

**INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION  
FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES  
OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**RUSSIA  
AND  
THE MOSLEM WORLD  
1 (319) – 2023**

**SCIENCE-INFORMATION BULLETIN**

Federal State Budgetary Institution of Science  
Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INION RAN)

Division of Asia and Africa

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**Russia and the Moslem World : Science Information Bulletin / INION RAN, Division of Asia and Africa.** – Moscow, 2023. – N 1 (319). – 130 p.

Scientific materials on the current political, social and religious issues concerning the relations between Russia and the global Islamic Ummah as well as Muslim countries are represented in the form of articles, reviews and abstracts.

Журнал зарегистрирован в Федеральной службе по надзору в сфере связи, информационных технологий и массовых коммуникаций, свидетельство о регистрации СМИ: ПИ № ФС77-83095 от 11.04.2022

ISSN 1072-6403

DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.00

Journal is indexed in the Russian Science Citation Index  
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## MODERN RUSSIA: IDEOLOGY, POLITICS, CULTURE AND RELIGION

DMITRY EFREMENKO. RUSSIA AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES AT A NEW HISTORICAL TURN: CHANGING INTERACTION IN THE CONTEXT OF A SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION IN UKRAINE

*Keywords: Africa; Global South; special military operation; transformation of the world order; trade and economic relations of Russia with African countries; food security; private military companies; information influence; military-technical cooperation.*

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*Citation:* Efremenko D. Russia and African Countries at a New Historical Turn: Changing Interaction in the Context of a Special Military Operation in Ukraine // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, No. 1 (319), P. 5-28. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.01

*Abstract. The article analyzes the changes in Russia's relations with African countries caused by the conduct of a special military operation in Ukraine. Since the mid-2010s and up to the beginning of SMO (Special Military Operation), there has been a strengthening of*

*these relations, which became especially noticeable after the Russia-Africa summit (2019). In addition to the growth of trade and the expansion of military-technical cooperation, a new significant factor of the Russian presence in Africa was the deployment of the activity of private military companies ("Wagner Group"). In the conditions of SMO interaction with African states in the spheres of trade and economy will go through a stage of painful transformation caused by Western sanctions pressure. At the same time, ensuring food security and preventing hunger in many countries of the Global South becomes a key problem. The modalities of Russia's presence on the African continent will inevitably be determined by the general confrontation between Russia and Western countries. In the longer term, African countries may become beneficiaries of the transformation of the US-centric world order, and SMO has become a strong factor in the acceleration of it.*

In the early spring of 2022, demonstrations were held in several African cities, whose participants, waving Russian tricolors, welcomed the special military operation in Ukraine launched by Moscow on February 24. The demonstrations were not too numerous, but the very fact of their holding attracted attention in the West, which was gripped by a powerful wave of anti-Russian hysteria. Almost immediately there were statements about a kind of "Putinophilia" characteristic of certain segments of society in African countries [Kane, 2022; Bensimon, 2022]. However, the real background of these speeches was, of course, not a deep understanding of the causes and goals of the Russian special operation, but a growing rejection of Western policy towards the Global South, intertwined with specific economic, political, social, ethno-religious and other circumstances in various countries and regions of the African continent. In this optics, Russia and Putin are seen as a force symbolizing an alternative to the world order controlled by the West and in some cases able to offer quite concrete solutions in the interests of specific local actors.

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A much more significant event, both encouraging for Moscow and alarming for Washington, Brussels and the capitals of former European colonial empires, was the voting in the UN General Assembly in March 2022 on draft resolutions condemning Russia's actions, when many African countries abstained, did not participate in the vote or even spoke out against. It can be said that in the conditions of powerful political and diplomatic pressure from the West, these states had an "instinct of non-alignment", connected both with the historical memory of the influence of the Soviet-American confrontation on the Third world countries, and with their assessment of the changing balance of forces on the world stage. According to Angela Stent, "many ... countries in the Global South view Russia as a large authoritarian country with which they can do business and accuse the United States of hypocrisy, given Washington's past wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan" [Stent, 2022]. The main motivations of the abstaining African countries, including the Republic of South Africa, can be summarized as follows:

- military actions in Ukraine are, first of all, a proxy war between Russia and the United States, in which African states should not provide explicit support to either side;
- it is all the more necessary to take such a position if one or more African countries seek to mediate in this conflict;
- it is important that relations with Russia in the areas of trade and security continue to develop [Strelcova, 2022].

### **Forced Adjustment of Priorities in the Conditions of SMO**

The military confrontation in Ukraine has become a powerful driver of the accelerated transformation of the world order, which has both immediate and delayed effects. Due to the relative remoteness of Africa from the theater of military operations, it can be concluded that the most significant

consequences for the countries and peoples of the continent will manifest themselves in the medium term, although the aggravation of the food crisis, rising prices and a dramatic redistribution of interactions of key players – buyers and sellers – in the hydrocarbon markets are important components of the current political and economic agenda. In the future, the geopolitical and geo-economic changes associated with the course and results of SMO will be of decisive importance.

From the point of view of military operations in Ukraine, several medium-term scenarios can be considered:

– sustained prolongation of military operations in case of continuation and further escalation of military and economic support for Kiev from the West;

– achieving a long-term truce and fixing the actual territorial control of the parties along the front line (due to the exhaustion of the parties of the possibility of continuing active hostilities, as well as the growing crisis in the economy and voter fatigue in the EU and the United States from the consequences of the military conflict and anti-Russian sanctions);

– the collapse of the current Ukrainian statehood as a result of a turning point on the fronts and economic collapse.

Less likely is the scenario that Washington and Brussels made the main bet on at the beginning of their campaign, imposing sanctions of unprecedented scale against Moscow: an explosive increase in the socio-economic crisis in Russia combined with military failures, protests in large industrial centers, the rise of ethnic separatism, the split of elites and – as a result – the collapse of the existing political regime.

None of the most likely scenarios provides for a comprehensive political settlement and normalization of relations between Russia and the West; a confrontation comparable to the darkest periods of the Cold War will remain a routine for many years, if not decades. Under all scenarios, the destruction of the US-centric world order and the crisis of the liberal model of

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globalization will occur, but their speed and the scale of the accompanying shocks will be different.

With a high degree of probability, Africa will become one of the sites of confrontation, in which, in addition to the West and Russia, a number of other international actors will participate. At the same time, this confrontation will ultimately contribute to strengthening the political subjectivity and influence of African countries as part of the Global South, which has its own interests and political and economic agenda in the context of the transformation of the world order.

The formation of a holistic African policy of Russia, going beyond the framework of bilateral relations with priority partners, has long remained a good wish. The potential of the continent and the prospects for cooperation with African states in Russia have been recognized repeatedly, but only the Sochi Russia-Africa summit, held on October 23–24, 2019, gave the necessary impetus to Russia's policy, which is based on the vision of African countries as a community of actors whose importance in the transformation of the world order is gradually increasing. The Summit contributed to the formation of an institutional framework for cooperation between Russia and African countries, in particular, the structuring of interaction with the African Union [Abramova, Fituni, 2021]. It can be said that by the beginning of 2022, a common framework approach of Moscow to interaction with the countries of the black continent had been formed:

“Today, Russia is trying not to view Africa as an arena of rivalry with the United States or other unfriendly centers of power, and politics in this region is not thought of as an element of a global zero-sum game. It is determined primarily by considerations of building relations between Russia and the African countries themselves, which have independent value, as well as economic and political benefits that can be extracted” [Maslov, Suslov, 2022, p. 130].

This approach has not always been maintained flawlessly by Moscow: in some cases, a special tradition of relations with a particular country or group of countries remains dominant.

Relations with Egypt, the countries of the Greater Maghreb, as well as with Sudan are simultaneously and justifiably viewed from the perspective of Russian involvement in the affairs of the Middle East and interaction with the Arab world. It should also be taken into account that cooperation with some states becomes the object of special attention of certain Russian influence groups, including state corporations and large non-state companies (for example, Gazprom in Algeria, Alrosa in Zimbabwe and Angola, Rusal in Guinea, etc.), private military companies and the law enforcement agencies backing them, etc.

However, it is more significant that after the start of the SMO and the deployment of various forms of hybrid confrontation between Russia and the West, it will no longer be possible to keep this approach unchanged in relation to Africa. Even if Russia would still like to consider its presence on the African continent regardless of the confrontation with the West, the other side is acting in the logic of a zero-sum game, and now this logic is being broadcast to regions remote from the Ukrainian theater of operations. Discrediting, zeroing out Russia's presence and influence in a particular African country is becoming a desirable goal for the West, which has – at least in relation to the macro-region itself – a high level of priority. In turn, the Russian leadership will have to calculate the consequences of certain steps on the African continent in terms of their possible impact on achieving tactical or strategic goals in the post-Soviet space, as well as preserving Russia's status as one of the most important sovereign actors in the system of international relations, strengthening its ties with the countries of the Global South.

### **De-dollarization of Trade and Search for Optimal Formats of Economic Cooperation**

In the conditions of SMO policy of economizing relations with African countries with increased attention to investment cooperation and technological cooperation will undergo forced

changes due to Western sanctions. A radical reduction in the ability to trade in dollars and other Western currencies will lead to the fact that the main means of payment with a high degree of probability will be the Chinese yuan (RMB). In other words, even in the absence of serious coordination between Moscow and Beijing on the African continent, trade and economic cooperation between Russia and African countries will contribute to the expansion of China's economic presence in Africa.

At the moment, the possibilities of expanding economic cooperation between Russia and a number of African countries under the auspices of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative are not entirely clear. Structuring such cooperation could contribute to the evolution of the Belt and Road towards a new global platform for supporting trade, investment, logistics and technological development, free (or having a high level of autonomy) from the institutions of the Washington Consensus. However, for such an evolution, a certain correction of the initial idea of this initiative is necessary, including overcoming the attitude that any significant cooperation project is necessarily sanctioned in Beijing.

The BRICS and BRICS+ formats play a very positive role in terms of the development of Russia's relations with African countries. First of all, the inclusion of the Republic of South Africa in this club has finally turned Pretoria into a privileged partner of Moscow on the continent. In fact, South Africa has become one of Russia's main "entry points" to Africa, at least south of the Sahara. South Africa's chairmanship in the group makes it possible to assess the level and prospects of its members' interaction with African countries every five years, regularly emphasizing BRICS support for African regionalism and the rapidly growing economic interdependence of the continent and the group's members [Atif, Akbar, 2019]. The almost annual participation of several African countries (apart from South Africa) in the BRICS+ format and the emergence of opportunities for access to financing from the New Development Bank further strengthens the positive perception of partnership with BRICS

(and hence with Russia) in African public opinion. For Russia, in the context of its opposition to Western sanctions pressure, the creation of an independent BRICS payment system and its use for trade with other countries of the Global South becomes a priority.

The expected expansion of the BRICS membership (with a likely change in the name of the group) opens up new opportunities for African countries, of which Egypt (and in the future, most likely Algeria and Nigeria) is the most likely candidate for joining the group. For Russia, such an expansion would be desirable for a number of reasons, among which the further strengthening of partnership with African countries, not mediated by structures and formats of multilateral cooperation controlled by the West, seems to be quite significant. An important result of the latter will be an increase in the proximity of the views and interests of non-Western actors of the world order regarding the ways of its transformation.

### **Food Security as a Key Element of the Russia-Africa Dialogue**

In the context of SMO, the intensive dialogue between Russia and other non-Western countries on the issues of promoting development and food security becomes especially relevant. There is no doubt that the current aggravation of the global food crisis will directly affect Russian-African relations. In an effort to undermine Russia's partnership with the countries of the global South, representatives of the United States and the EU insist that the main cause of the food crisis is the "Russian invasion of Ukraine" [McDonough, Zhou, 2022; Lu, 2022]. At the same time, the more fundamental reasons associated with the anti-crisis economic measures of the United States and the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic, the disruption of supply chains and distribution channels of agricultural products during the same period, as well as climate change, are deliberately ranked as secondary compared to the military actions in Ukraine.

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The effectiveness of a direct and open dialogue on food security issues was convincingly confirmed by the meeting of Russian President Vladimir Putin with Chairman of the African Union, President of Senegal Macky Sall on June 3, 2022 in Sochi. The leader of the African Union demonstrated an understanding of Moscow's main arguments and called for the lifting of those anti-Russian sanctions that prevent the supply of mineral fertilizers, wheat and other grain crops from Russia [Ndebele, 2022]. It is no less significant that the leadership of the African Union for a long time refrained from responding positively to the request of the President of Ukraine to speak online to the heads of the member states of this association. When the speech did take place, it turned out that only four African leaders listened to it live [Hochet-Bodin, 2022].

The position of the African countries contributed to the conclusion of a grain deal in July 2022, achieved through the mediation of Turkey. The deal itself is important not only in terms of unblocking grain supplies from the northern Black Sea region to the world market and facilitating the export of Russian grain and fertilizers, but also for understanding the possibilities and limits of compromise between the warring parties (one of them, in addition to the major part of Ukraine controlled by the Kiev regime, certainly includes the collective West). By entering into a deal, Russia has not only demonstrated good will, but has also received a lever of pressure in its hands, which, if appropriate circumstances occur, it can use [Prokopenko, 2022]. In the early autumn of 2022, this lever has already begun to be used at the level of political rhetoric, one of the important addressees of which were the countries of the Global South. In particular, the statement of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin that only a smaller part of Ukrainian grain supplies is sent to countries in dire need of it, while the larger part is unloaded at the ports of EU countries, emphasizes that for one of the parties to the deal, the needs of the Global South were just a bargaining chip. In fact, the interests of Europe, which suffered from a crop

failure due to a record drought, turn out to be a priority, and the supplies themselves become a way of paying for weapons sent by the West to the Kiev regime. Thus, the grain deal turns out to be not a prologue to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict, but something like fuel regularly thrown into the hotbed of war. The actual deceleration of the other part of the deal, related to the facilitation of trade opportunities in Russian fertilizers and cereals, also becomes an argument significant for assessing the situation of countries gripped by famine or on its threshold.

The decision of the Russian leadership on the possibility of free transfer to developing countries of 300 thousand tons of potash fertilizers blocked in the ports of the Baltic countries further highlights the divergence in interests and goals between the US-led bloc, tightening and expanding sanctions regimes, and the countries of the Global South. The reaction of the EU leadership to this initiative will clarify the possibility and expediency of further steps on the part of Moscow, the purpose of which will be to reveal the true essence of Western sanctions, their inconsistency with international law and the interests of the majority of global community.

### **Hard, Soft and Sharp Power in the “Wagnerian” Manner**

Today, Russia is favored by its very stable perception in the African public opinion as the heir of the Soviet superpower, which played a huge role in supporting the struggle for the liberation of Africa from colonial oppression, strengthening state independence, developing industry and socio-economic infrastructure of many countries of the continent, forming a stratum of qualified national personnel in the civil and military spheres. In Africa, they remember the readiness of the USSR to undertake armed intervention, not excluding the use of atomic weapons, during the Suez crisis of 1956–1957, the outcome of which had a major impact on the processes of decolonization

throughout the world. The involvement of the USSR in the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia in Ogaden, the wars in Angola and Mozambique, and the significant impact on the dynamics of other armed conflicts on the African continent created Moscow's reputation as a global player ready to project its military power on the continent to implement its own ideological guidelines and expand the sphere of political influence.

The dramatic changes of the 1990s, when Yeltsin's Russia abandoned attempts to keep the Soviet sphere of influence in Africa and implement a special political and ideological project there, did not mean the annihilation of the Russian presence in the macroregion as one of the largest arms suppliers. Moreover, having quickly moved from ideological bias to indifference with regard to the quality of political institutions and democracy in the arms-buying countries, Russia managed to retain such large arms markets as Algeria, for example, and at the same time use new opportunities where the USSR had not been active before. Russia managed to occupy vacant niches in the African arms markets when the United States began to link the supply of military equipment with respect for human rights or other political conditions, as was the case with Egypt (2013) and Nigeria (2014).

Moscow's successful military intervention in Syria on the side of the Bashar al-Assad regime has contributed to the fact that an increasing number of African governments have begun to consider Russia as a partner capable of providing very effective and multifaceted support in the fight against Islamic fundamentalism and / or separatism. In addition to supplying weapons and sending military advisers, the involvement of private military companies (PMCs) to solve security problems has become a particularly effective and relatively low-cost tool for expanding Russia's political and military influence in various regions of the African continent since the mid-2010s. In Western literature, as well as in the Russian media and the blogosphere, first of all they call the "Wagner Group," affiliated with

entrepreneur Evgeny Prigozhin. There is no reason to assert that the activity of Russian PMCs in Africa is limited only to the Wagner Group, but, first of all, it is customary to associate the accelerated expansion of Russian influence on the continent in recent years with Wagnerians [Siegle, 2021]. There was not only an expansion of the geography of the demand for Russian PMCs (Central African Republic, Sudan, Libya, Mozambique, Mali, etc.), but, in fact, geopolitical shifts caused by the "exodus" of some Wagnerian clients from the French sphere of influence. Although the latter is largely explained by the strategic miscalculations of Paris itself, there are grounds for a high assessment of the deployment of the Wagner Group's activity in terms of geopolitical dynamics.

Western analysts associate the secret of Wagnerians' success in Africa, firstly, with the "immaturity" of African elites, with whom Russians quite easily manage to find a common language, avoiding excessive domestic political demands, and secondly, with the willingness of the PMCs leadership to intervene in a critical security situation, providing political (often physical) survival of the relevant leader and his entourage in exchange for access to local mineral resources [Siegle, 2021]. Wagnerians, without burdening official Moscow with additional formal obligations, offer customers a kind of "regime support packages", ranging from conventional military assistance to carefully planned campaigns of (dis)information impact [El-Badawy *et al.*, 2022].

As for information operations, the accusations of structures close to Evgeny Prigozhin of involvement in ensuring the electoral success of Donald Trump in 2016 [Efremenko, 2020] created unprecedented advertising for them, obviously facilitating opportunities for promotion in markets beyond the full control of the United States and its allies. Attempts to visualize the "Eugene Prigozhin galaxy" on a geographical map showing the crossing the entire continent from the coast of Cyrenaica to the Cape of Good Hope with almost a continuous

“Wagnerian” strip [Laruelle, Limonier, 2021, p. 322], and completely turn Prigozhin into a legendary figure, comparable only to S. Rhodes. However, upon closer examination, it turns out that we are talking about inhomogeneous types of activities that differ in their scale, instrumentation, intensity and duration of action. It is obvious that the Wagner Group uses tools of informational influence on public opinion in African countries of interest to it, although specific examples of such influence are often confirmed only by indirect data and such not always reliable methods as open source intelligence (OSINT).

A relatively more realistic explanation of the activities of the Wagner Group and its connection with the promotion of the Kremlin’s interests in the countries of the Global South is offered by Marlène Laruelle and Kevin Limonier. Following the journalist Mark Galeotti, they write about a special area of entrepreneurial activity focused on strengthening Russia’s positions in different parts of the world. In this case, we are talking about the possibilities of profit-making and accumulation of political and symbolic capital in the process of forming “networks of Russian influence” abroad [Galeotti, 2019]. Among the various categories of entrepreneurs in this field, Laruelle and Limonier distinguish an elite stratum of “tycoons”, naming, however, only two names – Evgeny Prigozhin and Konstantin Malofeev. The “tycoons” do not require public funds to start their activity – on the contrary, relying on their proximity to the “vertical of power”, they decide on risky investments of their own funds in those countries and regions where traditional tools for promoting the political and economic interests of the state are ineffective and – in almost all cases – unprofitable. Such investments do not always justify themselves, but where it is possible to achieve success and ensure influence on the political, military and economic elites of the country concerned, they pay off both by participating in profits from the development of local resources and by new preferences within Russia [Laruelle, Limonier, 2021]. The weak side of the analysis of Laruelle and

Limonier can be considered an attempt to form a special cluster of these two entrepreneurs, ignoring the presence of strong non-monetary motivations in each of them, providing them with special positions among the Russian political, economic and power elite.

Nevertheless, such a model of promoting Russian interests contributes to the development of Russia's military-technical cooperation with countries where the activity of conditional Wagnerians is unfolding, promotion of Russian fuel, energy, raw materials and technology companies to high-risk markets, and expansion of constructive political dialogue at the interstate level. In particular, only in the period 2017-2019 Russia has signed 19 agreements with African countries on the development of military-technical cooperation; it is significant that even during the period of SMO implementation, the sharply increased US pressure aimed at blocking almost all ties between African countries and Russia could not prevent the achievement of agreements on cooperation in the field of military personnel training and information exchange, which Moscow concluded with Madagascar and Cameroon.

The question of whether the appearance of Russian PMCs in a particular country can become a prologue to the military presence of Russia as a state stands out. The primary objective here is to assess the feasibility and price of such a presence, taking into account the strategic importance of the region. It is also essential to understand the Russian capabilities to project military force at such a considerable distance from national borders for a long time. In fact, we are talking about agreements with the leadership of Sudan, allowing the use of the Red Sea Port of Sudan as a Russian naval base on lease terms for a period of 25 years. The presence of such a base would make it possible to establish a presence at a point located near the strategically important line of commercial and military communications through the Suez Canal (on its other side Syrian seaports perform a similar function for Russia) and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

Judging by numerous reports, representatives of the Wagner Group made their contribution to the preparation of these agreements thanks to close contacts with the President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, and after the overthrow of the latter in 2019, with the new de facto leader of the country, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. However, the agreements have not been finalized; under increasing American pressure, the Sudanese leadership uses delay tactics that allow representatives of the US intelligence community to conclude that Moscow will never get access to the Red Sea [Mackinnon, Gramer, Detsch, 2022]. However, Khartoum will make the final decision, most likely, based on the assessment of the results of PMCs. Similarly, other African countries will make decisions on the further development of military-technical cooperation with Russia, taking into account the degree of success or failure of the special operation itself, the effectiveness of the Russian military-industrial complex in general and specific types of weapons in particular. The Wagner Group can partly claim an exclusive assessment, having already demonstrated in the course of SMO a very high level of combat capability during its operation and having accumulated combat experience, which no other PMCs, including American and British ones, have. Metaphorically, we can say that Wagnerians have quite enough reasons to call themselves "the best in hell."<sup>1</sup>

### **Formation of a Common Discursive Space**

The previous analysis shows that on the African continent, Russia has sufficient grounds to count on a constructive dialogue and understanding of the motives of its actions. Moreover, we are talking about both influential elites and a wider audience. In this regard, the analytical material published on the website of the Brookings Institution in June 2022 [Blankenship, Ordu 2022] is of interest. Its authors analyzed more than 2.5 million messages on Twitter<sup>2</sup> in the period from February 14 to June 9, dedicated to the military actions in Ukraine, the creators of which were in Africa or are explicitly

connected with it. The messages were processed with the use of Twarc toolkit (<https://twarc-project.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>). The aim of the study was to identify the influence of the main Russian narratives spreading throughout the African continent. Despite the undisguised bias, the authors of the work showed that the content of a significant part of the tweets (about 200 thousand) for February-March was not in favor of Ukraine and the position of the West. In particular, the creators of these messages focused on the situation of African students studying at Ukrainian universities, whose difficulties with evacuation to EU countries they associated with poorly concealed racism of the Ukrainian authorities and their Western partners. In addition, a large number of tweets drew parallels with the current situation or the historical past of the African continent, the countries of the Near and Middle East. Commenting on the Western coverage of events in Ukraine, the authors of the tweets pointed out that the conflicts in Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan and – especially – the military actions and the humanitarian disaster in Tigray (Ethiopia) were practically ignored by European and American public opinion. Many reports emphasized that Russia, unlike key Western countries, has not tarnished itself as a colonial power and as a country in which racial enslavement was carried out. At the same time, the United States and the European Union continue neo-colonialist practices, carrying out economic plunder of Africa. With regard to Russia, they seek to act in a similar way, deliberately ignoring the legitimate interests of its security, which ultimately led to the escalation of the Ukrainian crisis into a military phase.

It is obvious that the ever-growing Internet audience in African countries is quite receptive to sources of information alternative to Western ones. It is important that when submitting information, the interests, concerns and even the peculiarities of the emotional perception of this audience are taken into account. At the same time, the critical attitude of many Africans towards the policies of the West and – especially – the former colonial

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powers does not guarantee the success of non-Western sources of information. A lot depends on the specific circumstances and the presentation of the material. So, in particular, the perception of the food security issues of African countries in the context of SMO was not in favor of the Russian position: on average, only one out of every ten tweets linked the aggravation of the food crisis with Western sanctions, while most of the messages contained criticism of Russia's actions [Blankenship, Ordu 2022].

If we evaluate the Western analytics of information work in Africa by various Russian actors as quite realistic, then the cost / effectiveness ratio of many information events looks quite favorable. However, the point here is not only the moderate costs of attracting local journalists and bloggers to such events, but also the objective compatibility of political discourses and interests of Russia and the countries of the Global South. Recognition of independence, avoidance of external dictates, economic justice and cultural sovereignty as the highest political values is a common platform on which it is possible to build a more detailed model of positioning of various state actors within the changing world order. Among the Russian non-governmental initiatives aimed at building common spaces of political discourse with the Global South in combination with the implementation of economic programs should, in particular, be called the creation of the International Agency for Sovereign Development (IASD), the chairman of the Supervisory Board of which is Konstantin Malofeev. According to him, the agency not only seeks to pave the way for Russian investments to Africa and other countries of the Global South, but also to promote the growth of the national well-being of developing countries by strengthening their sovereignty, providing opportunities for them to conduct independent domestic and foreign policy. Specifically, we are talking about creating alternatives to bonded lending by international financial institutions, accompanied by strict requirements of a political and socio-economic nature; restructuring on more favorable terms of the sovereign debt of

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developing countries; consolidation of assets of large African public and private companies in the hands of Africans; assistance to African states in creating their own operators for the development of mineral resources and overcoming the monopolization of this sphere by Western TNCs; combating sanctions practices of Western powers; assistance in overcoming the shortage of industry expertise and technology transfer [Malofeev, 2019].

This program, announced on the eve of the first Russia-Africa summit, remains fully relevant today, but at the same time, Russian investment opportunities in the conditions of SMO and the most severe sanctions from the West are sharply narrowed. Its implementation is possible provided that the efforts of the largest non-Western actors on the continent are coordinated, at least Russia and China, which have so far implemented their African strategies independently of each other. The very possibility of such coordination was discussed by Russian and Chinese experts even before the start of SMO [Kortunov et al. 2021], but in the context of escalating global tensions related both to the military actions in Ukraine and to the growing US pressure on China on the Taiwan issue, the chances of a transition to partial coordination of Moscow and Beijing's strategies in various regions of the world are beginning to increase. In addition to coordinating concrete steps, there is an increasing need for the formation of a common political language, a broad conceptual vision of global processes, including African anti-colonial narratives, Russian rejection of the unipolar world, and the Chinese idea of a Community of Common Destiny for Mankind (人類命運共同體).

It seems that one of the prerequisites for creating a common discursive space is the existence of an institutional format for a sustainable dialogue between Russia, China, India, other countries of Asia, Oceania, Africa and Latin America. BRICS and BRICS+, the SCO, the Belt and Road Initiative, the economic mechanisms of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the China-Africa and Russia-Africa summits are very important in

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terms of supporting political dialogue, but individually none of these formats is fully inclusive.

The convergence of the political discourses of Russia and the countries of the Global South in terms of content also requires serious efforts. In particular, attention should be paid here to the growing rejection in Russia of the left-liberal ideological symbiosis, which includes not only feminism and the promotion of the values of LBGT, but also postcolonial studies and critical racial theory [Lukin, 2021]. In this case, it is necessary to identify significant differences between this ideological construct, formed in the campuses of American and Western European universities, and the original interpretations of the legacy of colonialism, racism and imperialism in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is equally important to overcome political and ideological eclecticism, when, to the accompaniment of criticism of the West, flirting with the bearers of xenophobic attitudes and hatred towards migrants from developing countries begins.

Of course, one of the most painful issues is the level of expertise in Africa, which presupposes detailed knowledge of individual countries, regions and societies, possession of a sufficient number of specialists in local, including rare languages. Despite the continuation after 1991 the work of several centers for macroregion research and training of personnel with appropriate specialization (Institute of Africa of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Asia and Africa of Moscow State University, RUDN University, MGIMO University of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation), the problem of reproduction of such personnel and their language training persists and even worsens, including due to the termination of the activity of teachers of some rare African languages who began their activities in Soviet times [Kuznetsov, 2021]. One of the possible solutions, especially relevant in the conditions of increasing blocking of scientific and educational exchanges with Western countries, is a significant expansion of the practice of sending Russian graduate students, young scientists and teachers to long-

term internships at African universities and research centers. Of course, this process should not be one-sided, and in addition to the development of student exchanges, it is important to attract African specialists in social sciences and humanities to Russia, including with the aim of forming new competence centers for the macro-region. The expansion of the quantitative composition and qualitative level of such centers is an urgent task, the solution of which will allow not only to meet the increasing needs of Russian authorities and economic actors in diverse information and qualified analysis, but also to overcome certain costs of functioning of specialized expert (epistemic) communities, whose representatives are sometimes reluctant to part with the monopoly on expert judgment.

Finally, it is worth paying attention to the expansion of the Russian diplomatic presence in Africa. It is no secret that a long business trip to an African country was often tacitly viewed as not the most favorable trajectory of a diplomatic career. At the same time, the recent mass mutual expulsions of diplomats from Russia and Western countries, with all the destructive impact of such actions on interstate relations, have highlighted the problem of staff redundancy in Russian diplomatic missions in some "prestigious" countries against the background of a shortage of qualified personnel in Russian embassies even in the most important states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. At the very least, we can expect that after this shake-up, the declared priority of relations with the global South will be reinforced by the quantitative and qualitative strengthening of Russian foreign institutions in these parts of the world.

## **Conclusion**

The special military operation has changed a lot and will change even more in Russia's interaction with African states. And the mere statement that "Africa is becoming more important" is clearly not enough to characterize the expected

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vector of changes. It is quite obvious that for years to come, Moscow's main attention will be focused on Ukraine and, more broadly, the entire western flank of the former USSR. Even if military actions in Ukraine do not lead to a repeat of the Caribbean crisis, which has put the world on the verge of self-destruction, the confrontation between Russia and the West will retain its global and almost total character for a long time. It is in the context of the latter that the importance of the African continent will increase for Russia.

Depending on the specific circumstances, Moscow may act in different directions. It is very important for Russia to maintain neutrality or even receive the political support of a significant number of African countries, helping to strengthen their sovereignty and regional integration in such a way that, at the same time, the influence of the United States and former colonial metropolises on individual countries and the macro-region as a whole is reduced. Russia, however, will have to act using limited capabilities. The restoration of the Soviet sphere of influence, the scale of involvement comparable to intervention in the civil war in Syria are out of question. As in recent years, unconventional mechanisms and methods of influence can be used to achieve significant results with a relatively modest scale of resources used. The ideal option, the probability of which does not seem very high yet, would be coordination of efforts and division of labor with China, which can offer loans and investments in production and infrastructure to African countries, and Russia – stopping part of the security threats faced by insufficiently stable regimes.

At the same time, Moscow could consider to be a useful development for itself a crisis scenario, which would lead to the diversion of attention, forces and resources of the United States and / or former colonial powers from the Ukrainian theater of military operations. It is hardly appropriate to talk about the artificial construction of such a crisis, especially in conditions when interstate contradictions persist and even worsen in many

parts of Africa, fundamentalist currents spread, and economic and environmental problems generate new waves of migration. By forcing the confrontation with Russia and China, the West undermines the very possibility of joint efforts of the international community to solve the most acute African problems and achieve truly relevant sustainable development goals. At the same time, the destabilization of raw materials and food markets is taking place, ultimately – partial deglobalization, plunging countries and peoples of the planet into a state of deep uncertainty. If Russia manages to complete SMO not only by military success, but also by strengthening the status of a power offering a more just world order, then later there will be grounds to count on the implementation of Moscow's full-fledged strategy in Africa, focused no longer on achieving a preponderance in the confrontation imposed by the West, but on ensuring the needs and interests of the majority of humanity.

## Notes

1. The name of the blockbuster, one of the producers of which is E.V. Prigozhin. The film was released in the fall of 2022.
2. Blocked on the territory of the Russian Federation since March 4, 2022.

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Received: 16.12.2022.

Accepted for publication: 12.01.2023.

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# PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

IGOR DOBAEV. "COLOR REVOLUTIONS" IN GEOPOLITICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

*Keywords: agents of influence; coups d'etat; ideologies; non-governmental organizations; network wars; color revolutions.*

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*Citation:* Dobaev I. "Color Revolutions" in Geopolitical Transformations in the Post-Soviet Space // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, № 1 (319), P. 29–38.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.02

*Abstract. The article reveals the nature and content of the "color revolutions", which are a special case of the so-called "network wars". It is shown that "colored" agitations are based on the foundation of internal conflict-causing factors (political, socio-economic, demographic-migration and ethno-confessional). However, they would not have been possible without external influence and diverse feeding,*

*while the main external manipulator of the "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet space is the "consolidated West" led by the United States. "Color" deviations pose a real threat to the national security of countries in the post-Soviet space, and therefore need further detailed reflection and effective counteraction.*

In 1996, the work of American authors J. Arkilla and D. Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Network," was published, which suggested a new approach to changes in the military sphere caused by the information revolution. The researchers went by the coordinate system "cyber war - psychological war - network war." The chosen term for the new phenomenon - "network war" - emphasized the influence of the information revolution on organization and management in conflicts, on the development of network forms of organizations, doctrines and strategies. Later, this approach was developed in their other works. Other researchers, in particular M. Castels, also addressed to the topic of "network war." Today, this approach has become dominant in the US military-political and scientific community; and organizational and managerial aspects came to the fore, postponing technical ones.

On the basis of the exploratory work of these authors, the American military developed a new concept of warfare (emerging theory of war). This is the Office of Force Transformation under Vice Admiral Arthur K. Cebrowski. Subsequently, it was actively introduced into the practice of US warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, tested for training exercises and simulators. The developers of this theory were convinced that in the near future this theory, if it does not replace the traditional theory of war, will significantly and irreversibly change it qualitatively. The new concept of war meant to be the so-called "Network war."<sup>1</sup>

The theory of network wars claims that modern conflicts are deployed in 4 fringe areas of human structure: in physical, information, cognitive (reasonable) and social. Each of them has

important individual weight, but the decisive effect in network wars is achieved by the synergy (unidirectional action of various forces) of all these elements.

*The physical field* is a traditional area of warfare in which physical forces collide in time and space. This area includes combat zones (sea, land, air, outer space), fighting units (platforms) and physical carriers of communication networks. This aspect can be best measured, and previously served as the main one in determining the strength of the army and its ability to conduct warfare. In the information era, this does not become so obvious, and it's necessary to consider the physical aspect as a certain marginal effect of network technologies, the bulk of which are located in other areas, but which project their effects onto the physical area.

*An information field* is an area where information is created, processed, and distributed. This area covers information transmission systems, base sensors (measuring elements), information processing models, etc. This is the predominant environment of the era of network wars, which turned into an independent category - the "information sphere" along with physical environments, acquiring the major - if not central - importance. The information area in the era of network wars connects all levels of warfare and is a priority. Advantages or disadvantages in the accumulation, transmission, processing and protection of information in this case gradually become critical.

*The cognitive field* is the consciousness of the fighter. Particularly it is the space where the so-called "Effects-based operations, EBO" are conducted. All major wars and battles are deployed and won in this area. It is in the cognitive area such phenomena as "commander intention," doctrine, tactics, technique and procedures are located. Network-centric wars pay great attention to this factor, although the processes taking place in this area are much more difficult to measure than in the field of physical one. Sometimes their value and effectiveness are much more important.

*The social field* is an area of people interaction. Historical, cultural, religious values, psychological attitudes, ethnic characteristics prevail here. In the social space, relations between people are established, natural hierarchies are built in groups - leaders, the led, etc., group relations systems are created. The social field is a context of network warfare that should be taken into account in the most thorough way.

The central task of conducting "network wars" is to carry out the above-mentioned "Effects-based operations, EBO. EBOs are defined as a set of actions aimed at enemies, neutrals and even allies under conditions of peace, crisis and war"<sup>2</sup>.

However, the use of the concept of network wars by the Americans in warfare in Afghanistan and Iraq turned out to be effective only at the first, contactless stage of these campaigns. Furthermore, it required significant material resources. In this regard, especially after the death of Cebrowski its practical application was abandoned.

However, the theoretical and practical developments of network wars turned out to be in demand in the organization and conduct of the so-called "color revolutions." This term was first used in 2004 when the author of this work wrote the article "The Role and Place of "Color Revolutions" in Geopolitical Transformations in Southern Russia," which was published in 2005 in the collection of the Center for System and Regional Studies and Forecasting of Rostov State University (now the Center for Regional Studies of SFU)<sup>3</sup>. We understand "color revolution" as a pro-Western, and more often a pro-American coup, carried out in a particular country in the interests of the West (US) using the tools of network warfare<sup>4</sup>.

It should be emphasized that "color revolutions" are not started from nothing. For their successful implementation in a particular country, it is necessary to have a complex of internal conflict factors: political, socio-economic, demographic-migration, ethno-confessional. These deviations are actively fueled from outside. It can be argued that the main subject of

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“color revolutions,” or better to say “color overthrows,” is an “external player” based on Western and pro-Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs) already created within a country. The external player in all known “color revolutions” even in the role of the observer himself influenced the ongoing transformations and organized wide public and diplomatic support for the coupists. He directly or indirectly participated both in power neutralizing (forcing to abandon active opposition) and in stimulating and organizing opposition actions. In short, he largely determined both the methods and the directions of transformation. Moreover, consistently considering such “revolutionary” changes in the post-Soviet space as a rotating change of ruling groups, it turns out that each of them next became, as a rule, increasingly dependent on the West – the United States, the EU or NATO.

However, there is no doubt that the reason for the overwhelming number of major socio-political conflicts in the modern world is geopolitical in nature, while their specific content is formed from the outer interethnic, confessional, political, socio-economic and other contradictions. The sudden aggravation of the conflict, the radicalization of opponents, the choice of unusually aggressive methods of its “resolution,” the protracted nature of the confrontation, are unmistakable signs of external, subjective intervention of the “third force.” With regard to the post-Soviet space and wider – the Black Sea-Caspian region, such a “third force” is, as a rule, the transatlantic community – the United States and its satellites, pursuing their geopolitical interests in the region<sup>5</sup>.

Among the foreign structures, and many of them who actively worked and continue to work in the post-Soviet space, there are organizations that differ in influence, ideology, sources of funding and degree of relations with governments. Some NGOs declare themselves absolutely private, such as the Open Society Institute of American billionaire George Soros. Others (for example, World Vision), being private organizations, receive

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funding from the state. There are also structures under political parties: in the US it is the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, in Germany – the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (existing under the Liberal Democratic Party), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (Christian Democratic Union) and the Heinrich Bell Foundation (associated with the Green Party). There are also organizations which declared objective is to implement socio-economic development programs in foreign countries, for example, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) or the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), etc.

These organizations finance most diverse programs declaring the protection of women's rights, support for small businesses, strengthening civil society with its main idea of "human rights," AIDS prevention, environmental protection, training of journalists or judges, education reform, etc. However, all their initiatives are united by a single goal: they are designed to promote the implementation of the so-called Western "values" and "principles of democracy." In such projects, the condition for obtaining funding is the readiness of the country, certain groups of the population to "democratize" on Western models.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the newly formed states began to adhere to the principle of diversification in foreign policy, focusing on various countries and blocs of states, including Western ones. This approach, of course, made it easier for the collective West to implement its structures in the post-Soviet space and create numerous (hundreds and even sometimes thousands) Western and pro-Western NGOs in the new sovereign states. These organizations finance a wide variety of programs aimed at a certain "liberalization" of the population of these countries. However, all their undertakings are united by a single goal: they are designed to promote the implementation of the so-called "Principles of democracy." In such projects, the country's readiness for "democratization" becomes a condition for obtaining funding, and their goal is to reformat human

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consciousness. This approach bears fruit in the form of the implementation of coups d'état during the implementation of "color revolutions" in a particular country.

Many pro-Western network structures operating in the post-Soviet space together are a complex, multidimensional, total network. It should be emphasized that almost all these networks are deployed, first of all, in the intellectual segment of societies, covering the field of education, including higher one; scientific and creative structures. A separate and important area of activity of such NGOs in the deployment of networks is considered to be youth, work with which is carried out in schools, secondary and higher educational institutions, as well as outside these institutions, by forming various youth structures and organizations.

Definitely, structures financially dependent on the West are used by their organizers and sponsors for the following main purposes: reception of confidential information under the guise of scientific, cultural and other contacts, influencing the flow of information in the interests of the United States and its allies, selecting and subsequent training of specific persons, including as a tool for organizing and conducting "color putches."

In the West, both scientifically and pragmatically, technologies for carrying out "color coups" have been thoroughly developed, primarily by using "soft power" as quite effective and relatively cheap. First of all, here the work of the American author Gene Sharp "From dictatorship to democracy. Strategy and Tactics of Liberation" published in 1993 should be mentioned. However, it's important that this work was written back in 1988, in anticipation of the first and unsuccessful "color coup" for the Americans, which they planned to carry out in Burma (Myanmar). Nevertheless, using "soft power," they further achieved success in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), Armenia (2018). There were also failures: in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus. The failures of the "colored" are specific to countries where the so-called "democratic" norms

have been introduced least of all, and the ruling regime harshly suppresses the speeches of the non-systemic opposition, and vice versa.

If the “soft” forms do not work, the initiators of the “colored” are ready to use “tough” means of fighting. An example is the so-called “revolution of dignity,” which was carried out in Ukraine in the winter of 2014, as well as the January events of 2022 in Kazakhstan, accompanied by pogroms and victims. The mentioned “revolution of dignity,” in contrast to the previous “color” coups, can be called the “multi-color revolution,” since its participants were carriers of “multi-color” ideological views. Representatives of student youth, scientific and creative intelligentsia came out under orange and even rainbow banners, radicals from among the Crimean Tatars – under blue<sup>6</sup>, Ukrainian nationalists – Bandera – under black and red, etc. There is no doubt that such interaction of carriers of different ideologies became possible as a result of a single puppeteer for all of them – a consolidated West. As noted above, in January 2021, an attempt to conduct a “multi-color revolution” was made in Kazakhstan, but it was unsuccessful in connection with the decisive actions of the CSTO member countries.

Doubtless, the “color” methods of struggle in “soft,” “hard” and “mixed” forms, carried out by the United States and its NATO allies, with the pretext of “democratization” and “liberalization” of many countries of the world, including in Russia and the post-Soviet space, using foreign and local NGOs, pose a threat to the national security of these states and peoples. In this regard, they need comprehension, detailed study, the choice of forms, methods and means for the most effective counteraction to inspirators of “color” perturbations.

A serious experience for understanding the essence and stages of the deployment of “multi-colored” networks was the riots inspired by the West in January 2022 in Kazakhstan. It is quite obvious that the ruling regime remained in power only due to the military assistance of the CSTO. Behind the protests in

Kazakh regions, especially Alma-Ata, there were the same forces and behind attempted coups in other post-Soviet states, including the Russian Federation. It seems that the successful experience of other countries is useful for study and application. Of particular interest is the practice of countering “colored” in Belarus, where in 2020 the authorities independently, without external power support, managed to suppress the growing rebellion, ensuring not only their own security, but also the safety of their partners in integration structures.

As the Belarusian experience has shown, the policy chosen by the leadership of this republic to mop up the country of Western “influence agents” (“foreign agents”) is the only correct one. Having refused to flirt with foreign NGOs, in recent years all organizations financed from abroad have been practically liquidated in Belarus. At the same time, all the so-called “independent” media were closed, and some of them, like a number of telegram channels, were recognized as extremist. After the Kazakh events, the struggle with the remnants of these elements was only intensified.

However, in Belarus, attention is also drawn to opposition to those “colored” forces, which, following the example of Ukraine (2013–2014) and Kazakhstan (2022), can use not only “soft” but also “hard” force. This was confirmed by the creation of a joint Russian-Belarusian group of forces on the territory of the state allied for Russia, joint exercises to improve the coordination of units and increase combat training. Naturally, such actions were spurred by the actions of the collective West, waging a proxy war against Russia, using the territory of Ukraine and its resources.

The experience of some post-Soviet states shows that where the power vertical is strengthened, “anti-color” legislation is improved, Western and pro-Western NGOs are liquidated, “agents of influence” is mopped up, the possibility of external inspiration of “color” insinuations is sharply reduced there (an example is Azerbaijan and present Belarus). On the contrary,

where a reckless policy of “multi-vector” is pursued, such states become defenseless against “colored” (for example, Ukraine, Armenia, a number of Central Asian states). As for Russia, since the mid-2000s, consistent work has been underway to counter external influence and reduce the potential of internal conflictogenic factors, which are the fueler on which destructive external forces parasitize, with their allegedly private “funds,” NGOs and “agents of influence.”<sup>7</sup> In particular, laws have been adopted on such NGOs, “agents of influence,” etc. In particular, laws have been adopted on such NGOs, “agents of influence,” etc. However, it seems that this work needs further strengthening and improvement.

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## KANYBEK KUDAYAROV. THE SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF ILLEGAL DRUG TRADE IN KYRGYZSTAN

*Keywords: Afghanistan; Central Asia; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; drug trafficking; drug addiction; opiates; heroin.*

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*Citation:* Kudayarov K. The Situation in the Field of Illegal Drug Trade in Kyrgyzstan // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, № 1 (319), P. 39–52. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.03

*Abstract. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to significant geopolitical changes throughout the post-Soviet space. The newly formed states were left to themselves in the matter of state-building, which was carried out through full-scale reforms of the entire vital activity of the state. At the same time, the new political entities had to face certain challenges standing in the way of nation-building, among which the problem of illegal drug trade and drug trafficking was not the least. Due to its geographical location, the Central Asian states directly bordering the main drug economy of the world – Afghanistan – were the most affected by it. The infrastructure that has existed since Soviet times has allowed for a few years to establish a “northern route” of drug trafficking passing through the countries of the region to Russia and Europe. Decades of the existence of Afghan drug trafficking have led to serious changes in Kyrgyzstan, expressed in the form of an increase in drug crime and crimes committed under the influence of drugs, the formation of all-powerful drug cartels capable of promoting their interests through government officials and law enforcement agencies. The strongest blow for the population of the republic was the rapid increase in drug addicts and the spread of HIV / AIDS. An identical picture has developed in the neighbouring countries of Kyrgyzstan,*

*which contributed to both intraregional and international cooperation with the assistance of various international organizations. The measures taken contributed to curbing the Afghan drug expansion and to a certain extent were able to change the situation for the better.*

The illicit drug situation in Kyrgyzstan, as in other Central Asian states, is one of the pressing issues on the agenda during the whole period of independence of the Republic. Being one of the main threats to stability and security both regionally and globally, Afghan drug trafficking continues despite the measures taken by the international community to eradicate it. There is a noticeable reduction in the supply of opiates to external markets along the “northern route” in favour of the Balkan and other trafficking routes; this contributes to the improvement of the drug situation in transit and consumer states north of Afghanistan, but does not entirely solve the issue. Cooperation between the states of the southern flank of the CIS and Russia is still ongoing through the UNODC, the CSTO and other organizations designed to combat drug trafficking. The “northern route” for trafficking of Afghan opiates passes through Central Asia, directly affecting Kyrgyzstan, which being the “weakest link”, is the most vulnerable to the Afghan drug economy.

The causes of illegal drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan are associated with geographical proximity to Afghanistan, weak governance both within the country and along the borders, as well as the poor economic situation in the Republic. In a given economic environment, corruption may be seen as one of the possible ways out of this situation.

The other causes include ineffective state policy in the field of combating illegal drug trafficking and drug addiction, as well as imperfect anti-drug legislation. It should be noted that the fight against drug trafficking and drug addiction can only be effective if a range of services (Ministry of Internal Affairs, Border Service of the Federal Security Service, Ministry of Health, local authorities, public institutions and other structures) work

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together under the coordination of the Service for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, which is the successor of the State Drug Control Service of Kyrgyzstan [5, p. 18].

While the first and second reasons for drug trafficking are clear enough, since these topics are quite often brought to international attention and widely discussed in political, diplomatic and scientific communities, the issue of corruption often goes unnoticed by experts. With this in mind, attention should be paid to corruption in the law enforcement system of the state, in particular the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, which regulates and coordinates national anti-drug policy.

Considering the corruption component, it should be noted that, for instance, the 2013 annual report indicates that 142 cases of corruption were identified within law enforcement and judicial bodies of the Republic, of which 54 in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 16 in the Customs Service, 13 in the State Penitentiary Service of Kyrgyzstan, 3 in the State Service for Combating Economic Crimes, 2 in the State Committee for National Security, 2 in the State Drug Control Service, 2 in prosecution services, and 20 in the judiciary [3, p. 52].

It should be emphasized that a significant number of the cases never gets to court. In 2017, out of 704 corruption-related criminal cases, 173 (24.57 per cent) were brought to court. Another 244 cases were investigated (34.65 per cent) and 287 cases were dismissed (40.7 per cent). Thus, 40.7 per cent of cases never went to trial, which means that there are corruption schemes in pre-trial proceedings [14, p. 141].

Overall, law enforcement agencies are considered among the most corrupt structures of the state. However, there is no way to either confirm or refute this statement, since most of the information is classified, which makes it impossible to conduct independent analysis or investigation. The data is partially classified under the law (e.g. the budget), but in some cases

senior officials refer to secrecy when they are unwilling to provide information (e.g. crime statistics) [8]. The database of the Ministry of Finance is lacking data on the State Committee for National Security, the State Border Service, the State Committee for Defense Affairs and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

In the span of five months (from February to June 2019), citizens filed 550 complaints and statements about unlawful actions of employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, of which 63 were confirmed. After inspections by the Department of Internal Affairs, 27 officials were fired and 92 employees were relieved of their duties. In addition, 416 and 2351 officials received other disciplinary penalties for violation of the law and disciplinary breaches, respectively. Between February and June 2019, 14 criminal cases were initiated against employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the fact of extortion and receiving bribes, as well as 12 cases for abuse of power [19].

There are certain issues related to the drug situation and the protracted adoption of the basic legislation regulating the fight against drug trafficking in different republics (from 1998 to 2004) that are common for the CIS countries. However, there is still no common terminology in the field of drug trafficking and counter-narcotics, there are regulatory discrepancies regarding the legal circulation of drugs and counteracting their illicit turnover, as well as other issues [12, p. 84]. Nevertheless, the measures taken by Kyrgyzstan both at the national and international levels undoubtedly have a positive effect in combating drug-related crimes and drug addiction, charting the course to continue this anti-drug strategy.

The state began to develop a legal framework in this area, implementing various anti-drug programmes and creating corresponding concepts. The logical continuation was the approval of the Anti-Drug Programme for 2022–2025 [6], Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors” and regulations within the framework of the

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National Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026 [15].

It should be noted that the problem of illicit drug trafficking is one of the major threats facing the Kyrgyz statehood. It is clearly reflected in the "Concept of National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic", along with such threats as terrorism, extremism, border issues (disputed territories), etc.

## **Authorized Bodies**

The main authorized body dealing with this issue for a long time was the State Drug Control Service, which was abolished as part of the reform of the law enforcement system of the Republic. By the Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 637 of November 30, 2016 [17], the functions of the dissolved agency were transferred to the following bodies:

- The Ministry of Health was vested with the development and implementation of state policy and legal regulation of the licit movement of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors; eight employees were transferred to the Ministry and provided an appropriate budget.

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs was staffed with 255 persons and given an appropriate funding.

- The State Service for Combating Economic Crimes under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic was staffed with 68 employees.

The Government repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the results of implementation of the national programme to combat drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, ultimately resulting in its closure. Data for 2016 show that most of the drug crimes were solved by employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1473), while the State Drug Control Service accounted for 222 cases, which is almost 7 times less [10, p. 20]. A. Zelichenko believes that the Republic followed the example of Russia, which abolished the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian

Federation. At the same time, the expert points out that such a decision in Kyrgyzstan is wrong, since the two countries have different approaches to solving this issue, specifically one of the differences was that the treatment of drug addicts was one of the top priorities in the fight against drug trafficking in Kyrgyzstan. Now it is much more difficult to coordinate anti-drug policy, since there is no unified infrastructure and no single mechanism for implementing this policy. It should be noted that overlap or duplication of functions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Committee for National Security and other agencies used to be beneficial, since the competition helped to monitor each other's work [1]. The State Service for Combating Economic Crimes under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has been mainly dealing with drug crime ever since the State Drug Control Service was dissolved. Its functions are overlapped by the Prosecutor's Office, the Customs Service, the Ministry of Finance and the State Border Service of the State Committee for National Security [4, p. 59].

### **Drug Routes**

The very first drug routes appeared in the region in the 1990s. It was during this period that the drug routes, drug supply chains and drug cartels were established.

The “northern route” of drug trafficking developed further by increasing the number of heroin-producing drug laboratories in the territories bordering the states of Central Asia, which affected the volume of transported Afghan opiates. The region was becoming a transit zone of drug trafficking [13, p. 93].

Drug routes connect Afghanistan with the Central Asian republics through numerous passes and gorges. One of these drug routes goes through territory of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Depending on geographical and infrastructural conditions, narcotic substances are being transported via almost all means,

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ranging from horse-drawn transport in border areas to air transport where possible.

Drugs from Tajikistan to Kyrgyzstan are trafficked along the following routes:

1. The Kyzylart route includes the highway connecting the cities of Osh and Khorog with adjacent vast mountain ranges located in Murghob District in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) of Tajikistan.

2. The Altyn Mazar route starts at the Rushan Plateau on the Afghan-Tajik border along the GBAO, passing through the gorges of the Pamir Mountains and the Trans-Altay Range to the Chong-Alay valley in the Osh Region of Kyrgyzstan.

3. The Batken route includes numerous mountain trails that are used to cross from Jirgatol District, Gharm District and other nearby regions of Tajikistan to Batken District, Kadamjay District and Leylek District in the Batken Region of Kyrgyzstan.

4. The Khodjent route covers highways and the adjacent territories starting from Khodjent in Tajikistan, through Leylek District in the Batken Region and the adjacent Tajik and Uzbek districts and up to Osh in Kyrgyzstan.

The Kyrgyz-Tajik border mainly passes through hard-to-reach terrain, where the most vulnerable areas border with Sughd Province of Tajikistan. The vast majority of the western flow of opiates is shipped from Dushanbe first to Isfara District in Sughd Province of Tajikistan, and then transported to the Batken Region. This is a key region in drug trafficking, since there are no borders or border control in many areas [16, p. 86]. The main area used for the trafficking of opiates is the Tajik enclave Vorukh in the Batken Region. It historically has been challenging to undertake anti-drug operations on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border, because the demarcation process is still ongoing, which makes it considerably difficult for law enforcement agencies to work, especially in Tajik regions such as Gharm District and the GBAO. Border patrols in the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan are complicated by the fact that – in addition to Vorukh – there are

three Uzbek enclaves, namely Sokh, Chong-Kara and Shohimardon. If in the late 1990s drugs mainly flowed along the Khorog-Osh highway, then in the 2000s opiates were transported on horseback or on foot along the entire perimeter of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border towards regional centers, the cities of Batken and Osh [2, p. 50]. Experts emphasize that it is not possible to establish control over numerous mountain gorges connecting the republics with each other and with Afghanistan.

The evolution of the drug business and drug cartels led to the fact that by 2018, the major drug trafficking organizations of Kyrgyzstan were involved in drug shipment and retail, while staying clear of not drug-related criminal activities. It is important that there are also extremist and terrorist organizations, namely the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jamaat Ansarullah and Hizb ut-Tahrir al Islami.

### **Drug Seizures**

In recent years, the logistics of drugs has changed significantly. Trafficking along the “northern route” has been significantly reduced in favour of increasing exploitation of other drug routes. The dynamics of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan shows that in 2020, the area of poppy crops in the Badghis and Faryab Provinces (which are adjacent to the border with Turkmenistan) increased by 194 per cent and 98 per cent, respectively; at the same time, in Badakhshan Province (which borders with Tajikistan) this figure increased only by 36 per cent [21]. Despite the increase in opium cultivation on the Afghan-Tajik and Afghan-Turkmen borders, as well as heroin laboratories located close the Afghan borders with the countries of Central Asia, the drug flow along the “northern route” is gradually shrinking. It is attributed to enhancing of the “southern route”, and especially the “Balkan routes” of drug trafficking, which is the major outlet of Afghan heroin to the states of the European Union. For example, between 2013 and 2018, the volume of

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heroin seizures in all countries of the region surged from 67 per cent to 92 per cent.

According to the Newsletter for 2016 [10, p. 21], a total of 1,738 drug crimes were identified in the Kyrgyz Republic, which was 6.76 per cent less than the previous year and 6.3 per cent of overall crimes. The most common drug crimes are “storage without a commercial purpose” (1137) and “sale, storage with a sales objective” (471). The list of drug-related crimes also indicates an increase in cases of “abetting the drug use” by 81 per cent, “inducing of minors to use drugs” by 400 per cent, “maintaining premises for drug use” by 16 per cent, and “illicit trafficking in substances and poisons” by 57.14 per cent.

As far as drug seizures are concerned, a total of 18 tons of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors were removed from circulation, which is 36.6 per cent less than in 2015. The list of seized drugs include cannabis (hemp) - 13.2 tons (+35.2 per cent by 2015), marijuana - 2.13 tons (-8.4 per cent by 2015), hashish - 794 kg (+55.3 per cent), heroin - 166.8 kg (-51.5 per cent), opium - 24.9 kg (-46.2 per cent), and opium poppy - 40.4 kg (+178.03 per cent). The volume of seized precursors decreased by 84.9 per cent, amounting to 1.6 tons [10, p. 24].

A dramatic decline in drug trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic can be also attributed to economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of cannabinoids, pharmaceutical drugs and alcohol instead of expensive heroin was reported. Some drug addicts started using personal pipes while smoking hashish and marijuana (cannabinoids), which was not the case in the pre-coronavirus times [11, p. 11].

### **Cooperation with International Organizations**

Since the early 1990s, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been successfully operating in the republics of the region, implementing a large number of anti-drug projects. The Central Asian states highly appreciate its

efforts, thus allowing it to continue to operate within the framework of the UN programmes in Central Asia, which are comprised of the following sub-programmes: preventing and combating transnational organized crime; crime prevention; increasing access to justice and enhancing the rule of law; addressing the issue of drug use; expansion of treatment of diseases associated with drug use and HIV / AIDS prevention; preventing and countering terrorism and radicalization leading to violence; and support for research, trend analysis, policy, information promotion and forensics.

The UNODC also deals with the strengthening of border control and cross-border cooperation, implementation of the Container Control Programme (CCP) and other projects in the region. Thanks to regional cooperation, CCP's Port Control Unit (PCU) carried out several drug seizures in Osh in cooperation with the State Border Service of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, confiscating 127,344 capsules of the drug Regapen (Pregabalin). Given the increasing abuse of new psychoactive substances in the region, such seizures indicate that UNODC's involvement helps national partners to prevent the possible negative impact of these substances on the population [7, p. 30].

Russia has been a long standing partner in the fight against drug crime and drug trafficking in Central Asia, implementing anti-drug policy in cooperation with the CSTO (operations "Channel", "Thunder", etc.). In 2019, during the anti-drug operation "Channel Center", the internal affairs authorities identified 22 drug-related crimes; seized 29.5 kg of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors from illicit trafficking; solved 34 ordinary crime cases; and confiscated two firearms. During the operation "Channel - Caucasian Redoubt", 25 drug-related crimes were identified on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, and 368.6 kg of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors were seized from illegal circulation [20, p. 11]. In addition, operations such as "Channel - Valley", "Channel -

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Red Barkhan", "Channel - Patrol", "Channel - Sothern Trap" are carried out on a regular basis [18].

## Conclusion

To conclude, the analysis of the drug situation in Kyrgyzstan shows that the effectiveness of the ongoing anti-drug policy can be enhanced if special attention is paid to the problem of corruption and abuse of power in law enforcement agencies responsible for coordinating and implementing this policy. In order to increase control over the activities of law enforcement agencies, it is necessary to take measures to prevent violations. It is also important to strengthen internal monitoring of the situation by giving the Internal Investigation Service (already existing under the Ministry of Internal Affairs) greater authorities. The possible restoration of the Anti-Corruption Service within the State Committee for National Security or other structures should also be considered.

Other effective measures, proposed by V. Ivanov, include: 1) nullifying the drug market by reducing demand; 2) eliminating the supply of drugs of Afghan origin; 3) improving the tools of international cooperation [9, p. 146].

To curb the demand for drugs, regular preventive activities should be carried out, which means that specialists and teachers of academic institutions should deliver lectures and provide video and audio materials about the dangers of drugs and drug addiction. There should be continuous, step-by-step rehabilitation of drug addicts. At the same time, any attempts to distribute and sell prohibited substances must be stopped in a timely fashion.

It is vital to put an end to the drug economy in Afghanistan. This can only be done with the assistance and support of the international community. An effort should be made to build a dialogue with the Taliban. Given the urgent need of the Taliban for recognition of their regime by the world community, it can be

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assumed that the movement may be interested in switching to the traditional economy.

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Received 28.06.2022.

Accepted for publication 12.07.2022.

## AZIZ NIYAZI. VORUKH - THE TERRITORY OF THE TAJIK-KYRGYZ DISCORD. ON THE ISSUE OF THE INITIAL DEMARcation OF THE SOVIET PERIOD. Part 1

*Keywords: interethnic conflicts; Central Asia; Ferghana Valley; Vorukh enclave; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; national-territorial division.*

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*Citation:* Niyazi A. Vorukh - the Territory of the Tajik-Kyrgyz Discord. On the Issue of the Initial Demarcation of the

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Soviet Period // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, № 1 (319),  
P. 52–63. – DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.04

*Abstract. The Tajik enclave of Vorukh on the territory of Kyrgyzstan is an explosion-dangerous point of tension, which is very difficult to defuse. Many sections of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border near Vorukh remain non-delimited. Interethnic conflicts are constantly taking place there. In the course of the negotiations on the drawing of clear lines of borders, the opposing parties turn to various kinds of documents that are beneficial for their positions. Tajik experts prefer to rely on documentary sources of the initial period of national-territorial demarcation in Soviet Central Asia, their Kyrgyz colleagues – on post-war documents confirming the separation of Vorukh from the main part of Tajikistan. At the same time, there exists an ideologized radicalization of views on the status of Vorukh in the media of the two republics. Some argue that it has always been and remains an enclave. Others say that it was not originally an enclave and is not at present, since the lands connecting it with the "mother territory" were illegally annexed. In the article based on the analysis of modern expert assessments and documents of the 1920s on the drawing of borders between the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Region of the RSFSR (later the Kyrgyz ASSR) and the Uzbek SSR, and later In the Tajik SSR, it is concluded that Vorukh was not an enclave at that time.*

On the Tajik-Kyrgyz border near the village of Vorukh and in the surrounding territories, there are occasional conflicts between the local Tajik and Kyrgyz population. In recent years, clashes between citizens have typically been accompanied by armed confrontations between soldiers of the two countries. Warring parties report their dead and wounded, destroyed houses and households, and accuse each other of provocations. After that, the authorities of various ranks and from different departments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan announce that further steps will be taken in order to resolve the conflict, while law

enforcers and citizens habitually brace themselves for a new round of confrontation.

Vorukh is a large Tajik village and a territory of the same name located within the Kyrgyz Republic. This *jamoat* (rural commune) is part of the city of Isfara in Sughd region of Tajikistan and is surrounded by the administrative territories of Kyrgyzstan. For Tajikistan, Vorukh is currently considered to be an exclave, and for Kyrgyzstan it is an enclave [1]. To date, the fact that the two republics claim the lands of Vorukh and the adjacent territories remain a sticking point in the process of relieving rather strong border tensions [2]. Over time, the Vorukh issue has been further aggravated due to demographic reasons, as well as land and water shortages. The struggle for local living space coincided with the general post-Soviet social disaster and the rise of nationalism in the republics of Central Asia. Moreover, the escalation of tensions on the Tajik-Kyrgyz border coincided with the increase in destructive natural and climatic effects on the environment and local communities. Explosive situation in this region is gradually building up not only due to all abovementioned destabilizing factors. Over the past 3-4 years, the militarization level of border territories between the two states has noticeably increased. Military subunits with army equipment are being pulled along the border; fortifications of layered defences are set up by both sides.

To reduce tensions, the precise demarcation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border in the areas of national and territorial disputes seem to be the first and most feasible step. So far, approximately 600 out of over 900-kilometer border between the two states have been finally agreed on [3]. Dozens of disputed areas, most of which are located in the areas of Isfara and Batken, remain undivided [4]. The parties cannot come to an agreement on their ownership, since they refer to different documents and historical events of the Soviet era, use different rules and experience of international law to determine the boundaries. Demarcation is further complicated by the frequent

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interspersing of Kyrgyz and Tajik settlements and economic areas. Sometimes they form a chessboard pattern. Borders often run along the streets of villages or cross the same road in several places. The issue is aggravated by the fact that every now and then the Tajik media publish materials claiming that Vorukh is neither an exclave nor an enclave, but is an integral part of the Republic of Tajikistan, illegally cut off from its “mother territory”.

Bishkek maintains that Vorukh remains a Tajik enclave on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic [5]. At the same time, the opponents refer to solid facts, strong arguments and counterarguments. This is not surprising, since the history of the formation of Vorukh as an enclave is so convoluted that both disputing sides have their own truths based on selective convenient facts.

During negotiations on the Vorukh problem, Kyrgyz experts usually refer to the situation in the late 1950s and following periods. At that time, the movement of local borders as part of economic reforms resulted in Vorukh becoming a standard enclave. They produced documents that described local borders more clearly. As a rule, the Tajik side insists that the documents of 1924–1929 should be considered. That was the time when major decisions regarding the formation of the Central Asian republics were made; their main outlines are still largely based on those decisions.

The information on the setting of borders in the Vorukh region at the dawn of Soviet era is abundant. It should be noticed that the most significant of the sources indicate that Vorukh was not originally an enclave. This is supported by multiple documents and maps of the 1920–1930s.

During the Central Asian national and territorial division in 1924, the territory of Vorukh was included in the Isfara volost (Konibodom District, Fergana Region of the Uzbek SSR) [6]. Part of this volost – the Vorukh lands – was wedged into the neighbouring Batken District (Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast),

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which was part of Russia [7]. Vorukh was connected to the rest of Uzbekistan by a mere strip of land that ran through small Tajik villages and rural roads along the bed of the Isfara River. That stretch of land (Vorukh with a narrow corridor connecting it with the 'mainland') was about 40–45 km long from north to south and 1–3 km wide.

Shortly after the initial demarcation in October 1924, the leadership of the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast appealed to the central Soviet government requesting to expand its territory at the expense of the Sokh and Isfara administrative entities of the Uzbek SSR, which were deep into its territory. However, this appeal was rejected based on the evaluations of the joint inter-republican commissions. Isfara and Sokh, which were populated mainly by Tajiks, remained under the jurisdiction of the Uzbek SSR. Apparently this decision was strongly influenced by the fact that they were inhabited mainly by the Tajik population. Tajiks were mainly engaged in farming and had close connections with the settled Uzbek population. At that time territorial priorities were given to settled land users engaging in irrigated agriculture, since the boundaries should not cross existing water management systems. Moreover, the Soviet government was guided by a simple and clear principle of actual use of the area at the time of demarcation. Belonging of the territory was usually determined by the predominance of one or another ethnic group in a given area.

The issue of national and territorial demarcation in the regions of Vorukh and Sokh was supposed to be resolved, but in many ways the local ethno-cultural and economic structures could not fit into the projects designed by the revolutionaries. Moreover, national interests often began to prevail over common sense locally and therefore came into conflict with the basic rules of administrative and economic division. In Moscow, however, the leadership often did not quite understand social processes in Central Asia. Government officials knew little about regional geography, national identity of the locals and economic ties between them. As a result, during the formation of new

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administrative divisions in Central Asia, some territories were transferred back and forth between the republics multiple times. Naturally, this situation also affected Vorukh and the adjacent areas, which was a colourful ethno-territorial and cultural mosaic.

Despite the fact that the central government declared the “final settlement” of the national and territorial demarcation in the Fergana Valley at the end of 1924, mutual claims regarding the disputed territories remained. Most often these claims involved fertile lands located along the Isfara and Sokh rivers. To clarify the boundaries of new public entities, the Central Asian Liquidation Committee set up a commission, which on March 17, 1925, updated border lines between the state formations in Central Asia. On May 4, 1925, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee approved them in a resolution [8]. The Uzbek SSR retained the Isfara volost and the Sokh volost. In addition, by the decision of the Plenum of the Central Asian Liquidation Committee, about 34 thousand hectares of disputed territories were transferred from the Kara-Kyrgyz ASSR to the Tajik autonomy within the Uzbek SSR. The objective of the transfer was to preserve a direct corridor connecting Vorukh with the Isfara volost of Uzbekistan (later Isfara District of Tajikistan). It should be noted that this land in the Khujand-Leilek direction was used by the Vorukh residents until 1924 [9].

Once again, all the new Central Asian state formations filed over 50 claims on the newly established borders. Under the updated demarcation, there were more than twenty wedgings and inclusions, tens of kilometres long, in the Fergana Valley on the border of Kyrgyzstan [10]. The Kyrgyz side was dissatisfied with the fact that demarcation was based on nationality without consideration for the specifics of the nomadic way of life: at one time of the year the majority of the population of the area turned out to be a minority among the settled population at another. It was also ignored that some irrigated lands belonged to nomads from ancient times (most likely due to their conquests) and they leased them to settled farmers. Excessive sinuosity, strip system

and multiple inclusions in foreign territories when establishing borders in the Fergana Valley were also criticized.

The Kyrgyz side once again brought the issue of the Isfara volost to the fore, since it occupied significant territories wedged into the borders of the administrative entity. It was mentioned that some nomadic settlements and pastures were located within its borders. The belonging of Sokh, which was later turned into an Uzbek exclave, was also questioned. The Joint Commission headed by D.I. Petrovsky studied the claims of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Region [11]. On August 30, 1926, based on the criticism of the commission's work by the Regional Executive Committee of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Region and the complaints of its chairman I. Toychinov to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, [12] the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee decided to transfer the Isfara volost and the Sokh volost to the Kyrgyz Autonomous Region from the Uzbek SSR in their present borders [13]. However, on September 10, 1926, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union ruled against the inclusion of the Isfara volost and the Sokh volost within the borders of the Russian SFSR, leaving it in the Uzbek SSR [14]. Disputes persisted, and in order to settle mutual claims, the Joint Commission under the leadership of Byashim Kulbesherov was established. On January 27, 1927, after re-examination of the border issues, the commission announced its decision to leave the Isfara volost within the territory of Uzbekistan. At the same time, the Sokh volost and a number of settlements and lands adjoining it were proposed to be transferred to the Kyrgyz ASSR [15]. On May 3, 1927, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, chaired by M. Kalinin, approved the proposal of the commission headed by B. Kulbesherov and decided to separate Sokh from the Uzbek SSR and annex it to the Russian SFSR. However, the very next day, May 4, 1927, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union, once again chaired by M. Kalinin, resolved the Sokh issue

in favour of the Uzbek SSR [16]. Thus, Sokh and Vorukh, which were predominantly populated by Tajiks, remained part of Uzbekistan. Only a small part of the settlements and lands adjacent to them were transferred to Kyrgyzstan.

It was proposed to leave these territorial disputes at that. Nevertheless, the leadership of the Kyrgyz ASSR remained dissatisfied and on May 7, without putting it off, Zh. Abdurakhmanov, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Kyrgyz ASSR, composed a letter to I.V. Stalin, outlining numerous reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union [17]. Apparently, by that time Moscow was tired of considering the endless flow of complaints, claims and proposals of the Central Asian comrades. Perhaps the Kremlin was annoyed by its own misunderstanding of the reasons for never ending difficulties in the formation of the national statehood of the republics of Central Asia. Either way, it was recommended that mutual claims be forgotten until better times. Meanwhile, it was high time for epoch-making economic achievements.

In May 1927, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee decided to refuse to consider any petitions related to redrawing of borders for three years [18]. The same year, to emphasize that the national and territorial division between the Uzbek SSR and the Russian SFSR was completed, a map with the new borders between the two republics was issued. On this map, Vorukh was directly connected with the Isfara District (Khujand Region of the Uzbek SSR) [19].

After the Tajik SSR was formed at the end of 1929, it absorbed the Khujand Region of Uzbekistan (now Northern Tajikistan), thus making Vorukh part of a new independent republic. As before, it was connected to the 'mother' territories by a small strip of land along the Isfara River. This could be seen on the map "Formation of the Tajik ASSR (1924) and Formation of the Tajik SSR (1929)", which was published by the General Directorate of Geodesy and Cartography of the USSR in 1934 [20].

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Therefore, there is solid ground for acknowledging that during this crucial time of establishing the state borders of the Soviet republics of Central Asia between 1924 and 1927, Vorukh was not an Uzbek exclave surrounded by the territories of the Kyrgyz ASSR, since it was directly connected to the rest of Uzbekistan. Subsequently, when the boundaries of the Tajik SSR were drawn in 1929, Vorukh once again was connected to the main territory of the republic by a strip of land, and, therefore, was not a Tajik enclave on the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

In later years, during collectivization, modernization of industry and industrialization of agriculture, economic feasibility of developing a single state naturally prevailed over national interests. During the planning and developing of both large and small territorial and production complexes in Central Asia, all the borders were often moved by central, republican and even local authorities. Sometimes it was done in order to reduce tensions that arose when water and land resources were used. Due to the haste and their conditional character of border lines, their movements were not always documented. In some cases the decisions of the central authorities were not legally confirmed by the neighbouring republics or reflected in bilateral agreements. Over time, after multiple rearrangements, Vorukh was cut off from the main territory of Tajikistan – the history of it will be examined in Part 2 of this article.

## References

1. Exclave is a non-sovereign region, separated from the main ('mother') territory of the country and surrounded by one or more states. The same territory is an exclave for the country to which it belongs, and an enclave for the state to which it does not belong, but is surrounded by its territory. In scientific works, the term enclave is used when it comes to the surrounding state, and the same territory is called an exclave when it comes to the 'mother' state. In journalism and everyday life, the term enclave is commonly used.
2. More than 90 percent of the Vorukh population are Tajiks. According to the leadership of the *jamoat*, at the end of 2017, there were about 33 thousand

residents and 2700 individual *dehkan* farms. On average, each farm occupied approximately 37 acres. Consequently, all the peasant plots in Vorukh occupy a little less than 100 thousand square kilometers. These are mainly foothill fields, orchards, hayfields and pastures. Source: Enclave Vorukh: the territory of noble teachers, engaged girls and Soviet motorcycles. [Electronic source] // Website "Asia-Plus". URL: <https://asiaplustj.info/news/tajikistan/20171201/anklav-voruh-territoriya-blagorodnih-uchitelei-pomolvlennih-devushek-i-sovetskih-mototsiklov> (accessed: 11.05.2022).

3. On April 16, 2022, the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, announced that 664 km out of the 972 km of the shared border with Tajikistan had been agreed on. Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan called the actions of the Kyrgyz side on the border a provocation. [Electronic source] // Website "INTERFAX". URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/world/844726> (accessed: 12.06.2022).
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9. Between 31 January, 1927 and 10 May 1929 - Isfara District of the Khujand Region of the Uzbek SSR; between 10 May, 1929 and September 1929 - Isfara District of the Tajik ASSR; between September 1929 and 16 October, 1929 - Isfara District of the Khujand Region of the Tajik ASSR; between 29 August, 1930 and 16 March, 1938 - Isfara District of the Tajik SSR; between 16 March, 1938 and 27 October, 1939 - Isfara District of the Leninabad Region of the Tajik SSR.

10. On October 27, 1924, the strategic national and territorial division of Soviet Central Asia was started with the resolution of the II session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. On the basis of the Khorezm SSR and the Bukharan SSR, as well as the Turkestan ASSR, the Uzbek SSR and the Turkmen SSR were formed. The Tajik ASSR was part of the Uzbek SSR, and the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Region was part of the Russian SFSR. Source: Decree of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR of October 27, 1924 "On the demarcation of the Soviet republics in Central Asia and on the entry into the Union of the SSR of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic and the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic". [Electronic source] // Website "LIBUSSR". URL: [http://www.libussr.ru/doc\\_ussr/ussr\\_2222.htm](http://www.libussr.ru/doc_ussr/ussr_2222.htm) (accessed: 01.06.2022).
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17. Alamanov S.K. Anklavy v Tsentralnoi Azii: istoriia voprosa i sovremennye problem // Post-Soviet studies, 2018. – Vol. 1, No. 5. – P. 454.
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## ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

OLGA BIBIKOVA. LEBANON: PROBLEMS OF THE FORMER  
"MIDDLE EAST SWITZERLAND"

*Keywords: financial and economic crisis; unemployment; inflation; refugees; corruption of the ruling elite.*

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*Citation.* Bibikova O. Lebanon: Problems of the Former "Middle East Switzerland" // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, № 1 (319), P. 64–81. – DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.05

*Abstract. The once flourishing country is experiencing a severe economic and financial crisis, which is the result of the criminal activities of the oligarchic elite, representing several corrupt clans that head the country's confessional communities. Since the late 1970s, Lebanon has been experiencing a protracted crisis, which poses a serious threat to the stability of the State. But this is one of the most educated countries in the Middle East with an advantageous geographical and strategic position, amazing nature, fertile lands. However, the time when Lebanon was called "Middle Eastern Switzerland" has passed. The country used to be the main financial center of the Middle East, now it has become a place where the interests of different peoples and states collided. However, the Lebanese consider their elite the culprits of the current plight of the country's economy.*

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Since the late 1970s, Lebanon has been experiencing a protracted crisis, which poses a serious threat to the stability of the State. But this is one of the most educated countries in the Middle East, with an advantageous geographical and strategic position, amazing nature, fertile lands. However, the time when Lebanon was called "Middle Eastern Switzerland" has passed. Previously, the country was the main financial center of the Middle East, now it has become a place where the interests of different peoples and states collided. However, the Lebanese call their elite the culprits of the current plight of the country's economy.

The country is located in a temperate climate (330 sunny days!), has sufficient water resources. However, according to the World Bank data for 2020, the agricultural sector is underdeveloped, accounting for only 3% of GDP, and it employs 11 per cent of the workforce. The main agricultural products include fruit (mainly apples, oranges, bananas and grapes, as well as olives), which account for about 30 per cent of total agricultural production, and vegetables (such as potatoes, tomatoes and corn), which account for 60 per cent of total agricultural production. [1]

Industry accounted for 12.8 per cent of GDP in 2019, but in 2020 the share fell to 6.9 per cent of GDP. This sector employs 23.6 per cent of the workforce. It is dominated by the production of agricultural products, metals, minerals, furniture and other industrial goods. Before the crisis, there were more than 4,700 industrial enterprises in Lebanon, mainly producing food products, followed by construction materials and chemicals. [2]

The dominant sector of the Lebanese economy is services. They account for 87.2 per cent of the country's GDP and employ 65 per cent of the working-age population. Tourism accounts for almost 20 per cent of GDP, and employs about 18 per cent of the population. The sector was severely affected during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the United Nations World Tourism

Organization, the number of tourists arriving in the Middle East has decreased by about 57 per cent. [3]

The share of trade in GDP has also declined sharply and, according to the World Bank (2020), amounts to almost 46 per cent. Lebanon mainly exports ore (gold), diamonds, jewelry, vehicles, ferrous metallurgy waste, scrap metal, as well as electrical and electronic equipment. The country mainly imports mineral fuels, medicines and pharmaceuticals. [4]

Some improvement in the economic situation was observed in the 1990s. In 1992, Rafik Hariri, a citizen of Saudi Arabia, of Lebanese descent, was appointed Prime Minister of the country. At one time, having become close to the royal family, he made a fortune on large-scale construction in the kingdom. For Lebanon, he developed a large-scale Horizon 2000 program, according to which the country was to become a prosperous state again. Hariri focused his efforts on the reconstruction of Beirut. In order to implement his plans, he proposed to organize the privatization of state assets in energy, transport and telecommunications. He managed to attract foreign investment. Soon there were signs of recovery of the economy.

However, funds, exorbitant for the country, were spent on the reconstruction of Beirut after the civil war (1975-1990). Money was spent on the implementation of grandiose construction projects. Industries such as transport and energy have not received funds for modernization and today they are in decline. Nevertheless, before the outbreak of the war in neighboring Syria, Lebanon's GDP grew at the level of 8-9 per cent per year. But as the inflow of capital from abroad, including from the diaspora, decreased, the economic situation worsened. Naturally, in conditions of instability, external investors do not risk taking risks.

The methods that R. Hariri used to attract capital eventually led to the fact that Lebanon's public debt reached \$18 billion. His personal fortune has also grown. In addition, the

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prime minister distributed business projects to his relatives and representatives of the ruling elite of Lebanon.

Rafik Hariri has served as Prime Minister twice. Fearing the loss of its influence in the country, Syria supported the candidacy of Emil Lahoud in the next presidential election in 1998, who accused Hariri of unsuccessful economic policy. However, two years later, the political bloc led by Hariri won the parliamentary elections, and he regained the post of prime minister. In 2004, Hariri's cabinet resigned. He was going to continue his activities in Lebanon, but in February 2005 he became a victim of a terrorist act. [5]

In recent years, several prime ministers have been replaced at the head of the Lebanese government, including Saad Hariri, the second son of R. Hariri. He held this post twice: from November 9, 2009 to June 13, 2011 and again from December 18, 2016 to November 4, 2017. His resignation was unexpected: he was recalled to Riyadh, from where, standing in front of the camera, he announced his resignation. [6] It is characteristic that in his statement made in front of television cameras, Hariri accused Iran of interfering in Arab affairs. The background of the incident is connected with the fact that shortly before Hariri met with former Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati. It is obvious that this circumstance has caused dissatisfaction with Saudi Arabia, which is trying to reduce Iran's influence in Arab countries, especially in those where the Shiite population lives.

### **The Reasons for the Deterioration of the Economic Situation**

Returning to the reasons for the deterioration of the economic situation of "Middle Eastern Switzerland", it should be recalled about the general unstable situation in the region. But in recent years, the Lebanese themselves have pointed to internal reasons. Thus, Sahar al-Attar, editor of the Lebanese economic monthly "Commerce Du Levant", notes that the situation in Lebanon deteriorated in several stages. "Since the mid-1990s, a

model has been adopted in Lebanon, which was to borrow through banks throughout the country and attract foreign capital and the diaspora to finance this debt” [7], she explains. The money was not spent on the development of the country, but on “financing clientelistic networks” of ruling politicians [8], which means confessional communities that support a particular deputy, that is, those to whom the deputy owes his election to parliament.

In 2011, the country was flooded with refugees from Syria and by 2016 Lebanon was in a deep crisis. According to the United Nations, Syrian refugees number more than 800,000 (1.5 million, according to the Lebanese Government). This makes Lebanon the state with the largest number of immigrants per capita. [9]

In October 2019, mass protests broke out due to higher taxes, including on gas and tobacco, as well as due to the introduction of a tax for using Whats App - \$ 6 per month. [10] At the same time, pensions and salaries of civil servants were reduced.

In addition, the coronavirus pandemic has increased the country's economic instability. Since the outbreak of the epidemic in Lebanon, more than 560,000 cases of COVID-19 have been registered among the population and 7917 people have died. In the spring of 2020, thanks to the rapid closure of borders, the epidemic began to decline. [11]

Public discontent in the country was fueled by a sharp increase in inflation, unemployment, acute food shortages, as well as the inaction of the ruling class, which for decades put up with corruption, as a result of which in 2020 the government was forced to default on its debt on Eurobonds in the amount of \$ 1.2 billion. According to World Bank estimates, between 2018 and 2020, the country's GDP per capita fell by 40 per cent. [12] The World Bank called the Lebanese crisis one of the largest in the world since 1850.

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In September 2021, the report of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was published, which notes that if 30 per cent of the Lebanese population lived below the poverty line before October 2019, then in August 2020 this figure was 50 per cent, and in September – 74 per cent. At the same time, half of the Lebanese population does not have access to medicines, and a third of families are deprived of access to medical services. [13]

Since 2019, the national currency has lost more than 90 per cent of its value, depositors face severe banking restrictions. Some banks have stopped their activities, others have frozen foreign currency accounts and restrict the issuance of funds to their owners. Lebanese who use banking services are practically subject to strict restrictions on withdrawing funds from their accounts. In the summer of 2022 there was a curious case when an armed man detained hostages in one of the Beirut branches of Federal Bank, demanding that the bank issue money from an account belonging to him, necessary for the treatment of his father. [14] The example of this man was followed by his compatriots (including women). In just three days of September 2022, five such cases were recorded. The Association of Banks of Lebanon was forced to announce the closure of all bank branches for three days to make a decision on security measures.

In some Beirut supermarkets, in the spring of 2022, a rule was introduced to limit payment by cards: the buyer can pay half of the cost of the goods by card, and the other part must be paid in cash. [15]

There is a thriving “black market” in the country, thanks to which it is much more profitable to change dollars in a street exchange point than in a bank. Kazan orientalist Azat Akhunov noted that “changing dollars at the official exchange rate means going broke ... If you can get 1.5 thousand Lebanese lira (LL) in a bank for \$ 1, then almost 35 thousand LL are given in exchangers for a dollar. For example, a kilogram of peaches costs almost 22 thousand LL. According to the official exchange rate, this is

870 rubles per kilo, according to unofficial and real — about 40 rubles per kilogram". [16]

Explaining the current situation, Hassan Diab, the former Prime Minister of the Lebanese Republic, blamed his predecessors: "Instead of reforming the economy, debts accumulated, which gave rise to large-scale corruption. The existing banking system allowed a small minority to make a profit, while 40 per cent of citizens were below the poverty line". [17]

### **Explosion in the Port of Beirut**

On August 4, 2020, an explosion occurred in the port of Beirut due to a gross violation of safety regulations and rules for the storage of explosive substances, as a result of which the main granary of the country was destroyed. The cause of the explosion was the detonation of firecrackers stored in a nearby hangar. The detonation initiated the explosion of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, which had been there since the end of 2013. At the time of the explosion, there were over 15 thousand tons of wheat in the granary. This is a small amount, because the Lebanese consume about 40 thousand tons per month. However, the loss of storage caused the need to build a new elevator and search for new sources of replenishment of grain reserves. Russia was one of the first to respond to the trouble of the Lebanese. On the instructions of Russian President Vladimir Putin, 5 grain transport planes were sent to Lebanon. [18]

As you know, bread is the main food of the poor population. The resulting shortage of bread in the country has affected the attitude of the Lebanese towards Syrian refugees. In some areas, bakeries even organized separate queues depending on nationality, giving preference to Lebanese. [19]

During the explosion in the port, 214 people were killed (among the dead were the leader of the Kataib party Nazar Najarian and the wife of the ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands), more than 6,500 people were injured. The blast

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wave devastated several hospitals [20], touched 10 embassies and consulates (including the Russian Federation). Nearby museums, including the famous Sursok Museum of Modern Art, were seriously damaged. In addition, the historic quarters of Jammayze and Mar-Mikael Quarantine were affected, restoration work is still underway there. 300 thousand Lebanese lost their homes. Initially, the total damage was estimated from \$ 3 to 5 billion. Later, this amount increased to \$ 15 billion. [21]

At the initiative of France, a conference was organized, the purpose of which was to provide assistance to Lebanon. The international community has promised to provide Lebanon with additional assistance in the amount of \$ 370 million, including \$100 million promised to France.

The fiery speech of French President E. Macron, who flew to Beirut a day after the explosion, has long fueled the hope that Europe will help their country to get out of the crisis. In July 2022, the pages of the French "Monde" published an appeal by "Seven Lebanese Associations" to E. Macron with a request to "impose sanctions against Lebanese political and financial mafiosi in order to pull the country out of the hell into which it is immersed." [22] Recall that a year before there was a scandal at French customs with Riad Salame, the governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon, who was detained at Le Bourget airport with 90,000 euros in cash, while the Lebanese financial Prosecutor's office charged him with "money laundering" and "participation in a criminal community." The matter ended with the fact that the French customs did with a fine of 2,700 euros... [23].

Naturally, in the conditions of a catastrophic fall in the standard of living in the country, crime has increased. On Sunday morning, August 7, 2022, more than 30 prisoners escaped through the window of a prison in the Adli district of Beirut itself. It is obvious that the escape took place through the mediation of prison staff. This is not surprising, since more than 80 per cent of Lebanese are below the poverty line. [24]

Begging, theft (up to metal manholes from the streets of the city), prostitution (especially among immigrants), suicide have become a daily phenomenon in Lebanese cities.

### **Diaspora as a Source of Financial Investments**

The Lebanese economy largely depends on the transfer of funds by citizens working abroad, primarily in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula. The volume of transfers of highly educated Lebanese from abroad reaches up to a quarter of GDP, significantly exceeding the volume of all foreign direct investment. Thus, Lebanon, unlike most countries, exports not goods and services, but specialists. Indeed, Lebanon supplies the labor market of many countries with qualified specialists. At the same time, the patriotism of Lebanese emigrants who do not break with their homeland should be noted.

According to the former Prime Minister of the Lebanese Republic Hassan Diab [25], "Lebanon is a rentier state, too dependent on finances and the influx of funds from the sprawling diaspora." [26]

It should be noted that the Lebanese diaspora [27], according to some data, exceeds the population of Lebanon by more than 2 times. According to the latest estimates, the Lebanese diaspora has about 16 million people, while the entire population of the country does not exceed 6 million people. [28]

Most families (mostly from the upper and middle class) have relatives living abroad. Naturally, the deterioration of the economic situation caused an increase in emigration of Lebanese. The part of the population that had financial resources made a choice in favor of leaving the country, for example, to the Persian Gulf countries, Canada, the U.S., Germany, France or Latin American countries (where almost 3 per cent of the population have Syrian-Lebanese roots). In the 21th century, Australia and some African countries became a new direction. In the first four months of 2021 alone, 230,000 Lebanese citizens legally

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emigrated. Among them were about 40 per cent of Lebanese doctors and 30 per cent of nurses. [29] Sociologists note that in this way the country's middle class, traditionally politically active, was weakened, which led to a decrease in socio-political momentum. According to the Lebanese themselves, the explosion in the Beirut port, recognized as one of the largest man-made disasters in the history of mankind, had a very strong psychological impact on the Lebanese. It was then that many Lebanese saw their future in emigration.

### **Problems with Energy**

Today, the main concern of the Lebanese has become the issue of survival, satisfaction of basic needs. After Lebanon's two largest power plants closed in early October 2021, strict electricity rationing had to be introduced. In fact, the power supply system has been in need of reconstruction for a long time, since the network has not been upgraded for many years. It was obvious that new power plants were needed to meet the growing needs of the population.

The shortage of energy has paralyzed the life of the Lebanese population and the work of many key sectors of the economy. In this situation, Lebanon was forced to ignore international sanctions and turn to Iran for the purchase of oil. Tankers brought oil to the Syrian port of Banias, from where it was transported to Lebanon. It is characteristic that Hezbollah is engaged in the transportation of oil, which from the very beginning took this issue under its control. Thus, Hezbollah has once again demonstrated its loyalty to the state. [30]

In addition, the government was able to negotiate with Iraq on the purchase of fuel. Considering Lebanon's dire financial situation, Baghdad even agreed to partial payment by goods and services.

In the summer of 2022, an agreement was signed between Egypt, Lebanon and Syria, according to which Egypt, Lebanon

and Syria agreed to export 650 million cubic meters of natural gas through the Arab gas pipeline through Syria. However, under the terms of the World Bank, the implementation of this deal requires the consent of the United States to export Egyptian gas to Lebanon, due to the fact that the United States imposed sanctions on Syria. Under the terms of the agreement, Egypt undertakes to pump gas through the pipeline to supply the Lebanese power plant Deir Ammar, which will increase the energy supply to settlements in northern Lebanon by 4 hours a day. [31]

## **Food Security**

As the economic situation worsened, the problem of food security aggravated. The staff of the UN humanitarian mission stated that 77 per cent of families were experiencing food shortages. There were not enough products in stores, and the cost of those that were still there had increased by 3-4 times. The staff of the Doctors Without Borders mission noted that more than 80 cancer drugs could not be bought in Beirut, and paracetamol was "not so easy to find." [32]

In 2020, the commander of the Lebanese army drew the attention of the government to the plight of the army, in which the salary of military personnel did not exceed \$ 80, the U.S., the main sponsor of the Lebanese army, previously promised to increase funding for the country's army from \$ 105 to \$ 120 million per year. However, due to the huge inflation and unfavorable exchange rate, the value of this money is rapidly falling. The President of the country, M. Aoun, was forced to call on the international community to provide the military with humanitarian aid items. In the list made public by the army commander, there were very specific things: milk, flour, medicines were in the first place, and only then the president requested fuel and spare parts for military equipment with a total cost of several tens of thousands of euros. [33]

## Refugees are a Heavy Burden

Lebanon's big problem remains the issue of refugees from Syria staying in the country. There are almost 1.5 million of them in Lebanon, which is a quarter of the population of all of Lebanon. Syrians have been there since 2011. After their arrival, large-scale humanitarian assistance was organized, in which the Lebanese State, UN agencies and foreign donors participated. Since 2011, 70 per cent of international funding has been channelled through UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Food Programme. At the same time, from 80 to 90 per cent of the funds were allocated to help refugees, and the remaining 10 per cent – to support the most vulnerable Lebanese population. At the end of 2019, humanitarian organizations based in Beirut appealed to sponsors to increase the amount of aid and increase the poor Lebanese's proportion. However, the amount provided remained the same, but the assistance provided to Syrian refugees decreased. In addition, in the country there is dissatisfaction with Syrian refugees, who receive food aid from NGOs and financial assistance from the UNHCR, while many needy Lebanese do not have access to it. [34]

Let me also remind you that several generations of Palestinian refugees have lived and are living in Lebanon since 1948. More than 470 thousand refugees have been registered to help refugees and organize work (UNRWA) [35]. In June 2022, Beshara Boutros ar-Rai, Patriarch of the Maronites of Antioch and the entire Levant, called for the deportation of Palestinians from Lebanon. He believes that the presence of Palestinians in Lebanon is in conflict with the interests of the State. "Yes, we are with you, dear brothers, but we ask the international community to help Lebanon, which has exhausted its economic resources, and find a final solution for both Palestinian refugees and Syrian displaced persons." [36] He also called "unacceptable" the attempts to force Lebanon to integrate the Palestinians by granting them civil rights. Thus, the Patriarch hinted at the plan

proposed in 2019 by J. Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, to solve the Palestinian problem through the integration of Palestinians into Lebanese society. A similar appeal was sent by the Prime Minister of Lebanon N. Mikati to the UN Secretary General A. Guterres, in which he recalled that "Lebanon receives the highest percentage of refugees per capita in the world and is suffering from one of the most serious economic crises since 1850." [37]

### **External Factors Affecting the Situation in the Country**

Lebanon's proximity to Israel keeps the country in constant tension. The Israeli Air Force violates the airspace of Lebanon, carrying out reconnaissance flights over almost all areas of the country. It is estimated that Israeli military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace 22,111 times between 2007 and mid-2022. [38] Israel is hunting for targets of the Shiite organization Hizbullah, which Tel Aviv considers as an agent of Iran. As we have already noted, Iran's influence in Lebanon worries Saudi Arabia as well.

The authority of Hizbullah rose sharply in 2006, when the Lebanese army was inactive, while Hizbullah rained rockets on Israel, and Hizbullah militants successfully attacked Israeli tanks. [39] Later in August 2014, Hizbullah, in cooperation with the Lebanese army, prevented jihadists from the Jabhat al-Nusra group from entering Lebanon through the town of Arsal in northern Lebanon, where the jihadists had moved their families in advance. [40]

The strengthening of the Shiite community in the country worries Saudi Arabia, which views Hizbullah as an agent of Iran in Lebanon. It is characteristic that in relation to Iran, the interests of Saudi Arabia coincide with the interests of Israel.

### **Offshore Oil and Gas Fields**

Oil and gas fields found on the Mediterranean shelf of Lebanon give hope for a way out of this situation. However, the

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situation is complicated by the absence of a clearly fixed maritime border between Lebanon and Israel. And although an exploration agreement has already been signed with the participation of French Total and Italian Eni, experts warn that the discovered natural gas reserves may lead to an aggravation of the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, because the interests of Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt collide there. [41] According to the findings of the British company Spectrum, which was engaged in exploration in this area, there are 710 billion cubic meters of gas in the Lebanese economic zone. [42]

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Analyzing the causes of the current crisis, the Lebanese themselves call the government's disregard for the needs of the people as the root cause. This is obvious even to foreign observers. Thus, the correspondent of the French edition of *Le Monde* in Beirut, B. Barth, titled his article very specifically: "The catastrophe in Lebanon was the result of decades of mismanagement, corruption led by the oligarchic elite<sup>43</sup>". Most Lebanese survivors of the civil war believe that the current situation in the country is more hopeless than it was in the mid-1980s.

On October 31, the term of office of the President of the Lebanese Republic, M. Aoun, ends. He was elected to this post at the 46th attempt after the start of the election. Elections were constantly postponed due to the lack of a quorum. The country has been living without a president for almost 2.5 years. And then and today there is no shortage of candidates for the highest post in the country, but is there one among them who can defeat corruption and bring the country out of a state of crisis?

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Received: 19.10.2022.

Accepted for publication: 01.11.2022.

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## SWETLANA POGORELSKAYA. THE TURKISH COMMUNITY IN GERMANY: THE ISLAMIC FACTOR

*Keywords: Internal politics of Germany; Turkish community; Turkish Sunnis; DITIB; Islam in the EU.*

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*Citation.* Pogorelskaya S. The Turkish Community in Germany: the Islamic Factor. *Russia and the Moslem World*, 2023, № 1 (319), P. 82-94. – DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.06

*Abstract. The Turkish community in Germany is well structured, has its own organizations and unions, maintains contacts with Turkey, and is represented in German political parties. From a civilian point of view, Turks are immeasurably integrated into German society better than people from other Moslem countries. However, the full integration of the Turkish population into German society depends on the degree of integration of Islam professed by them. And its integration is obstructed by the fact that both major religious unions are inextricably linked with Turkey. Is it possible to solve the problem? In the article, after a brief overview of the civil situation of the Turkish community, it is supposed to investigate to what extent its activities today are determined by the religious factor, what influence it has on its position in German society and to what extent, in cooperation with the institutions of the state, it manages to solve practical issues of the life of Turkish Moslems in Germany.*

The Turkish community of Germany is an interesting and, perhaps, from a social point of view, rare phenomenon. Large,

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active and well-structured ethnic communities in modern Western states are not uncommon, but the opportunity for their emergence is either the historical status of the state as the host country, or the presence of colonies in the past. Germany never was a host country and didn't want to be it. On the contrary, this prospect frightened the Germans in the 1990s in connection with discussions about the need to change immigration legislation urgently. It had no colonies at the time of the collapse of the colonialism system. Meanwhile, its Islamic community is one of the most powerful in Europe, and the pace in it is set by the unions of Turkish Sunnis, due to their number and good organization.

There are many problems with the Turkish community in Germany, since it is heterogeneous and, along with the law-abiding population, also includes elements dangerous to internal security. Moreover, the German authorities are less ready to tolerate its diverse connection with Turkey, especially after Erdogan came to power, who repeatedly emphasized that he considers the Turks living in Germany to be some kind of mediators between the two states.

In the short article, after a brief review of the civil situation of the Turkish community, it is supposed to explore one, but very important aspect – to what extent its activity today is determined by a religious factor and what effect it has on its position in German society.

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The emergence of the Turkish community in Germany took place due to the imperfection of its immigration law, and what they obtained in the end – the clumsiness of domestic politics and the underestimation of the role of Islam, which has long been considered something of a harmless cultural feature of migrants. From a modern perspective, one could reproach West German politicians for the lack of strategic thinking - however, in the Cold

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War era, the entire world political process, and even more so, the life of such a “front-line” state as West Germany, went on in the shadow of bloc confrontation. Strategic thinking focused on issues of nuclear confrontation, and not on Islamic topics, which, in the context of the life of Western societies, became truly relevant not even in the 1990s, but only after 11.9.2001. At first, they just did not pay attention to the culture of labor migrants, then they did not pay attention to it within the framework of the ideology of domestic political “multiculturalism.” Hardly anyone assumed that of the limited contingents of unskilled Turkish workers, working on temporary contracts in heavy, primarily in the steel industry and professing their religion in “yard mosques,” on cartons from package boxes instead of prayer carpets, over time there will grow a new, well-structured community, an ethnic minority of Germany with a high-level cultural and religious claim – for example, building mosques whose minarets would be taller than the spires of nearby Christian churches. West Germany did not officially accept immigrants permanently unless they had German blood. Guest workers had to leave it after the expiration of their contracts. Workers from poor southern European countries – Portugal, Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia, basically did so, the Turks became an exception. The United States recommended the Germans to accept the Turkish contractors as part of the strategy of those years, to tie Turkey to the West. The integration of illiterate immigrants from rural Anatolia into German society was not required – they were settled in hostels at industrial enterprises. However, as families were reunited, guest workers moved from hostels to old working-class quarters, creating infrastructure for “their” consumer. This is how the Turkish regions of Frankfurt, Cologne, Berlin, and other industrial centers were formed. Having lived in the country for a certain period with a working visa, workers, according to the law, could receive a permanent residence permit. In 1973 (at that time 910,500 Turks lived in Germany), the mass importation of labour from non-EU member

states was banned. It did not work, because according to the Regulator of Exceptions to the Ban, entry and subsequent reunification with families continued. The number of family members quickly exceeded the number of guest workers themselves. By 1983, migrant workers made up only a quarter of the entire Turkish community - 53 per cent of the Turkish population were families who entered in accordance with family reunification, and 17 per cent were born in Germany. In 1983, Helmut Kohl, who headed the conservative-liberal coalition, raised the issue for the first time at a high level. The Return Assistance Act was adopted - migrant workers who decided to return to Turkey were paid 10,000 marks for an adult and 1,500 marks for a child - fair amount of money at the time. However, the law did not work. The returnees (only about 250,000 people) could not take roots in Turkey, many of them soon returned to Germany.

Over time, the social composition of the Turkish community has changed significantly. In the time of the "guest workers," it was relatively homogeneous in material terms. In the second generation, the processes of property stratification and the ongoing creation of infrastructure "for themselves" led to the emergence of their own "middle class" - doctors, teachers, lawyers. Labour organizations arose. The third generation went into German politics, citizens with Turkish roots were in almost all significant parties, most of them at the territorial levels, but there are Turkish deputies of the Bundestag, and Kemal Ozdemir at one time was the leader of the Green party. The number of deputies was consistently growing. In 2009, there were five deputies of Turkish origin in the Bundestag. In the last Bundestag elections in 2021, there were 18 of them, most of them from the SPD and the Greens. In matters significant for Turkey, however, the Turkish political lobby is forced to be torn between Turkey and Germany.

Intriguingly, the fourth generation, the late 1990s - early 2000s, turned back to Turkey and Islam. At first, the reason for

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this was the fact that the process of integrating the Turks into German society paralleled the process of their disintegration from the same society. This was due to the status of “guest workers,” even in the 1980s, more than twenty years after their arrival, they were still expected to leave, taking with them German-born children and grandchildren. Three generations grew up in a situation unclear from an administrative and psychological point of view, living between countries. After the modernization of the immigration legislation of the Federal Republic of Germany at the beginning of the 2000s, their situation stabilized, but the consciousness of their specialness in comparison with the Germans was thoroughly strengthened among young people. With the strengthening and politicization of Islam after the end of the era of confrontation of the blocs, and, at the same time, with the growth of Turkey’s ambitions as a regional force, there was an opportunity not only for a new self-identification, but also for hopes to transform the country in which they were born and raised – Germany. It’s interesting that, by the end of the 2000s, according to polls, almost 40 per cent young Turks who lived in Germany and had German citizenship considered Erdogan to be their leader, and not Angela Merkel.

The processes of structuring the civic institutions of the community formally established in the 1990s. In 1995, a parent organization, the Turkish Community of Germany, was created in Hamburg, declaring itself a representative of all Turks living in Germany, regardless of their citizenship; it currently includes 260 organizations and unions. The “Turkish Community of Germany” has political goals regarding vitally important issues for Turkish fellow citizens in their daily lives in Germany.

However, a significant part of these issues was somehow related to issues of practical profession. These were primarily issues of teaching Islam in schools. One can also recall the initiatives and even lawsuits of the Union of Turkish Parents, which demanded Turkish girls to be out of swimming as part of physical education lessons and not be involved in overnight

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excursions. The same topic included processes in which Turkish women working in state structures (for example, in schools) defended their right to wear a hijab.

It can be said that despite the laicist and liberal (in matters of Islam) intellectual and political stratum, the strata of the community remains conservative and traditionalist. Therefore, its religious organizations define its life sometimes much more than German politics. Moreover, Islam of the Turkish community, which for the most part tends towards stability and strengthening of its life in Germany, is much more intense than Arab Islam, runs to interaction with the state in solving important issues for itself.

The Union of Islamic Cultural Centers (VIKZ), the oldest Turkish-Islamic cultural union founded in 1973, during the years when Islam of Turkish migrant workers developed in Germany under the auspices of cultural affiliation, contains about 300 mosques and Koran schools, was one of the four co-founders of the Coordination Council of Muslims of Germany, created in 2007 as a working platform for cooperation with the Islamic Conference of Germany.

The Union of Turkish-Islamic Cultural Associations in Europe (ATIB) is the main agency of Turkish cultural organizations that united in Cologne in 1987.

Both of the largest Turkish Islamic unions in Germany - DITIB and Milli Görüş - are continuance of Turkish religious structures.

The Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB), founded in 1984 in Cologne, is subordinate to the official Turkish structures (religious affairs departments, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), the most powerful organization of Turkish Sunnis today, one of the four co-founders of the Muslim Coordination Council. The respectable, socially well-integrated and interested in stability and good relations between Turkey and Germany residents, the strong middle class of the Turkish community participate in these organizations or sympathize them. Imams in

the mosque of this union were sent from Turkey for a period of 5 years and worked in contact with consulates, its main language was Turkish. This union today unites the vast majority of the Turkish population (and according to its own data, 70 per cent of all Muslims living in Germany), its functionaries cooperate with both the Turkish and German authorities. By the time of its foundation, it contained 135 mosques, now 960 (out of 2600 of all mosques in Germany).

Founded in 1976 in Cologne and officially registered in 1995, the Islamic Community of Milli Gorus (IGMG), the "National View," also had its roots in Turkey, supporting the Islamist Nekhmettin Erbakan. It has kept in contact with Turkey's radical Islamist organizations opposed to Laicist politics. In the 80s, the movement was replenished mainly by Islamist oppositionists of the Turkish government, who at that time received the status of "political refugees" (as clobbered on "freedom of belief") in West Germany. Having an extensive structure throughout Europe, in Germany it belonged to one of the largest organizations after DITIB. According to its own data, it united more than 500 communities around the world (communities are grouped around mosques), of which 304 communities in Germany. In Germany, it was popular primarily among the population of industrial metropolis. In 1984, in Cologne a radical wing broke away from it - the Union of Islamic Associations and Communities (ICCB, banned in December 2001), grouped around Gemalettin Kaplan (known as the "Cologne caliph") and later headed by his son Metin. Both lived in Germany with "political refugee" status.

After 11.9.2001, Milli Gorus became the object of close attention of the German special services, since the initiators of the terrorist attack, who lived in Germany as students, were members of the community around one of the mosques belonging to Milli Gorus. And in 2009, the prosecutor's office became interested in him - suspicions arose that terrorist associations in the Middle East were supported at the expense of

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this organization. Therefore, in 2010, the Islamic Conference of the Federal Republic of Germany, despite the protests of other participants, suspended the union from cooperation.

In religious terms, the Turkish community of Germany, even in modern times, is still much more conservative than the population of Turkey as a whole. The reason is the social origin of Sunni "guest workers" who came out of the underdeveloped rural regions of Anatolia. Using the hatches of German legislation, the Turks of Germany had a better chance of asserting their religious rights than if they lived in Turkey.

In the negotiation process aimed at integrating Islam, which started the German government, creating the Islamic Conference of Germany, its main partners were Turkish religious unions, as representatives of the most part of the Muslim population in Germany.

Training imams for German mosques of Islamic unions remains a central issue of cooperation. Germany, in the interests of its internal security, would like to go back completely on the "import" of imams, preparing them in German educational institutions. As a rule, imams arrive at German mosques only for a limited period. So imams of DITIB mosques are sent by the Turkish Department of Religious Affairs to Germany in a rotational manner and paid by Turkey. Similarly, it was in the interest of the state to teach Islam to Muslim schoolchildren in German schools as part of the subject of "religion," and not in the "schools of the Quran" at mosques.

In 2019, the state started training imams in Germany, opening the Islamic College at Osnabrück University. The subject of "Islamic studies" began to be offered at theological faculties in German universities since 2010. Since, however, the decisions of the Islamic Conference serve as guidelines, both Turkish unions – DITIB and Milli Görüs, do not participate in it, offering their own projects, as well as concerning the teaching of Islam in the framework of the school subject "religion."

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Thus, according to the DITIB project, from 2020, Turkish graduates of German schools wishing to receive the major "imam" go to Turkey, where they get religious education. Then they return to Germany, where in universities they are trained in Islamic studies - after which they acquire the right to teach in schools. Prior to this, DITIB, without waiting for a single decision of the Islamic Conference, at the level of its land unions concluded agreements with the governments of the federal states on the teaching of Islam within the framework of the subject of "religion."

The German state (the project is carried out at the level of federal states) requires one thing - ensuring sufficient independence from Turkey. In this regard it tried administratively to prevent the implementation of the project in schools in the state of Hesse, however, with no success. Somewhere cooperation overcomes the "red lines" of Islam - for example, the state of Lower Saxony demanded that the teaching of Islam comply with the general rules of the school subject "religion," prescribing "the thematization of the diversity of sexual identities and the rejection of their discrimination," which the Islamic Union interpreted as interference with theological postulates.

Conflicts between the German land authorities and Islamic unions in the course of practical interaction on this pressing issue are a clash of two paradigms: the government would like to have in Germany a "German Islam" focused on theological issues, free from ethnic roots, but the Muslim diaspora of Germany is not only theologically diverse, but also multi-ethnic. Islamic unions have their own limits, which they cannot exceed if they want to keep themselves. Obviously, the optimal partner for the authorities in terms of political correctness would be the unification of "progressive Islam," but it does not represent the diaspora German liberal critics indignantly point out that land authorities (e.g. in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia) are negotiating with two major Turkish unions, DITIB and the

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“Islamic Religious Community of North Rhine-Westphalia” (behind which the Islamist Milli Gorus hides), while the Liberal-Islamic Union has not even been invited to develop programmes. However, if its representatives start teaching their version of Islam in schools, Muslim parents will again send their children to the “Koran schools” at mosques, to imams appointed from abroad.

If the government wants to integrate Muslims, it is has to learn to work with what it is – and in this case, the large and influential unions of Turkish Sunnis as DITIB, in turn interested in collaborating with the German authorities, are partners that cannot be ignored.

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The reasons for the complex integration of the Turkish community are primarily in its constant replenishment from the outside. It did not limit itself to guest workers and their offspring born and raised in Germany, but grew up by reuniting families, they preferred marrying children to members of their clans from the same rural regions of Anatolia, from where guest workers came to Germany. In addition, it was replenished with political refugees, also reunited with families. As a result, while the upper intellectual and socially successful layer gave Germany lawyers, doctors, scientists, journalists, teachers, politicians and even writers, the diaspora remained as conservative and traditional as decades ago.

In such conditions, the ties with Turkey, with the “roots,” was inevitable – economic, political, personal. Now this connection is successfully used by Erdogan. The Islamic factor plays a huge role in this. It is by virtue of the traditional community, which is still dominated by people from conservative areas of Turkey and their offspring, that it is an integral identity factor.

The German authorities, far from decrying Islam as a world religion, neglected their own, intra-German Islam for too long, since its believers (Turks, Arabs, Kurds and many others who profess various directions of Islam) were formally in a country with a temporary residence status. Too late, starting to correct mistakes and to integrate “own” Islam, but not realizing the specifics of this religion, the authorities again began to make mistakes, demanding from internal Islam the same clear domestic political organization as from Christians or Jews. It is not surprising that it has so far managed to achieve success only with a small Ahmadiyyah Jamaat.

The powerful unions of Turkish Sunnis, primarily DITIB, having behind them Turkey (a NATO member growing into a regional force) and the dominant part of the diaspora, can afford a more independent position in negotiations with the authorities rather than small Islamic organizations. The DITIB negotiations with the authorities on the practical aspects of the life of Muslims in Germany (especially on the training of imams and on the teaching of Islam in schools) sometimes seem to be Turkey’s negotiations with Germany on the amenities of the religion of the Turkish population, despite the fact that DITIB in these negotiations emphasizes its independence in force.

However, having allowed the creation of a powerful diaspora from Turkey, with which, within the framework of Western blocs and alliances, good relations are needed in strategic interests, the German government is forced to reckon with the peculiarities of Turkish Sunnis – if, of course, it does not want to lose them again within its own country, turning away from their faith or trying to remake it into a convenient option for itself.

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Received: 10.10.2022.

Accepted for publication: 02.11.2022.

## ALEXANDER GORDON. MOSLEM IMMIGRATION AS A THREAT TO EUROPEAN IDENTITY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE GREAT REPLACEMENT

*Keywords: immigration; Islam in Europe; cultural identity; E.Macron; R. Camus; E. Zemmour; Great Replacement; national radicalism in France.*

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*Citation:* Gordon A. Moslem Immigration as a Threat to European Identity: The Doctrine of the Great Replacement // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, №1 (319), P. 94-110.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.07

*Abstract. The article examines the circumstances of the spread in the socio-political life of the West of the doctrine of the French writer Renaud Camus about the "Great Replacement," implying the loss by European peoples of their identity under the influence of Islam and immigration from Africa and Asia. When assessing the particular popularity of Camus' ideas in France, attention is drawn to both objective demographic prerequisites and collective neuroses caused by the depressive state of national consciousness, as an example of which the phenomena of xenophobia in the history of the country are analyzed.*

The social and political life of many European countries has recently been strongly influenced by the immigration issue.

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The scale of intercontinental migration makes us recall the great migration of peoples at the beginning of a New era. Undermining the way of life that has been formed for centuries, sowing irritation and anxiety in the minds of the conservative part of European inhabitants, responding with panic moods among orthodox zealots of Western civilization, it becomes a factor of destabilization of the primary order.

In the panic that reaches hysteria in some countries, the fear of the invasion of Islam comes forward. The minarets of mosques being built in European cities and the closed attire of Moslem women – all visible signs of religiosity excite the public consciousness of the fairly secularized inhabitants of Europe in the twentieth century, sometimes giving rise to primitive anti-Moslem campaigns resembling a “witch hunt”. The paroxysms of Islamophobia, in turn, create favorable ground for the cultivation of radical Islamism among the Moslem population of Europe, which attracts a politically active part of the youth and is realized in monstrous acts of terrorism. In such a historical situation, a breeding ground is formed for the emergence and dissemination of racist doctrines.

The concept of the “Great Replacement” is unoriginal to the point of banality and simple to the point of truism: it implies a global ethno-demographic process, as a result of which the majority of the population of European countries will be non-Europeans, immigrants from Africa and Asia. This concerns not only Europeans, but also the fate of the entire white race. It is no coincidence that the Australian lone terrorist who shot about a hundred aborigines in New Zealand, by his own admission, was inspired by the concept of “Great Replacement.” He stated that contemplation during his stay in France, a country where “invaders were everywhere,” convinced him of the need to move to action, and despair that Macron, an “internationalist, globalist, opponent of whites” was defeating Marine Le Pen, became the detonator of his murderous madness [31].

However, the distinctly racial essence is covered by an intellectual shell that allows the concept to claim a new doctrine. The factor of fertility, higher birth rate among Afro-Asian migrants who settled in Europe and formed stable diasporas is indicated. According to the calculations of 2017, the time of the introduction of the concept of "Great Replacement" into politics, even with zero migration only due to higher fertility, the Moslem diaspora will increase by one and a half times by 2050: from 4.9 per cent of the population of 28 European countries to 7.4 per cent. At the same time, average estimates will be higher in France (12.7 per cent), Belgium and Sweden (11.1 per cent), Great Britain (9.7 per cent), the Netherlands (9.1 per cent), Germany (8.7 per cent), Italy (8.3 per cent) [19].

The factor of exclusively fashionable geopolitical conspiracy theory is introduced and the culprit of a new "tectonic catastrophe" leading to racial cleansing of European countries is established. These are the world's elites, who in this way expect to ensure their dominance, which has been shaken due to the economic recession and constant political crises.

Finally, and this is the subject of this article, in order to carry out their insidious plan and paralyze the resistance of the indigenous population of European countries, the elites seek to demoralize it by pursuing a policy of "great deculturization", that is, alienating the European population from their roots.

An alien culture of "aliens" is being imposed on Europeans, Islam is seen as the most dangerous<sup>1</sup>. With it, the adherents of the "Great Replacement" are chosen on the ground of confrontation between Christianity and Islam, which has been compacted for many and many centuries, remembering the Christian roots of European civilization, and at the same time advertising their affiliation or familiarization with them, which looks quite strange in the secularized societies of modern Europe<sup>2</sup> and especially France, where the republican system has established itself on the principles of equidistance of the state from all religions and *Laicism* (secularism), which, in confrontation with Islam, have been defended until recently even by right-wing radicals.

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Meanwhile, it is in the confessional context of an emphatic appeal to Christian “roots” that the original racial idea acquires a shell of “clash of civilizations,” quite decent from the point of view of the political correctness existing in Europe, about the danger of which Samuel Huntington warned half a century ago [see 13].

Meanwhile, the question arises why the doctrine claiming to protect the entire Christian civilization, the global ethno-demographic character and the revelation of tectonic shifts in the world historical process, turned out to be at the center of the ideological and political life of France alone, turning the life of the cradle of European civilization on the eve of the last presidential elections into an arena of a clash of believers or non-believers in the prospect of a “Great Replacement.”

France has the largest Moslem diaspora in Europe, numbering, according to various estimates, about 6 million (8.8 per cent of the country’s population) people, while it to a lesser extent felt the effect of the last invasion of refugees from the Moslem Middle East, so that the share of the migrant population and its demographic composition have changed less significantly than, for example, in neighboring Germany [19]. And it is no coincidence that now only more than half (57 per cent) of the French are concerned about the number of immigrants [26]. Crushing acts of mass terror by Islamist militants followed in 2015, and the peak of the socio-political reaction to those tragic events, it seemed, should have been expected earlier.

The key to understanding the alarmist hysteria that accompanied the French presidential campaign of 2022 can be given, I think, by a comparative assessment of the significance of various factors in cultural and psychological terms. President Emmanuel Macron, who acted and ultimately confirmed his legitimacy, announced in 2017 the revival of the “greatness of France” as the motto of his own government [1; 10]. He linked the acute issue of the country’s lag in the transition to a high-tech economy with the spiritual state of French society.

Macron, writes the editor of an authoritative business publication, claims that France “will restore self-confidence and its dynamism only if it regains its Greatness.” This attitude coincides with the idea of Charles de Gaulle, who proclaimed that France can only be great or none. “To abandon the wounded Greatness – this has been the course for the past forty years,” to focus on the example of others, these “little” Swedes, these “average” Canadians or these distant New Zealanders who “teach us lessons of success.”<sup>3</sup> Macron holds the opposite opinion: “If things are going badly in the French economy, it’s because /.../ it is necessary to liberate the spirit of creativity.” The whole problem is precisely in the “state of mind.” It should be truly national. And France will become truly dynamic only if it “turns to its roots, culture, creative spirit, as well as social justice and the desire to restore dignity to the man of work and the citizen” [24].

However, the inspiring program of the renewal of France on the path of liberal economic reforms addressed to national pride [1; 11] was thwarted by circumstances, some of which could have been foreseen and turned out to be completely unpredictable in another part. There began protest actions of the “yellow vests,” who did not see a place for themselves in the presidential renewal program and who, with their comparative smallness, expressed the sentiments of a very significant depressive periphery, concerned about the stability of their financial situation on the basis of the decades-old practice of increasing state subsidies in the social sphere policy République protective, a radical French variation of the “welfare state” [5; 9].

The COVID-19 pandemic completed the disruption of reforms, the fight against it required not only huge investments in the social sphere, but also repressive restrictions on public space, which alienated numerous adherents of liberal democracy from the president. By the time of the presidential elections in 2022, the spiritual atmosphere began to descend into that abyss of

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decadent moods (déclinisme) [7; 10], to get out of which Macron's program pursued as its goal.

"Two-thirds of the French have a feeling that France is in decline, according to a survey conducted by the CSA Institute<sup>4</sup> in September 2021. This fear is constantly returning due to current events" [21]. Although the authors of the article in the Catholic newspaper (they are not the only ones doing this) consistently refute the idea of the economic decline of France, the political agenda in the election campaign was formed under the influence of various and increasing fears, the sources of which were the pandemic, the environment, the recession and most of all - migration [23].

And, as the authors of the article in Figaro emphasize, fear can be the "engine of history." "It unites and destroys societies, becomes the basis of their organization, as well as disorganization." At the moment, "phantoms of concern seem to be becoming decisive / .../. Crises turn out to be everywhere/.../, creating the impression of an endless crisis" [Ibid.].

In such a political situation, the ideology of restoring French Greatness was devalued into the pathos of the "war of civilizations", national renewal - into the ideologies of the "Great Replacement", faith in republican institutions - into conspiriology. According to the results of a sample survey conducted in 2018 by the French Institute of Public Opinion (IFOP), it is clear that about half of the respondents of the sample (48 per cent, 17 per cent - completely) agree with the statement that the "Great Replacement" is "a political project of replacing one civilization with another, consciously carried out by our political, intellectual and media elites and it needs to end by sending those people back to where they came from."<sup>5</sup>

A similar survey conducted by Challenges-Harris Interactive on the eve of the election campaign in May 2021 showed that public opinion in the country is literally overwhelmed by fears of "Great Replacement": two-thirds of the French believed in "replacement". Fear struck adherents of

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different political orientations, although, and this is significant, extremely differently. Among the supporters of the president, only half believed, while among the supporters of the "National Association" of Marine Le Pen, 93 per cent were concerned [26].

The insertion into the political agenda of the phantoms of collective consciousness, fueled by the expectation of ethno-political and ethno-cultural cataclysms, is extremely reminiscent of the seemingly long-lived situation of the country, revealed under the Third Republic in connection with the infamous "Dreyfus affair"<sup>6</sup>. The republican regime could not strengthen in any way, the country was torn apart by antagonisms, losing international positions and being threatened by a powerful neighbor. The defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 and the capitulation, burdened with a huge indemnity and the annexation by the Prussians of the two historical provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, wounded the French national consciousness painfully. This had the most serious consequences "not so much for the pride of the people, who retained the conviction of their greatness, but," Christophe Prohasson points out, "for the essence of their identity." The search for national identity in the distant past, characteristic of the new nationalism<sup>7</sup>, the historian argues, was nothing more than a "reaction to a sense of decline" [23, p. 67].

It was in vain that the supporters of the Republic, with facts in their hands and proper statistical data, proved that there was no need to talk about the decline of the country and, economically, the development of France was marked by obvious growth rates<sup>8</sup>. The experience of national decline has become a propaganda device of the ultra-right in the fight against the republican system. The decline was declared the legacy of the Revolution of 1789, which destroyed the Old Order, so it was subject to fierce word-painting, up to aestheticization. Maurice Barres<sup>9</sup>, who is considered the forerunner of modern French national radicalism, succeeded especially in this field.

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"Like his teachers Taine and Fustel de Coulanges," writes historian Claude Dijon, "Barres saw France sick / .../. He glorified disquietude and whipped up anxiety. The land and the graves of his ancestors - that's his motto / .../. In contemplation of cemeteries, Barres sought his way / .../, reveling in the smell of death." The spirit of decadence is useful, he assured, because the "fierce nationalist passions generated by it are necessary for the defeated peoples" [16, p. 431-432].

Ethnic prejudices focused on anti-Semitism became the object of nationalist passions. For the ultra-right, it was a godsend, as Charles Morras, the creator of Axion Francaise, frankly admitted: "Everything seemed impossible or difficult to implement without this providential anti-Semitism. Thanks to it, everything is being put in order, leveled and simplified" [22, p. 129].

In anti-Semitism - and this is the secret of the success of the ultra-right agitation, which provided the national radicals with mass support that they had not previously received - medieval religious prejudices and frustrations of certain segments of society, bypassed by the historical process, merged. In the their view, Jews embodied all the evils of the New European civilization of Modernity: the power of money, the smoking chimneys of factories, the destruction of the rural way of life, the contrasts of the capitalist city, and finally, what is now dubbed "globalization."

The World Exhibition of 1889 was called the "triumph of Jewry" by the instigator of the anti-Semitic campaign, publicist Eduard-Adolphe Drumont, "the author of the immortal work" on the dominance of Jews in France<sup>10</sup> [10], as stated in the epitaph on his grave, knocked out in 1942 (and destroyed by order of the Paris Mayor's Office in 2002). With gloomy delight he described his visit to the World's Fair: "The Jew made a sample of his ideas out of it. This gigantic bazaar; this tent, more majestic than a palace; this Nomadism, streaming with golden rain and covered with purple; this last word of Modernism - a tower reminiscent

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of the Tower of Babel and its origin; it is base magic with its false radiance”<sup>11</sup> [22, p. 69].

With such a worldview, it did not matter that Jews in France (according to 1914) accounted for 0.2 per cent of the population – 80 thousand residents of several large cities. It is important that this people embodied, as M. Vinok writes, “in its purest form”, a Different One or Something Different [22, p. 13], an alien principle in French society, which had to be disposed of. In accordance with the Royalist-clerical tradition, Protestants and Freemasons were also declared alien to the French identity. In the twentieth century, the space of xenophobia was progressively expanding.

A particular concern for French identity was the increasing number of immigrants, which was accompanied by increasing difficulties with their assimilation. The largest researcher of immigration, Gerard Noiriel, records three waves of fears that spread in France in the twentieth century.

From a legal dissertation of 1914: “Can we always encourage interventionists (envahisseurs) to accept our morals, our civilization/.../? Is assimilation successful? Unambiguous symptoms seem to indicate that we are approaching the saturation point. Our customs are permeated with exoticism, our language is littered with foreign expressions, our very security is threatened by dangerous elements who are attracted by our wealth and whom lenient laws do not hinder in any way.”

From the journalistic bestseller of 1931: “Now that compact hordes of foreigners have established themselves on our territory and when in some districts young foreigners outnumber local youth, the problem takes a completely different turn, and we are forced to conclude that ethnic minorities are forming among us.”

From the “Figaro Shop” on October 26, 1985: “Will we still be French in 30 years?” (the meaning of the rhetoric was clearly conveyed by the image of the symbol of the Republic of Marianne, wrapped in a paranza) [12, p. 321].

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The theme of ethno-cultural invasion and especially the progressive establishment of the civilization of Islam on French soil was developing in countless journalistic products, as well as in novels from the genre of dystopia. The most significant in terms of the talent of the authors and their influence on society can be considered "The Camp of Saints" by Jean Raspail and "Submission" by Michel Houellebecq. Raspail's novel was published back in 1973 and in well-known circles of French society is revered as a prophetic novel about the death of European civilization under the pressure of non-European masses who found themselves in Europe thanks to the sympathy of Europeans for their poverty and the goodwill of governments. Specifically, Raspail depicts a million migrants from the banks of the Ganges who landed on the Cote d'Azur and completely subordinated the life of Provence to their manners and customs [28].

The novel by Houellebecq, published in 2015 on the eve of Islamist terrorist attacks, was already a very concrete prediction of the collapse of European civilization in France as a result of the victory of a representative of the Moslem Brotherhood in the presidential elections of 2022. Houellebecq used the developed in the popular consciousness and literature theme of the orthodox Moslem ruler of France, who found himself in the Elysee Palace [12].

The balance of power in the presidential campaign of 2022 and its outcome turned out to be completely different than described in the novel; however, it is unnecessary to refute the writer's futuristic assumptions with political realities. He reliably and profoundly displayed disorientation and depression in a well-known to him intellectual environment, but most important – vividly and emotionally expressed the fears prevalent in French society, which created a favorable ground for the insertion and promotion of the concept of "Great Replacement" into the center of socio-political life<sup>12</sup>.

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The author, the French writer<sup>13</sup> Renaud Camus (born 1946), according to his own statement, came to this idea on a whim (apparently, like Morras to anti-Semitism). It literally dawned on him that the growing mass immigration of Afro-Asians in European countries conceals the self-interest of the elites – political, economic, intellectual – of these countries.

If we detach ourselves from the subconscious area of this extraordinary personality, we can say that a favorable situation has developed, and Camus felt the opportunity to show his ambitions. And his ambitions corresponded to the prevailing mood in society. He began by defending left-wing political positions, because of which he was expelled from his parents' old-fashioned bourgeois family. In the 1970s and 1980s, he expressed support for pedophilia in his works of art. In the 1990s, he was noted for anti-Semitism. The next stage was the protests against Moslem immigration since the beginning of the 2010s, marked by the publication of the book "The Great Replacement" [15]. In 2014, he was sentenced to a fine by the Correctional Tribunal for speaking at a conference on "Islamization", where Moslems were declared a host of invaders whose goal is to replace the French people and their civilization with Islam.

Meanwhile, Camus' ideas began to take root in French public opinion, a second wind was given to their spread by a journalist and politician, a "pundit"<sup>14</sup> of French television", as his colleagues dubbed him, Eric Zemmour (born 1958). He built his political program around the slogan of the Reconquista, calling his party "Reconquête (Reconquest)." Bearing in mind the historical example of the expulsion of Moslems<sup>15</sup> from the Iberian Peninsula, Zemmour conceives the "reconquest" of France from Islam in the name of the triumph of Christianity. While in Armenia in an ancient monastery on the border with Turkey, he heralded the "great confrontation of Christianity with Islam," which once began on these borders and "has now resumed" [29]. Victorious Christianity, Zemmour believes, will return France to

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its civilizational origins and, thanks to this, will restore its greatness after decades of decline.

The fight against Islam in France should take place, according to Zemmour, precisely at the civilizational level. He demands the “zeroing out” of immigration, that is, the termination of access to France for immigrants arriving from Africa and the Middle East. The country should abandon multiculturalism and return to the course of assimilation of immigrants approved during the Third Republic. In Zemmour's election program, a special section was devoted to this topic: “Resume assimilation to remake the French.” And Zemmour promises: “I will remake the French thanks to a genuine policy of assimilation.”

Proposed: “To transform school into the melting pot<sup>16</sup> for forming assimilated Frenchmen by resuming education in the national spirit in primary school, presenting and inspiring /students/ with love for the history of our country. Encourage the knowledge of great literary works so that all Frenchmen from a very young age could speak French. To enable all young French people to succeed in school without the threat of being judged by the environment from which they come, and to do this, expand the network of special boarding schools for the best secondary school students. To restore school uniforms in order to eliminate differences in clothing that contribute to communotarianism, school harassment, social inequality. To end the invitation of teachers from Arab countries and Turkey within the framework of EILE – Enseignements Internationaux de Langues Etrangères<sup>17</sup>. To propose a law on names for newborns in a referendum so that the first name is established on the basis of French and regional calendars or prominent people of ancient and biblical history. To enable 10,000 young men annually to undergo voluntary military service for better assimilation with the national community. To establish a great ministry of the World of Knowledge and / their / dissemination, uniting public education, higher education and culture” [32].

It is easy to notice that the author diligently adapts to the regime of official political correctness: there are no references to Islam or the Afro-Asian origin of immigrants, there is not even a reference to immigration. The program is addressed to all French people, pursuing the goal of educating them from school years in the proper patriotic spirit. In detail, it is certainly useful: knowledge of French history, literature, language, and in general it looks like a repetition of the past, a reproduction of the experience of the colonial school that has sunk into oblivion, where African, Arab, Vietnamese children recited "Our ancestors are Gauls." And the purpose of their training was to educate the pro-French native elite of the "advanced (évolué)".

In response to Camus' discovery of the "great deculturation", the alienation of the indigenous French from their civilizational roots, Zemmour suggests the alienation of people from Afro-Asian countries from the civilizational heritage of their ancestors. It is surprising that a native of colonial Algeria ignores the works of Octave Mannoni, Albert Memmi, Franz Fanon, who described the destructive split mind of a person that found itself at the "turn of cultures" [2; 25; 30]. Meanwhile, this situation was subjected to artistic representation and analytical reflection in many works of the era of decolonization, eloquently linking the personal crisis in the environment of the intelligentsia formed by the colonizers with its transition to the position of political radicalism. Prophetic in this regard was Fanon's book "Black Skin, White Masks" (1952) about the neuroses of a dark-skinned intellectual from the colonies in France [20].

Realizing the impossibility of "reconquista" in the full historical sense of expelling Moslem immigrants from France, Zemmour, in addition to demographic "zeroing" (stopping the immigration influx), comes to the idea of civilizational "zeroing," cleansing French society of the heritage of non-European civilizations, completely denying the possibility of a "dialogue of cultures" and their mutual enrichment. Even in an ennobled, civilized form, the doctrine of the "Great Replacement," as it

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turns out, threatens France with the loss of the universality of its identity, the historical purpose of its civilization, which, according to adherents of the idea of French greatness, "carries a message to the whole world" [24].

## Notes

1. On the topic of the Islamic threat in France, there is extensive, including domestic literature: see [6].
2. From the latest literature, see: [4].
3. This refers to the so-called giscardism, a political course voiced by President Giscard d'Estaing and implying a weakening of the role of the state in the modernization of the country. See [10].
4. Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel.
5. de Montvalon J.-B. Les théories du complot bien implantées au sein de la population française // Le Monde. – 2018. – 7 janvier.
6. For the main lines of the split that occurred in French society, see: [3, P. 158–167]. Stable stereotypes of historical consciousness in the definition of national identity [14].
7. In comparison with optimism and a future-oriented attitude in the nationalism of the Great French Revolution and its legacy (Hugo, Michelet, Gambetta).
8. Among the relevant texts, I would like to draw attention to the report of the author of the multi-volume "History of the French Nation" Gabriel Hanotaux for the academic forum. The fact is that the "big" Academy turned out to be largely on the side of the "anti-Dreyfusars," supporting the national radicals: 22 of its members signed the manifesto of the League for the Defense of the French Fatherland against the revision of the case, even when evidence of forgery was discovered. Thus, the text of Hanotaux is also important for assessing the evolution of the position of the French academic elite (see: Hanotaux G. la France est-elle en décadence ? Séance publique annuelle des cinq Académies le 25 octobre 1901. – URL: <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/la-france-est-elle-en-decadence>. (accessed: 5.07.2022)).
9. It is characteristic of France that the ideologists of national radicalism usually became writers, including those from the first row of continuing popularity in public opinion.
10. Drumont's lengthy (1200 pages) pamphlet "Jewish France", published at the end of 1885, became a bestseller, opening a series of similar publications

(several dozen annually), which psychologically prepared public opinion for the "Dreyfus Affair."

11. The "Tower of Babel" in Drumon's imagination turned out to be Eiffel's creation, built for the opening of the Exhibition.
12. The fact that the plot of Houellebecq's novel expressed not only French neuroses may be evidenced by the appearance of a similar Russian dystopia 10 years earlier: E. Chudinova, the Mosque of Our Lady of Paris. 2048. M.: Yauza, 2006. 446 p.
13. Camus is the author of more than 160 literary works, as well as albums of drawings and photographs of his own work.
14. In modern English-language journalistic discourse, an intellectual whose opinion is authoritative in the media.
15. The fact that Sephardic Jews were ostracized at the same time, Zemmur, obviously Sephardic by origin, kept silent.
16. It is possible to translate "boiler" by association with the popular concept of the American assimilation process.
17. The program of teaching foreign languages by their native speakers.

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Received: 28.10.2022.

Accepted for publication: 17.11.2022.

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## THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

DMITRY MIKHEL. ALI SHARIATI'S PHILOSOPHY AND  
THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION IN IRAN

*Keywords: Ali Shariati; Islamic revolution; Median school; Red Shi'ism; modernization; Marxism; political Islam.*

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*Citation:* Mikhel D. Ali Shariati's Philosophy and the Islamic Revolution in Iran // Russia and the Moslem World, 2023, №1 (319), P. 111-129. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2023.01.08

*Abstract. The article deals with philosophical work of Ali Shariati, a prominent Iranian intellectual of the second half of the 20th century and one of the ideologists of the Islamic Revolution. Shariati gave Iranian Shi'ism a revolutionary red color, suggesting that the original Islam should be seen not only as a doctrine but also as a revolutionary practice. Shariati is represented as an original thinker whose mission was to avoid the extremes of liberal and communist worldviews. An important place in Shariati's philosophical work is occupied by questions about the impact of modernization processes on Iranian society and the specificity of Marxism.*

## Introduction

In 1979, the Islamic Revolution took place in Iran, where the main driving force was the Shi'ite clergy. Traditionally perceived as a conservative social force, the clergy was able to assume an active political position and lead the revolution in Iran, the fact that astonished other countries. Radicalization of the political position of the clergy served as a starting point in the recent history of political Islam, a significant phenomenon for the entire modern world. The emergence of political Islam in Iran was primarily due to the spiritual leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, who proposed the doctrine of 'Islamic rule'. Along with Khomeini, there are other iconic figures in the history of Iran of the second half of the 20th century who greatly contributed to the emergence of political Islam. One of them, without a doubt, is Ali Shariati (1933-1977), an Iranian philosopher who organically combined Islamic ideas and left-wing political beliefs. Using the experience of the past, Shariati practically advocated the renewal of the ideals of the Islamic religion and proclaimed the need to update the Islamic doctrine in keeping with the times. Shariati expressed his philosophical credo in the original concept of 'Red Shi'ism'.

## Iranian Context

The intellectual formation of Ali Shariati was influenced by the dramatic events of Iranian history in the middle of the 20th century. Starting in the 18th century, almost all Islamic countries were made colonies of the West to varying degrees. After the end of the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, there was not a single sovereign country in the Islamic world – even the Iranian empire was actually a colonial state.

The discovery of oil fields in Iran boosted the rapid development of the oil industry and promoted the entry of

Western oil corporations to Iran. Western oil producers unashamedly depleted the country's natural reserves, and were heavily involved in all governance-related matters. Western meddling in Iran was particularly intensified during the reign of the Shahs from the Pahlavi dynasty, who came to power in 1925. The modernization of Iranian society that followed was controversial and caused vast resistance from the majority of Iranians. In particular, Iranian intellectual elite, the clergy and millions of ordinary Muslims objected to the fact that rapid social and economic development was accompanied by planting of Western culture and materialistic worldview.

This was particularly intolerable for Iran as one of the most ancient civilizations in the world. For many centuries, Iran had successfully resisted the West, and Iranians could hardly forget that their forefathers always fought against Western peoples, such as Greeks, Macedonians and Romans. Traditionally, the pillar of Iran's greatness was its spiritual culture based on the Avesta tradition, which was later replaced by Shi'ite Islam. By the beginning of the 20th century, the virtual colonization of Iran by the West had completely suppressed Iranian spirituality. With the backing of Western patrons, the secular authorities of Iran eradicated all the dissenting voices in the country. Even the Islamic clergy of Iran, famous for their independence, were suppressed.

In the middle of the 20th century, civic activities in Iran were revitalized due to the developments associated with the end of the Second World War – the Iran crisis of 1946, the rise to power of the National Front Party (1951) and the following coup d'état (1953). After the British and Soviet troops withdrew from Iran, patriotic sentiments ran high among the Iranian intellectuals, who thought to take control of the country. The highest achievement of this civic activity was Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh becoming the head of the government (1951-1953); he nationalized oil, the greatest asset of Iran, and expelled all Western experts and advisers.

In response, a group of military officers associated with the Shah, led by General Fazlollah Zahedi (1897–1963) and supported by British and American intelligence agencies, overthrew the government of Mosaddegh and restored Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1919–1980) to the Shah's throne. It was by his hands that the country turned into a police state, and the nationalist forces close to Mosaddegh were defeated. In the economic sphere, American and British corporations regained control of everything and their representatives once again served as main advisers at the court of the Shah.

### **From Khorasan to Paris**

The abovementioned events took place while Shariati was growing up and matured. His father, Mohammad-Taqi Shariati, was an Islamic scholar and head of the Centre for the Propagation of Islamic Truths (*Kanun-e Nashr-e Haqaueq-e Eslami*) in Khorasan. Shariati's family sympathized with the policy of Mosaddegh, so his fall from power was a tragedy for Shariati Sr. and his son.

Ali Shariati spent his childhood and youth in the village of Mazinan, near Sebzevar in Khorasan province; the Marxist-Leninist party of Iran (*Hezb-e Tudeh-e Īrān*) was founded there following the deployment of Soviet troops in 1941. In Khorasan, Marxist sentiments were strong even after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops; Shariati, along with the religious education in his father's house, absorbed socialist ideas that circulated widely among workers of Khorasan. In time, such dual intellectual influence eventually prompted Shariati to forge his own 'middle way' by imaginatively combining Islam and socialism.

In 1950, Shariati joined the Teacher's Training College in Mashhad, the main city in Khorasan and the second-most-populous city in Iran. After graduating (1952) he worked as a teacher in the village of Ahmedabad near Mashhad; three years later he joined the newly founded philological faculty of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (1955) with the intention to

obtain a bachelor's degree in Arabic and French. At the university Shariati took great interest in politics and helped to found student political organizations. During his student years he was repeatedly arrested for his political views and started collaborating with local newspapers, publishing his own articles and translations [11, p. 49–57].

While preparing for admission to university, Shariati decided to make one of his father's ideas true and embarked to translate "Abu Dharr al-Ghifari" by Abdel Hamid Gouda al-Sahhar, an Egyptian writer, from Arabic into Farsi. He completed his translation in 1955; while working on the book, he took the liberty of editing the original text by giving it a new interpretation. Al-Sahhar portrayed the hero as a highwayman who pillaged merchant caravans near Mecca. When Abu Dharr (also spelled Abu Zarr) heard about the Prophet Muhammad, he converted to Islam and started preaching new religion among the Ghifar. He later joined the army of the Prophet and participated in numerous battles. After the death of the Prophet, Abu Dharr moved to Syria and led a pious life full of asceticism. Shariati was fascinated by the fate of this historical figure and injected his own traits into the character's image.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in his interpretation, Abu Dharr was the first representative of Islamic socialism. [11, c. 57–61] Later, Shariati used the same approach when interpreting the views of other figures in early Islamic history, including the Prophet Muhammad himself and members of his family.

In 1959, Shariati graduated from Mashhad University and chose to continue his education in France. At the Sorbonne, where he studied sociology and the history of religion, he became close to several major French thinkers of that time. He was deeply impressed by the 'new left' ideology, especially by the views of Frantz Fanon (1925–1961), who promoted the revolutionary cause for decolonization in the Third World, and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980), the founder of French existentialism.

While in France, Shariati plunged into local intellectual life and political struggles. He worked with Algerian revolutionaries

from the National Liberation Front, translated the works of Fanon and Sartre into Persian, participated in demonstrations in support of Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961), and was repeatedly arrested. Shariati also forged close relations with Iranian political exiles; together with Mehdi Bazargan (1907–1995),<sup>2</sup> he co-founded the Freedom Movement of Iran. In 1964, he completed his studies in Paris for the Degree of Sociology. While working on his thesis, he translated the book “Westoxification” (*Charbzadagi*) by the Iranian émigré journalist Jalal Al-e-Ahmad (1923–1969) into Farsi; he subsequently published it in Iran.

### **The Issues of Modernization**

After returning to Iran, Shariati was given the opportunity to teach at the university. His career as a university professor started in 1964 at his alma mater – Mashhad University – where he lectured on the history of Islam. In 1970, he was invited to teach at Tehran University. At the same time, in cooperation with Bazargan, Shariati founded the Hosainieh-e Ershad religious and cultural center,<sup>3</sup> where he gave lectures on a wide range of philosophical, social and religious issues for students and also for general public. It was during these years that Shariati received unprecedented popularity among Iranian youth.

One of the key themes of Shariati's lecture courses was the issue of modernizing Iranian society. While he did not consider himself a sharp opponent of modernization, Shariati believed that its main feature in Iran was the fact that it was implemented in a European manner, similar to Westernization. Having spent many years in the West, Shariati knew Western culture well and had a rather negative attitude to the influence of the West on Iran. His large audience unanimously supported his views. However, Shariati himself believed that Iranians in general were not yet sufficiently aware of the perniciousness of Westernization. He commented on this topic in a letter to his son (1972): “We are talking about a society half of whose members are asleep or have

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been deluded, and the other half who are awake are in a state of flight. We want both to awaken the asleep, inducing them to stand up, and to have the fleeing escapes returned to Iran encouraging them to stay" [10, p. 13].

Shariati identified the White Revolution launched by the Shah in the 1960s not merely as modernization in the European manner, but also as "poisoning by the West" - westoxification. He learned the overall perception of the whole process from Al-e-Ahmad, whose book contains the following words: "We have been unable to preserve our own historico-cultural character in the face of the machine and its fateful onslaught. Rather, we have been routed. We have been unable to take a considered stand in the face of this contemporary monster. So long as we do not comprehend the real essence, basis, and philosophy of Western civilization, only aping the West outwardly and formally (by consuming its machines), we shall be like the ass going about in a lion's skin. We know what became of him... So long as we remain consumers, so long as we have not built the machine, we remain occidentotic. Our dilemma is that once we have built the machine, we will have become mechanotic, just like the West, crying out at the way technology and the machine have stampeded out of control" [7, p. 31].

Like Al-e-Ahmad, Shariati also tended to resort to a pathetic depiction of Westernization. In his short essay "Reflections of a Concerned Muslim: on the Plight of Oppressed Peoples" (1977) he wrote the following: "My friend, I live in a society where I face a system which controls half of the universe, maybe all of it. Mankind is being driven into a new stronghold of slavery. Although we are not in physical slavery, we are truly destined with a fate worse than yours! Our thoughts, hearts, and will powers are enslaved. In the name of sociology, education, art, sexual freedom, financial freedom, love of exploitation, and love of individuals, faith in goals, faith in humanitarian responsibilities and belief in one's own school of thought are entirely taken away from within our hearts! The system has

converted us into empty pots which accommodate whatever is poured inside them!" [14, p. 39–40].

Nevertheless, unlike Al-e-Ahmad, Shariati was not so inclined to dwell on the criticism of Westernization. A graduate of Mashhad University and the Sorbonne in Paris, he formulated for himself an alternative during his stay in France where he studied new left-wing writings and Marxist literature. In essence, he believed that the impending Iranian revolution was the alternative, which was supposed to liberate Iran both from the despotic Shah's rule and his policy of Westernization.

### **Question about Marxism**

A high-quality Western education enabled Shariati to look at the current social, economic and political issues of Iran from a broad analytical perspective. Marxist theory was a particularly suitable methodological tool for that matter, allowing the situation in Iran to be interpreted with the use of such terms as 'class exploitation', 'political violence' and 'capitalist alienation'. However, while respecting Marxist theory, Shariati did not consider Marxism an effective means for solving Iranian issues. [8]

According to Shariati, it was mainly due to the fact that Marxism was a typical product of Western thinking and an example of yet another Western misconception. In his famous work on Marxism, Shariati wrote the following: "...Marxism itself is utterly a product of the history, social organization, and culture outlook of this same West", which he intends to deny [12, p. 49]. Marxism was a product of Western Modernism, which proclaimed the policy of abolition of religion, human individuality and spiritual values. In a sense, Marxism can even be viewed as a religion that "sees its task as the systematic eradication of all forms of religion" [12, p. 52].

Shariati did not reject some of the Marxist ideas, but generally regarded Marxism as a one-dimensional ideological system that neglects what the religious outlook can give. He fully

understood that Marxism does not recognize the role of an individual in history, while reducing man to his class affiliation and human life itself to production activity. Marxism reduces social well-being and even liberating from oppression to a materialist interpretation, without providing any other possibilities. "We see that socialism removes from all his limbs and branches expect one, but it so encourage that one to spread out that it outgrows root and trunk. Thus, it makes man one dimensional, however, lofty and sublime that one dimension may be" [12, p. 117].

According to Shariati, despite the fact that Marxism and communism that is based on it are efficient opposition to liberalism and capitalism, they are more intertwined than an inexperienced observer might think. Both these systems, "though they differ in outward configuration, regard man as an economic animal." They compete with each other only to find out which of the two will provide more successfully for the needs of this animal. Relying on the progress of machine production, both capitalism and communism promise man only material abundance, which results in the decline and disappearance of traditional moral values. All the dominant ideologies generated by the modern Western world view man in isolation from his divine or spiritual nature. Unlike in Islam, they do not consider man as a descendant of Adam, but always as an animal - a product of biological, historical, social or instrumental development. The modern Western world refuses to see the divine element in man. Now "humanity is a species in decline" [12, p. 32-48].

### **The Median School Philosophy**

Shariati criticized Iranian modernization in the form of Westernization along with Marxism from an original philosophical position, which he first formulated in November 1954. In preparation for entering Mashhad University, Shariati

published a series of articles in the Khorasan newspaper, entitled "The Median School of Islam" (*Maktab-e Vaseteh-e Eslam*). The author argued that if one looked closely at the world map, they could clearly see that Islamic countries - Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and the countries of North Africa - were located between the capitalist world of the West and the communist world of the East. This geographical location is not an accident and impacts all aspects of Islamic life. Philosophically, the Islamic world is halfway between materialism and idealism; sociologically, it is between capitalism and communism; and politically, it finds itself caught between the Western and Eastern blocs. In general, according to Shariati, the Islamic world holds a 'middle position' and the school of thought is called 'Median school' [11, p. 61-62].

Shariati fully absorbed the idea of the Islamic 'Median school', which apparently guided his way of thinking all his life. While criticizing the Shah's policy of modernizing Iran, Shariati did not deny the value of modernization as such, but viewed Westernization of Iranian society as its main danger, resulting in the "poisoning by the West" and loss of its own spiritual foundations. When he criticized Marxism, he recognized the value of the left-wing socialist methodology, but suggested that Marxism in general should be considered an unsuitable system of thought for Iranian society. Tentatively devising his own method, Shariati recognized himself as a representative of the Islamic Median school. A logical decision for him was to turn to Islam. True to his own original principle, Shariati tried to find his own vision of Islam, the one in the middle between Islam of inhuman oppression and Islam of submission.

As stated above, Shariati thought of such a vision of Islam in his youth, when he portrayed the former pagan and highwayman Abu Zarr from the left-wing point of view; Abu Zarr became a Muslim and a faithful warrior of the Prophet, using his weapon against the Meccan tribal nobility. In his "Lessons on Islam" (*Darsha-ye Islamshenasi*), Shariati explained his

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understanding of Islam as follows: "It is necessary to explain what we mean by Islam. By it we mean the Islam of Abu Zarr; not that of the caliphs. The Islam of justice and proper leadership; not that of the rulers, the aristocracy and the upper class. The Islam of freedom, progress and consciousness; not that of slavery, captivity and passivity. The Islam of the mojahed; not that of the clergy. The Islam of virtue, personal responsibility and protest; not that of (religious) dissimulation, (clerical) intercession and (divine) intervention. The Islam of struggle for faith, society, and scientific knowledge; not that of surrender, dogmatism and uncritical imitation (*taqlid*) of the clergy" [6, p. 112].

Shariati's vision of Islam was far from how Islam was seen not only in the West, but also in Iran. The philosopher stated that originally Islam was a truly revolutionary political force aimed at protecting major social ideals: justice, human dignity and freedom. That was what Islam was in the beginning, Islam that was given to the world by the Prophet Muhammad, his son-in-law Imam Ali and his other family members. Revolutionizing ideas about the original Islam, Shariati expressed the idea that in modern times Islam could and should be charged with revolutionary energy. According to Shariati, what liberalism and Marxism were incapable to achieve, will be fulfilled by Islam becoming the revolutionary banner of the future struggle for social ideals. "Islam will play a major role in this new life and movement... This future, which begins with the discarding of capitalism and Marxism, is neither predestined nor prefabricated... There is no doubt that Islam will have an appropriate role in its construction, when it has freed itself from the effects of centuries of stagnation, superstition, and contamination, and is put forth as a living ideology... That is the task of the true intellectuals of Islam. Only in this way Islam – after a renaissance of belief and an emergence from isolation and reaction – be able to take part in the current war of beliefs and, in particular, to command the center and serve as an example to contemporary thought, where the new human spirit is seeking

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the means to begin a new world and a new humanity... This is no extravagant proposal; it is a duty" [12, p. 95-96].

### **Red Shi'ism**

Being a Muslim, Shariati always remained an Iranian and Shi'ite. Therefore, his appeal to Islam was an appeal to Shi'ism, which traditionally believes that the Muslim community should be led not by the elected caliphs, but by the direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, namely Ali ibn Abi Talib – the cousin, son-in-law and companion of the Prophet – and his children from the Prophet's daughter Fatima. In this Shi'ite coordinate system, Shariati cultivated his most significant philosophical concept of Red Shi'ism. For him, the way the Prophet Muhammad, his family and their closest supporters lived, believed, thought, suffered and fought for freedom and justice was a paragon of righteous Islamic life, as well as the key to solving all the modern problems of Iranian society.

According to Shariati, the Shi'ism that everyone has known since the days of the Safavid dynasty has become stilted and socially powerless orthodoxy that is good only for mourning the dead and sick and ensure the observance of insignificant rituals; he called it Shi'ism of mourning – Black Shi'ism – that is not capable of raising the banner of struggle for social ideals. This Shi'ism definition, in his opinion, was never the only form of Shi'ism, since it was preceded and may be soon replaced by another form of Shi'ism – Red Shi'ism – which is a true form of Shi'ism that goes back to the Prophet himself and his descendants. That is Shi'ism of martyrdom and struggle.

In his essay on Red and Black Shi'ism, Shariati says the following: "Islam is a religion which makes its appearance in the history of mankind with the 'no' of Mohammad (PBUH), the heir of Abraham, the manifestation of the religion of the Unity of God and the oneness of mankind, a 'no' which beings with the cry of Unity, a cry which Islam reinitiated when confronted by

aristocracy and compromise. Shi'ism is the Islam which distinguishes itself and determines its direction in the history of Islam with the 'no' of the great Ali (as), the heir of Mohammad and the manifestation of the Islam of justice and Truth, a 'no' which he gives to the council for the election of the caliphate in answer to Abdul Rahman, who was the manifestation of Islamic aristocracy and compromise. This 'no', up until pre-Safavid times, is recognized to be part of the Shi'ite movement in the history of Islam, an indicator of the social and political role of a group who are the followers of Ali, known for their attachment to the kindness of the family of the Prophet. It is a party based upon the Quran and the Traditions... The history of Islam follows a strange path; a path in which hoodlums and ruffians from the Arab, Persian, Turk, Tartar and Mongol dynasties all enjoy the right of the leadership of the Moslem community and the caliphate of the Prophet of Islam, to the exclusion of the family of the Prophet and the rightful Imams of Islam... Shi'ites do not accept the path chosen by history. They negate the leadership which ruled over history and deceived the majority of the people through its succession to the Prophet, and then, supposed support of Islam and fight against paganism. Shi'ites turn their backs on the opulent mosques and magnificent palaces of the caliphs of Islam and turn to the lonely, mud house of Fatima. Shi'ites, who represent the oppressed, justice-seeking class in the caliphate system, find, in this house, whatever and whoever they have been seeking" [13].

All his life, Shariati's attention was focused on the historical representatives of Red Shi'ism. As mentioned above, he started with Abu Dharr, but later his gallery of images of Shi'ite fighters for freedom and justice expanded considerably. One of the most striking and truly marvelous is the image of Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad. Analyzing the meager information available to her biographers, Shariati presents Fatima as the ideal of a woman and a Muslim, which is, in his opinion, more appealing than either Europeanized Iranians or oppressed

women from patriarchal families; moreover, he presents her as a spiritual and political leader, whose fate was inextricably linked with the fate of her great father. In his book about Fatima, Shariati repeatedly mentions the nickname given to her by her contemporaries - 'the mother of her father' (*Umm Abiha*) - highlighting the fact that Fatima became the support of the Messenger of God in fulfilling the great mission for which he was chosen. The excitement that Shariati experienced while working on the book about Fatima is especially obvious on the last pages of the book.

His writes the following: "Fatima appeared as a halo around the faces of all of the oppressed who later became the multitudes of Islam. All of the sufferers, all of those whose rights had been destroyed, all who had been deceived, all took the name of Fatima as their emblem. The memory of Fatima grew with the love and wonderful faith of the men and women, who throughout the history of Islam, fought for freedom and justice. Throughout the centuries they were punished under the merciless and bloody lash of the caliphates... This is why in the history of all Muslim nations and among the deprived masses of the Islamic community, Fatima has been the source of inspiration for those who desire their rights, for those who seek justice, for those who resist oppression, cruelty, crime and discrimination. It is most difficult to speak about the personality of Fatima. Fatima was the ideal that Islam wanted a woman to be. The form of her face was fashioned by the Prophet himself. He melted her and made her pure in the fires of difficulties, poverty, revolution, deep understanding and the wonder of humanity" [5, p. 159].

### **Shariati and the Islamic Revolution**

Shariati died almost two years prior to the Islamic Revolution. However, it is hard to imagine the very possibility of this historic event without him giving lectures to numerous audiences and without his polemical essays that emanated the

potent energy of revolutionary Islam. It is difficult to imagine the Islamic Revolution without Shariati's portraits that crowds of students held high above their heads as they walked with the flow of other Iranians, carrying portraits of Ayatollah Khomeini, the descendant of the Prophet. It is hard to imagine the days of the revolution without inscriptions such as "Glory to Dr. Ali Shariati, who lost his life for the just cause!" appearing on buildings in Iran! [2, p. 227]. But it is even harder to imagine the Islamic revolution without a revolution in Islam itself - without the Shi'ism of mourning and submission becoming the Shi'ism of martyrdom and political struggle. In this respect, it cannot be denied that Shariati personally contributed a great deal to such a transformation.

It is known that before the revolution, some books by Shariati were subject to confiscation, and those SAVAK caught with such books in their homes were thrown in jail and tortured.<sup>4</sup> This should not be surprising, since the Shariati's books advocated the idea that from the very beginning of Islam, Shi'ites has been obliged to stand against unjust and arbitrary authorities and be revolutionaries, the Prophet and his family members used to be revolutionaries.

Though it is easy to evaluate Shariati's contribution to revolutionizing of Islam and to the possibility of the revolution itself, it is far more difficult to establish why after the revolution his name gradually disappeared from the political discourse in Iran.

In such cases, the first argument that is most commonly given is that Shariati frequently criticized the Shi'ite clergy, appealing in his writings not to Muslim scholars but to the living spirit of Islam. Moreover, it should be mentioned that Shariati was not an expert on Islamic studies and, therefore, injected a lot of subjective and philosophical interpretations into Islamic thought [3]. It should be also noted that some followers of Shariati subsequently were at odds with Khomeini after he came to power and the Khomeini leadership of Iran; therefore, if

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Shariati himself were alive, it is anybody's guess as to what his relations with the Ayatollah regime would be [8, p. 39].

It is important to note, though, that Shariati indeed was rather harsh and often ready to criticize the clergy. However, he also had constructive suggestions to the *ulama* (*ālim*), which in many respects echo the ideas of Khomeini. "More important than anything is the great mission of the *ālim*, who according to the tenets and principles of the great school entrusted to him and according to the needs... of the time in which he lives...must stretch out his hand to the principles... and extend them so that religion does not remain in the old, conditional, past framework which is long past..." [10, p. 18] For comparison, Khomeini wrote the following: "Only the clergy vociferously takes a stand against oppression and oppressor, against injustice and the one who does it... We are not exclusively occupied by sermons and prayers... Our job is to preach and instruct you, the people" [4, p. 73].

There seems to be a reason for the fact that Shariati's name is rarely mentioned in Iranian official circles these days. This is due to the fact that he is much more frequently referred to in circles that make up internal opposition to the Iranian leadership. Even more often it is heard in the discourse of those experts in Iranian culture who work outside the Islamic Republic. In Western universities, Shariati's writings are widely studied, and his works are being actively translated into European and other languages. Apparently, in the personality and philosophy of Shariati, some experts see a missed opportunity for Iran to become a more liberal country than it is today [1, p. 102]. However, criticism against Iran for the lack of freedoms is ideological in nature. In short, Shariati's legacy has become a matter of judgment tightly entwined with politics and value preferences.

One might also assume that as Iranian society progresses and the Islamic Republic of Iran joins the international processes more fully, Shariati's legacy will once again be actively discussed by Iranian scientists and political leaders. The revival of interest

in Shariati's work in Iran may also be conditioned on a change in political relations between Iran and the US, the lifting of western sanctions against Iran, and a general change in attitude of the West to independent Iran.

## Conclusion

The work of Ali Shariati is yet to be thoughtfully analyzed by Russian-speaking philosophers. He was not only an ardent fighter against Western imperialism and colonialism, but also a gifted political philosopher who managed to create an incredible synthesis of Islamic doctrine and Western left-wing theories, and especially Marxism, which Shariati regarded as yet another Western delusion. Shariati gave Iranian Shi'ism a revolutionary red color by suggesting that the original Islam should be viewed not only as a doctrine, but also as a revolutionary praxis. The favorite heroes of his Islamic researches - the Prophet Muhammad, Ali, Fatima and Abu Dharr - appear in Shariati's writings not merely as sacred figures of Shi'ite history, but also as true fighters for freedom and justice, who set an example for their contemporaries of how to live, believe, love and fight for highest ideals. Shariati was calling on his contemporaries to learn their Red Shi'ism by touching the hearts of student audiences in Mashhad, Tehran and other places. Shariati's lectures and published works turned out to be just as important in awakening Islamic political consciousness in Iran as was the preaching of the Shi'ite clergy to the rest of Iranian society.

## Notes

1. Later, some researchers noted that the personality of Shariati himself combined the traits of Karl Marx and Abu Dharr [9, c. 2].
2. Mehdi Bazargan (1907-1995) was a prominent Iranian liberal intellectual; Deputy Minister of Education in Mosaddegh's government; Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Tehran University; one of the leaders of the anti-Shah opposition; and first Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He resigned as the head of the provisional revolutionary government of Iran after the US embassy in Tehran was seized by radical revolutionaries. One of the most influential opponents of Imam Khomeini, Bazargan stayed in good terms with Shariati for many years.

3. According to Ervand Abrahamian, Shariati received a permanent place in the Hosseinieh Ershad in 1969 and remained there until 1972, when the religious and cultural center was shut down at the request of the Shah's special service SAVAK. It should be noticed that the Hosseinieh Ershad was considered as a source of revolutionary ideas not only by the Shah's regime, but also by the traditional Muslim clergy, who saw it as 'den of infidels' since Shariati in his lectures relied on Western methodology, primarily Marxist sociology. [6, c. 108–109]
4. As evidenced by a Russian eyewitness of the Islamic Revolution, those who read Shariati's book about Fatima during the Shah's regime were arrested and tortured [2, p. 187].

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*Received: 30.11.2022.*

*Accepted: for publication 20.12.2022.*

РОССИЯ  
И  
МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ МИР  
1(319) - 2023

Научно-информационный бюллетень

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Подписано к печати 20/ III - 2023 г. Формат 60x84/16

Бум. офсетная № 1 Печать офсетная

Усл. печ. л. 7,6 Уч.-изд. л. 6,5

Тираж 300 экз. (1-100 экз. - 1-й завод) Заказ № 134

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по общественным наукам Российской академии наук**  
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Отпечатано по гранкам ИНИОН РАН  
ООО «Амирит»,  
410004, Саратовская обл., г. Саратов,  
ул. Чернышевского, д. 88, литер У