

**THE ISLAMIC FACTOR  
IN MODERN EUROPE:  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
REVIEW**

Nowadays, no one of religion in the world, as Islam does not attract as much attention and does not cause so much controversy and conflicting judgments. Today, Islam is the second, after Christianity, according to the number of followers of the religion, playing an important role in the social life of the Muslims. Muslim communities exist in more than 120 countries around the world, 35 of them they make up more than 80% of the population (most of them located in Northern Africa and Western Asia), which exhibit a high political and social activity.

In the European Union (EU) Muslims are a minority:: their share is in France – 9% in the Netherlands – 5.6%, Germany – 3.9%, in Austria – 4.1% of the population, with the exception of Bulgaria – 11 87% [1]. In General, the proportion of the population of Islamic countries in the EU, according to various estimates, ranging from 3 to 5 percent.

According to experts, by 2025-2030, the number of Muslims in Europe could rise twice, but the accuracy of such assessments is not flawless. Many of these estimates were derived based on simple extrapolation on European Muslims model reproduction patterns that characterize regions of traditional Islam. However, experts believe that it is appropriate to expect growth of the Muslim population in Europe. A wave of strong immigration from Islamic countries is increasing, which is especially vividly seen today. According to a very low-key assessment experts at the Carnegie Endowment, to the year 2023, Islam will be the first in the number of adherents of the religion of peace. Now, the total number of Muslims in the world is estimated differently and is approximately one and a half billion people. And at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. the number of Muslims was estimated at 100 million. man.

Recently, the Islamic factor takes more and more attention of experts, considering the Muslim world as a very powerful force in contemporary international life and one of the pillars of the future world order. The growing importance of Islamic factor due to several reasons, which first and foremost you need to include the strategic importance and dimensions of the Islamic world, a high birth rate (in France, for example, the birth rate among the local Islamic adherents significantly lower than the average Asian and African indices; it roughly corresponds to the «Middle French» growth indicators of

the population) and the constant growth of Muslim migration to Europe and North America.

The origin of European Muslims is very different. The origin of European Muslims is very different. The first wave of migration came in the mid-1950's, and is associated with the dismantling of the French, British and Dutch colonial empires. France first drove the inhabitants of the Maghreb; in the UK-residents of Pakistan; Indonesians-in the Netherlands.

The second wave of Muslim migration to Europe occurred in 1960 after the bilateral agreements of Algeria and France, Germany and Turkey. Later, France and the Benelux countries have been given permission to individual labor migration of residents of Morocco, Tunisia and Turkey.

The third wave of Muslim immigration to Western Europe came in the early 1990's. Mostly they were refugees and applicants for political asylum from Bosnia and the Middle East. Most of them also sought to France, Britain and Germany, but also appeared a new center of gravity – the Scandinavian countries.

Today, some researchers say about the fourth wave, which includes Muslim businessmen and students who move to Europe in order to achieve career goals. Also in this group are the Europeans, who converted to Islam (mostly women married to Muslims) [2].

Muslim civilization and European civilization with Christian roots faced the problem of peaceful coexistence in the EEC. Features of Islam not just as a religion but as a lifestyle, enveloping all of her hand, led to complexity in the way of Muslims to adapt to European society.

Islam has certain characteristics that distinguish it from other beliefs: this is inclusive of religion, which is not just a world view or ideology, or set of moral values, it's a way of lifestyle, which comprehensively regulates the life of the believer.

Islam as an ideology is a rallying point for all Muslims. However, his commitment is highly controversial and reflects the interests of different social groups and strata of the population. In fact, today the Islamic world is experiencing enormous difficulties of development, it is very unstable, polarization occurs Islam. Against this background, the extremist trends in Islam are increasing, there are political alliances of forces of aggressive nationalism and extremism from religion.

The spread of radical Islamism contributes to a number of factors, such as: loss of ideological orientations with regard to the disenchantment in the ideas of nationalism, appeared in the bankruptcy

of socialism, continuing in part of the population of rejection of capitalism, which he associated with the colonial past, as well as drug addiction, sexual promiscuity, the disintegration of family ties; the absence of most of the Muslim states of strong alternative political forces of democratic orientation, etc., it is impossible not to take into account the continuing tensions in Arab-Israeli relations, the conflicts taking place almost continuously (border, territorial, ethnic, sectarian, and so on. etc.) in different intensity, which in varying degrees in Muslim countries are involved.

If in the future there will be no prospects for solving problems, many are turning to return to the idealized «golden age» of Islam. It is not just about the population of Muslim countries, but also of the inhabitants of the Western and European countries.

Everyone remembers, for example, about the terrorist acts that have taken place in Paris, at the beginning of this year, which became the largest by number of victims over the past half-century. As it became known, the group which committed terrorist acts, mainly consisted of French youth.

The Imam of the Paris suburb of Drancy-Hassen Šalgumi, (at one time he said that wearing the veil in the Republic makes no sense) called on authorities to do everything possible to stop the radicalization of Muslim youth: «why do terrorists use our youth? It is a French youth who struggle against their own country. They as jihadists went to Mali, and are now in Syria and elsewhere... Everyone should see their area of responsibility... and civil society and politicians and judges... The yare not work inghardtoenditall.» [3].

In recent decades, there is an intensive growth of the Muslim diaspora in Western Europe. Now, according to various estimates, there are already 12 to 14 million Muslims. The largest communities are found in France (about 5 million people, mostly North Africans) and Germany (up to 3 million, mainly Kurds and Turks).

In most cases, Muslim communities in Europe are not assimilated with the local population and live in designated areas according to their moral and religious laws. It is not uncommon for clashes on ethnic basis with the indigenous population. A large proportion of migrants is on the lowest rungs of the social ladder. All this creates fertile ground for active work of Islamic extremist organizations. Many experts believe that in the near future many Muslim diaspora in Europe can turn into one of the most dangerous sources of tension.

Adaptation of Muslims in Europe is linked with both positive and negative processes. Many Muslims

and their children are attached to European values, get an education, work, strive to integrate into the European multicultural situation. At the same time they wish to preserve their ethnic, spiritual and cultural identity. Some of them are drawn into radicalist and extremist groups, committing wrongful acts that determines anti-Islamic bursts (due to a number of different factors, young people are most vulnerable to the negative effects of antisocial and criminal groups).

At the beginning of the XXI century, the attention of the public and political circles have attracted such phenomena as «Islamic renaissance» and «Islamic boom». We are talking about the features of manifestations of Islam in social and political life of the modern world. The influence of Islamic countries, intensifies every year on international policies, which have to be considered today by the major powers. At the same time more and more clearly manifest foreign policy ambitions of countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia and a number of others. Traced, though not always sufficiently clear, the desire of Islamic states for unity of action in the international arena.

Many political analysts believe that the twenty-first century began 11 September 2001, namely from the time of one of the largest terrorist attacks, when the Islamist terrorist groups have declared themselves. And if before September 11, the relationship between Islam and the West were not particularly straightforward, after those events, the process of confrontation began to take visible shape.

Well-known American political scientist Fareed Zakaria, in his book «The Post-American World» stressed that in modern conditions the leading role of America will inevitably decrease, because countries such as China, India and Russia are gaining momentum. Today, the «Westernization» is no longer a modernization. According to many experts, many European countries are at the dawn of its five-hundred-era dominance. Experts are increasingly coming to the conclusion that the spiritual traits, socio-cultural features of a particular society or region, an impact on the social and historical dynamics. It is not just about erasing cultural and civilizational features of different countries, but also the loss of polarity, without which civilization is dead. Commenting on the process of retreat of Western civilization, the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard wrote: «Maybe one day white people (caucasian people) will disappear, and not realizing that their whiteness is only a result of the shocking mixing and convergence of all races and cultures,

just as the white color represents an amalgam of all colors» [4, p.60].

Today, more and more began to use the term «Euro-Islam», which is understood as a new religion – ideology of Muslims living in Western Europe. Euro-Islam – is considered a variant of Islam which, according to many researchers, already exists. This term should combine the principles of Islamic duties and the basics of the social structure of Western countries, such as human rights, the rule of law, democracy and gender equality.

Tariq Ramadan (born in 1962 in Geneva), one of the authors of the concept of Euro-Islam – is a well-known scientist, publicist and public figure. He was the first who used the term «European Islam», in the mid 90's. T. Ramadan actively defends European Muslims and promotes their ideas in the West, which made him the object of attention from scientists, politicians and journalists. According to T. Ramadan, Euro-Islam will help the European Muslims safely and less painlessly integrate into the European community.

According to T. Ramadan you can be not only a Muslim, but also European, justifying it by the fact that a Muslim lives under the laws of a European country, except for certain circumstances. He believes that European Muslims should form a «European Islam», as there are «Asian Islam» and «African Islam». But this vision of T. Ramadan has not received a response from the orthodox Muslims who believe that there is only one, true Islam. T. Ramadan's views are treated differently, that European Muslims that Oriental.

Giving an interview to euro news journalist, after the events in Paris, Tariq Ramadan said: «What we have is a transnational reality now that we can see in Germany, in Belgium in France even in Britain with the rise of the UKIP party that is stigmatising the immigrants and Muslims, saying Islam is alien to the European continent. My position is to say exactly the opposite: Islam is a European religion, it is a western religion and we have to deal with it, we are going to build our future together.»

Ramadan stands for the delimitation of Islam and the Arab culture, the integration of Muslims into European society while preserving their religious values, and the main condition for the development of Euro-Islam is the transfer of Islamic principles on European soil, taking into account cultural, religious and social characteristics of the countries of the continent; but there is another direction of Euro-Islam – a radical, whose members, insist on using radical measures in relation to European society, propaganda and armed actions.

It should be noted that the tendency to radical views there is from the second generation of migrants. The first generation of migrants generally do not claim social benefits, which are provided by the European Union for their national citizens.

Formation of the Euro-Islam is a long historical process that religion should pass on its own, a more natural way.

In modern Europe, rooted secular culture. Therefore, on the one hand, in these countries the political system tries to take into account the role and the place of Muslims. For example in France, in 2002 was founded a special council of Muslim worship in order to establish a dialogue with the state and society of Muslims.

But on the other EU countries are also seeking to preserve its secularism in politics and culture. For example, in France, in February 2004 it was adopted «The law on the secular character of the society, forbidding students to wear clothes or symbols related to any religion».

In general, the role of the Islamic factor in Europe and in the world continues to grow.

The important thing is that the images of the Islamic world, appearing in the American and European press, almost invariably negative and associated with violence. The fact that most Muslims lead normal lives and professes an entirely reasonable faith with an emphasis on the feeling of kindness brotherhood, charity, social justice and peace, in recent years has been overshadowed by political events.

Similarly, in the same way, distort the image of the West in the eyes of Muslims, that constantly appears as the world of compressor, a supporter of the enemies of Islam and the oppressor of the poor. In General, Muslims around the world against the West feel resentment and hostility, which in its extreme form, resulting in the form of national and international terrorism.

Islam, being a culture of peace and understanding, should not become an instrument of destruction of the world. We can not allow the conversion of the struggle against Islamic extremism in the confrontation between religions, and even more so – in an open conflict, which will be drawn to many countries and people.

#### References

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