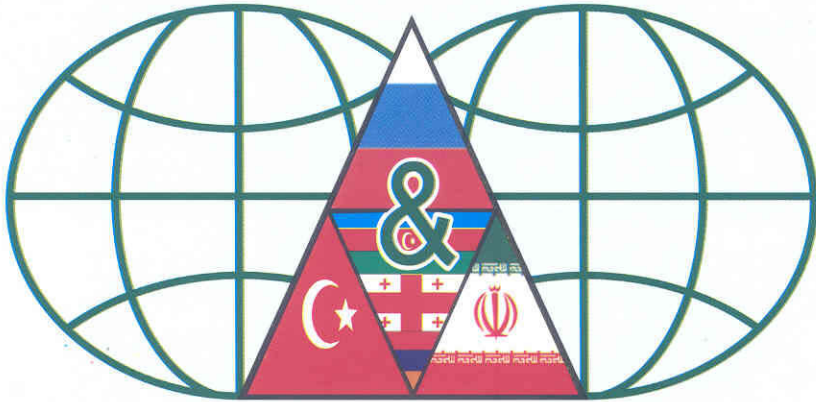




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dialog, but it must be directed into the right channel, making efficient use of the cultural potential of the people.

Despite all of its uniqueness, the art of Azerbaijani carpet making developed and was enhanced in reciprocity with the cultures of many nationalities. By creating masterpieces of national creativity and crafts, our ancestors gave a signal to us in the 20th-21st centuries about the eternity of existence in the beauty of all-embracing harmony. This is not mystics, it is reality. Many creations of carpet art have plunged into the depths of history or been destroyed, while others have been forgotten, but their legacy will resound forever, continuing the chronicle of folk life in the vibrant images of universal values, harmony of rhythms, and rich variety of many-colored hues.

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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION VS. RELIGIOUS RADICALISM IN ISLAM

### A b s t r a c t

**T**he author goes back to the roots of religious radicalism in the Islamic world and charts the ways it can be opposed. Having analyzed the Western political, economic, and cultural impact on the

Muslim civilization he concludes that the Muslim countries stand a chance of joining the globalization process on an equal footing with others if they are able to reform public consciousness.

### I n t r o d u c t i o n

Throughout world history human ideas and human activities have been determined mainly by local factors (kinship ties, geographic location, social organization, and religion). In the past the horizons of many were limited to their native town or village. Globalization has done something more than merely change the forms of economic activity, it has changed the nature of human activity and people's preferences and values. As part of the process, religion became an instrument for all kinds of political forces. In fact, its explosive potential has been exploited since time immemorial by politicians seeking their earthly aims. The first years of the new millennium marked by an upsurge of religious violence cannot be described as an exception. Here I intend to identify the causes of radicalism in contemporary Islam and answer the following questions: How do political and economic changes

affect the nature of religious feelings? Why have radical views become the most widespread in the Muslim world? Can the Muslim states, now in the epicenter of international terrorism, cope with it single-handedly? How can the Islamic heritage be used to stem the wave of radicalism? The answers are extremely important not only for the Muslim civilization: the course and results of the antiterrorist struggle will shape the political future of the world and the nature of its civilizational development.

## Religion and Religiosity in the Globalizing World

Late in 2008 sociologists from Maryland University published the results of their highly interesting project which showed that 51 percent of the population in 20 countries was dead set against conversion to a different faith; while a third resolutely objected to the right to profess any religion. The following European and Muslim countries demonstrated the highest share in both groups: the PNA, 78 percent; Indonesia, 72 percent; Egypt, 67 percent; France, 64 percent; Azerbaijan, 63 percent; Russia, 62 percent; Poland and Jordan, 60 percent each; Britain, 57 percent; Turkey, 55 percent; Italy, 53 percent; India, 52 percent. Nigeria with 20 percent, Kenya with 25 percent, and South Korea with 20 percent demonstrated the highest degree of indifference. A great number of people object to the right to profess any religion in their homelands: 67 percent in Egypt; 54 percent in Ukraine; 51 percent in Jordan, and 50 percent in South Korea. There are similar sentiments in other countries as well: Russia (38 percent), Germany (36 percent), the U.K. (33 percent), Italy (30 percent), and France (26 percent). A fairly high share of the respondents objected to the equal status of all religions: 46 percent in Poland; 45 percent in Egypt; 44 percent in Russia; 40 percent in Ukraine, 36 percent in the PNA; and 31 percent in Azerbaijan.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the results reveals the fact that in our steadily contracting world, in which the boundaries between cultures are growing increasingly transparent, religion remains an important individual ethnopsychological feature. Exhausted by callous rationalism and pragmatism and wrung dry by a never-ending stream of information and the pursuit of technological novelties, human beings are turning to irrational forms of cognition in the hope of bringing order and clarity to their lives. Religions have outlived the modernist ideologies of the 19th and 20th centuries to become actively involved in the current recarving of post-modernist thinking that rejects all generalizations. In the culturological context, however, the traditional religious world perception comes across another "brainchild" of Western civilization, namely, the global culture.

This notorious term has been moved to the center of philosophic discussions while a large part of the academic community looks at it as a political mythologeme created by the financial and political elite to justify its claims to shape world civilization. In his paper "Global Culture(s): Salvation, Menace, or Myth?" delivered at the New Cultural Formations in an Era of Transnational Globalization conference (Taiwan, 6-7 October, 2001) American Sociologist Prof. Immanuel Wallerstein convincingly demonstrated that it was wrong to regard "global cultures" and "world culture" as synonyms for the simple reason that at all times they have remained unknown to the absolute majority of the planet's population and were hardly of any value even for the highly educated minority well acquainted with their postulates.<sup>2</sup> We, in turn, interpret global culture as a sum total of the achievements of the Anglo-Saxon civilization: the vehicle of globalization, the scientific, technological, and eco-

<sup>1</sup> Interfax Agency, 12 December, 2008, available at [<http://www.interfax-religion.ru/dialog/?act=news&div=27857>].

<sup>2</sup> [<http://www.politstudies.ru/universum/dossier/01/wall02.htm>].

conomic superiority of which ensures the advance of the global culture across practically the entire world.

P. Berger, A. Giddens, Z. Bauman, J. Tomlinson, I. Wallerstein, M. Featherstone, A. Appadurai, A. Zinoviev, and others made the specifics of the budding global culture one of their subjects.<sup>3</sup> According to Peter Berger, director of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University, the only thing that brings together the manifestations of the global culture at the elite and mass level is extreme individuality that liberates man from all his obligations to tradition and society.<sup>4</sup> It is the feeling of individual freedom that makes the global culture highly attractive; this thesis is effectively exploited to promote the American way of life in the Third World countries.<sup>5</sup> The ideologues of liberalism, the cornerstone of the global culture, have so far failed to invent new methods to identify “the individualized personality from among the world of faceless units” (to quote A. Zinoviev), yet liberation from obligations to society makes the road to material success much easier. This is globalization’s serious challenge to the local cultures and religious traditions.

The global culture, however, should not be counterpoised to religion as such. Evangelical Protestantism, the Pentecostal Church born in the United States late in the 19th century in particular, is an important instrument of cultural globalization. Peter Berger has pointed out that this movement “reveals purely Anglo-Saxon features” while its ideology inculcates in its followers a feeling of belonging to a certain global community with the center in the United States.<sup>6</sup> This means that the relations between the global culture and religion are multidimensional and multilevel. In fact, the global culture per se can be regarded as a quasi-religious phenomenon: it divides the globalizing society into estates of sorts: the elite (political and financial), with access to all the boons created by globalization, which follows certain rules of conduct and shares certain ideas; the “middle class,” composed of prospering businessmen and intellectuals who, driven by the hope of joining the elite, follow its dress code, rules of conduct, and modes of entertainment; and the lower stratum, the “pariahs” with little or no chance of acquiring the status of actor in the global economic expanse. At the same time, the members of each of the groups are not unanimous in their attitude toward global culture. There are sincere cosmopolitans among the elite and the pariahs ready to exchange traditions for the “American dream;” there are also those who remain loyal to their ethnoconfessional identity while demonstrating their superficial adherence to the global culture.

This means that traditional world perception remains all-important in the globalizing world. By liberating man from the fetters of a certain milieu, globalization opens up a wide range of possible life strategies and, by the same token, poses the very difficult problem of “internal self-identification and building one’s own axiological hierarchy.”<sup>7</sup> Tradition, religious tradition in particular, as a

<sup>3</sup> See: P. Berger, “Four Faces of Global Culture,” *National Interest*, Vol. 49, 1997; M. Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity*, Sage, London, 1995; A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991; J. Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 1999; I. Wallerstein, “Culture as the Ideological Battleground of the Modern World-System,” in: *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, ed. by M. Featherstone, Sage, London, 1990; A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 1996; Z. Bauman, *Globalizatsiia: posledstviia dlia cheloveka i obshchestva*, Ves Mir, Moscow, 2004; A.A. Zinoviev, *Globalnyi cheloveinik*, Algoritm, Eksmo Publishers, Moscow, 2006.

<sup>4</sup> See: P. Berger, “Kulturnaia dinamika globalizatsii,” in: *Mnogolikaia globalizatsiia*, ed. by P. Berger, S. Huntington, Russian translation, Aspekt Press, Moscow, 2004, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> The extent to which the dominance of personal over public interests is hailed in the United States is best illustrated by John Kennedy’s widely quoted phrase: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” (see: J.F. Kennedy, “Inaugural Address,” 20 January, 1961, available at [<http://tucnak.fsv.cuni.cz/~calda/Documents/Modern/jfk.html>]).

<sup>6</sup> See: P. Berger, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> V. Kuvaldin, “Globalizatsiia—svetloe budusheec chelovechestva?” available at [[http://scenario.ng.ru/interview/2000-10-11/5\\_future.html](http://scenario.ng.ru/interview/2000-10-11/5_future.html)].

source of axiological attitudes, is gaining importance when the utilitarian interpretation of morals and law is sending materialist culture into an even greater crisis. In his *The Crisis of Our Age: the Social and Cultural Outlook* (1941), American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin wrote with good reason that violence and crime, mental disorders, and economic poverty spread far and wide during crises.<sup>8</sup> In turn, A. Panarin has pointed out that the present conflict of values was caused “by a general misbalance of consciousness torn apart between the experience of what is and the experience of what is desired. To remain sane consciousness had to dethrone both in order to confirm the position of total relativism.”<sup>9</sup>

This makes the preserved ethnocultural and religious identity an axiological-philosophical imperative; attempts to revive society by bringing it back to religion and traditional values are much more frequent. Today, when the church carries much less weight in society than the media and when the corrupt bureaucracy is unable to ensure public prosperity, a large part of society is turning back to religion. The media and the political system are obviously unable to shoulder much of what religion is expected to accomplish: its compensatory, regulatory, and other functions. This forces politicians to demonstrate, on a gradually increasing number of occasions, that they are interested in religion and seek the advice of the clergy. Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wrote in her *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God and World Affairs* that for some time now religious convictions have been becoming all too obvious in the White House and U.S. Congress.<sup>10</sup> American sociologists Manuel A. Vásquez and Marie Friedmann Marquardt offer the following comment: “With this return to religious sources of legitimation, it seems as if religion has turned the tables on modernity, showing the latter’s failure to fulfill its own utopian illusions.”<sup>11</sup>

This means that the global culture does not exert an unambiguous influence on religion. An analysis of the globalization rating printed annually by the *Foreign Policy* journal shows that the degree to which the state is involved in global exchange says nothing about the level of the nation’s religiosity.<sup>12</sup> What is more, some of the Muslim and Buddhist movements are using, with spectacular results, Western (Protestant) technologies to set up their own religious networks. Nurchular, a pro-Turkic movement, which has been described as an extremist organization and banned in the Russian Federation since 25 May, 2008 by a decision of the Supreme Court, is one such example.<sup>13</sup> The Roman Catholic Church and the League of the Islamic World are, in fact, global institutions that cannot be identified with any local initiative or be viewed as the sum-total of a multitude of regional branches.

So-called new religions are spreading in the globalizing societies together with the traditional religions. In his *Sociology*, Neil Smelser described the new religions as a protest against the bureaucratic nature of organized religion because their ideologues concentrate not so much on doctrine and faith as on their personal subjective experience and mystical approach to the realization of the final aim of life.<sup>14</sup> There is a different opinion: new religions are seen as an attempt to adapt to contemporary society. According to Colin Campbell, the new religions are much more tolerant of science and axiological diversity; they are much more lenient toward personal religious ideas; they seek direct religious experience and help people find their bearings in the chaos of the contemporary world.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See: P. Sorokin, *Krizis nashego vremeni*, available at [[http://www.krotov.info/lib\\_sec/18\\_s/or/okin\\_04.htm](http://www.krotov.info/lib_sec/18_s/or/okin_04.htm)].

<sup>9</sup> A.S. Panarin, *Narod bez elity*, Algoritm, Eksmo Publishers, Moscow, 2006, p. 59.

<sup>10</sup> See: M. Albright, *Religiia i mirovaia politika*, Russian translation, Alpina Business Books, Moscow, 2007, p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> M.A. Vásquez, M.F. Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> See: V. Yelenskiy, “Globalizatsiia, voobrazhaemye soobshchestva i Pravoslavie,” available at [<http://www.archipelag.ru/geoculture/religions/secular/orthodoxy>].

<sup>13</sup> See: *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, 7 May, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> See: N. Smelser, *Sotsiologiia*, Feniks, Moscow, 1998, p. 486 (Russian translation).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.



Not infrequently the new religiosity phenomenon is manifested in the greater interest in occult practices and folk believes. Prof. Lillian Voyé of Belgium believes that these beliefs develop autonomously and are much closer to magic than to religion. Today, however, religion is using them to influence secular society.<sup>16</sup> In the 20th century, many philosophers predicted the revival of mysticism yet their assessments differed: according to Oswald Spengler, the revived interest in magic and theosophy meant that Western civilization was drifting toward its extra-historic state.<sup>17</sup> Nikolai Berdiaev, in turn, believed that mysticism and occultism triumphed because society needed "religious gnosis" and that this should be interpreted as a transition to spirituality.<sup>18</sup> In any case, the fact that early forms of religious consciousness have been revived means that in the globalizing society religiosity is assuming a new quality.

## Religion as an Instrument of Geopolitical Influence

It is wrong to look at the sociocultural changes underway in the world today outside their political context. Globalization has moved the next redivision of the world closer but its outlines cannot yet be discerned. So far it has become clear that social conflicts (which might develop into wars or revolutions) are rocking states which the leading powers regard as globalization objects. The changes realized in this way in these countries, very much in conformity with the current political "fashions," are mostly destructive. The weakening national states and the mounting cosmopolitanism of the elite groups supply the background for religious and ethnic identification which, granted "favorable" conditions, might develop into radical and extremist movements. Very much in line with the dual standards practice these movements are differently assessed: some of the radicals are hailed as human rights activists while others are listed as religious fundamentalists and terrorists.

Not infrequently the "globalizers" exploit the religious factor to secure their geopolitical aims, the Muslim world currently at the stage of high passionarity being one such region. The theoreticians of global chaos describe Islam as a system unable to coexist with other civilizations and religions. Samuel Huntington, the author of the civilization clash theory, describes the Islamic world as a belligerent civilization inclined toward the use of force in conflict settlement and living within "bloody borders:" "Wherever one looks along the perimeter of Islam, Muslims have problems living peacefully with their neighbors."<sup>19</sup>

Premier of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu has written that revived Islam is determined to push the West away and destroy it. The hatred of the United States obvious in the Arabic and Muslim world is caused not so much by the West's aggressive policy in the Middle East and its support of the Jewish state. He is convinced that this is a delusion because enmity of the West, which goes back into the past, still remains the moving force behind the militant Arabic-Islamic political culture.<sup>20</sup> Bernard Lewis has discerned the roots of "this hatred" that "goes beyond hostility" in the Koranic conception of the "enemies of Allah:" "But Islam, like other religions, has also known periods when it inspired in

<sup>16</sup> See: L. Voyé, "Secularization in a Context of Advanced Modernity," *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 60 (3), 1999, p. 279.

<sup>17</sup> See: O. Spengler, *Zakat Evropy*, Vol. 2, Russian translation, Aitir-Press, Moscow, 2004, p. 325.

<sup>18</sup> See: N.A. Berdiaev, "Novoe srednevekovie," available at [<http://www.philosophy.ru/library/berd/midl.html>].

<sup>19</sup> S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Touchstone Books, New York, 1998, p. 256.

<sup>20</sup> See: B. Netanyahu, *Voina s terrorizmom: Kak demokratii mogut nanesti porazhenie seti mezhdunarodnogo terrorizma*, Alpina Publisher, Moscow, 2002, p. 122.

some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against us."<sup>21</sup>

The West moulds its opinions about Islam and its followers accordingly. The United States and its allies shape their policies in the Islamic world under the impact of the above and similar statements. Western interference in the domestic affairs of the Muslim states did little to reduce the tension. Irritated by the gap between the Western and Muslim civilizations the globalization apologists talk about the limits of global expansion of a "fundamental and meaningful nature."<sup>22</sup> One cannot but wonder whether the West should bridge the gap to save its dominating position. The answer is not an easy one: to preserve the present level of social and economic prosperity the industrialized powers need resources; the problem can be resolved by maintaining a state of manageable chaos in that part of the world best described as a "raw material appendage." The Islamic world, which occupies an important geostrategic area, is rich in natural resources, and demonstrates population growth, has a special role to play. On the one hand, Islam is the only philosophical system that, having expanded its sphere of influence, challenged the West as the global hegemon. On the other, its conflict potential is high, or at least enough to stir up "manageable conflicts" in any part of the world.

What made the Islamic factor a suitable candidate for the role of a global destabilizing factor? How does Islam's regulatory base affect the spread of radicalism? Is there a chance for the Muslim civilization to move along a different road in the globalizing world?

Alexander Ignatenko believes that Islamic radicalism is an endogenous element connected with the "Salafi" interpretation of the holy texts, which perpetuates the logic of the past. He has written that the Salafi heritage contains a radical idea which when "implanted in the public consciousness might acquire certain practical, organizational forms even where there are no social, economic, or political ideas for radicalism or extremism."<sup>23</sup> The examples supplied are of a debatable nature: he ties together the Salafi doctrine and taqfir (accusation of apostasy) and jihad. It seems that the author has erroneously identified Salafism with Kharijism (one of the earliest religious-political trends in Islam). His description of Salafis is fairly vague: "The Salafis insist that in everything the Muslims do, believe in or accept as rules they should follow what existed and what was done during the period of early Islam." Meanwhile, hardly any of the Sunni, Shi'a, or Sufi trends idealize early Islam or are oriented toward the practices of the Prophet Muhammad. In Islam nearly all the religious-legal and ideological schools appeal to the Islamic original sources, therefore each of them can be described as fundamentalist. Ignatenko's attempt to discern the sources of religious radicalism (which claims exclusiveness and ignores the temporal and spatial context) in the special way the holy texts were interpreted deserves attention.

Vitaliy Naumkin, another Russian expert in Islam, describes "European colonialism of the New Time, the continued expansion of the West, its obvious desire to dominate, impose its values and its direct armed interference"<sup>24</sup> as one of the causes of Islamic radicalization. He is convinced that radicalism can be described as a response to the deep-cutting crisis into which the Islamic world was plunged by the failed nationalist and socialist ideologies. The situation is further exacerbated by the obvious Western cultural expansion interpreted by the Islamic ideologists as a desire to push Islam to

<sup>21</sup> B. Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 3, September 1990, available at [<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/199009/muslim-rage>].

<sup>22</sup> A.G. Kosichenko, "Vliianie globalizatsii na kulturu i tsennosti cheloveka," available at [<http://www.kisi.kz/parts/global.html>].

<sup>23</sup> A.A. Ignatenko, "Endogeny radikalizm v islame," available at [<http://i-r-p.ru/page/stream-library/index-2488.html>].

<sup>24</sup> V.V. Naumkin, "Fekhtovanie tsivilizatsyi," *Rossiya v Globalnoi Politike*, No. 5, 2007, available at [<http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/28/8550.html>].



the margins of social life. One can hardly be surprised, writes R. Landa in this connection, that some Muslims are determined to use force to defend their national and social interests normally presented in a religious wrapping; from the religious point of view the struggle against the "bad Muslims in power" who violate the Koranic rules and serve the "infidels" is even more justified.<sup>25</sup>

Aziz Niiazi, director of the Institute of Central Asia Development Problems, associates religious radicalism with failed modernization: the Islamic protest movements, he argues, are of a social-ecological nature that relies on the population strata that "suffered more than others from the destructive results of accelerated industrialization." These movements regard the Islamization of public relations as an alternative to the existing order supported by the secular elite with no ideological underpinnings.<sup>26</sup>

The socioeconomic prerequisites of religious radicalism are gathering weight as the Muslim countries become more involved in a close global exchange. While in a closed society living according to religious traditions poverty is not a defect but a social norm, in a globalized society poor people are keenly aware of their deficiency. In an effort to bring the situation into harmony with their world perception they turn to Islamic tradition as a source of social justice and join all sorts of radical movements with no social and economic platforms which survive by exploiting anti-Western rhetoric. Radical groups thrive and grow because people are illiterate and know next to nothing about religion. According to the World Bank, in 1990 in Algeria (when the Islamists were riding the wave of popularity) 42.6 percent of the adult population was illiterate.<sup>27</sup> The share of illiterate women was even higher—54.5 percent.<sup>28</sup> In these conditions, secular governments tend to make the same mistake: instead of promoting religious education and upgrading the level of religious culture they infringe on the rights of the Islamists in an attempt to curb their activities, which merely attracts more supporters to their ranks.

The weak position of intellectual Islam is another no less important factor in the spread of Islamic radical and religious-political movements. In Tunisia, for example, the Hizb al-Nahdah (Resurrection Party) has been preserving its following against the background of the much less popular ulemas. Significantly, its leader Rashid Gannouchi, who has been living as a political émigré in the U.K. since 1991, does not belong to the ulemas. In fact, Abdelfattah Mourou, one of the movement's founders, can be described as an educated theologian. The nation looks at the state-supported ulemas as part of the totalitarian system that interferes with the socioeconomic reforms.<sup>29</sup> People mistrust the traditional religious leaders mainly because they are unwilling or not prepared to defend the Islamic social ideals and come forward with adequate assessments of the political and social developments. Moderate Islamic leaders not associated with the government could have played this role but they are deprived of organizational resources, money, and state support. This leaves the radical and religious-political leaders free to mold ideas about Islam in the minds of the Muslims.<sup>30</sup>

This means that for several reasons the Islamic world is defenseless in the face of the global threats, with religion being the conductor of these threats. Muslim politicians and public figures are fully aware of the fact that the future of the Muslim civilization is being decided today but in most Muslim states the ruling elite has nothing to offer the nation except modernization "from above." This

<sup>25</sup> See: R.G. Landa, "Politicheskiy islam: predvaritelnye itogi," available at [<http://www.i-r-p.ru/page/stream-library/index-2118.html>].

<sup>26</sup> See: A. Niiazi, "Konflikty v Tsentralnoi Azii i na Kavkaze: novyi vzgliad," available at [[http://cis.ng.ru/words/2001-03-28/1\\_asia.html](http://cis.ng.ru/words/2001-03-28/1_asia.html)].

<sup>27</sup> See: C. Kaul, V. Tomaselli-Moschovitis, *Statistical Handbook on Poverty in the Developing World*, Oryx Press, Phoenix, 1999, p. 206.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>29</sup> See: C. Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Society in Practice*, University Press of Florida, 1994, p. 158.

<sup>30</sup> See: A. Malashenko, "Islam: poslednee preduprezhdenie Zapadu," *Pro et Contra*, No. 3, 2004, p. 91.

is hardly the best option in the globalizing world: its inevitable repercussions in the form of exacerbated social contradictions will stir up more social protests. Successful modernization in the Islamic world demands that the values of different social groups become much closer and that the Western experience of state, economic, educational, etc. development be drawn upon taking full account of the ethical and legal norms of Islam. The Muslim nations should be shown how the world is changing and should adjust their religious consciousness accordingly. Success calls for complex measures, religious education being one of them.

## Islamic Religious Education and Reform of Social Consciousness

Islam's vast ideological potential should be tapped to prevent religious radicalism, help the faithful to better adjust to the social context, and organize a dialogue among civilizations. Religious education, which involves detailed explanation of the basic religious and legal provisions of Islam, its moral and ethical values, and their role in contemporary society is an important instrument to be used to tap the religion's potential to the full. F. Kozyrev has justly noted, however, that neither religiosity per se nor religious education can produce religious tolerance. In other words, religious education is a double-edged sword: it can prevent religious enmity and can fan it.<sup>31</sup> This means that the process (its contents and organizational forms) should be supervised by the state and civil society. Today, religious education can no longer pursue purely religious aims—it should have socially important aims in view as well. In this it will serve society, fortify its spiritual and moral convictions, strengthen its political organization, develop a market economy on the principles of mutual trust, and extend social and cultural contacts. Religious education is an important tool for inculcating religious tolerance and respect for other ideologies.

On the whole, religious education in the Muslim countries should pursue the following aims:

1. Explain the fundamental philosophical and ethical-legal norms of Islam, the role of religion in society today, and its potential contribution to settling global problems. This is an important component of religious education that helps oppose religious violence and radical and extremist ideologies. Our experience has taught us that, being unaware of the basics of religion, many of the radically-minded Muslims cannot distinguish between the Shari'a aims and methods. There is a commonly accepted opinion that a Muslim state living according to the Shari'a is the main aim of Islam. In fact the state and the laws should be regarded as merely the means used to achieve a much more important aim—fulfilling one's obligations to the Almighty, oneself, and society. In my monograph *Koran i globalizatsiia: v poiskakh gumanisticheskikh idealov* (The Koran and Globalization: In Search of Humanistic Ideals) (Baku, 2005) I have demonstrated that Islam regards social and related problems as stemming from the violated natural harmony of public being. This means that religious education should help restore it by channeling the creative energy of the faithful to overcome the civilizational crisis and addressing global problems.
2. Preserve and strengthen the moral-ethical norms of Islam that are expected to direct and develop scholarly and public thought. This has become especially important in the conditions of mythologized consciousness, development of virtual dependence, and informational overloads. Islam's ethical system cements the brotherhood of men, it is higher than ethnic or ra-

<sup>31</sup> See: F.N. Kozyrev, "Vospitanie veroterpimosti kak pedagogicheskaja zadacha," in: *Obrazovanie i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo (materialy kruglogo stola 15 noabria 2002 g.)*. Seriya "Neprieryvnoe gumanitarno obrazovanie (nauchnye issledovaniia)," Issue 1, Sankt-Peterburgskoe filosofskoe obshchestvo, St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 75.

cial distinctions and it helps strengthen national unity. Religious values serve as the basis for the harmonious development of the individual; they support the family as a traditional institution; they confirm justice, individual and collective responsibility, and respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms. Stronger traditional spirituality is an effective remedy against all the ailments of contemporary materialist society.<sup>32</sup>

3. Inculcate tolerance toward other religions and different Islamic trends as well as respect for people irrespective of their race, ethnic or other affiliation. This element of religious education presupposes knowledge of other religious and religious-philosophical teachings. This has become especially important today when globalization has made isolation impossible, when the idea of a "territory" is no longer three-dimensional, and when labor migration has reached even the poorest countries. It has been noted that tolerance of other religions and cultures does not undermine one's own cultural and religious tradition.
4. Uproot the regressive tradition which has nothing to do with the Muslim societies' historical needs; promotes mythologized consciousness and mystical practices; and revives those fragments of collective memory that interfere with the progressive development of any nation or the Muslim umma as a whole. These traditions, some of them having nothing to do with the holy texts or defying rational explanations, are rejected by the progressive-minded part of society. More likely than not it is these traditions that cause disagreements among the Muslims and draw a barrage of populist criticism from the religious radicals.
5. Religious consciousness should be reformed so that civil culture and the individual participating in it can be reformed in turn and the religious meaning of labor, wealth, and secular science actualized. This movement is intimately connected with the previous task since reform requires a critical assessment of our own tradition. The efforts to restore "medieval" religious thinking will fail because under globalization public consciousness is changing at a pace that deprives restoration of its meaning. We should admit that reformation is impossible until the Muslim world acquires the adequate conditions for its intellectual resources.

## C o n c l u s i o n

The above suggests that integration of the Muslim countries into the global process exacerbates their social contradictions, which encourages religious radicalism. This is a systemic phenomenon caused by numerous religious, political, economic, social, cultural, and other factors. Religious radicalism, which tends to develop into extremism and terror, undermines the domestic stability of the Muslim countries and regions, interferes with their social and economic progress, and causes the suffering of thousands upon thousands of people. The international community is duly concerned with international terrorism yet it is the Islamic world that bears the main burden of its consequences. The United States and its allies accuse the governments of the Muslim countries of being unable to oppose terrorism; they use this as a pretext for their wider military presence in the strategically important region. The war on Iraq and the military operation of the Jewish army in Gaza demonstrated to the world what America's and its allies' struggle against "international terrorism" was all about. The results are better described as humanitarian catastrophes. In other words, international terrorism is spearheaded against the Muslim civilization rather than the West.

Fully aware of the threat, those Muslim countries that claim the role of equal partners in the global processes (Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan) are waging an active struggle

<sup>32</sup> See: A.A. Abusulayman, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, IIIT, Herndon, 1997, p. 153.

against international terrorism. The results largely depend on the causes of Muslim radicalization and the remedies. I am convinced that victory should be sought in the ideological sphere with well-organized state- and public-controlled religious education being the main weapon. State and public control should not be interpreted as interference in the religious communities' internal affairs: people should be isolated from destructive ideas clothed in religious garb, otherwise radical movements and external forces will be free to go on with their brainwashing.

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## THE EAST AND THE WEST: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

### A b s t r a c t

**T**he East-West division, the ways their philosophies developed and the results of their impact on the relations between civilizations are a few of the subjects the author has selected for an in-depth investi-

gation. She also analyzes the causes of the moral and spiritual crisis mankind is living through to put forward solutions based on the achievements as well as the problems both civilizations are coping with.

### I n t r o d u c t i o n

In recent history academics have been turning with increasing frequency to ancient history in search of arguments to support the division between the East and the West. To put this differently: while yesterday the problem of a divided world did not exist, today it has moved to the fore and can be discerned as the primary cause of practically all the global challenges.

It is worth noting in this case that the East in the East/West antinomy is mainly the Islamic East, while the Far East, an object of Western influence in the form of conquests and many years of colonialist policy, has largely preserved its independent thinking, original culture, and national specifics. India, China, and Japan are pertinent examples of this. The Japanese have no fears of possible Europeanization of the younger generation (something imposed elsewhere by the demands of the times and conditions of life today): they are completely confident in the spiritual richness of their religion and its indissoluble bond with the nation's values. They know that this contact