RELIGION IN WORLD POLITICS AND THE PROBLEM OF 'CIVILIZATIONS'

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In our opinion, the multiplicity of meanings of the word 'religion' and its forms ('religious', 'religiosity') is an obstacle to an adequate understanding of the role of religious factors in world politics. In everyday use there are so many meanings of this word, that for scientific purposes we have to narrow its content. We can mention among the main meanings of the word 'religion' the following: religion as a world outlook; religion as a set of rituals (cult); religion as a personal experience of perceiving the supernatural (following William James), and religion as an aggregate of institutions. As a factor of world politics, religion, as a rule, appears in two of its meanings: as a system of beliefs (worldview) and as a set of institutions.

Proceeding from these two meanings of the word 'religion' we suggest differentiating religious factors in world politics from the confessional factors. Under the term 'confession' we understand organized religion, embodied in some social institutions (Christian church, Muslim ulema, Buddhist sangha, etc.). The practice demonstrates that every religion, even not suggesting strong hierarchical organization (like the organization of the Catholic and Orthodox churches), nevertheless, always has some sort of institutional structure ('church' in a broad sense). Institutional structures of various religions are participants in the world political process, being a version of or an analogy to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It seems that to designate the activities of religious organizations as a 'religious factor' in world politics is not quite correct because here we speak not about the influence of religion as a worldview, cult, or experience, but specifically about the influence of organizations. For example, we should distinguish between 'the Catholic factor' (which is often actualized beyond the Church) and 'the factor of the Catholic Church' in world politics.

Unfortunately, the problem of interrelations between religion and politics is often reduced to the problem of relations of the church (or other religious institution) and the state. The phenomena of the non-church and non-state character (transnational religious movements, religiously motivated terrorism, religio-ethnic conflicts) are mentioned in-between. At the same time, religion is not equivalent to the 'church' or any other official structure. Religion often emerges in the world arena as a system of transnational connections between states, groups, communities, and political movements. These connections are established 'above' state borders, making an additional system of mutual connections, co-existing with the system of interstate relations. In a sense, the world returns to a pre-state condition when human loyalty could belong to the state or to a transnational religious community.

According to Benedict Anderson, the preeminent contemporary scholar of nationalism, religious communities of the pre-modern age were not connected with a specific territory: being global, they spread in a nearly borderless way, united by sacral languages and common sacral texts[1]. Latin, Arabic, Church Slavonic, and other languages

[1] Anderson, B. Imaginary communities (in Russian). – Moscow: Kanon-press-Ts; Kuchkovo pole, 2001. – P. 36.

of the sacred texts were the uniting languages. But already in the late Middle Ages the process of 'territorialization of faiths' begins, designating the transition to the sacralization of nation and territory[2]. One of the bright manifestations of this territorialization was the change of Latin – the common language of the West Christian world – into the multiplicity of national languages of Europe. As early as in the 18th century nationalism in a sense had changed religion as an overwhelming world outlook. It was transformed into a special religion, not presupposing belief in the supernatural, but providing sacral meaning for the nation-state and its symbols: coat of arms, flag, graves of the heroes of the fight for national independence, etc. Within nationalism its own quasi-religious rituals are worked out: the change of guards at the graves of unknown solders, ceremonies of raising the flag, celebrating national (specific for a given nation) holidays. Nationalism speaks about a mystical connection between the citizen of a state and its territory, 'explaining' to a citizen of every concrete state why he or she should be loyal to this state even being born beyond its borders.

But the nationalist explanations did not sound serious for all citizens. Already in the beginning of the 20th century the world was divided into two parts, the Communist International emerged and thousands, if not millions, of citizens of various countries lost loyalty to 'their' governments, having extended it to distant ideological centers. Communist ideology was the first rival of nationalism. Only several states have really divided under the influence of ideological contradictions (South and North Vietnam, South and North Korea, West and East Germany). But even inside monolith states strong dissident movements existed, conducting struggle (sometimes armed) with the governments of their countries. As an example one can cite leftist terrorists of the 1960s and people who for ideological reasons became the agents of the USSR, and various armed groups of resistance (*banderovtzi*, 'forest brothers') acting in the USSR. The existence of strong 'internal enemies' was mostly concealed by the authorities of the states in question (as a rule they were proclaimed 'individual outsiders' and equated to simple criminals), because their very existence undermined the nationalist mythology. At the same time, these forces did not possess enough possibilities to change from partisan war to large-scale armed conflicts.

'The return' of religion into world politics led some Western scholars to refer to the era in terms of 'neo-medievalism' when the loyalty of citizens belongs not to the state, but to transnational religious communities[3]. In this period, as well as in the Middle Ages, territory has no specific significance, because people have an opportunity to contact each other directly, without physically transcending state borders. Moreover, there is no need in using the old means of communications, such as mail and telephone, because they are too vulnerable to the power of states. The loss of connections with the territory, the lowering of the significance of physical contact, makes various non-state actors, so to speak, less and less perceptible. Many political scientists prefer to speak not about inter-national relations (relations among nations, *i.e.,* states), but about world politics where states interact with ethnic groups living on the territory of one or several states and transnational actors.

The era of the Middle Ages with its unclear territoriality and degraded loyalties is so far away that the language of the theory of international relations does not allow the new phenomena to be expressed adequately. The very term 'transnational religious communities' is under question. As American scholar Jose Casanova mentions, we can call religions transnational only in relation to the system of sovereign national states, which were substituted for the medieval Christian world (Christendom) where lay (national) and papal (international) authorities existed in a state of unstable equilibrium[4]. The 'transna-

[2] Anderson, B. Imaginary communities (in Russian). – Moscow: Kanon-press-Ts; Kuchkovo pole, 2001. – P. 41.

[3] See: Bull, H. The Anarchical Society. – N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977.

[4] See: Casanova, J. Globalizing Catholicism and the Return to a 'Universal' Church // Transnational Religion and Fading States / Ed. by S. Rudolf, J. Piskatori. – Boulder (Colo.): Westview, 1997. – P. 121.

tional' political religions themselves do not correlate themselves with that system; that is why it is more correct to call them 'supranational' or even 'non-national.' The word 'transnational' is no more than a euphemism allowing 'the old' world of sovereign states to accept somehow the new actors of world politics. Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (the University of Chicago) suggests using the metaphor of 'plastic overlays', which were put on the traditional political map of the world, not rejecting sovereign states but co-existing with them[5]. In reality the world of states and the world of transnational actors not so much co-exist, but fight for survival, and the result of this fighting depends on the success of the national projects.

Every transnational religious system ('world' or 'civilization') consists of different elements, including states, religious enclaves within the borders of other states, transnational movements, etc. To illustrate our vision of the structure of 'civilizations', let us take a common notion of the 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' world. There is a vast literature about this 'world', both analytical and conceptual. The ideal vision of the Islamic world order suggests that the division of the community of Muslims (umma) into sovereign states makes no sense. God is the only sovereign ruler of all states. The seminar 'State and politics in Islam' (London, 1983) decided to eliminate nationalism in all its forms, especially in the form of 'nation-states'[6]. Ideally the community of Muslims should coincide with the single Islamic state. Practically it was difficult to realize this idea. There are contradictions between separate Muslim states, which are not insurmountable, but do not allow for speaking about their unification into a single state. Interstate unions, based on Islam (the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Islamic Commission of the International Red Crescent, the Islamic Development Bank, the Islamic Organization of Education, Science and Culture) are of a formal nature. A well-known Russian scholar of Islam A. A. Ignatenko writes that, 'the Islamic world as a consolidated actor of international politics exists only virtually, as a sort of project, or, more precisely, projects'[7]. The picture changes when we consider the existence of non-state actors (for example, non-governmental transnational Islamic movements, Islamic minorities inside states, etc.). At the transnational level the Islamic world is not a project, but a reality.

The existence of strong transnational Islamic ties can be proved, for example, by the violent negative reaction of the whole Islamic world to the book 'Satanic verses' by Salman Rushdie. Demonstrations and the other protest actions in this regard took place not only in the 'official' Islamic countries, but everywhere where the supporters of political Islam live. Thus many Western countries unexpectedly found themselves a part of the transnational 'Islamic world'. It became evident that, although the Islamic world may include whole states (so-called Islamic states, *i.e.,* ideocratic ones, for example, Iran), it equally includes politically active Islamic elements in the secular states: parties, movements, separate personalities. These elements, of course, may aspire to win the power in their states, but they also can establish contacts with like-minded people beyond state borders.

The suggestion that the book by Rushdie may be published in Russia has also demonstrated the existence of the transborder Islamic ties. On April 22, 1998 the Muslim leaders of Russia of various political orientations (the leader of the radical organization the Union of Muslims of Russia Nadirshakh Khachilaev, the chair of the Spiritual Department of Muslims of the Central European region of Russia Ravil Gainutdin, the supporter of Eurasian Islam Geidar Jemal, etc.) had published a joint declaration, directed

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[5] Rudolph, S. H. Introduction: Religion, States and Transnational Civil Society // Transnational Religion and Fading States... – P. 12.

[6] See: Zhdanov, N. V. Islamskaya kontseptsia miroporiadka. – Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia, 2003. – P. 24.

[7] Ignatenko, A. A. Samoopredelenie islamskogo mira // Islam i politika. – Moscow: IV RAN; Kraft+, 2001. – P. 9.

against the publication of 'Satanic verses' in Russian planned by the publishing house 'Limbus-Press'. In this declaration they wrote that, 'the performers of this criminal order can not be granted peace and private security in the case of realization of this hostile plan… the destiny of the previous publishers of this book in the other countries should serve a lesson to those who want to try their fate' and during the following press-conference N. Khachilaev directly referred to the fetwa issued by Ayatollah Khomeini[8]. An impression emerges that an order of a leader of one state, having special authority in the Islamic world, obliges the citizens of the other states to act, even in secular states and even in ones not Muslim in a cultural sense. No one expressed concerns about contradictions between Sunni and Shia Muslims. The other illustration of a non-state vision of Islamic solidarity is the fact that during the 1991 Gulf Crisis mass demonstrations in support of Saddam Hussein took place even in countries where the ruling regimes included their armed forces in the anti-Iraq coalition (Morocco, Bangladesh, Egypt, Syria, and Pakistan). In all these cases the contrast between the position of the government and the position of non-governmental organizations and private citizens is evident.

As for contradictions within the Islamic world, which some scholars proclaim irreconcilable[9], we can cite in this regard the following words by Bassam Tibi, 'The Islamic world is extremely diverse, but its multiformity composes a single spectrum, which should be called the Islamic civilization. Islamism, correspondingly, is also multifaceted, but, nevertheless, it is a single phenomenon'[10]. Within the framework of the Islamic world diverse religious actors interact: states contact transnational terrorist groups; Shiites support Sunnites, and Sunnites – Shiites. For example, both Iran and Saudi Arabia supplied the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina with arms and radical Islamists from different countries fought in the Bosnian army[11]. The leader of Libya Muammar Qaddafi provided L. Farrakhan, the head of the Afro-American organization 'The Nation of Islam' with a million dollars for Islamic propaganda in the USA and Farrakhan, in response, made a call to stop sanctions against Libya[12]. The list of such examples can be continued.

None of the states can be seen as a monolith: secular states have segments of society feeling themselves a part of the Islamic world, while Islamic ideocratic states, of course, have the opposition, secret or open, which does not feel itself a part of the Islamic world. This disperse, discontinuous structure of 'civilizations' is even more visible in the case of the 'Catholic world' in the understanding of liberation theologians, i.e., with the Socialist Catholic world. It seems that only Nicaragua may be called a state that brought into life the ideology of progressive Catholicism nationwide; for this reason, there never could have been a union of states based on liberation theology. 'The Socialist Catholic world' of the liberation theologians consisted exclusively of non-state actors: political movements, basic Christian communities, and private citizens. Nowadays civilizations may be of a virtual nature: for example, radical Protestant groups, based on the ideology of the 'supremacy of the white race' as early as in the beginning of the 1980s started to use the opportunities of computer networks for exchanging information. This 'civilization' (if we can use this term for a virtual community) is fully non-territorial and consists of 'phantom cell networks' or 'autonomous leadership units,' independent on each other but able to act simultaneously for the sake of their aims[13].

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[8] Verkhovskii, A. M., Mikhailovskaya, E. V., Pribylovskii, V. V. Politic Xenophobia (in Russian). – Moscow: Panorama, 1999. – P. 115.

[9] Rudolph, S. H. Dehomogenizing Religious Formations // Transnational Religion and Fading States. – P. 244.

[10] Tibi, B. Politizatsia religii // Internationale Politik. – 2000. – № 2. Internet-version. On the Internet at: http://www.deutschebotschaft-moskau.ru/ru/bibliothek/internationale-politik/2000–02/article04.html

[11] Guskova, E. Yu. Istoria yugoslavskogo krizisa (1990–2000). – Moscow: Izdatel A. Soloviev, 2001. – Pp. 279–281.

[12] Ignatenko, A. A. Op. cit. – P. 11.

[13] Hoffman, B. Inside Terrorism. – N.Y.: Columbia Univ. Press, 1998. – P. 118.

All 'civilizations', thus, are disperse in their structure: the Islamic world, for example, includes not only official Islamic countries (in whose constitutions Islam is mentioned as a basis for law), but multiple enclaves on the territories of different states. A. A. Ignatenko writes that in the Great Britain an entity exists 'partly being out of the jurisdiction of the British crown' – a zone, limited to separate mosques, enterprises, etc. 'People, living dispersedly, but included into this zone, are characterized by isolationism, live in accordance with the Islamic law (for them so-called 'Sharia court of the Great Britain' is the decisive ideological and legal institution)', he writes[14]. Such spatially discontinued enclaves exist already everywhere in European countries. In Germany, Turkish Islamic organizations, such as 'National Vision – Islamic Society', work with a center in Cologne. It supports camps and schools with 14 thousand students in 252 cities of Europe[15]. Islam becomes 'the second religion' in France and Italy. On the territory of the Russian Federation on August 16, 1998 (in the villages Karamakhi and Chabanmakhi of Buinak region of the Dagestan Republic) an Islamic enclave emerged where the laws of Russia were abolished and the laws of Sharia introduced. Does it mean that Great Britain, Germany, and Russia are 'Islamic states'? We think, no. The paradox is that a state, not being Islamic, may, surprisingly for its leadership, become a part of the transnational Islamic world.

It is understandable that many scholars of Islam use the vocabulary of the international Communist movement, talking about 'the Comintern of Islam' or 'Islamic civil war in Spain' (meaning the war in Afghanistan)[16]. But in our opinion, the Islamic world should not be seen as an analogy to Comintern; it is rather a structure opposite to Comintern. Comintern, being of a non-state and even an anti-state nature, remained a rigid hierarchical structure. It had a single center, sending obligatory directives. Nothing of this kind may be found in modern transnational religious movements, in particular in transnational Islam. Formal structures are absent here or they are not influential. Nevertheless, the observer gets an impression of fully coordinated activity. How do transnational movements gain such coordination (if, of course, we do not consider a version with a secret governing center)?

Political scientists answer this question recalling the principle of emulation, which means that, in spite of the absence of the formal ruling structures, religiopolitical groups reproduce organizational forms and doctrines of each other[17]. When talking about transnational religious communities, many people suggest that they mean formal structures more or less governable from a single center. But in fact we do not always see formal organizations and planned campaigns. The impression of coordination emerges because groups with similar tasks emulate each other in various parts of the world. This was how, at the end of the 1960s and in the beginning of the 1970s, Catholic organizations based on the principles of liberation theology were created. (The hierarchical structure of the Vatican had nothing to do with it, because the Vatican did not support these organizations.) 'Transnational influences work in more complex and varied ways. Networks can take many forms, ranging from vertical and hierarchical patterns – the classic Catholic model – to more acephalous models in which emulation, not projection, takes precedence', American scholars of liberation theology D. Levine and D. Stoll write[18]. Particularly, they think that liberation theology had no exact 'moment of creation'. 'Change arises instead from simultaneous creation and informal emulation as groups of clergy and ordinary people begin experimenting with new ideas and models for change around

[14] Ignatenko, A. A. Op. cit. – Pp. 16, 17.

[15] Kireev, N. G. Antiterroristicheskoe zakonodatelstvo i borba s radikalnym islamismom v Turtsii // Musulmanskie strany u granits SNG. – Moscow: IV RAN; Kraft+, 2001. – P. 326.

[16] Rudolph, S. H. Op. cit. – Pp. 13, 255.

[17] Eickelman, D. F. Trans-State Islam and Security // Transnational Religion and Fading States... – P. 32.

[18] Levine, D. H., Stoll, D. Bridging the Gap Between Empowerment and Power in Latin America // Transnational Religion and Fading States... – P. 73.

the same time all across the region'[19]. In the same way, basing on emulation, Islamic political groups and the groups of 'white Aryan resistance' emerge and act throughout the world. Of course, after the number of such organizations grows, they can establish contacts between each other and can create coordination centers.

We should emphasize that in speaking about 'civilizations' or 'worlds', we are speaking about transnational religious communities, based not on 'religions as such' but on religious ideologies (political religions). The very fact that people profess some religion is not a political problem. 'Religions as such' in our times do not make transnational communities: their followers, including religious leadership, feel themselves first of all loyal citizens of their states. For example, those Muslims living in Europe, who do not identify themselves with political Islam, are not a source of threats for the unity of European states. Followers of political Islam, who in the traditional sense may not be Muslims at all, pose the real threat: sometimes they do not know the basics of Islam, do not practice it, do not observe food rules, etc.

Although religious ideologies only slightly resemble original religions, they are the foundation of mass political activity. The followers of political religions have a dualistic vision of the world as the arena of confrontation between 'us' and 'them.' But the watershed, in their opinion, is not between, for example, the Orthodox and the non-Orthodox (*i.e.,* Muslims, Catholics, atheists, religiously indifferent people, etc.), but between 'us' and 'them'. Sometimes strict followers of Orthodoxy and even hierarchs of Orthodox churches may be counted as 'them'. And vice versa, often people, distant from Orthodoxy, become 'us': atheists, Neopagans, Catholic Slavs, Muslims, etc. The same thing is typical for all political religions: the representatives of other religions are not the first object of their critique; instead, the official leaders of 'their' religion or its apolitical followers are the object of critique. The process of politicization of religion is beyond the control of the official religious leaders, whose authority does not mean much for the followers of a political religion. The followers of political Orthodoxy may not even be 'believers' in the traditional sense: they profess not religion, but religious ideology.

The term political religion dates back to Eric Voegelin's book 'Die politischen Religionen' (1938) where he defines totalitarian ideologies such as Communism, Fascism, and National Socialism as political religions. Such ideologies establish grounding for national unity by providing a quasi-religious dimension to the political order[20]. For Voegelin and his followers a political religion is not a religion as traditionally defined; rather, it is an ideology that does not imply a belief in the supernatural. Ideologies are secular phenomena (unless we consider 'supernatural' concepts such as 'nation' or 'state' in the framework of totalitarian ideologies). Voegelin considered deification of these entities a feature of political religions[21]. Nevertheless, deification here is simply a metaphor, and Voegelin's political religions are thereby religions only in a figurative sense. However, when an ideology includes genuine references to the supernatural and justifies political activities through an appeal to the other world, it is, in our opinion, not an ideology as such but a 'politicised' or 'political' religion.

Our usage of the term correlates with the 'classical' one because we, following, for example, Juan Linz, understand a political religion as a worldview which claims to be the absolute truth and which is not compatible with existing religious traditions[22]. However, our concept of political religions also closely resembles what Linz defines as 'the-

[19] Levine, D. H., Stoll, D. Bridging the Gap Between Empowerment and Power in Latin America // Transnational Religion and Fading States... – P. 74.

[20] Maier, H. Politische Religionen. Die totalitären Regime und das Christentum. – Freiburg, Basel, Wien: Herder, 1995. – P. 29.

[21] Ibid. – P. 30.

[22] Linz, J. J. Der religiöse Gebrauch der Politik und/oder der politische Gebrauch der Religion. Ersatzideologie gegen Ersatzreligion // 'Totalitarismus' und 'Politische Religionen'. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleichs. – Paderborn, etc.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996. – P. 130.

ocracy', stressing that politics are used for religious purposes, and not vice-versa[23]. A 'theocracy', for Linz, is not a political religion (which he considers secular ideology) but a form of 'politicised religion' somehow correlated, nevertheless, with political religions.

The term 'political religion' is commonly used by many scholars to designate religious ideologies both directly (for example, in an article 'Political Religion in the Twenty-first Century' by Peter van der Veer)[24] and indirectly (for example, widely used constructions like 'political Islam', 'political Hinduism', etc. may easily be reshaped into constructions like the 'political religion of Islam' and the 'political Hindu religion'). We also suggest that 'theocracy' is a misleading term because one can hardly imagine a polity that would be based directly on religious principles (except, maybe, very small communities); we prefer to describe polities governed by political religions as 'ideocracies'.

Political religions understand the events of this world as a part (or reflection) of sacral cosmic events. Aims of religiopolitical movements are aims with a capital 'A'; vital human endeavours viewed as sanctioned by supernatural forces. Those who are motivated by political religions do what they do not because they want to do so; instead, they see themselves as following the decree of God or some other supernatural force. It is important to understand that political religions should not be confused with the use of religion for political purposes. Religious politicisation implies that political means are used for religious purposes, such as to build God's Kingdom on Earth, an Islamic state, etc. Political power is thereby only the means by which to achieve an ultimately sacral goal.

American scholar of political religions Mark Juergensmeyer describes 'religious wars' (as opposed to 'wars justified by religion') in the following manner: 'These religious activities are not just political exercises justified by religion, they are perceived by the faithful as facets of a more fundamental confrontation. Conflicts of the real world are linked to an invisible, cosmic war: the spiritual struggle between order and disorder, light and darkness, faith and doubt'[25]. This means that any worthwhile war is seen as a 'holy' one, or as an earthly reflection of the conflict between Good and Evil in the other world. In many instances, though, a cynical use of religion by politicians can become the first step toward religious politicisation.

Sacralization of political conflicts entails the demonization of enemies, who become personifications of universal Evil. No sacrifices are too extreme, and negotiation with the enemy becomes impossible. 'We are not fighting so that the enemy recognizes us and offers us something. We are fighting to wipe out the enemy', once said by Hussein Mussawi, the former leader of Lebanon's Hezbollah[26]. This approach often results in indiscriminate acts of religious terrorism or in suicide terrorist attacks.

Thus, political religions can be understood to include not only totalitarian ideologies, but also ideologies that justify political actions through appeals to the supernatural. In other words, political religion is a hybrid of religion and ideology. Most scholars distinguish between political religions and the religions upon which they are originally based by using special terms to designate the former: for example, a political religion based on Islam is called 'Islamism'; some authors also use 'Orthodoxism' (*pravoslavism*) to define political Orthodox Christianity, although this term is not commonly accepted. For many scholars this form of religion seems 'not genuine' in comparison with 'religions as such'. But, in our opinion, the danger of political religions is not their distortion of the 'genuine' dogmas, but the fact that they express religion in terms of 'enemy-friend', thus opening the way for xenophobia and religiously motivated violence.

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[23] Linz, J. J. Der religiöse Gebrauch der Politik und/oder der politische Gebrauch der Religion. Ersatzideologie gegen Ersatzreligion // 'Totalitarismus' und 'Politische Religionen'. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleichs. – Paderborn, etc.: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1996. – P. 138.

[24] Van der Veer, P. Political Religion in the Twenty-first Century // International Order and the Future of World Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. – Pp. 311–327.

[25] Juergensmeyer, M. Sacrifice and Cosmic War // Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World. – London: Frank Cass, 1992. – P. 112.

[26] Quoted in: Hoffman, B. Inside Terrorism. – New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1998. – P. 96.