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SWETLANA POGORELSKAJA. ISLAM AND THE NEW IDENTITY OF GERMANY

Keywords: Germany; Islam; "German Islam"; German identity; hybrid identity; Islamism.

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Abstract. Over the past two decades, the Federal Republic of Germany has been trying hard to integrate its Moslem community into the existing legal order. How did a country that has never had an indigenous Moslem population develop such an extensive and diverse diaspora that the state is forced to seek a dialogue with it? Does Islam influence Germany's new identity?

After analyzing the formation of the diaspora and the forces represented in it, from moderate to Islamist, as well as the changing state policy towards Islam, the author comes to the conclusion that Islam will not be able to become part of the German identity. The state is currently integrating moderate Islam into the existing legal order, cutting off and marginalizing radical parts of the diaspora, which could create prerequisites for strengthening cultural penetration. However, the Moslem diaspora itself is too diverse to have a common identity. It represents different ethnic groups and different, sometimes warring, directions of Islam. "Hybrid identities" as mediums of the introduction of Islam into the public consciousness in Germany are rare, these are persons of intellectual professions or politics. Islam does not have the deep historical roots in the country that Christianity or Judaism have and has not made a decisive cultural contribution to the mentality of society. Missionary activity among Germans, conducted by local Islamists, is crossed out by terrorist attacks of visiting jihadists who seek not to convert, but to fight.

Thus, even if Islam ceases to be a religion of migrants and foreigners, it will not be able to change the identity of Germany in the foreseeable future.

In 2010, the nerve of German society was touched by the words of the Federal President of Germany, conservative politician Christian Wulff, uttered by him in a speech on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the unification of the two

German states: "Islam belongs to Germany."¹ They caused bewilderment not only of his Christian-democratic party members who did not want to see this religion as part of the German identity, but also of a number of radical Islamic organizations in the country who did not want to belong to Germany. Nevertheless, these words best characterized the complex and contradictory situation in which German politics found itself at the beginning of the new millennium in connection with intra-German Islam.

After the terrorist attacks of 11.9.2001, which manifested the final onset of the era of new conflicts, Western democracies for the first time seriously turned to their own Moslem diasporas. During the years of the confrontation of the blocs, the Islamic world stood in the shadow of the conflict of socio-political systems, "socialism" and "capitalism", in the new conditions it became an actor of the "conflict of civilizations". It was a real revelation for the Germans that one of the main participants in the terrorist act in New York, a student Mohammed Atta, who came to Germany from Egypt to study physics, had already become radicalized in Germany, in Hamburg, in circles formed around a local mosque belonging to the radical Islamic union - and was recruited by Al-Qaeda there.

For almost half a century that has passed since the organized entry into Germany of the first Turkish "guest workers" (whose very name implied their temporary, guest status) and, later, political refugees from Islamic countries, a diverse and multi-ethnic Moslem diaspora has spontaneously developed and expanded in the country, with a developed system of not only religious, but also cultural and public organizations and unions covering almost the entire daily life of the Moslem population. As far as the role of Islam in the world process increased, the radical component of this diaspora began to strengthen, the German policy faced the inevitable task of integrating moderate Islam into the state legal order until Islamism integrated it into itself. However, will integrated Islam

become part of the modern German identity? In other words, will Islam in Germany become "German Islam"?²

In the proposed article, the process of integration of Moslems will be considered precisely in an identitarian context. In the proposed article, the process of integration of Moslems will be considered precisely in an identitarian context.

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The question of what is "Germanhood" is a traditional one for German thinking. He occupied poets, thinkers, and politicians as the last two reichs consolidated and was inextricably linked with this consolidation. The tendency of "Germanhood", which arose due to fragmentation, first of all in the cultural, and only then in the state dimension, intensified or vice versa weakened due to the geopolitical situation of the country, changes in its borders, the size of compactly living ethnic groups, first founding themselves "abroad", then again becoming part of the country, as well as due to with the cultural power of the German diasporas.³ Nevertheless, the concept of "cultural nation" has always carried a component of state thinking, implying either the unification of cultural German spaces into a state unity or, if there are no forces or opportunities for this, an identitarian connection of these spaces with Germany.⁴

With the end of the Third Reich, the concept of "blood" and "soil" was ousted from political usage, as well as a number of more harmless concepts that discredited themselves due to their use by Hitlerism. An integral part of the new German identity planted with the support of the Western allies was a sense of guilt, the so-called "historical guilt" for the outbreak of the Second World War and for the crimes of Hitlerism. "National" concepts (for example, "national interests") were tabooed, the very topic of "Germanhood" was ousted from public discourse and was not discussed in the circles considered "decent"⁵. Even the patriotism of the West Germans was prescribed not national,

but “constitutional”, which meant – loyalty not to the national state and not to the national idea, but to the democratic constitution of the country, its Basic Law.⁶

The public, and consequently, scientific and political discourse of West Germany on issues of “Germanhood” in the years when the Moslem diaspora was spontaneously forming in the country, was determined by the intellectuals of the Frankfurt school (from Adorno to Habermas). “The gloomy heart” (as Travni figuratively writes) of the German identity professed by the public [Trawny, p. 25] since Adorno's time has been Auschwitz, i.e. German historical guilt. In these conditions, to infringe foreigners, and moreover the poor and underdeveloped, but friendly in their cultural diversity, seemed simply unthinkable. And there was no particular interest in them. After all, immigration legislation was built in such a way that, with all the liberality in matters of cultural habits and the right to their identities, it was not easy for a foreigner to settle in the country on a permanent basis.

Indeed, having been rejected by principled policy, the concept of “blood” remained in immigration legislation, albeit in a formal form. In any case, the right to be accepted by the country immediately for permanent residence and with all types of social security was granted only to Germans who lived abroad precisely as Germans by blood, who preserved the language and culture and were able to prove it. Moreover, in the era of the confrontation of the blocs, the provision on “late migrants”, i.e. Germans entering the country after the massive and forced relocations of the first post-war years opened the doors to Germany to Germans from Eastern Europe and even from the former USSR.

Germany did not accept other foreigners on a permanent basis. The possibility of naturalization was carried out through individual loopholes such as family reunification, marriages, through business, less often through long-term labor relations. Less often because foreigners, after the ban on the import of labor

in 1973⁷, were taken for terms that did not exceed the time after which they could apply for a permanent residence permit with a work visa. Since such naturalization took place every time in individual cases and the main concern of the foreign affairs services was to reduce the number of such cases, the state did not provide for the systematic integration of new residents into the German legal, civil and cultural space. The costs of integration justify themselves only if the state is a so-called "host country", i.e. it has criteria by which it accepts large contingents of foreign migrants for permanent residence.

Thus, the mass of the Moslem population, except for a small number of naturalized, in West German times, and in the first years after reunification, was considered to be temporarily staying in the country. In this temporality, there formed the permanence of the diaspora, which has been living in the country for generations, but is not part of it.

The formal "temporary" stay of the Moslem population in the country, on the one hand, made life easier for the state – there was no need to take care of the integration of these masses, it was enough to monitor the status of stay and expel those whose status for stay had expired. On the other hand, it, having passed, so to speak, into a state of "permanent temporality", led to the creation of parallel societies. The Moslem community had almost all the infrastructure necessary for life – from consumer, to public and even educational. Since Islam was not taught in schools as part of the subject "religion", school-age children attended Koran schools in mosques (which were maintained by Moslem unions and received mullahs from abroad). There were also private schools for Moslems, for example, the famous King Fahd Academy in Bonn, maintained by the Saudis on a plot of land belonging to them. According to German intelligence services, many Islamists known to them sent their children to this school⁸.

The structure of the diaspora was impenetrable, whole "caliphates" were created in its depths, for example, around the Kaplan family from Turkey. Metin Kaplan, the famous "Caliph of

Cologne", lived in Germany for decades, like his father Jemaledin, with the status of a "political refugee", and in Turkey was wanted for terrorism⁹. When the German state finally took up Islam, it was Metin who was cited by the media as a "hate preacher" (Hassprädiger) – in his sermons for many years he called on the flock to "turn their children into the tip of a spear aimed at the infidels."

Various organizations of the Moslem population were united in unions. The largest, "Ditib", the union of that part of the Turkish diaspora loyal to both Germany and Turkey, which makes up its majority and originates from "guest workers", is directly connected with the Turkish state and received muftis appointed from Turkey to its mosques. Another major union of the Turkish diaspora, Milli Gerush, on the contrary, represented radical forces in opposition to the Turkish regime and in its origins united those who lived in the country with the status of "political refugees". Many of its member organizations are under the supervision of special services because of their Islamism.

In addition, there were smaller unions representing other branches of Islam and other ethnic groups. Most of the unions are united into two competing parent organizations, the Islamic Council of Germany, which unites mainly Turkish Sunni organizations and the Central Council of Moslems of Germany, in which Arab Islam is mainly represented.

The identity processes within the Moslem community were of little interest to the state and society, except that by the mid-1990s sociologists noticed that, unlike the second and third generation of "guest workers", who sought to integrate into the life of Germany at a higher level than the parents standing at the factory conveyors, and gave the diaspora a galaxy of Turkish teachers, doctors, journalists and even politicians, the fourth generation, the youth, have the opposite development – adherence to their Turkish identity and Islam, and, often, in a radical form.

These processes were most often explained by the crisis of identity, life between two countries as different as Turkey and Germany, connected primarily with the fact that the majority in the diaspora did not have German citizenship, but some form of residence permit, which should be regularly renewed. In addition, the diaspora was constantly replenished with new members, since both wives and husbands of children who grew up in Germany were preferably taken from Turkey, from those rural regions the first “guest workers” once came from. In addition, with the coming to power of Erdogan, the Turkish state began to pay special attention to compatriots living in Germany, Erdogan himself, while in Germany on official visits, used them several times to address the Turkish diaspora with calls not to forget his roots.

Theorists tried to find a kind of “hybrid identity”¹⁰ that harmoniously connects ethnic origin and German socialization, but just in the case of the fourth generation of the Turkish diaspora, this concept did not work. Suffice it to say that a significant part of young men, according to polls, considered Erdogan¹¹ their president, while as for Merkel, they simply did not perceive her as the head of state. “We are Germany!” – tens of thousands of Turks chanted in Cologne in 2016, enthusiastically welcoming Erdogan¹². One can also recall how many threats from the Diaspora were received by Turkish Bundestag deputies (mainly from the Green Party) who voted in 2016 in a resolution in connection with the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire¹³.

Thus, the concept of “multiculturalism”, or, as left liberals affectionately called it, “multi-culti”, was accepted by both the state and society, and the reasons for which “multi-culti” was tolerated were mutually exclusive. The socio-political mainstream, defined by left-liberal intellectuals and the dogma of German historical guilt, understood the new “Germanhood” as a principled openness to other peoples and cultures, while immigration legislation allowed us to hope that all these peoples

and cultures would not stay in Germany for a long time. In essence, "multi-cultists" meant peaceful and friendly coexistence within the framework of one state of many widely understood "cultures" (religion was also considered a "cultural feature"), of course, on the basis of a common legal order for all.

For a long time, the Moslem community lived in a "rounded" state and the authorities did not care about it. It became bad when a butterfly fluttered out of the chrysalis – Islam in Germany became so strong, that it felt entitled to declare its claims against the state and, moreover, to start a mission to the "infidels". If in 2004 (the year of the adoption of the new immigration law) more than 3 million Moslems lived in Germany (of which only 750,000 had German citizenship) and about 3,000 mosques worked (of which about 100 were under the supervision of special services in connection with the propaganda of Islamism)¹⁴, then in subsequent years their number grew, moreover, Christian churches abandoned due to lack of flock began to be converted into mosques. Turkish parents who professed Islam increasingly filed lawsuits against schools, demanding that their daughters be exempted from swimming lessons or overnight excursions, Moslem women conducted lawsuits against employers, demanding permission to wear a hijab at work, moreover, Moslem lawyers began to refer to "sharia" as part of identity in the courts.

The strengthening of Islamic consciousness within the country went hand in hand with the increasing importance of the Islamic factor in the global political process. Of course, open Islamism and Jihadism in Germany was constantly in the field of view of the special services, but the problem was publicly recognized only after 11.9.2001, when it became known that one of the main perpetrators of the terrorist act, Mohamed Ata, a student from Egypt who studied physics in Hamburg, became radicalized and contacted Al-Qaeda emissaries already in Germany, in Islamist circles, "hanging out" around the local mosque, maintained at that time by the "Arab Cultural Union"¹⁵.

A new law on entry and stay (2004), prepared for a long time, but discussed for many years in the Bundestag and hindered by the Federation Council, was urgently adopted. It linked naturalization with integration. The concept of “multi-culti” began to be curtailed, albeit with great difficulty, overcoming serious resistance from left-wing intellectuals. It was only in 2010 that Merkel publicly confirmed its complete rejection¹⁶.

It was impossible to expel the mass that had accumulated for decades using the methods of the rule of law: the process of expelling Metin Kaplan alone, despite the frank Islamic radicalism and the hostility of this “political refugee” to the constitutional system of Germany, lasted for several years. In addition, not all radicals were migrants. Many already had German roots, and some, for example, the famous Salafist Pierre Vogel, were ethnic Germans who converted to Islam.

Therefore, in its new policy towards Islam, the state has gone the only right way in this situation – negotiations and integration. Since 2007, the Permanent Institute of Dialogue – the Islamic Conference (DIK, Deutsche Islam Konferenz) has been operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The largest Islamic unions¹⁷ were invited to participate in it, as well as intellectuals of the Moslem faith who represented Moslems who were not covered by the organization. The state has taken a course towards the inhibition of integrated Islam, offering it a number of amenities in exchange for some concessions. Non-integrated Islam was subject to political marginalization and quiet suffocation in legal ways. Over the years that have passed since the beginning of the Islamic Conference (a work complicated by contradictions between the changing leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the unions participating in the conference), it was nevertheless possible to agree on the training of muftis in Germany (preachers from abroad are the main source of radicalization), and in the meantime, on an exam for the knowledge of the German language for visitors. Several Islamic unions (belonging to the

Ahmadiyya Jamaat) have received, by virtue of their orderly structure, the status of “corporations of public law”, which gives a number of benefits in cooperation with the state.

The marginalization of non-integrated Islam was carried out mainly in the course of the fight against Islamic terrorism, and not only with outspoken jihadists, but with the entire logistics of Islamism formed in Germany over the years of “multicultural” life. In other words, Islamists are being not only in the implementation of their radicalism, but in everything, even in their public projects aimed at Germans, for example, the famous Salafist missionary project “Read!” was suffocated on the ways of banning its organization, the True Religion group¹⁸.

The migration crisis, which changed the composition of the diaspora in favor of Arab Islam, brought to Germany young jihadists who were not integrated even into the local Islamist landscape and, for the first time, terrorist actions inside the country, the largest one occurred in 2016 at the Christmas Market in Berlin¹⁹. From 2016 to 2021, the German special services, which created a special “Joint Center for the Prevention of Terrorism”²⁰ in Berlin, prevented 11 Islamist attempts²¹, strengthened control over the entire “Islamist scene”, i.e. the entire circle, in one way or another associated with Islamism, as well as sympathizers with it. According to the intelligence services, in the Islamist landscape of Germany there are currently represented salafist, jihadist and legalist groups, not counting just radical youth, from among whom future terrorists are mainly recruited²². Moreover, in the intra-German Islamist scene, the number of motivated young women is growing, primarily taking on the “home office”, working on the Internet²³.

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So can Islam become part of Germany? There is no unity on this issue even in the ministry, which oversees the Islamic Conference. Wolfgang Schaeuble (CDU), under whose leadership

the conference was created, was convinced that this was the case²⁴. The next minister, Thomas de Maiziere (CDU), was no longer convinced, and the minister of Merkel's last government, Horst Seehofer (CSU), said that "Islam does not belong to Germany,"²⁵ at the same time advocating at the meetings of the Islamic Conference for "German Islam", meaning own, prepared in Germany, muftis and sermons in German²⁶.

Reflecting on whether German identity, as it was officially planted in Germany (through the Federal Center for Political Education, Politics, Media, public Discourse), had an impact on Moslems living in the country, it should be noted that so far this impact has been minimal. Being forced to accept the existing legal order, as well as using liberal values to their advantage, Moslems (with the exception of a small number of intellectuals and politicians) did not approve of such special components of modern German identity as tolerance of sexual minorities, collective historical guilt of Germans for crimes of National Socialism or friendship with Israel. In their rejection of Israel, for example, Arab Islamists often clashed with the German ultra-right²⁷. In addition, the Moslem community in Germany is constantly growing and being replenished by migrants from countries where radical Islam is widespread.

The complex and lengthy processes of changing German identity after the reunification of the two German states and in the course of the "fusion" of the new and old federal lands together, as well as the transition from the "Bonn" to the "Berlin" republic, have so far practically not affected the self-contained and self-interested Moslems of Germany.

Reflecting on the possible impact of Islam on German identity, the following important points should be noted.

In the German case, firstly, it makes no sense to talk about the "Islamic identity" of the diaspora as such. Due to the peculiarities of its formation in Germany, it represents different ethnic groups and, accordingly, different, sometimes warring, directions of Islam. Before the immigration crisis in 2014-2016,

about 63percent of Moslems living in Germany were Turks. They were followed by Arabs, Bosnians, Pakistanis, Afghans, Chechens, Kosovo Albanians and Germans who converted to Islam. Accordingly, Turkish Sunnis prevailed quantitatively, followed by Shiites (Alevites, Iranian Imamites, Turkish Shiites, Ismailis), Ahmadis, Sufi groups. Having received more than a million Moslems at once in 2015–2016, Germany became the owner of not only the largest Moslem diaspora in Europe (5.6 million people, which corresponds to 6.7 percent of the total population²⁸), but also the most diverse one. This multiethnic diaspora does not have its own integral identity.

Because of this (and because of the peculiarities of Islam) it cannot even, in its own interests, create a single parent organization for negotiations with the state on the most important issues of its daily functioning²⁹, let alone somehow purposefully influence the established identity of society in the country of residence.

Secondly, “hybrid identities” in the German case are a rare phenomenon inherent mainly in Moslem liberal intellectuals, politicians, persons of intelligent professions, such as doctors or teachers, or German convertides. The identities of the majority of the Moslem population of the country do not include German components, despite living in Germany, but are tied to the country of origin, the professed direction of Islam and the measure of its radicality.

Thirdly, Islam, even if its integrated unions, ready to cooperate with the state, succeed in obtaining the status of “corporations of public law”, and with it the conditions of functioning in the legal field similar to those in which the confessions recognized in Germany operate, will not become part of the modern German identity. Not only because it is the identity of a secular state governed by the rule of law, but also because Islam does not have the deep historical roots in the country that Christianity or Judaism have. It is not historically the religion of any part of the indigenous population and has not,

accordingly, made a defining cultural contribution to the mentality of society. The heterogeneity of Islam represented in the country is another obstacle on this path. Passionarity is broken by internal conflicts in the diaspora, missionary activity among Germans, lovingly nurtured and implemented by generations of Islamists who settled in Germany, is crossed out by terrorist attacks by visiting jihadist “scumbags” who seek not to convert, but to fight.

Thus, even if it “belongs” to Germany, i.e. ceasing to be the religion of migrants, refugees and foreigners and entering the intra-German confessional community, Islam will not be able to change the identity of Germany in the foreseeable future, provided that the state does not change its policy - cutting off radicals, consistently integrating moderate organizations and unions into the existing constitutional order and into German (European) political and civic culture.

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- 6 The most famous authors in the topic of constitutional patriotism: Dolph Sternberger (conservative option), Jurgen Habermas (left-liberal option).

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