



Does It Mean You're Radical If You Have a Beard and Don't Eat Baguettes?

Review of: E.I. Filippova and J. Radwani, eds. 2017. *Religii i radikalizm v postsekuliarnom mire* [Religions and radicalism in the postsecular world]. Moscow: IEA RAN (in Russian). — 330 p.

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This book was one of the results of the fruitful Russian-French dialogue on topical issues of social anthropology, launched in 2005 by the Institute of Ethnology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Cultures (*INALCO*, France). The publication was preceded by a seminar on interreligious interaction between France and Russia, which took place on October 28–29, 2016, the materials of which are presented at the end of the book.

This collection claims a comprehensive understanding of radicalism in the post-secular world. The authors managed to present the rich texture of interaction between the state and various religious communities in Russia and France. The editors — Elena Filippova and Jean Radva-

ni — have done a great deal of work on understanding such a wide thematic field and attracting the most appropriate materials. Despite the fact that most of the book is devoted to Islam (which has already become a traditional tendency when focusing on the problem of radicalism), it also shows the relevant manifestations in Christianity. The book is divided into four parts: a detailed editorial introduction, in which E. Filippova sets the conceptual framework for the entire publication and J. Radvani analyzes the limits of comparability of the French and Russian experience; a first part, which is devoted to the interaction between religion and the state; the second part on interconfessional contacts and general problems concerning the relationship between religion and society; and final-

ly, the third part, on religiousness and modern forms of radicalism. However, these parts do not equally contribute to the general idea of the book.

In the introduction, Elena Filippova examines the concepts of postsecularity and post-religiosity, which she believes are the most suitable to describe the current situation. Referring to D. Uzlaner she notes that “the clear boundaries between religious and secular, established within the framework of the secular paradigm, are violated” (7). Speaking about the change in religious identity, she cites B. Turner’s thesis that modern conversions “are more like a change of consumer brands than the result of deep spiritual searches” (9). Finally, Filippova argues that “the line linking the current growth of fundamentalism to the conservative protest against the cultural postmodern with its relativism and the absence of inviolable truths can be more productive” than searching for a causal relationship between religiousness and radicalism (13). The erosion of the core of religion (if it is understood in terms of modern history) and the misunderstanding of dogmatism is mentioned in several articles from the second part, and the change in the boundaries between the religious and secular in the first part. However,

the problem is that the authors of the articles themselves rarely appeal to these concepts (with a few exceptions), and all these (undoubtedly valuable) theoretical constructs are detached from the main part of the book.

In his brief review, Jean Radvani searches for similar moments in the French and Russian experience of interaction between the state and religious organizations. He was able to identify the areas that allow for the most productive comparison: first, the diversity of the Muslim population; second, the problem of the integration of Muslims; third, the problem of radicalization, or, in his words, the “increased deformation of political Islam and its consequences”; and finally, the fight against Islam-related extremism. In my opinion, the author has managed to define very precisely the main vectors of discussion on this issue — and not only within the framework of this book.

In the first part, Alain Christnacht presented a detailed and exhaustive overview of how the attitude of the French state toward different faiths has changed since the French Revolution. Roman Lunkin, based on an analysis of the legal framework and the practice of law enforcement in Russia, reveals the contradictions of “Orthodox statehood.” In his view, the

Law on Freedom of Conscience, adopted in 1997, as well as the set of amendments called the “Yarovaya Package,” which intensified the discussion of the dominance of “traditional” religions in Russia, became particular points of no return. The author calls this phenomenon a phenomenon of “mono-religion,” which emerged “as a result of the atheistic policy of the Soviet period, which led to the eradication of national religiosity and impoverishment of the religious diversity of Russia” (41).

Katie Rousselet echoes Lunkin’s arguments. Looking at the relationship between spirituality and religiosity in late Soviet society and then in Russian society in the 1990s, she draws an important conclusion: the term decoupling is applicable only in a limited way to Russian society (especially if, following B. Turner, one distinguishes between political and social secularization). In fact, atheism and “clericalization” are two sides of the same coin. “Religion is an integral element of a certain form of government, made possible by the reconstruction of the identity initiated by the elites and quickly taken up by the entire society (53) . . . religiosity participates in the construction of the post-Soviet state, just as state atheism participated in the construction of the Soviet state” (57). Therefore,

one should not contrast the Soviet experience to the post-Soviet one, but, on the contrary, look for continuity and similarities, which is what the author has managed to do, giving numerous historical and contemporary examples of interaction between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia.

The interaction between the Muslim community and the Russian state is covered only by the example of Tatarstan (obviously, this is due to the participation of Kazan [Volga] Federal University in the project), which, of course, does not reflect the entire palette of such interactions in different regions. It is much more worrying that authors of two of the articles devoted to Tatarstan take a clear state-centric position. In his text, Azat Akhunov describes in detail the history of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Tatarstan (DUM RT) from 1998 to the present day. The collection of facts is impressive: the author examines in detail the events of the unification congress of the Muslims of Tatarstan in 1998, but there are no references to any historical research or documents. Among the sources there are separate speeches by Muslim leaders of Tatarstan and newspaper articles. The emphasis placed on the narrative reveals the author’s desire to idealize the pri-

macy of the state in state-confessional relations. Thus, Akhunov proceeds from the unsubstantiated notion that “power in the understanding of an ordinary Tatar is sacral; on this basis, perhaps, sometimes, there were proposals to appoint state officials to the highest religious posts” (70). Akhunov characterizes the situation of “powerlessness” in the Muslim community of Tatarstan as follows: “We had to act forcefully, otherwise we could have lost control over the situation.” However, this was avoided due to M. Shaimiev’s intervention in the course of preparation of the unification congress of Muslims of 1998, which was to decide who would head the DUM RT — the “candidate from the government” or a representative of the opposition wing. The author goes on speaking about destabilization or, on the contrary, stabilization through the intervention of Shaimiev’s firm hand. Akhunov comes to the following conclusion: “The relations that have developed between the authorities and Islam have so far yielded positive results and, as noted above, are positively assessed by the Muslim ummah of Tatarstan and are perceived as fair” (79). Although this position is quite popular, especially among Tatar researchers, it still requires justification. To speak about the features inherent in a nation means

to stand on extremely unstable ground; moreover, it is unreasonable to use such statements as an argument to justify the necessity and usefulness of state interference in the religious sphere. This requires stronger arguments based on sociological or other data that are not available in this study.

Reseda Safiullina also notes in her article “the positive nature of the State’s interference in the affairs of religion.” However, then she wonders whether this situation suits those Muslims “who tend to have an official religious structure.” What about the “mass of Muslims who disagree with many provisions” of the DUM? (84) The answer is self-evident — there is a need for more discussion, including on theological issues. However, Safiullina believes that this should be a real discussion, not a simulation. Otherwise, “the wide spreading idea about merging of the republican authorities, security forces and the official clergy will turn to impenetrable barriers between ordinary Muslims and state institutions. As a result, all dissenters will be driven into the underground” (87). It turns out that a productive discussion between representatives of the Muslim community loyal to the authorities is impossible, but it is also impossible between “traditionalists,” because there is a theo-

logical split among them, since “the Hanafi tradition is no longer presented as something unified, monolithic, but as a multifaceted tradition in which accents can be placed in different ways” (87). In public discussion there is criticism of the medieval scholastic approach. Initially, the problem of “recreating the Russian theological school” was put at the forefront. Therefore, speaking about the most adequate way out of the current situation, the author refers to D.-H. Mukhetdinov’s thesis about the change of hadithocentricity to Koranocentrism. Thus, it all comes down to unifying the religious field — this time by creating a unified theological school.

It is worth noting that both A. Akhunov and R. Safiullina appeal to the constitutional principle of separation of religion and state. But both also justify the violation of this principle, on the one hand, by referring to the “positive” consequences of state interference in the life of religious communities, and on the other hand, to M. Shaimiev’s assertion that “religion is separated from the state, but not separated from society” (82).

The second part of the book is designed to show the diversity of interfaith interaction in society. And the articles in this section use a great numbers of facts: almost every author cites data from

sociological surveys and relies on interviews and other field research. At the same time, it is disappointing that sometimes either the conclusions are trivial (“thus, moods of protest are an integral part of the religious life of the Muslim and Christian communities of Karachaevo-Cherkessia. . . . On the whole, the population demonstrates a fairly high resistance to the influence of destructive ideologies” — from the article by Yevgeny and Natalia Kratova, p. 188), or there are no conclusions at all, and the authors are limited to fairly flat statistics (for example, the works of Titova and Kozlov, as well as Olga Pavlova). The article by Guzelia Guzelbaeva abounds in quotations from interviews with informants, but the overall picture is not clear: first, the social status of informants is not specified (although both the general public and experts were interviewed), and secondly, interesting field materials are undoubtedly followed by almost no meaningful conclusions. Conceptual summaries or discussions of the identified problems are often absent.

Liliya Sagitova describes in detail the place of Islam in the modern public space of Tatarstan. It is one of the best examples of the description of the realities of Tatarstan in this edition. The author draws attention to the discussion within the elite about

the understanding of the modern role of Islam and the mechanisms of social integration of Muslims, as well as noting the problem of the stigmatization of Muslims (a very illustrative example is news about the so-called “Sharia patrol,” as well as the movement “Russian jogging for a healthy lifestyle”¹). However, Sagitova also fails to avoid some alarmism when it comes to “the risks of Islamic globalization,” which “may lead to the loss of the historically established Islamic theological tradition of the Tatars, divide the Muslim ummah of Tatarstan, and contribute to the formation of Muslim sects of extremist orientation” (97).

A rather interesting portrait of interfaith dialogue in Adygea is presented by Irina Babich. Alexander Martynenko uses the example of the village of Belozer’e to show the life of “the enclave of the Tatar-Muslim culture in the Volga region . . . the Muslim enclave in the Republic of Mor-dovia.” Against the general background, the work of Alena Guskova, who focused on the poorly studied area of interaction between Muslims and Christians of

the Moscow region, is particularly notable. Through numerous interviews, she shows how tolerant the two religious groups are of each other and also reveals an important issue on which their opinions are shared: the question of the transmission of traditions. “An incorrect understanding of the dogma of ‘ethnic’ Christians and Muslims, failure to observe the requirements of religion, lack of interest in the issues of faith among young people, mixed marriages in which unbelief is chosen over faith — these problems were common” (202).

The third part of the book seems to be the most successful, as the authors were able not only to consider the various aspects of radicalism in detail, but also to set the direction of further discussion and even enter into polemics among themselves.

Sylvia Serrano points out that the goals and methods of fighting radicalism are distorted by the wrong definition of the subject field of radicalization by the French authorities. Their main mistake, according to Serrano, is an attempt to unify this field and create a kind of average image of a radical based on supposedly similar sociological characteristics. “As a rule, the authorities tend to describe the process of radicalization as a certain path consisting of a series of events

1. In January 2014 in Tatarstan “Sharia patrols” appeared, which attacked people that “didn’t live according to Sharia” in their point of view. As an answer some days later the group “Russian jogging for a healthy lifestyle” appeared, which attacked participants of the “Sharia patrols.”

and crucial contacts, which can be modeled” (221). They prefer this way as it simplifies the formulation of tasks to counter radicalism, but it is not productive. As Serrano notes, ultimately, this approach leads to imagining that “a reluctance to eat baguette or go to the pool is a prerequisite for radicalization” (225). First and foremost, Islam is at risk, as “a radical person’ stigmatizes Islam as a religion incompatible with French society.” Is it possible to overcome this situation? To answer this question, Serrano presents a classic polemic by Olivier Roy and Gilles Kepel. The first insists on the need to address the phenomenon of the “Islamization of radicalism” in its entirety, while the second considers political violence the result of the radicalization of Islam. As a result, she states that “the content of antiradicalization programs is rather in line with G. Kepel’s concept” (223).

The editors of the collection, apparently, following S. Serrano, support the position of Olivier Roy, as his text is in the collection, but Gilles Kepel’s is not. It is hardly necessary to dwell on this text, which contains information about hundreds of people who have participated in terrorist attacks in France. Once again, Roy defends the position he has expressed in many works: there is no single psychological,

political, or other portrait of a jihadist; at best, there are some similar sociological characteristics and nothing more. Each specific case is unique. “They [jihadists] do not share its [modern society’s] values, but share its sociological characteristics: the couple is the main cell. Therefore, a jihadist often goes the way of desocialization with his wife or girlfriend, in order to reconstruct a micro-society in the company of brothers and sisters in arms” (257). The myth of brainwashing for Muslim women is also breaking down, as it does not take into account such components of individual behavior as personal freedom and political choice.

However, the trend toward simplifications based on various classifications and typologies is attractive not only for civil servants engaged in the development of counter-radicalization programs, but also in the academic environment. Thus, the article by Samir Amgar and Samy Zenyani completely contradicts the theses set forth by O. Roy. In their article, they offer a seemingly exhaustive classification of modern Salafism: quietist (based on the principles of purification of religion from innovation and education of Muslims to give up bad customs), political (defending a “militant and political understanding of Islam in the spirit of

the Muslim Brotherhood”), and revolutionary (calling for jihad in the form of armed struggle). The main weakness of such theoretical constructions is their limited factual basis. Thus, it appears as if the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is no different from its “western branch” and the regional diversity of the movement’s activities is not taken into account. The authors also emphasize the “symbolic protest” of Salafists, which is allegedly expressed in their appearance: “It is typical to wear long traditional robes, hats on the head and beards” (272). The failure of this thesis is clearly illustrated by the texts of Serrano and Roy.

How do we find the balance between the dangerous simplifications that lead to the neglect of significant aspects of social reality and the analysis of each case in the spirit of Olivier Roy? It is probably necessary to investigate similarities in the activity of these or those movements or separate persons, but not to construct them as an absolute, pretending to an exhaustive explanation. In his article, Akhmet Yarlykapov focuses on this very issue. Long years of ethnographic work allow him to speak with full confidence about the mosaic of the Islamic field in Russia as the most important factor to be taken into account when building a dialogue between the state

and the Muslim community, especially in light of what is happening in the Middle East. In his article, he discusses in detail the new security challenges posed by the Islamic State and the possible ways in which the state can respond to these challenges. The author comes to the conclusion that this “mosaic” of the Muslim community in Russia should also give rise to a kind of “mosaic” of measures taken by the state: it is necessary not only to support the DUM, but also “to involve in cooperation another part of the Islamic field, growing more and more, which for a long time remained outside the partnership due to the lack of official status” (248); and, of course, it is necessary to consistently implement the principle of equidistance of the state from all Muslim organizations in order to assert the principle of secularism (some authors who have presented their research on Tatarstan in this collection argue otherwise).

Victor Shnirelman presents a picture of radicalism associated with Orthodox traditionalists and fundamentalists. Using several cases he analyzes various manifestations and dynamics of radical movements that use the rhetoric of traditional values and Orthodoxy. He examines in detail the activities of the Orthodox national teams that emerged after

the “punk prayer service,” the pogrom in the Manege on August 14, 2015, the program for the construction of 200 churches in Moscow and related activities of the organization “Sorok Sorokov.” Most of the article is devoted to discussion about the film *Mathilde*. The factual basis of this research, which allows the author to draw original and, undoubtedly, strongly supported conclusions about the new cultural boundaries in the Russian public space, is striking.

Finally, Anne-Sophie Lamine calls for an examination of the multifaceted nature of radicalism from the perspective of social

psychology. She shows how the attitudes of “faith-identity” and “faith-confidence” influence manifestations of radicalism.

The undoubted merit of the book’s editors is that they managed to gather such different points of view in one collection and literally “dissect” the problems of interaction between the state and religious communities. Updating the discussion on many painful issues of French and Russian society is, perhaps, the greatest success of the publication under consideration.

S. Ragozina

M. Iu. Smirnov, ed. 2017. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' sotsiologii religii* [Encyclopedic dictionary of the sociology of religion]. Saint Petersburg: Platonovskoe Filosofskoe Obshchestvo (in Russian). — 508 p.

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There is no question that the editor-in-chief of this publication, Yuri Smirnov, and the circle of authors representing established, well-respected post-Soviet religious studies, proceeded from the best motives and spent a lot of effort to make a useful book. The result was ambiguous: sometimes impeccably solid, but in general not very clear and sometimes even strange. While some articles are thoughtfully and pro-

fessionally written, and some important sociological theories and names are adequately presented and have reference and educational value, it is still not quite clear how to use this book.

The original design itself is questionable. The very idea of arranging everything alphabetically — names, concepts, organizations — as is usually done in large universal encyclopedias, does not seem to be a very ap-