Reliģiski-filozofiski raksti

XXVI

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PHILOSOPHICAL CHALLENGES OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES IN FACE OF MODERN TERRORISM
(ISLAMIC STATE AND AL-QAEDA)

Introduction

"I come from Finland, a "Christian" nation where the people do not strongly adhere to their corrupted religion", in the propaganda magazine *Dabiq* of the terroristic state-like organization the Islamic State tells a woman identifying herself as Umm Khalid al-Finlandiyyah. She continues with diagnosis of the present situation: "Most of them say they are Christians but don't really practice their false faith. They might go to church when there's a wedding or a funeral, but most of them don't know much about their distorted religion, even though they are proud of it."[1] Of course, such a description is neither new, nor original in the secular world, but it has a different meaning if analysed in a specific context – against the backdrop of all the atrocities performed by the Islamic State.

Violent Islamic radicalisation has become a widely known phenomenon in the European Union (EU). Together with local religious converts in the EU, the influx of returnee 'foreign terrorist fighters' and sleeper cells have become a real threat to large parts of Europe while Latvia has been mostly spared by it. Consequently, the decision by a young and shy Latvian boy

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[1]   al-Finlandiyyah, Umm Khalid. How I came to Islam. *Dabiq*, No. 15, p. 36.

named Mārtiņš to join the Islamic State provoked turbulent discussions among experts from various fields and the general public alike. Later, the news that the former leader of the Islamic community of Latvia Imrāns Oļegs Petrovs had joined the Islamic State added even more fuel to the discussions.[2] Obvious violence and bloodshed in the war in Syria and Iraq provoked a plenitude of questions which could all be reduced to a simple "Why?" Speculations emerged that the men and women of all ages and nationalities who have been tempted to join the Islamic State do so for money, sex, or out of plain stupidity. However, the stories told by these very individuals suggest that such a viewpoint is not sufficient.

Contrary to the widespread opinion promoted by journalists and non-experts in mass-media, contemporary radical Islam is a part of today's world culture. The ever-increasing speed of globalization, the disappearance of national borders, and the merging of cultures is a process of twofold effect. On the one hand, people have new opportunities to develop themselves and their values. It stimulates economic growth, tolerance for minorities, openness, basic freedoms, inclusive society, etc.[3] On the other hand, it challenges (and endangers) many classical values and the usual order of things. It is a very broad process and one of its sides are the reactionary movements of modern Islamic terrorism with their specific means of attraction. Particularly, the emergence of the Islamic State can be interpreted in relation to events and ideas in the field of philosophy,

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[2] On the factors determining the political participation of Muslim youth in Latvia, see: Stašulāne, Anita and Jānis Priede. Politiskais un pilsoniskais naratīvs: Latvijas musulmaņu jauniešu politiskās līdzdalības noteicošie faktori. *Reliģiski-filozofiski raksti No. XVIII*, 2015, pp. 62–86.

[3] Public opinion survey "Standard Eurobarometer 89" (spring, 2018) shows that majority (53%) of respondents considers that the Member States of the European Union are "close" in terms of shared values. A more concrete analysis shows that the top value is "peace" (45%), followed by "human rights" (42%), and in the third place – "respect for human life" (37%). Subsequent values are as follows: "democracy" (27%), "individual freedom" (24%), "equality" (21%), "the rule of law" (18%), "tolerance" (16%), "solidarity" (16%), and lastly three values are mentioned by fewer than one in ten respondents: "respect for other cultures" (9%), "self-fulfillment" (9%), and "religion" (5%,). See: Standard Eurobarometer 89. Available at https://bit.ly/2sRPb8z (retrieved 02.02.2019).

culture, politics, and economics in the last few decades in both the Middle East and the whole globalized world.

During the last decade, one of the most spectacular and well-known manifestations of political Islam have been the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda emerged as a small ideological movement, in some sense, as a club of intellectuals – bloodthirsty, but, nevertheless, intellectuals. However, the Islamic State was swift and skilful to profit from both the situation in Syria and Iraq (war, lack of civil society, social and religious segregation, etc.) and cultural situation in the West. It was and still is a populistic movement. Therefore, it could be stated that the emergence of both al-Qaeda and the Islamic State is not the cause, but rather the consequence of a certain social and cultural order.

Explanation could be linked to the so-called 'Postmodern situation' where classical Western values are lost or changed. Jean-François Lyotard described it as a disintegration of meta narratives or distrust in general ideas and general concepts. In philosophy the postmodernist situation means that specific ontology has lost its authority, ontology which was interlocked with narratives characterized by belief in the progress of humanity, in the reason and truth, in the divine (idealistic, absolute) universality. The deliberate deconstruction of old values and ideals or simple reality of social evolution can be particularly traumatic to the people who are searching for the Absolute truth, the divine providence, and stability of universal values.[4] While the Western liberal philosophy and political agenda of the European Union proudly offers 'history without history' and 'happiness here and now', the Islamic radicals offer a worldview where God is still alive and divine miracles can provide the meaning of life.[5] Western modern political-philosophical ideas, often highly valued in the West, at the same time are challenged and disqualified by the modern violent Islamic movements.

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[4]   Rubene, M. Postmodernisms. *Grāmata*, No. 12, 1991, pp. 3–7.
[5]   For interpretation on differences in the understanding of history, see: Kļaviņš, Kaspars. Lost Antiquity and Permanent Present. Understanding of History in the Western and Middle Eastern Tradition. *Reliģiski-filozofiski raksti No. XXII*, 2017, pp. 92–128.

This paper intends to explore theoretical interpretation that could provide a better understanding of the Islamic State's (or any other radical Islamic terroristic group's) successful recruitment efforts by investigating ideas common to modern liberal Western thought and modern military jihadism. Namely, particular attention will be drawn to the concept of identity (plurality; lack of; crisis; overcome of) and the idea of cosmopolitanism. The argument will be supplemented with references to texts of the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and some radical Islamic scholars.

1. Ambiguous values

One of the ever-lasting problems of Western societies (but not limited to the West) is the question of **identity** – is it something essential, or rather a fluid social construct? Various theories of identity have been accepted and adopted. To name just a few, one could speak about ethnic, national, civil, societal, local, subcultural, linguistic, sexual etc. identities. The widespread interpretation of the 21st century Western liberal world is the idea that almost everything could and should be interpreted as a mutable social construct and that includes not only gender issues, but national, ethnic and religious identities as well. The idea of 'national state' understood as more or less consolidated ethnic group is giving way to meta- or supranational (for now – just theoretical) institutions. Philosopher and anthropologist Clifford Geertz comments: "To an increasing degree national unity is maintained not by calls to blood and land but by a vague, intermittent, and routine allegiance to a civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by governmental use of police powers and ideological exhortation."[6]

In contrast to the symbolic or civic model, there is an ethnic model of a nation in which origin is determined and therefore cannot be (easily) changed. Here identity is based on the concept of unity in the language, culture, traditions, land, country etc. This model is based on the idea that the innate culture is permanent. The ethnic model, unlike the civic one,

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[6] Geertz, Clifford. *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*. New-York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 260.

does not allow to choose one's identity arbitrarily. Wherever the individual is located and whatever it does, it remains attached to its native community. It follows that nations (communities) are based on a common origin, i.e. belonging to a historical 'superfamily'. Philosopher and sociologist Anthony Smith compares the two approaches: while the Western civic concept stresses the role of law, ethnic model emphasizes common descent, vernacular languages, traditions and customs.[7]

The philosophical and cultural situation in the late 20th and in the beginning of 21st century can be described (of course, not exclusively) as a trend that continues to push for the goals set by the postmodern philosophy. This state is eloquently described by sociologist Zygmunt Bauman: "*Liquid modernity* is the growing conviction that change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty."[8] He speaks about contemporary state, where a person can shift from one social position to another in a fluid manner. In his words, nomadism becomes a general trait of human as it flows through life like a tourist, changing places, jobs, values and even political or sexual orientation.

The idea of fluidity of identity is legitimate at a theoretical level, but it has many opponents on the ground who feel disgusted and alienated by the idea that, for example, Islam and relationships with God are just a social construct founded by random causes.

Moreover, the significant role of culture and cultural heritage is widely accepted among Europeans. As shown by the public opinion surveys in Europe, the role of culture and cultural heritage is very high. The results of the survey "Special Eurobarometer 466: Cultural Heritage" (2017) confirm that the vast majority of Europeans (84%) feel that cultural heritage is important to them personally, and 90% believe that it is important to their country, as well as cultural heritage is considered a crucial part of European identity by 80% of respondents. Considerable majority of Europeans (88%) believe that cultural heritage should be taught in schools.[9] Consequently,

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[7]   See: Smith, Anthony D. *National Identity*. London: Penguin, 1991, p. 11.

[8]   Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, pp. iix–ix.

[9]   Special Eurobarometer 466: Cultural Heritage (2017). Available at https://bit.ly/2BRcama (retrieved 28.10.2018).

by recognizing the importance of culture, Europeans (including Latvians) are respecting the fact that their identity is dependent on the cultural background which cannot be easily changed, even if they accept the social constructivism as a theoretical possibility. Culture is a fundamental forming element in the development of any identity and thus the importance of cultural background to the respondents suggest that identity mostly is not understood as something fluid and changeable.

The interpretations of identity are topical in the context of Islam and Islamic radicalism. For example, propagandists of the Islamic State write in their journal *Dabiq* that the West had been ruled by philosophies, which are at "all-out war with the fitrah". They list Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Durkheim, Weber, and Freud as culprits of the ideology that "since the days of the so-called French Revolution in the West and thereafter the October Revolution in the East" strives to produce generations void of any traces of the *fitrah* ('fitrah' is explained as inborn human nature). In other words, void of any strong identity. Anonymous author expands his or her statement: "Children – and even adults – were taught that man's creation was the result of pure chaos, that history was the result of conflicts merely over material resources, that religion was the fabrication of simpleminded men, that the family social unit was adopted merely out of convenience, and that sexual intercourse was the ultimate reason behind man's decisions and actions."[10] The author of the article concludes that such actions have led to the destruction of all facets of the *fitrah* in the Christian lands and therefore by destroying the basis of religiosity the Christians have exterminated the divine morality. Thus, the supposed consequences are dire: "[Western woman] is the willing victim who sacrifices herself for the immoral "freedoms" of her people, offering her fitrah on the altar of secular liberalism."[11]

Similar attitude and interpretation of global political and philosophical process is expressed in the so-called "Al-Qaeda Handbook", a computer file found by Manchester Metropolitan Police during a search in the house

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[10] "The Fitrah of Mankind and the Near-Extinction of the Western Woman." *Dabiq*, No. 15, p. 20.

[11] Ibid., p. 25.

of a suspect in 2000. The unknown author begins the text with almost poetic and mournful account of the poor, almost devastating situation of the Islamic society. Author continues and presents one of the culprits: "But they [the local rulers] did not stop there; they started to fragment the essence of the Islamic nation by trying to eradicate its Moslem identity. Thus, they started spreading godless and atheistic views among the youth. We found some that claimed that socialism was from Islam, democracy was the [religious] council, and the prophet – God bless and keep him – propagandized communism."[12]

The contrast to Western values and the Western way of life is frequently mentioned in the texts of the Islamic State. An article "Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You", written by anonymous author in the propaganda magazine *Dabiq*, presents and accounts for six reasons for the hatred against West. Foremost, the author stresses, it will be nothing new, it has been said repeatedly, but the reason of ignorance among the Westerners is simple, namely, the political elite of West is hiding the truth because of political correctness, political advantages and plain fear to step outside the mainstream narrative.

All the reasons can be divided in two parts: the fourth, fifth and sixth reasons are material. Namely, they are crimes (in a broad sense) against Islam, war (bombardment, killing, etc.), that consequently leads to interpretation that war against West is a defensive war.[13]

However, the first three reasons are theological and value-oriented. The very first and so considered the main reason is the interpretation of faith and God – the dispute on the oneness of God, the role of Jesus as a son or prophet etc. The third reason is atheism. While religious Christian from the viewpoint of the Muslim should be regarded as a fool, atheism in the eyes of the Islamic State is something much worse because it denies the fundamental divine and sacral values.[14]

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[12] Al-Qaeda Handbook, translation in English, p. 8.
[13] "Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You." *Dabiq*, No. 15, pp. 31–32.
[14] Ibid.

The second reason is much more concrete: "Your secular liberalism has led you to tolerate and even support 'gay rights', to allow alcohol, drugs, fornication, gambling, and usury to become widespread, and to encourage the people to mock those who denounce these filthy sins and vices. As such, we wage war against you to stop you from spreading your disbelief and debauchery – your secularism and nationalism, your perverted liberal values, your Christianity and atheism – and all the depravity and corruption they entail."[15] The anonymous author makes clear that the war is not just fight for the access to natural resources or 'worldly possessions'; it is rather a fight to stop the Western influence and to "protect mankind from your [Western] misguided concepts and your deviant way of life."[16] While, of course, the attributed sins are as common in the West as in the Islamic states, the message is clear – the moral ideals should not be challenged and discussed.

One of the most notorious jihadi scholars Sayyid Qutb stated, here paraphrased in more modern language, that the main reason for concern is not the military dominance of Western powers, but the cultural offence, and it should be countered. He noticed that modern Western states try to separate private identity and public behaviour as two very distinct realms. Be it ethnic, cultural, sexual – any private orientation is of no concern to others, i.e., it is not a public issue. Qutb denies any such distinction, and in the case of Islam, stands up for the monolithic union of public and private life. According to Qutb, Islam is and can be only public – there is no private Islam. He strictly states that any Islamic state is obliged to implement *sharia*, and *sharia*, according to Qutb, is "everything legislated by Allah Almighty for ordering man's life; it includes the principles of belief, principles of administration and justice, principles of morality and human relationships, and principles of knowledge."[17] Consequently, *sharia* is understood not as merely judiciary principles, but as a set of comprehensive

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[15] "Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You." *Dabiq*, No. 15, p. 32.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. A. B. al-Mehri (ed.). Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and publishers, 2006, p. 120.

rules for all the aspects of life. Furthermore, he condemns the sciences and philosophy of West by linking the decline of Christianity with emergence of modern sciences. He writes: "Hostility of the scientific community toward the Church did not remain limited to the Church or to its beliefs, but was directed against all religion, so much so that all sciences turned against religion, whether they were speculative philosophy or technical or abstract sciences having nothing to do with religion"[18] However, in Qutb's eyes, here lies even more danger, namely, he sees a "a well thought out scheme" with objective "to shake the foundations of Islamic beliefs and then gradually to demolish the structure of Muslim society."[19]

Qutb's example can be applied to many other cases. In a broad sense, here is exposed the long-standing question of identity. Are traditional practices, ideas or rites just a private 'hobby', 'leisure activity' or do they have a public, social role? The question of national identity is of greatest concern in many nations worldwide today, including Latvia. Despite the efforts of modern European political agencies, institutions and political leaders to spread cosmopolitan and multicultural ideas, the longing for strict and enduring identities is still well represented in public. Islamic radicalism tries to fill the void created by identity crisis. It tries to fill the need for strict identity limits, to mark clear borders and provide a moral compass.

Another main concept that is closely connected to the issue of identity is **cosmopolitanism**. One way to describe the current political scene of the European Union is the distinction between states that welcome closer integration and openness (e.g. France, Germany) and states which strive for more isolationism (e.g. Hungary, Poland). This distinction is illustrative in the topic of cosmopolitanism: apparently, a significant part of Western (European) society welcomes post-national thinking and cosmopolitan ambitions. Moreover, the European Union, *united in diversity*, openly encourages the politics and philosophy of post-nationalism. This is reflected in contemporary social philosophy. For example, Jürgen Habermas

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[18] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones.* A. B. al-Mehri (ed.). Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and publishers, 2006, p. 128.

[19] Ibid.

advocates for the post-national state, in which shared identity is attached to non-territorial values of constitutionalism and democratic rights.

Cosmopolitan aspirations are not new, they were expressed by Enlightenment philosophers (I. Kant, G. V. F. Hegel, J. Lock, T. Hobbes, Voltaire, etc.) who strove to overcome old authorities (church dogmatism) and to push for, in Kant's words, man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. This concept has been supplemented with concepts of equality, tolerance, etc. However, the aims of Kantian Enlightenment are widely disputed[20] and now often substituted by individual, emotion-based freedoms[21]. While contemporary cosmopolitanism is indeed related to Enlightenment ideas, it is different, and in the context of globalization, even more topical than ever. Therefore, it is Islam that provides an alternative kind of cosmopolitan utopia which seemingly promises global brother/sisterhood without the problems of liberal market-oriented societies.

While Islam is often described as a traditional and conservative religion, it certainly has numerous innovative and progressive aspects, including orientation towards the cosmopolitan world order. In the early 20th century, the Pakistani Islamic scholar, philosopher and preacher Maulana Abul A'la Maududi defended the position that Islam is not just a religion as a system of beliefs and rituals, but rather stated: "Islam is a revolutionary ideology and programme which seeks to alter the social order of the whole world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets and ideals."[22] One such world-wide ambition is the creation of a global Islamic society – *Ummah*.

The aspiration of the Islamic State to establish a caliphate seems to be an example of the global ambitions of extreme Islamic radicals. Shortly after the conquering of Mosul (Iraq) the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in his speech called on all the Muslims in the whole world to come to the "Caliphate". He urged: "Therefore, rush O Muslims

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[20] See: Kastijo, Monika. *Eiropas apgaismības liktenis.* Rīga: LU FSI, 2016.

[21] See: Šuvajevs, Igors (ed.). *Bēgšana no brīvības? Ērihs Fromms un Latvija.* Rīga: LU FSI, 2014.

[22] Maududi, Abul A'la. *Jihād in Islām.* Beirut: The Holy Koran Publishing House, 1980, p. 5.

to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis. [..] The State is a state for all Muslims. The land is for the Muslims, all the Muslims. O Muslims everywhere, whoever is capable of performing hijrah (emigration) to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because hijrah to the land of Islam is obligatory."[23] His statement closely resembles the position of Qutb who writes: "[Islam] came to elevate man above, and release him from, the bonds of the earth and soil, the bonds of flesh and blood – which are also the bonds of the earth and soil. A Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where the Shari'ah of Allah is established and human relationships are based on the foundation of relationship with Allah Almighty."[24] The cosmopolitan or super-national understanding of Muslim community, *ummah*, of course, is not unique to Qutb or Islamic radicals because, to put it simply, it is one of the basic principles of the Islam. However, the difference is that Qutb's understanding of *ummah* is all-inclusive and not merely religious community. Therefore, it is in direct conflict with existing political order of the world which is mostly divided across the ethnic lines.

The dissolution of the Caliphate by modern Turkish state in the 1924 was a traumatic event in the Islamic society worldview. While Ottoman Empire did not enjoy unanimous support among the Muslims, it still was the one and only highest-level official state-like entity representing Islam and Muslims. From then on, various groups have been talking about the necessity of reestablishment of Caliphate but almost none made any concrete steps to fulfil the ambition. The "Dream of Caliphate" was in the agenda of al-Qaeda as well. Therefore, the announcement by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, proclaimed by supporters as *amirul-mu'minin*, was an ideologically and symbolically significant moment: "O Muslims everywhere, glad tidings to you and expect good. Raise your head high, for today – by Allah's grace – you have a state and Khilafah [Caliphate], which will return your dignity, might, rights, and leadership. It is a state where the Arab and non-Arab,

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[23] *Dabiq*, No. 1, p. 11.
[24] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones.* A. B. al-Mehri (ed.). Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and publishers, 2006, pp. 132–133.

the white man and black man, the easterner and westerner are all brothers. Their blood mixed and became one, under a single flag and goal, in one pavilion, enjoying this blessing, the blessing of faithful brotherhood."[25] While majority of Muslims in the whole world did not subject to the call of the al-Baghdadi and considered him an impostor, his announcement still gained a lot of attention and provoked strong emotional, both rejecting and supporting, reactions.

2. Hijacking of values

The concept of cosmopolitanism, of course, is not a cause (*per se*) of radicalisation. Then where is the challenge of Western philosophy and Western values? The hypothesis is that the terrorists of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in the contemporary cultural situation have reinterpreted philosophically loaded concepts of 'identity' and 'global citizenship'. Of course, these are not exclusively Western concepts. However, they are deeply rooted in the Western philosophy, they have political influence and they are topical to people. The Islamic radicals have been fast to discover this. The thesis of this paper is that cosmopolitism is rather a 'soil' – shaped by Western philosophical ambitions, but hijacked by fundamentalist Islamists or *jihadis* who promise a post-national world that still respects solid identities, concrete traditional values, the dignity of God, the universality of truth, etc. Qutb thinks without compromises: "There is nothing beyond faith except unbelief, nothing beyond Islam except *Jahiliyyahh*, nothing beyond the truth except falsehood."[26] So the Islamic radicalism has turned the quest for identity and the concept of cosmopolitism into a call to banner in promise of reinvented worldview where cosmopolitanism is not utopia of tolerance but rather a global mosque. However, identity is reinvented not as something liberating but rather a beacon for everyone who desires strong borders, orienteers and

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[25] *Dabiq*, No. 1, p. 7.
[26] Qutb, Sayyid. *Milestones*. A. B. al- Mehri (ed.). Birmingham: Maktabah Booksellers and publishers, 2006, p. 144.

values. Such a worldview could be tempting to numerous people in wide spectrum – from nationalists to conservatives.

This could be explained theoretically by referencing to the current ideological situation in Europe, as well as in the whole EU, including Latvia. The postmodern philosophy has done a lot to deconstruct and dissolve the old myths and ideals. However, the problem is that the new ideals are not yet born. Of course, Western liberal, democratic, republican, secular ideals are still alive, but they have lost the universalistic philosophical backing grounded in the Enlightenment and Modernism. As Zygmunt Bauman puts it, we live in the times of *interregnum*, meaning the period when old ruler is dead but the new one has not yet arrived. National states in the EU often risk becoming formless secular individualistic societies without cultural heritage and thus losing moral, ethical traditions. Such situation – dependence on abstract laws and not the historical mores – is universalistic only on papers. Then it would be an enormous fallacy to think that Muslims – from radical to moderate – would abandon their traditional and socially inherited mores in favour of bandwagon filled with universal, jet abstract, theoretical, imagined law of the secular and democratic West. To paraphrase the ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche, the West killed the God and put the human in the throne, but radical Islamists, the terrorists of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, want to revive God even if it means to sacrifice blood of endless innocent civilians.

The citizens of contemporary nation-states in the EU (and beyond) are not safeguarded from the temptations to return to the 'old ways', traditional virtues, social habits and mores, even if it means to give up at least some of the values that are widely regarded as progressive and thus essentially necessary for the survival of the modern European society (tolerance, solidarity, respect for others, the rights of minorities, individual freedom and rights, etc.). In such a light, words of anthropologist Scott Atran sound ominous: "But, so far, we find no comparable [to Kurds and fighters of the Islamic State] willingness among the majority of youth that we sample in Western democracies. With the defeat of fascism and communism, have

their lives defaulted to the quest for comfort and safety?"[27] His question can be expanded: is the youth of Western societies even opposed to some of the actions perpetrated by Islamic terrorists? The fatigue of consumerism, constant rivalry and endless competitions, the rejection of the perceived superficiality of the West, of feminism, of gender equality can and often leads to the opposite – to the imagined comfort of traditional way of life and the clear, jet illusory borders of classical values.

Conclusion

Postmodern philosophy should not be blamed as a single perpetrator of the cultural processes that characterize the 20th century, as it only described the given reality. And this reality, of course, can be depicted as an unseen economic development, widespread emancipation and rise of tolerance. Yet, the dark side of the liberating, secularizing and democratizing progress is the moral confusion. The clarity and inner spiritual strength of the Islamic State – regardless of whether just imagined or real – smashes the indecisive and chaotic ideals of contemporary West.

The challenge of the Western philosophy regarding the values is of the utmost importance.[28] Studies of radical Islam and terroristic organizations are mostly limited to narrow fields; be it politics, criminology or military sciences. There are good reasons to do so and such approaches are not to be discarded. However, radicalism, terrorism and Islam can and should be studied from a more distant viewpoint with wider perspective, namely, to see it as a part of cultural processes on the background of philosophical and theological ideas.

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[27] Atran, Scott. "Why ISIS has the potential to be a world-altering revolution." *Aeon Essays* (online), 15 December 2015. Available at https://aeon.co/essays/why-isis-has-the-potential-to-be-a-world-altering-revolution (retrieved 28.10.2018).

[28] On the dynamics between Islamic and Christian religious communities in the late 20th century and the early 21st century and on the pre-conditions for a successful interreligious dialogue, see: Stašulāne, Anita. Kristiešu un musulmaņu attiecību dinamika. *Acta Universitatis Latviensis.* 2015, nr. 803 Oriental Studies, pp. 87–101.

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