

CATASTROPHE OF THE SENESCENT EUROPE



RUSLAN KURBANOV is a doctor of political science, a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences), and the Head of the Expert Council of the Working Group of the Russian Federation's Public Chamber

While reading chilling stories about the perceived invasion of migrants that is purportedly threatening the very identity of Europeans, I get a lingering feeling of a complete spiritual and intellectual crisis and one of the human will – a crisis that has befallen some representatives of the formerly great Western civilisations. An increasing number of expository articles in publication tell us how insidious and ignorant migrants are moving to Europe in huge droves. The fears with respect to the supposed ominous threats posed by such migrants are inflated to an incredible proportion. However, looking back on the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, Europeans were capable of ruling entire countries and subcontinents without even jeopardising their identity. Today, while they still represent the majority in their own respective countries, they tend to throw tantrums about the migrants and ethnic minorities who have settled in Europe. It turns out that the 'ignorant' migrants somehow pose a terrible threat to European cultures and identities. How could that really occur?

The matter is that just a couple of centuries ago, European civilization had a huge will when it came to development and to the preservation and reproduction of the culture of its peoples. However, **today, Europe is increasingly turning into a region that is old and dilapidated. It is losing the initiative and the desire to maintain the dominance of its will globally.** It is losing the desire to safeguard itself from the influence of neighboring peoples and cultures, while remaining dominant and enjoying a high level of life. In the past, the same catastrophe also befell the Roman empire, whose society was only interested in safety, rather than new conquests; it was eager for pleasure, not tests, as well as personal amusements, rather than the birth and upbringing of new generations.

Having found itself in such an unenviable position, the senescent Europe is now frightening itself in relation to the demographic expansion of Eastern and African peoples and the headily reviving and developing Islamic world, which is allegedly laying claim to the European 'cozy microcosm', 'cultural oasis', and 'small world'. ■

MULTICULTURALISM CONSTITUTES AN OLD-FASHIONED MODEL



EMILE PAIN is a Russian sociologist and political scientist; Head of the Centre for Xenophobia Studies and Extremism Prevention at the Institute of Sociology (Russian Academy of Sciences)

Multiculturalism is essentially an offspring of democratic development. As an overall political programme, it emerged in democracies and virtually nowhere else. Thus, in essence, it really is an extension of democratic development and cannot at all be considered to be opposed to it. After the unforgettable statement made by German Chancellor Angela Merkel with respect to the failure of post-war policy on migrants' integration into the German society, many journalists started to speak about the failure of this so-called multiculturalism policy. But the achievements of this very policy actually speak to the contrary. One of the most crucial problems that multiculturalism has managed to resolve is, for instance, can be seen in the fact that representatives of non-native-German ethnic and racial groups sometimes come to occupy high-ranking state offices in the countries of Europe, etc.

Nevertheless, the policy of multiculturalism is not totally devoid of limitations. It is eager for amendments and ways to amend it are indeed being sought. One of the most popular models succeeding multiculturalism seems to be the **model of**

cultural freedom. This model is built on the basis of the concept that, in order to support a strict group identity – which is what multiculturalism is famous for – essentially means depriving humans of the ability to choose.

Whether the policy of cultural freedom shall prove to be effective is a question for the present time, since it is primarily a theoretical point. Practical technologies for this model have not yet been worked out. And today, instead of multiculturalism, which has shown its limitations, and the political model of cultural freedom, which has not yet been worked out, there is an intermediate option in Western countries. This pertains to the division of cultural spheres. In the public sphere, this model welcomes cultural homogeneity and, in the private sphere, it considers cultural diversity possible. But since it is difficult to clearly divide life into private and public spheres, especially in the modern context, this model still cannot be considered as perfect. But the present-day democratic world is looking for models of community life that are as close as possible to ideal for the representatives of various ethnic and religious groups. ■