same professes the conservative Islam [16]. In Bulgaria the sect „Uskakalar” is the most active in region of Rhodopes [17].

- *Baha'i sect* – it origins from imamite-shi'is branching [18]. In religious aspect Baha'i emphasizes on continuity of God thought that is mirrored by words of series of prophets whose ideology in fact contains separate elements of Baha'i. They rely on unity more than other movements – the common between religions as bearers not only of religious but moral-ethical norms, too. The last is very interesting like conception – something completely explainable while all three basic monotheistic religions admit the continuity between them [19].

In Bulgaria the Baha'I was disseminated by one American with German citizenship – George Banx in 20s of 20 century. Centers in Sofia, Plovdiv and Varna were created. From 1931 until 1954 active missionary in Bulgaria was the Canadian artist Marian Jack although she hadn't succeeded to learn Bulgaria and had health problems [20].

Baha'i occurred and started developing religious-propaganda activity as organized community after 1989. The occurrence of Baha'i religion in Bulgaria is related to name of Ane-Maria Krjucer. Baha'i pilgrims made many efforts to create local spiritual councils. In Bulgaria their emissaries came all the time. Great amount of religious-propaganda literature was edited [21].

After 1989 Baha'i missionary in Bulgaria was restored by Ane-Maria Krjucer – grand-daughter of famous Swedish entomologist and philosopher August Forel. Baha'i was registered in 1991 and in 1993 the seventh

international convention was organized in Sofia with 750 participants from 165 countries. They claimed that they had followers in 100 villages in Bulgaria [22].

**- The sect „Suleymanjilar”**

The sect was created in 40s of 20 century by Sjurejman Hilmi Tunahan born in the village of Delchevo, district Razgrad [23]. The religious organization „ Suleymanjilar” doesn’t have official registration in Bulgaria. The sect controlled and financed Muslim religious schools /mindresses/ in Bulgaria where there was active religious-educational activity among youths. The selection of the children was mainly oriented to socially disadvantage and comparatively good conditions supported them like free food and boarding-house, perspective to continue religious training in Turkey etc. The significant amount of finances was invested in building and construction of these schools /mindresses/ as in some cases this was against norms of Bulgarian legislation [24]. „Suleymanjilar” had substantial capital and organizational structures in almost whole Europe. But in Republic of Turkey it was forbidden to develop religious-educational activity among children under the age of 16 [25].

„Suleymanjilar” has extremely conservative ideology that is very close to Muslim brothers i.e. it is required one very strict practice of Sheriat. It must be said that members of „Suleymanjilar” have their own interpretation of Jihad – the so-called army type of Jihad”, says the Arabic Vladimir Chukov [26].

The ideology of „Suleymanjilar” rejects country and secular education and allows polygamy. According to its canons sick people shouldn’t be cured and in general radical Islam is professed. Unofficially in Bulgaria the sect used the company „Gjunesh 2004” ltd as undercover with registration address Plovdiv, boulevard „Sixth September” [27]. As regards registration decision the activities of the trading company are trading of goods, trade representation, provision of loans, transport operations, licensing and forwarding transactions, accounting services, purchasing, building [28]. The company was registered by Turkish citizens Sjurejman Akbulut, Sjuljun Jengiz and Regep Sormagech. There is no data for company to develop any commercial activity [29].

The building where the company was situated and served as undercover of the sect was ex-slaughter house bought by three Turkish citizens in 2005. In the same building Turkish students who studied in Plovdiv were settled. According to official data the boarding-house was created in order to cushion youths from temptations of life in big city but in fact the place was prepared for study center for religious training [30]. In the same building the prayer house was located with Islamic literature and other books used for sermons [31].

On November 24, 2008 the Regional court – Plovdiv issued a verdict that suspended the activity of the trading company „GJUNESH 2004” ltd – Plovdiv because of the contradiction with norms of Law of denominations. The request for suspension was done by District prosecutor’s office – Plovdiv because the

activity of the company contradicted to laws of the Republic of Bulgaria – Article 155 (2) of Commercial Law [32].

- *The sect „Nurcular”* – the religious-nationalist sect that shares the ideas of Turkish Islamic theologian with Kurdish origin Sail Nursi (1876-1960)[33]. The sect’s creator and manager was the theologian Fejtulah Gjulen who escaped in the USA few years ago persecuted by Turkish legislation because of the dangerous fundamentalist activity oriented to secular character of Turkish country. The sect „Nurcular” had great financial resources, information agencies, televisions and few newspapers. One of them – the newspaper „Zaman” was published in both Turkish and Bulgarian language. It was often used for propaganda against Bulgarian national interests. Several religious schools in Bulgaria were financed by money of Gyulen that brainwashed little Muslims and worked for their final detachment from Bulgarian root. The goals of the sect are under the mask of the so-called moderate Islam - pushing the idea of creating a World Caliphate under the authority of Shari'a. In this respect, the biography of its leader is also very significant [34].

„Nurcular” is organization with conspiracy character at many stages. A file was made for each trainee that contained data for social state of the parents, abilities of the child, moral-psychological specifics of personality, evolution of views etc. The most promising and talented students were chosen to experience the training processes of the sect gradually. The aim was to occupy in future key positions in management authorities, management of law enforcement, social-political organizations, science and economics in relevant countries. The adherents of the sect liaised with representatives of management authorities, workers in regional administrations, members of the government, leaders of national social organizations. The purpose was to gather information for economic and social-politic situation in regions as they used parents of the children who were trained in „Nurcular” structures. There is information for relationships between sect and fundamentalist centers in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries as well as participation of the management of „Nurcular” into financing and training of death terrorists in Chechen republic. In present USA and Turkey consider the presence of „Nurcular” structures on the territory of Eurasia as one of the contrivances to strengthen economic and political influence of Turkey on particular regions [35].

In Bulgaria the sect „Nurcular” is the most active in Rhodopes region [36]. The sect supports hundreds of illegal schools on the territory of Republic of Bulgaria. The sect is discreetly tolerated and financed by Turkey.

According to specialist of conflicts and terrorism researches associate professor Tatyana Dronzina who is the Bulgarian chairperson of international project for prevention of Islamic radicalism in school there are representatives of extreme Islamic sects who are mainly located in East Bulgaria. „These are sects that are familiar with more or less radical attitude and as concerns the ways of

penetration into local Muslim population, I would like to say that there are arguments to think that such citizens with radical attitude try to liaise and contact with students of spiritual secondary schools in Shumen, Ruse, Momchilgrad and the Higher Islamic Institute in Sofia. According to our research data the students of families with comparatively low financial status are offered money and these actions are carried out outside the schools and the institute'', says Prof. Dronzina. The so-called Quran courses are among the channels of dissemination of radical ideas in Bulgaria. According to the research such courses are organized in the town of Sarnitsa, Pazardzhik region that are probably financed by Wahhabi sect in the town of Madan, Smolyan region, financed again by the same sect, in the village of Lyulyakovo, Burgas region, financed by the sect of " Syleimandji " and in the village of Bilka, the same area, again funded by the same sect. There are reports of such courses in Shumen region funded by the Nurcular Sect [37].

- *The sect „Hakikat Wakfu” (translated the Divine truth)* - it is forbidden even by Turkey [38]. The sect is a branch of Sufism – Islamic mysticism rose in Turkey during 20 century. It was established in the 50th of last century by Yungyut who was the descendant of Prophet Mohammed and called himself a sheikh everywhere. The order rejected all that was secular and especially the achievements of modern science. Blood transfusion and donation of human organs were forbidden. The ideology of „Hakikat Wakfu” concerns „the sacred war against all infidels” and fight against non-Muslims – radical jihad. All manifestations of women were forbidden. In Bulgaria its representative was Kadir Kadir who was born in village of Kozlets, Haskovo region and knew personally Yumer Yungyut. Kadir spread books with underlined hostile content as regards other religions – especially the Christianity and Judaism. He was sent to the court with accusation of diffusing ideas of Jihad in mosques [39]. In house of Kadir in Haskovo and his house in near village Kozlets 30 Volumes of sermons in Turkish and Arab were taken. It is thought that he used his company „K.S.K” ltd registered in boulevard „Osvobozhdenie” 8 in Haskovo as undercover for his often traveling to Turkey where he obtained religious literature. He was officially a business broker of different kinds of goods. In the house of Kadir fundamentalist books were found and most of them were written by Yumer Yungyut who was the establisher and ideologist of Hakikat Wakfu[40]. According to elaboration of Bulgarian services and State Agency for National Security this literature enroots unbearableness against representatives of other religions [41]. In relation to this Kadir Salim Kadir was sentenced as a leader of radical Islams’ group to 12 months’ imprisonment but the enforcement of the sentence was postponed for a period of three years /suspended sentence/ [42].

## **ISLAMIC PARTIES:**

### **- *The party „Muslim Democratic Union”***

The party was created by two brothers Yuzeir and Ali Yuzeirovi [43] in the village of Slavyanovo, Targovishte region [44]. The second of two brothers was chosen for chairman of the party. The organizers called on all who had accepted the ethic norms of Islam to join the party and rejected its ethnic basis although the Constituent Assembly finished with Ottoman military march that was also the anthem of the party. After that it had become known that both brothers erected on their own parcel the monument of the Unknown Muslim Soldier who shed blood on Bulgarian earth. As regards the blames that they created anti-constitutional party on religious basis the two brothers gave an example with registration of Christian Democratic Union [45]. According to brothers the so-called „Muslim Democratic Union” was not an ethnic party but it was opened to all Bulgarian citizens who „adopted the ethic norms of Islam” [46].

The establishment of the party was proclaimed by Bulgarian medias but it was not legally registered.

**- *Turkish Democratic Party*** – the party is created in 1992, it is anti-constitutional with leader Adem Kenan. Goals of the party: autonomy of the Rhodopes and the Ludogorie, „Turkish court of justice”, protection of „pure-blooded Turks”. Bulgarian Muslims are included by Kenan as concerns „pure-blooded Turks”. In 1999 Kenan announced common actions to change constitution [47] and wanted Parliament to identify the official language. Kenan raised Turkish national flags in front of his home in Shumen village of Yassenkovo [48].

On September 9, 2005 the District prosecutor’s office in Shumen started investigation against Kenan for eventual crime of general nature / Article 162 (1)(3)(4) of Penal Code / for instigating racist enmity and for creation of organization inciting racist hatred. Subsequently the prior check against the leader of unregistered Turkish Democratic Party was done by Supreme Cassation Prosecutor’s Office. On September 11, 2005 policemen of Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Interior – Shumen with representatives of District prosecutor’s office conducted a search in the house of Adem Kenan and confiscated documents of Turkish Democratic Party. On September 15, 2005 Adem Kenan was questioned by Supreme Cassation Prosecutor’s Office. He was interrogated for the activity of the party and his press announcements. After questioning he said that his announcements had been completely motivated in order to protect the rights of the minorities in Bulgaria and he hadn’t appealed the minorities to insurrection. There was no charge against Adem Kenan [49].

On October, 2005 during visitation of Adem Kenan in Razgrad he proclaimed that he intended to create new party that aimed to protect the rights of Turks in Bulgaria. The chosen name of the party was Initiative Committee for

national self-determination and national self-preservation of Turks living in Bulgaria [50]. The formation had a purpose to protect Turks' rights in our country [51].

- Political party „The Democratic Wing Movement” – political organization, legal entity, non-governmental organization. The political party was registered by City court – Sofia on July 24, 2003 in Register 10, Account type 281, Volume 9, Page 95 in company case 7163/2003 with headquarters Sofia city, boulevard „Vitosha” № 60. The party was registered pursuant to Article 9 of the Law on political parties. The statute of the political party was adopted by Constituent Assembly sit on July 17, 2003. On June 1, 2007 the verdict of Sofia court / Register 10, Account type 281, Volume 9, Page 95 / changed the name of the political party „The Democratic Wing Movement” into party Democratic Progress and Prosperity (also known as the Pomak Party). The political formation was registered with headquarters Sofia city, boulevard „Hristo Botev” № 17 [52]. The main idea of the establishment of the party for democratic progress and prosperity was searching memberships among Islamic Bulgarians and their descendants and using them as sustainable social basis [53]. The party was created by Prof. Adrian Palov and united three associations of Muslim Bulgarians - „Development” (Kardgali), „Karlak” (Momchilgrad) and „Alada” (Dgebel). Kadri Ulanov and Arif Abdulah were one of the establishers. The deputy of Palov was Mehmed Dorsunski. In 2008 they took part in the conference „The minorities and right political space in Republic of Bulgaria” organized by Sezgin Myumyun. Palov called Bulgarian nation „a bunch of ethnicities” where the separate spray is „Pomak ethnicity”. Dorsunski insisted on turning Bulgaria into Switzerland and wanted each ethnicity to have a party. According to Myumyun „the Pomak ethnicity” should be a part of Umma and close to Turks. Ulanov, Dorsunski and Alov wanted separate „Pomak party” and left Myumyun and Palov and organized a Steering board to establish the party „POMAK” [54].

- *The party „POMAK” („An union for peace, authenticity and culture”)* – On March, 2009 Arif Abdulah (Alov), Kadri Ulanov, Mehmed Dorsunski and Vasil Vojnov made first attempt to establish the party POMAK. The goal was saving the Pomak identity and protecting Pomak ethnicity from assimilation and discrimination [55].

- *The party „Democratic party of labour”* – the party is created in 1992 in the village of Jaltusha by Kamen Burov ( Muslim Bulgarian) to „protect discriminated ethnic group of 400 000 Pomaks”. In 1999 Burov wanted „the Pomak minority” to settle down in „Rhodopes enclave”. It is not officially written that for that purpose Bulgaria should separate this enclave in the most democratic manner. Pomak history occurred from Turkey. Later, the party of Burov fell apart and he went to work in Spain. The basic purpose was to legitimate „the Pomak ethnicity” [56].



- *National Turkish Union* – in 2006 Menderes Kungyun (Muslim Bulgarian, ex-member of UDF) established illegally the anti-constitutional National Turkish Union. In 2007 he created the federation „Justice-Bulgaria” in Sofia, hall „Bulgaria”. In 2008 in Bulgaria the mission of European commission against racism and neutrality arrived. In their report there were persons of Pomak origin who were victims of discrimination. The synonyms of origin were family, people, nation, race, blood. These were words of European commission against racism and neutrality. Kungyun announced that he would establish civil cultural non-profit association ULUS that would work together with the federation of Sezgin Myumyun. ULUS meant nation, tribe, country, horde ( in particular – The golden horde ). Kenan and Kungyun identified Russo-Turkish Liberation War as occupational and Pomaks as inheritors of Kuman Turks who had come from North China and helped the Ottoman Turks to conquer Rhodopes. This is written by Turkish historians Prof. Jemil Kavanch, Prof. Hyusein Memishoglu and Alish Sait in the book „the Pomak minority”. Kenan and Kungyun met at the premier of this book in Razgrad[57].

### **Conclusion**

The Islamic fundamentalist organizations are under control of intelligence services of foreign Muslim-majority countries and they act under the guise of traders. They use trading companies which they don't own and foundations to justify their activity thus they don't develop any serious trading or industrial activity and they don't invest in Bulgaria. In relation to the activity of the trading company they travel to Bulgaria a lot that enables them to gather information with different character.

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