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## **FUNDAMENTALISM AND EXTREMISM AS A MIRROR OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IN THE ARAB WORLD**

This article focuses on the study of the main internal factors that have influenced modern fundamentalism and extremism in the Arab world. Extremism is sponsored by numerous religious and political movements and parties. The channel for feeding extremists is "charitable activities for the glory of Islam", the transfer of money from various charitable and public organizations, which they provide in the form of humanitarian aid, private gatherings and donations of Muslims. Extremists from Islam are not limited to external sponsorship, actively resorting to criminal methods of financing, primarily drug trafficking, arms trafficking, gold, jewelry, extortion, robbery, kidnapping. The emergence of Islamic extremism was facilitated by internal and external factors in the development of Muslim countries, where domestic political factors had a special impact, namely unemployment, living standards of the vast majority, difficult demographic situation, low economic development, low level of authoritative political regimes and their repressive opposition policies. as well as the crisis of national ideology, etc.; which created a mass social base for the Islamist opposition to secular political and secular regimes. Thus, the key to overcoming the recurrence of Islamic fundamentalism, which is exacerbated by the wave of economic and social problems, is not in the direct fight against it, but in improving people's lives and economic recovery, which helps to "absorb" the negative manifestations of Islamic fundamentalism.

**Keywords:** fundamentalism, extremism, economy, Arab countries, Islam.

Successfully formed and developing fundamentalist movements require certain favorable conditions. This means that the mass development of fundamentalist beliefs, determined by general conditions, is not an accidental phenomenon. Very often, fundamentalist movements can arise in conditions of social crisis and political instability, which tend to rely on violent means<sup>1</sup>.

The inseparability of politics and Islam in the mass consciousness played a special role in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, as for many Islam is the most grounded religion of the East, which is characterized by a clear idea of the unity of politics and religion. In the conditions of accelerated rates of urbanization, social stratification, huge loss of social landmarks, Islamic fundamentalism was able to transform a mass protest charge into political programs. The fundamentalist alternative to social development, using the Western model, arose as a result of society's active reaction to the rather rapid and violent breakdown of many traditional civilizational values. The teachings of Islamic fundamentalism actively preach the basic religious values, which are fully consistent with the rather spontaneous aspirations of large social groups, which are already placed in unfavorable conditions in the process of radical transformation of society<sup>2</sup>.

In the 1970's and 1980's, a wave of economic liberalization took place around the world. Protectionist policies have come to an end and barriers to competition in most countries have been broken. As a result, countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America have become more or less open to international trade. Commercialization has affected almost all spheres of public life. The governments of many countries relied on investment in their economies to build advanced industry on the money of Western investment spaces. Rapid industrial development on the basis of capitalist principles of organization of production and modern technologies has largely changed the appearance of such countries as China, South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand, India, Egypt<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Трофимов, Д.А. (1992). Исламский фундаментализм в арабских странах: истоки и реалии. *Восток*, 1, 5-27.

<sup>2</sup> Малашенко, А. (1996). Религиозный фундаментализм в контексте глобальных перемен. *Глобальные социальные и политические перемены в мире: материалы российско-американского семинара*. Москва, 34-49.

<sup>3</sup> Жданов, Н.В. (2003). *Исламская концепция миропорядка*. Москва, 27.

Competition with foreign companies has resulted in the ruin of hundreds of millions of small rural and urban producers, the emergence of new poor, and a sharp increase in the debt dependence of developing countries.

The aim of the article is to analyze the main internal factors that influenced modern fundamentalism and extremism in the Arab world.

Islamic fundamentalism is divided into two directions – moderate and radical, according to theoretical institutions (primarily the principle of "takfir" in the radicals) and the emphasis on peaceful or violent methods of struggle. A distinctive feature of modern Islamic fundamentalism (21st century fundamentalism) is that it responds to the challenges of globalization and the powerful political, economic, and spiritual expansion of the West<sup>1</sup>.

The policy of Islamization is a reflection of Islamic fundamentalism in political practice. For Muslim civilization, the logic of returning to the original sources in order to correct the shortcomings introduced by human imperfection and time, is a basic model, as it ensures not only the preservation but also the development of spiritual tradition and socio-religious identity. The model that describes the return to religious and metaphysical origins is fixed in the very tradition of Islam. To denote such logic in the Sunni tradition often use the term "Salafiya", which is etymologically adequate to the term "fundamentalism", but it is used in a broader context<sup>2</sup>. In Shia tradition in similar situations the term "Usul" is used which has the same linguistic value.

The most important global trend in social development in the 1990s was the process of religious revival, the essential aspect of which was the "repoliticization" of Islam<sup>3</sup>.

Modern Islamic fundamentalism differs from previous Islamic concepts of fundamentalist orientation in the field of politics, although in this case it is a policy that is guided by a total religious worldview. At the end of the XX century. political instability, weakness of power led to the politicization of the social germs of religion. The disappearance of the bipolar system, the collapse of the USSR led to the transformation of the geopolitical balance of power, the expansion of the sphere of Islamic political and cultural influence in general.

At the beginning of the XXI century. Islamic fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world have become an important factor in regional and international politics. The problem of spreading the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism is global. The risk and threat to security in today's world is primarily linked to Islamic radical fundamentalism.

The problem of intensifying Islamic fundamentalism has become relevant in many countries. In recent decades, there has been a surge in international Islamic fundamentalism in most countries, sometimes leading to bigotry or extremism.

The monolithic nature of Islamic extremism is its diversity, due to numerous conditions, reasons, regional features, specific goals of individual organizations<sup>4</sup>.

Extremism can be classified as follows. First, it is the activities of religious and public associations, or other organizations, the media, individuals to plan, organize, prepare and take actions that are aimed at undermining security; seizure or appropriation of power; creation of illegal armed groups; committing terrorist activities; incitement to racial, national or religious hatred, as well as social hatred related to violence or incitement to violence; humiliation of national dignity; committing mass riots, hooliganism and acts of vandalism on the grounds of ideological, political, racial, national or religious hatred, hostility towards any social group; propaganda of exclusivity, superiority, or inferiority of citizens on the basis of their religion, social, racial, national, religious or linguistic affiliation<sup>5</sup>. Second, it is the propaganda and public display of Nazi paraphernalia or symbols similar to Nazi paraphernalia or symbols to the point of confusion. Third, these are public appeals to carry out these activities or perform these actions. Fourth, it is the financing of the specified activity or other assistance to its implementation or performance of the specified actions, including by providing for implementation of the specified activity of financial resources, real estate, educational, polygraph and material base, telephone, facsimile and other types of communication., information services, other material and technical means<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Малащенко, А. (1997). Религиозный фундаментализм в контексте глобальных перемен. *Глобальные социальные и политические перемены в мире: материалы российско-американского семинара*. Москва, 34-49.

<sup>2</sup> Максименко, В.И. (1999). Фундаментализм и экстремизм в исламе. *Ислам и исламизм*. Москва, 76-92.

<sup>3</sup> Журавский, А.В. (1990). *Христианство и ислам*. Москва: Наука, 76.

<sup>4</sup> Трофимов, Д.А. (1997). Исламский фундаментализм в арабских странах: истоки и реалии. *Восток*, 1, 76.

<sup>5</sup> Арухов, З.С. (2010). *Экстремизм и его причины*. Москва, 89.

<sup>6</sup> Арухов, З.С. (2010). *Экстремизм и его причины*. Москва, 43.

Modern religious extremism is inseparable from terrorism, which is one of the most pronounced types of extremist activity. In recent decades, religious extremism has increasingly turned to the organized use of terrorist acts as a means to its ends. Numerous facts of this kind have been observed in the North Caucasus, Uzbekistan, Yugoslavia, Ulster, and the Middle East<sup>1</sup>.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was a tendency in the Arab world to strengthen the positions of fundamentalism and Islamic extremism, which was generally due to the general politicization of Islam (as well as the Islamization of politics).

Numerous objective factors have contributed to the strengthening of Islam's position in the Arab world. First, a special role was played by numerous changes in the geopolitical situation in the world as a whole. The position of the United States as the only world hegemon has strengthened, which has become a catalyst for the departure from European models, as well as the search for ways of original development. Secondly, the conflict of civilizations manifested itself in almost all spheres of Arab societies, as it showed the impossibility of blindly copying the West. Third, the current socio-economic situation in the Arab East has the following features: agrarian overpopulation; a large number of non-agricultural workers; rather fast urbanization of cities at the expense of natives of villages; inability to provide employment for the city's population, rising unemployment; quite strong property stratification in society.

For a long time, the definition of "Islamic extremism" was not reduced by researchers to a single denominator. This allowed it to be assigned to a wide range of religious and political organizations, which more or less often use terrorist methods in their daily activities. Such organizations include numerous autonomist and separatist movements, which seldom use terror as a means of drawing attention to a particular problem. In Islamic extremism, violence is the main method of struggle, which is openly and illegally used in military units<sup>2</sup>. In this case, the concept of extremism has taken on a fairly broad meaning and is understood as a stable religious attitude or a type of modern religious consciousness.

The rise of Islamic extremism is partly the result of a consistent policy of Islamization. Concepts, slogans, categories, which were taken from Islam, are designed to serve as a means of influencing the masses in the desired direction for the ruling elite. Secular political doctrines aimed at mobilizing the people to pursue a course had the opportunity to become a religious form that was most accessible to the majority of the population. Islamic rhetoric was once actively used by Boumediene and Gaddafi, Nasser and Sadat<sup>3</sup>.

Like any negative phenomenon, extremism is not born by itself. The reasons that determine the emergence and existence of extremist organizations are many, the most important is ideology.

In general, researchers have identified the following features of extremist ideologies: 1) "black and white" view of the world; 2) activism; 3) deep primitivism, rarely independence and originality<sup>4</sup>.

The basic principles and views of many theorists of modern Islamic extremism were formed on the basis of the ideological heritage of many Muslim thinkers. The ideologues of extremism have borrowed a number of provisions from the Kharijites, in particular, the thesis of the orthodoxy of man in accordance with his actions, while orthodox Islam pays great attention to intentions. The next provision is that a ruler who deviates from the precepts of Islam should be overthrown, while most ulema believe that a bad ruler is a punishment sent by Allah on wicked Muslims.

Regarding the ideological and historical origins of Islamic extremism, the works of theologians of the XIX-XX centuries are somewhat popular. Jamil ad-Din al-Afghani and Rashid Reed, who relied heavily on the legacy of Ibn Taimiya. In their scientific works, they sought to encourage Islamic countries to actively resist the "imperial" policy of European states, calling for a return to the "original purity" of Islam, justifying political violence.

Hassan al-Banna, known as the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, had a decisive influence on the formation of the ideology of modern Islamic extremism. It is necessary to note two fundamental differences between BM and modern extremists, concerning the issue of "takfir" (accusation of infidelity) and the strategy of struggle. Al-Banna considered the society of his day to be unjust and drowning in sin, but he did not consider it a society of infidels; therefore, he saw his political struggle as a struggle between Muslims. The strategy of fighting for the Islamic State, which he proposed, was radically different from the extremist one. The appropriation of political power is the final stage of long-term work concerning the education of the

<sup>1</sup> Трофимов, Д.А. (1997). Исламский фундаментализм в арабских странах: истоки и реалии. *Восток*, 1, 123.

<sup>2</sup> Максименко, В.И. (1999). Фундаментализм и экстремизм в исламе. *Ислам и исламизм*. Москва, 76-92.

<sup>3</sup> Журавский, А.В. (1990). *Христианство и ислам*. Москва: Наука, 65.

<sup>4</sup> Журавский, А.В. (1990). *Христианство и ислам*. Москва: Наука, 32.

population in the Islamic spirit, the formation of a "true" Islamic worldview. According to Al-Banna, the involvement of the masses is the most important factor for success<sup>1</sup>.

The ideology of Islamic extremism is also represented by the spiritual leader of the Egyptian "Al-Gamaa al-Islamiya", a popular preacher Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman, who is currently in prison on charges of organizing an explosion in a New York mall in 1993 and remember. infamous London preacher Abu Hamza al-Masri (Mustafa Kamel), head of the virtual organization "Sharia Proponents"<sup>2</sup>.

In the long run, religious extremism will turn into a political force that will be able to have a decisive influence on the regional situation. The difficult economic situation contributes to the destabilization of the political situation, creating favorable conditions for the intensification of Islam. Established systems of presidential monopoly, as well as the absence of an organized political opposition, contribute to Wahhabism becoming such an opposition, advocating "social equality and justice," skillfully exploiting public discontent with the effects of modernization.

The phenomenon of the rise of Islamic extremism is directly related to the very political situation in the region, which is characterized by increased conflict.

It is difficult to overestimate the role of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the process of intensifying Islamic extremism. The intensification of radical fundamentalism, the escalation of social tensions and the escalation of violence present the background against which extremist movements have been able to play a significant role. The result of the Israeli aggression – negative migration processes: 1. Since 1948, about 2/3 of the Arabs (almost 900 thousand people) left only the occupied territories of Palestine; 2. By May 1967, almost 1,300,000 Palestinians lived in UN camps; 3. Lebanon during the 9 years of civil war left 500 thousand people; 4. A significant part of the population settled in neighboring countries: Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan<sup>3</sup>. This became the basis of negative economic dynamics. As for the refugee camps, which were already quite embittered and still virtually destitute, they became centers of the national liberation movement in its most radical forms. Particular attention should be paid to interfaith conflicts in the Middle East. Their mechanism became the most effective as a result of negative migration processes, which violated the boundaries of ethno-confessional areas, which were traced quite clearly. This tendency was especially evident against the background of the civil war in Lebanon. The objective socio-economic consequences of the Arab-Israeli conflict are playing into the hands of the Islamists, creating a favorable environment for them, capable of forming a social base.

It is necessary to mention the factor of external support. Many Islamist organizations are ideologically and materially supported from the outside by some regimes, such as Saudi, Iranian, Pakistani, Afghan and Sudanese.

According to Western experts, Iran annually allocates up to \$ 100 million to support Islamist, mainly Shiite organizations abroad, which is one of the areas of foreign policy. For a long time, the IRI leadership did not deny the facts of support for international Islamism. According to Khamenei in an interview with Al-Alam magazine: "We believe that only an extremist movement can resist the black despotism of the world's great powers and succeed. That is why we not only do not deny our extremist approach to global despotism, but we also recognize it and are proud of it"<sup>4</sup>.

As for Saudi Arabia, the government strongly denies its involvement in supporting Islamic extremism, but various charitable organizations and foundations coordinated by the Saudi League of the Islamic World (LIS), such as Ibrahim Al Ibrahim, Al Haramain, and many others, declared themselves in different countries (USA, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kenya)<sup>5</sup>.

Pakistan is also on the list of countries that support Islamic extremism. First of all, thanks to the support of the Afghan Taliban and Kashmiri separatists. The unresolved interstate conflict between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue is a major cause of support for Islamists.

Thus, the following conclusions can be drawn. Islamic fundamentalism is characterized by most of the shortcomings of Islam itself, namely the heterogeneity of beliefs and contradictions of ideology, which entails the illogicality and imperfection of legal norms. The peculiarities of Islam as a religion, combined with the cultural and historical tradition that exists in the Arab world, have added a religious form to the political

<sup>1</sup> *Исламизм и экстремизм на Ближнем Востоке: сборник статей* (2001). Москва, 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Исламизм и экстремизм на Ближнем Востоке: сборник статей* (2001). Москва, 43.

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<sup>4</sup> Аятолла, Хомейни (2000). Свет исламской революции. Речи и выступления Руководителя Исламской Республики Иран. Москва, 128.

<sup>5</sup> Мирский, Г.И. (2008). *Исламизм, транснациональный терроризм и ближневосточные конфликты*. Москва.

opposition. External problems of interstate contradictions play a supporting role, but in many respects it is thanks to them that Islamism is radicalized and acquires additional dynamism, as it is formed as an independent political ideology. Political leaders use only those aspects of Sharia that are beneficial in a given situation. Thus, Islamic fundamentalism is beginning to manifest itself not as a religious, but as a political movement that seeks to seize power in any available way, as well as by forcible overthrow of the legitimate government.

The study of the Islamic fundamentalist type of consciousness contributes to the understanding of such problems of political science as modernization and social stability, political communication, the relationship between reality and ideal, discourse and doctrine, the formation of political needs and others. It brings us closer to understanding the values that have become vital to certain groups and are not reflected in the current political and ideological context.

The activities of radical Islamists at the present stage are characterized by a huge geographical scope, a fairly high degree of logistical and financial security, organization. Extremism is sponsored by numerous religious and political movements and parties. The channel for feeding extremists is "charitable activities for the glory of Islam", the transfer of money from various charitable and public organizations, which they provide in the form of humanitarian aid, private gatherings and donations of Muslims. Extremists from Islam are not limited to external sponsorship, actively resorting to criminal methods of financing, primarily drug trafficking, arms trafficking, gold, jewelry, extortion, robbery, kidnapping.

The emergence of Islamic extremism was facilitated by internal and external factors in the development of Muslim countries, where domestic political factors had a special impact, namely unemployment, living standards of the vast majority, difficult demographic situation, low economic development, low level of authoritative political regimes and their repressive opposition policies. as well as the crisis of national ideology, etc.; which created a mass social base for the Islamist opposition to secular political and secular regimes. Thus, the key to overcoming the recurrence of Islamic fundamentalism, which is exacerbated by the wave of economic and social problems, is not in the direct fight against it, but in improving people's lives and economic recovery, which contributes to "resorption" of negative manifestations of Islamic fundamentalism.

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