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**PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEMS OF PREVENTING AND
CONTROLLING RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM
AMONG YOUTH**

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Abstract

The article deals with some pedagogical aspects of prevention and control of religious extremism among youth. An attempt is made to show the role and significance for civilizational mentality of the data contained in the monotheistic Holy Scriptures (the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran) in preventing and countering religious extremism and terrorism among youth. The features are described of the religious perception of the world (paganism and monotheism) that distinguish them from the scientific perception of the world whose inevitable advent is predicted by monotheistic Scriptures. The author urges the need for modern pedagogy to rethink its attitude to the Holy Scriptures and determine their place in the country's educational space. The scientific worldview recognizes dissenting opinions, discussion and debate as key methods of cognizing the world. Therefore, it espoused by a significant part of humanity today do not offer "faith in the simplicity of the heart" and do not invoke "authorities" in the field of theology or science and scientific schools. The article demonstrates that the Scriptures are best capable of demonstrating to the youth the logical and inevitable change of people's civilizational mentality and adoption of a tolerant attitude not only to religious beliefs, but to others' opinions, position and way of life as long they do not break the national laws.

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1. Introduction

In the past two or three decades contemporary pedagogy in this country has been confronted with some fundamentally new challenges and formidable problems that need to be addressed immediately. I am referring to extremism and terrorism among the youth. These include skinheads, the mounting AUE (first letters of the Russian words Prison Code is One, alternatively Prisoner-Hoodlum Unity) movement in the eastern parts of the country and various Natsiki (nationalistic) groups. Problems connected with religious extremism and terrorism are the greatest cause for concern. They pose the most serious security threat to the nation both in terms of the number of people involved in religious extremist and terrorist organizations and in terms of the number of criminal acts they perpetrate. (A History of Ancient Rome, 1982; Coulanges, 2010)

2. Problem Statement

These problems, of course did not exist in the USSR with its state ideology of militant atheism. Consequently, modern pedagogy in this country has no previous experience or research results to fall back on. Pedagogy outside Russia, too, does not have enough experience in this sphere due to many reasons, of which more will be said anon. The existing studies of the problem from the legal, sociological and other angles are, first, highly superficial because they do not touch upon the underlying historical, civilizational and other causes and sources of these phenomena which are extremely destructive of the modern world. Second, they are not very helpful to modern pedagogy and the education and awareness system in terms of counteracting and preventing religious extremism and terrorism at school, university and among the youth in general.

Below we present our experience and our vision of the main approaches to preventing and countering religious extremism and terrorism in our country and accumulated in the process of re-socialization of the people convicted of religious extremism and terrorism and serving prison sentences.

3. Research Questions

Let us state from the outset that an overwhelming majority of those who choose the path of extremism and terrorism are young people aged between 17 and 25. (Coulanges, 2010; Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, 2015).

Not finding any support for their ideas of justice, spiritual brotherhood and a harmonious order in the surrounding world, they flatly reject the ways of life that the country and the world have to offer. They believe that the most effective way to solve the problems of being in the modern world is through religious perception of the world and religious law. Secondly, they mistrust the traditional, officially recognized religious organizations because they think that they are in the service of the state regime and are therefore incapable of solving not only their personal, but also the social problems facing the whole country. Thirdly, the all-or-nothing attitude characteristic of youth leads them to believe that social well-being cannot be achieved within the framework of existing constitutions and under current regimes. They believe that the government should be toppled, through violence if necessary, in order to build a theocratic state based on the Lord's behests, laws and commandments clearly formulated in the

Scriptures. Fourth, most of them have a very vague idea of the historical roots of religious views and of the tasks religions have been wrestling with throughout the existence of man. This is no accident because the issues of mental development of people and ideological principles of the existence of states have in recent decades been neglected by the systems of education and upbringing of the young generation not only in this country, but in many other countries. Suffice it to say that it was only fifteen years ago that Russia passed the law On Counteracting Extremist Activities under the pressure of the problems that had piled up. (Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, 2011; Descartes' Philosophy in Brief)

Fifth, we have come to the conclusion that young people who have embarked on the path of extremism and terrorism under the influence of their "spiritual mentors" can be made to change their mind only proceeding from the texts of the Holy Scriptures. They command unassailable authority. They can be neither refuted nor questioned.

4. Purpose of the Study

Needless to say, it is impossible within a single article to cover all the pedagogically significant aspects of counteracting and preventing religious extremism and terrorism. Nor is it possible to chart the main paths of preventing and counteracting them in the national education system. So we thought it would be best, in this article, to look at the sources of religious extremism and terrorism. The reasons are, first, that they show those who embraced extremism and terrorism why the modern world has come to perceive religious extremism and terrorism as not merely destructive phenomena, but as criminal acts. Second, they explain the motivations of religious terrorist acts observed in various parts of our planet. Third, they make it possible to develop a system of effective pedagogical (educational) measures of influencing the young generation in order to instill in them a thoughtful and conscious attitude to the essence of the social processes ongoing in the modern world that engender extremism and terrorism. Accordingly, sub-adults come to reject not only religious extremism and terrorism, but also manifestations of extremism and terrorism in every sphere of human activity.

5. Research Methods

The research methods used are traditional for pedagogy: observation, analysis of research and empirical material on the topic and its critical assessment and generalization. It would be helpful to define some words and concepts that occur in the text of the article and are variously understood and interpreted in modern specialized and general dictionaries. By "civilization" I mean "the level of social development, material and spiritual culture achieved by a given socio-economic system" (Diccionario CLAVE, 2012).

"Mentality" denotes the intellectual and spiritual qualities of people in their interconnectedness and unity. In turn, the main meanings of the word "spirituality" (dukhovnost') include the features of a person's world view that influences that person's psychological (mental) reaction to the events in the surrounding world and the person's habitual behavior in various situations.

As I have written in my previous works humankind has lived through three main types of world perception and behavior: pagan, monotheistic and, in the past two or three centuries, what we call "scientific perception of the world." That does not include mixed (transitional) types.

This classification is basically similar to what the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran say about three types of people's perception of the world and behavior. These are people with pagan mentality who, according to the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran, lived in the era of "ignorance" (The Bible. Books of the Old and New Testaments. (1995) New Testament, Acts. 17:30; The Quran, 10th ed., 2008, Surah 33:33). Then came people with monotheistic mentality who worshipped the One God, Creator of "heaven, earth and man himself." They included the followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They were to be followed, according to the Scriptures, by people who, according to St. Paul, had the mentality of the Heavenly Father: "The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven." (The Quran, 2008, pp. 45-52).

As for the concept of "religion," in the majority of modern languages the main meaning implies a certain perception of the world (world view) which predetermines the person's mental state, emotional reactions to the phenomena and events of the surrounding world which also influence the person's behavior in various situations. The world perception of religious people is based on their faith in the existence of God (gods) or other terrestrial or extra-terrestrial forces that control the world and directly influence a man's fate. What is of key importance is that a religious man's behavior strictly complies with the norms and rules envisaged by the corresponding Scriptures. Therefore the semantic fields of "mentality" and "religion" overlap to a certain extent. This is borne out not only by the entries in the modern dictionaries, but by philosophical, political, religious and other dictionaries (Diccionario CLAVE, 2012; Diccionari manual llengua Catalana Editorial, 2005; The New Russian Encyclopedic Dictionary, 2013; Federal Law of 25 July 2002 N 114-FZ; Englert, 2002, 2009; Dictionary of the Russian Language; Gnedov, 2014).

It is also important that the Scriptures say that a follower of a faith is only he who does not merely believe in God proclaimed in the Scriptures, but he who observes the prescribed norms and rules of behavior and the corresponding rituals of God worshipping. (Ziebertz & Simon, 1995; Isik-Yigit, 2011; Kunstmann, 2010).

6. Findings

So, what are the sources of religious extremism and terrorism and how do they manifest themselves in the modern world? Religious perception of the world has at all times given rise to extremism and terrorism. However, the forms and scale of its manifestation and spread differed dramatically during various mental epochs.

Thus, in the pagan era when a person's life was strictly regulated by religious rules, rites and rituals that existed in every family and tribe, extremism was directed at other families and tribes. The pagans believed that when their ancestors, after the earthly life, passed to the other world where they existed as spirits, extended their protection from there only to their progeny in the male line. Therefore according to the pagan religious tradition, a family should not only be totally isolated from other families in terms of ritual and custom, but from all the "alien" attributes of their earthly life (dwellings, labor implements, land ownership and other life support means) which are under the tutelage of their own family and tribal god-ancestors.

Fustel de Coulanges, a student of pagan religious views, wrote that “the oldest religion was exclusively domestic, and so were the ethical norms. Religion did not say to man, pointing to another man, “this is your brother,” It said to him: he is an alien, he cannot take part in sacraments near your hearth, he cannot approach your family grave, he has other gods, he cannot join you in a common prayer, your gods reject his worship and consider him to be an enemy, hence he is also your enemy.” (Kunstmann, 2010, p. 94).

However, as families grew they did not sever their links with each other because they had common ancestors. They joined in tribes and genuses. Their unity was based as a rule on common ancestral gods and similar traditions and customs. And of course they were united by the language which the members of a tribe understood.

Families down to the seventh or even ninth generation were thought to be relatives. The norms and rules of life of various families and tribes were carefully hidden from outsiders. There was no question of imposing gods and rituals on other families and tribes.

There were of course forests, fields, rivers, seas, etc. beyond the private property of the pagans. The pagan mind peopled these areas with various creatures that were guardians of these places. These creatures, like the gods of one’s own family, were to be placated by gifts and offerings in strict accordance with ritual to win their benevolence and prevent them from doing harm to those who were using these lands. However, for a pagan the main protectors against the elements and adverse natural phenomena and god-spirits were the family and tribal gods who guarded them always and everywhere from all and sundry, ensuring their safety and wellness.

As for the attitude of pagans to other tribes, their shrines and religious rites, it was extremely hostile. Thus, in leaving to make war on other tribes, pagans were sure that they were fighting not so much the people who were hostile to them, as the gods who protected these people. The pagans were convinced that they had obligations only to their own gods, but never to alien gods (Kunstmann, 2010, pp. 204-208). Therefore, members of different tribes, like their religious shrines, were ruthlessly destroyed and burned.

The pagan protected and hid from other families and tribes the rituals and traditions of worshipping his gods because he believed that personal ancestral gods of the family, if properly worshipped, would ensure success and prosperity in all his undertakings. However, the pagan families and tribes that lost a war, on the contrary, were eager to worship the winners’ gods. They believed that the victors’ gods, by defeating them, proved to be stronger than their own gods.

Thus, religious extremism during the pagan times consisted, not in imposing one’s gods and rites of worship, but in destroying everything that was alien to their own gods, including the attributes of worship of alien gods and all the property of the members of other tribes that these gods “guarded.”

With the growth of trade, economic and other links between tribes which led to the emergence of cities with mixed populations, gods shared by all the citizens were bound to appear. The citizens worshipped them in the same way as they worshipped their own family gods and they shied away from worshipping the gods of other communities. If a city was prosperous and strong, those who settled there deemed it necessary (expedient) to worship and honor the gods of “that land.” It is clear why the warriors who conquered other cities did not impose their gods on the conquered tribes. The citizens considered

their own successful gods, their worship rites, norms and rules of communal life to be “a precious legacy of the ancestors.” So the winning pagans were reluctant to share this legacy with the vanquished enemies (Kunstmann, 2010)

Thus, for example, the Athenians could not allow the citizens of Aegina to enter the Pallas temple, to worship Theseus and take part in holy repasts, let alone keep the holy flame burning in the city’s communal center. No one but a native of a city could become the city head and perform sacrificial rites. (Kunstmann, 2010, p. 205). This was categorically forbidden by pagan rules. For the same reason different cities could unite on religious grounds to form a spiritual and later administrative entity. That is why city states existed for centuries.

Ancient Rome is a vivid example. In the minds of its citizens every territorial acquisition increased not Rome as a city state, but the territory ruled by the Roman people, the citizens of Rome. The conquered lands were seen by Roman citizens as the result of the protection of their own gods which brought Rome closer to world dominance. This explains why none of the peoples of the conquered territories became citizens of Rome, hence did not worship its gods and did not obey Roman laws (Kunstmann, 2010; Kant).

Acts of the apostles in the New Testament relating the preaching activities of St.Paul are highly indicative. In Jerusalem, the Jews, accusing St.Paul of inviting pagans to the Solomon Temple, took him to court at Synedrion which could have sentenced him to death for his ungodly behavior. However, because the Jews themselves could not execute Paul, who was a citizen of Rome, he was eventually sent to be tried in Rome (Acts. 21:28; 24:27; 26:32)

As for the mentality of the ethnic groups and peoples who converted to monotheism, it accorded fully with the new historical conditions as people were moving from family and tribal mode of living to polyethnic communities and states. Under the pressure of new historical conditions, humanity was gradually abandoning the norms and rules of family and tribal life in favor of religions monotheistic views with corresponding ways of life.

Thus, the One God declared Himself to be the sole true God of all the earth people regardless of their family and tribal affiliation. He declared himself to be the almighty living Person who had created all the worlds visible and invisible to Man and Man himself. He demanded worship and reverence solely of Himself ordaining that he rules all the elements and natural phenomena on which depends the life and death, success, well-being, suffering and misfortunes of all the earth people. All the pagan traditions and customs were banned on pain of merciless punishment. All the material attributes of paganism (idols, images, graven images, heathen shrines, sacrificial altars, etc.) were to be destroyed. The One God could not be “tolerant” of “false gods” who embodied a different mentality and were associated with outdated norms and rules.

It is noteworthy that monotheism put spiritual kinship of people above blood, family or tribal kinship. It is spirituality that, according to the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran, makes people members of a single family, “brothers, sisters and close ones” who deserve respect and mutual help. By contrast, those who preferred family and tribal idols and graven images to faith in the One God were considered by monotheists to be “enemies.” The tradition of negative attitude to “infidels” who did not believe in the behests, laws and rules established by the One God and of treating them as “enemies” of the

true God has been cultivated in monotheism for millennia and survives in Judaism, Christianity and Islam to this day.

However, while under the Torah the enemies of the One God are only pagans, ie. practically everyone except the sons of Israel whom the One God has chosen by educating them in monotheism and forming the corresponding world view, legal consciousness and law abidance, over time the situation changed dramatically. The canons, laws and commandments contained in monotheistic Scriptures (the Torah, followed by the New Testament and the Quran) ceased to meet the requirements and bidding of the new living conditions. Therefore, on the one hand, a thousand and five hundred years after the Torah, the New Testament was vouchsafed to people and in another six hundred years, the Quran, which, according to the Quran, is the third and final message of the One God to the human race. On the other hand, a great many interpretations or other norms of the Holy Scriptures appeared. Any interpretation (opinion) already implies the existence of a different opinion (interpretation) and consequently discordant thinking. Each new religious interpretation as a rule took the shape of a trend that considered its interpretation of the Holy Scripture to be the solely right one and all the others to be wrong.

Gradually, mutual recriminations and charges of divergence from the norms and rules set forth in the Scriptures became the norm of spiritual life in monotheism. Along with officially recognized interpretations of the Scriptures which were not open to doubt or change, there emerged a plethora of other interpretations which were brutally suppressed by the authorities.

There was no question of a tolerant attitude to other religious views. The entire history of monotheism shows that extremism and terrorism with regard to proponents of other religions and even currents within religions have been the norm of religious life and have indeed been encouraged as “righteousness” aimed at eradicating “sinful,” heretical and other ungodly acts.

Thus, while the pagans regarded as enemies only those who worshipped gods alien to their families and tribes, monotheism declared to be enemies also the people who worshipped the same One God but, according to the priests and government leaders, had diverged from proper fulfillment of God’s will. It is clearly shown in the New Testament that among the Judaists the religious currents (parties) of Pharisees and Sadducees were at loggerheads with each other. But while the Torah tried to keep at bay manifestations of religious extremism and terrorism with regard to “close ones and brothers” from amongst the sons of Israel, both turned against the faith of Jesus Christ considering it to be false and Jesus himself to be a “blasphemer.” Accordingly, they sentenced to death not only Jesus, but spread their “terror” to all the followers of Messiah.

Christianity at its birth was far from united. St.Paul, lamenting the fact wrote: “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.” [1 Cor.1:10]. It is highly significant that it was not until Christianity had been proclaimed the state religion of the Roman Empire and Ecumenical Councils, usually initiated by the Roman emperors for purely political reasons, were convened that independent churches (Alexandrian, Antiochian, Jerusalem Patriarchate, etc.) began to be united into a single Christian church which became the worldview and ideological basis of the existence of the Roman Empire.

It was not by chance that shortly after the split of the Roman Empire in 395 into the Eastern and Western parts they began to vie with each other for dominance within what was once the single Christian church, with the rivals embracing different theological interpretations of the Bible. (Kant I. Quotes).

The political implications of the division into “us and them”, “into friends and foes” were highlighted during the events connected with the separation of the Kiev-based Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Russian Orthodox Church in June 1992.

The division of Muslims into Shiites and Sunnites was also politically motivated. Shortly after the death of the Prophet Mohammed, in the 7th century some believers were in favor of electing Caliphs while others supported the rights of Muhammad’s favorite son-in-law Ali ibn Abu Talib. There were purely political motives behind the appearance of the Wahhabi trend in Islam and practically all the other “right” interpretations of the Quran in order to bring back the faithful into the fold of “pure Islam” which would bring freedom from injustice and oppression and bring peace and prosperity to the peoples.

It has to be said for fairness sake that one can observe from the precepts given in the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran that over time a tolerant attitude began to prevail to the people who did not worship the One God. This applied not only to the pagans, but to “whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed - then it is those who are the wrongdoers.” 45:45). “And those who reject Our revelations as false and turn away from them in arrogance, they shall be the inmates of Hell; and there shall they abide” (Surah 7:36).

Thus the Torah, responding to the need to wean the Sons of Israel from pagan mentality is extremely intolerant of the pagans allowing the destruction of the pagans and their homes, cattle, crops, labor implements and pastures (Shmot 324 Tisa, 11-14; Dvarim 2 Dvarim 31-35 etc.) Over time, however, the New Testament and then the Quran began to preach a more tolerant attitude to the pagans (Matth.5:23-26, 18:35; Surahs 2:256, 4:135, 9:73 and others). The movement toward tolerance of other faiths is not of course accidental. For by the time when the New Testament and especially the Quran were vouchsafed, historical (socio-economic, etc.) conditions had matured for the transition of many ethnic groups and peoples to a world view and way of life in accordance with the norms and rules of monotheism. Tolerance was an extremely important factor in introducing the fundamentals of monotheism in the life style of the peoples.

This was highlighted by St.Paul’s appeal to the early Christian preachers: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” (Rom. 12:14). The Quran considers the Torah and the New Testament to be the true messages of the One God and demands unconditional respect for them. Moreover, while St.Paul appeals to Christians not to be divided, the Quran preaches tolerance not only toward the pagans, but also those who, having adopted monotheism, “divide into factions”: “Surely you have nothing to do with those who have made divisions in their religion and become factions. Their matter is with Allah and He will indeed tell them (in time) what they have been doing.” (Surah 6:159). Because “there is no compulsion in religion” (Surah 2:256). And yet, it can be said with certainty that in spite of all the appeals for religious tolerance in the New Testament and the Quran, humanity owes to monotheism the manifestations of religious extremism and terrorism which goes far beyond the framework of families, ethnic entities, peoples and states.

7. Conclusion

What are the key features of the new mental epoch set to replace paganism and monotheism which, on the one hand, posits “freedom of conscience and faith” and on the other, for all the tolerance of various ideas and views, calls for tough opposition to religious extremism and terrorism?

In a nutshell, the civilization of men with a new mentality can be represented in the following way. The scientific perception of the world, unlike the religious perception, does not recognize ultimate truths. It cannot exist without doubts and vacillations, without openly and freely expressed alternative ideas, opinions, positions, views, judgments and standpoints. The scientific world view recognizes dissenting opinions, discussion and debate as key methods of cognizing the world. It cannot do without a critical assessment of established positions and opinions and its value lies in the novelty of its ideas, suppositions and propositions and in ground-breaking approaches to the existing problems and their solution. Therefore the scientific world view and thinking espoused by a significant part of humanity today do not offer “faith in the simplicity of the heart” and do not invoke “authorities” in the field of theology or science and scientific schools (Schlussbotschaft der Synodenteilnehmer in Rom, 2012).

It is not by chance that Rene Descartes (1596–1650), one of the most brilliant representatives of a nascent mental civilization of scientific world perception, declared at the very beginning of the Age of Enlightenment, “Question everything” (Lohrer, 2012). And a hundred years later Immanuel Kant (1784–1804), when asked what is “enlightenment,” gave this answer: Enlightenment is man’s leaving his self-caused immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to use one’s intelligence without the guidance of another. Such immaturity is self-caused if it is not caused by lack of intelligence, but by lack of determination and courage to use one’s intelligence without being guided by another. Sapere Aude! Have the courage to use your own intelligence! is therefore the motto of the enlightenment...” (Guilbert, Lagane & Niobey., 1971). The founders of the new mental civilization of “scientific world perception” (Voltaire, Holbach, Diderot, John Locke and others) undermined the age-old blind faith in the immutable authority of the Scriptures and of religious authorities and organizations. The steady growth of the planet’s population, which has already topped seven billion, was another factor that contributed to the emergence of fundamentally new civilization mentality. It made it necessary to develop the entire Earth space across national borders. That in turn exposed a vast number of people to various world views and cultural attitudes, rules and norms of behavior. The exposure is not only physical, but takes place at a distance through the mass media and communications generated by scientific and technological progress. Thus, according to the UN, the number of migrants in the world increased from 154 million in 1990 to 232 million in 2013 and 321 million in 2017. (Number of People Convicted of Extremism Doubles in Russia). On the other hand, because of the powerful integration and migration processes which swept the whole globe, the confrontation between the religious and scientific world views has gone from the national to the planetary level. Today it is hard to name a country that is not involved in the orbit of faith conflicts and, moreover, of overt religious extremism often developing into terrorism.

Thus, religious extremism springs from religious perception of the world. While the transition to the monotheistic mental civilization involved brutal suppression of the old religious world view, not stopping short of exterminating its proponents, the transition from the mental civilization of monotheism

to the civilization of the scientific world perception is marked by the tolerance the latter has shown not only toward monotheism and paganism, but toward all the other world views.

The phenomenon of religious extremism, I believe, is doomed to sink into oblivion together with the mental civilizations of paganism and monotheism which engendered it, ie when the religious perception of the world ceases to dominate public consciousness. The modern world is in the throes of giving birth to a new type of man characterized by the scientific perception of the world and creative (“God-like” in the language of the Scriptures) approach to solving the tasks of Being that constantly crop up. That this process is inevitable, is the clear message of the monotheistic Scriptures (the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran) which do not only contain some interesting data on the emergence of Man on Earth formulated and presented in accordance with the mentality people had when the Scriptures were vouchsafed, but also priceless ideas on the strategic direction of human development. Moreover, they clearly formulate the list of moral principles and foundations of productive life of all men, ethnic entities and peoples on Earth (Oganesyan, 2017). I believe therefore that it is incumbent upon modern pedagogy to reappraise not only its attitude to the Holy Scriptures of monotheism, but to determine their place in the country’s educational space because they can bring home to young people the fact that change of people’s civilization mentality is logical and inevitable and that there needs to be a tolerant attitude not only to religious beliefs, but to others’ opinion, position and life style as long as they stay within the framework of national laws.

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