

**DISCURSIVE PRACTICES OF
CONTEMPORARY RADICAL ISLAM
IN THE COUNTRIES OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND
EURASIAN CUSTOMS UNION**

Yulia EBZEEVA

*Ph.D. (Philol.), Assistant Professor,
Head of the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philology,
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
(Moscow, Russian Federation)*

The work has been carried out with financial support within the framework of the initiative scholarly-research project of the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philology, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN) "Poly-Linguo-Cultural Linguistic Personality under Globalization."

Natalia DUBININA

Senior Lecturer, Department of Foreign Languages,
Faculty of Philology, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
(Moscow, Russian Federation)

ABSTRACT

By the middle of the second decade of the twenty-first century, extremist groups, operating in different countries and at the global level, have considerably extended their informational, tactical, strategic, ideological, political network, as well as resources and economic interaction, the process and the results of which have become especially obvious in the European Union and the Eurasian Customs Union member states. All sorts of terrorist and religious groups have mastered the skills of exploiting territorial conflicts across the post-Soviet space and the efforts in finding solutions to get out of the ethnic and confession-al crisis. Radical Islam is ready and able to compete with the "classical" conservatism (paleoconservatism) and "new right" in turning to traditionalism, moralism and religious fundamentalism. It is not inferior to socialism in its egalitarianism and anti-bourgeois social and economic propaganda, and also to fascism (National Socialism) in totalitarianism and the willingness to sow destruction and death.¹ Islam has already become the "new alternative style" with a vast collection of discursive practices among the highly varied social groups not only in Muslim coun-

tries but in the Customs Union (CU) and the EU member states. Islam is gradually developing into a global radical anti-systemic ideology, filling the niche previously occupied by socialist ideology now in an ideological crisis. The Communist system was liquidated, the Communist ideology and the left-radical groups lost part of their appeal. The void was filled with religiously tinged political doctrines to let people express their dissatisfaction with the capitalist system. This added special importance to theoretical studies of a complex set of problems, related to the specifics of radical Islam, as we know it today. It is equally important to consider its pronounced impacts on the main components of the social and political systems of the EU and the CU and the possibilities to forecast, with a great deal of reliability, the trends in the direction of influence of Islamism, with due account for the forms of manifestation of radicalism at different levels of discursive practices. These problems should be addressed and resolved before proceeding to the task of ensuring efficient political governance and choosing the optimal trends of opposing these negative social and political phenomena. Studying the nature, types and forms of manifestations of radical Islam in the EU and CU is instrumental for inter-state structures and special services in preventing ethnic and social deviations.

¹ See: E. Ermakova, M. Jilkisheva, G. Fayzullina, I. Karabulatova, Kh. Shagbanova, "The Media and Fiction: Postmodernist Discourse of Contemporary Terrorism in the Context of Apocalyptic Rhetoric," *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 17, Issue 2, 2016, pp. 61-69.

KEYWORDS: *radical Islam, Customs Union, European Union, discursive practices, ethnic and social deviations.*

Introduction

In the course of history, Islam and its egalitarian ethos have acquired a fairly successful experience of ideological expansion of its discursive practices among wide social groups in different countries. Islamization of different population groups that had occupied the lower steps of the “ladder of prestige” began in the Middle Ages when Babur (born Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad) conquered India and set up the Timurid Empire of the Mughal dynasty. Members of the caste of untouchables found Islam highly attractive. The process is going on in India where lower castes embrace Islam, Buddhism or even Christianity, the caste of Mirasi (singers and dancers) that adopted Islam can serve as a relevant example.

Radical Western intellectuals, likewise, are tempted by Islam and its ideology. René Guénon, for example, arrived at Islamism via conservatism and traditionalism; Roger Garaudy moved away from Communism.² In any society, there are deviants, ready to abandon their religions for the sake of radical Islam.³ The criminal subculture and radical Islam share their rejection of the state, its laws and norms; they prefer to live either “by the rules of a criminal community” or by the Shari‘a. This engenders dialog, mutual respect and even partnership between the members of the criminal world and radical Islam.

In the early twentieth century, arrested Communists spread their ideas to criminals, with whom they shared prison cells. Today the criminal world willingly accepts the ideas of Islamism:⁴ in prisons, radicals (Communists or Islamists) are kept in the same cells with professional criminals and are respected for their ideas.

In Great Britain, with the Muslim population of slightly over 5%, Muslims comprise 13% of the prison population.⁵ Nearly a third of them became Muslims while in prison. The Muslim diaspora in Europe is building up its influence together with its growing numerical strength—today, it is 19 million-strong. In some countries, there are Islamic political parties and Muslim quarters in the big cities, closed to the non-Muslims (even the police).⁶

It took the Muslim diasporas in the EU and in the CU many decades to become that big, yet they recently joined politics at the country level and acquired their own parties. Until recently, they had been lobbying their interests through all sorts of political institutions. Most of European Muslims side with the left parties that support a liberal migration policy, social programs for the poorest groups and a “multicultural” environment.⁷ Today, it has become clear that this cooperation has been exhausted and that the West and East should start looking for new cooperation practices.

² See: R. Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, Sophia Perennis (publisher), 2001; R. Garaudy, *The Founding Myths of Modern Israel*, Institute for Historical Review, 2000.

³ See: I. Mkrtumova, I. Karabulatova, A. Zinchenko, “Political Extremism of the Youth as an Ethnosocial Deviation in the Post-Soviet Electronic Information Society,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, 2016, pp. 79-87; G.V. Osipov, I.S. Karabulatova, A.S. Karabulatova, “Matrimonialnye strategii v polittekhologiiakh IGIL,” *Nauchnoe obozrenie*, Series 2, Humanitarian Sciences, No. 6, 2016, pp. 69-79.

⁴ See: I. Karabulatova, B. Akhmetova, K. Shagbanova, E. Loskutova, F. Sayfulina, L. Zamalieva, I. Dyukov, M. Vykhrystyuk, “Shaping Positive Identity in the Context of Ethnocultural Information Security in the Struggle against the Islamic State,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, 2016, pp. 84-92.

⁵ See: “Tret zakliuchennykh-musulman Britanii priniali islam v tiurme,” available at [<http://www.islamnews.ru/news-24729.html>], 24 February, 2017.

⁶ See: “Riadam, no ne vmeste: Musulmane v Evrope vse bolshe obosobliaiutsia,” available at [<https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/01/12/politmuslims/>], 23 February, 2017; S. Kern, “Britain: Muslim Prison Population Up 200%,” available at [<http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3913/uk-muslim-prison-population>], 24 February, 2017; R. Suleymenov, “Allah ego znaet. O srashchivanii musulmanskogo fundamentalizma i kriminala v Tatarstane,” *Slovo*, 12-25 December, 2014, p. 13.

⁷ See: T.R. Meshlok, *Musulmanskie menshinstva v stranakh Zapadnoy Evropy vo vtoroy polovine XX veka (na primere Frantsii i Germanii)*, KubGU, Krasnodar, 2007; G.V. Osipov, I.S. Karabulatova, G.F. Shafranov-Kutsev, E.R. Kucheryavaya,

The bipolar system disintegrated leaving behind numerous obstacles in the relationships between states and cultures.⁸ Many Islam-related problems affect all sides of global life—from the relationships of the states to development of social consciousness.

Methods and Materials

We have tried to identify the causes and prerequisites of radical Islam, as we know it today, viz. the main factor of political processes, while relying on conclusions of foreign and Russian authors and on the media as a source base. The aims we have posed ourselves require

- (1) studies of the principles and methods of influence of radical Islam on the historical processes in the EU and CU countries;
- (2) discussion of contemporary radical Islam as a real political factor in the EU and CU member states;
- (3) an analysis of similarities/dissimilarities of radical Islam in the EU and CU member states, accounting for diverse factors.

There are no statistics, related to the numerical strength of Muslim structures: Islamic or pro-Islamic centers of statistics deliberately overstate the relevant figures, while the government structures deliberately understate them. This makes it difficult to arrive at more or less correct figures. Today, there are at least two Islamic political parties in Europe—The Party for the Renaissance and Union of Spain (PRUNE) and the Islam Democrats (the Netherlands), the party, which is highly active in The Hague, where it won several seats in the city council.

There are public movements with no tangible political impact, still hoping to acquire the status of parties. Such is the Finnish Islamic Party in Finland, the UCOII (Unione delle Comunità e Organizzazioni Islamiche) in Italy, the Union des organisations islamiques de France (UOIF) and the Justice and Development League in Germany. The fact that the latter is a clone of its Turkish namesake causes a lot of concern. The public is especially suspicious of the unfolding radicalization of Islam and the activities of certain organizations, working under the banner “In the name of Islam and for the sake of Islam.” It took terrorism that emerged at the heat of the Afghan conflict several decades to spread beyond the limits of the Muslim world to become one of the most obvious global security threats. Radical Islam should be studied, since, being a global phenomenon, it has certain local specifics, which makes regional or even country terrorism an object of scrutiny.

Our studies are based on the conceptual principles of political science, on systemic approach and the methodology, elaborated by prominent Russian and foreign scholars, used for comprehensive linguo-cognitive political research.

We have studied radical Islam as a homogenous system, the attributes of which appeared and have become more or less clarified in the course of the functioning of the state as an integral social and political mechanism and the milieu, in which extremist sentiments crop up. We used the struc-

S.D. Galiullina, L.R. Sadykova, “Problems of Ethno-Confessional Extremism in Russia as a Reflection of Deviation Processes in the Society,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 6, S. 3, 2016, pp. 95-103.

⁸ See: A.G. Kisilev, S.A. Shilina, *Upravlenchesky diskurs kak sotsialnaia kommunikativnaia tekhnologia v sisteme otnosheniy gosudarstva i sotsiuma*, Monograph, INFRA-M, Moscow, 2017, 120 pp.

tural-functional variant of systems analysis that orients the scholar toward the analysis of structural characteristics and identification of specifics of the system as a whole.

Results

The Islamist charities that support all Muslim prisoners, whether “political” or “criminal,” and supply them with all the necessities, are sometimes blamed for making radical Islam the norm in a deviant milieu. These organizations that function as NGOs accept money from all those who want to help the imprisoned Muslims and their families. They offer a sort of “spiritual consultations” and lessons on Islam from imams, who regularly visit prisons and who mainly represent radical Islamic movements.⁹ In the 1920s-1930s, there was the International Red Aid (MOPR) Organization that helped convicted and imprisoned revolutionaries. Today, Islamic radicals have mastered more effective radical discursive practices. Great Britain, very much concerned by the growth of radical Islamic sentiments among the prison population, is not alone. France, with its much harsher penitentiary system, likewise, does not like the massive Islamist propaganda and the growing number of newly converted Muslims behind bars. Indeed, having served their terms in prison, these highly radicalized people pour into the streets of European cities to affect the European society in many respects. Similar processes are going on in Russia (in the Volga Area, the Urals and Daghestan).¹⁰ The trends that are being spread in the criminal milieu are alien to the autochthonous Muslim peoples of the Russian Federation: they represent radical fundamentalist trends, practiced in other countries (Wahhabism, Salafism, Hizb ut-Tahrir, etc.).

The Islamists, put into Russian prisons for religious extremism and terrorist activities, are spreading their ideas among other inmates that were either uninterested in religion¹¹ or belonged to the traditional Hanafi madhab. These people create jamaats of inmates, many of whom are tempted by the ideology of radical Islam that forgives the crimes perpetrated before the conversion, while new crimes are exonerated as part of the jihad: this ideology justifies the crimes, committed against those who do not share it (the “wrong” Hanafi Muslims are not safe either).¹²

Outside the prison walls, members of organized criminal groups in Tatarstan and Daghestan have become active Wahhabis. In Kazan, for example, organized Salafi groups have painted their criminal activities with religious hues: they have transformed racketeering in the markets into collecting *zakat* from each “ethnic” Muslim in favor of the jamaat and the “brothers” in prisons or waging the holy war.

The non-Muslim traders are not safe either: the racketeers refer to the protection of the Christians and Jews as the “people of the Book” in the Islamic Caliphate to explain why today the “protected” should pay *jizyah* (per capita tax paid by non-Muslim subjects). It should be said that the number of ethnic Russian criminals, converted with the influence of their Islamist accomplices, is steadily growing and that not infrequently Russian Muslims are even more radical than their “brothers.”¹³

⁹ See: D. Lisnyanskaya, “Angliyskiy zakliuchenny XXI v.,” available at [<http://www.polosa.co.il/blog/34759>], 24 February, 2017.

¹⁰ See: R. Suleymenov, op. cit.; I. Karabulatova, “Ethnocultural Communication Systems in the Northern Caucasus and the Problem of Radical Islam,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Vol. 17, Issue 4, 2016, pp. 71-79.

¹¹ See: “Krugly stol ‘Radikalizm v sovremennom mire’,” *Vestnik Akademii ekonomicheskoy bezopasnosti MVD Rossii*, No. 6, 2015.

¹² See: R. Suleymenov, “Tiuremny khalifat,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 21 February, 2013.

¹³ “Terrorist IGIL iz Rossii kaznil russkogo spetsnazovtsa na kameru,” available at [<http://rusjev.net/2015/12/03/terrorist-igil-iz-rossii-kaznil-russkogo-spetsnazovtsa-na-kameru/>], 24 February, 2017; “Kak verbuiut liudey, devushkek i iunoshey v

Most of universal Western ideologies are in crisis; today the void is filled with radical Islam that strongly affects social life in Europe and Russia. On 15 July, 2016, *Milliyet* referred to the Turkish special services to report that the Islamic State announced mobilization of fighters in Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Northern Caucasus and that the ISIS had already put together a group of 25 fighters to be moved to Turkey via Azerbaijan and Georgia and to Western Europe via Cyprus.¹⁴ The numerous Wahhabi groups operating in the Northern Caucasus (Islamic Jamaats, the Army of Islam, etc.) can be described as radical. Between 1 January and 5 February, 2017, over 11 thousand migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean to reach Europe. According to the International Migration Organization, 85% of them landed in Italy, others in Greece.¹⁵ Wide dissemination of Islam has found fertile soil, particularly in an aberrant environment.

Discussion

The social and political changes, caused by the much stronger positions of Islam in the European Union, have attracted attention of many members of the academic community. The results of their studies can be divided into two groups

- (1) scholarly works, dealing with the social, epistemological and ontological manifestations of Islam and
- (2) studies of its political outcrops.

The authors of the first group discuss the problems, related to the positions of Muslims in secularized society, and offer all possible variants for the development of the “secular” or “European” trend in Islam.¹⁶ The authors of the second group discuss the compatibility of the political manifestations of Islam with the development of the European world and acute problems created by the already obvious and increasing radicalization of Islam.¹⁷ They write about the problems created by the growth of Islamic diaspora in the EU and CU, as related to the problem of integration and point to the cause and effect of confrontations in contemporary society.

In July 2016, leaders of several terrorist groups (banned in the Russian Federation), based in Syria, composed of people from the Northern Caucasus (Junud al-Sham, Ajanad al-Kavkaz), condemned the terrorist act in the airport of Istanbul. This probably means that they want to distance themselves from the Islamic State.¹⁸

IGIL, v Rossi i za rubezhom,” available at [<http://xn----7sbabkuaucayksiop0b0af4c.xn--p1ai/obshhenie-i-kommunikacii/kak-verbuyut-lyudej-lyudej-devushkek-i-yunoshejj-v-igil-v-rossii-i-za-rubezhom/>], 24 February, 2017; “Vykhodtsy s Kavkaza v riadakh IG (IGIL),” 21 February, 2017, available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/251513/>], 24 February, 2017.

¹⁴ See: “Milliyet: IG gotovitsia k otpravke boevikov s Kavkaza v Evropu,” available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/285868/>], 24 February, 2017.

¹⁵ See: “MOM: s nachala 2017 goda v Evropu pribylo bolee 11 tysiach migrantov,” available at [<http://overallnews.ru/i/6724088/>], 24 February, 2017.

¹⁶ See: B. Tibi, *Krieg der Zivilisationen. Politik und Religion zwischen Vernunft und Fundamentalismus*, Munich, 2002; T. Sh. Gilazov, I. S. Karabulatova, F. S. Sayfulina, Ch. M. Kurakova, G. M. Talipova, “Between the East and the West: Phenomenon of Tartar Literary Criticism in the Linguo-Cultural Aspect,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 3, S 2, 2015, pp. 508-517.

¹⁷ See: S. Balic, “Islam für Europa: Neue Perspektiven einer alten Religion,” in: *Kölner Veröffentlichungen zur Religionsgeschichte*, Vol. 31, Cologne, 2001; T. Ramadan, “Europeanization of Islam or Islamization of Europe?” in: *Islam, Europe's Second Religion: The New Social, Cultural, and Political Landscape*, ed. by Sh. T. Hunter, Washington, 2002; Yu. S. Netesova, *Islamistsky terrorizm v stranakh Evropeyskogo soiuza*, MGIMO, Moscow, 2012.

¹⁸ See: “Eksperty konstatirovali usilenie raskola sredi chechenskikh boevikov,” available at [<http://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/285703/>], 24 February, 2017.

In Russia, the North Caucasian peoples have preserved the memory of their national liberation wars in legends, songs and other folklore genres. “Here, the rapid growth of the ‘Islamic factor’ is connected to the events of the national liberation war of the nineteenth century, led by Shamil, and the revolt of 1877.”¹⁹ In Syria, four thousand citizens of Russia and about five thousand citizens of other CIS countries are fighting in the ranks of the Islamic State.”²⁰

This memory is gathering more and more consequence as justification of extremist (terrorist) practices. In view of the international political realities of our days and the situation in Russia, we should try to forecast the trends of Islam’s development. We should help Muslims adjust to the rapidly changing situation in Russia and become successful in the multi-confessional society.

The last decade has seen a multitude of books and articles, dealing with various aspects of the “global jihad,” which could only be expected in view of the complicated nature of the new threat and disparate dimensions of radical Islam, as we know it today. The scholarly value of many of them, however, leaves much to be desired. The changes that have taken place in the religious life of the Muslims should be studied and critically assessed.

Conclusion

At the height of its cultural and religious revival, radical Islam is attracting new followers at a much faster pace than other religions. This is explained by its extreme moral demands; in fact, it is hardly possible to change the Muslim lifestyle by normative acts.

The relationships between secular society and the Muslim ummah (which is highly varied) should be based on tolerance. This excludes any attempts to adjust the cultural values of a minority to those of the majority and suggests that mutually profitable aspects should be developed. Rooted in Islamic ideology and its system, Muslim enthusiasm is closely connected with fatalism. Religious enthusiasm is especially emotional when dealing with non-Muslims. Religious fanaticism in Islam was developing under the pressure of its main provisions of belief in the afterlife, the Judgment Day, heaven and hell. Islam relies on dramatic methods to persuade its followers.²¹

The great and increasing number of Muslims in Europe has added weight to their faith and its role in domestic policies of European states; it has transformed the political spectrum of Western countries and created a new political identity, since the familiar images of political parties have changed. Europe has been confronted with a fact that is better described as a challenge: the Muslims, who refuse to obey the laws of the Shari‘a because it brims with bans and norms unacceptable in secular society, betray Islam,²² while in a democratic state, with its constitutional principle of separation of church and state, violations of laws are punishable by law.

¹⁹ A. Malashenko, *Ramzan Kadyrov. Rossiyskiy politik kavkazskoy natsionalnosti*, Rossiyskaia politicheskaia entsiklopedia, Moscow, 2009.

²⁰ “Putin soobshchil, skolko rossiiian voiuet v riadakh IGIL,” available at [<https://ru.tsn.ua/svit/putin-soobshchil-skolko-rossiiyan-voyuyut-v-ryadah-ig-811140.html>], 24 February, 2017.

²¹ See: Yu.N. Grabilina (Yu.N. Ebzeeva), “Osobennosti dramaticheskoy dialogicheskoy rechi,” in: *Nauchnye Trudy MPGU*, Humanitarian Sciences Series, Collection of Articles, Prometey, Moscow, 2000, pp. 327-329.

²² See: “Beschinstva migrantov v Germanii: opublikovany rezonansnye video,” available at [<https://www.obozrevatel.com/abroad/96087-beschinstva-migrantov-v-germanii-opublikovanyi-rezonansnye-video.htm>], 24 February, 2017; “V Evrope stremitelno obostryaetsia situatsia iz-za naplyva migrantov,” available at [<https://ru.tsn.ua/svit/v-evrope-stremitelno-obostryaetsia-situatsiya-iz-za-naplyva-migrantov-492468.html>], 24 February, 2017; “Ya chertovski ustal: pismo politseyskogo o beschinstvakh migrantov v Shvetsii vyzvalo rezonans v Facebook,” available at [<http://overallnews.ru/i/6786033>], 24 February, 2017.

In the highly secularized West European countries, Islam can be barely understood and accepted. This means that it is not institutionally legalized and that xenophobia is spreading among the Europeans. If realized, the demands of Muslims will inevitably change the social and political foundations of the EU and CU member states that are not yet quite ready to accept such changes.
