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# WESTERN MULTICULTURALISM: NEW CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

**A** crisis is a stage in the life cycle of society. Since the historical path of development has no eternal development or eternal decline, the intermediate phase is characterized by a crisis or stagnation. Any crisis ends with two logical outcomes. In the first

case, this or that historical, political and economic process stops altogether after a crisis. In the second case, another development process begins after a crisis as a new stage of the life cycle. The aforesaid is most clearly seen in the meaning of the word "crisis" in Chinese. In



Chinese the word “crisis” is composed of two characters, one meaning “danger” and the other - “opportunity”. [1] If we are talking about society, society cannot stand still. Therefore, the crisis can be accompanied by only looking at new ways.

In this sense, the process that is currently perceived in the world as a crisis of multiculturalism also cannot remain in a state of crisis eternally. In its development, society should determine the model of multicultural values in a certain time interval. If we consider that the processes of globalization make polyculturalism inevitable, the existence of closed societies isolated from the global processes in some corner of the world is impossible.

As you know, in the last few years, both among political leaders and in the academic and social environment of Europe, statements have been made that the policy of multiculturalism failed. The main reason for its failure is that migrant workers, especially from Muslim countries, do not recognize Western values promoted in accordance with the immigration policy of Western

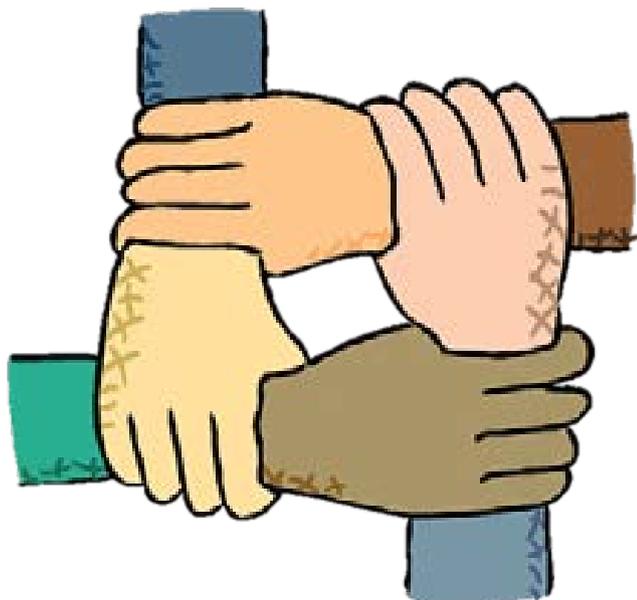
European countries as common standards.

But the reality is that regardless of the cause and effect, Europe no longer fits into the framework of classical European values. Now the “Old World” reflects the lifestyles of different cultures. Even if the policy of multiculturalism, which has been conducted by European officials until now, is facing a crisis, different cultural values that exist in Europe today can neither be erased nor converted into standard samples. In this case, this crisis should lead to a search for new forms of coexistence. In other words, “the Western model of multiculturalism”, which suffered a setback, is in search of a new approach. Before considering these approaches, in this study, we would like to draw attention to the challenges facing the West.

**The Western civilization is facing new challenges.** Western European countries, which suffered large human casualties in World War II, receiving immigrants as cheap labor from former colonial countries after the war, began to make up for the shortfall. The rapid economic growth in Europe after the war was several times



higher than the internal workforce. The aging of the local population in Europe and at the same time, the excess of cheap labor in neighboring regions resulted in the stimulation by Western countries of immigration from former colonial countries. Currently, the majority of migrant workers in Europe are Muslims. In addition, immigrants from non-Muslim countries of Africa and India, who are faithful to their cultural values, have become locals in Europe. As a result, a new generation of non-Christian immigrants, alien to Western values, began to develop in France, Germany, Belgium, the Neth-



erlands and other Western European countries from 1950. For comparison, if in the 1950s, 800,000 people of Europe's population were Muslims, in 2010 this figure reached 44 million. [2]

Thus, Europe, which is considered the cradle of the Western civilization, is facing two major challenges. Firstly, European society, which was based on national identity for centuries, no longer fitted into this framework after the flow of immigrants and faced a new way of life. Secondly, the settlement of Muslims in Europe put the West face-to-face with a different system of values.

In connection with the first challenge, we would like to note that today the majority of European states are already immigrant countries. In other words, at least 10% of the population in these countries is foreign. Given that Europe is experiencing a demographic crisis, we can say that this trend will increase even more. According to Eurostat, in 2010-2060 the natural growth in the EU will be 16 million people. During this period, the share of immigration will be 86 million. This is 17% of the total population. Taking into account the immigration flow, intermarriage and the difference between the local population and immigrants, a sufficiently high level of foreign-born population is expected in the birth rate in Europe. [3]

It should be noted that this factor distinguishes the European model of multiculturalism from other Western models. For example, in contrast to the "Old World", Western societies created in new countries (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) are not only not experiencing a crisis at this stage, but are even considered by many experts to be the best model. The main distinguishing point here is that in the new countries the formation of national identity took place precisely during immigrations, and European immigrants dominated. The formation of national identity in Europe happened in the Middle Ages. For this reason, new residents of the "Old World" have problems in integrating into European society. Given the dominance of immigrants in society under the present conditions, it is clear that the main objective of the European model of multiculturalism is assimilation.

Despite the differences in the number of immigrants in some countries, the common approach is not very different. You can highlight France, where the number of immigrants in comparison with the total population is high. According to the French Institute for Statistics (INSEE), based on figures for 2008, 19% of the popula-



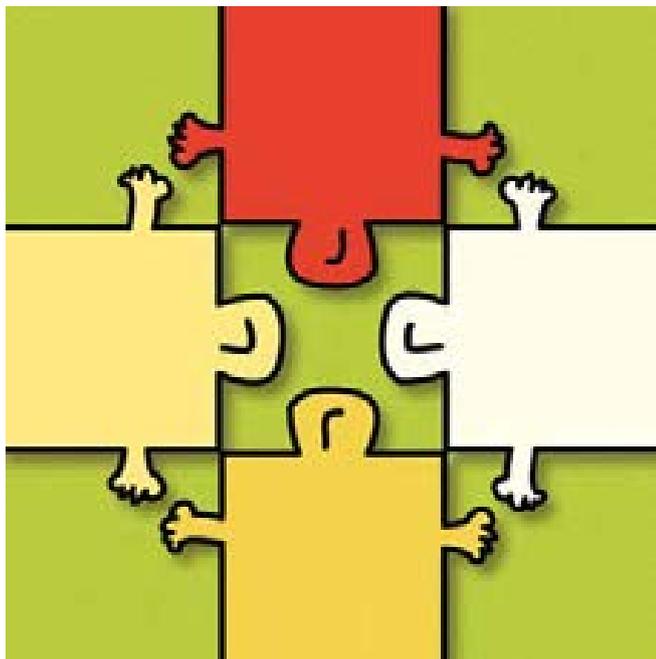
tion (12 million people) of the country were either born overseas or at least one of the parents is an immigrant (including immigrants of the first and second generation). According to studies, in 2006-2008, at least one of the grandfathers or one of the grandmothers of about 40% of infants in France was an immigrant.

In countries such as Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, immigrants make up more than 10% of the population. Ethnically and culturally, these immigrants also represent signif-

icantly different values. Among the new residents of Europe, apart from carriers of Islamic values, representatives of Far East culture from countries such as India, China and Vietnam keep their values and culture. All this shows that for Western society multiculturalism is not an option, but a necessity.

For countries with a young population this challenge may seem irrelevant. But given the fact that in most of the leading European countries the population is aging and the proportion of the working population





decreases, it becomes apparent that Europe is unlikely to give up the ideology of multiculturalism. According to studies, in Germany, which is leading in Europe in terms of population, the population will drop by 10 million after 50 years and reach 72 million people. In parallel, the aging process will increase significantly. For example, if in 2012 the share of the population older than 65 was 20.5%, it is projected that in 2062 this ratio will be 30.1%. In other words, the immigration of labor force into Germany from outside is inevitable.

The most important challenge facing the European states, which have become countries of immigrants, is the demographic crisis and as a way out of the crisis - a policy based on immigration. And it is impossible for new European citizens not to bring their values with them. In our view, only by respecting the values of newcomers and, most importantly, considering them to be its own, can Europe emerge from the crisis.

The future development of Europe, which is experiencing a crisis, seems impossible without immigrants. However, currently Europe ignores the spiritual values of its new residents, preferring only Western values. In the eyes of the West, the newly arriving immigrants should be a homogeneous integral part of the society that receives the immigrants. Their behavior and different moral norms are not accepted due to the fact that they do not correspond to Western values. But time has shown that immigrants, whose influx to Europe as cheap labor was stimulated, did not end up in the same

boat as united Europe.

The notions of the European society based only on Western cultural and religious values do not justify themselves as a universal global standard. It is noteworthy that several centuries ago, those who argue that multiculturalism is failing due to the fact that immigrants arriving in Europe as labor force today do not accept Western values not only did not accept the cultural diversity of indigenous peoples and slaves forcibly brought from Africa, but also destroyed them on the other side of the ocean. But at that time, such an attitude was not considered a cause of the crisis of multiculturalism.

Thus, the most important dilemma facing the West in a crisis is respect for other people's values. It should be based on a system of relations based on respect not only for Western values, but also for the spiritual world of others.

**Fear of Islamization of Europe.** The fact that the vast majority of immigrants in Europe are Muslims has presented the West with another important challenge. The West sees it not as a challenge, but as a threat to its own values and future in general.

It is known that the Western civilization attaches great importance to religious values. For many centuries, Christianity has played a core role in the system of Western values. Throughout history, the main rival of the West in the religious sphere was precisely Islam. For example, from the world's religions, Buddhism, with its main pillars in the Far East, was not able to penetrate the "Old World" because of the long distance. The Jews were persecuted in Europe for centuries, had repeatedly been expelled and started to be perceived as equal citizens only from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Islam-West relations were even more strained. The strengthening of either party became a cause of bloody clashes. The bloodiest campaign of Europeans as bearers of Christianity in the Islamic world was the Crusades. Throughout history, Europe has faced the direct influence of carriers of the Islamic religion twice - for the first time during the creation of the Caliphate of Cordoba in Spain and for the second time - with the entry of European lands as far as Vienna into the sphere of influence of the Ottoman Empire. In both cases, after the weakening or collapse of empires, Europe demonstrated religious intolerance against Muslims. The persecution of Muslims in Spain and the Balkans on religious grounds and the destruction of the heritage of Islamic culture show historical traditions in the attitude of the West towards Islam.



Now the situation is different. For the first time in history, Islam has become not an alien conviction in Europe, but the religious faith of part of the population. As immigrants from Turkey, North Africa and former colonial countries of the Middle East are Muslims, the West is once again faced with Islam. Currently, Europe has found itself face to face with the fact that its future fate might be Muslim. Migrant workers come to Europe not by conquest, but through penetration of society. In this case, it is impossible for Europe to struggle with this new Islamic wave with previous methods.

According to researchers, as a result of the flow of immigrants to European countries and the high level of natural population growth among them, in 2050, 20% of the population of Europe will be Muslim. Now the idea is being put forward that Western and Islamic cultures cannot coexist. In Europe today, society is presented as a dilemma with completely incomparable concepts such as democracy or Shariah law, Islam or freedom. But the reality is that Islamic values are the choice of a part of the population of Europe. If there is no tolerant attitude towards them and if the Islamic factor does not take its rightful place among the Western system of values, it

becomes a problem, first of all, for the future of Europe.

The loyalty of Muslims in Europe to their religion and at the same time, the popularization of Islam as a religion and indicators of population growth among the Muslim population are perceived in Western society as the main disturbing aspects in terms of the future. The consequence of this is Islamophobia in the West. The fear of the minority becoming the majority is the main challenge facing Western multiculturalism. ♦

*To be continued*

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