RELIGIOUS PARTIES:
THE BASE OF POLITICAL STABILITY

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POSTFACE**

François Coguel


** Ibid., pp. 332-335.
RELIGIOUS PARTIES:
THE BASE OF POLITICAL STABILITY

Understanding the political function of religious parties is important for an analysis of the political process of many countries. Religious parties play a significant role in Holland, France, Italy, Germany, Israel and many other countries. One special interest in studying these parties, as S. M. Lipset and J. Linz have pointed out, is their special stratificational basis. While most parties can be clearly classified in terms of the basic cleavage of modern society, the class or socio-economic cleavage, religious parties recruit their followers from as many strata in the population as adhere to the church on which they are based. Religious parties are found on the right, the center, and even on the left, as shall be shown in this paper. The primary interest of religious parties is not control and allocation of the national income, but the furtherance of the system of beliefs, the culture. Therefore it is possible for them to find supporters in all classes and thereby fulfill -- under certain conditions which will have to be specified -- integrative functions for the society, as well as the democratic process.

* I am in debt to Seymour Martin Lipset and Juan Linz for a very helpful discussion on the subject of this paper.


Under different conditions, religious parties may constitute a major disrupting force, and the cleavage between clerical and anti-clerical camps may endanger the cohesion of the society as well as the democratic process. In somewhat different terms, one might say that religious parties are confronted with two alternatives: a Kulturkampf and partnership in the coalition-opposition game. In the second case, because of reasons discussed later in this paper, they tend to be in the government rather than in opposition.

A Kulturkampf is an open and diffuse conflict. Basic socio-economic issues, which are the basic source of cleavage in modern societies, are temporarily pushed aside and the religious cleavage gains supremacy. Political forces are grouped mainly according to their position on the clerical - anti-clerical continuum. The press, intellectual and public opinion, are sharply divided into two camps, of which each tries to overcome its inner cleavages in order to secure a downfall of the other, the separation of the state from the church for instance. Although a Kulturkampf may, as we shall see, and with basic solutions to very elementary problems of modern society, it is always a dangerous remedy, and very often leaves behind a bitter feeling on both sides, a hidden split in national solidarity, which although bridged and half forgotten, may always flare up and become an element in a new conflict. One might compare the relationship between the clerical and anti-clerical camps after a Kulturkampf has subsided, to the present relationship between the South and the North in the United States. The bitter memories of the Civil War constitute a hidden crack in the national cohesion, which is from time to time activated.

The second alternative for religious political representation, is letting the scene be dominated by socio-economic issues while holding a more or less center position on these issues, and trying to achieve their
goals partially by participation in coalitions.

This paper will discuss some of the political and sociological conditions associated with these two alternatives, by analyzing one case, that of religious parties in Israel.

A decisive factor in determining which alternative will dominate seems to be the hierarchy of values of the different social groups represented by the parties as well as their compatibility. By hierarchy of values we mean the relative importance assigned to different problem areas and spheres of life. By compatibility we mean relationship from the point of view of the values' content. Groups may hold certain spheres of life to be of primary importance, and at the same time, hold opposing views on these spheres. They may, on the other hand, hold similar, compatible points of view regarding certain spheres of life, but attribute to them different places in their hierarchies of values. In case the hierarchy is about the same, i.e., all social groups regard the same values as primary in importance (e.g., cultural problems), and the same values as secondary (e.g., foreign policy) and so on, and at the same time hold opposing points of view, the scene is set for a Kulturkampf. If, on the other hand, there are different hierarchies: if what is vital for one group is secondary for another, and vice versa, even if the attitudes are not compatible, the scene is set for cooperation and coalition. This can be demonstrated by

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5 We shall concentrate our discussion around these alternatives of Kulturkampf versus coalition. Actually there are at least two other possibilities: 1. The conflict area may be neutralized by being transferred to a minister known as an administrator, and the problems being left to bureaucracy. 2. The conflict area may be left to a third, usually-middle, man or party. These alternatives seem less significant and less frequent than those mentioned earlier.
the case at hand. Religious parties for instance view the issues of religion, education and culture as primary in importance, and regard other issues such as socio-economic problems and foreign affairs, as far as they do not directly impinge on religious interest, as secondary in importance. This becomes apparent for instance when a coalition is formed. Religious parties usually will be more interested in the portfolio of education or interior than in the portfolio of the treasury or that of foreign affairs. Now, if other parties, e.g., the anti-clerical liberals, hold the same general hierarchy of values, little space is left for compromises and political maneuvering; the conflict is full and open; the basic consensus is threatened. As the main issue of the conflict is cultural (in the widest sense of the term) "Kulturkampf" is just the appropriate term. This is what seems to have happened in the days of Bismark in Germany and in the early days of the Third Republic.

If on the other hand, non-religious parties have a different hierarchy of values, they, for instance, regard socio-economic issues (inflation, unemployment, welfare programs, etc.) as dominant or foreign policy issues as primary in significance, this may be a basis for mutual tolerance, political give and take and a common coalition. (A qualification to this statement will be introduced in the last part of this paper.) While in the first case the political arena is divided into clerical and anti-

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6 Examples of religious interests in foreign policy would be: anti-Soviet attitude of Catholic parties; missionaries' interest in colonies.


8 K. Eggers, Rom Gegen Reich, Norland Verlag, Berlin, 1941.

clerical parties; in the second case, the terms left and right are used to designate the two poles of the continuum, the two rival sectors. On this continuum the religious parties are described as being in the center.

(7) As Lipset and Linz point out, religious parties tend to be center parties because (1) they have less ideological commitment on non-cultural issues than either left or right parties; (2) they are the only parties capable of appealing to voters on both sides of the socio-economic cleavage; (3) being in the middle lends religious parties a strong coalition position. They are sought after as members of coalition by both sides, and their willingness to participate or to continue to participate in a certain coalition may often determine its fate. In short, they tend to be center parties since this position opens for them the highest political chances, while they have to "pay" less for being center, in terms of political disadvantages, than many other parties. Followers of most religious parties, who regard cultural issues as vital, are less frustrated—when compromises are reached or a moderate stand is taken on economic and foreign affairs—than followers of right or left parties.

The question is: What is the place of the Israeli parties in relation to these alternatives? Are they one opponent in a Kulturkampf or center parties, standing between the left and right extremes? A clear answer can be given: The Israeli religious parties are center parties, and have been members of all the coalitions since the establishment of the state. They have participated in a coalition with Mapai (social democrats); Mapai and General Zionists (right); and Mapai, Ahdut Haavodah (left) and Mapam (extreme left). This shows their flexibility. The position they

held in different coalitions clearly shows their primary interests. They never held even one economic portfolio, or the defense ministry or the foreign office. They held the ministry of religious affairs, often the ministry of interior and the ministry of welfare, and one of the two assistant ministers of education and culture. In those coalitions in which they were powerful members, they obtained the ministry of the Post as well, which—according to some political commentators—was especially created for the purpose of coalition bargaining. In those coalitions in which their position was relatively weak, they lost it to some other small party. When Israeli parties are placed on a continuum from left to right, the following list is agreed upon: Communists, Mapam, Ahdut Ha'avodah, Poalei Agudat Israel (religious), Mapai, Hapoel Hamizrachi (religious), the Progressive party, Mizrahi (religious), Agudat Israel (religious), the General Zionists, Heruth. This list clearly demonstrates the center nature of religious parties in Israel.

The fact that the basis for coalition and compromise is broad does not imply that it is always easy to form a certain coalition or to reach agreement on government policy, etc. Frequently, one religious party or all of them, or just a pair threatens to refrain from joining a coalition or to leave it in case this or that concession or position should not be granted. But usually, sooner or later, after days or weeks of political protest, the party in question joins or re-joins the coalition. Government crises due to religious issues have not been frequent and are becoming even less so with time. The coalition partners, it seems, become used to the pattern and tend to settle their differences of opinion without applying the, in political terms, expensive weapon of resigning from the coalition

or forcing new elections. Another reason for some decline in the strength and scope of "religious" government crises may be related to a unique characteristic of the Israeli party system: While in most countries in which religious parties are present, every religion is represented by one party, the Jewish religion in Israel is represented by four parties (two right and two left wing parties). Later we shall discuss these parties and compare them to each other. The point relevant here is that these parties may be differentiated according to their leniency with regard to interpretation of religious norms. The more lenient a party is, the easier it is for non-religious parties to reach an agreement on policy and a common coalition with it. Hapoel Hamizrahi is the most lenient party, and since as the following table shows, it is achieving a more and more dominant position among the four religious parties, this is a factor in mitigating of "religious" crises.

(9) Hapoel Hamizrahi The other religious parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>First Knesset</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. There are 120 seats in the Knesset.
b. A combined list with Mizrahi, who received 2 seats at the 1951 elections.

As Hapoel Hamizrahi is the closest party to Mapai (Labor Party) the dominant partner of all Israeli coalitions\(^\text{12}\), this may be an important factor in maintaining and somewhat increasing mutual understanding. This does not imply that harmony prevails. While on the national level the number and intensity of "religious" crises seems to decline, on the municipal level...\(^\text{12}\) See Amitai Etzioni, Agrarianism in Israel's Party System, in "The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science," August, 1957.
level the strife in many places is strong and overt. This level is often of more direct interest to the religious parties, since many religious affairs are controlled by municipal laws and agencies. The Knesset tends to transfer conflict of this kind to the municipalities. Although this creates some inconsistency -- for instance what is allowed in the socialist led city of Haifa, may consist a severe violation of the law in the religious town of Benai Brak -- it fulfills an important function in avoiding national conflicts and governmental deadlocks. If one and the same law would be enforced throughout the country, for all citizens, groups on one or the other side of the religious cleavage, would always be annoyed. But since the law is different for different localities, it can be more readily adapted to the nature of the population.

The tension reducing function of this procedure is clear. Its limitations should also be pointed out: first, many places are not dominated by this or that group. Second, while certain laws are easy to "localize", as for instance ban on local transportation on Saturdays, others, such as laws concerning marriage, do not readily lend themselves to "localization."

(10) Since in Israel a considerable number of laws and by-laws are enacted locally, the nature of religious parties can be seen more clearly on the municipal level. Here they switch from partnership in a right coalition to a center or even left coalition and back, with great ease, the decisive factor being, what party is ready to support more religion enforcing by-laws (e.g., a ban on public transportation on Saturdays; a ban on marketing of pork, etc.) more synagogues, the appointment of more religious functionaries, etc. It is important to note that in municipalities Hapoel Hamizrahi is often relatively weaker since many of his supporters are concentrated in Kibbutzim, moshavim and other villages, while the
other three religious parties are stronger in towns and cities. Another reason for more conflict on the local than on the national level is that crises here are considered less detrimental to national welfare and parties which cause them are less stigmatized by public opinion as "irresponsible."

The different hierarchies of values, which on the one hand are so helpful in reaching compromises and forming coalitions, are also the basis of what the non-religious public considers as "irresponsible" tactics of the religious parties.

The term "irresponsible" is often applied to extreme, left or right parties, whose political behavior endangers the society and its political structure. "Irresponsibility" here, when applied to coalition parties, assumes a slightly different connotation; it signifies holding a position which is not based on the needs of the nation, but on the particularistic interests of the party. Although every party is somewhat opportunist in this sense, religious parties are inclined to higher irresponsibility as far as foreign affairs or socio-economic issues are concerned, than other parties, for they consider these as relatively less vital, and are ready to consider their own attitudes on these issues, as means to their primary goals. In Israel, on the national level, this tendency is less pronounced than on the local level due to the special significance of national non-religious issues, e.g., defense policy, and the strong pressure of public opinion against parties which make these issues part of a political give and take. As will be shown later the religious parties (11) have to consider a floating vote public which floats between Mapai and anti-clerical inclined parties and have therefore to take this pressure into consideration. The increasing hegemony of Hapoel Hamizrahi which has stronger national commitments than the other three religious parties, seems to be another factor pressing for more responsibility on the national level.
Before the main line of analysis can be continued, the left-right cleavage in the religious camp has to be related to the earlier discussion. One may ask: If religious problems are indeed dominant for these parties, why this socio-economic cleavage? The Israeli coalition system as well as its socio-political structure for reasons which cannot be discussed here, pays a premium to small parties. Thus every historical cleavage is perpetuated and every schism rewarded. It pays more to be a small party than a faction in a middle-sized one (the whole religious block never obtained more than 17 seats out of 120). The best proof for the assumption that there is a strong common denominator among the four religious parties is the fact that they have maintained a common front on several issues. There has been only one religious list in the election to the first Knesset (1946), although two religious blocks disintegrated shortly after the election. Lately some steps are taken to realize a long considered plan, to unify all four parties: HaPoel Hamizrahi and Mizrahi have recently formed a formal alliance, called The National Religious Party. The future will tell whether the centripetal forces will overcome the long tradition and the strong centrifugal forces, the differences of opinion on economic, social as well as religious issues. All earlier attempts to realize the same goal have failed. Yet the constant effort to merge proves that a common denominator is present.

This still leaves open the question: Why two parties on each side, two on the left and two on the right. It is perhaps a little too optimistic to try to reveal deep political and sociological reasons for

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every political schism, which often is a consequence of personal feuds and historical events or even accidents. But it seems that at least a partial explanation can be given in terms of different approaches to religion (more versus less leniency); the above mentioned tendency of the system to reward small parties; different ethnic sources of recruitment; as well as political ties to different Jewish centers of power organizations and parties in the Diaspora. All these problems are beyond the scope of this paper.

**Socio-Political Conditions**

The major factor sustaining this political system is the uneven distribution of religious values among the population. While about 20 per cent are religious and about 20 per cent hold Marxist attitudes, the remaining 60 per cent stand in between, neither religious nor anti-religious. This is a group large enough to give both sides hope to gain support on issues of primary significance to them and to penalize every extreme position, on both sides, by causing loss of supporters and voters to the middle group. There is no survey that can prove this estimate. A mechanical view of election results shows that the religious block does not obtain more than 12.5 per cent of the votes, and the Marxist inclined parties (Communists, Mapam and Ahdut Ha'avodah) do not secure more than 18.5 per cent. But it must be taken into account that there are religious people, often new immigrants, who vote for other than religious parties, especially Mapai and Herut. One religious sub-group does not vote, on principle. On the other hand, some Marxists and anti-clerical voters will

14 This point is also mentioned by Edwin Samuel, *State and Religion in Israel*, in "The Political Quarterly", p. 382.
vote for Mapai, whose tradition is non-Marxist socialism. The number of (13) religious voters who do not vote for religious parties seems to be somewhat larger than that of Marxist voters who vote for non-Marxist parties. One reason being that the religious parties have to compete over the loyalty of some of their voters with ethnic lists (mainly Yemenites and Sephardim, who secured 4.5 per cent of the votes in the election to the first Knesset, less in the subsequent elections). The left parties have no such rivalry.

Thus the remaining 60 per cent who vote for non-religious and non-Marxist parties include some religious people and some Marxists. But mainly they consist of people who are in between, neither religious nor anti-religious. Their standpoint varies on various religious issues. Hence, there seems to be in Israel a floating vote on religious issues. Especially since the population is neither divided by adherence to two or more religions as in the Netherlands for instance nor is it grouped into two clear-cut sectors, the clerical and the anti-clerical camps as in many Latin countries. The arch goes all the way from extreme religious groups, through religious Kibbutzim, people who view themselves as "religious but not orthodox", to non-religious people with some "traditional" sentiments and finally Marxists and active anti-religious groups.

The most extreme religious group called Neturey Kartha, concentrated mainly in one quarter of Jerusalem and a few other towns, refuse to


16 An ecological study comparing the votes of the same district in different elections in order to prove this point is impossible in Israel, since mass immigration constantly changes the composition of the district's.

17 We discuss in this paper only the Jewish voters, which are about 90 per cent of the voters.
recognize the state of Israel, being a secular authority, not exclusively based on religious norms and tradition. Members of this group refuse to identify themselves to the police, often prefer jail to paying taxes and sending their sons to the army, etc. They have supported and constituted a source of recruitment to a number of very small and insignificant groups (14) of terrorists, who tried to enforce religious norms by burning cars traveling on Saturdays, stoning people "unmodestly" dressed, etc.

Next are members of Agudat Israel, very strict in their interpretation of religious norms. Affiliated to a world organization, they changed their anti-Zionist attitude and their approach to the idea of a Jewish state only after the European tragedy of 1939-1945 and the establishment of the state of Israel. They are mainly supported by extreme orthodox Jews in the Diaspora and by small groups in Israeli cities. They have never won more than 3 seats. Many of them, like members of the earlier discussed group, spend their lives studying in Yeshivoth, are exempted from military service and earn their living from small shops, often run by their wives, and contributions from religious Jews throughout the world. Poalei Agudat Israel, a left split of the same party, organizes religious workers. It has often followed a quite unmoderate trade union policy; they won 2 seats at the election to the second Knesset and 6 in a combined list with Agudat Israel at the election for the third Knesset. Mizrahi is the middle class religious party. It is considered

18 Yeshivoth -- Talmudical college.

19 Parties in Israel, on the eve of the election to the second Knesset, published by "Haaretz", July, 1951, Tel Aviv (Hebrew).

20 Being a small businessmen's party, not identified with big business, it has not been prevented from forming an alliance with a socialist religious party and from participating in a relatively left coalition (since 1955).
more "reasonable" in its religious demands than both parts of Agudat Israel. Mizrahi obtained 2 seats at the only election in which it was represented as an independent list (1951).

Hapoel Hamizrahi is the major religious party. It obtained more seats than all the other religious parties together -- 8 seats (1951). It can be well described as a religious Mapai (labor party).

A socialist (left) religious party is a rare phenomenon. Religion is usually supported by right, conservative parties and religious parties are usually center parties with a slight inclination to be right of the center. Socialism is often considered as a synonym to anti-clericalism.

(15) In the few cases in which there have been left religious parties, as for instance in France before World War II (the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian. Historical Party), they have been of small significance, as compared not only to other parties but also to religious center and right wing parties. In Israel, on the other hand, the major religious party is a socialist party (Hapoel Hamizrahi). The fact that there are left as well as right wing religious parties expresses the need to represent people and recruit support on both sides of the class cleavage. In other countries where this need is not met by left wing parties, other forms of political representation fulfill the same function. Religious parties often include left factions like the Christian Democrats in Italy and in Germany for instance; have religious trade unions as in the Netherlands and in Belgium, for instance; and recruit new supporters from the left wing through leftist affiliated youth movements (e.g., Catholic parties in Italy and France). In all these cases and many others, the religious parties found it necessary to maintain special political organizations (unions, youth movements, factions) in order to recruit support from the left and represent it. Thus the Israeli case is merely a more explicit way of
representing religious socialist voters rather than a completely unique case. The reasons for left religious parties in Israel being stronger than right religious parties -- a phenomenon which seems to be extraordinary -- cannot be discussed farther there. We can only briefly refer to the main reason, namely that the political system of Israel as a whole, including the center, is somewhat more on the left than the political systems of many other democracies.

What is the main socialist religious party in Israel (Hapoel Hamizrahi) like: It is based on the principle of "Torah Veavodah" (scripture and work), i.e., religion and socialism. It has 3,000 members in 10 Kibbutzim, thousands of new immigrants in 60 Moshavim (this party is especially successful with immigrants from oriental countries), a strong youth movement and a religious trade union, related but not affiliated to the General Federation of Labor (the Histadrut). Members of this party participate in national services, including the armed forces, study Torah (16) in a Yeshiva for one year before joining the army or a Kibbutz. Although non-religious Jews consider them as orthodox the religious groups frequently depict them as inclined to reform Jewish religion. Hapoel Hamizrahi has strong national commitments which sometimes compete with religious tradition. In a few instances this led the party to follow an independent line, contradicting the verdict laid down by the Chief Rabbinat, an organization recognized by all religious Jews in Israel, as well as by the government, as the supreme authority for the interpretation of religious laws, the representation of religion in non-political spheres and as the top organization of many religious functions and institutions. All these cases

21 The Israeli community is not divided into three congregations, orthodox, conservative and reform, as for instance the American Jews are. The only religious organized life which exists is orthodox.
have had a common denominator: HaPoel Hamizrahi has followed a more national line. In one case they were in favor or reciting a certain prayer on Israel's independence day, considered by the Chief Rabbinat as a secular holiday. In another case they favored the recruitment of girls to the armed forces, to which other religious groups and the Chief Rabbinat strongly objected. In most cases, when the religious tradition is open to two interpretations, one more strict, the other more lenient, they are on the more lenient side.

So far we have discussed the politically organized religious groups. But the rest, mainly the large middle group, can by no means be considered as simply non-religious. It divides differently on almost every religious issue. Many who do not attend prayers regularly will not drive or smoke on Saturday. Many who do that will not eat pork and will observe some other food taboos as well. Most of those who will not do even that, still will feel obligated to attend a synagogue on the high holidays. Almost all members of this group will see to it that their sons will have a religious confirmation (Bar Mizva) at the age of 13. There are no known cases in the "middle" as well as in the anti-clerical group, in which boys were not circumcized. The Bible is studied intensively in all schools, although there are large differences in the amount of time devoted to it and in the interpretation given. Many, especially in the anti-clerical group, may rationalize their behavior in various ways — explaining circumcision by reasons of health; the teaching of the Bible by its historical and artistic value, and confirmation by social pressure, etc. It is clear however, that whatever the reason given, there is a deep respect for Jewish tradition whose religious nature cannot be rationalized away. The political consequence of this and other earlier discussed factors is that left wing parties did not press too hard to transform their ideas on
these issues into laws. Marriage, for instance, is still conducted by religious authorities alone. Perhaps the best way to demonstrate the relatively peaceful relations between the Israeli left and religion is to point to the present (1957) government which is a coalition of labor and some religious parties, which has been in existence now for two years without showing signs of special strain or a tendency to dissolve.

The political consequence of this uneven "religiousness" in the religious group and the not full fledged anti-religiousness of the anti-clerical group, and above all the uneven distribution of religious values in the middle groups are: 1. Most non-religious center parties, as well as powerful Mapai, try to avoid a clear-cut anti-clerical position. Mapai had an affiliated religious list in the election to the first Knesset which was unsuccessful. After them, Mapai, from time to time, made efforts to persuade the moderate religious party, Hapoel Hamizrachi, to merge with it. On the other hand, Mapai never supported any extreme religious measures, which could have annoyed a large part of the middle group, e.g., ban on transportation on Saturday. 2. Religious parties which move toward extreme and "irresponsible" positions are penalized by the voters. The moderate Hapoel Hamizrachi is the largest religious party and the only one among the four which gained two seats while all the other religious parties lost part of their votes (1949-1955. See p. 7.). Other factors than moderation may be credited for this gain. Only further research will be able to determine what role was played by moderation and what by (18) other factors. 3. The left wing parties which are anti-clerical in their platforms, are much less so in their political activities. 4. Strong religious pressure might push voters from Mapai leftwards toward Marxist parties. In toto: both sides are pushed to moderation and compromises. A Kulturkampf is avoided.
Two other factors, which work in the same direction are the coalition system itself and the institutionalization of religion. The coalition system pays a high political premium to all parties moderate enough to attract voters from both sides of the socio-economic cleavage and to participate in left, right and center coalitions. 22 Extreme religious parties, which would tend to push religious issues too hard, would cause parties representing the large middle group to combine with left groups to an anti-clerical coalition. As in Israel the major party in all coalitions is Mapai (labor party), extreme religious parties even if they would gain the support of the right could but lose in an open conflict. Moderate religious parties, on the other hand, can participate in all coalitions.

Since the establishment of the state, Israel has had eight coalitions. In all coalitions some religious parties, often all four, participated. The following table shows three coalitions: a "center", a relative right and a relative left coalition. The other five coalitions are very similar to these.

(19) **NUMBER OF MINISTERS, BY PARTY, IN THREE COALITIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Center 9-8-51/6-25-52</th>
<th>Right 12-24-52/1-25-54</th>
<th>Left 11-2-55</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mapai</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapam</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahдут Haavoda</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Progressive Party</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Zionist</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapael Ratszahi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 and an assistant minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizrahi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>an assistant minister</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psale Agudat Israel</td>
<td>an assistant minister</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agudat Israel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last factor for moderation is the institutionalization of religion which is quite high in Israel. The Chief Rabbinat, discussed earlier, is an official authority, strongly linked with the State administration. The Rabbinical courts are an integral part of the judiciary system. Their verdicts are executed by process and offices of civil courts. The government pays salaries to thousands of religious functionaries, and finances many religious activities. There are no civil alternatives to many religious functions (marriage, divorce) and to many

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23 On religious courts in Israel see *The Israel Year Book*, 1952-53, Israel Publication Ltd., Tel Aviv, pp. 89-90.

religious jurisdictions (in matters of alimony, confirmation of wills, and all other matters of personal status). Thus the state, by letting religious authority have a monopoly over certain areas indirectly supports it. The state participates, often considerably, in financing religious schools, synagogues and many other religious institutions. In political terms, the religious parties have a large amount of means and rewards to lose as well as a whole set of laws and by-laws which could be changed. A Kulturkampf could lead not only to fuller enforcement of religion, which is a major goal of the religious parties, but might end up by disrupting the institutional roots of religion in the political system. In short, the three factors: the uneven distribution of religious beliefs, the coalition system, and the institutionalization of religion, all function in the same direction — toward moderation, toward avoiding a Kulturkampf.

Until now we have discussed mainly the forces making a Kulturkampf undesirable for religious parties. But why does not the left, which has been anti-clerical in most countries, assume a more extreme anti-religious standpoint than it does? The answer is different for different parties. The Communists are an exception of small significance. They hold an anti-clerical position as they do in other countries. But since in Israel they have never obtained more than six seats out of 120 and about half of this they achieved through Arab votes, their influence on political life is minor. Mapam and Ahdut Haavodah, which are quite anti-clerical in their platforms and in their propaganda while in opposition, are compelled to make many concessions to religious parties whenever they wish to participate in a governmental coalition. As the following table shows, left coalition (consisting of Mapai, Ahdut Haavodah and Mapam only, since Communists are not considered candidates for government coalitions in Israel) would have a very narrow basis in all three Knessets, 64, 60, 62 respectively.
Mapai prefers to be regarded by public opinion in Israel as well as abroad as holding a center position, and this is one reason why it insists on including non-left parties in all coalitions. The religious parties are considered such parties. Being able to play left against religious parties and vice versa makes coalition bargaining easier for Mapai.

But the factors leading to the moderate position of Mapai on religious issues are much more complex. Mapai’s ideology has never been Marxist and it has always tried to develop its own brand of socialism. The strong ties of the Jewish community in Palestine and the State of Israel today, to Jews in the Diaspora, are an important factor. Jewish tradition cannot easily be separated from religious tradition and the Jewish sentiments to Zion and Israel are, to a considerable degree, religious sentiments. Several times the religious parties succeeded in making a point in Jerusalem, by organizing a Jewish demonstration in front of the
Israeli consulate in New York. Often issues which could lead to a Kulturkampf are avoided, because -- it is said -- a nation which is in constant danger of war cannot afford a Kulturkampf. Lately anticlericalism in the socialist camp in many countries is diminishing. Thus Mapai's intellectuals find new support for their religious tolerance, a few even for their religious revivalism.

This ideology is functional for Mapai as a party. Many of its voters, as discussed above, are not anti-religious, quite a few are religious, especially among the new immigrants from oriental countries. The absence of anti-clericalism also consolidates Mapai's convenient center position and is of much use in creating "balanced" coalitions, as pointed out earlier. Religious parties are a welcome partner of coalitions also because they leave Mapai a relatively free hand in non-religious issues. The institutionalization of religion makes it a force, which, if one does not intend to abolish, one better come to terms with. The following case will illustrate this point: Many Kibbutzim (collective settlements) recently began to raise pigs, which is a grave violation of Jewish religious law. When the Chief Rabbinat threatened to taboo some of their products (mainly milk), these Kibbutzim, including many which are affiliated with Mapam, signed an agreement with the Rabbinat (August 1957) promising to stop all raising of pigs. Other cases could be described, but the main point seems to be clear: politically as well as from an economic point of view, moderation on clerical issues is advantageous. Since Mapai's ideology anyhow is neither Marxist nor anti-clerical, its ideology and its political needs reinforce each other and explain Mapai's approach to religious issues.


The limits of the situation

From a static point of view a Kulturkampf would be disfunctional, would undermine the cohesion and consensus, which are vital to the social system and the political structure. A coalition-compromise relationship on the other hand, is functional. It enables the political process to proceed through ad hoc arrangements and compromises, leaving the basic conflict dormant. From a dynamic point of view the picture is more complicated and perhaps more balanced. The Kulturkampf, while risking the solidarity of the nation and endangering the political process of democratic decision, may end up by solving at least partially the basic conflict, e.g., by separating the church from the state, by secularizing education, etc. These may be elementary needs of a modern industrial society. If on the other hand, the basic conflict between the forces supporting secularization and those engaged in preserving religious hegemony over total spheres of life, stays dormant and only the acute symptoms are taken care of, the political process is always full of tension, carrying in itself a potential breakdown.

In Israel, the second alternative prevails. From time to time the dormant conflict bursts out, a government is dissolved, a municipal coalition has to be re-formed, a long and heated polemic over a religious issue keeps the Knesset from its ordinary work. At least once a year some kind of violence occurs, from burning cars to violent street demonstrations.

25 Although certain religions may be more functional than others to the emergence of modern societies, the process of industrialization in all countries, west and east, is associated with general secularization and withdrawal of religion from some institutional spheres at least. See R. H. Tauney, Religion and Rise of Capitalism, The New American Library, 1948, especially p. 228. For an empirical study which makes the same point, see R. Redfield, Folk Culture of Yucatan, University of Chicago Press, 1941.
A number of factors which impede the adjustment of religion to the needs of the young state and its modern economy can be pointed out. Jewish religion had in the far past, many more and much stronger mechanisms for adjustment, institutions whose role it was to enact new religious laws and to give new interpretations to the old ones. The best known perhaps is the Sanhedrin. As these institutions have been lost long ago, enactment has ceased almost completely and reinterpretation has slowed down considerably. It is often said Jewish religion has been "stagnized."

(24) With the establishment of the state needs to adjust have grown rapidly and immensely. On Saturday, for instance, trains--which are public--do not travel. Telephone service, which is also run by the government, is operated, while delivery of cables belongs to the category of "unclear" cases. For a while "important" cables were delivered, others not. Marriage between two Israeli citizens, with different religious affiliation, is still a very complicated matter, as there is no civil marriage. The armed forces are another source of "difficulties". One could prolong this list considerably. Almost in every sphere of life, the dormant conflict may flash up. In order to avoid a Kulturkampf, complicated compromises are reached and quite stretched interpretations are given to old religious norms. This annoys the public, especially intellectuals and youth, whose need for ideological consistency is strong, as well as extreme groups on both sides. This in turn makes further compromises more difficult, and leads--once in a while--to an outburst in form of some minor violence and or coalition crisis. In short: although the coalition-compromise system enables the day to day functioning of the political process, from time to time a price of instability has to be paid, as a kind of sacrifice to the demons of Kulturkampf, to keep them dormant. Or, in less symbolic language, in order to remind both sides not to overstep the boundaries of the
compromise, if an open conflict is to be avoided.

The increasing hegemony of HaPoel Hamizrahi over the other religious parties, opens the possibility that greater adjustment will be achieved in the future. If the four parties will unite, this may cause more stubbornness in bargaining but may also release some of the present pressure against further compromise, since there will no longer be a rival party, apt to make political capital out of such compromises. The decrease of Marxist appeal and some increase in religious interests of the non-religious groups, may decrease somewhat the need to compromise. Thus the dormant conflict may be solved without ever awakening into a full fledged Kulturkampf. What new forces will impinge on this process and what it will lead to, only God knows and only future generations can tell.
Il n’a jamais existé et il n’existe pas actuellement en France de "parti religieux", au sens où cette expression peut être employée à propos de la vie politique de la République d’Israël. Aucun parti français, même parmi ceux dont la doctrine et le programme sont "d’inspiration chrétienne", n’ont défendu habituellement un point de vue favorable à l’Église catholique à l’occasion des rapports de fait ou de droit que celle-ci entretient avec l’État, n’est en effet un parti véritablement confessionnel; aucun n’accorde explicitement dans son programme d’exclusivité, ou même de priorité, à la défense d’intérêts ecclésiastiques ou religieux.

L’article qu’on vient de lire incite cependant à poser la question de savoir dans quelle mesure les remarques générales sur les partis religieux, dont M. Amitai Etzioni a fait précéder son analyse du rôle de ces partis en Israël, peuvent trouver leur application ou leur transposition dans le cas de la France. La place que les problèmes politiques à incidence religieuse (et les problèmes religieux à incidence politique) ont tenue pendant la plus grande partie de la IIIe République dans notre vie publique -- et qu’ils sont loin d’avoir entièrement perdu aujourd’hui-- donne en effet pour nous un intérêt particulier à tout effort d’élaboration d’une théorie générale des conséquences de l’intervention de considérations d’ordre religieux dans les luttes politiques d’une démocratie multipartite.

Il convient d’abord de noter à cet égard que si le "parti religieux" se définit par la priorité qu’il reconnaît, par rapport à toutes les autres questions, aux problèmes qu’il est commode d’appeler, au sens
large du terme, "culturels", et qui sont plus ou moins directement liés
des convictions religieuses ou philosophiques sur la nature et le
destin de l'homme, sur sa place dans la société et dans l'univers, les
partis anti-cléricaux doivent, au moins dans certains pays et à certaines
époques, être rangés dans la catégorie générale des "partis religieux":
qu'on songe par exemple à ce qu'a été en France le parti radical-socialiste
au temps d'Emile Combes, et au caractère passionné et exclusif de l'action
(333) qu'il a menée pour priver l'Église catholique de tous ceux de ses moyens
d'influence sur lesquels l'État paraissait en mesure d'agir.

M. Amitai Etzioni observe à juste titre que l'intervention de
partis religieux dans la vie politique d'un État peut aboutir, selon les
cas, soit à des conflits du type du "Kulturkampf" allemand, soit au con-
traire à une action d'intégration, plus facile à exercer par ces partis
que par d'autres, du fait que leurs adhérents et leurs militants se re-
crutent en général dans les diverses classes ou catégories sociales du
pays considéré. Le "Kulturkampf" se produit lorsque la hiérarchie des
valeurs est la même pour les partis religieux et pour les partis non-
religieux ou anti-religieux, ce qui donne presque automatiquement naissance
des conflits violents à l'occasion du règlement de tous les problèmes
de type "culturel": enseignement, rapports juridiques entre Église et
État, cérémonies publiques du culte, statut des personnes, etc. Mais ne
faut-il pas ajouter qu'il peut se faire que le Kulturkampf soit délibéré-
ment recherché par certains partis à titre de dérivatif à des préoccupa-
tions ou à des projets de réforme d'un autre ordre? Il n'est pas sans
intérêt de constater que le radicalisme français des premières années du
XXe siècle se recrutait, comme les partis religieux définis par M. Etzioni,
dans des catégories sociales diversifiées, y compris certaines milieux
daussi et la classe des notables provinciaux privilégiés de la
fortune. Or les luttes religieuses intervenues de 1901 à 1910 par suite du conflit entre le radicalisme anti-clérical et la droite catholique, ont eu certainement pour effet -- sinon pour but -- de retarder très sensiblement l'insémination en France d'un impôt général et progressif sur le revenu. On ne doit donc pas exclure, dans l'élaboration d'une théorie générale des effets des conflits religieux sur la vie politique, l'éventualité où ces conflits seraient délibérément recherchés et provoqués, à titre de dérivatifs à des préoccupations d'un autre ordre.

Ce qui s'est passé en France sous la IIIe République conduit également à remarquer qu'un parti ne peut efficacement défendre des intérêts religieux que dans la mesure où il accepte de se placer sur le terrain du régime constitutionnel en vigueur: jusqu'à l'époque du Ralliement, l'attachement à la monarchie des milieux catholiques engagés dans la vie politique a stérilisé leur effort pour défendre les positions de l'Eglise, en même temps qu'il tendait à renforcer l'anti-cléricalisme des républicains. Un peu plus tard, la position prise par la majorité des catholiques dans la crise de l'affaire Dreyfus devait avoir le même effet.

Sous ces réserves -- qui constituent plutôt des compléments que des critiques -- l'expérience de la France paraît de nature à confirmer la validité de la théorie générale esquissée par M. Amitai Etzioni. Il est évident en effet que l'apaisement très sensible des conflits religieux qui s'est manifesté dans notre pays depuis la fin de la première guerre mondiale s'explique dans une grande mesure par le fait que les préoccupations d'ordre économique, social et financier ou d'ordre diplomatique ont tendu, pour un nombre croissant de partis, à prendre le pas sur les préoccupations d'ordre "culturel". S'il avait existé en France un "parti catholique", Indifférent aux problèmes concrets qui préoccupaient
avant tout les autres partis, il lui aurait été possible alors de jouer, aussi nettement que les partis religieux le font en Israël, le rôle d'élément indispensable de toute majorité de coalition, ce qui aurait pu lui permettre de remplir la fonction d'intégration qui, d'après M. Etzioni, doit être celle des partis religieux en dehors des périodes de "Kulturkampf".

Mais la France n'a pas de parti catholique, et ne peut pas en avoir, parce que les catholiques français sont très loin de se désintéresser des problèmes autres que religieux, et parce que, politiquement, ils se divisent quant à la façon dont ils les envisagent.

Le M.R.P. n'aurait pu tenir dans la politique française un rôle comparable à celui des partis religieux en Israël que s'il avait été plus indifférent qu'il ne l'est à la politique économique et sociale, et s'il n'aurait pas été soumis devant les électeurs catholiques à la concurrence des milieux catholiques, économiquement et socialement conservateurs, qui constituent l'une des bases du Centre national des indépendants et paysans.

Par ailleurs, les militants et les électeurs du parti socialiste présentent un certain nombre de caractéristiques socio-économiques telles que ce parti, en France, ne peut renoncer à attacher une importance considérable (sinon toujours prioritaire de façon absolue) aux considérations d'ordre culturel et religieux.

Telles sont les deux raisons pour lesquelles le schéma théorique exposé dans l'article de M. Etzioni ne peut pas se traduire exactement dans la réalité de la vie politique française.

Il n'en reste pas moins que le M.R.P. -- lequel est évidemment, de tous les partis français, le moins éloigné de répondre à la définition du "parti religieux", au sens propre du terme -- a pu participer
successivement à des majorités de coalition d'orientation très diverse, (335) et jouer ainsi, dans une certaine mesure, le rôle d'intégration que la théorie formulée par M. Etzioni assigne aux partis religieux, ce qui semble bien confirmer la validité de cette théorie.

En France cependant, des portefeuilles comme celui de l'Intérieur ou de l'Education nationale semblent, par nature, ne pouvoir être confiés à des membres d'un parti favorable à l'Eglise catholique, alors qu'au contraire ceux-ci assument fréquemment, au gouvernement, des responsabilités d'ordre économique, social, financier ou extérieur: la situation est donc exactement inverse de celle d'Israël.

L'explication de cette différence tient sans doute à ce que, si aucun parti français n'est, au sens complet du terme, un "parti religieux", aucun d'eux n'est non plus totalement indifférent aux considérations d'ordre culturel ou religieux. N'est-ce pas d'ailleurs une des raisons pour lesquelles à peu près tous les partis français s'appuient simultanément sur des catégories sociales diverses, et pour lesquelles les termes de gauche et de droite évoquent plutôt en France des désaccords de type culturel que des antagonismes d'intérêt?