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Comparative approach to the study of policy of tsarist and soviet government in relation to Islam

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Abstract

Kazakhstan was not an independent, free state throughout nearly three centuries. It was a part of the Russian Empire since 1731, and it entered 'Unbreakable Union of freeborn Republics, Great Russia has welded forever to stand' in 1922. Islam was constantly oppressed, restrained in the period when Kazakhstan was turned into one of the national provinces of tsarist Russia and became one of the Soviet republics. There were times when a real threat appeared over the religion that it would be rooted out and eradicated from the consciousness of millions of Kazakhs. It is impossible to claim that only Islam got under propaganda of the atheistic pressure during the communism construction. The pressure was experienced also by other traditional religions. But, nevertheless, unlike Christianity, other faiths were exposed to bigger persecution during the Soviet period. Probably, it was due to, firstly, a large number the Orthodox in comparison with the Muslims. Secondly, it may be considered as the continuity of anti-Islamic activity of the previous authorities. The article covers the attitude of autocracy and the Soviet authorities towards the Muslim doctrine. On the basis of a comparative analysis to study the relationship of the Muslim religion by the autocracy and the Soviet leadership. The study is based on the logical methods of historical research, such as analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, analogy, generalization, and special - a comparative-historical method, historical, genetic, dialectical. The actions of tsarist autocracy in the religious sphere had the purposeful and interconnected character: all support and creating favorable conditions for the distribution of Orthodoxy and its eminence, bans and oppressions concerning Muslim faith. But the pursued policy did not lead to refusal of Kazakhs from Islam. So in this regard we have come with an interesting observation and conclusion. Overall, continuous prosecution of the Moslem doctrine and its supporters by the tsarist and Soviet governments did not bring desirable results. Islam withstood under the pressure of the Russian tsarism and the Bolshevist government, and then, with the acquisition of the independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, it revives again, and we are eyewitnesses of that.

Keywords: christianization policy; religion, islam, atheism, the colonial policy.

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1. Introduction

Kazakhstan was not an independent, free state throughout nearly three centuries. It was a part of the Russian Empire since 1731, and it entered 'Unbreakable Union of freeborn Republics, Great Russia has welded forever to stand' in 1922. Islam was constantly oppressed, restrained in the period when Kazakhstan was turned into one of the national provinces of tsarist Russia and became one of the Soviet republics. There were times when a real threat appeared over the religion that it would be rooted out and eradicated from the consciousness of millions of Kazakhs. It is impossible to claim that only Islam got under propaganda of the atheistic pressure during the communism construction. The pressure was experienced also by other traditional religions. But, nevertheless, unlike Christianity, other faiths were exposed to bigger persecution during the Soviet period. Probably, it was due to, firstly, a large number the Orthodox in comparison with the Muslims. Secondly, it may be considered as the continuity of anti-Islamic activity of the previous authorities. The article covers the attitude of autocracy and the Soviet authorities towards the Muslim doctrine.

2. Main body

During the implementation of Christianization, the conductors of which were Russian officials, missionaries and church attendants, Muslim mosques and mektebes, i.e. schools, were closed, mullahs were exposed to persecution. Kazakhs came off from national roots: customs, traditions, which had been developing for centuries; they were forced to live Russian way of life. As a result the imminence hung over the Kazakhs as an independent nation.

All this strengthened grievance in minds and hearts of the Kazakh people against the colonizer policy of the tsarism. A special place in the protests was taken by true attendants of Muslim clergy: mullahs, ishans, kazy, as a more competent, conscious part of the population. The Russian ideologists tried to convict by all means those Muslim attendants who showed discontent with tsarism policy. They tried to attribute various sins to such representatives.

The tsarist government supported Muslim clergy and people who professed Islam for some period. Decrees about toleration were issued, the Russian government ordered to build Muslim divine service and educational rooms: mosques and madrasahs, in Kazakhstan. Ekaterina II recognized Islam as a lawful religion by the Decree on September 22, 1788. Also the Orenburg Mohammedan spiritual meeting (ЦГА РК. Ф.64; Оп.1, д.2427.-Л.15) was established by this Decree.

It would not be absolutely correct to call the created management an establishment where problems of Muslims were solved. It carried out administrative tasks, and had to facilitate colonial bodies in supervision over Mohammedans. Naturally, it was more convenient for imperial administration to deal with one loyal mufti, who was under their constant surveillance and was known for devotion to the Russian power. But a greater number of mullahs were a more difficult problem to deal with. However, the possibility of influence on them was found in giving a salary to certain mullahs. Just these mullahs had no due authority. Such representatives of Muslim clergy were told about in the leaflets which appeared in large settlements after their capture by the Russian armies. In "The Kokandskaya petition to our Kyrgyz" from 1860 it was said that some 'Muslims try to receive positions', meaning spiritual attendants and their feudal lords, and others from among ordinary inhabitants 'serve them as guides, fight with their brothers in faith' (ЦГА РУ. Ф.И-715; Оп.1, д.25.- Л.461).

At the beginning of the tsarist decrees pursuance reliable Tatar mullahs were sent to the steppe, the construction of mosques was encouraged and those who wished to commit the hajj to Mecca were not interfered. Therefore 'after the pacification of the Kyrgyz hordes filling space between Russia and China, the sermon of the Koran has found there such soil for itself that it has never had here before, in the middle of disorder and unrest of the Kyrgyz, and may happen not to have anywhere nowadays. Mosques have extremely increased in their number and settled in the places that used to be wild, desert and unsafe for religious promotion. The colonies of Muslim dealers have appeared. In these settlements mosques are immediately erected and the schools are established next to them. These schools are becoming the centres of Moslem, gathering admirers and sending propagandists' (Туркестанский сборник, С.221). Such actions of the government represented the attempts to use Moslem doctrine in interests of the colonial policy.

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