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WESTERN EUROPE FROM PERSPECTIVE OF MULTI-CONFESSIONAL DIALOGUE

B.G. Koibaev (a) *, S.A. Khubulova (a), Z.E. Dzottsoeva (a), L.Ch. Khablieva (a),
E.V. Khubulova (b)
*Corresponding author

(a) North Ossetian State University named after Kosta Levanovich Khetagurov, 44-46 Ulitsa Vatutina, Vladikavkaz, Russia
(b) North Ossetian Institute for Humanitarian and Social Studies named after Abaev V.I., Branch of the Federal Research Center Vladikavkaz Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 10 Mira Ave., Vladikavkaz, Russia

Abstract

The presence of a great number of followers of Islam in Western Europe to a certain extent influences traditional values of the Old World. The situation that has been recently observed is a case in point. The migration is a global issue, affecting many regions of the world and most significantly Europe. States of the continent have become trapped by thousands of migrants from Syria, Africa, Afghanistan and Egypt.

Islam imperceptibly introduces its own changes in the religion and daily activities of European people. Such rapprochement at the religious and social levels cannot but provoke a reaction among the indigenous population of the countries of Western Europe, expressed more often in a negative attitude towards the "newcomers". At the same time, Muslims of the second or third generation, born on the European soil can be considered Europeans on a par with the indigenous people.

There is a transformation of European identity; Christianity gives way to the position of Islam. The problems arising at the junction of two cultures, two religions affect social and political aspects of life of Western European societies. Facing the choice of multiculturalism, Europe is trying not to lose its own traditions, but as long as the Western rulers, undecided, refuse to pursue an active integration policy, the number of Muslims in Europe increases and the mosques continue to grow in major European cities. This circumstance makes us look at the issues of the spread of Islam in Western Europe more widely.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, confessions, migration, crisis, migrant.

1. Introduction

Exploring the development of Christian and Muslim relations in the second half of XX century, and how this development has changed the attitude of people towards Islam in Europe and throughout the world, it can be noted that significant changes began to occur from the beginning of the -50s. Despite the fact that, starting from the mid-twentieth century and until the end of the -1970s, the process was mostly of a theological nature and did not receive wide publicity in the press, it was during that period when the parties managed to make some progress in building interfaith dialogue.

Later, when disputes about the collision of two cultures were embodied in reality on the streets of European cities, the experience of almost three decades of international meetings, forums and scientific conferences on this issue served as a necessary basis for finding solutions to many problems that have arisen in Europe.

2. Problem Statement

To analyze the multi-confessional European society in the post-war years, as well as interpenetration of European and Muslim values

3. Research Questions

The process of relations between the Christian and Muslim worlds in the European space of the first half of XX century is of great interest: the state and results of the interfaith dialogue, socio-cultural adaptation of immigrants and Muslim countries.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to study the experience of inter-civilization dialogue between Christian and Muslim traditional cultures and the emergence of a new phenomenon for XX century - Euro-Islam.

5. Research Methods

The goal defined research methods and specific approaches. The complex and multidimensional process of interpenetration and interaction of different cultures, psychology and traditions posed the problem of an interdisciplinary approach, addressing the methods of social psychology, religious studies, ethnology, history, philosophy, which allowed us to get a complete picture of the process under study. The authors also used structural and chronological, system-based and comparative methods, which made it possible to give an expert assessment of the events and processes

6. Findings

Christianity gave a second thought to its relations with the representatives of other religions at the very beginning of XX century. Initially this process involved intra-Christian debates about the origin of a new problem, on the one hand, and defining ways to build relations with the representatives of the "alien" faith, on the other hand. Despite the fact that only a small part was given to possible relationships in the

new vision of the world in its missionary view, nevertheless, the process had a theological significance for the Christian world.

The two world wars prevented the development of fruitful relations between Muslims and Christians, but soon after the end of the Second World War, the church turned to the problem of relationships with people of other faiths. In some Muslim countries, as the independence was acquired, the remaining Christian missions were viewed by the population as a legacy of the Western colonialists. The Muslim world, in turn, faced a number of difficulties after the end of the Second World War. First, it was necessary to fill the information vacuum that emerged after all political changes, that is, to connect the past with the present. Secondly, the rejoicing caused by the independence from the colonial rulers did not last long. The new rulers became the decisive force in Muslim countries.

Parties, ideologies and clans dominated the national character, and people were rarely informed about what was happening. Mass rejoicing was replaced by the disappointment as a result of inability to participate in the process of making any meaningful decisions. The people did not have any right to make their choice in the field of social and political affairs and were limited in their religious and social activities. Thirdly, the majority of the population, mainly Muslims, was internally displaced persons and, being in extremely unfavorable economic conditions, had practically no time to think about their past heritage and adapt to new conditions. At that moment, a call was made for the establishment of new relations between Muslims and Christians.

The ulama regarded the growing influence of the West on Muslim countries in the political and social spheres as a conductor of "corruption", "evil" and "moral degradation" (Maududi, 1955). Under such circumstances a call for a dialogue, abandoned by the church from the West , could not be heard in Muslim countries. They perceived the church as their ally in the struggle against socialism and materialism, on the one hand, and against injustice in general, on the other. In Bamdun, after two preliminary meetings, a large forum was held. Both Western Muslims and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as ulama took an active part in it. The main attention was paid to the problems of the "shrinking clutches" of materialism and ever-increasing influence of socialism.

As a result of the formation of the State of Israel in 1948, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians became forced refugees. Most of them found refuge in neighboring countries - Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. The Bamdun forum had to somehow respond to these events. The participants, who were the Muslims, hoped to get in good with the western church. Since there was a significant number of Christians among the refugees, the Muslim side hoped that the Vatican would readily accept a proposal to cooperate on legal issues.

However, the situation was complicated by the fact that it was at that time when the collapse of the illusions of the peoples of the East regarding western democracy was observed. Speaking about this, one of the participants in the meeting, Mustafa al-Sabai, pointed out three reasons that led to the manifestation of sympathy for communism:

1. "The corrupt social structures, especially in the Muslim East ... a corrupt government structure, failure of rulers to strengthen legal laws ...";

2. "Hostile opposition of Western democracy to the peoples of the East in their quest for independence and freedom";

3. "Support for Zionism could not help strengthen Western democracy in the Arab world ..." (Teissier, 2000, pp.33). It somehow help us understand why, despite the obvious crisis in Muslim world, the Western political course was rejected. However, despite the differences that existed, including theological ones, as a result of the forum in Bamdun, it was found out that Muslims were relying on real interaction with the West. From the mid-1950s to the end of the -1960s, a large number of discussions were held at the international level on the topic of defining goals and ways of developing relationships between people of different faiths. It should be borne in mind that in the -60s and early -70s there was a large migration of Muslims to the West. The rapid growth in the number of Muslims in Central Europe led to a new wave of rapprochement and involvement in close relations with Muslims, which was of the greatest importance for both Christian and Muslim relations in general.

Great efforts in exploring new ways of affinity with Muslims were made at a scientific conference in Asmara in 1959. The most important impetus for the development of these relations was the participation of Hendrik Kramer in it. In one of his articles, H. Kramer wrote: "If we seriously think about the objective changes in the relations between the Muslim and Western worlds, we will see that our past hostile relations, one-sided minds and communication, built in the form of a monologue, were replaced by the opportunity and the need for the emergence of interdependent relationships (material and cultural), sincere human communication and open dialogue. The unprecedented situation is that it depends on the insight of the Christian world in the search for new ways for dialogue based on disinterested support and work on the problems of the Muslim world in an obvious crisis "(Revue, 1964).

As you can see, sincere desire to solve the problems of the Muslim world is expressed by H. Kramer in building the material and cultural relations between the East and the West.

Further development of the dialogue between people of different faiths took place in Germany, where the migration of labor from Turkey could not but be alarmed by religious and civil authorities. In 1963, at a conference held by the German Evangelical Church, a special working group was formed to study the problem that arose with the appearance of Muslims in Germany. The working group made the following decisions:

1. To involve the leaders of religious societies in the study of this problem. 2. To entrust the care of Muslims to charitable and religious organizations. 3. To hold a conference on Islam with the participation of a pastorate (Teissier, 2000).

This decision inspired the Gospel mission in Egypt to invite German missionary societies working with Muslims to meet in Wiesbaden in December 1963. There it was decided to form an encounter group, which would express the will of the mission in association with other churches on the issue of the Muslim presence in Europe.

At this stage, it became necessary to understand not only the difficult situation in which the visiting Muslims in Europe found themselves, but also their faith. One of those who tried to look into the theological aspects of the problem of Christian and Muslim relations was Hassan Saab. In his article on this issue, he

wrote: "Christians, like Muslims, have a tendency to judge a different faith from the positions that take into account the conventions that exist in Christianity or Islam. For Muslims, Christianity is associated with the aggressiveness of those rulers, from whom they have suffered for one and a half centuries. The rejection of aggressiveness entailed the rejection of Christianity. For Christians, Islam is associated with the backwardness that they have experienced due to recent contacts with it. Christian aversion to Islam stems from aversion to backwardness. This will occur until Christians and Muslims draw a dividing line between religious values and human realities" (Teissier, 2000).

The opinions similar to the above and expressed by the representatives of both parties contributed to the formation of basis for future relationship building. Shortly after the conference in Wiesbaden, the Roman Catholic Church prepared a document called Nostra Aetate proclaiming the beginning of a new relationship with Muslims. After that the Commission on Islam was formed. It focused on those who belonged to the church, who had any contact with Muslims, even if they simply lived among them, or who were engaged in the study of Islam. These people were regularly invited to Rome for consultations. As a result, in 1969, the commission produced a very valuable document called Establishing a Dialogue between Muslims and Christians. As it can be seen, the church representatives were aware of the need to establish a connection between Christianity and other religions at the theological level.

However, they also recognized the difficulty of taking this approach to Islam. Bishop Jacques Jomieu said in an interview with Le Monde that "despite the fact that Islam has three aspects (religious, political and cultural), it is the cultural one that should be chosen by those interested in the dialogue. A dialogue can be realized only if Muslims and Christians begin their work side by side at a cultural level. But the civic life (part of the political aspect) may also represent a space for collaboration. The rapprochement in the religious sphere can also be gradually achieved after passing through the cultural stage" (Le Monde, 1971). Such a rapprochement could be of great importance for future relationship between the two religions.

In addition, it must be borne in mind that the above-mentioned document had not only religious significance, but also clearly highlighted the social, cultural and political spheres. When the Council of Bishops, after a detailed study of the document, revealed its strongly pronounced tolerance towards Jews, part of the Council representatives from the Arab world expressed their objections to this issue. They feared that by adopting the document in this form, Muslims, and in particular the Arabs, would perceive this as the adoption of pro-Jewish and, therefore, pro-Israel positions, which, in their opinion, could destroy the idea of a church in the Middle East. Серьезность подобной точки зрения обязала Before the final adoption of the document the corrections were made by Muslim representatives. In its final form, the document emphasized the closeness of Muslim beliefs and values with those of the Roman Catholic Church, which, in turn, prompted Muslims and Christians to understand that: "for many centuries, Christians and Muslims were united only by strife and discords. The Holy Council is now asking everyone to forget the past, and insists on making every effort to achieve mutual understanding between people for the benefit of maintaining peace, freedom, social justice and moral values".

The year 1970 marked a turning point in the history of Christian and Muslim relations. In the mid-1960s, the Secretariat for Relations with Other Religions, now called the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, was already established by Vatican. He developed the document mentioned above.

However, in 1970, the Vatican for the first time hosted a top-level Muslim delegation. The Supreme Council for Islam in Cairo stayed in the Vatican from December 16 to 29, and a year later, the World Council of Churches established the Department for Dialogue with Representatives of Existing Religions. This step signified an official recognition by the Catholic churches of the importance of building new relations with Muslims, as well as with other religions.

The 1970s was a period of exploration of an unfamiliar culture for Western Europe. At that time a great importance was given to meeting people of a different faith. In essence, a bilateral rapprochement was achieved. The churches of Europe began to understand their responsible position in relation to their new neighbors. In fact, they showed genuine interest in the problems of Muslim settlers and were probably the only allies who decided to find their place in European cities. In an atmosphere where Muslim settlers in Europe received a rather casual definition of "black immigrants", the Church established a commission to observe Muslim customs and traditions to study this new phenomenon.

In Britain, the joint efforts of the British Church Council and the Association of the Missionary Societies of Great Britain and Ireland established an advisory group on Islam in Britain. In 1976, a report was published entitled A New Stage: Guide for Churches in Building Relations with Muslim Communities authored by Bishop David Brown (Brown, 1976). The report consisted of three parts - the Muslim society, issues of religion and problems of relationships. The report revealed the main problems of Christian and Muslim relations and also included the norms of behavior applicable in practice.

The symposium held by Le Monde in Paris in November 1973, which was aimed at "strengthening the intellectual and civic dialogue between East and West" (Le Monde, 1973), can be considered a definite success in building interreligious dialogue. Although the symposium paid much attention to the problems of democracy, agreement in the Mediterranean region and Islam and socialism, the Palestinian question and the problem of Zionism were of great importance. One of the main figures at the symposium was Colonel Gaddafi, who even before 1973 had long tried to draw the attention of the world community to the problem of relations between the Western and Arab worlds. He wanted to raise issues which, in his opinion, affected the manifestation of injustice towards the Arab people by the West. Despite the fact that the Libyan leader failed to achieve the desired results in Paris, this meeting resulted in holding the seminar in Tripoli in February 1976. The main topic of the meeting in Tripoli was that the colonial period prevented the Arab world from entering into dialogue on equal terms with the West. Now that the colonial period has been left behind, both parties had an opportunity to build a mutually beneficial dialogue based on open discussions. In Tripoli, Gaddafi stated that it was "a meeting for the sake of truth and sincerity as a pledge of positive actions..." (Teissier, 2000).

It should be mentioned that the -1970s was also marked by the crisis in Lebanon. This country that was proud of its religious and cultural harmony and in the old days it was perceived as an example to follow, now was put into the flames. The religious strife separated the inhabitants from each other and many international politicians took a direct part in fomenting this conflict and complicating the situation in Lebanon.

The -1970s was the time when there was widespread controversy in the world about Sharia and human rights. Against this background, the idea of Christians among Muslims in Asia, Africa and Europe was viewed as people holding more secular rather than religious interests and who would like to observe

Muslim countries in the process of modernization and secularization rather than in the process of Islamization. Moreover, the mission of Christianity began to be perceived in the East as the engine of the process of secularization. The transition to Christianity was no longer just a transition to different faith, but also to different culture and different vision of the world.

Since the late 1970s, the problem has ceased to be purely theological. The Iranian revolution of 1979 has brought Islam, as a political force, to the center of international political debate (Fisher, 1980). That impelled not only to review the whole world's relations with Islam, but also led to an attempt to find out the causes of this revolution and how it could influence the Islamic world and the future of its relationship with the West. In 1981, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation organized his first Christian and Muslim colloquium. It took place in Bonn. There, the foundation stated that among other things the clash between religions was a clash between two worldviews. Bruno Heck in his opening speech emphasized that "the political antagonisms which has arisen between the Euro-Atlantic and Islamic worlds and continue to keep them in opposition to each other ... do not offer prospects for either side" (L`Actualité religieuse, 1981) . He suggested that, perhaps, this meeting would help understand all the Christians the reasons why the faith, which is crucial for Muslims "changes from being beneficial to being unacceptable" in the modern world.

The work of the conference was reflected in a book published shortly thereafter, in the preface to which the publishers discovered the hidden motivation of the colloquium: "Islamic fundamentalist reforms that are a response to the growing saturation of the world with Western materialistic values of industrial civilization make the West worry. "Re-Islamization," the merits newly discovered inside Islam, which allow the third world countries to solve their own problems. This tendency leads the West to the state of confusion and bewilderment, which cannot be hidden by holding all kinds of forums and congresses. The shade of military Islam, which controls a large proportion of the world's energy resources, cannot but alarm politicians and people at large. At the same time, our understanding of our interdependence is growing" (Siddiqui, 1999). In this preface there were expressed general concerns about the large amount of energy resources in the Muslim world. How the establishment of "military Islam" in the East would be reflected in the West depended entirely on the policies pursued by the West in this region.

While the questions of Islam occupied the minds of Western scholars and politicians, the implementation of Sharia became the work of such generals as Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan and Nimeiry in Sudan. The general Zia-ul-Haq came to power in 1977 as a result of a military coup and immediately demonstrated his purely Islamic attitudes. The question of introducing Sharia appeared to be acute after its discussion in the upper chamber of the Pakistani parliament. Similarly, Nimeiry divided South Sudan in June 1983 into three regions, and in September of the same year he introduced Sharia throughout the territory, thereby, exacerbating the situation. In Nigeria, the demands of the Sharia pushed the interests of two sides and caused a storm of discontent. Muslims usually perceived the worldly laws as Christian laws, arising from the daily lives of Christians. Christians, for their part, saw in the Islamic revival, which imposed its will through sharia, a violation of their human rights. The requirements were exhibited first from one side, then from the other side, and the situation had gradually become worse.

The introduction of Soviet troops in Afghanistan in 1979 caused a large flow of refugees to neighboring Pakistan. At that time, the Palestinian question was widely discussed in mass media. A little later, in 1982, the whole world witnessed the massacres in Sabra and Shatila. It was also the year when the

Muslim world entered the new century on the Hijrah. However, 1991 was the watershed in the history of mankind. The bipolar world had suddenly collapsed. Having remained the only superpower on the planet the United States continued the tactics of expanding its political influence in the world. With the fall of communism, which was the ideological enemy of the capitalist West, major politicians on the other side of the ocean began to search for a new enemy. It was in this way that the "Islamic threat", which had played a minor role in the international political arena until that time, came to the forefront. Such statement can be illustrated by the statements of leading politicians from the administration of the United States. For example, Warren Christopher, Bill Clinton's advisor on international politics, called Iran an "international gangster" (Brieger, 2002). It was media that played the most important role in the process of Islam-bashing. Demonstrating absolute ignorance of the specifics of the Muslim world many of them represented Islam as a movement of fanatics ready any moment to start a "holy war", as, in their opinion, the Koran demanded. It should be noted that the Arabic word "jihad" corresponding to this concept has nothing to do with the word "war" and is translated as effort or tension. However, it was published in the New York Times that "Muslim fundamentalism is quickly becoming the main threat to the world peace and security, like Nazism or fascism in the -30s or communism in -50s" (New York Times, 1993). This opinion was repeated by the Time's journalist Bruce Nilen, who declared that "the dark side of Islam reveals its face as violence and terrorism aimed at overthrowing modern secular regimes in Western countries" (Time, 1993).

The distorted image built by the Western strategists, primarily American political scientists, about Islam has the following reasons: possibility of redistributing geopolitical map of the world in accordance with the proclaimed new world order, possibility of military intervention in the East and, as a result, control over the energy resources of the Muslim world.

The -1990s as far as the relations between the East and the West is concerned was a period of analysis of foreign civilization when the first takeaway appeared about the incompatibility of two cultures and two worldviews. Big changes took place inside Europe. The fall of the Berlin Wall, which symbolized the divided world and which was demolished by people as a prelude to the collapse of the Soviet Union, promoted changes not only on the geographical maps, but also in the minds of Europeans. Politically, Europe has become more open, but economically it is still divided into the haves and the have-nots.

The creators of the European Union were eager to gain independence from the United States and Japan. The erection of political and economic barriers could not but lead to certain changes in the political and economic structure of Europe. There were also changes that occurred in society. Today's Europe is no longer fully owned by its indigenous population. Military conflicts in Europe, like the Balkan crisis, and the protracted economic crisis in the East caused a new flow of immigrants to more prosperous countries of Western Europe. The biggest part of this flow was made up of Muslims, both Europeans and people from Asia and Africa. Today Europeans are forced to reckon with completely different culture and different lifestyle of the people who inhabited their former colonies. Negative attitude towards strangers creates negative social phenomena such as discrimination and racism.

For Muslims, Europe has a slightly different meaning due to their isolation from their roots. Immigrants from Muslim countries who have settled in Western Europe are separated from their history, culture, language, religion, and this is not a problem of one or two generations. The process of adjustment to new environment goes easier and faster in the economic environment, however, psychologically most

Muslims are not in good terms with Europeans. Moreover, in some countries, Muslims are perceived as a kind of threat to Europe and are associated with the Trojan horse. This negative attitude of native Europeans towards immigrants is partly concerned with the unwillingness of Muslims to be assimilated. The impetus of Muslims not to build any close relations with the society they live in, relates to the fear of assimilation. This fear is quite natural, the same as the inevitability of assimilation.

However, it is known that along with the absorption of the features of the character of one culture by another, there is the so-called "parallel assimilation", when "traditions, thoughts and ideas do not dissolve in another culture, but exist in it, exerting and experiencing a certain influence" (Minces, 1986, pp.81). In our opinion this type of assimilation is a domineering one in case of European Muslims remaining unnoticed at some stages of its development.

Muslim families who have settled in Europe and have lived there for centuries can also be considered a "detached" community. Their relocation to non-Muslim environment and close interaction with it causes unique changes because most European Muslims come from the countries where Islam is the state religion (Lewis, 1994). The existence in the conditions of minority, caused by voluntary migration, obliges the Muslim elite in the West to reconsider the age-old traditions of the Muslim faith. At the same time, the most educated representatives of the new generation of Muslims in the West understand that the duty of Muslims in Europe is to organize their future in the new space (Cesari, 1998).

7. Conclusion

Thus, an increasing number of representatives of the ulama comes to the conclusion that Islam should have a special embodiment in Europe, corresponding to Western society. The analysis of the development of Christian and Muslim relations in the second half of XX century allows to draw the following conclusions:

1. the flow of immigrants from Muslim countries to Western Europe, which after the fall of the Berlin Wall became more open;
2. the collapse of socialist camp in the -1990s, marking the end of the Cold War, has put Islam at the top of the international political debates;
3. the Islamic identity should be analyzed taking into account the influence of the European environment.

The new generation of Muslims in the West, represented by young people born in Europe, is part of the European society, which cannot be understood without awareness of this fact.]

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