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CAUSES OF THE SPREAD OF ISLAMOPHOBIA IN WESTERN COUNTRIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

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SUMMARY

Islamophobia is one of the social problems of our time. The content of the concept of Islamophobia is largely explained by its etymology. As is known, the concept of Islamophobia comes from the Arabic word "Islam" and the Greek word "phobia", that is, fear of Islam. This concept promotes fear, hatred, including intolerance and violence towards Islam and people belonging to this religion. Islamophobia is considered one of the forms of racism, intolerance and discrimination.

Islamophobia as a social problem currently manifests itself mainly in Western countries. In these countries Muslims are considered to be the culprits of such negative problems as poverty, unemployment, crime, violence, religious radicalism and fundamentalism. In such a situation Islamophobic ideas manifest themselves as one of the main directions of European socio-political thought.

The article analyzes the causes of the spread of Islamophobia in Western countries in the modern era.

Keywords: *Islam, Muslim immigrants, Islamophobia, Western countries, multiculturalism, "parallel society", objective causes, subjective causes.*

Introduction

Islamophobia primarily creates conflicts on religious ground within the country. By doing so, Islamophobia poses a serious threat to the country's national security, socio-economic development, and improvement of people's living standards. In addition, the spread of Islamophobia hinders the democratic development of countries. Because the spread of Islamophobia in society leads to the violation of the rights and freedoms of people, more specifically, those belonging to the Islamic religion. Considering that Islamophobia is a serious problem in the modern world, the UN General Assembly at its 76th session held on March 15, 2022, unanimously declared March 15 *(on March 15, 2019, 51 Muslims were killed and 40 Muslims were injured by local islamophobes in 2 mosques in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. - B.N.)* as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia (UN Resolution, 2015). According to professor Enes Bayrakli this decision of the UN General Assembly should be seen as a historical turning point in the fight against Islamophobia on a global level. Because in this way, for the first time, the problem of Islamophobia was politically recognized on a global level (Bayrakli, 2023: 68). The recognition of Islamophobia as a problem on a global level creates favorable conditions for progressive forces to fight against it. These forces have the opportunity to refer to the aforementioned decision of the UN General Assembly in their fight against Islamophobia.

Islamophobia in Western countries

As mentioned above, Islamophobia is widespread in Western countries today. In some of these countries, Islamophobia even manifests itself as a state policy. In this regard the address of Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the participants of the international conference "Embracing Diversity: Tackling Islamophobia in 2024", held in Baku on March 8, 2024, states: "It is deplorable that today, Islamophobia has become integrated into the state policies of numerous Western countries that consider themselves democratic. These countries account for 80 percent of all the manifestations of Islamophobia that occurred around the world in the last year" (Aliyev, 2023).

There are objective and subjective causes of the spread of Islamophobia in Western countries. The objective causes include historical, political, socio-economic and cultural ones.

Historical causes

Islamophobia which promotes fear and hatred toward Islam and Muslims as well as persecutes Muslims, and deliberately committes violence against them is a social phenomenon of the contemporary era. However its manifestations can be found also in different stages of history. Since the Middle Ages bloody clashes between Christians and Muslims at different stages of history and crusades against Muslims called by Christian religious leaders and heads of states, have purposefully created an enemy image of Muslims in the public consciousness of Christian nations and have passed on this image to current generations (Nəcəfov, 2020: 188-194). In addition, since the 18th century, the idea of opposing Islam to science, philosophy, and social progress in general became widespread in European public opinion. This idea was promoted not only by church representatives, but also by some figures in science, culture, and art. For example, the famous French historian of religion and publicist Ernest Renan (1823-1892) noted the contradiction between Islam and science and attributed the backwardness of the Muslim world to Islam. In his lecture "Islam and Science," delivered at the Sorbonne on March 29, 1883, he noted that the spirit of positivist science and Islam are incompatible (Miloshevich, 2014: 32).

The terrorist incidents that occurred in a number of Western countries in the late 20-th and early 21-st centuries, especially the horrific terrorist acts committed by the Muslim terrorist organization Al-Qaeda in the United States on September 11, 2001, further reinforced the enemy image of Muslims in the public consciousness. Musa Serdar Chelebi, the Head of International Relations and Political Science Department at the Turkish German University notes the following about the impact of terrorist attacks by Muslim terrorist organizations on the spread Islamophobia in the world: "The 9/11 attacks in the United States marked a turning point in promoting and legitimizing all actions driven by Islamophobia, which include the repressive and restrictive policies imposed on Muslims in each country. The 9/11 attacks were used to portray devout Muslims, not only in countries with Muslims minorities bur also in Muslim majority countries as terrorist or terrorist sympathizers" (Chelebi, 2023: 65).

Thus, events throughout history have created certain conditions for the spread of Islamophobia and for its support by local population in Western countries.

Political causes. The collapse of the policy of multiculturalism

As is known, multiculturalism is one of the models of policy by which the state regulates ethnocultural diversity in society. This policy is more progressive and effective than other possible political models, in particular assimilation and isolation. Because the policy of multiculturalism, unlike the policy of assimilation and the policy of isolation, creates the necessary conditions for the integration of national minorities into the society in which they live (Nəcəfov, 2020: 86-87). Futhermore, multiculturalism is one of the main features of a democratic society. Because the protection of the rights of peoples belonging to different races, religions and cultures is an integral part of the protection of human rights. Therefore, Western countries, considering the spread of democratic values in society as a priority of their political development, give preference to the regulation of ethnocultural diversity in society through the policy of multiculturalism.

Since the mid-20th century mass migration to Western countries has led to an increase in ethnocultural diversity in these countries. The policy of multiculturalism has provided the governments of these countries with the opportunity to properly regulate ethnocultural diversity in society. Because the policy of multiculturalism, aimed at recognizing and preserving ethnocultural diversity in society, was the only effective policy capable of ensuring the achievement of unity in society in new historical conditions, as well as the integration of immigrants, including Muslim immigrants, into Western society. In order to integrate into the society they settled in, Muslim immigrants had to learn the state language and also accept democratic values such as the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, etc. However, some groups of Muslim immigrants, refusing to accept these conditions, did not want to integrate into Western society. This gradually led to the collapse of the policy of multiculturalism in Western countries. Some heads of Western states and governments (former British Prime Minister David Cameron, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel), referring to the unwillingness of Muslims to integrate into Western society, declared the collapse of the policy of multiculturalism (Multikulturalizmə giriş, 2019: 270). The former British Prime Minister David Cameron in his speech at the 47th Munich Security Conference in 2009, criticizing the state policy of multiculturalism, noted the following: "Under the doctrine of

state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values" (Cameron, 2011).

Thus, the reluctance of some Muslim immigrant groups to integrate into Western society has led to the collapse of policy of multiculturalism and created favourable conditions for the spread of Islamophobia, which is one of the main alternatives to this policy.

Socio-economic causes

In recent times, the massive influx of immigrants into European countries, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa, has led to a deterioration in the socio-economic situation of the population of these countries. The main indicators of this are the growth of poverty and unemployment among the local population, the growth of crime, violence, radicalism, fundamentalism, and ethno-religious conflicts in Western society. Most immigrants seeking asylum in Europe are Muslims. Naturally, the listed negative socio-economic phenomena cause legitimate discontent among the local population, creating favorable conditions for the spread of Islamophobic sentiments among them.

Cultural causes

Many Muslim immigrants moving to Western countries are unable to adapt to the new social environment due to the diversity of their ethnic and cultural values. The vast majority of them are members of the poor class of their home countries. They move to Western countries because they cannot meet the financial needs of themselves and their families in their home countries. Most Muslim immigrants who belong to the poor class are illiterate. They usually demonstrate their commitment to their ethnic and religious values in their daily behavior. Most of them are not interested in learning the state language, history and culture of the country they are settling in. They live compactly with their compatriots in certain areas of the country. Sometimes in their relations with each other they apply their own customs and traditions that contradict the laws of the countries they live in. As it is seen, the majority of Muslim immigrants are not interested in integrating into the Western societies they have taken refuge in. They are isolated from it. This leads to their isolation from the society.

Muslims, isolated from the society, find refuge in their community, its traditional rules and patriarchal norms of behavior based on ethnocultural values. As a result, the phenomenon of "parallel life" or "parallel society" arises, which is characterized as life based on the customs and traditions of a minority, along with the life of the majority of society. The formation of a parallel society is associated with Muslim immigrants. The phenomenon of a "parallel society" is evidence of the contradiction between the values of liberal democracy, widespread in Western countries, and the ethnocultural values of Muslims. Its formation radically changes the attitude towards multiculturalism in Western countries. Thus, if earlier the idea of multiculturalism implied tolerance, respect, interdependence and coexistence, now in the new circumstances this idea is perceived rather as a means of institutionalizing differences between ethnocultural communities. Naturally, Europeans are suspicious and fearful of Muslims' refuge in their own ethnocultural values and patriarchal norms of behavior. This also leads to the spread of Islamophobic sentiments and ideas in society.

Subjective causes

As for the subjective causes for the spread of Islamophobia in Western countries, it is important to note that there are two of them. The first cause is related to the propaganda of Islamophobia by Western ideologists. Such Western ideologists claim that Islam and its values contradict the values of modern Western civilization, primarily liberal democracy. In this regard the famous American political scientist Samuel Huntington in his book "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order", predicting the future political and economic development of post-communist countries, notes: "Developments in the postcommunist societies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are shaped by their civilizational identities. Those with Western Christian heritages are making progress toward economic development and democratic politics; the prospects for economic and political development in the Orthodox countries are uncertain; the prospects in the Muslim republics are bleak" (Huntington, 1996: 29). Huntington also voices the above-mentioned Islamophobic idea in another work. In his article "After 20 Years: The Future of the Third Wave" considering it useless to provide assistance to democratic development of the countries of Islamic civilization, he recommends that developed Western countries, led

by the United States, provide such assistance to the countries of Latin America, which are close to Western civilization (Huntington, 1996: 9).

Referring to the ideas of ideologists of Islamophobia on imcompatibility of Islam with liberal democracy heads of state and government in some Western countries are elevating Islamophobia to the level of official policy. One of such countries is Germany. The main manifestation of the elevation of Islamophobia to the rank of official policy in Germany is the fact that the government's integration policy is based on discrimination against Muslim immigrants. This policy divides all immigrants in the country into several categories, placing Muslim immigrants in lower categories. (Kondratyeva and Novojenova, 2006: 24). The first category includes ethnic Germans from the former Soviet republics. Their status is the highest among immigrants. Immediately upon arrival in Germany, they were granted full civil rights by the government, as well as numerous benefits (housing, loans, benefits for disabled family members, etc.). The second category includes immigrants from the European Union and the United States. People in this category have the right to vote at the local level, although they are not eligible to participate in state and federal elections due to their lack of citizenship. The third category includes "guest workers", who are discriminated against under many provisions of both the civil and labor codes. The fourth category includes immigrants who have applied for political asylum. The fifth category includes refugees who entered the country illegally (Kondratyeva and Novojenova, 2006: 24-26).

As can be seen from this classification, among immigrants in Germany, ethnic Germans, as well as immigrants from the USA and the EU, have the same right to work as local residents. From the distribution of immigrants who arrived in Germany according to the specified categories, it becomes clear that among all immigrants in the country, Muslim immigrants are subject to the greatest discrimination. Because they belong to the third, fourth and fifth categories. The main manifestation of the discriminatory policy pursued by the German government towards Muslim immigrants is the large number of unemployed people among them. In such a situation the discriminatory policy of the German government creates serious obstacles to the integration of Muslims into the society in which they live. Frustrated by discrimination, Muslim immigrants withdraw into their communities. Most of Muslim immigrants do not make an effort to integrate into the society in which they live. In particular, they do not strive to learn German and are indifferent to observing the laws of the country and democratic values. Although it is known that learning German is mandatory for immigrants and the laws of the country apply to all residents of the country. The reluctance of Muslim immigrants of this group to integrate into the society in which they live leads to the spread of Islamophobic sentiments among the local population.

The second subjective cause for the spread of Islamophobia in Western countries is related to the activities of certain right-wing, nationalist and neo-fascist political forces. These forces represent right-wing populism. They spread Islamophobic sentiments in society, formed under the influence of the above-mentioned objective historical, political, socio-economic and cultural reasons, and abuse them for their own interests. In order to gain the support of voters the right-wingers present Muslim immigrants as the culprits of the political and socio-economic security problems that modern Western society faces, or even as potential terrorists. They present the fight against them as one of the main areas of their political activity.

Conclusion

Thus, as a result of objective and subjective causes, a negative image of Islam and Muslims has been formed in the public consciousness of Western countries. Muslims are portrayed as the cause of negative events in society, such as the increase in poverty, unemployment, crime, violence, radicalism, fundamentalism, and ethnic-religious conflicts. Furthermore, Islamophobia manifests itself also as a direction of the state's domestic policy. It is widely practiced by some government bodies.

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MÜASİR DÖVRDƏ QƏRB ÖLKƏLƏRİNDƏ İSLAMOFOBİYANIN YAYILMASININ SƏBƏBLƏRİ

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XÜLASƏ

İslamofobiya dövrümüzün sosial problemlərindən biridir. İslamofobiya anlayışı əsasən onun etimologiyası ilə izah olunur. Məlum olduğu kimi, islamofobiya anlayışı ərəb dilində "İslam" və yunan dilində "fobiya" sözündən yaranmışdır. Bu söz İslamdan qorxu deməkdir. Bu anlayış İslama və bu dinə mənsub insanlara qarşı qorxu, nifrət, o cümlədən dözümsüzlük və zorakılığı ifadə edir. İslamofobiya irqçiliyin, dözümsüzlüyün və ayrı-seçkiliyin bir forması hesab olunur.

İslamofobiya bir sosial problem kimi hazırda özünü əsasən Qərb ölkələrində göstərir. Bu ölkələrdə müsəlmanlar yoxsulluq, işsizlik, cinayətkarlıq, zorakılıq, dini radikalizm və fundamentalizm kimi mənfi problemlərin günahkarları hesab olunurlar. Bu, islamofobiya ideyalarının Avropanın ictimai-siyasi fikrində geniş yayılmasına səbəb olur.

Məqalədə müasir dövrdə Qərb ölkələrində islamofobiyanın yayılmasının səbəbləri təhlil olunur.

Açar sözlər: *İslam, müsəlman immiqrantlar, islamofobiya, Qərb ölkələri, multikulturalizm, "paralel cəmiyyət", obyektiv səbəblər, subyektiv səbəblər.*

ПРИЧИНЫ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЯ ИСЛАМОФОБИИ В ЗАПАДНЫХ СТРАНАХ В СОВРЕМЕННУЮ ЭПОХУ

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РЕЗЮМЕ

Исламофобия — одна из социальных проблем нашего времени. Содержание понятия исламофобии во многом объясняется его этимологией. Как известно, понятие исламофобии происходит от арабского слова «ислам» и греческого слова «фобия», то есть страх перед исламом. Это понятие порождает страх, ненависть, включая нетерпимость и насилие по отношению к исламу и людям, принадлежащим к этой религии. Исламофобия считается одной из форм расизма, нетерпимости и дискриминации.

Исламофобия как социальная проблема в настоящее время проявляется главным образом в западных странах. В этих странах мусульмане считаются виновниками таких негативных проблем, как бедность, безработица, преступность, насилие, религиозный радикализм и фундаментализм. В такой ситуации исламофобские идеи

проявляются как одно из главных направлений европейской социально-политической мысли.

В статье анализируются причины распространения исламофобии в западных странах в современную эпоху.

Ключевые слова: *ислам, мусульманские иммигранты, исламофобия, западные страны, мультикультурализм, «параллельное общество», объективные причины, субъективные причины.*

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