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St. Petersburg Branch
of the Russian Institute
for Cultural Research

WORLD RELIGIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONTEMPORARY CULTURE: NEW PERSPECTIVES OF DIALOGUE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Christianity and Islam in the Context of Contemporary Culture:
New Prospects of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding
in the Russian Federation and Eastern Europe,
in Central Asia and the Caucasus





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of the UNESCO Moscow Office and the UNESCO Office in Almaty,
in the framework of the UNESCO/UNITWIN Network
on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding.*

World Religions in the Context of the Contemporary Culture: New Perspectives of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. Christianity and Islam in the Context of Contemporary Culture: New Prospects of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding in the Russian Federation and Eastern Europe, in Central Asia and the Caucasus / Eds. D. Spivak, S. Shankman. — St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research / Russian Baltic Information Center “Blitz”, 2011. — 208 p.

This international collective monograph is dedicated to the elaboration of the fundamental principles of responsible and constructive intercultural dialogue with consideration of different spiritual and religious traditions in the contemporary world, especially those rooted in the age-old traditions of world religions; analysis of both its main challenges, and the most actual prospects; collection and evaluation of the good practices that have appeared in this realm; and elaboration of practical recommendations, applied primarily to the outlooks and expectations of students, as well as the general academic community. Dialogue of Christianity and Islam in context of culture, primarily in the Russian Federation and countries of Eastern Europe, as well as of those of Central Asia and the Caucasus, were chosen as the focal ones for the present research, which has been conducted with due consideration of the strategic directions of the activities of UNESCO in the cultural realm. The book is intended for the attention of broad reading audience.

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INTRODUCTION

D. Spivak

Fundamental aspects of intercivilizational, intercultural, and interfaith dialogue between adherents of major world religions in the contemporary world, as well as principles of its practical applications, form the main subject matter of the long-term international research project “*World Religions in the Context of the Contemporary Culture: New Perspectives of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*”, initiated in the framework of the International Network of UNESCO/UNITWIN Chairs on Interfaith dialogue for Intercultural Understanding, and implemented by UNESCO Chair in Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions, their Specific Cultures and Interreligious Dialogue, based at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Institute for Cultural Research, with financial and organizational support from the UNESCO Moscow Cluster Office for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, and the Russian Federation, and UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Joining forces with representatives of a cluster of scientific disciplines, studying the process of including world religions in the societal context of the present-day world, as well as its problems and prospects, mutations and implications, ‘points of tension’ and ‘points of growth’, taking into consideration the basic principles of the cultural strategy of UNESCO, seems a very timely and constructive focus. More specifically, the monograph focuses on two major challenges of the contemporary world: standardization, brought about by speedy globalization, and isolationism, conditioned by various kinds of radical localism, regionalism, separatism, and/or anti-globalism. Cultural diversity forms a sort of ‘middle way’ between these two strong and contradictory tendencies. The concepts of standardization, isolationism, and cultural diversity may be regarded as pivotal for the cultural strategy of UNESCO, in addition to the conceptual realms which are crucially important for withholding and promoting, revitalizing and celebrating cultural diversity, namely cultural heritage, living cultures, sustainable development, and, finally, intercultural dialogue, including interfaith dialogue, which comprises the primary topic of the present work.

In methodological terms, conducting a project of this kind essentially means creatively joining the results attained in the frameworks of a number of academic disciplines, belonging to both the humanistic and societal cycles, primarily general history and political science, the history of ideas and cultural studies, demography and sociology, psychology and art studies. In doing so, the project design follows principles of poly- and trans-methodologies. Poly-methodology constructively combines the methodologies of each academic discipline to provide a multidimensional description of a given fragment of a certain subject realm, described independently by the distinct disciplines. Trans-methodology heuristically and creatively transfers methodologies elaborated within separate academic disciplines into different fields, allowing trends to be traced in back to qualitatively different fields.

In terms of pragmatics, the project comprises a collection, evaluation, and in-depth elaboration of innovative strategies and tactics (good practices) which serve as vehicles for respon-

sible and innovative interfaith dialogue in the contemporary world, conducted primarily to consolidate the culture of peace, promote social interaction, and enhance the creative potential of society. Young people, especially college students, women, migrants, and also the 'new poor', especially urban agglomeration dwellers, generally constitute the target groups of the project. The projected readership includes students, as well as the staff of present-day educational institutions, social activists and members of the manifold religious communities, political decision-makers, and journalists.

The present volume is dedicated to problems and prospects of dialogue between Christianity and Islam, which definitely forms a focal point in the development of the contemporary world. An immense body of literature has been produced in this area, and the immediate context for the present collective monograph is formed by a number of recently published materials of high-level societal and/or academic forums held under the aegis of/or in partnership with UNESCO¹, by academic publications in anthological or reading-book format², vocabularies, thesauruses, and/or reference books³, discussions materials⁴, conceptual works dedicated to theoretical and pragmatic aspects of dialogue between Christianity and Islam⁵.

This stage of the long-term international research project *World Religions in the Context of Contemporary Culture: New Perspectives of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*, is intended to serve as an introductory and heuristic overview, prepared by experts of the St. Petersburg UNESCO Chair based on their experiences conducting large-scale international projects dedicated to various aspects of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. The most recent example to be cited is a Russian-Lebanese research project entitled *Christianity and Islam in the Context of Contemporary Culture*, implemented under the auspices of UNESCO Moscow Office and UNESCO Beirut Office in 2009, which resulted in the publication of an international collective electronic monograph *Christianity and Islam in the Context of Contemporary Culture: International Dialogue in Russia and the Middle East*, in English and Russian with Arabic summaries (*Saint Petersburg-Beirut, 2009*)⁶, which has been had a most favorable reception in

¹ Cf. e. g.: Межкультурный и межрелигиозный диалог в целях устойчивого развития. Материалы международной конференции. М., 2008; Dialogue among Endogenous religions. Christianity and Islam in the Service of the Culture of Peace in Africa: Proceedings of an International Symposium. Cotonou, 2009.

² Христиане и мусульмане: Проблемы диалога. Хрестоматия / Сост. А. В. Журавский. М., 2000; Традиция в условиях перемен. Вып. 2. СПб, 2009; Отечественные записки, 2003, № 5: Специальный выпуск «Ислам и Россия»; Interfaith dialogue and Peacebuilding / Ed. D. Smock. Washington, 2002; Abu Nimer M. et al. Unity in Diversity: Interfaith Dialogue in the Middle East. Washington, 2007.

³ Словарь религий. Иудаизм, христианство, ислам. СПб, 2008; Матвеев С. А. Англо-русский теологический словарь. Иудаизм, христианство, ислам / English-Russian Theological Dictionary: Judaism-Christianity-Islam. М., 2006.

⁴ See, for example: Круглый стол «Ислам и христианство: проблемы диалога» / Континент — Институт этнологии и этнографии РАН — <http://magazines.russ.ru/continent/2004/119/isln.html>.

⁵ Асадуллин Ф. А. Отказываясь от заповедников моноконфессиональности. Формирование культуры диалога — главный императив развития межрелигиозных отношений // http://religion.ng.ru/problems/2009-10-07/5_monokonfession.html; Асланова И. Ш. Диалог как форма межрелигиозного общения — http://www.intelros.ru/readroom/credo_new/-2-2010/6311-dialog-kak-forma-mezhreligioznogo-obshheniya.html; Садур В. Экзистенциальная диалогичность поликонфессионального бытия. М., 2008; Patel E. Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation. Boston, 2008; Landau R. What the World Needs to Know about Interfaith Dialogue — <http://www.how-to-succeed-at-interfaith-dialogue.com>.

⁶ For concise text of the international monograph, see the official UNESCO site: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001852/185275M.pdf>.

the wide international audience⁷. Having conducted a detailed analysis of the implementation and results of the Russian-Lebanese research project, supplemented with an inquiry into the problems and prospects of similar large-scale research projects, we have identified a number of keynote issues and focal points for our future progress. For example, we have ascertained that focusing on the common heritage of both religious traditions, as represented by the set of Abrahamic origin insights and archetypes, can provide both a source of progress and a substantial hindrance in their dialogue. Nonetheless, the perspective of serious and responsible dialogue between Christianity and Islam in the framework of the contemporary, globalized and less than stable world should generally be regarded as definitely promising and fruitful, especially when it is conducted in keeping with the principles and strategies of UNESCO.

Secondly, we have ascertained that elaborating the fundamental principles of interfaith dialogue should be combined simultaneously with working-out pragmatic techniques and tactics, starting with a collection of good practices and ending with moderated web forums dedicated to open discussion of the relevant topics and tracing innovative trends in the dialogue's development.

Thirdly, definite general stages can be perceived in the course of responsible and effective interfaith dialogue, and knowledge of such stages serves as framework for the structuring and analysis of future dialogues. To provide a preliminary view, the broadly defined stages consist of:

- participating in conducting pre- and/or post-conflict moderation and appeasement;
- consolidating notions, skills and insights, gained in the course of such moderation, regarding elements of the culture of peace, however fragmentary and abridged;
- elaborating these elements further, into wider networks, including:
- reconsidering regional and/or community histories and narratives as integral aspects of intangible cultural heritage, basing the reconsideration on concepts of multinational, multi-faith societies;
- reforming educational programs at all levels to convey the message of fruitful interfaith dialogue between different social groups, in order to enhance and promote social cohesion;
- imbuing art education with impulses and insights leading towards the culture of peace and generally linking the enhancement of creativity with intercultural, interfaith dialogue to produce a joint dimension of spiritual progress.

Finally, generally focusing on the Near and Middle East, as well as the countries of Maghreb, should be regarded as a most constructive and timely focus for present-day studies of interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Islam. However, manifold processes occurring in the territory of the former Soviet Union and its nearest neighbors, which deserve more detailed attention and consideration, have until now been largely neglected by scientific, impartial analysis and description. For this reason we have concluded that it would be most timely and expedient during the next stage of our project to concentrate on understanding the problems and prospects of interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Islam in the vast territory of the Russian Federation, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

⁷ E. g. see official sites of the international network of Education about Religions and Beliefs (<http://www.aocerb.org>), working under the auspices of the UN Alliance of Civilizations or, of the Information System «Joint Access to Educational Resources» (http://window.edu.ru/window_catalog/pdf2txt?p_id=37551), functioning as part of the Federal System of Educational Information Resources (Russian Federation), which posted hyperlinks to the concise text of the aforementioned book.

Choosing this region for in-depth analysis gives the researcher access to a surprisingly vast set of models of historical dialogue between Christianity and Islam, which seems to offer potentially constructive and fruitful insights for resolving the difficulties and contradictions of *the present-day world*. Recurring to the latter expression, we wish to notice that the onset of modernity in this region, according to our rough definition, began in the 1990s, when a cluster of countries, having newly acquired independence due to the notorious Soviet perestroika, started to work-out and elaborate the novel identity patterns of their citizens, which have tended to include a more than substantial ethno-religious component. In the Islamic world in general, as well as the Christian world, the dramatic events of 9/11 have created the keynote reference point, reshaping in a most radical way the geopolitical and ethno-religious situation on the global scale.

Regarding the nations on which the present stage of our international research project is focused, it is expedient to note that the Russian Federation, Belarus, and the Republic of Moldova present typical examples of the historical flourishing of the Christian tradition represented primarily, although not exclusively, by the Orthodox Church. Having made this observation, one must immediately add that Islam, belonging to the set of the foremost traditional religions of Russia, has flourished for many centuries in the vast territory of Tataria, Bashkiria, and a number of other republics of the Volga region, as well as at the majority of the republics of Northern Caucasus. Recurring to present-day processes, one notes that large communities of Muslims are currently forming rapidly in major Russian urban agglomerations, a situation which merits consideration as its own subject matter, being quite novel for our religious studies.

The states of Central Asia, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, have all earlier or later joined the Islamic world, of which they are an important and integral part. Nowadays, the positions of the Islamic religion are being restored here to a considerable extent. Christianity, known in this region since times immemorial, constitutes a typical minority religion here. The Transcaucasian region is represented in our research by the states and societies of Armenia and Georgia, on the one hand, and by Azerbaijan, on the other. Armenia and Georgia have long been an integral part of the Christian civilization, and Azerbaijan is an important member of the vast Islamic World.

Interfaith dialogue, conducted for centuries in the territory of the aforementioned regions and countries, has definitely gained momentum in recent years. One feels authorized to emphasize that practically all of these countries have either initiated large-scale international initiatives of interfaith dialogue(s), or they have developed and elaborated interfaith dialogues on the national level. Among the countries of Central Asia, the famous Kazakhstan initiative of conducting World Conferences of Religious Leaders deserves primary mention. As of now, three such large-scale interfaith forums have been conducted, which have gathered numerous highly competent and influential leaders from both the clergy and the political establishment, not to mention scholars specializing in religious studies.

In the Russian Federation, the creation in 2009 of the High Level International Group of Religious Leaders, dedicated to interfaith dialogue, should be mentioned. One must also note the strategic initiative of the Russian Federation recently presented to the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, which resulted in the creation of an Advisory Council on Religious Affairs, subordinated to the United Nations⁸.

⁸ Within the framework of modern political discourse, this initiative tends to be often compared to the well-

In addition, highly constructive initiatives have been formed and implemented in the Caucasus. The World Summit of Religious Leaders, conducted in April 2010 in Baku, presents a good example of such initiatives. Representatives from 32 countries participated in the work, which included a meeting between the Catholicos of Armenia Garegin II and the Head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Caucasus, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahşükür Paşazadə, which was mediated by the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill.

In the course of conducting the research for this collaborative monograph, every effort has been taken to ensure both high level of cooperation between the experts involved into the project and their academic independence. Following an extended period of communicating by phone and by email, the preliminary concise text of this book was created and presented to the authors. In order to ensure detailed analysis and discussion, the majority of the authors of the present volume gathered at the end of April, 2011, in the city of St. Petersburg, Russia, on the historical premises of the St. Petersburg Scientific Centre of Academy of Sciences of Russia, for a two-day international meeting. Conducted in a most open and constructive manner, our discussions have been most instrumental in enhancing final reviewing of the texts by the authors, supplementing, correcting, and/or updating the texts whenever necessary and expedient. Finally, the integral text has been subject to respectful editing and organizing conducted under the auspices of the Editorial Board. As a result, the text of this international collective monograph has been created and is now on its way to the vast international reading audience.

Judging from the results of our preliminary discussions during the 2011 Working meeting in St. Petersburg, the research collected for the present stage of the project *World Religions in the Context of Contemporary Culture: New Perspectives of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*, the authors intend to continue coordinating their works, dedicated to interfaith communication between Christianity and Islam, probably within the framework of a new regional structure, forming part of the Network of UNESCO/UNITWIN Chairs on Interfaith dialogue for Intercultural Understanding. Regarding the project in general, new stages concerning other religious traditions and ethno-religious situations are currently being elaborated.

known Saudi initiative on interfaith dialogue, which led to the adoption of the so-called Madrid Declaration on Interreligious Dialogue in the year 2008.

PREFACE

S. Shankman (USA)

Many of the great modern thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries imagined a future purged of religion, as well of religious and of ethnic differences. That master narrative, which was embraced by — among others -- the founders of the Soviet state, seemed to have history on its side. Remarkably, that narrative is now in many ways a thing of the past. In its wake, many have returned to the great spiritual traditions of the region, especially to Christianity and Islam. If we are to live in a peaceful world, it is essential that these two religions, while maintaining their distinctive characteristics, at the same time continue to cultivate respectful and mutually enriching ways of living side by side. Hence, this monograph on Christianity and Islam in the Russian Federation, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus is important, timely work. The UNITWIN network on Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding emerged in the context of a profound search for meaning by those who were living in this particular geographic region and who themselves were experiencing the fading power of this master narrative. This volume bears witness to the fruits of that search, and to the remarkable cultural diversity that the now outdated modernist master narrative had attempted, but failed, to assimilate into the once seemingly unyielding thrust of its unfolding.

Part I reflects on the fundamental problems of interreligious dialogue in today's world. Professor Sergei S. Horujy from the Russian Federation, following Habermas's critique of the master narrative that envisioned the end of religion, suggests that we now live in a "post-secular" age. Professor Horujy envisions a Christianity that, by holding true to the "fraternal affection" and the call to love that is central to the Christian message, is inclusive and thus lovingly open to other religious and spiritual traditions. Professor Abusseitova, a UNESCO Chair from Kazakhstan, views the cultural specificity of Kazakhstan — the very kind of cultural specificity recognized by the 2001 UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity -- as a bridge between East and West. Marietta T. Sepanyants of the Russian Federation reflects on the importance of the dialogue of cultures — including a dialogue with Islam — as crucial for Russia's acquiring a new collective identity in place of the central role it once played in the now vanished collective identity of the "Soviet People."

Part II of the monograph focuses on "Issues and Prospects of Dialogue between Islam and Christianity in Multi-Ethnic Societies of the Present-Day World." Igor Kotin of the Russian Federation provides us with important empirical data about the current size of the many ethnic groups within Russia that claim Muslim heritage. He shows that half of Russia's current population identify with religious and spiritual traditions: 35% are Russian Orthodox Christians, 10% are Muslims, and 5% pursue other spiritual paths. Hence we see, from these statistics, the reason why, for Russia, Christian-Muslim dialogue is so important, for Christians and Muslims make up nearly half of those who identify themselves as religiously oriented. But another equally important truth emerges here. Half the population of Russia does not ally itself with any religious tradition. This fact suggests to me that those concerned with so-called "interreligious" or "interfaith" dialogue in today's Russia — and in today's "post-

secular” world in general — need to focus more of their attention on the dialogue between the secular and religious segments of society, to seek common ground as well as to recognize differences. In the other essays in Part II, Natalia Kutova looks at the relation between Islam and Christianity in Belarus, Emil Dragnev in Moldova, Hidayat Orudjev in Azerbaijan, Hovhannes Hovhannisyan and Sevak Karamyan in Armenia, Nino Chikovani in Georgia, Laura Yerekhesheva in Kazakhstan, Adash Toktosunova in Kyrgyzstan, Munzifakhon Babadjanova in Tajikistan, and Muzaffar Artikov in Uzbekistan.

Part III reflects on “Fundamental Issues of Education for New Prospects of Interfaith Dialogue in the Context of Contemporary Culture.” Efim A. Rezvan of Russia begins his essay by referring to the project “Ijma” (meaning “Concord” in Arabic) undertaken by the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg, which culls the opinions of Muslims throughout the Islamic world. Here is an opportunity for international cooperation between Russians and Kazakhs, and for relating a past attempt at photographic anthropology — by Samuel Martynovich Dudin (1863–1929) — to a similar anthropological effort in 2010. Dr. Rezvan describes the 2010 project in a lively first-person narrative style that offers an engaging alternative to the traditionally discursive and scientifically objective model of academic prose for registering cultural difference. Goulchokhra N. Seidova looks at an instance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in a Shiite Muslim community in the Caucasus, as well as mentioning the presence there of a significant Jewish community. Gunay Efediyeveva and Bakhtiyar Alijev look at the relation between Islam and Christianity, as well as other religions, in Azerbaijan. The authors of this essay describe a spirit of tolerance that is encouraged in today’s Azerbaijan, including an International Day for Tolerance that was first celebrated in November 16, 1999 and the opening of one of Europe’s largest synagogues in 2003 in Baku. Munira Shahidi takes a different approach to Muslim-Christian dialogue, for she focuses on the long and continuing history of this dialogue as it is expressed in the arts — most paradigmatically, perhaps, by the Islamic philosopher Avicenna (Abu Ali Ibn Sina) and by the great Italian poet Dante in the Middle Ages.

Finally, Dimitri K. Burlaka brings us back to where we began, i. e. with the notion that we are living today not in a post-religious age, as the master narrative of the 19th and 20th centuries had us believe, but rather in a post-secular age. Professor Burlaka explains how, in post-secular, “post-[officially] atheist” Russia, the Methodology of Values and Culture approach in contemporary Russian education offers students a way of learning about religion that fosters tolerance. That approach is intercultural and interreligious at its core because it emphasizes how the major religions in Russia — Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism — all engage in similar ways of fashioning ethically responsible individuals.

LIVE TOGETHER WHILE REMAINING DIVERSE

Efim A. Rezvan (Russia)

In 2009 the e-book appeared which presents the results of a joint international research project “Christianity and Islam in the Context of Contemporary Culture: Perspectives of Interfaith Dialogue from Russia and the Middle East” realized under the aegis of the UNESCO⁹. The current international collective monograph basically continues the previous work. Unlike the first monograph which was based on the material as seen from the perspectives of Russia, Lebanon and the Middle East in general, the new one is devoted to the prospects of interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding in the Russian Federation, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Generally speaking, the current volume deals with the vast Eurasian spaces which have the civilization paradigm of their own: “*live together while remaining diverse*”.

This civilizational paradigm resulted from long historical processes that were going on in the huge Eurasian territory for many millennia. The “Pax Mongolica”, achieved at the cost of enormous human and cultural losses, united vast territories of Asia and Eastern Europe into one political unity, thus facilitating trade and cultural exchanges. The conquering led to mass migration of the population and the most civilizational type of the new state provided for efficient cultural interaction of people of the empire (without conducting to unitarianism). After the disintegration of the Golden Horde, Russia inherited territories and the state order of the Golden Horde, thus continuing the existing civilizational traditions. For example, during intercourse with Muslim states Russia used, besides its coat of arms, a *tughra* with an Arabic formula. On the vast Eurasian territories there emerged the “Pax Russica”, a successor of the “Pax Mongolica”. A gigantic empire was built by common efforts and mostly common interests. The principle “live together while remaining diverse” many times proved to be rational. On the whole it is this basic algorithm of survival and development which has been elaborated on the vast territories of Eurasia. The algorithm includes such characteristics as the priority of internal sources of development and the ability to react to changes and actively, constructively, and synthetically affect the civilizational environment.

Periods of unitarianism tendencies have been changed by periods of moderation, but people’s wisdom, achieved through suffering and imbibed on the level of subconsciousness principles, did not let the ruling Unitarianism ideologemes secure their victory.

Thanks to relationships and rapidly developing interconnections a new community was emerging on the vast territories of the empire — a Russian people; the Russian world was expanding, in the common interests of which an amalgam was forming, a blend of customs and traditions, languages and religions. Russian became the predominant language, and the emerged culture was much richer than the proper Russian one at that: it included a number of significant elements of national cultures of peoples comprising the state. Attempts at forced Christianization turned out to be less effective than natural processes of conversation and dia-

⁹ Санкт-Петербург-Бейрут, 2009. См.: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001852/185275m.pdf>

logue. Its subjects professed different religions, which were actively developing. For instance, the Islamization of Kazakh steppes took place when they became a part of Russian territory.

Gradually an image of a Russian citizen emerged and was strengthened in the public conscience. His belonging to the unified historical and cultural space was significantly more important to him than his belonging to “his own people”, although the latter undoubtedly remained. People were “Russian”, but they remained Tatars and Georgians, Jewish people and Germans... The emerged feeling of a civilized community leaned against the uniformity of language and culture. Russian was the language, and the culture, with the key Russian influence, was gradually becoming super-national and common. All of these first of all had to do with the educated minority, but the vector was so powerful that the idea of “the citizen of Russia” was much broader. We remember that much later, in the course of Soviet epoch, the ideas of proletarian internationalism were often interpreted amidst ordinary people, and also by the representatives of cultural and scientific elite as a demand for unconditional respect for national traditions of all people of the great country.

Russian Orthodoxy was the most important but not the only religion recognized by the state. Majestic edifices of mosque, synagogue and datsan were erected in the capital of the empire.

Today our world undergoes a new epoch of conquests following the age of colonization. The world is entering the global economy which is connected with the overall dominance of an ideology based on ultraliberalization and free market relations. In practice globalization means the transformation of a large part of the world into the “Pax Americana” with a standardized image and ideals of life, forms of political organization of the society, a type of mass culture, life values. In the emerging information environment, according to psychologists, psychiatrists, and sociologists from different countries, there is a mass identity crisis, a crisis of man’s ability to self-identify as representative of a nation or ethnic group; there is a tendency to cloning a human, to lose the spiritual, world outlook reference points.

We are witnessing aggressive use in the post-Soviet space and elsewhere of the ideologemes of “freedom” and “democracy”. Aggression and selective usage often defaces the entire system of Western values, threatening the stability of global processes.

In the conditions of increasing “informational globalism” an important means of securing Russia’s interests is increasing its presence in global informational and virtual space, which today is of greater importance in determining a country’s prestige and influence than ever before. In this connection a state must build and coherently promote an informational strategy aimed at improving the international image of the country based on the traditions of Russian statehood and on the best achievements of science and culture. It is necessary to bring cultural and political initiatives to a focus and to increase the “rhetoric initiative” of Russia politics and diplomacy.

In this connection we think the principle “to live together while remaining diverse”, which characterizes the peculiar Eurasian cultural-historical type, has great potential to provide for building an ideological system able to compete within the country as well as abroad.

The principle “to live together while remaining diverse”, which characterizes the peculiar Eurasian cultural-historical type, has great potential for the whole extent of Eurasia. The project “Russia” was realized mostly because the peoples of empire have been schooled themselves to live in this particular way.

Islam is multi-faceted. A certain prophecy is ascribed to Muhammad, the founder of Islam: “The Jews have been divided into 71 communities. The Christians have been divided into 72 communities ... *Umma* will be divided into 73 communities”. Later, it suggests that, of all the communities, only one will be saved on Judgment Day. It is important to remember that until the dreadful moment when God pronounces the verdict, people will not be able to identify which community will be saved. For centuries Muslim scholars have been trying to figure out what unites all Muslims unequivocally and indisputably. The effort has been anything but simple; as the worldviews, customs, traditions and lifestyles of different Muslim communities, sometimes living right next to each other, have been so different. It turns out that the only absolute common factor is the direction of the prayers towards Mecca.

The largest in the world collection of seeds of cultivated plants is kept in St. Petersburg. The seeds were collected by Nikolay Ivanovich Vavilov (1887—1943) in the course of his 110 scientific expeditions. The goal set by the scientist had to do with victory over hunger. Vavilov’s collection was intended for experimentation in the field of creating new varieties of plants. Today, based on this collection alone, plant growing can be restored even if all food plants in the world disappear. The wealth of this collection is in its variety. Any schoolboy realizes that losing one of its components equals catastrophe. Characteristics of one lost species may turn out to be crucial in struggle against, let’s say, unknown disease capable of annihilating all paramount cultivated plants, which are the foundation for the food ration of humanity.

Amazingly the truth so understandable to a schoolboy in this case is not apprehended as such when we speak of the diversity of civilizations, which requires defence by us.

PART I.

**FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS
OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE
IN THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD**

CHAPTER 1

CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: IN SEARCH OF NEW PERSPECTIVES OF A DIALOGUE OF RELIGIONS

Sergei S. Horujy (Russia)

I.

At the turn of the 19th century, German poet and mystical philosopher Novalis wrote his famous essay *Christendom or Europe*. Already the title of his essay stated clearly the identity of two historical phenomena; and though Novalis described the process whereby Europe was gradually losing “the beautiful chief characteristics of these truly Christian times,” he was convinced that the original identity could not be lost. Europe and the Western World, could be Christian, for better or worse, but they could not be anything else at their core, since there is not (and there cannot be) another ultimate meaning of their historical existence. “Ultimate meaning cannot be annihilated, it can be just clouded, weakened, superseded by other meanings.”¹⁰ And we can assume that, with some limitations, this position was shared by most enlightened Europeans; it was a voice of European self-consciousness.

Two centuries later, at the turn of the 21st, European self-consciousness expressed a polar opposite position. After fundamental discussions, a very representative forum consisting of participants from all the countries of the continent, refused to include any reference — not only about *ultimate meaning*, but also about the virtual Christian ancestry of European culture — into The European Union’s Constitution. In a sense, that refusal is a symbolic event marking the apex of secularization, a break with Christian consciousness when the “gathered powers,” essentially, agreed to replace Novalis’ expression with the opposite: *Postchristianity or Europe*.

This striking shift is a fruit of the history of the 20th century, which was ultimately dramatic for Christianity. A variety of factors led to the intensification and acceleration of social secularization, as well as the start of the post-Christian phase in countries of Christendom. The experience of world wars and totalitarianism showed the fragility, and in some measure, the ostensible nature of Christian principles of conscience and society; it revealed a deep crisis of Christian ethics that could not interdict Christian peoples — neither in Orthodox Christian Russia nor in Lutheran Germany — from mass support for inhuman totalitarian regimes. Then came the explosive development of technological civilization, accepted by mass consciousness as ‘the highest stage of development,’ which made the religious form of consciousness obsolete, inadequate to the new reality as well as to new possibilities for man and his mind. Finally, the advent of globalization brought an intense mixing of ethnicities and cultures, as well as of communities with different religions, and entailed an ultimate dilution

¹⁰ Novalis. *Die Christenheit oder Europa*. Ein Fragment // *Id. Dichtungen und Prosa*. Leipzig, 1975, S. 446.

of traditional order and the replacement of mono-religious societies. Hardly anywhere now do Christian communities form monolithic “Christian societies”; instead they find themselves in an extremely heterogeneous medium, closely neighboring with representatives of other religions, and people with secular, non-religious consciousness. Now, at this stage, the idea that the contemporary West is ‘post-Christian’ has acquired popularity. This notion has never been clearly defined, being generally used in accordance with its literal meaning: as a denotation of a new formation of society and consciousness, for which Christianity is irretrievably, irreversibly in the past. But it is important to note that the concept of post-Christianity had not yet fully formed and reached universal dominance, when another concept, another perspective on the contemporary situation started to force it aside and supersede it.

This new idea which is currently acquiring more and more influence is that of post-secularism, first suggested by Juergen Habermas in the aftermath of the terrorist attack of 9/11 (though the term itself had emerged before without becoming a full-fledged concept). The idea affirms that nowadays secular (extra- or non-religious) and religious consciousness form a new type of inter-relationship, quintessentially different from their relationships in the epoch of secularization. The determining trait of this type of relationship is its rejection of secularization’s leading strategy, which was directed toward the displacement and elimination of religion from social and culture life, and supposed that such elimination would become total or nearly total in the near future. (Hence we can see that the idea of post-Christianity can be considered a kind of flash-forward to a time when complete secularization is believed to be an accomplished fact.)

Two basic suggestions supersede the strategy of secularization. First, religious consciousness is not regarded as a backward and obsolescent formation — a kind of ‘vanishing scenery’ — but is seen as an everlasting, immanent factor of human existence. Second, and equally important, post-secularism assumes that secular consciousness and religious consciousness should be neither isolated from each other nor in confrontation with each other, but that they should develop an active contact and mutually tolerant communication, and build a dialogue targeted at mutual understanding.

At the moment these ideas are being actively discussed, and they generally find support in both secular and religious circles. A meeting and discussion between Juergen Habermas and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) held in Munich on January 19th 2004 can be considered as the specific starting point, a symbolic meeting of two sides of the post-secular dialogue. Old confrontational attitudes certainly do not disappear easily. Radical secularization was part and parcel of Western liberalism’s positions for a long time, while the condemnation of non-religious consciousness, as well as an uncompromising attitude towards it were a necessary feature of orthodox religious (but not only fundamentalist) views. As current events in Russia and the whole of Christendom brightly demonstrate, conflicts between adherents of these opposite views still occur at all levels, and are still a characteristic trait of modern life. However, the weight of evidence suggests that the foundation for a transition to a post-secular formation has been laid. Its development is gradually becoming one of the leading trends in social and anthropological reality.

Relations between Christianity and (secular) society are undoubtedly the main constituting factor of Christianity’s situation in the contemporary world. However, there are two more important constituting factors to the situation: internal inter-confessional relationships inside Christianity and the relationships between Christianity and other religions. Relationships of different parts of Christendom, its different confessions and types, played a key role

on the stage of History for a long time. The relationships were typically marked with mutual prejudice, confrontation and conflicts, and with frequent violence. The fight against heresies during the first Christian centuries and the Middle Ages, conflicts between Catholics and Protestants during the Reformation, the history of the Inquisition in the West, the history of schism and sectarianism in Russia, left a number of examples of wars, bloodshed and cruel repressions. As the modern era brought certain mitigation, humanization of customs; blatant manifestations of violence and cruelty decreased (though works of contemporary historians, like M. Foucault and others demonstrate that violence and cruelty still persist even in 'enlightened societies' towards various marginal minorities — the mentally ill, homosexuals, prisoners). However, such cruelty and violence are succeeded by moderate forms of hostility — tension and alienation, mutual distrust and disapproval, heavy burden of accumulated recriminations, prejudices and superstitions. An attitude towards a non-orthodox Alien in Christian consciousness still showed rejection and intolerance, though not yet expressed in direct aggression.

At the same time Christian consciousness could not forget that a call to unity of all Christians and fraternal affection among them is a part of grounds of Christ's Gospel. Efforts to reach this unity did not cease during all historical periods and has taken various shapes. Initially these were attempts of a formal junction: top-down unifications of church leadership, driven by some external, non-spiritual, motives or circumstances; and not resulting, as a rule, in real spiritual unity. But in the area of inter-confessional contacts, alternative endeavours and models gradually started to take hold. In the first half of the 20th century the Ecumenical Movement became a mainstream context for inter-confessional contacts. The Ecumenical Movement emerged in the circles of American Protestantism and cultivated various forms of rapprochement and unity, mostly between Protestants and Orthodox Christians. (The Catholic Church rejected participation in this movement *ad initium*.) Ecumenical activities were fruitful in many respects. They gave valuable support to the impoverished Russian Emigration's many clerical and cultural enterprises to mention the contributions to Russian spiritual culture made by the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute, the Journal *Put'*, and the YMCA Press in Paris in the 1920's and 1930's. The Ecumenical Movement also developed a wide range of arrangements and institutions to fulfill and regularize inter-confessional contacts. The main such institution, the World Council of Churches, established in 1948, was able to become, both organizationally and ideologically, the intellectual center of Christian unity, owing to the participation of major religious thinkers such as Orthodox Christian theologian P.georges Florovsky and Protestants Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Anders Nygren. Activities of the Ecumenical Movement, including the quite active participation of the Russian Orthodox Church in inter-confessional contacts as well as renewal and changes in the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council of 1962–65, resulted in notable strengthening of intra-Christian communication and mitigating centuries-long intransigence and enmity. In 1965, the Catholic Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople mutually lifted the anathemas between them. "One of characteristic events in contemporary Christianity is dilution of confessional discord," - Sergei Averintsev wrote¹¹. To a great extent this dilution of discord is the result of development of inter-confessional dialogue. It is within the realm of possibility that the accumulated vast experience of such a Christian dialogue to some extent can be transferred to the field of an interreligious dialogue.

¹¹ Аверинцев С. С. Христианство // Новая Философская энциклопедия. Т. 4. М., 2001. С. 306.

2.

Relations with other religions are the last remaining factor in the Christian situation. This factor has a special significance for our theme, so we will consider it more systematically. What common principles define Christianity's stance toward other religions? It goes without saying that the cornerstones of this stance can be found in the New Testament. Christ is The Way, The Truth, and The Life. The Truth personally embodied in its entirety; without Christ, without union with Him, there is no *Salvation* of man — no possibility of achieving man's full self-actualization, his life purpose. But this absolute directive of Christianity does not impose an unambiguous attitude toward other religions; it leaves open the possibility of two opposite positions, which are usually referred to as *the principle of exclusiveness* and *the principle of inclusiveness*. Without going into the details of other religions and beliefs, we can see that, *a priori*, other religions can be in one of two positions vis-a-vis Christianity (in which for Christians resides the entirety of Truth). The grounds and credos of other religions can either have nothing in common with Christian grounds and credos, being utterly alien and opposed to them; or the other religions can bear within themselves some primary and inchoate forms, some vague forestalling, partial reflexions, and elements, of the Christian Truth. In the second case, it could be suggested that the spiritual essence of other religions has been, to a certain extent, absorbed, included in Christianity; finding within Christianity a fulfillment and endorsement, an actualization of their own potencies. This latter outlook on other religions is the attitude of inclusiveness; while the opposite attitude, which denies other religions any measure of truth and commonality with Christianity, is that of exclusiveness.

In its concrete history Christianity did not make a theistic choice between the two attitudes; neither one nor the other was rejected essentially. Even in the Early Christian epoch, when the uniqueness of God's Incarnation in the image of a slave was especially fervently perceived by the new Christians, who were experiencing the unprecedented new reality opened by this event — Christ had told them himself that he had come not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it; and Apostle Paul, speaking about the Hellenes' religion, told the men of the Athenian Areopagus that, in worshipping The Unknown God they, unknowingly, worshiped Christ. In other words, even when the attitudes of exclusiveness were the most natural and clear, teachers of Christianity also pointed to the presence of inclusiveness in the new belief, too.

Later, both attitudes followed a difficult path. If we describe the progression very simply, we can say that until the New Age the attitude of exclusiveness, detaching Christianity from the entire universum of world religions and beliefs, was much more noticeable and predominant. The attitude of exclusiveness was much closer to mass Christian consciousness, while inclusiveness manifested more as a tendency in the teachings of a small number of thinkers who were inclined toward resumptive and rationalist views of reality (for example, Nicholas of Cusa). However in the Contemporary Era the position of inclusiveness is gaining more and more currency. In academic theological thought, the change has been facilitated by the development of the disciplines of historical criticism and comparative religious studies; and, in the broader social consciousness, it has been facilitated by the active processes of ethno-cultural migrations and mixings. In contemporary Western theology there have emerged noteworthy teachings affirming the inclusiveness principle — first and foremost, the teachings of Karl Rahner (1904–1984) and Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. According to Rahner, “all religions are moving to Christianity, unaware of their movement.” Ratzinger summarizes the modern movement towards inclusiveness as follows: “All the cultures are permeated by understanding of human striving for God ... of conviction, repentance and absolution, con-

scious oneness with God ... and finally acceptance of the basic moral canons as they are formulated in Decalog," so *ad extremum*, "inclusiveness reflects the essence of history of human cultures and beliefs."¹²

At the same time, as Ratzinger also notes, the extreme expressions of inclusiveness, strongly accenting the commonality and likeness of Christianity to all other religions, lapses into *pluralism* — a position, close to Eastern mysticism, by which all religious teachings, despite their outward diversity, are tried against one and the same spiritual essence. The attraction to pluralism, also fed by the ideology of multi-culturalism, is one trends of the present-day dilution of Christianity which is a process, noticeable enough within Protestantism. In the afterglow of the fact that "pluralism and inclusiveness sporadically are about to verge into each other,"¹³ the inclusiveness principle must be accepted within bounds. On the other hand, the exclusiveness principle also cannot be entirely displaced and discarded. In its emotional and existential aspects, Christian religiosity, which to different extents is stronger in Orthodoxy than in Protestantism, is inseparable from the feeling of "The Narrow Path" — the feeling of an intense experience of communion with Christ as the "one thing which is needful;" as the only saving thread which, by definition, is nowhere besides Christianity. Professors can find in Christianity as much in common with a number of other religions as they want, but I personally know, with my whole soul, that my way of striving for Christ and union with Him is narrow, sole, and none of the other ways, however close or neighboring to Him they would seem, do not lead to Him.

In sum, we can describe the contemporary Christian position on religiosity with respect to other religions as an acknowledgment of Christianity's essential inclusiveness in terms of ideals, history and culture; combined with elements of exclusiveness on the level of 'Religious Feeling,' the level of personal emotional-existential aspects of faith.

Now it is time to say that notions of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, which at first glance seem to be abstract and theoretic, actually are directly associated with the practice of inter-religious relations. Evidently, inclusiveness tends to suggest an open and benignant attitude toward other religions, so long as they are at least somewhat 'pregnant with Christianity;' that is, so long as they bear some rudiments, some potencies of the Truth, which in Christianity is fully given and revealed. An as example, we can call to mind the overtly inclusive conception of 'potential Orthodoxy' advanced in Eurasian circles in Russian emigration. Supporters of the concept worked toward convergence with the adepts of non-Christian religions, claiming that the other religions (which did not know the Christian sermon) were 'potentially' close to Orthodoxy — in contrast to, for example, Catholics, who had deliberately detached themselves from Orthodoxy. The inclusiveness position encourages a dialogue of religions, for which theses on some specific 'grains of Christianity' in other religions could become an initial basis of the dialogue.

Such dialogue, however, requires maximal tact on the Christian side, since the representation of another religion as simply a primitive form of Christianity, which has not yet completely fulfilled its potential, may naturally evoke protest and dismissal in the dialogue's partners.

The attitude of exclusiveness seems at first glance to urge us, on the contrary, toward alienation and isolation from other religions. On closer examination however, this turns out to be far from the case. The core essence of Christianity is its pan-human and universal character,

¹² Йозеф (Бенедикт XVI) Ратцингер. Вера — истина — толерантность. Христианство и мировые религии. М., 2007. С. 90, 130.

¹³ Ibid. P. 92.

a craving for a dispensation where ‘there is neither Hellene nor Jew.’ Athonian monks are demonstratively a striking example of the most ardent, the most ‘exclusive’ faith. But the Elder Silouan, a great Athonite hermit of the 20th century, made a *prayer for everyone*, for all Christians and non-Christians, the very center of his spiritual practice, and his spirituality was called *mystic of love to brother*: not only to a Christian brother, but to every fellow creature. And similar to the ascetic life of monks-hermits in ancient times, today Rev. Silouan’s ministry influences the whole Orthodox Christian world, appealing to expand the circle of Christian love to everyone, beyond Christianity.

Further, there is another important sphere related to Christianity’s universalism, which brings Christianity — even in the position of exclusivity — into contact with other religions. This sphere is the *mission* to preach the Christian sermon all over the world which, already in the New Testament, is asserted as a Christian duty. The fate of the mission nowadays is not easy. Diverse forms and methods of missionary work have been practiced for ages; including the harshly straightforward methods that combined with pressure from secular authorities, according to the ancient principle *cujus regio, ejus religio*. In subduing colonies and conquering new lands and tribes, such methods were the norm. These days such methods have almost disappeared, but they have left persistent historical memory, because in many circles and countries they created an attitude toward missionary work likened with the expansion and pressure of Christianity. In this area too, there are new developments, take for example the officious and primitive propaganda of some recently emerged Protestant sects, which reduces the Christian teaching to its absolute limit. The contribution of such phenomena to inter-religious contact can hardly be considered positive. However, the mission is an irrevocable Christian duty, which means that nowadays it must find new forms, adequate to evolving inter-religious relations. These new forms, which are ancient at the same time, must take us back to the clear original sense of the Christian mission.

The Christian mission should open the Truth of Christianity to people; as long as we believe that Christ is the Truth, we must absolutely help our neighbor to discover the Truth! Missionary work comes close, if you will, to Socrates’ art of maieutics. So an experienced contemporary Orthodox Christian preacher writes: a missionary must “help his listener dislodge the tares from their souls and preserve wheat ... Warmth, love, affection toward people ... this is the most important quality for a missionary.”¹⁴

The contemporary situation of inter-religious relations in the world is complicated and ambiguous; it is saturated with controversial trends and factors. On one hand, analogous to the slackening of inter-confessional strife within Christianity, there is an emerging understanding between various very different religious groups regarding the communality of their interests; as they are all equally caught in the powerful wave of secularization and globalization, which pushes-aside and marginalizes religion *per se*, religious consciousness in any of its instantiations. Today almost all religions encounter similar difficulties of existing in a deeply secularized society and state, but the rallying effect of this common secular threat is still relatively insignificant. To a notably greater extent, the contemporary situation is characterized by an escalation of all the possible religiously-driven conflicts. All traditional trouble spots of inter-religious (and inter-ethnic) tension are extremely active. As we have mentioned above,

¹⁴ Прот. Артемий Владимиров. О целостности христианского мирозерцания и о том, каким должен быть православный миссионер // Современная православная миссия. Екатеринбург, 2010. С. 62, 73.

globalization processes generate major incessant migrations, so, beside old areas of close inter-religious contacts and mixing, many new areas of contact develop. Active inter-religious contacts have become inevitable for virtually all religious communities.

As inter-religious contacts and missing increase, it is vitally important to develop efficient strategies for solving inter-religious conflicts, to find new ways and methods of defusing inter-religious tensions, and to establish stable regimes in which various religions harmonically coexist in the same space. With no alternative, the main and key element of such strategies can be only *a dialogue between religions*. In conclusion we will consider the question how this dialogue is understood in Christianity and we will discuss its developmental perspectives in the contemporary situation.

3.

Religious dialogue, as a concept and a problem, was first studied systematically by Paul Tillich (1886–1965), one of the most influential Protestant theologians. Generalizing his vast experience observing inter-religious contacts, in 1962 he published the first contemporary monograph on this problem: *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions*. There he formulated a body of principles of inter-religious contact, which became the well-known and influential *Tillich's Platform*. Here are the principles:

The dialogue between exponents of different religions is based on a number of postulates. First, it is supposed that both partners recognize the value of religious standings of the other side... so that both of them agree on the importance of the dialogue. Secondly, it is supposed that each partner is capable to uphold his religious views with due competence so that the dialogue represents a serious comparison of opinions. Thirdly, it is supposed that a certain common ground is present, on which both dialogue and confrontation are possible. Fourthly, both sides are supposed to be open to criticism of their religious foundations. If all these conditions are met ... such encounter of two or several religions might be very fruitful and if the dialogue goes on, it might even bring forth historical consequences.¹⁵

In the last several decades, the dialogue between religions has grown into an extensive sphere of life in the international community. Functioning mechanisms and institutions, like the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, have been constructed, establishing regular frames for the dialogue and giving it a permanent character. A number of major meetings have been held with their help, in many cases quite literally facilitating the resolution, or prevention, of religious conflicts. In the ensuing sections of this monograph, these specific institutions and events will be examined in detail. Now we should say that at present there still remain significant principal difficulties and problems in the area of inter-religious dialogue, notably the contemporary situation adds new problems to the pre-existing ones.

It is possible to notice a feature which demonstrably limits the success of inter-religious dialogue thus far. As a rule, success has been in the form of various official agreements implemented as actions by official organizations. In other words, the dialogues have been completely regimented and formalized, and have remained a dialogue of structures, institutions, and leaders. Therefore, in despite such success the overall atmosphere of inter-religious relations, which form in situations and attitudes at the grass-roots level, in the thick of the religious communities themselves, the situation has changed very little, or not at all. Inter-religious dialogue has dramatically lacked a personal dimension; has lacked a live human interaction, and

¹⁵ Тиллих П. Христианство и встреча мировых религий // Тиллих П. Теология культуры. М., 1995. С. 425.

as a consequence has lacked the capacity to change mutual feelings and attitudes of people and communities. Now it is reasonably safe to say: *the future of the dialogue of religions depends on our ability or inability to engage the grass-roots dimensions.*

In my *Dialogue of Religions: Historical Experience and Fundamental Grounds*, written as part of our department's previous project, I describe the design of two models of religious dialogue. The formalized and regimented model of dialogue can lead only to finding a 'common denominator,' a sum of all the positions shared by the participating sides. Such revelation of the grounds for consensus can help reconcile cases of conflict, but it principally excludes from the dialogue all diversity, all of the participants' specific differences; excluding thereby the individual depth of their worlds and all the elements of their actual religious lives. The fruits of such dialogue do not penetrate to the grass roots level, and do not leave significant after-affects. The alternative model of inter-religious dialogue is based on another communication type. An institutionalized dialogue uses the formalized communication of structures, what in computer terms is known as *communications protocol*. The alternative model, on the other hand, is based on *personal communion*, which has radically different qualities of communication: here, among other things, the space of the dialogue is much more extensive and includes the sides' individual characteristics, allowing therefore a much fuller self-expression. The engagement of such model could therefore produce valuable effects, although its practical feasibility is not evident. Obviously, inter-religious dialogue is not the same as a dialogue between individuals, but this difficulty happens to be surpassable.

One can note at least two ways for inter-religious dialogue to engage the powerful resources of personal human interaction. One of these ways is well-known and is frequently used in ecumenical inter-confessional contacts between Christians. I am referring to various kinds of informal collective interactions — interactions of diverse groups, who emerge most often from below and spontaneously, by their own initiative, enter into inter-confessional contact, of an informal character. Because of the key condition of informality, communication during such contacts (while they are collective) can remain essentially personal, without turning into the formalized *communications protocol*. Such informal and spontaneous contacts are primarily fed by genuine interest toward the other side's personal experience and outlook; and, in recent years, they have reached such a scale as to visibly affect the global situation, the global atmosphere of inter-confessional relations. Suffice it to note the example of the Taizé (France) meetings, which annually gather many thousands of Christians of all confessions and nominations, but nevertheless retain the character of *personal* encounters, of the direct exchange of personal spiritual experience.

An obvious query comes to mind: cannot this personal communication form of dialogue also be used for inter-religious contact? It is quite evident why personal dialogue has not gained wide currency in the sphere of formal interreligious dialogue: because on the institutional and organizational level the distance between the sides is much greater; the *trust in the genuineness of the Other's spiritual experience*, which is a necessary prerequisite of such encounters, is case rarer and harder to come by. However, the dangers of our present situation, with the threats of rising propensity toward conflict and hostility, are too high to neglect such a valuable, although challenging possibility. We must try!

Another way is suggested by a deep-seated structure of Christian, specifically Orthodox Christian, experience. As shown in my works, the core, the essence of this experience develops and stays in the lap of a certain spiritual tradition, which arises on the basis of a spiritual practice — the ascetic practice of striving and ascent toward God. Other world religions yield their own spiritual traditions as well, in which their experience likewise plays the key essential

role. The spiritual tradition obtains special features due to its connection with spiritual practice: it fulfills the preservation and translation of a personal, rather than social or institutional, experience. This is why contact between spiritual traditions can have the nature of personal communication. Here, another path opens toward an inter-religious dialogue based on personal communication, through implementing a *dialogue of spiritual traditions*.

The dialogue of spiritual traditions, which hold within themselves the mystical grounds of spiritual experience, is the most intimate and meaningful kind of religious dialogue. But it is also the most complicated. Spiritual traditions take upon themselves responsibility for the purity and wholeness of the experience of their corresponding religions, as well as for its protection from distortion; and therefore it is most difficult for them to cultivate a sympathetic reception of another experience, the openness to encountering and interacting with another tradition. But it is precisely the dialogue of spiritual traditions that promises, if successful, the deepest, strongest, and most valuable results, which would affect all aspects and levels of the religious situation. It is therefore desirable to find the resources for such a dialogue within every world religion, and to work toward achieving it.

Christianity abounds with such resources. Here the category of personal communion is introduced into the nature of the Divine Being itself, which is defined by contemporary theologians as *personal being-communion*. In the spiritual tradition of Christianity, personal communication is a spiritual value, and communication with God necessarily suggests an openness to communication, to dialogue, with a neighbor. Moreover, communication with God and with one's neighbor is inherently inseparable from love; as both are the realization of Christ's commandments to love God and to love your neighbor. In this, both communication and love are accepted as daily principles and powers, which open all the borders and surpass all the barriers created by people and societies. Communication and Christ's love are cosmic principles that embrace the whole of human existence and the whole created being. This theme strongly penetrates the whole spiritual Orthodox Christian tradition, from St. Isaac the Syrian to Rev. Silouan the Athonite; and in its essence the commandment to love God and love your neighbor is common to all Christian confessions, as expressed in the works of a contemporary Protestant theologian: "Love in Him [in Christ] embraces the cosmos, including both the religious and the secular spheres." Here the boundaries between religions are annulled; they do not exist for the forces of love and personal communication.

To conclude, from the Christian position, a dialogue can and must develop, between spiritual traditions and between religions, by appealing to the principles of personal communication and love, and by basing itself upon these principles. A wealth of communicative experience and all-embracing, boundless, love: this is Christianity's valuable contribution which, we hope, can discover new possibilities and open new prospects for dialogue and mutual understanding between religions.

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CHAPTER 2

EAST-WEST: DIALOGUE OF RELIGIONS AND CULTURES IN THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD

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In the very beginning of the third millennium, humanity meets new values, which are both promissory and prospective and also threaten to decelerate effective progress. In facing the new challenges of modern society, the eternal issue of peace takes on special significance: what are the new forms or ways of coexistence of people who constitute the various cultures and traditions, particularly of the Orient and Occident¹⁶? Through the centuries, representatives of various civilizations, cultures, nations, confessions and world-views have taken part in the ongoing process of Orient-Occident dialogue. Throughout this time crucial transformations have occurred in all spheres of social, political, economic and human development. Though until very recently many have felt the modifications in cultural and spiritual life have been insufficient to transform physical existence. Developments in the last decade demonstrate the fallacy of such perception. Transformations in spiritual, religious and cultural development do significantly influence the lives of individuals, societies and humankind in whole.

Within the frameworks of occurring transformations one can identify different levels, which reveal the new challenges related to both the international system and regions in whole, and to separate countries and individuals. Every level of challenge proposes its own answer to these occurring transformations. We need to acknowledge the fact that until recently there has been no well-defined strategy, not to mention detailed solutions, for addressing the new challenges on the international level. In order to conform to the new development, we need a clear vision and realization of global and local developmental trends. Such a vision is impossible without stating the fundamental concerns and questions and without understanding the occurring transformations. In addition, courage is needed to modify the established stereotypes and propagate the new understanding. In other words, there is need for governmental attitudes, or the art of policy, to cover a global area bigger than a single state.

The transformation processes occurring in the world, which are perhaps more visible in financial-economic and political spheres, are based in the cultural essence. The cultural aspect of the transformations results from the fact that concepts of globalization, on one hand, and localization, on the other hand, have to a great extent been acquiring the pronounced cultural

¹⁶ Наумкин В. В., Звягельская И. Д. Угрозы, вызовы и риски «нетрадиционного» ряда. М., 1999; Ерасов Б. С. Цивилизации: Универсалии и самобытность. М., 2002; Хатами С. М. Диалог цивилизаций: путь к взаимопониманию. Алматы, 2002; Взаимоотношения Турции и Центральной Азии в контексте расширяющейся Европы // Материалы международной научной конференции. Алматы, 2006; Олбрайт М. Религия и мировая политика. М., 2007; Абашии С. Н. Национализм в Средней Азии: в поисках идентичности. СПб, 2007; Арыстанбекова А. Х. Современные тенденции в международных отношениях. Алматы, 2010.

tint and vigorous highlights of the concept of identity. In this respect, cultural identity is acquiring broader dimensions, extending the frameworks of both our attitude towards occurring transformations and our understanding of culture as a whole.

Culture, which is widely understood as a totality of the complex (not only spiritual, but also economic, political, military etc.) development of any nation or state, currently has the potential to bear the dominant load and to a large degree define the occurring transformation processes. Modern development in many ways has cultural dimensions, and therefore the issues of cultural development today cannot be confined by a narrow realization of culture, but should cover a broad spectrum, including spiritual heritage, science, knowledge, various kinds of art, and also purely applied fields of politics, economics, environmental initiatives, etc. Such a broad view of culture allows us to consider issues of identity as a combined complex phenomenon without separating identity from its historically established bases or its new forms of development in any community of people.

This broader approach poses new challenges, primarily in the area of identity, established cultural paradigms, and stereotypes of cultural perception. If culture has such a wide margin of safety, allowing it to define modern development to a large extent, established cultural patterns of behavior, thinking, perception, i. e., everything that is related to and associated with specific stereotypes, should have equally great potential for transformation. However, as we know, the stereotypes of cultural perception may bear both positive and negative loads, which ultimately are of great importance to inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.

The analysis of culture would be incomplete without taking into account the ongoing transformations related to the processes of globalization and localization, as noted above. This two-fold process cannot be assessed in unilateral terms, as the new cultural patterns revealed by the processes of globalization and localization have a two-fold character. On one hand, globalization is expanding our understanding of cultures and the specific cultural paradigms associated with them, which leads to a rejection of established, usually negative, stereotypes, and to rapprochement and, to some extent, the mixing of cultures. On the other hand, localization incurs a special responsibility for preserving traditional cultures, maintaining their capacity and development.

Taken together, the two-fold process of globalization and localization puts a special mark on our understanding of culture and inter-cultural dialogue, and also leads to transformation of the very understanding of cultural stereotypes and cultural identity. The emerging global consciousness and thinking does not allow the domination of a certain individual cultures, but highlights the new facets of cultural diversity. It is not mere chance that during this time the question of cultural diversity has been raised by UNESCO, and its formalization in the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted in 2001, has become possible.

The modern trend underscores the relevance of the concept of plurality, not a selected uniqueness of culture, which by its very definition puts cultural elitism out of the brackets of modern development. It is of great importance for our theme, as through this process the old and, as a rule, narrow understanding of cultural stereotypes is being overcome.

Thus, in the changing modern world, the particular importance of culture as a significant underlying concept of development can no longer be completely determined by the old models of cultural perception, but rather suggests new approaches related to the expansion of our views regarding the role, diversity and contents of cultures, which points to the fact that the imperative of modern development lies in the revision of established cultural stereotypes and the new understanding of intercultural interactions related to such revision.

It may be noted that in current conditions a broad view of culture implies a new perspective of cultural stereotypes, as well as the concept of identity. Today, cultural identity may have an expansive interpretation. In this regard, the axiomatic distinction between “we and others” is also no longer so categorical, as it can allow the other intermediate characteristics related to the interaction and multiplicity of cultures. Hence, it is inevitable that the new perception of cultures requires a new approach at the institutional level, as well as coordinated efforts of the entire world community.

Features of this or that culture underlying the development of specific states should be recognized by all participants of the international community. That is, in particular, the objective of the abovementioned UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which aims to remove possible tensions in the relations of various cultures, and therefore of civilizations and nations¹⁷. Nowadays, through the prism of this very understanding, it becomes important to create the specific concepts of development of countries both at bilateral and multilateral levels, and within the frameworks of international systems of collective security. In the context of our theme it is also important to mention that, along with the traditional dimensions of security, such as defense, food, information etc., today we should properly address cultural security as well.

Thus, the above-considered change currently affecting culture content as a whole, as well as changes in the related concepts of identity and cultural perceptions (stereotypes), also suggest changes in the paradigm of relationship on more particular levels; for example, the relationship between the Orient and Occident, on one hand, and between specific religions on the other.

In examining the relationship between the Orient and Occident, we should note that the classic distinction between the Orient and Occident is also currently undergoing transformation. This is largely due to the process of extension and multiplicity of cultures mentioned above. Despite the fact that this process is in the initial phase of its development, one can already note some changes, which are connected with the fact that the Orient-Occident dichotomy is no longer a determining factor in world affairs. The principle of multiculturalism, multiplied by the globalization-localization process, takes on the agenda of a networking principle and, moreover, other possible lines of interaction have developed, in particular, such as between the North and South. Since the concept of culture by its very definition implies the inclusion of interactions between various cultures, in terms of transforming (or rather,

¹⁷ Джалилов З. Г. К вопросу о месте национальной культуры в гражданском обществе // Государство и общество в странах постсоветского Востока. Алматы, 1999; Центральная Азия: диалог цивилизаций в XXI веке. Алматы, Тегеран, 2001 (на английском, русском, персидском языках); Прозоров С. М. Ислам как идеологическая система. М., 2004; К новым стандартам развития общественных наук в Центральной Азии // Материалы международной научной конференции / Редактор-составитель М. Х. Абусеитова. Алматы, 2006; Единство и разнообразие в религии и культуре. Философские и психологические корни глобальных противоречий. Международные чтения по теории, истории и философии культуры. Выпуск 22. СПб., 2006; Межкультурный диалог и культурное разнообразие // Сборник материалов круглого стола, посвященного обмену передовым опытом в области межкультурного диалога и популяризации Всеобщей декларации ЮНЕСКО о культурном разнообразии в Центральной Азии / Ред. М. Х. Абусеитова, К. Исак, Л. Г. Ерекешева. Алматы, 2008; U. S. –Islamic World Forum. New Directions. The Brookings Project on U. S. Relations with the Islamic World. Doha, Qatar, February 16–18, 2008, 92 P. ; Russia and the Islamic World. Materials of the Fourth Forum of the Strategic Vision Group. Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 27–29 October, 2008.

extending) the process, a significant expansion of the interacting cultures is occurring. This expansion means that the purely geographical frameworks, which dominated the minds of peoples and societies for thousands of years, have begun to fade and blur. Instead, the content of culture has become the cornerstone, which should determine the way cultures would interact with one another.

Such a significant change is of great importance, since all derivatives of culture, particularly religion, are gaining a new dimension. In inter-religious dialogue, for example, a rigid distinction between religions no longer meets the challenges of today's world. Moreover, maintaining a rigid distinction has become not only counterproductive, but also (taking into account the politicization of religions) is absolutely harmful. Instead, an understanding of religion which puts religion in the context of certain cultures (interacting or not), has become more relevant. Such "filling" of religion implies, on one hand, that religions must always take into account the cultural context and, in the same cultural context, they must inevitably interact with other religions. On the other hand, in different cultural contexts religions (especially the world religions "scattered" around the globe) potentially play a bridging role between cultures.

Such an expansive interpretation of religion leads to the need for dialogue and interaction as an obligatory factor contributing to removing the current lines of tension in the relations between cultures and religions.

Are we able jointly to withstand the negative perspective? Can we find in our complicated world the understanding of commonness of our historical destinies and interests? Can one make clear to people the similarities between cultures and religions? Undoubtedly, the resolutions to these questions are found in communication within the regime of cooperation and dialogue! If we consider dialogue in terms of the content, then it can be seen as an interaction of cultures, religions, ethnicities, states, and humanity as a whole, as an integral entity. Dialogue is, above all, a spiritual form of communication between people in which attitude of the subject to another subject is that of an equal. Dialogue communication presupposes mutual respect, the search for harmony and mutual intercourse, which leads to unity. Dialogue represents the entire widest spectrum of inter-subjective relations in various spheres of public life, and appears as an alternative to violence in all its manifestations. It suggests the search for unity, rather than the domination of one over all others.

The successful development of dialogue must be based on a reliable and robust platform that includes: lasting peace and political stability, respect for universal human rights and freedoms, as well as international norms; the culture of communication and behavior; efficient and stable policy in the sphere of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations; the enabling environment for political and legal regulation; the rule of law and the inviolable rights and freedoms of citizens; access to cultural and religious values; social justice and equality; reliable protection of national interests; and respect for other cultures and religions.

Only by possessing these and other conditions is dialogue able to prevent the Orient-Occident confrontation and promote establishment of partnership relationships in the socio-historical, cultural and spiritual spheres, thereby fixing the concept of "dialogue" in the minds of politicians, diplomats, academicians, clergy, etc. In the dialogue process, ethnic and religious harmony, which is an alternative to violence and despotism, plays a significant role.

Today, Kazakhstan enjoys a fairly stable orientation of the population to the expansion of inter-civilizational and inter-cultural dialogue and the preservation of inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony. Sociological studies conducted by R. B. Suleimenov Institute of Oriental

Studies in different regions of Kazakhstan in 2007–2009 indicate that in the public consciousness there has generally formed a positive attitude towards the establishment of dialogue between cultures and religions. These studies have shown that the dominant attitude is tolerant towards representatives of other cultures and religions (68%), suggesting that such an attitude of tolerance allows a normal relationship between the citizens regardless of their ethnicity and religion.

Most of the interviewees acknowledged the significant achievements of Kazakhstan in promoting inter-religious stability. In particular they drew attention to the following aspects: there is stability in inter-religious relations; the conditions for learning the basics of all traditional religions have been created; religious holidays are freely celebrated; spiritual connections with foreign co-religionists have been restored; the system of religious education has been reconstituted; the canonical forms of religious life have been revived; there is the upward trend in the number of believers of all confessions; and the state establishes a constructive dialogue with all religious communities.

In response to the question “Have you ever perceived an unfair, biased attitude on the part of members of other religions?” 58.64% of respondents gave a negative response, confirming the presence of tolerance among the citizens of Kazakhstan.

It is noteworthy that events associated with the actions of religious extremists in various other countries have not seriously affected the attitude of the non-Muslim population in Kazakhstan toward the followers of Islam. In response to the question asking “Whether your attitude towards Muslims has worsened in connection with certain actions of religious extremists in recent years?”, about 68.3% of the respondents said their attitude toward the followers of Islamic religion has not deteriorated. More often the meaning of the answer to this question was worded in the form of “I have many friends among those who follow Islamic canons. And no religious extremists can undermine our friendship”.

Representatives of almost all religious confessions and organizations have noted that Kazakhstan has reached an important stage in its history, and utilization of the religious factor must not be allowed to escalate tensions in society. Expressing mutual respect, the citizens of Kazakhstan do not accept fanaticism, hatred, sectarian violence, and they believe that religious groups must carry out their activities without any manifestations of proselytism. They emphasized that in Kazakhstan there have never been religious wars, but there have always been the conditions for the establishment of peace and harmony among various ethnic groups and faiths. They see the solution of various problems within the framework of existing laws, guaranteeing the protection of freedom of conscience.

It should be noted that during the years of Kazakhstan independence in the public consciousness there has formed a generally positive attitude toward religion. 50.3% of the respondents believe religion must develop along with other areas to the best of its ability; 25% believe religion must become the foundation of spiritual and moral education of youth. Over 70% of the respondents reported that the reason of their affinity with their nation lies in the native language, 60% named the traditions and customs, and more than 40% cited religion. 50.4% of the respondents said that religion improves the relations between people, 16.4% said it makes a person spiritually wealthy. According to our research, about 80% of student youths expressed an interest in the history of religion, and over 17% have read or are currently reading the Holy books. Traditional religion has not lost the quality of its functional connectivity with national traditions and customs and remains an integral and necessary element of the whole system of spiritual culture. For the majority of the population of Kazakhstan,

religion acts more as a spiritual, moral and cultural phenomenon closely connected with the history of state and nation.

Since ancient times, Kazakhstan has historically acted as a place of intersection, a bridge between Oriental and Occidental civilizations, including in its area of contacts the countries of the Middle and Near East, Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, Persia (Iran), ancient China and India. Over the centuries, processes of intensive inter-cultural and inter-religious cooperation have occurred, which have left a mark on the contents and forms of inter-ethnic and interreligious interaction in the modern period. In particular, this is reflected in the policy of Kazakhstan.

The modern policy of independent Kazakhstan is rich in various international initiatives. From the first days of independence the country's President Nursultan Nazarbayev has initiated a large-scale work in the field of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, partially due to the geographical and demographic situation, as well as to the specific religious and ethnic situation in the country. Indeed, geographically Kazakhstan occupies a unique place in Eurasia as a meeting point between East and West, and the confessional and ethnic diversity in the country is striking: there are more than 130 ethnic groups and over 40 faiths and denominations¹⁸.

Along with Islam, the population includes followers of Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, Buddhism and other confessions. Since the beginning of 1990s in Kazakhstan there was a sharp increase in the number of religious buildings. Currently in the country there are over 3,200 places of worship belonging to all faiths. Since independence the number of mosques has increased from 59 in 1989 to 2,135 in 2007; the number of Orthodox parishes has increased by 4 times, Catholic by 2 times. There are over 1000 Protestant missions and houses of worship, 21 Jewish communities, and numerous Buddhist temples, etc.

However, despite the ethnic and religious specificity, the real policy largely depends on the specific actions of the leaders. In this regard also, Kazakhstan represents a unique case, as the "real-Politik" in the field of inter-confessional dialogue is inseparable from the personality of the President¹⁹.

It would be required much space to enumerate the various initiatives. I will mention only the most important initiatives, which include the International Congresses of Representatives of World Religions (2003, 2006, 2009); the International Conference of Peace and Accord (2006); the International Forum "Common World: Progress through Diversity" (2008), organized by the MFA of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and the program "The Muslim World and the West", as well as many others held in the format of international and regional initiatives, such as, for example, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). In 2010, Kazakhstan chaired the Organization for Security and Coopera-

¹⁸ Артемьев А. К. Религия в реалиях казахстанского общества или к вопросу о духовном согласии и свободе совести // Саясат, 1999, №11–12, С. 74–76; Иванов В. А., Трофимов Я. Ф. Религия Казахстана. Справочник. Алматы, 2003; Джалилов З. Г. Религиозная ситуация в Казахстане и некоторые проблемы политико-правового регулирования // Shygys, 2004, №1, С. 236–246; Джалилов З. Г. Ислам и общество в современном Казахстане. Серия «Казахстанские востоковедные исследования». Алматы, 2006; Христианство и ислам в контексте современной культуры: Межрелигиозный диалог в России и на Ближнем Востоке / Ред. Д. Спивак, Н. Таббара. СПб/Бейрут, 2009.

¹⁹ Казахстанский опыт межэтнического и межконфессионального согласия: предложения для ОБСЕ // Материалы международной научно-практической конференции. Алматы, 2009.

tion in Europe (OSCE); in 2011 it will preside over the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The United Nation has supported Kazakhstan's initiative to declare 2010 the "Year of Rapprochement of Cultures". The above-mentioned activities represent a significant platform from which Kazakhstan declares and distributes the ideas of inter-cultural and inter-religious cooperation to the broad international arena.

Kazakhstan's initiatives take distinct forms in the direction of forming harmonious structural frameworks on the international level. Of course, these frameworks still need further support, development, and the coordinated efforts of various participants in the international system. However, the initial steps in this direction have already been made, and they are obvious. The next step is to make the system work, and to enrich it. Through this prism, the initiatives taken by Kazakhstan are unprecedented and have far-reaching consequences for the entire global community, global stability and peace.

It is symptomatic that in July 2011 Kazakhstan will become a chairman of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). This means not only recognition of the policy of the country by the international community, but also recognizes the fact that the solution of issues in the CIS and Eurasia in the frameworks of international organizations is impossible without active and meaningful participation of the countries of these regions in developing measures to maintain international stability and security. The chairmanship of Kazakhstan is the first experience in this direction and it is extremely important not only for the Republic of Kazakhstan but also for the rest of Asia. One of the important directions of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the OIC, as well as its subsequent participation in the activity of the OIC and also other organizations is the formulation and solution of issues concerning expanding the dialogue of civilizations in Orient and Occident, particularly between the Muslim world and the West. The problems in the relationship between the Muslim world and the West are today the most relevant. Civilizations extend their limits in a natural process that goes from age to age. But currently there is a need to expand the limits through the cognition of each other, strengthening cooperation in the world, concerting the efforts of the Occidental and Oriental civilizations, supporting the convergence of cultures, which would lead not to unification but to the multiplication of ideas while preserving identity.

East-West relations should become one of the most important items on the agenda of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OIC in 2011. The dialogue of civilizations long ago moved beyond mere cultural and historical studies and has become an independent and, moreover, the most important issue of social, economic and political development. In this regard, accenting the broad understanding, examining and resolving of the relationship issues by all countries, both Oriental and Occidental, based on different religious and cultural traditions, should receive the full support of all OIC member countries.

Initiatives of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, aimed at the formation and implementation at the international level of the ideas of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, are most clearly presented in the formats of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Congresses of Representatives of World and Traditional Religions (held respectively in 2003, 2006 and 2009).

Undoubtedly, these initiatives have proved to be extremely popular. By the beginning of the current century, the world community faced the problem of choosing between the constructive paradigm of progressive and dynamic development, and the option of radical authoritarianism based on forceful confrontation with new trends in world development and the private spiritual and cultural system, which could bring the Muslim World and the West to the mutual isolation and, ultimately, to cultural and spiritual stagnation.

Often religions have become not the subject, but the object of international relations, experiencing the costs of socio-economic and political turmoil. The difficult situation in Afghanistan, conflicts in the countries of the Middle and Near East, inter-ethnic and the sectarian problems in European countries — all comprise only parts of the evidence of the difficult situation in which the modern world is in today. Naturally, in these circumstances there has appeared a question of world religions conducting a positive assessment of own potential, building a dialogue between world and national traditional religions, political coordination of efforts of spiritual leaders in addressing crucial issues of world development, and inter-cultural and inter-religious cooperation. The international forums show the correctness and timeliness of the initiatives of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. A. Nazarbayev to hold the Congresses with the participation of religious leaders, politicians and scientists.

From the example of the Congresses one can trace the history of Kazakhstan's policy in the sphere of inter-religious dialogue. At the same time, the example of Kazakhstan can help us better perceive the transformations occurring on a global level, of which the example of Kazakhstan is the most representative.

The 1st Congress of the Representatives of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana in 2003 gathered the 29 delegations. The 3rd Congress held on July 1–2, 2009, was attended by 77 delegations from 35 countries worldwide.

The agenda of the 1st Congress was greatly influenced by the events of September 11, 2001, and the need to resist the idea of the so-called “clash of civilizations”. As a result, the 1st Congress adopted a resolution declaring that inter-religious dialogue is the most important tool to support peace and harmony among countries.

The 2nd Congress was held in 2006, at a time when there was an escalation of conflicts in the world, especially in the Middle East. The war in Iraq and other countries was exacerbating relations between the confessions. At that time, spiritual leaders met in Astana, appealed to states to continue the dialogue and make further efforts to strengthen the culture of peace and harmony.

In 2009, the situation in the world and regions was strongly affected by the issues of social instability, the global financial crisis, terrorism, nuclear disarmament etc. All of this suggests that perhaps the real cause of economic and social cataclysms lies in a shortage or even absence of spirituality. Spirituality, morality and ethics do become critical imperatives of contemporary development in all spheres, and the absence of these concepts complicates the present and future development.

At the 3rd Congress of World and Traditional Religions, Nursultan Nazarbayev correctly noted that the current crisis cannot be overcome without a change of consciousness, without strict observance of morality and high principles.

In the search for convergence of the Orient and Occident, politics and the intellectual community play a big role in creating a working dialogue platform, a kind of laboratory where new ideas and policy recommendations can emerge. The drive for understanding the occurring transformations in their integrity and promoting the peaceful resolution of emerging problems (Middle East settlement, the situation around Afghanistan, the issues of social adaptation of migrants from Muslim countries to the conditions of Western society, etc.) leads politicians to make greater use of concepts such as “inter-religious dialogue”, “morality”, “humanism”.

Through the Congresses it became possible to amortize the various confrontations and tensions, to find mutually acceptable and effective ways to resolve disputes and crisis situations. Resolutions adopted at the Congresses have contributed to the more productive development of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, creating favorable conditions for implementing the various initiatives aimed at transformation of entire regions into the zone of security and tranquility. Undoubtedly, holding the Congresses in Astana appears to be an essential tool in deepening mutual understanding between the Orient and Occident, and establishing partnership relations in economic, political, cultural and other spheres.

Conclusions

1. In the conditions of globalization and unification there are inevitably occurring the reverse process — enhancing and preserving the cultural identity of peoples, countries and regions. In this regard, the relationship between the Orient and Occident appear to reflect these processes.

On one hand, there is a need to go beyond the former narrow understanding of history and culture as being limited by the framework of only one state or region. Hence, there is a tendency to study a wider and, at the same time, deeper context in examining consequences of the interactions between cultures adjacent and separated from each other. On the other hand, there is also the reverse trend — the actualization of one's own cultural identity. Both these processes are inconceivable without the interference of forces, which, therefore, should to a greater or lesser extent be taken into account when studying historical and contemporary development.

2. Whereas previously the relationship between the Orient and Occident was considered in the context of developed and developing (overtaking) civilizations and cultures, now there is a change of direction. The occurring processes indicate the appearance of a new trend, which boils down to the fact that interactions between the Orient and Occident should be now considered through the prism of equal partnership. This is a significant feature of the current stage of development.

3. All this leads to the relevance of the issue of multiplicity of cultural approaches and the identity of each. Such approaches should, in their essence, be multi-cultural, i. e., consisting of various cultural components, which are more or less formed one or another culture. Hence, the issue of cultural interaction has never before been as relevant and important in understanding both our own national and many other cultures.

Given these considerations, it is necessary to conduct scientific study of the issues, as they have not only a purely scientific, but also a pronounced applied aspect. In fact, by studying the questions, we can fill in the gaps in our own history and, at the same time, we can better understand present and future trends in world cultures.

4. For this purpose it is necessary to create an automatic database of already existing researches and achievements obtained by our scientists and experts working on the above designated areas. Their consolidation will ensure not only the fixation and accumulation of information and knowledge, but also the analysis, synthesis, and timely initiative distribution of information that supports effective research. It is also necessary to create a web-site or electronic newsletter “New Developments in the Interaction of Cultures and Religions”, which would facilitate the rapid exchange of information and development of scientific relations.

5. It is now time to establish an International Centre for monitoring and forecasting trends in the development of national cultures and religions. Its creation is dictated by the need to

find ways to further strengthen the inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue and the need to establish equitable cooperation between the Orient and Occident. The establishment of this Centre would bring together the efforts of various researchers really working in the field, who are able to see the global processes of modernity and participate in making crucial decisions at the highest level.

CHAPTER 3

ISLAMIC FACTOR IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA'S PROCESSES OF IDENTIFICATION²⁰

Marietta T. Stepanyants (Russia)

The dialogue of cultures is necessary for Russia, first of all, for solving her internal problems. The people of Russia have to acquire a new collective identity in place of the former and lost collective identity known as “Soviet people”. This is a hard task, because various ethnic groups in today’s Russian Federation strive for their own self-identification, for autonomy or even for complete sovereignty.

The influence of religion in the identification processes not only affects the “main” religion of Russia. It is equally perceptible (sometimes even to a greater degree) among other religions, and primarily in Islam, the second most widespread religion in Russia after Orthodoxy.

Who am “I,” and who are “we”? Wherein resides our difference from others, the difference in which we believe, which we value, and towards which we strive? Having unexpectedly ceased to be “the Soviet people,” Russian citizens have turned to these questions, now that they have discovered the illusory and deceptive nature of much of what they were once taught and forced to believe. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the destruction of the socialist system gave rise not only to a broad interest in self-identification, but also to a perception of its vital importance for each individual and for the society as a whole.

In the hierarchy of factors of self-identification, ethnic affiliation is especially significant. Surveys conducted by the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Sociology in 1999 showed that in answer to the question “About whom would you say ‘This is us?’”, the overwhelming majority of respondents identified themselves with ethnic communities rather than with their regions or the broader Russian Federation. At the same time, these ethnic identities are to a significant extent defined by religion, which may be the central characteristic of culture writ large.

The precise number of followers of Islam in Russia is still unknown. Figures ranging from 12 to 50 million have been cited. If one considers as Muslims all peoples with traditionally Islamic cultures, then the higher figure may be justified. However, sociological surveys show that among the Tatars and Bashkirs (two of the most numerous traditionally Muslim peoples), only 45–46% claim to be believers, and of these only about 11–12% preserve the rituals²¹.

In studying the influence of Islam on identification, one must take into account the doctrinal differences between the two world religions, as well as the difference between the eth-

²⁰ Excerpted by permission of the Publishers from ‘Ethno-religious Identity in modern Russia: Orthodoxy and Islam Compared // Religion and Identity in Modern Russia. Eds. J. Johnson, M. Stepaniants and B. Forest (Farnham etc.: Ashgate, 2005). P. 30–38. Copyright © 2005.

²¹ Социальная и культурная дистанция. Опыт многонациональной России // Ред. М. Л. Дробышева. М., 1998.

nogenesis of the Muslim peoples of Russia and the Russian ethnos instantiated by the state over hundreds of years.

From the very beginning, Islam viewed the state as a religious community. The group of believers that arose in the seventh century at Medina viewed their *umma* as an organization transcending kinship and tribe, and its creation was the first stage on the path towards establishing a state. In this we find one of the key differences distinguishing Islam from Christianity. Unlike Islam, the appearance of Christianity within the confines of already existing states engendered the independence of the church and its separation from secular power. The close, often seemingly indestructible connection between the Russian Orthodox Church and the pre-revolutionary Russian state (which some religiously oriented leaders would like to see restored even today) was not at its core doctrinally justified. It appeared as a continuation and a further development of Russia's inherited Byzantine tradition; that is, as a consequence of history, not of religious doctrine. In Islam, by contrast, the identification of religion with the state occurred from the beginning, and so was fundamental.

Muhammad was not only a prophet, a messenger of God, but also organized the unification of diverse Arab tribes into the *umma*, which soon formed a state: the *khalifat* (Caliphate). The legal foundation of the Muslim state was the *Shariat*, the law of God. Gazali, one of the most authoritative Muslim theologians, asserted that "*Shariat* is the foundation, and the government is its defender. If something has no foundation, it can be destroyed and lost"²². Modern Islamic fundamentalists tirelessly stress this particular feature of Islam. According to Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, "Islam rejects the idea of conflict between spiritual and secular that is characteristic of the West. ... The Christian idea of 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's' is absent, because everything belongs to the all-powerful Allah"²³

Turning this principle of the faith-based community into an absolute has allowed Islam over the course of history to justify the consolidation of ethnically diverse groups within the boundaries of one empire. Therefore, nationalism as an ideology seems irreconcilable with Islam, because nationalism asserts national unity as the foundation of statehood and sees religious communities on the same level as linguistic, economic, territorial, cultural, and other communities. From the point of view of Islamic doctrine, nationalism is *asabiyya*, group solidarity, and is comparable to the exclusive loyalty to one's tribe characteristic of early Arab society. According to the tradition (*sunna*), the prophet Muhammad proclaimed that "the man who turns to *asabiyya* does not belong to our community."

Just as *asabiyya* had led to inter-tribal conflict in the past, later Muslim leaders viewed nationalism (manifested as the interests of a particular nation) as a cause of wars in which one nation would attempt to enslave another. They regarded it as an egotistical, immoral, and materialistic philosophy, giving rise to colonialism. "Both in spirit and in general, Islam and nationalism oppose each other," stated Abul Ala Maududi, the founder and spiritual leader of the Islamic fundamentalist organization Jamaat-i-Islami. "The ultimate goal of Islam is a world government in which racial and national prejudices will be eliminated; all of humanity will be joined into one cultural and political system..."²⁴

²² Quoted in Ansari Z. I. Contemporary Islam and Nationalism: A Case Study of Egypt // The World of Islam VII: 1-4. Leiden, 1961. P. 8.

²³ Quoted in Mitchell R. P. The Society of the Muslim Brothers. London, 1969. P. 244.

²⁴ Quoted in De Vos G. A. Responses to Change: Society, Culture, and Personality. New York, 1976. P. 114.

“Anti-nationalism” received its most logical expression in the ideology and movement of pan-Islamism. Pan-Islamism arose at the end of the 19th century, and was associated with Djamal al-Din al-Afghani, who believed that nationalistic ideas prevented Muslims from uniting against their common enemy (colonialism). Afghani challenged this national solidarity with a religious one. He and his supporters viewed Islam as a unified ideological platform, capable of joining the Muslims in battle against the colonial yoke and imparting faith in the possibility of revival.

The idea of Islam’s incompatibility with nationalistic ideology was especially popular in the early stages of the national-liberation movement, before the peoples of the Muslim world had dared to oppose their colonial rulers. The rise of the local bourgeoisie, as well as the strengthening of nationalistic feelings in the former colonies and near-colonies, led to a gradual turn from pan-Islamism (although in a transformed state it continues to exist even today). Characterizing the atmosphere that had developed by the 1930s, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: “The old pan-Islamic ideal had ceased to have any meaning; there was no *khalifat*, and every Islamic country, Turkey most of all, was intensely nationalist, caring little for other Islamic peoples. Nationalism was in fact the dominant force in Asia, as elsewhere.”²⁵

Most strikingly, Islamic ideologues had shifted from one extreme to the other, moving from the complete negation of the idea of “nation” to identifying it with the religious community. The most revealing example in this regard is the formation of Pakistan. A concept of “Muslim nationalism,” operating on the assumption that two nations — the Hindu and the Muslim — existed in India, served as the justification for creating Pakistan.

Russian Muslims present numerous examples of such fluctuating relationships between Islam and nationalism, varying with historical conditions and concrete socio-political situations. But before examining one of these examples, associated with the Tatars, we will note a few general characteristics of the self-identification processes among Russian Muslims in comparison with those typical of Orthodox Russians.

On the individual level, Russians’ self-identification includes an Orthodox component because of the need to “find oneself” in the spiritual vacuum created by the destruction of the political and ideological systems founded on communist ideals. Russians turned to Orthodox Christianity hoping to find the meaning of life and moral reference-points. On the collective level, the Russian appeal to Orthodoxy came about through a torturous search for a “national idea” that could serve as the basis of unity, inspiration, and mobilization in solving problems of state reorganization.

At the individual level, the motivations of Russian Muslims in turning to their traditional faith correspond with those of Orthodox Russians. However, for Russian Muslims identification on the collective and ethnic level is even more significant. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Tatars, Bashkirs, Chechens, and other Russian Muslims, as well as other ethnic minorities living in cohesive groups, were able to declare themselves *nations*; that is, not only cultural but also political communities. Ethnic groups developed their ideas about statehood and sovereignty in connection with their historical pasts and statuses within the Russian Federation (as well as in the Russian empire and the USSR).

The most numerous Muslim people of Russia, and the most developed in many respects, are the Tatars. The issue of national identification moved to the center of Tatar social dis-

²⁵ *Nehru J.* The Discovery of India. New Delhi, 1982. P. 351.

course around the second half of the 19th century, which historians characterize as the start of the Tatar ethno-nation's first formative stage. The second stage (from 1905–1907 until the 1920s) witnessed the establishment of the so-called “political” Tatar nation. At that time, three basic ideological directions appeared: Islamism, Turkism, and Tatarism.

Islamic ideologists assert that identification with the Muslim faith is a priority for Tatar self-identification. For them, the Tatars are a “Muslim nation.” They argue their position by citing the history of the Tatars, who come from Volga Bulgaria, a state formed by the Turkic Bulgars in the seventh century near modern-day Kazan. The Bulgars converted to Islam in 922.

Tatar identification with the “Turkish nation,” prominent among the Tatar bourgeoisie and among some of the intelligentsia, is meant to separate the Tatars from Muslim peoples more broadly and to emphasize their unique place among them. It is also connected with the rise of movements promoting the unification of Russia's Turkic peoples, begun by the Crimean Tatar Ismail Gasprinskii. A few ideologues of Turkism (for example Yusif Akchur) have expressed solidarity with pan-Turkism defined as the unification of all Turkic peoples under Turkish leadership. Others (F. Karimi, J. Validi, Kh. Maksudi) argue that the Tatars themselves must unite the Turkic peoples.

The prominent theologian Shigabutdin Marjani played a prominent role in developing the concept of a “Tatar nation” (Tatarism). He was the first Tatar to address the question of his people's ethnic origins. Marjani insisted on the Bulgar heritage of the Tatars and believed that Tatars should consider not religion but ethnicity as their defining characteristic. “A few (of our tribesmen),” he wrote, “declare that we are not Tatars but Muslims... Poor souls! ... If you are not a Tatar, and not an Arab, a Tajik, or a Nogai, and not a Chinese, a Russian, a Frenchman, a Prussian and not a German, then who are you?”²⁶

Kaium Nasiri then formulated a detailed conception of the “Tatar nation” in his *A Short Tatar Grammar, Explicated in Examples* (Kazan 1860). Nasiri established four basic components of Tatar identity: origins (“a people of the Turkish tribe”), common territory (“Tatars, living in Siberia, Orenburg, Kazan, and other districts on the right bank of the Volga and in the Astrakhan district”), culture (“their own literature”), and language (“we usually call the Tatar dialect, spoken by the Turkish tribe, the Tatar language”).

The relative importance of religion in Tatar self-identification has changed over the course of history, shifting between complete domination and a minimal level. Although in modern Tatarstan one can observe the rebirth of Islamism and Tatarism (and Turkism to a certain extent), a new approach has now appeared: Tatarstanism. The political elite, in their attempt to gain as much “sovereignty” (independence from the federal center) as possible, must take into account both the ethnic composition of Tatarstan (according the 1989 census, the Republic's population was 48% Tatar and 43% Russian) and Tatarstan's geographic position in the middle of the Russian Federation (making it is practically impossible to secede). Wishing to avoid ethnic conflict, preserve political stability, and simultaneously achieve the maximum possible independence in negotiations with Moscow, the leaders of the Republic proclaimed Tatarstan's sovereignty on August 30, 1990, “in the name of a multi-national people,” asserting “the inalienable right of the Tatar nation and all peoples of the Republic to self-determination”²⁷

²⁶ Quoted from: Юзеев А. Н. Ислам и национальная идентичность казанских татар // Религия и идентичность в России. М., 2003. С. 163.

²⁷ Белая книга Татарстана. Путь к суверенитету. 1990–1995. Казань, 1996. С. 5.

But two years later, in the Constitution of the Tatar Republic adopted on November 6, 1992, Kazan had already exchanged this notion of a “Tatar nation” with that of “People of Tatarstan.” This concept, advanced by Rafael Khakimov, a political advisor to Tatar president Mintimer Shaimiev (and now director of the Institute of History of the Tatar Academy of Sciences), views the people of the Tatarstan as a nation²⁸. Khakimov sees Tatarstan’s situation as analogous to Switzerland’s: a poly-ethnic nation, consisting of ethnic groups possessing equal rights. Just as in Switzerland, Tatarstan forms “a poly-ethnic, poly-cultural society, operating on the principle of territorial (not ethnic) sovereignty”²⁹

Although “Tatarstanism” has support on the official level, its critics cite public opinion data in the Republic to assert that the “idea of Tatarstanism” has no future, and is merely an ideology promoted by the Republic’s ruling party to justify Tatarstan’s economic and cultural independence. While not without foundation, judging Tatarstanism’s future in this way seems premature. At least two scenarios are possible.

First, the most numerous ethnic group (the Tatars) may aspire to the status of a nation in Tatarstan. Of course, this would complicate Tatarstan’s inter-ethnic relations and, more importantly, its relations with the federal center, because this choice would present the possibility of a later demand for full national self-determination.

But a second variant is possible: the political elite may succeed in convincing the public that a poly-ethnic nation is preferable, especially considering the distribution of power and resources on the republic and federal levels. That which Norwegian anthropologist T. Eriksen described might come to pass: the nation arises “from the moment when a group of influential people decides that it has to be. In the majority of cases the nation begins as a phenomenon that is given birth to by the elite. Nevertheless, in order to become an effective political tool, this idea must take root on the level of the masses.”³⁰

Because of its limited independence from the broader Russian situation, the ultimate choice in Tatarstan will depend upon developments in identification processes in other regions. Other republics also have politically pragmatic local elites (and sometimes common-sense public attitudes) interested in solving social problems by constructing a new type of identity to unite ethnic groups sharing single territories, freeing them from inter-ethnic conflicts that would harm everyone involved. A notable example of this is Daghestan.

Daghestan contains 102 ethnic groups, with no one group titular or predominant. Five ethnic groups collectively dominate (Avars, Dargins, Kumyks, Lezgins, and Russians), together comprising two-thirds of the population. The Republic has multiple religions as well, although Islam is the traditional religion of the overwhelming majority of the population (over 90%). Most Daghestani Muslims are adherents of Sufism (a mystical branch of Islam) and various *tarikat* (Sufi fraternal orders). Clan relations remain influential in the region, as do the norms and mores of *adat* (common law), which are most deeply preserved among mountain-dwellers.

After the disintegration of the USSR and the initiation of reforms, the situation in Daghestan became extremely complicated. An exaggerated level of tension in inter-ethnic relations

²⁸ See: *Хакимов Р. Сумерки (К вопросу о нации и государстве)*. Казань, 1993.

²⁹ *Хакимов Р. Асимметричность Российской Федерации: взгляд из Татарстана // Асимметричность Федерации*. М., 1997. С. 68.

³⁰ *Eriksen T. H. Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London, 1993. P. 105.

appeared because of the economic recession (driving much of the population to the edge of poverty) and the battles over political institutions and the distribution of state property. In the republic arose:

“...embers of all kinds of ethno-religious conflict familiar to homeland studies: conflicts fuelled by battles among different national groups for living space in their historical lands, territorial conflicts arising because ethnic communities’ physical locations did not always coincide with political-administrative borders, and conflicts sparked by socio-economic and geopolitical factors.”³¹

The political authorities of Daghestan saw a way out of the developing situation through the “introduction of practical means and methods of de-ethnicization.” Such a path would ultimately lead to the formation of a “Daghestani identity,” similar to the “Tatarstan nation” in that both concepts promote a general republican identity. The difference between them, however, is substantial. The poly-ethnic character of the “Tatarstan nation” is intended to minimize the importance of religious affiliation in the identity of Tatarstan’s citizens. In Daghestan, in contrast, this de-ethnicization is accompanied by an *increasing* emphasis on religious identity. Islam unites Daghestani citizens, rather than separating them as in Tatarstan.

Islam has historically supported the unity of Daghestan, with the particular features of Islamic doctrine playing a significant role in this process. Beginning with the prophet Muhammad and his associates, the followers of Islam first politically unified the Arab family groups and tribes, and then the representatives of diverse races and ethnic groups. Although according to official data only 20–25% of Daghestani residents are practicing Muslims (those who observe all directives and rituals required of Muslims), a significantly higher number both identify with Islam and are favorably disposed toward political co-existence with other clans and ethnic groups. Daghestani citizens’ preference for Sufism supports these beliefs, because in contrast to Sunni and Shi’a religious leaders, Sufis view secular life, including politics, with indifference. For example, the *tarikat* of Kadiriyya, established in the Northern Caucasus in the 1860s by Kunta-kazi Kishiev, acknowledged any political power as lawful (including the Russian Tsars), believing that politics affects only external life and thus has no importance for the internal, spiritual life of the Sufi. (It is true that in the 19th century an anti-Russian opposition formed the politically involved *tarikat* of Nakshbandiyya, but this was ultimately connected to the idiosyncratic personality and ambitions of the Nakshbandiyya *imam* Shamil.)

In the early 1990s, Daghestani political analysts took stock of Islam’s integrating power and gave the “renaissance” of Islam a green light: the number of mosques grew exponentially (from 27 in 1985 to 1600 in 2001), Muslim educational institutions expanded (there are now 17 Muslim institutions of higher learning with 44 branches in Daghestan, as well as 132 Muslim secondary schools [*madradas*] and 245 elementary *madradas* focusing on the Qur’an), and religious literature became widely distributed. However, the calculations and plans of Daghestani political authorities were destroyed by the unforeseen penetration of Islamic fundamentalism (most often called Wahhabism) into Daghestani life. This fundamentalism is distinguished by an aggressive interference in politics and the rejection of the separation of Islam and state. It is also characterized by an idealization of early Islam; by irreconcilability with other viewpoints, new information, and reforms; by intolerance and antagonism towards non-Muslims; and by the use of violent, even armed methods to accomplish its goals. Fun-

³¹ Гусаев М. М. Этноконфессиональные процессы в современном Дагестане. Автореферат диссертации на соискание ученой степени кандидата философских наук. Махачкала, 2000. С. 20.

damentalism's appearance in Dagestani politics was facilitated both by internal and external factors, most notably the events occurring in neighboring Chechnya.³²

Islamic fundamentalist ideologues believe in the complete identification of national or ethnic identity with religion. From this belief comes the name of one of the most influential Dagestani fundamentalist movements: "Islamic Nation." This name testifies to its intent to replace the current Dagestani system of national integration with a system based on *shariat*, presented as a unified doctrine capable of "destroying *in vivo* the seeds of discord and mutual hatred" (Arukhov, chapter 5 in this volume).

The fundamentalists present an open challenge both to secular power and to the Sufi *tarikats* (indeed, Dagestani Islam is commonly called *tarikatism*). Recognizing the mutual threat to their power and spiritual influence, the state and *tarikatism* have now allied to defeat the influx of fundamentalists. The Sufi orders, through their leaders (who even in 1998 were still in direct opposition to the government), have in practice united with the government on a general platform of anti-fundamentalism. In September 1999, a law was adopted "On the prohibition of Wahhabism and other extremist activities on the territory of the republic of Dagestan." This law designated *tarikatism* as the single legal and historically rooted form of Islam in Dagestan, which in practice represented official government recognition. The *tarikats* answered in 2001 by creating a Russia-wide political party, "The Islamic Party of Russia" (built on the base of the Sufi-oriented movement "Nur"), that is loyal not only to the Republic, but to the federal government as well.

This comparison of religion's influence on the evolution of Russian and Muslim identities in the Russian Federation truly demonstrates that nations are "neither natural, nor primordial, but the result of hard constitutive intellectual and political work of elites and the masses".³³ It is still too early to predict the ultimate results of these developments in Russia. Only one thing is clear: in our time, societal or collective endeavors do not convey authentic religious meanings. Religious identifications beyond the individual level are encouraged more for pragmatic political reasons than to impart the spiritual ideals inherent in religious teachings.

The search for identity inevitably results in division and separation. Just because of that it is said that an "era of identity" is full of sound and fury (cf. Zygmunt Bauman, *The Individualized Society*). The Other starts to be looked as an alien, even as an enemy. There are quite explicable reasons for that. In fact, the separation leads to the revision of borders, to the redistribution of lands, of fertile plots, of natural recourses, of water sources, of accesses to sea ways, etc. It results in reshuffle of property and political power. The opposing business groups and political parties use a wide arsenal of means to achieve the success. Manipulation with cultural, especially religious differences becomes in their hands the most enormous destructive weapon. Dogmatic interpretation of religious teachings; justification of one's own deeds by God's will; recollection (often far from being adequate) of religious fights of the past — all the above said constitutes the powerful weapons for mass agitation under which people lose control over their words and deeds.

³² For more detail see: Ханбабаев К. М. Этапы распространения ваххабизма в Дагестане // Алимь и ученые против ваххабизма. Махачкала, 2001; Emelianova G. «Islam and Power in Post-Communist Islamic Russia». In ISIM Newsletter. Leiden 10/02, 2002. P. 34.

³³ Suny R. G. The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, 'National' Identity and Theories of Empire // A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin. Eds. R. G. Suny, T. Martin. Oxford, 2001. p. 28.

The intellectuals — historians and philosophers, poets and writers, film producers and journalists — play especially significant role in molding confrontation with the Other. People believe in their words more than in political propaganda trusting them as educated and unselfish persons. Just because of that a responsibility of the intellectuals is of such great importance. There is no other way to put an end to distrustfulness and enmity than to redirect the processes of identification to the path of reasonable, well-balanced and constructive cultural dialogue.

Only the dialogue of cultures is capable to put an end to distrust, hostility, and hatred by transforming the acquisition of identity into reasonable, well balanced and constructive venture.

PART II.

**ISSUES AND PROSPECTS OF DIALOGUE
BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY
IN MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETIES
OF THE PRESENT-DAY WORLD**

CHAPTER 1

ISLAM IN RUSSIA AND PERSPECTIVES OF CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Igor Yu. Kotin (Russia)

1. Introduction

In Madeley's framework of church-state relations in Europe, Russia is part of the historic mono-confessional Orthodox culture bloc³⁴. Undeniably from the time of Vladimir the Saint (ninth century) Orthodox Christianity has been the dominant religion in the Russian politics, from Kiev Rus' until the Russian Empire. However, during the same time Russian territorial expansion also brought vast Muslim areas under imperial control. After the 1917 October Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union in 1924 the new communist rulers deprived the Russian Orthodox Church of its privileges as the state religion, exactly for being too closely associated with the Tsarist Empire. Consequently, other religions such as Islam acquired more equality, though it was the equality of the poor and the deprived. The atheist policy of the Soviet government led to the closing of most churches, mosques and temples and induced a considerable secularization of society³⁵. Remaining places of worship fell under strict control of the government.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1992 brought the independence of former Union republics with a Muslim cultural heritage in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) and Transcaucasia (Azerbaijan) and reduced the proportion of Muslims in the country considerably, when compared with its forerunners: the Soviet Union and the Russian Empire. Still, in the Russian Federation, Muslims remain a significant religious minority and Islam is entering the political arena.

The aim of this paper is to describe the relations between the state and Islam in post-Soviet Russia and the perspectives of inter-faith dialogue by focusing on different political-geographical contexts: the traditional Muslim areas of Tatarstan and Dagestan, and the metropolitan areas of Moscow and St. Petersburg, where Muslims are immigrant communities. Russia's own stand (compared to Western and Central Europe) will be further illustrated by the reactions to the recent 'Cartoon issue'. We shall start with an overview of the different Muslim communities in Russia and their geographical distribution, followed by a section on central Muslim institutions, regional situation and issues of Muslim concern in relation with Russian society, and perspectives of the inter-faith dialogue.

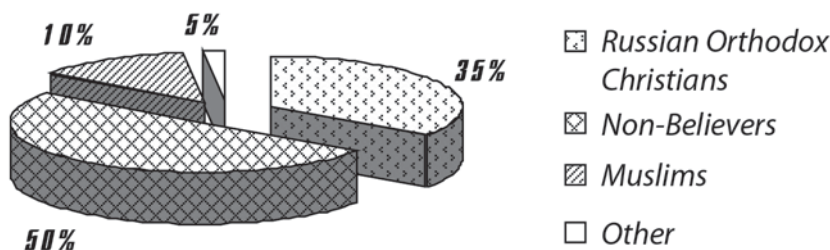
³⁴ *Madeley J. T. S.* A framework for the comparative analysis of Church-State relations in Europe // *West European Politics* 2003, No. 26, P. 31.

³⁵ *Kotin I., Krindatch A.* Russia: Religious Revival in a multi-cultural landscape // *The Changing Religious Landscape of Europe*, Amsterdam, 2005. P. 145–150.

2. The geography of Russian Islam

The major Islamic enclaves in the Russian Federation are located in the Volga-Urals, the North Caucasus, and Central Russia. Russian Muslims are concentrated in the eight autonomous republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Adyghea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, Dagestan, and Chechnya.

As indicated by the recent census of the Russian Federation (2002) ethnic groups with Muslim heritage constitute 10 percent of Russia's population. 56 ethnic groups, which constitute their identity using Muslim symbols, total 14.3 million out of 145.1 million of Russia's population. This is enough to call Muslims the largest religious minority in the country. It is, however, less than it was popularly assumed by the public and the media, which speak of the Muslim share of Russia's population as 20 percent. Further, it was the perception of Russia's Muslims themselves that they constitute at least 20 percent of Russia's population. 20 percent is certainly an overestimation. However, if we take into account that significant part of Russia's population is constituted by non-believers, 10 percent looks quite significant.



Ill 1. Main groups of Russia's population according to religious beliefs (cultural traditions).

Sources: Krindatch (2002), Kaz'mina (2003).

The debates over the census showed the importance of the Muslim identity problem. Before the 2002 population census was carried out, Muslim lobbies raised the question of including 'religion' or at least the 'Muslim identity' as a census category. The Census organizers rejected this, but in case of the largest ethnic group with Muslim heritage we can see that Islam is becoming ethno-differentiating factor. While Muslim Tatars are included into the category 'Tatar', their co-ethnics with Christian cultural roots chose the category 'Kresheni' ('Converted to Christianity' Tatars). For 56 ethnic groups of the Russian Federation, Islam is the religion of their ancestors and it is very much part of their ethnic identity.

Table 1 records the largest ethnic groups with Muslim heritage. We consider ethnic groups with a population over 100,000.

Despite a two-fold rise of the Kumyks and the Ingushis and a relative rise in numbers of particular ethnic groups, for example, of the Chechens from 899,000 in 1989 to 1,361,000 in 2002, and of the Azeris from 336,000 in 1989 to 621,000 in 2002, it should be said that the largest ethnic groups with Muslim heritage did not rise significantly. For example, the number of Tatars, the largest ethnic group with Muslim heritage rose only from 5,522,000 to 5,558,000, less than 0.7 percent.

The demographic profile of ethnic groups with Muslim heritage in the Russian Federation varies geographically this indicates the existence of three major categories of persons with Muslim cultural roots in the country. The first group consists of the people of the Volga

Table 1.
Size of Ethnic groups claiming Muslim heritage with more than 100,000 people, 1989 and 2002.

| Ethnic group | 1989 | 2002 |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Tatars | 5,522,000 | 5,558,000 |
| Bashkirs | 1,345,000 | 1,674,000 |
| Chechens | 899,000 | 1,361,000 |
| Avars | 544,000 | 757,000 |
| Azeris | 336,000 | 621,000 |
| Kazaks | 636,000 | 655,000 |
| Kabardins | 386,000 | 520,000 |
| Dargins | 353,000 | 510,000 |
| Kумыks | 277,000 | 423,000 |
| Ingushis | 215,000 | 412,000 |
| Lezgins | 257,000 | 412,000 |
| Karachaevtsi | 150,000 | 192,000 |
| Laks | 106,000 | 157,000 |
| Adigs | 127,000 | 129,000 |
| Tajiks | No data | 120,000 |
| Balkars | 78,000 | 108,000 |

Source: Goskomstat of the Russian Federation, 2002.

region, who constitute up to 7 million of Russia's Muslims. Most of them live in the Tatar and the Bashkir republics, where they constitute half of the population. The second group is constituted by the people of the North Caucasus, where more than 30 ethnic groups claim Muslim heritage as a part of their ethnic origin. They account for about 4 million of the population of the Russian Federation. The third group is that of migrants in the Russian territory, who are mostly from former Soviet Transcaucasia and Central Asia as well as from the North Caucasus, although in western Siberia some Muslims are the so-called Siberian Tatars in Turkic-speaking enclaves who can claim to be descendants of the old Muslim population, who lived there before the Russians came. The third group consists of up to 3 million. In addition, there may be millions of Russian converts to the Islam, but we do not have separate statistics for religion. Our estimates are based on ethnic figures. Another important source of our knowledge about Muslims in Russia is a list of mosques registered by the Ministry of Justice. The number of registered mosques shows a large-scale Muslim revival in the Russian Federation.

In contrast to the tendencies of 21st century Europe³⁶, religious revival is typical for Russia, especially among Russia's ethnic Muslims. Islamic revival is seen mostly in the territories of traditional Muslim dominance³⁷. The major regions of Islamic revival in the Russian Federation are located in the eight autonomous republics of Tatarstan, Bashkortastan, Adighea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, Daghestan, and Chechnya. Most Muslims belong to the Hanafi *madhab* (the juridical school) of the Sunni Islam, although Daghestani (except the Nogays) and Chechen Muslims adhere to the Shafii madhab of Sunni Islam. There is also a small Azeri Shia community in southern Daghestan. Azeri Shias recently became nu-

³⁶ Henkel R., Knippenberg H. Secularization and the rise of religious pluralism: Main features of the changing religious landscape of Europe // The changing religious landscape of Europe, Amsterdam, 2005, P. 1.

³⁷ Kotin I., Krindatch A. Russia: Religious Revival in a multi-cultural landscape // The changing religious landscape of Europe. Amsterdam, 2005. P. 162.

merous in many big cities of Russia. A large number of the Daghestanis, as well as the Chechens and the Ingushes, profess Sufism — a mystical form of Islam.

Table 2.

Regions with the largest number of registered mosques (out of the total of 3,445), 2003

| Region | Number of mosques | Region | Number of mosques |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Tatarstan | 971 | Nizhniy Novgorod region | 62 |
| Daghestan | 567 | Sverdlovsk region | 62 |
| Bashkortostan | 405 | Penza region | 61 |
| Orenburg region | 129 | Kurgan region | 42 |
| Karachay | 103 | Astrakan region | 38 |
| Ulyanovsk region | 101 | Omsk region | 36 |
| Kabardino-Balkaria | 99 | Mordovia | 31 |
| Samara region | 89 | Saratov region | 25 |
| Tyumen region | 84 | Moscow region | 22 |
| Perm region | 75 | Adygea | 16 |
| Chelyabinsk oblast | 65 | Moscow | 14 |

Source: Ministry of Justice

Table 2 shows that the ethnic republics of Tatarstan, Daghestan and Bashkortostan lead in numbers of mosques. In 1999, Chechnya had 150 registered religious organizations and 300 recognized mosques. Interestingly, significant numbers of mosques are found in the Ulyanovsk region, the Samara region, the Perm region etc., i. e. in the Volga-Urals region, outside of recognized ethnic republics. Partly the number of mosques in these regions reflects a rise of migrant Muslim communities and the revival of old ones. Beyond this, we know that the Muslim population of Moscow is nearly 200,000 — 250,000, or even more (taking in to account 166,000 Tatars and 96,000 Azeris registered in the city). This is reflected in the significant number of registered mosques, i. e. eleven. However, St. Petersburg has only one officially recognized mosque, with another one struggling for registration, one under construction, and three or four operating without registration as prayer-houses. The number of mosques in St. Petersburg does not reflect the 180,000–strong Muslim minority. This disparity definitely raises the question of the attitude of the state and regional powers towards Islam and the Muslims.

3. The State and Islam: Central Muslim Institutions

There is no universally recognized hierarchy within the *Umma*, or world Muslim community. Thus the State deals not with an hierarchically organized unity but with the Muslim Umma, or the community of the followers of Islam in the country. At the same time the followers of Islam consider Muslims in other countries as their brethren and part of the universal Umma. Thus, the State-Islam relations always have international aspect, generally the State is supposed to protect Islam, while Islam prescribes loyalty to the state. It is supposed, however, that the state should be Islamic and Islam should be state religion. Thus theocracy is supposed to be a part of the government system. The traditional division of countries by Muslim ideologists into the Dar al-Islam (country of Islam, where Islamic law dominates), the Dar al-Harb (countries where Islamic forces struggle for domination) and the Dar as-Suhl (non-Muslim country in temporary peace with Muslim world, generally under the protection of Muslim power) does not help much, as the ideology of the Islam does not recognize

non-Muslim power. In principle, Muslims should either struggle against non-Muslim power or take a refuge in another country where Muslim law operates. In practice, many Muslim territories have experienced non-Muslim rule, where the solution has been found in offering Muslims protection and giving them a sort of governing body, which, being appointed by non-Muslims, can be considered sort of substitute for the Muslim state. This body guarantees the rights of Muslims and also operates as the highest Islamic court.

In the Russian Empire the *Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musulman Rossiyskoy Imperii*, the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Empire was established in 1789. The *Dukhovnoe Upravlenie* had its headquarters in Orenburg but later moved to Ufa (both in the Volga-Urals region). The *Dukhovnoe Upravlenie* was in charge of Muslim religious needs and conveyed a message from the ruling elite of the Empire. Islam was allowed as personal religion, but was not welcomed as the political ideology of masses. In 1880s under Alexander III, relations between the state and Islam deteriorated as the Tsar allowed activity of Russian Orthodox Christian missions among Muslims. It should be said, however, that Alexander III also supported Russian Orthodox missionary activity among Roman Catholics and Protestants in the west of the Empire.

The pre-revolutionary decades of the 20th century saw foundation of Muslim parties and political organizations in Russia. The liberal-democratic Party of Tatar Muslims known as the *Ittifaq-al-Muslimin* had its representatives in the state *Duma*, the first Russia's Parliament. Soon the *Duma* got the Muslim lobby consisting of 30 Muslim deputies. The Muslim lobby later diminished and in 1907 it had only 8 members. The brief period of legal political activity of Muslim political groups and parties (1905–1917) gave impetus to separatist feelings among the Muslims elsewhere in the Russian Empire, including the Volga-Urals region.

The break-up of the Russian Empire gave rise to hopes of independence in the Muslim dominated regions. Attempts to establish a Muslim theocratic state were made in the North Caucasus. Azerbaijan saw the establishment of a liberal-democratic government. Muslims in the Volga-Urals region dreamt of the foundation of the *Itil-Ural* state. These foundations and dreams proved short-lived. By the time of the foundation of the Soviet Union in 1924 all Muslim-populated regions of the former Russian Empire were incorporated into the country controlled by the atheist *Bolsheviks* (Communists).

The period between 1924 and 1943 saw no concessions for the Muslims, or for any other religious groups, but in 1943 four Spiritual Boards for Muslims were established in an attempt to counter the effect of Nazi propaganda, which was partly aimed at the Muslims of Russia. Among the established boards were the *Dukhovnoe Upravleniye Musulman Evropeyskoy chasty Rossii i Sibiri* (The Spiritual Board of Muslims in European Russia and Siberia) and the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the North Caucasus, based in Mahachkala. The two other boards controlling Muslims of the Transcaucasia and Central Asia are now based abroad. In 1990s the Spiritual Boards collapsed and separate *Muftiyats* (Boards) for major regions appeared. As a result, the following Muftiyats have been established in the Russian Federation: The Muftiyat of Moscow and Central Russia, the Muftiyat of Tatarstan, the Muftiyat of Bashkortastan, the former Muftiyat of European Russia and Siberia which lost power but was not dissolved. The importance of the Muftiyats depends on the local power. In the 1990s several Muftiyats competed for first place in the hierarchy. Among them:

1. The Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia and European New Independent States, also known as the *Highest Muftiya* or *the Supreme Muftiyat*. (*Dukhovnoe Upravlenie Musulman Rossii i evropeiskih stran SNG, Verkhovnij Muftiyat*). Its head is Talgat Tajuddin. Its

- headquarters are based in Ufa. The Board claims to control nearly half the mosques in Russia. Its importance, however, is diminishing.
2. The Highest Coordinating Center of Muslims in Russia. The head is Gabdulla Galiulla (now replaced by Naftigulla Ashirov). The headquarters are in Kazan. The Center was organized as the body opposing the Highest Muftiyat. It has proven, however, to be less influential.
 3. The Council of Mufties of Central Part of European Russia. The head is Ravil Gainutdin. The headquarters are in Moscow. It seems to be a real rival to the Tajuddin led Muftiyat. Many mosques and religious organizations show their loyalty to both the Central Spiritual Board and the Council of Mufties.

In the 2000s the situation developed further. The number of Muftiyats grew, but they lost in importance. They became regional organizing centers for traditionalist Muslims in each province (republic or oblast) where significant numbers of the followers of Islam exist. These are such Muftiyats as the Muftiyat or *Duhovnoe Upravlenie* (Spiritual Board) of Muslims of Chechnya, Daghestan, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Perm and Nizhniy Novgorod Oblast', etc., where the Muftiyats are in close relations with the local elite. Some of the Muftiyats also recognize national Muslim organizations, but their local links are more important than the links with the center.

After 1992, several major Muslim political parties or political movements emerged in present-day Russia. These are the 'Muslims of Russia', the 'Nur' and the 'All-Russian Union of Muslims'. The first party is more popular in the Volga-Urals region and in Moscow, and the third has support in the North Caucasus. However, local ruling elites of 'ethnic Muslims' belonging to the mainstream politics generally have more influence than loose all-Russian Muslim parties. It is also against election law to have religious-based parties in the country. Thus, for the majority of Muslim political activists in Russia regional links with local branches of national parties are again more important than belonging to a religion-based party.

We will consider two major republics in the two regions where the local non-Russian ruling elite has Muslim roots, the Tatarstan in the Volga-Urals region, and the Daghestan in the North Caucasus.

4. Tatarstan

Present-day Tatarstan is a relatively developed region with rich oil and gas supplies, with developed petrochemical industry and urbanized population. Its population is nearly half-Tatar, half-Russian, but the political leadership is in hands of the Tatar elite as the result of the Soviet national policy in ethnic regions. All main leaders of the Tatar elite are former Soviet bosses who chose to change loyalty towards Islam after the fall of the Communist ideology. In 1990–1992 Tatarstan's leadership, together with the leadership of the Chechnya, favored the disintegration of the Russian Federation. In 1992 they refused to sign the Federal Treaty. Instead the Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaimiev suggested a redistribution of power between the center and the regions. Shaimiev demanded more power and resources to be left in his republic than sent to the center. Yeltsin agreed, so Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, with their rich oil and gas resources, detained a significant share of taxes and enjoyed relative prosperity, while some other Muslim-populated center-supported republics, particularly Daghestan, suffered from the lack of resources. In February 1994 a power-sharing treaty between Moscow and Kazan was signed, which secured Tatarstan's remaining within the Russian Federation

but gave a special status to this republic. The treaty meant an agreement to share power and resources with formal Moscow supremacy. However, recent political changes after Yeltsin, particularly the formation of Federal *okrugs* (super-regions), which include autonomous republics, may mean the end of the relative autonomy of Tatarstan. Yet, at the moment President Shaimiev is one of the leaders of the pro-Putin party 'Edinaya Rossiya' (United Russia), which supports Moscow and enjoys its support as well.

While at the center, Islam is recognized as a traditional religion, at the regional level in Tatarstan Islam is the dominating religion. There is an active Tatar national movement regionally under the leadership of the All-Tatar Public Centre (VTOTS), the Party of *Ittifaq* (Union), *Milli Majlis* (National Assembly), and the *Azattyk* (Freedom) Movement in Tatarstan. All these parties and organizations use Muslim slogans and symbols. Tatar national symbols, architecture, and monuments include Islamic elements. Tatarstan's authorities encourage a faster pace of building of mosques, Islamic schools (medresses), and other Islamic institutions in comparison with Russian Orthodox construction. For example, in 1986 there were 18 Muslim and 15 Russian Orthodox registered communities with their mosques and churches accordingly. In 1992 the number of Muslim registered communities and mosques grew to 333 while the Russian Orthodox communities and churches grew to 89. By 1997 there were 802 registered Muslim communities and mosques and 171 Russian Orthodox communities and churches in Tatarstan.

The federal-regional power sharing treaty allows local power to control ethno-regional and local components of the school curriculum. Hence, textbooks describing Islam as the main source of culture in Tatarstan have been published since 1992, when President Shaimiev encouraged the secession of Tatarstan's Islamic authorities from the Federal Islamic structures represented by the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia and European states of the CIS (TSDUMR, formerly DUMES), based in Ufa (Bashkortastan). Tatarstan's leadership has regarded the independent Tatarstan *Muftiyat* as an important attribute of sovereignty. In February 1998 the Shaimiev administration organized the election of the President's relative, Gusman-hazret, as the new Mufti of Tatarstan. The Kazan-supported Islamic organizations call themselves *Jajidist*, or liberal Islamic organizations, claiming the heritage of Tatar *Jajidists* from the pre-1917 period. The radical revivalists (Salafi or Wahhabi) missionaries are watched by the regional power with suspicion. Their presence in the region is considered dangerous, but Kazan is interested in securing monetary investment from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and financial support for the Hajj-goers, controlled by the Salafi missionaries.

The opposition to regional power also uses Islamic slogans. Founded in 1998 by ex-Mufti of Tatarstan, Gabdulla Galiulla, a new political movement, 'Omet' (Hope) unites the nationalist party (the *Ittifaq*), communists and some Islamists. This movement, as well as the populist Muslims of the Tatarstan Movement and the Safi Islam group, revolve around particular personalities and lack public support.

While regional leaders have used Islamic slogans to attract public support in their struggle for power with the center, they sometimes find themselves in an unpleasant situation when they are asked which Islam to support. In August 1992 the Congress of the Imams of Tatarstan elected Gabdulla Galiulla as Mufti of a Kazan-based the Muftiyat of Tatarstan, independent of Ufa-based Supreme Mufti Talgat Tadjutdinov. In his turn, Mufti Talgat Tadjutdinov did not recognize this move and supported the formation of the alternative Board (the Muftiyat) in Zelenodol'sk in 1994. In 1996, Kazan-based Galiulla supported Ravil Ginutdinov, the self-proclaimed Mufti of Central European Russia (Moscow), in the creation of another anti-TSDUMR institution — the Council of Muftis of Russia. Tatarstan's President Shaimiev supported the re-

gionalist movement and in 1998 the Unifying Islamic Congress, organized by Tatar authorities, legalized the break-up with the neighboring Ufa, but appointed another Mufti, pro-Shaimiev Gusman-hazret. While the Kazan-based Muftiyat claims to control 1200 Muslim communities in Tatarstan and even a dozen more in the neighboring Perm oblast, the Ufa Mufti Talgat Tadjuddin claims to control 470 Muslim communities in Tatarstan. Muslim authorities in neighboring Daghestan maintain contacts with all these umbrella organizations.

The change of President in Tatarstan did not cause any change in the relations between the regional power and the religious leaders. The relationship is seen as balanced and friendly by both Islam and Orthodox Christianity and protected dominant religions in the region.

5. Daghestan

Daghestan is another region of Russia with a dominant Muslim population. Daghestan receives more from the center than it gives in return. Daghestan lacks natural resources and suffers from high unemployment. It is also a multi-national republic, with 14 main groups, of which several of the largest struggle for power. The largest groups are the Avars (757,000), the Dargins (510,000), the Kumyks (423,000), the Lezgins (412,000), the Laks (157,000), and few others. The Chechens (92,217), Russians (150,054), and Azeris (88,327) are also quite numerous in Daghestan. Daghestan has a long history of Islamic dominance since the 8th century A. D. For centuries Islam in North Caucasus was connected with Sufism. The first Sufis of the Tariqa (Sufi brotherhood) of Abu Bakr Derbendi appeared in Daghestan in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The tariqatists attribute supernatural characteristics to the *mazars* (the graves of Sufi shaykhs and other shrines) and sanction a *ziyarat* (visiting the shrines of well-known *shaykhs*), which contributed to the isolated existence of local Islam.

The 18th century witnessed Russian occupation of the territory and local Muslim resistance. From 1785 to 1790 Shaykh Mansur united Chechnya and Daghestan in an anti-Russian political-military Union. Between 1824 and 1859 Imam Shamil ruled the *Imamat* in the territory of Chechnya and Daghestan in resisting Russian forces. In 1877–1878 Russian troops defeated an Islamic holy war and Daghestan was finally incorporated within the Russian empire³⁸. After the turbulences of 1917, rebellious Daghestanis and the Chechens proclaimed a theocratic emirate, which was soon cracked down by the Bolsheviks in 1921. In the Soviet period the Avars dominated the political, economic, and *militsia* (police) establishments in Daghestan. The Avar dominated *Naqshband tariqa* coexisted relatively well with the remaining powers, and prospered. The local Communist party structures at the same time were Naqshbandi-related structures. In the 1940s, during the period of relative religious liberalization, the Daghestan city of Buynaksk (near Mahachkala) witnessed the formation of a Spiritual Board of the Muslims of the North Caucasus (Muftiyat), in which the leading positions were occupied by the Daghestani Islamic elite linked with the Naqshbandis.

Daghestan remained an agrarian republic, strongly dependent on Federal subsidies, which helped to preserve the clan and Sufi social network in return for the region's formal loyalty to Moscow. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of financial support from Moscow resulted in changes of power. It also opened Daghestan's door to foreign Islamic missions. While the struggle for power involves several ethnic groups and definitely remains under control of the Sufi leaders, Salafism (Wahhabism) is gaining support from the unemployed and

³⁸ *Yemelianova G. M. Islam and Nation Building in Tatarstan and Daghestan of the Russian Federation // Nationalities Papers* 1999, No. 27., P. 609.

dispossessed population, especially from the Chechens and the Nogays of Daghestan. Wahhabism in this region publicly protests the low standards of morality and Communist past of the majority of the present-day Muslim clergy. The first Wahhabis turned up in Daghestan in 1988, and soon the republic witnessed an open military struggle between the Wahhabis and the Sufis over the main Sufi shrines. In 1998, three villages in Buynakskii district of the Daghestan had proclaimed themselves Islamic territory under Sharia law. In these circumstances the Daghestan leadership has opted for ruthless political and administrative suppression of Wahhabism. Common hostility has united the Daghestani secular political elite and Islamic officialdom, represented by the Spiritual Board of the Muslims of Daghestan (SBMD).

The victory over the Wahhabis heralded the unity of power and Sufi Imams, who quickly claimed loyalty to Moscow in exchange of subsidies. Thus the struggle for power in Daghestan has been between the Sufi controlled government and the Saudi-supported Wahhabis. Ethnic movements in Daghestan also use Islamic symbols and slogans, as do the political parties. The political parties include the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) and the Islamic organization Al-Islamiyya, the Supreme Religious Council of the Peoples of Caucasus, and the regional association of Muslim women, Maslima, plus the Daghestani branches of the All Russian Union of Muslims and the popular political movement *Nur* (Light), which has become the Islamic Party of Russia.

One of the most important sources of Wahhabi influence remains the annual Hajj. Wahhabis advocate strict monotheism (*tawhid*) and oppose tariqatism as a deviation from Islam. Wahhabis also accuse the Islamic officialdom of corruption, involvement in dirty politics and financial fraud, and fearing open discussion of religious issues. The Wahhabis thus operate as an anti-nomenclature egalitarian and, to some extent, anti-state force in Daghestan.

6. Chechnya

In post-Soviet Chechnya, Chechen Naqshbandis, who had representatives in the major political and economic spheres during Soviet times, distanced themselves from the Chechen radical nationalists under the leadership of General Dudayev. The first Chechen Mufti Muhammad Bashir, a Naqshbandi, refused to back Dudayev during the presidential elections in 1991. The failure of the Chechen nationalists to mobilize the Naqshbandi network for the war of independence facilitated their rapprochement with another Sufi tariqa, the Qadiris, who were much more disadvantaged than the Naqshbandis during the Soviet period. Bekmurza, the elder brother of Dzokhar Dudayev and the regional leader of the Qadiris, played an important role in forming this alliance. The two Chechen wars resulted in the demise of the Dudayev regime and his successors. However, Chechnya's new Mufti, Qadirov Sr., was appointed as the new Chechnyan leader by Moscow. After Qadirov Sr.'s death his son Ramzan Qadirov became the ruling position in Chechnya. This succession heralds the dominance of the Qadiri and other Sufi-related Muslim leaders in Chechnya.

7. Muslim Population in Russian Metropolitan Cities.

In the Volga-Urals region and the North Caucasus Muslims can claim Islam is the ethnic religion of the territory. However, in Moscow and St. Petersburg, which both have significant Muslim populations, the Muslims are immigrants and they live in a Christian and atheist dominated environment.

In 1994 the Muslim population of Moscow was estimated to be 200,000 to 250,000. Until the break-up of the Soviet Union, Muslim Tatars dominated the Muslim community in Moscow. Now Azeris are also numerous. Estimates for 2000 give a figure of 170,000 Tatars in Moscow, while a number of Azeris is 33,000. The increase in the number of mosques in Moscow is a relatively new post-Soviet phenomenon. Before 1994 there was only one registered mosque in Moscow, the Jami Masjit. In 1994 the Moscow government returned the so-called Historical mosque in *Zamoskvorechye* to Muslims. In 1997 two more mosques appeared in the city, in Otradnoe and on Poklonnaya Hill³⁹. Another Shia mosque in Otradnoe was constructed by a rich Azeri businessman, and there is a Shia mosque on the premises of the Iranian Embassy in *Novie Cheremushki*. There are a total of eleven mosques in Moscow, and also several unregistered Muslim prayer-halls. The Moscow *Jami Masjit* is traditionally a Tatar-dominated mosque and is often called the Tatar Mosque. The so-called *Historical Mosque* has a significant number of North Caucasian and Arab mosque-goers. The *Otradnoe Mosque* is dominated by Muslims from the Nizhniy Novgorod region of the Russian Federation⁴⁰.

The St. Petersburg Muslim community is also large and varied (See Table 3). More than one-third of the city's Muslims are Tatars. The Azeris are nearly as numerous as the Tatars, but they are newcomers and Shias, which makes them outsiders even among other Muslims. The Azeris have established their own prayer-house. The main conflict is between the Tatars and the rest of the Sunni community of St. Petersburg as well as between the 'old' established groups and the 'Young Muslims'. The conflict rose to the surface over the establishment of a new mosque in St. Petersburg. The city's largest Muslim organization, the Spiritual Muslim Department, accused a rival group, which planned to build the new mosque, of preaching Wahhabism. The new radical group, titled Al-Fath, received support from the Moscow-based Union of Mufties of Russia, while the Spiritual Muslim Department applied for support from the Ufa-based Central Muftiyat. The municipality of St. Petersburg was also involved in the conflict. The construction of the new mosque was permitted by the City Construction and Architecture Committee, but the Spiritual Muslim Department applied for the support to the Kalininskiy district of St. Petersburg to stop construction. The conflict of personalities is also evident. The Mufti of the oldest mosque in the city, Jafar Panchaev, is in a struggle for control of the local Muslim community with its former Imam and the leader of Al-Fath, Mr. Khafiz Makhmutov. In November 2006 a decision to construct the new mosque was given by the central and local authorities. The construction began under control of the newly formed *Duhovnoe Upravlenie Musulman Sankt-Peterburga i Severo-Zapada Rossii* (Spiritual Board of Muslims of St. Petersburg and the North-West Russia).

8. The 'Cartoon Issue' and the reaction of Muslims in Russia

The publication of cartoons in the Danish *Jyllands-Posten*, which provoked a heated debate in Europe and a political scandal in the Middle East, had little effect in Russia due to strong state control of the media. The cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* in September 2005 provoked a protest in the local Muslim community, which spent several months rousing opposition to the cartoons, which they considered blasphemous. The reproduction of

³⁹ Хайретдинов Д. З. Этнический состав мусульманской общины Москвы // Мусульмане изменяющейся России. М., 2002. С. 117.

⁴⁰ Там же.

the cartoon sketches in Norway in December 2005 elicited a wide protest from European Muslims and their brethren in the Middle East. Danish Muslims arranged a tour in the Islamic world conveying information about the cartoons published in the Danish newspaper. Thus the cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* triggered a diplomatic crisis and Europe-wide discussion of blasphemy laws and freedom of speech. Among the newspapers which entered the fray were the French daily *France Soir*, Germany's *Die Welt*, Italy's *Corriere della Serra*, and Spain's *Catalan daily El Periódico*. The reproduced sketches included a portrayal of Muhammad wearing a bomb-shaped turban, and as a knife-wielding nomad flanked by two women shrouded in black. Although both the European justification of freedom of speech and the Muslim demand for laws on blasphemy exaggerated the importance of the initial publication, the result was a full-scale political crisis in Denmark and a rise of anti-Danish and anti-European, anti-Western feelings in the Muslim world⁴¹.

For the first week after the cartoons were published in Denmark, Russian media mostly did not comment on the news at all, positioning it as a Danish issue. Information about the issue was only available on western channels and in foreign-language newspapers. However, the increasingly wide-scale anti-Western hysteria in the Arab world soon gave momentum to Russian Muslim demands for anti-blasphemy laws in Russia and comments among Russian conservatives on the rightness of Russia's distinction from Western liberalism and Muslim radicalism. The Russian media seem to have received directives on how to behave and cover events in Europe. The first Russian newspaper that dared to publish a sketch in relation to the 'cartoon issue', the Volgograd-based *Gorodskie Vesti*, was closed the day after publishing a cartoon which showed Jesus Christ, Moses, Muhammad, and Buddha saying to struggling villains "We did not teach you this". Another provincial newspaper from Vologda also was closed the day after reproduction of the Volgograd cartoons. The majority of Russians found the eagerness of authorities to stop any publication critical of anybody as a revival of Soviet times. Russian Muslims, however, expressed their gratitude to the Russian authorities for their defense of traditional religion and its values. A press-conference convened by Mr. Abdul-Vahed Niyazov, the head of Islamic Cultural Center of Russia, showed a trend strengthening loyalist Muslim forces. Mr. Niyazov even tried to use the situation to make the event anti-American and anti-Western⁴².

More than in the past Islam plays important part in the politics of the Russian Federation, which can no longer be considered a mono-confessional Orthodox state. Especially at the local and regional levels, Islam can be a key factor in the relation between the state and religion/church, depending on the ethnic-religious composition of the population involved. In traditional Muslim regions, such as Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Adyghea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, Daghestan, and Chechnya, Islam is not only a protected religion but also the faith of the ruling elite. Compared to the former Soviet Union, religious freedom in general has increased considerably, which has also benefited Islam (see also the paper of Krindatch in this monograph).

A very different situation exists in metropolitan areas, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg, where Muslims form immigrant communities comparable with the Muslim communities in West-European cities. In the cities, the Muslim influence on local politics is considerably lower, as a consequence of the high level of secularization and the traditional orthodox domi-

⁴¹ Blasphemous Cartoons, 2006

⁴² ITAR-TASS, 2006.

nance within the religious part of the population. In general, local authorities in metropolitan areas are not willing to allow the construction of mosques. Internal divisions within the Muslim community further complicate the situation. These divisions have ethno-religious (Shi'ites versus Sunnites, Wahhabis versus popular Islam, Tatar versus non-Tatars; relatively established versus 'newcomers') and economic backgrounds. For example, wealthier groups which can afford to build their own mosque versus poor Muslims who are dependent on the goodwill of the local municipality.

The 'Cartoon issue' further illustrates the growing sensitivity of the central government regarding the feelings of Muslim citizens and finally it illuminates the distinction between Russia, on one hand, and the West and Central Europe, on the other hand, concerning the relationship between the state and Islam. The great need of inter-faith dialogue is felt both by the state and by the society.

9. History of the Relations between main confessions of Russia

Christianity and Islam are the two major confessions in Russia. The history of their relations corresponds to the main stages of Russian history, and vice versa, as each major event in the history of Russia has had some impact on the destiny of the adepts of these two confessions. It is important to remember that although Christianity and Islam have been the dominant religions in Russia neither religion has held an exclusive monopoly and they have never been united. For this reason, within Christian and Muslim communities today there are numerous groups with differing notions regarding the importance and prospects of inter-confessional dialogue.

Recent events surrounding the demise of His Holiness Patriarch Alexey II of Moscow and All Russia have highlighted the profound respect in which eminent Muslims hold the leading Orthodox clerics and the Orthodox community of the land. Yet, the relations between Muslims and Orthodox Christians in Russia can hardly be considered serene. Sometimes serious disagreements arise even in the Inter-Religious Council of Russia. One reason for the disagreements is the rigorous hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church and the lack of a corresponding hierarchy among Muslims. The non-hierarchical structure of Islam is understood by some as a democracy, while others consider it a disappointing barrier to equality in dialogue and a fact that makes it difficult for ordinary members of the communities to accept formal mutual agreements reached by the Orthodox clerics and representatives of Muslims.

While doctrinal differences certainly interfere with serene relations, the main interference is a product of history. In the millennial history of the Russian state, Christians and Muslims have fought in opposing armies or, more often, they have fought together against a common external enemy. In internal wars, fought within Russia for political and economic purposes, Muslims and Christians used religious slogans to bolster their opposition. Slogans such as "the church in war" and "the holy war" ("the jihad of sword"), which do not represent the original ideals of either Christianity or Islam, have been used by various politicians for the political and military mobilization of the religious population and they have shaped the attitudes of each side toward the other.

It is unwise to idealize the formative stages in the development of either religion, as each pretends to be the only true holder of religious knowledge and the only way to salvation. This pretension, in which both traditions are equally culpable, presents a serious problem. Many truly believing Christians and Muslims consider the faith of the other an error or a delusion

and those who disagree are not “true believers”. This disrespectful attitude and the lack of mutual recognition are by-products of wars waged for political and economic purposes and they drastically interfere with serene relations between Muslims and Christians today.

Today, circumstances are necessitating a change in attitude. The world is suffering a crisis of faith concerning all religions, including Christianity and Islam. We understand culturally belonging to a community. The sense of belonging can be hardly analyzed, either in the aggregate or in one’s personal sense of belonging. However, the world situation today — the problems of war and peace, the struggle with hunger and poverty, and the need to avoid ecological and nuclear catastrophes — necessitates our transcending traditional confessional boundaries to join forces and develop common strategies. Here, given the exigency of the situation, the questions of “faith” and the perceived errors perpetuated by the adherents of other faiths yield in priority to the issues of restoration of faith among Christians Muslims accordingly. For Christians and Muslims trust in God is the central requirement of faith, and passivity in our earthly lives is not an option. These questions along with the questions of the future of Russia can and must be solved together by Russian Christians and Muslims.

The Russian Federation is the recognized successor of the Soviet Union, which in turn inherited the major part of the Russian Empire with all its merits and issues, population diversity, and religious and cultural traditions. The Russian Empire was successor to the Moscow State, Vladimir and Kievan Rus’. The baptism of the people of Kievan Rus’ in 988 A. D. is the most important event that defined the development of Eastern Europe for the next millennium. Hebraic monotheism and Islam were already well established among the people of the Volga Region⁴³¹. Hebraic monotheism was an official religion of the Khazar khaganate, and Islam was popularized in the Volga Region by Arabian missionaries and merchants. Prior to the fall of the state of Khazars, Islam became widespread in the Volga Region, having been adopted as the official religion of the Volga Bulgars.

Remarkably, the first inter-confessional dialogue in Russia is the legendary dispute that occurred at the court of Prince Vladimir between the representatives of Christianity, Islam, and Hebraism over the future religion of Rus. Vladimir chose Christianity, the religion of the southern neighbor, the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. Later the schism between Rome and Constantinople, further splits within the Catholic Church, and the emergence of national Protestantism, as well as further divisions among other Protestant denominations (Methodism, Baptism) made the peoples of Eastern Europe define their relations not only in terms of Christianity and Islam, but also in terms of the branches of Christianity. These definitions were dramatically framed in intra-church conflicts, which were sometimes more fierce than the conflicts between different faiths. Finally, the schism within the Orthodox Church itself, caused by the reforms of Patriarch Nikon, led to the emergence of the old believers, some of whom (the Nekrasov Kossaks) were employed by the Ottoman Sultan in fighting the “Prince of Darkness”, who they beheld as the Orthodox Tsar.

The Foundation of the Russian Empire by Peter the Great aimed at centralizing power throughout the vast territory of Russia, and this centralization affected the religious communities as well. In 1721, in St. Petersburg, the Holy Synod ministry on Orthodox religion was established. Other religions found themselves under the supervision (far less strict) of the Department on Non-native Religions. Empress Catherine II, who was in power several decades

⁴³ See: *Ковалевский А. П.* Книга Ахмеда Ибн-Фадлана о его путешествии на Волгу в 921–922 гг. Харьков, 1956.

after the death of Peter the Great, considered herself his successor. Like Peter the Great she took care of public life in Russia, including organizing and supervising the religious life of the country. Catherine the Great emphasized her spiritual kinship with the French philosophers of the Enlightenment and as an enlightened monarch, in 1773, she issued the edict on religious tolerance, which allowed the formation of “non-native” communities, notably Muslims and Lutherans, and allowed the construction of new mosques and Lutheran churches. The title of the epistle to the Holy Synod is especially remarkable: “On tolerance of all the faiths and on the ban against bishops against taking part in deals concerning different faiths and against building houses of worship for the different religions, which should be the concern of the secular authorities”.

In 1800, in Kazan, a publishing house was established that specialized in publishing Muslim religious books. The expanding rights of believers’ encouraged their interest in the Enlightenment. In the Muslim world, it generated the reform (“jadidist”) movement, which was largely connected to the activities of Ismail Gasprinsky (1851–1914). From 1888, Gasprinsky issued the newspaper “Tarjiman” (“Translator”), and which was enormously influential in the modernization of Muslim education in Crimea, the Volga Region, and Turkestan. Gasprinsky issued new textbooks and school programs and founded the so-called “new-method” schools in Crimea. Later these schools became widespread throughout the Muslim territories of Russia, as far north as Samarkand and into Tashkent and the dependent emirate of Buchara. Due to these progressive schools there emerged in the first decade and a-half of the 20th century a new generation of Muslim intellectuals educated in the European tradition but who retained their “Muslim” identity.

Under the policy of strengthening Russification, which characterized Alexander III’s reign, the reform movement diminished in the communities of all faiths and the conservative trend intensified. During the late imperial period, the Department of Spiritual Affairs and Foreign Religions took control of the ideological movements regarded hostile to both Orthodox and Muslim subjects of the Russian Empire. During the reign of Nicholas II, efforts to continue the conservative policy of his predecessor and to rely on the most traditionalist powers among the representatives of all the major religions were unsuccessful. As a result, bowing to popular pressure, Nicholas II made serious concessions to the Old-believers and Protestants and declared the freedom of faith for all subjects by his imperial manifesto.

The 1917 February Revolution abolished the office of autocracy, and this terminated the special status of the Orthodox Church as the one supervised and supported by the monarchy. At the same time, the revival of the Patriarchate gave hope for the restoration of the authority of the church during the period when ex-emperor Nicholas II fell into disgrace with the population.

During the so-called “Brezhnev stagnation” that followed Stalin’s despotism and Khrushchev’s “voluntarism”, a pragmatic approach to the major confessions and to believers prevailed. A number of churches, mosques, and synagogues remained open for the religious communities and the believers could worship freely, but religious agitation was prohibited; the priests, imams, and community leaders were under supervision; and religion became mainly a family asset. Owing to the maintenance of big family and clan links in Central Asia and in the Caucasus, these limitations caused Islam to become a largely “ethnic religion”. At the same time, Orthodox Christianity lost its links with the majority of the ethnically Russian population, which was generally deprived of family ties and ties to location by the State. In this sense, Orthodox Christianity was more weakened than Islam by Soviet atheism.

The mass revival of Orthodox Christianity began in 1988, when the USSR celebrated the millennium of the Baptism of Rus'. By this time, the Perestroika (renovation) of economy and the policy of Glasnost' (publicity) in the field of knowledge had born their first fruit. The population expressed interest in religion, mostly in the religion of their ancestors. Also, taking into consideration the fact that preparations for the celebration began in 1985, it seems the initiators of Perestroika might have had in mind the possibility of replacing the communist ideology with the Orthodox ideology. Properties were returned to the church and other religious organizations and spiritual leaders who had been repressed were rehabilitated, mostly posthumously. In April 1988, M. S. Gorbachev, then leader of the party in power and of the government, consulted with Patriarch Pimen and the members of the Holy Synod regarding preparations for the celebration of the millennium of the Baptism of Rus'. Following these publicized consultations many Russians adopted and re-adopted Christianity. Many neophytes joined the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the Muslim communities. This success of religion also constituted a problem, as new adherents are ignorant about questions of faith and they tend to adopt aggressive attitudes towards the heterodox and irreligious people.

As the religious organizations grew stronger, the government decided to express legally its attitudes towards religion and the major confessions. As a result two laws on religion in Russia were passed, namely the Federal laws "On freedom of Worship" (1990) and "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" (1997).

According to the Act "On Freedom of Worship" all people are allowed to express freely their religiousness. However, this freedom has led to anarchy and the rise of organizations (usually called New Religious Movements), such as the ill-famed White Brotherhood, which have proven destructive.

The Russian Federal law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" is less liberal. Paragraph 3. 27 of this law defines the so called "traditional confessions". The Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" was adopted on the 26th of September 1997 and it immediately elicited acute discussion in the press. The preamble reads: "Based on the fact the Russian Federation is a secular state; recognizing the special contribution of Orthodoxy to the history of Russia and to the establishment and development of Russia's spirituality and culture; respecting Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and other religions which constitute an inseparable part of the historical heritage of Russia's peoples.. ." These words alone evoked controversy.

The law also requires cooperation between the government and religious associations, meaning that the "state is to cooperate with and support the charitable activities of religious organizations, as well as the implementation of their socially significant cultural and educational programs and undertakings".

Despite the significant achievements and the enormous positive role of the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church and Muslim communities, it is important to note their "Achilles' heel" is their dependence on central or regional authorities, their tendency to rely on government support, and their hope for administrative resources. This dependence explains the rigidity of many local Orthodox and Muslim organizations in numerous situations where persons and even local communities, sometimes the population of a whole village or town, need help. Rivals of Orthodox Christianity and rivals of Islam are often prompt in providing such help to the suffering people, both for humanitarian ends and in the "hunt for souls".

Compared with the fresh vitality of new agents in the "market of religions", the vulnerability of dependence sometimes makes Orthodox Christianity and Islam especially sensitive

and even aggressive in their relations with the rivals. In a number of cases the aggression has been excessive, in my opinion, particularly as it concerns the activities of the Roman-Catholic Church and some Baptist (Baptists and Methodists) churches. The urge to maintain “their” “ethnic” and “traditional” congregations is without doubt in tune with the interests of a centralized state, the nature of which is not discussed, but which due to the peculiarities of development in Eurasia is not and cannot be a state of liberal or democratic character.

One segment of the Russian population, now in the no-man’s land between Islam and Christianity, is the so-called “Kreshens” or Tatar Christians. The “Kreshen issue” was sparked by the growing trend to subsume confessional conscience in national conscience and by the national debate over whether to include the category of “confessional identity” in the list of questions asked during the national census. Those who wanted to include confessional identity were mostly Muslims. Ultimately the question was not included in the 2002 population census for fear of violence, although in Great Britain the question was included in its 2001 population census, without any serious negative repercussions. Today we can rely on population estimates by ethnologists⁴⁴². Supposedly, in 2002 about half the Russian population considered themselves believers: 10–12% worshiped Islam, more than 30% Orthodox Christianity, and less than 1% regarded themselves Protestants and Catholics. Although today the Orthodox percentage has grown, their level of religiousness is unclear⁴⁵³. Most likely, more Russians have become more aware of their Russian identity with Orthodox Christianity being a part of that identity. The same is true for Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism in Russia.

So, recent efforts of the Russian government have created a regime of patronage embracing the four so-called traditional religions. The problem of their representation has not been entirely solved due both to the peculiarities of the communities and to the personal ambitions and concerns about status quo of the interested parties. Most notably, the issue of Muslim representation on the Russian Inter-Religious Council is not simple. The Council was founded by the Central Muslim Spiritual Board of Russia, the Mufti Council of Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Associations in Russia, and the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of The Russian Federation. By mutual agreement, each confession would have an equal number of representatives. Ideally, the formula is one religion one vote. However in reality the situation is clouded by the ambiguous position of various Muftis from the North Caucasus and Tatarstan who have their own independent administrations and no representation on the Inter-Religious Council of Russia. There is also the Supreme Muftiate of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), headed by Supreme Mufti Shaikh-ul-Islam Talgat Tadjuddin. The traditionally friendly and respectful relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and Mr. Tadjuddin do not erase problems that arise in the inter-faith contacts concerning Muslim representation on the Russian Inter-religious Council. By the same token, one can reasonably ask whether the Russian Orthodox Church with its parishes in Ukraine and Belarus is a national organization or a supranational one. Should it have the same status on the Inter-religious Council as the CIS Muftiate, or should it be considered supra-national? Obviously, the problems of hierarchy and correspondence are not primary, but the lack of rational solution leads to the lack of coordination of the activities of the interested parties.

⁴⁴ See: *Казьмина О. Е.* Конфессиональный состав населения России. — <http://cbook.ru/peoples/obzor/konfess1.shtml>.

⁴⁵ *Kotin I., Krindatch A.* Religious Revival in a Multi-cultural Landscape // *The Changing Religious Landscape of Europe*. Amsterdam, 2005. P. 154. Tab. 3.

During his term as the Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, the present Patriarch of All Russia Kirill in an interview for the newspaper *NG-Religii*⁴⁶ addressed a number of crucial questions regarding the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslim organizations of Russia. Particularly, he said: “The existing disagreements in the Islamic community of Russia are its internal issues, and the Russian Orthodox Church cannot interfere in the resolution of these issues. On the other hand, the existence within the contemporary Russian ummah of different centers of comparable importance, pretending to represent the interests of the whole Muslim community at the federal level, significantly complicates general contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and Islam”. This is not an unsolvable problem. Metropolitan Kirill said he does not think that “for an effective dialogue it is important to unite all Muslims under a common administration. It would be a mistake to suppose the territorial administration scheme (accepted by the Russian Orthodox Church) is optimal for every confession and to demand organizational unity as an important condition for the cooperation of Islamic, Buddhist, or Jewish communities. The Islamic ummah of Russia is heterogeneous in both its ethnic and religious aspects, and the coexistence of different spiritual centers is quite reasonable so long as there is peace between them”.

Contrary to the opinion of some researchers and journalists, Metropolitan Kirill does not see the adoption of Islam by Russians as a threat: “Every year a few tens of Russians adopt Islam as a result of their spiritual striving or mixed marriages, but today even more ethnic Muslims become Christians for the same reasons. Such cases of changing the religion are not the result of some task-oriented activities of the Russian Orthodox Church or the traditional Muslim centers of Russia, and they do not complicate our inter-religious affairs either. For our religions, it is a top-priority task to revive the traditional religiousness in its proper space, and it is obvious that strong limitations on mutual proselytizing are one of the main conditions for our good-neighborly relations”.

As we can see, most prominent representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslim community of Russia are not disposed to accentuate their dogmatic differences. It is common for them to remember the common (“Abrahamic”) roots of Christianity and Islam and their mutual respect for the personalities of Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary, who are revered in both religions. At the same time, the question of religious symbolism and its interpretation has suddenly become a painful issue and source of tension for a number of Muslim muftis. Particularly, Muftis see the so-called “anchor crosses”, on which the Cross is superimposed over the crescent, as “suppression of the Muslim Crescent by the Christian Cross”. There is no need to investigate the origin of the Christian and Muslim symbols closely in this article, but the fallacy of such an interpretation is obvious to the experts. In the Christian tradition, the crescent is a symbol of Our Lady’s purity and has in no way any pejorative meaning for Islamic symbols. The power of human fallacy, including religious fallacy, has always been huge. There is, for example, a depiction of the sun and the crescent in St. Stephen Cathedral in Vienna. The sun and the crescent stood for the union of the Pope and the Emperor of the Roman Empire. After the unsuccessful siege of Vienna by the Turks and the defeat of the army of the Grand Vizir, the citizens of Vienna insisted on removing the depiction of the crescent as allegedly the symbol of the power of Islam.

Similarly, some Muftis view the Christian symbols, for instance the depiction of St. George the Dragon-Slayer on the Moscow coat of arms, as symbolic of the union of government

⁴⁶ See: <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1087071.html>.

authorities and the leading local religions. In Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, however, the authorities obviously favor Islam and Islamic symbols.

After the collapse of the USSR, under President Yeltsin's leadership regions received "as much independence as they could take". The fortification of vertical power and the merger of the regions under V. V. Putin did not lead to any loss of independence in the areas of religious and cultural policy. In the Volga Region and the North Caucasus, Islam is given priority by the authorities, who are mainly "ethnic Muslims": Tatars, Bashkirs, Avars. The biggest and richest republic of the "Muslim zone" of the Volga Region, Tatarstan, preserves its Orthodox sacred objects, but there are currently far more mosques built than new churches, which has caused some observers to note an "Islam advancement" there. According to Elena Maler-Matyalova, in this region we are dealing with the clash of civilizations — Christian and Muslim. Maler-Matyalova thinks "today there is no equal coexistence between the two peoples and confessions in the territory of Tatarstan"⁴⁷. However according to the official position of the Tatarstan government, they have achieved inter-confessional peace and concord, and priority is given to the "traditional religions".

Tatarstan undoubtedly has the largest number of mosques. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, in 2003 there were 971 mosques in Tatarstan. In Daghestan there were 567, in Bashkortostan 405, in the upland republics of North Caucasus: Kabardino-Balkaria 99, in Karachai-Cherkess 103, and in Adygeia 22. Also, in the Orenburg region there were 129 mosques, in the Ulianovsk region 101, and in the Samara region 89. In the three latter cases, where the Russian administration is dominant, the mass building of new mosques and Muslim centers is registered.

10. How Representatives of the Christian Church View Inter-religious Dialogue

So we see evidence a lukewarm conflict between representatives of Islam and Orthodox Christianity, which has historic origins and is somewhat aggravated by the actions of radical believers and politicians. The salient question is: Is it possible to prevent the escalation of this inter-confessional conflict?

The path to avoiding violent confrontation has some guideposts. Alexey II offers a useful reminder: "We should remember the induced attempts to deepen the antagonism between the Muslim and Christian civilizations". In his message to the participants of the IV Meeting of the joint Russian-Iranian theological commission on dialogue "Islam — Orthodox Christianity", which occurred in Moscow, the Patriarch said: "We cannot and must not prevent the advancement of international relationships. People of the world need to resist mutual threats, such as terrorism, conflicts, new diseases, environmental issues". The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed his anxiety about the threats of globalization: "Is there somebody who is trying to control the whole system of international bonds in order to establish the domination of one worldview, one ideology, or one group of countries? Is not the advancement of the global economy leading to the further enrichment of rich peoples and the further impoverishment of poor people? Will people and peoples be able to preserve their freedom of spirit?" This anxiety was addressed to some extent by an appeal to the people: "Basics of the Social Policy of the Russian Orthodox Church", issued and adopted by the Assembly of Hierarchs. Also encouraging are efforts of the Protestant churches, namely the Baptists, which

⁴⁷ *Малер-Матязова Е.* Татарстан: столкновение цивилизаций // Правая.ру, 29. 07. 2005 — <http://www.pravaya.ru>.

actively cooperate with one another and with representatives of different churches in seeking solutions for the most pressing humanitarian problems. In February 2002, S. V. Ryahovskiy, V. D. Stolyar and other leaders of Protestant associations signed a declaration calling for the heads of Protestant churches in Russia to coordinate their efforts in advancing civil peace and concord, and in defining a common position in their relationships with the state and with the other religious associations, and also for support of charity and social service.

11. Practical steps towards the Inter-Faith Dialogue

Finding ways to resolve the disagreements between Orthodox Christians and Muslims is incumbent on leading Orthodox clerics and the prominent representatives of the Muslim community. However, the search for solutions also involves the local hierarchs and activists of the religious communities. There are positive examples of activities already happening on the local level. In 2007, in the Stavropol Region, Orthodox and Muslim youth participated in a summer camp: "Caucasus, our common home". Theophan, the Bishop of Stavropol and Vladikavkaz, notes, "Conflicts are usually rooted in banal ignorance. Often inter-religious and international conflicts happen through ignorance of cultures and traditions of the other and the inability to find a common language". Summer camps provide a way to bring youth together and help them learn to appreciate one another and communicate.

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslims of Russia need to develop a more congenial attitude toward atheists, including staunch atheists, as well as toward the representatives of non-Orthodox Christian churches: Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Jews, shamanists, and representatives of the new religious movements, among who are founders and followers of Russian paganism, who seek to restore the ancient Slavic religion. Further, representatives of all religions need to develop a clear and unswerving attitude toward violence and terror, which today (unlike in previous times) is associated primarily with radical Islamists.

12. Conclusion

The necessity of inter-faith dialogue in Russia is evident. The key actors in this dialogue are Russian Orthodox Christians and Muslims. The non-religious population is also important though is not necessarily active in the dialogue. The themes of the dialogue are the globally important issues of war and peace; assistance for the victims of wars and natural disasters; and cooperation in many fields including education, health, and social stability. Discussion of theological questions should be conducted by educated and tolerant experts and should not be exposed to general discussion by the public. The interests of all major communities including Christians and Muslims require avoiding or even strongly banning any offense against any religion.

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CHAPTER 2

ISLAM WITHIN THE RELIGIOUS SPACE IN BELARUS

Natalia Kutuzova (Belarus)

The end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century were marked by the creation of a globalized culture common to all humanity, by the global rise of national self-consciousness, and by the turning to cultural and national traditions. The culture of Belarus has been closely integrated in European culture since the Middle Ages. The dilemma “the East and West” is foundational in Belarus culture and has been expressed in the traditional rivalry between Christian (Orthodox and Catholic) sectors. The traditional understanding of “East-West” cultural polarization does not adequately reflect the real social and cultural situation, because many cultural and national traditions can co-exist in both the Western and Eastern regions, and consequently the situation requires a different strategy of development.

The peculiarities of the social and cultural space of Belarus are: first, the poly-ethnic structure of the population (there are 142 ethnic groups); second, the poly-religiousness (the spectrum of religious tendencies and churches is broad; there are 25 confession groups); third, the bilingualism of Russian and Belarusian languages. Centuries of different national, religious and linguistic groups inhabiting one territory did not form a united ethnic conglomeration. Each social and cultural group remained true to its language, customs, valuable orientations, out-look complexes, and geopolitical preferences. Thus, the social and cultural space of Belarus is a field of varied conflicts. Whether the conflicts become obvious or remain on the latent level completely depends on state policy and civil activity.

Religiousness in Belarus is connected with a choice of divine language, the historical past, with a certain way of life, and with a choice of an ethnic accessory, which since 14th century has not coincided with citizenship.

Islam in the Christian State

The history of the Christian State in the Belarusian territory began far in the past, during the Middle Ages. The synthesis of the Slavic and Baltic pagan cultures has been added to (not superseded by!) Christian spiritual tradition, which also was not homogeneous. A religious policy of the first princes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (further — GDL), as well as the geopolitical position of Belarus, constituted the ground for building a great “bridge”, currently known as “the bridge between the East and the West, the North and the South”.

Princes Mindovg and Jagailo considered the Catholic Church dominate, and Vitovt even tried to create an autocephalous Orthodox church. As a whole, the religious policy of the GDL tended toward tolerance and fluctuated like a pendulum between Orthodox “Russia” and the Catholic “Latin world”.

Tatars-Muslims have moved into the Belarusian territory since the 14th century. About four thousand Tatars, together with their families, lodged in the GDL territory in 1397, after

they were captured by Vitovt armies and permitted to settle with the obligation of military service. In some historical interpretations, the Tatars were invited by Vitovt to join them in the war against crusaders⁴⁸.

Crimean Tatars, as well as Tatars from the Volga regions, migrated into the Belarusian territory. They were Muslims — Sunnites of the Hanafi madhhab. Prince Vitovt guaranteed the Tatars religious freedom and wide civil rights, including the right to construct mosques and marry Christians. Tatar nobles had identical rights with Christians. The legal status of Tatars was limited only by the fact that the state religion was Christianity.

Repeatedly Tatar Muslims, together with aboriginals of the GDL, protected the country from enemies. Numerous military ranks of Tatars were created in the GDL. Non-Belarusian Tatars who attacked the GDL territory in 1510 called upon the Belarusian Tatars to join them in extortionist actions, however they were refused: “The God, the Prophet does not speak for you to plunder, we should not be ungrateful: we should battle you as robbers, instead of brothers”. True patriotism and the spirituality brought up by faith echo in this phrase⁴⁹.

Relative tolerance in the GDL led to an increase in the number of Tatars-Muslims. Their number had reached forty thousand by the 16th century, and over one hundred thousand by the 17th century. About 30 mosques operated in the GDL in 16th century. The most ancient mosques still existing are in the villages of Nekrashuntsy under Lida (1415) and Lovchitsy under Novogrudok (1420).

It is indicative that Jewish movement into the GDL also began in the 14th century. Prince Vitovt published documents giving Jews the right to engage in commercial activity and craft and accepting Jewish religious freedom.

Historical records from the establishment of the GDL state provide valuable material about the regulation of inter-church attitudes. Legal documents from the 13th to the 16th centuries, including GDL Statutes, incorporate the principle of religious freedom, stipulate the deportation of persons who offend in the GDL territory, and ensure the presence of witnesses representing both sides in court in cases of inter-church accusations.

In his “Messages,” Prince Gedimin refers to the construction of a fair state: “We shall establish a world which Christians do not yet know”⁵⁰.

Ideas of tolerance are reflected in the legislation, in the princely and royal Letters of 1563 and 1568, GDL Statutes, the decisions of the Warsaw Confederation in 1573, and the Decree of Stefan Batory in 1585. The GDL Statute of 1588 was one of the most tolerant acts in Europe at the time, and it included the text of the Certificate of the Warsaw Confederation, the original manifesto of religious tolerance written in 1573. Ideas of religious freedom were realized in Rzeczpospolita owing to Protestant nobles. Protestants nobles held 38 seats out of 73 in the Senate of Rzeczpospolita in 1569⁵¹.

The first research concerning Tatar culture dates to the 16th century. Mikhalon Litvin (his real name was Vaclav Mikolaevich), diplomat, and public figure of Rzeczpospolita, wrote “The Treatise about Customs of Tatars, Litvins and Moskovits”, directed to king Sigismund August II in 1550. The Treatise contains a comparative analysis of the customs of the peoples

⁴⁸ *Канапацкий И. Б.* Белорусские татары: историческая судьба народа и культура. — <http://muslimby.info>

⁴⁹ *Станкевич Я.* Беларускія мусульмане і беларуская літаратура. Вільня, 1933 / Менск, 1991. С. 6.

⁵⁰ Послание Гедимина 26 мая 1323 г. // *Послания Гедимина.* Вильнюс, 1966. С. 40–41.

⁵¹ *Сокол С. Ф.* Политическая и правовая мысль в Белоруссии XVI — первой половины XVII в. Минск, 1984. С. 201.

and their laudatory characteristics, addressed to the Tatars. M. Litvin admired the ascetic and rational life of the Tatars, their aversion of alcohol, their military successes, the organization of their court, and their polygamy, and he suggested that the Litvins should study the Tatars.

The first serious conflict in inter-church attitudes is detected at the beginning of 17th century, when it was provoked by the process of Catholic Counter-Reformation and the expansion of the Vatican to the East. The legal status of the Orthodox Church passed to the Greek-Catholic church, which caused a violent reaction among Orthodox believers who had begun struggling for a restoration of their own religious freedom. The period at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries was extremely difficult for non-Catholics. The term “dissidents” was used in documents in referring to Orthodox, Protestants, and non-Christian believers. For example, the special agreement of the king of Rzeczpospolita and also the Catholic bishop was necessary for Muslims to construct mosques. Muslims could not employ Christians nor distribute Islam, under threat of a death penalty.

There was a temporary stabilization in religious attitudes for 30th years during the reign of King Vladislav IV in the 17th century. However, in 1668 it was forbidden by the Sejm to convert from Catholicism to other confessions. Jesuits developed “the project of destruction”, destroying Orthodox and Greek-Catholic churches⁵².

“Dissidents” were deprived of the rights of election by ambassadors of the Sejm and could not serve on Tribunals and commissions from 1732. In 1764, the Sejm adopted the regulation enforcing the death penalty on those who converted from Catholicism to other confessions. In 1766, the Sejm approved the law offered by the Krakow bishop that considered “anyone who acts or speaks in favor of non-Catholics an enemy of the state”.

In 1766, the Constitution allowed the repair of old mosques, and in 1775 the Constitution allowed the construction of new mosques. By the end of the 18th century there were 23 mosques and 65 prayer houses in the Belarusian-Lithuanian territory. The Trakai’ region has been most densely populated by Muslims. The data about the number of Muslims living on the territory of Rzeczpospolita at the end of 18th century are disputed. Polish researchers Korzan and Sobchak think 21,500 to 50,000 Muslims lived in the territory, but others consider these numbers strongly overestimated⁵³.

Religious freedom under the domination of Catholicism was declared in the Constitutions on May 3, 1791, however by that time the separation of Rzeczpospolita was, in fact, predetermined. King Jan Kazimir warned about a possible separation of Rzeczpospolita in 1661⁵⁴. As a result of the separation of Rzeczpospolita, the Belarus territory became part of Russia and religious attitudes began to be adjusted by the Russian legislation.

The system of Muslim self-management in the form of the dzhamiat — large communities wherein members gathered for assemblies or congresses at regular intervals — developed during the 15th to 18th centuries. The Dzhamiat elected mullahs and imams and distributed certificates confirming noble privileges.

Minsk, Vilno, and Grodno regions were parts of the Russian Empire in 1793 and 1795. The audit of 1795 revealed that the aggregate number of Tatars did not exceed 2330 person in the Slonim and Vilno regions. The Dzhamiat system of self-management was abolished and Be-

⁵² Сборник документов, уясняющих отношения латино-польской пропаганды к русской вере и народности (Из исторических материалов, помещенных в «Вестнике Западной России»). Вып. 1. Вильня, 1865. С. 6–16.

⁵³ Канфесіі на Беларусі (к. XVIII — XX ст). Мінск, 1998. С. 145

⁵⁴ Турчинович О. Обзорение истории Белоруссии с древнейших времён. СПб., 1857. С. 237.

larusian Muslims were subordinated under the Orenburg mufti. However, Muslims refused to submit, as they recollected the privileges initially granted to them by the kings of Rzeczpospolita. The Belarusian Tatars-Muslims were subordinated under the Taurian Muslim Religious Department during 1831–1891. Muslims called on the Department to assert the nominations of mullahs and to obtain statements from the “books of the metric”, which contained information about mullahs of Novogrudok elected from among the nobles during the 19th century.

In the GDL territory there were about 60 mosques and Muslim prayer houses at the beginning 17th century and 23 mosques and 65 prayer houses at the end of the 18th century. The construction and repair of mosques stopped after the accession of the territory of Rzeczpospolita into the Russian Empire. The Decree of September 23, 1755, allowed Muslim to have open commons only where the number of male Muslims was no fewer than 200 persons. The Decree of September 2, 1870, forbade the construction of mosques without an estimation of the number of believers.

The Decree of December 13, 1817, resolved the construction of mosques in settlements and according to the approved plan⁵⁵. Mosques were located in the settlements of Mir (1809), Liakhovichy (1815), Slonim (1803–1804), Vidzy (1857), Kleck (1881), Ivie (1884), and others. There were 170 Muslims in Slonim, and 240 in Vidzy. Some mosques were built with monetary donations from princes Radzivill and Zamoisky and other nobles. Mosques were either common, or ‘five-times’: the namaz (Mohammedan prayer) was done at the latter routinely five times a day. However Muslims did not gather there on Fridays and during holidays.

The attitude of Russian authorities toward Muslims was tolerant during the first half of the 19th century. The Decree of June 25, 1840, allowed Muslim nobles to own real estate and Christian peasant serfs. There is information about Muslims readily assigned to various positions because of their rejection of alcohol and moral way of life. According to the 1897 census, 13,877 Muslims lived in the western provinces.

There is interesting information about Tatars-Muslims widely using the Polish language. The Vitebsk Governor General Verevkin wrote in 1866: “Tatars have kept the religion and customs that are more Polish than Russian”⁵⁶, although for eighty years the Tatars were forbidden to use the Polish language in religious practice. The Arabian language at that time had already fallen out of use and consequently there were indispensable translations of religious books into the available languages: Polish and Russian. The Qur'an in two volumes in the Polish language was published in 1858 (J. T. Buchatski's translation). The book *Sharatul' iman: Precepts of an Islam* was published in 1897 in Petersburg in Russian, and the Qur'an in Russian (G. Sablukov's translation) was published in 1907.

Many authors of the 19th century cite problems in the religious education of children. Children were educated at mosque schools from 6–8 years of age. They were expected to know the Arabian language and learn to read the Qur'an and Khamail (prayer book). The original methodical maintenance facilitating reading and understanding of the Qur'an, were tedzhvids and kitabs, containing interpretations of ceremonies and religious duties written in the Polish or Belarus languages.

The hand-written heritage of Belarusian Tatars-Muslims is unique and includes 41 manuscripts together with fragments from the end of the 18th to the first half of the 20th centuries. The manuscripts are in collections of the Central scientific library NAS of Belarus, the

⁵⁵ Канфесіі на Беларусі (к. XVIII — XX ст). Мінск, 1998. С. 148.

⁵⁶ Ibid, P. 149–151.

National library, and the Grodno State museum of the history of religion. Some tens of hand-written texts are in private possession of Tatar families. The question of revealing the texts, cataloguing them, and creating electronic copies for the further scientific study is becoming actuality. Researchers of the Tatar hand-written heritage (E. Titovets, M. Tarelko, I. Synkova) consider that the inter-operability of Muslim culture and local Christian culture is recorded in the hand-written heritage. It is expressed in the content and design of the books. Muslim books are written in the Polish or Belarus language with Arabic letters and Christian terminology found in texts.

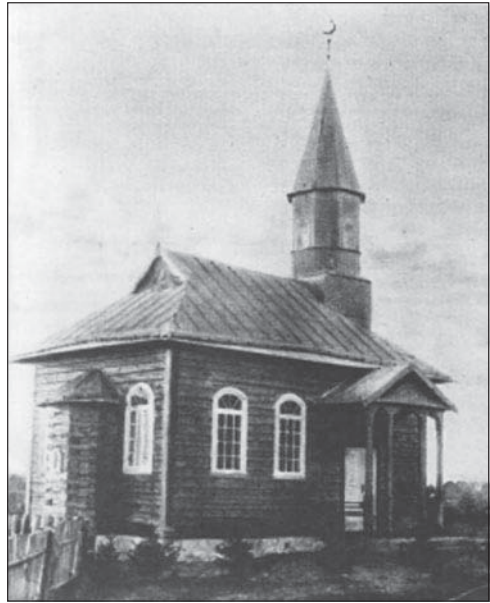
In the book *Russian Muslim* (SPb, 1881), I. Gasprinsky wrote that Tatars-Muslims lived in the western provinces, had a high degree of religiousness, and wanted to teach their children about Islam⁵⁷.

The illegal Academic circle of Polish Muslims, created in 1907, had among its leaders Leon Mirza Krichinsky, who wrote the encyclopedic book *Bibliograficzne materialy do historii tatarow Polski, Litwy, Bialorusi i Ukrainy* (Petrograd, 1917). The educational and charitable society of Tatars was created in Vilno in 1909.

The Tatar military divisions, including the First Muslim corps on the Romanian front, operated in 1917.

The new period of Muslim history began with a victory of the Soviet authority: with the propagation of atheism and the struggle against “religious prejudices”, which led to the destruction of religious buildings, including mosques. The cathedral mosque in Minsk, constructed in 1902, was closed. According to the regulation of the Minsk Executive Committee of the Soviet of People’s Deputies (July, 1949) the Muslim community in Minsk was dismissed and the mosque was destroyed for sixty years. Religious activity was forbidden, but religious activities were carried out secretly. The Muslim community in Muravshizna (Ivye) uniquely survived, including a working Sunday school for children. The quantity of believers was nearly 250 persons in the middle of the 1960s.

The life of Tatars-Muslims in Western Belarus was more interesting. The provisional number of Muslims was six thousand, with nineteen working communities. The Poland congress of Muslim Dzhamiats in 1925 in Vilno created the congress of the muftiat and the autonomy of dzhamiats was proclaimed. The religious life of Muslims quickened. Mosques were constructed in Miadel (1930), Vidzy (1932), and Liahovichy (1928); the religious holidays in Slonim were accompanied by balls; mizars (Tatar cemeteries) were equipped with modern conveniences; and printed editions of religious texts were pub-



Ill. 1. Mosque in Nekrashuntzy (Grodno district, Lidy region). There is a Muslim community existing there since 1420. Photo from 1938

⁵⁷ Байрам, 1991, №1 (Минск).

lished. The short-term religious revival stopped in September 1939 when Western Belarus became part of the BSSR, from that point the mass reprisal of clergy and atheistic propagation began. According to the population census of 1989 the quantity of Tatars in BSSR was 12 552 persons.

Islam in the Republic of Belarus: The Revival of Religious Life

The revival of religious life, including Muslims, began in Belarus in the 1990s. Mosques were constructed in Slonim (1994) and Smilovichy (1996) and reconstructed in Novogrudok (1997) and Vidzy (1999). The most ancient mosque in Belarus, in Lovchitsy, was reconstructed in 2001, the Muslim center was created in Ivie in 1998, and construction of the Minsk cathedral mosque began.

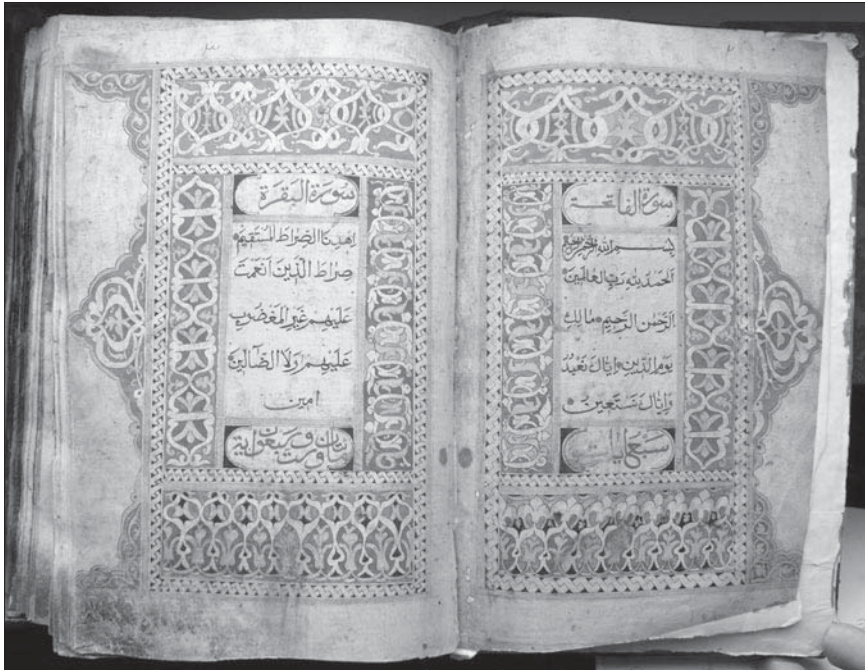
The Belarusian Muslim religious associations and the Public association of Tatars, “Zikr ul’-Kitab”, have played a key role in the religious revival. Scientifically-practical conferences devoted to problems of the Tatars-Muslims have occurred annually since 1993. The problems discussed include the conservation of the Muslim historical and cultural heritage (mosques, ancient mizars, and hand-written heritage) and the religious education of children in Muslim families. The sociological monitoring of religious life in the mid-1990s has shown a high degree of religiousness among Tatars-Muslims. Believers in the senior age groups (55 years and older) read the Qur’an in Russian, Polish and, in some instances, in Arabic (about 71 % of Tatars). Others study the Qur’an with mullahs. Among Muslims in the 30–55 year age group, 28% of believers read the Qur’an themselves, 43 % study the Qur’an with mullahs. The sociological monitoring⁵⁸ has revealed the certain problems in the education of youth: only 9 out of 100 say they read the Qur’an. In general, 80 % of Tatars in the senior age group, 80 % of 30–55 age group, and 60 % of Tatar youth recognize the positive value of Islam in a life. Practically all Tatars recognize the Belarusian language as their native language. These data testify that the national-cultural originality of the Belarusian Tatars-Muslims has been maintained and Islam also plays the major role.

At the end of the 1990s, a group of Pakistan students distributed the doctrine of Mirza Guljam Ahmad, the religious reformer of Islam. Ahmad’s pan-Islamism accented the propagation of the doctrine among the non-religious elite of a society, the non-recognition of mullahs and ulems, the thesis that Ahmad is “the promised Messiah”, and some anti-Christian ideas. These ideas and Ahmad’s doctrine have not been allowed to extend to Muslims groups in Belarus.

There were 23 Muslim communities in Belarus at the beginning of 1997, with 19 in the western region. The First Belarusian congress of Muslims took place in 1994, and the Muslim religious association of Belarus was created. 27 Muslim communities (26 of which were Sunnites) were registered by 2001. The majority of Muslim communities are in the Grodno region, the region of historical settlement of Tatars-Muslims. The provisional number of Muslims-sunnits is about twenty thousand persons. One community is registered by Azerbaijanians — Shiites. The aggregate number of Shiite Muslims in Belarus is about five thousand persons, not including Azerbaijanians Shiite immigrants from Afghanistan and Turkey. The number of Muslim communities is 25 now.

The increase in religiousness of the Belarusian population has been noted since the end of the 1990s. According to sociological interrogations in Belarus about 33% of the popula-

⁵⁸ Archive of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities



Ill. 2. The Qur'an. One of the oldest Qur'ans (oil-paper, water-colour). Not later than 17th century. Collection of mufti Shabanovich. Photo by M. Borozna



Ill. 3. The Zablotki Qur'an. The Qur'an which belonged to Stepan Ivanovich Zablotki, retired major of a Dragoon regiment (1864). Photo by M. Borozna

tion was religious in 1994; by 1998 the percentage had grown to 47.5%. Interrogations in the last two years have shown no less than 60%. Sociological data shows that among Christian believers about 70% are Orthodox, about 14% are Catholics, and less than 1% are Protestants, and 1.5% identify themselves as “Christians on the whole” without any confessional distinctions⁵⁹. The growth of the religious organizations has occurred in the East and Central regions, as well as along the Trans-European corridor (Brest-Minsk-Orsha). Nowadays, the majority of the population is Christian, less than 3% are non-Christian (Jews, Muslims, Krishnas, Bahai). In Belarus there are more than three thousand religious legal organizations, and the aggregate number of confessions is 25. The largest are the Belarus Orthodox Church (BOC), the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), and New Protestants. Judaism and Islam are also recognized as historical religions in Belarus. In Belarus, religious identity includes language and ethnic aspects. 70% of Orthodox are Russian-speaking Belarusians, Russian, and Ukrainian. 90% of Catholics are Poles and Belarusians. The Protestants are Russian and Belarusians who speak both Russian and Belarusian. Islam and Judaism are ethnic religions which are widespread among the Tatar and Jewish population of Belarus. The leading centers of the basic religious communities are outside of Belarus: the BOC in Moscow, and the RCC in the Vatican. This factor is reflected in the geopolitical orientations and political values of believers.

Research in recent years shows that the ethnic and religious factor dominates in the structure of identification processes (for example: Orthodox are Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians; Catholics are Poles, and Belarusians; Tatars are Muslims and Jews, Old Believers are Russian, etc.). The citizens of Belarus connect the religious phenomenon with ethnic culture and traditions, which convey into world outlooks and the integrating and regulatory functions of society. The ethnic and religious self-identification of Belarus citizens is as follows: 77% of Belarusians, 76.7% of Ukrainians, 71.6% of Russians, 6.3% of Poles, and 41.7% of representatives of other nationalities identify themselves with Orthodoxy. 89.1% of Poles, 9.3% Ukrainians, 8.3% of “other” nationalities, 5.8% of Belarusians, and 3.4% of Russian self-identify as Catholics. A religious and ethnic factor plays an especially important role in a multicultural society.

Sociological research of inter-religious attitudes shows that during last 10 years the fraction of tolerant believers has increased up to 76% (in 1998 this parameter was 50%), among non-believers it is 84%. Sociologists note the level of tolerance has grown in Belarus even during sharply strained relations between the Christian and Islamic regions. Sympathies toward traditional Islam are widespread in Belarus and have increased among representatives of all Christian confessions. Sociologists note a high and stable level of mutual tolerance among representatives of all religious groups. However it is possible to assume that these values of tolerance are shaped to a greater degree by the multicultural space of Belarus, and are not due the work of religious groups and their leaders.

Another expressive parameter is the interpretation of the State’s role. 63.6% of Orthodox believers say the State supports the Orthodox church, among Catholics and “Christians as a whole” 48.9% and 44.4% believers think the State supports religion. Only 33% of Muslims, Protestants, and Jews say the State shows an indifferent attitude toward their religious groups. 10% speak of discrimination against their religion by the state. It is necessary to note similar opinions are subjective and quite correlated with the etatism, which is widespread in the Be-

⁵⁹ The data of monitoring of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities.

larus public consciousness. Etatism (confidence in the strong state) was the dominating factor of Soviet ideology and remains the dominating concept in the modern ideological program for all churches in Belarus. Believers consider the State the basic patron, sponsor, and the basic target for complaints regarding the infringement of religious freedom.

One of the most acute problems the Muslim religious associations address is the problem of the religious education of youth and the formation of religious identity. Migrant-Muslims from the Arabian countries who come to Belarus propagandize the traditional versions of Islam, which brings the traditional cultural wealth of Muslims immigrants into conflict with the traditional behaviors and thinking of the Belarus Muslims. Conserving the historical and cultural values of the Tatar Muslim culture in Belarus is a necessary condition for adequate progress of this ethnic group. Mufti Abu-Bekir Shabanovich constantly emphasizes the indispensability of educating children and youth regarding the values of traditional culture and inter-religious dialogue. Values of tolerant behavior and respect for the heritage of Islam in Belarus are necessary for non-Muslims in Belarus to learn.

Scientific research of Tatars-Muslim history has increased since the 1990s, including the monograph *Religious in Belarus* (Minsk, 1998) by V. Novitsky, V. Grigoreva, A. Filatova, et al.; the historical publications of mufti Ibragim Kanapatsky; the research of Tatar manuscripts in *When Have Gone Idols*, by M. Tarelko & E. Synkova (Minsk, 2010); the catalogue *Manuscripts of the Belarusian Tatars from the end of the XVII to the beginnings of XX centuries from the collection of the CSB NAS of Belarus* (Minsk, 2003); and the encyclopedic material about Tatars in Belarus collected by J. Adamovich, I. Kanapatsky, & J. Jakubovsky. The concept of the Tatar Encyclopedia was published in J. Yakubovsky's article in 1992 ("Bairam", 1992, №2). The enthusiast V. Likhodedov has collected material about the historical regions of Tatar-Muslims, published in the book *Belarus and the Muslim World* (Minsk, 2010) in Russian, Belarusian, Arabian and English languages. However, there is still felt to be an insufficiency of serious researches of Belarusian Tatars-Muslim culture and popular literature available for the mass reader.

The Council of Mufties (muftiat) has undertaken some initiatives: the creation of a museum of Tatar national culture in Belarus, reconstructing some ancient mosques (including the mosques in Dovbushky) as monuments of wooden architecture, conserving ancient Tatar cemeteries — mizars; developing special tourist routes; and creating an electronic resource cataloguing the architectural cultural — historical monuments of Tatar-Muslims; creating an electronic resource cataloguing the hand-written heritage; activating research work; establishing an annual scientific conference about the actual problems; sponsoring competition featuring the works of young students and post-graduate students; and encouraging the scientific community, the Muslim religious association, and the Public association of Tatars to work together.

Political and legal regulation of state-church attitudes

The Council of Ministers of Belarus regulation "About the order of definition of days off for believers of non-Christian religions in connection with their holidays" (1992) provides the possibility of celebrating religious holidays. The most meaningful Muslim holidays are Ramazan, Uraza-Bairam, Kurban-Bairam, and Mavlid. The foundation of the new state religious policy is the law "On religious freedom and religious organizations" (1992), by which religious organizations received independence and the possibility of religious activity. The law recognizes the equality of all religions.

The Constitution of Belarus (1994) has established that no religion has superior advantages in the country and religious discrimination is not allowed. The special Regulation of the Council of Ministers of Belarus (1995) approved the order of the invitation and activity of foreign clerics in the territory of Belarus. The right to the invitation of foreign clerics was provided only to legal religious organizations and stipulates mandatory coordination of the invitation with the state body of religious affairs. Additions to the text of the Constitution in 1996 note: "the relationships of the state and religious organizations are adjusted by law in view of their influence on the formation of the spiritual, cultural, and state traditions of Belarusian people" (article 16).

The law "On the freedom of worship and religious organizations" (2002) has fixed the constitutional thesis in its preamble: "The Orthodox church plays a defining role in the historical development and progress of spiritual, cultural and state traditions of the Belarusian people; the spiritual, cultural and historical roles of the Catholic church in the territory of Belarus are recognized; and the inseparability of the Evangelic-Lutheran church, Judaism, and Islam from the general history of the people of Belarus is recognized".

The Committee on Religious Affairs and Nationalities and the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities were established by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus in May 2006. The Commissioner coordinates the activities of regional bodies on religious affairs, provides advice, and oversees the observance of legislation on the freedom of worship and authorized activities of religious organizations.

The primary objective of religious policy in Belarus is the conservation of stable inter-church situations without religious confrontation and the maintenance of state-church and inter-church dialogues. The Act-Agreement between the Belarus Orthodox Church and the State in political, economic, spiritual, and social areas (2003) is a unique example of the state and church working together. A similar Act-Agreement is being prepared between the Catholic Church and the State, and the Act will be constitute an interstate agreement between the Vatican and the Republic of Belarus. The goal of actual dialogue dominates state-church attitudes. The Inter-church Council was created under the authority of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities with the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus. Two muftys are members of the Council along with other leaders of religious associations. According to Decrees of the President all legal religious organizations are released from payment of taxes. The Experts Council under the authority of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities was created to provide expertise in the areas of state-church and interchurch attitudes and religious freedom. The Inter-ethnic Council operates under the authority of the Commissioner for Religions and Nationalities in coordinating the response to national problems. Leaders of national-cultural associations of the Republic are included on the staff.

Prospects of partnership in the system of state-church and interchurch attitudes

The history of Belarus shows that inter-church or interreligious dialogues are possible when religious organizations have equal possibilities. Religious freedom wins first place in the hierarchy of religious demands. The State, which is the main actor in political life, is not the unique provider of religious freedom. Religious organizations are also adequate actors in a civil society, and their number presently exceeds three thousand. The value of religious organizations in the structure of civil society is great, considering the rather high level (about 60%) of religiousness in Belarusian society.

The activity of religious organizations has increased in Belarus in recent years. According to the analytical project “The Index of Civil Society”, volunteerism, as a third sector, is not very popular in Belarusian society. Sociological data reveals that 10% of respondents are engaged volunteer activities under the initiative and under the direction of religious organizations. Muslims seldom volunteer as a matter of practice. Protestant organizations lead in the level of volunteerism⁶⁰.

The activation of the third sector (NGOs and religious organizations) has led to the development of the Eastern Partnership Roadmap for Belarus project “The Right to Freedom of Religion and Beliefs”. The Roadmap is a program of joint activity involving civil society, including religious organizations, and the States for maintaining “religious freedom”. The document is very important, not only inside the country, but also for its international image. The criteria and indicators of performance of Roadmap are the international standards of religious freedom.

The precedent of the joint project of the Roadmap under international standards has allowed a new phenomenon to occur in Belarus, social-church attitudes supporting the partnership between the State and civil society. The Roadmap includes a system for monitoring the condition of religious freedom. It introduces educational courses devoted to religious freedom in the context of human rights into the re-education of officials, law-enforcement, and judicial bodies, and it popularized the idea of tolerance and the values of the historical and cultural religious heritage of the Belarus people.

Educating youth in the values and skills of tolerant behavior is the most important factor for multicultural and multi-religious spaces of Belarus. Nowadays, all textbooks about religions criticize the religious organizations in Belarus. A textbook about religious and cultural diversity in Belarus is very needed in the educational system.

The international standards of UNESCO regarding cultural and historical heritages need to be studied and used in the educational process. According to the OSCE concept of “inter-cultural education” religious education is integrated into the secular humanities (history, philosophy, music, art, literature). The educational initiatives of religious organizations should be considered from the viewpoint of ensuring religious freedom.

The formation of multilateral public-state-church attitudes is occurring in Belarus. Features of the new trend are: a partnership policy and full coordination in working together across sectors; the implementation of national legislation and legal practices maintaining international standards of religious freedom; the protection of the historical and cultural heritage of the people of Belarus; and the regulation of religious life through the law.

History has given chance for Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Muslims, and Jews to meet on the Belarus territory. The ethno-religious heterogeneity of Belarusian society has led to formation of a unique culture, but it has caused the special importance of the state as a guarantor of stability and orders providing tolerant attitudes in the society. The occurrence of the new trend “public-state-church attitudes” has provoked the interest of religious organizations in joint programs of social cooperation to ensure the future of the traditional Belarusian tolerance and multi-religious culture.

⁶⁰ The Index of a Civil Society — <http://civilsociety.blog.tut.by/>

CHAPTER 3

RELIGION ET SOCIÉTÉ DANS LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDAVIE. LES RACINES HISTORIQUES, LES ÉVOLUTIONS ET L'ÉTAT ACTUEL DU DIALOGUE INTERRELIGIEUX ENTRE LE CHRISTIANISME ET L'ISLAM

Emil Dragnev (Moldova)

Parmi les religions mondiales, dans l'espace à l'Est des Carpates, c'est le christianisme qui semble être rependue. Quand même, il reste trop difficile de déterminer les principaux étapes chronologiques dans ce processus, à cause de l'absence des témoins écrits et de la relativité des données archéologiques. En tenant compte, qu'à l'époque du christianisme primitif, cet espace se transforme dans une arène des mouvements des tribus et des peuples, les artefacts archéologiques qui peuvent être attribués au christianisme, ne comportent pas des signes évidents pour les attacher aux représentants concrets. Il semble, qu'ici, les conditions pour l'affirmation constante du christianisme ne s'assurent qu'après la fin du premier vague de la Grande Migration, pendant un long processus de peuplement de ce territoire par les principaux promoteurs de cette religion, la population romanisée.

Il est difficile aussi de dater le commencement des migrations de la population romanisée, d'origine des Dacies romaine, ou même des Balkans (dans la plupart christianisée) vers les régions à l'Est des Carpates. Cette difficulté s'explique par le fait, que cette migration ne se réalise pas par des mouvements significatifs, qui, d'ailleurs, ne sont pas détectables ni dans les sources archéologiques, ni dans la tradition populaire orale. Un trait spécifique du développement d'une population, dont l'occupation principale est celle de pâture, dans une région montagneuse, c'est l'expulsion périodique des surplus démographiques, quand un nombre de famille jeune, quitte leur village natal, en cherchant des nouveaux lieux, capable d'entretenir leur activité vitale.

Dans une perspective historique, il faut tenir compte de l'appartenance de la région comprise entre Carpates, Danube et Dniestr, à l'aire de la civilisation Sud-Est européenne. Les mouvements de population mentionnés, se passent dans le cadre d'une région assez vaste, qui n'englobe pas seulement la région des Carpates, mais aussi la celle des Balkans, où l'élément chrétien, évidemment, a eu une implantation plus profonde. À l'Est des Carpates ont été peuplés surtout les endroits montagneux et boisés, qui couvrent la plupart de la partie du Nord et centrale de la Moldavie historique. Probablement, ce processus a reçu une tendance plus stable après le commencement du VII^e siècle. Quand même, une affirmation constante du christianisme se passe après la christianisation du Premier Tzarat Bulgare est avec l'épanouissement de sa domination politique au Nord du Danube.

Le deuxième vague des migrations (alimenté surtout par des peuples turques) a touché le plus les territoires méridionales des steppes, et s'accomplit avec l'invasion des mongoles-tatars, et l'instauration de leur domination à l'Est des Carpates. Avec l'islamisation des tatars pen-

dent la première moitié du XIV^e siècle (qu'on doit reconnaître comme partielle pour cette période), se passe le premier contact entre le christianisme et l'islam dans l'espace à l'Est des Carpates. Si le pouvoir politique de tatars s'étend sur la plupart du territoire du futur principauté de Moldavie, l'area peuplée par eux, probablement ce limite à la partie du Sud de l'entre fleuve de Prut et Dniestr (avec des centres urbaines comme Le Vieux Orchei, Costechti et autres).

Dans l'un des plus importantes villes de tatars, à Vieux Orchei, on a trouvé une plaque de pierre avec une inscription en arabe, qui témoigne d'une construction de mosquée ici: "Cette mosquée a été ordonnée de bâtir la pieuse et la vertueuse Alich (...) san". Les recherches archéologiques n'ont pas apporté encore la localisation de la mosquée, mais on a trouvé les vestiges de deux mausolées, qui comportent les traits caractéristiques des enterrements musulmans.

Les sources historiques assez lapidaires pour cette époque, ne sont pas capables de nous fournir des informations sur le caractère de relations interreligieuses. Dans la bien connue "Vie de St. Jean le Nouveau" (le saint patron de la Moldavie), l'éparque tatar de la Citadelle Blanche (Cetatea Albă), qui a disposé les supplices de martyr de St. Jean, est présenté comme un païen et pas comme un musulman. La victoire du Grand Duc de la Lituanie Olghert sur les tatars chez les Eaux Bleues (1362/63) a contribué à l'abaissement de leur pouvoir dans la région, et en effet, à l'extension des frontières du principauté de Moldavie vers le Dniestr et la Mer Noire.



Il. 1. St. Jean le Nouveau en face de l'éparque de la Citadelle Blanche. Fragment de la peinture de l'ancien reliquaire, en provenance de l'église de la Métropole St. George de Suceava, fin du XVII^e siècle. Musée Nationale des Beaux-arts, Bucarest.

La politique confessionnelle des princes régnants moldaves a été dépendante, en bonne mesure, des facteurs étrangers. L'orientation vers le catholicisme des princes régnants comme Latzko et, pendant le premier parti du règne, fort probable, Pierre Muchat (qui ne s'accompagne

pas de la même réorientation de leurs sujets), dans les années 70 — première moitié des années 80 du XIV^e siècle, a été déterminé par la nécessité de légitimer le nouveau état, apparu comme résultat de la rupture du lien de vassalité avec la Couronne Hongroise. La légitimation a été obtenue par l'acceptation du patronage de la papauté, en fondant l'évêché de Siret, subordonné directement au Saint-Siège, et en se retirant de la juridiction de la métropole orthodoxe de Chalić. Comme cela, la principauté de Moldavie a été incluse dans le champ du droit de la *Respublica Christiana*.



Ill. 2. L'Église épiscopale de St. Nicolas a Rădăuți, bâtit dans les années 70 du XIV^e siècle pendant le règne du Pierre Muchat, en style gothique et adaptée aux nécessités du culte orthodoxe par la division transversale de l'espace intérieur. Cette église a servi aussi comme nécropole pour la famille princière jusqu'à le règne d'Étienne le Grand (1457–1504).

Ultérieurement, les intérêts politiques des princes régnants de la Moldavie, les rapprochent des ducs de la Lituanie. On suppose, que ce le mariage du frère du prince régnant Pierre Muchat, Roman, avec Anastasie, en provenance du lignée des princes lituanienne de la Podolie, les Koriatović, qui a apporté l'élargissement de la principauté de Moldavie jusqu'au Dniestr et la Mer Noire.

La réorientation définitive vers l'orthodoxie se produit en bonne mesure, grâce à la politique du roi de la Pologne, Wladyslaw Jagellon, à sa volonté de lier la dépendance vassale de la Moldavie, surtout à la Lituanie. Ainsi, l'hommage de vassalité du prince régnant Pierre Muchat, a été effectuée à Lwów (1387), en suivant le rituel orthodoxe, avec le baisement de la Croix, et en présence du Métropolite de Kiev Ciprian. Les causes du conflit avec la Patriarchie de Constantinople, survenu tout de suite, ne sont pas pleinement éclaircies. Il s'a exprimé, dans la non-reconnaissance de la canonicité de consécration des deux évêques moldaves (Joseph et Méthode) et la désignation pour la chaire métropolitaine de Suceava d'un prélat en provenance du clergé de la patriarchie œcuménique, qui, à son tour, n'a pas été acceptée dans la principauté.

Le conflit a été résolu en 1401, pendant le règne d'Alexandre le Bon (1400–1432), avec la reconnaissance de la canonicité de la consécration de l'évêque Joseph, tellement reconnue aussi dans sa qualité de Métropolite de la Moldavie. Pendant la division de la principauté en deux parties par les fils d'Alexandre le Bon, à la sollicitation du prince de la Pays Bas, Étienne le II^e, a été fondée encore une éparchie, avec une chaire métropolitaine, à Roman (1436), mais soumis à la Métropole de Suceava (Pays Haute).

Après la chute de Constantinople en 1453, on a suspendu toute relation avec la patriarchie de Constantinople, parce que la dernière a été traitée comme un institution de l'Empire Ottoman. Après la réactivation de l'ancien évêché de Rădăuți, et la fondation d'un nouveau, à Vad (dans les possessions transylvaniennes d'Étienne le Grand), a issu une sys-

tème d'organisation ecclésiastique assez auto-suffisante. Même, après le rétablissement des relations avec la Patriarchie de Constantinople, après 1538, malgré la soumission formelle à la juridiction patriarcale, l'Église Moldave a été *de facto*, autocéphale.

Le nombre de quatre prélats (après la perte des possessions transylvaniennes, et puis du contrôle sur la désignation de l'évêque de Vad, en 1598, sur le territoire du Principauté de Moldavie a été fondé l'évêché de Huși) permettait d'investir les évêques aux chaires vacantes, sans appeler aux autorités ecclésiastiques au-dehors du pays. En même temps, la présence d'un deuxième métropolitain à Roman, dépendant du métropolitain de Suceava, donnait la possibilité au prince, en conformité avec l'accord de Stoudion de 1380, en cas de vacance du siège du chef de l'Église Moldave, de nommer à sa place le métropolitain de Roman, en évitant la procédure de son élection par le Synode de la Patriarchie œcuménique. Vers la fin du XVI^e siècle, on a essayé d'obtenir le rang de patriarcat, mais ce seulement le rang d'archevêque qui a été reçu, analogue à ce d'Ochride. La titulature d'archevêque a été utilisée par les métropolitains moldaves jusqu'au milieu du XVII^e siècle.



Ill. 3. L'archevêque et le métropolitain de la Moldavie, George Movila (1588–1591; 1595–1605) dans la scène de la Liturgie Divine. Fresque de l'église du monastère de Sucevița (env. 1596).

Pendant la durée du Moyen Âge et le commencement des temps modernes, la politique confessionnelle de l'état se caractérise par une tolérance pragmatique. Généralement, les représentants des autres confession/religions que les chrétiennes orthodoxes, occupent dans le système de l'économie urbaine du pays une place significative, dont, le développement de laquelle, était toujours une priorité pour le pouvoir central. Ça a déterminé la disponibilité de ce pouvoir, de leur offrir tous les droits pour les institutions ecclésiastiques, surtout pour les catholiques et les arméniens. C'est aussi significatif, que le prince régnant de la Moldavie a accepté recevoir sous son patronage les hussites émigrés du royaume de l'Hongrie, en plus parts, des artisans.

Dans la même époque, les relations avec l'islam, généralement, ont eu un caractère externe, plus exactement, sur la voie de l'évolution des relations politiques et économiques avec l'Empire Ottoman. Tandis que, au cours d'une époque presque quatre-centenaire (à partir du milieu du XV^e siècle) ces relations ont évolué vers un agrandissement de la

dépendance de principauté de Moldavie (à l'exception de la période qui commence dans la dernière décennie du XVIII^e siècle), le maintien de l'administration autonome du principauté, a exclus les moments de confrontations interreligieuses. Dans la littérature polémique, les écrits anti-islamiques, n'occupe pas une place plus importante que les traités contre les "hérésies" des latins (catholiques), protestants, arméniens et hébreux (même peut être plus modeste).

Il est à mentionner, qu'à l'exception des traités polémiques spéciales, dans lesquelles l'islam est défini comme une "croyance mahométane", dans les autres sources écrites, des notions comme "musulman" ou "mahométan", sont pratiquement absentes. Dans les textes de l'époque, quand il s'agit des musulmans en général, sans une concrétisation ethnique, on utilise des notions liées à la généalogie biblique: ismaélites ou hagareniens. Dans les fresques médiévales du Jugement Dernier, les turques et les tatars musulmans sont placés parmi les autres nations-confessions (hébreux, latins=catholiques, arméniens, éthiopiens etc.).



Ill. 4. Fragment de la scène du Jugement Dernier des peintures murales de l'église du monastère de Voronetz (1547). Dans le registre des nations au Jugement sont représentés les hébreux, les turques, les tatars, les arméniens et les éthiopiens.



Ill. 5. Fragment du registre des peuples au Jugement Dernier des peintures murales de l'église du monastère Moldovitz (1537) ou sont représenté les turques a côté des latins (=catholiques).

Dans la perspective eschatologique, au moins jusqu'à la fin du XVIe siècle, était maintenue la vision sur le lien direct entre l'expansion de l'islam et les événements apocalyptiques. Les terreurs apparus en Moldavie avec l'ascension au pouvoir du sultan Selim, et avec ça, la possibilité de la transformation du principauté en pachalik, dans l'écrit qui porte le titre *Les Empereurs chrétiens* (env. 1515), ont été transposés dans le champs des inquiétudes eschatologiques sur l'avènement de l'Antéchrist.

En plan général, on constate une sorte d'équilibre, dans lequel l'islam, en restant dans la vision de l'église moldave une fausse religion des infidèles et de se point de vue, condamnable, mais dans le domaine politique, il est aperçu comme une réalité, qui réclame a construire des relations. D'un part, l'intransigeance dans le domaine de la croyance est toujours conséquente: tellement, le prince Elie Rarech qui s'est converti a l'islam, a été soumis a un *damnatio memoriae*. D'autre part, la tradition historiographique témoigne une attitude tout a fait pragmatique au sujet de l'Empire Ottoman. On peut se souvenir de l'exemple de la tradition, consignée par Jean Neculce (réellement une tradition et pas un fait historique), sur ledit testament politique d'Etienne le Grand, selon lequel, a l'impossibilité de défendre son indépendance avec l'épée, il faut se soumettre au turques, qui sont plus forte et plus sage que les autres.

A l'exception des régions qui ont été gouverné directement par l'administration ottomane (le sud de l'interfluve entre Prut et Dniestr, et en XVIIIe siècle la région d'Hotin), ou les celles peuplés par les tatars (la steppe de Bugeac), selon les traites toujours renouvelés entre le Principauté de Moldavie et la Porte Ottomane, les turques n'ont pas eu le droit de s'établir dans le Principauté, et donc, tant plus, il ne peut pas s'agir de construction des mosquée.



Ill. 6. Dans la Citadelle Blanche, qui après 1484 été administré directement par les turcs, du complexe de la mosquée n'a pas resté que le minaret.

Evidement, l'église orthodoxe moldave a eu une position privilégiée dans le Principauté, ce que étaient en plein contraste avec les limites qu'on lui a imposées dans le Balkans, surtout dans les localités de cohabitation des chrétiens et des musulmans. Apres les guerres russes-ottomanes du dernier quart du XVIIIe — commencement du XIXe siècles, la population musulmane du Sud de l'interfluve entre Prut et Dniestr a quitté ces régions.



Ill. 7. Tellement est l'aspect des églises édifiées sur le territoire du Principauté de Moldavie, après l'instauration de la suzeraineté ottomane (l'église du monastère Moldovitz, fondée en 1535 et couvrit des peintures a l'intérieur et a l'extérieur en 1537).



Ill. 8. L'église de la Dormition, édifiées en 1763–1767 a Căuchani — centre politique des tatares de Bugeac. comme dans les multiples cas analogique dans les Balkans, les églises ne peuvent pas être construite plus haute que les maisons simples, et a l'extérieur, me doive pas trahir son destination de culte (le petite tour au-dessous de l'autel a été ajuté après 1812).

Avec l'incorporation de l'interfluve entre Prut et Dniestr (territoire qui a pris le noms de Bessarabie) dans l'Empire Russe (1812), les relations interreligieuse et interconfessionnelles dans ce espace, ont été réglementés par la législation et la pratique. Principalement, il s'agit de la règlementations des relations avec les représentants des autres confessions chrétienne (en excluent l'orthodoxie dominante) et les juifs, parce que les musulmans n'habite plus dans ce espace. Une situation analogique peut être enregistrée et ultérieurement, quand la Bessarabie a fait parti de la Roumanie et puis, de l'URSS.



Ill. 9. La Cathédrale de la Metropole Orthodoxe de la Moldavie (au temps soviétique — transformée dans une sale d'expositions), 1836, arch. A. Melnikov.

En ce qui concerne la dernière période mentionne, sans s'approfondir dans les détails de la bien connus politique soviétique dans les domaines des religions et des cultes, il faut mentionnes un nombre des particularités. Elle diffère des périodes antérieures par l'apparition dans la République Moldave, en conséquences des divers processus de migration dans les limites de l'URSS, des représentants des peuples qui pratique l'islam. Ces sont surtout les représentants des peuples de l'Asie Centrales, les azéris, les tatares et autres.



Il. 10. En absence des édifices de culte musulmane, quand même, l'architecture de Chișinău n'est pas étrange à l'influence de l'architecture islamique orientale, comme le témoigne par exemple l'édifice du Musée National de l'Ethnographie et des Sciences de la Nature (construit en 1903–1906, arch. Vl. Tziganko).

En même temps, dans les conditions respectives de la politique religieuse des autorités soviétiques, bien sûr, il ne peut pas s'agir de la formation des quelconques communautés sur des fondements confessionnelles, et, tant plus, de la légitimation officielle de leurs culte et l'édification des mosquées. Néanmoins, on peut constater un certains sorte de "faire connaissance", au niveaux de la vie quotidienne avec l'islam. Ça se passe aussi comme résultat de l'expérience de l'habitation temporaire des originaires de la RSS de Moldavie dans les régions avec une population musulmane prépondérante.

Cette connaissance, se produis, pourtant, dans les limites d'un soi-disant syncrétisme ethno-confessionnelle, sous la modalité de réceptions des coutumes nationales, qui contiens, en quelque mesure, des éléments de la foi islamique. Tout comme dans l'espace entier de l'URSS, en Moldavie, un certain rejaillissement de l'intérêt pour l'islam, se produit avec le commencement de la guerre en Afghanistan. Les militaires démobilisés, en rentrant chez leurs maisons, ont apporté des nouvelles impressions sur le monde islamique, évidemment, dans les limites de l'expérience disponible.

Après la Déclaration de l'Indépendance, l'état et la société de la Moldavie, arrive dans une situation qui réclame la construction d'une système des relations interreligieuses et interconfessionnelles, dans un nouveau état des choses. On peut caractériser ses nouvelles conditions dans la perspective suivante: d'un part, l'obtention de l'indépendance et, premièrement, les transformations démocratique, ont été aperçue comme une possibilité de renaissance pour l'église orthodoxe et de s'affirmer dans un nouvelle rôle dans la société. La renaissance national-culturelle, a été vue dans une liaison indissoluble avec la celle religieuse, et, spécialement, la celle orthodoxe.

Mais, d'autre part, il fallait tenir compte de l'universalité des normes démocratique, de la nécessité de concordance entre la pratique et la loi. Dans cette instance, la société n'a pas été toujours prêt de reconnaître que la liberté pour l'orthodoxie, dans la même mesure signifie et la liberté pour tous les autres confessions et religions. Et avant tout, la nouvelle situation a été un examen sérieux pour l'église orthodoxe, qui, a été tentée de convertir sa prépondérance absolu en un statut privilégié par rapporte aux autres con-

fessions. En même temps, l'état, dans les conditions de la concurrence démocratique, en tenant compte du poids de l'autorité de l'église orthodoxe, qui, d'une façon assez stable, occupe la première place dans les sondages, parmi les institutions avec le plus haut degré de confiance, assez souvent, se trouve dans la captivité de la paradigme électorale. Ça a eu une répercussion sur l'attitude à l'égard de l'islam, et plus concrètement, par rapport à sa légalisation.

Table 1.

Les religions et les confessions dans la République de Moldavie selon les données du recensement de 2004 (sans les données sur les districts de la rive gauche de Dniestr)

| | Religion/confession | Les pratiquants en chiffres absolus | Les pourcents par rapport à nombre totale des répondants (3 383 332) |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Orthodoxes | 3 158 015 | 93,3390 |
| 2 | Orthodoxes d'ancien rite (vieux-croyant, <i>staroobruadtsy</i>) | 5 094 | 0,1505 |
| 3 | Catholiques | 4 645 | 0,1372 |
| 4 | L'Eglise Reformée | 1 190 | 0,0351 |
| 5 | Évangélistes confessionnels | 1 429 | 0,0422 |
| 6 | Évangélistes synodaux-presbytériens | 3 596 | 0,1062 |
| 7 | Baptistes | 32 754 | 0,9680 |
| 8 | Pentecôtistes | 9 179 | 0,2713 |
| 9 | Adventistes du septième jour | 13 503 | 0,3991 |
| 10 | Chrétiennes évangélistes | 5 075 | 0,1500 |
| 11 | Musulmans | 1 667 | 0,0492 |
| 12 | Autres religions/confessions | 25 527 | 0,7544 |
| 13 | Athées | 12 724 | 0,3760 |
| 14 | Sans religion | 33 207 | 0,9814 |
| 15 | "Non-déclarés" | 75 727 | 2,2382 |

La première association culturelle islamique, "As-selam" a été fondée en 1994, et ne s'est proposé encore le but de légalisation officielle du culte, mais surtout des objectifs d'illumination culturelle. La tentative de légaliser le culte, a été réalisée le 25 juillet 2000, par la Direction Spirituelle des Musulmans de la République de Moldavie, mais tout est finit avec les refus d'enregistrement officiel. La décision des autorités moldave a été confirmée par la CEDH (Cour européenne des droits de l'homme) en 2002, en raison de l'absence du certificat sur les principes fondamentaux de leurs religions.

Aussi sans réussite a été la tentative d'enregistrement de la communauté islamique (la Direction Spirituelle des Musulmans de la République de Moldavie, sous la direction de Talgat Masaev) le 11 juillet 2005, et puis, le 28 juillet 2006. L'appellation a OSCE n'a pas apporté aucune résultat. L'Officier de presse de l'OSCE Claus Neukirch a déclaré, que l'appellation de l'ambassadeur William Hill au Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de la Moldavie a resté sans aucune réponse.

L'enregistrement du culte islamique a été réalisé, quand même, le 14 mars 2011, au moment quand le Ministère de Justice a légalisé la Ligue Islamique de la République de Moldavie (LIRM), qui se positionne en qualité d'un institution qui assure l'unité des associations islamiques dans la République de Moldavie, en essayant de représenter leurs intérêts a

l'étranger. Selon les objectifs annoncés, la LIRM orientera son activité dans la direction de la consolidation de relations entre différentes associations musulmane ethno- religieuse, de satisfaire les nécessités pour la pratique du culte (constructions du mosquée), de clôturer les associations musulmanes face à l'influence des éléments extrémistes, etc.

L'absence de l'expérience dans le problème des relations interreligieuses, la situation politique interne pleine des tensions, aggravé par les tentations d'utiliser le facteur ethno-confessionnel dans les intérêts politiques, ont alourdi la solution des problèmes dans ce domaine. En même temps, tous les "acteurs", qui doivent assurer la coexistence harmonieuse des différentes religions et confessions dans une société, en mesure égale, ont démontré qu'ils ne sont pas tout à fait prêts pour accomplir cette mission. L'état, après une longue tergiversation, a résolu en fin l'aspect juridique de ce problème. Mais, il nous semble, qu'il ne dispose pas d'un programme élaboré dans cette direction, en agissant selon le principe de résoudre les problèmes du moment qu'ils sont apparus (et pas toujours avec l'opérativité nécessaire).

L'église orthodoxe, en personne de la Métropole de la Moldavie, a réagi assez douloureusement à l'égard de l'officialisation du culte islamique. De sa part, la LIRM, n'a pas assuré aussi le support informationnel et idéologique de ce acte.

Ainsi, sur le site "L'Islam en Moldavie", on ne trouve aucune information à l'égard des musulmans et de leurs associations dans la République de Moldavie, la plupart du matériel disponible ici en étant consacré aux questions de la foi. Il existe sur ce site un rubrique qui porte le titre — "Lettre aux chrétiens", mais contrairement aux attentes, il ne s'agit pas ici d'un appel au collaboration, à l'estime réciproque etc. On trouve à cette place, exclusivement les démonstrations de la contestation de la divinité de Jésus. Seulement deux mois après la légalisation de la LIRM, pendant une émission télévisé sur le canal "TV7", on a éclairci, que ce site, ne leur appartient pas. Cette émission, de même comme une autre, sur le canal "PublicaTV", dans lesquelles ont pris part des représentants de l'église orthodoxe, de la LIRM, de la société civile, du Ministère de Justice et autres, ont mis en évidence plusieurs moments d'incompréhension, mais, en même temps, ont contribué à leur élimination. De cette perspective, il faut se mettre la question, si un nombre de telles émissions serait plutôt bienvenues avant l'officialisation du culte islamique en Moldavie?

Dans cette situation, l'élaboration des programmes didactiques, à tous les niveaux, concernant l'instruction dans le domaine de la problématique religieuse en général, et des relations interreligieuses en particulier, la réalisation des divers projets et activités sur cette voie, sont nécessaires pas seulement pour la constructions des bonnes stratégies étatiques, mais aussi pour préparer la société de les réceptionner de façon adéquate, et en même temps, d'effectuer les pressions indispensables sur les structures d'état.

Sur cette voie, on peut mentionner, quelques changements dans les programmes et les manuels scolaires. Notamment, dans le manuel d'Histoire pour le 6^e-ème années, dans le thème *Les Arabes du VI^e au XI^e siècles*, sont présentés des séquences sur la foi islamique et dans le manuel pour le 10^e-ème années, a été inclus le thème de généralisation — *La religion islamique*. Les programmes et les manuels du cours d'*Histoire des religions*, pour le cycle lycéen, sont en états d'élaboration. L'introduction de ce cours aura une grande importance, en ce qui concerne le niveau de l'auditoire visé, en tenant compte que dans les programmes des établissements d'enseignement supérieure, des cours sur l'histoire des religions, l'histoire des peuples islamiques et de l'islam en particulier, sont prévues

seulement pour les facultés d'histoire de l'Université d'Etat de Moldavie et l'Université Pédagogique d'Etat "I. Creangă".

En se basant sur les institutions d'état et les organisations de la société civile, il faut créer un espace média spéciale pour le dialogue entre le christianisme et l'islam dans la République de Moldavie, dans lequel, parmi les informations positives sur tout les deux religions, la pratique d'interaction et du dialogue, sera très utile de réaliser un travail d'orientation dans la navigation sur l'Internet, pour mettre en évidence les *sites* crédibles et en attentionnent sur les *sites* provocatrices (entièrement ou en contiennent des telles informations). La méconnaissance dans ce domaine donne possible l'exploitation abusive de ces *sites*, qui se réclame comme exposants du point de vue général de l'islam sur un nombre des problèmes. Par exemples, sur le *site* UmmaNews.com on peut lire l'affirmation suivante: "Nous rappelons qu'avant la désagrégation du Khalifat Ottomane, la Moldavie a fait parti de lui, et c'est pourquoi, la transmission du pouvoir dans ce pays dans les mains des musulmans est une obligation de même façon, comme le rétablissement de la suprématie du Charriât, par exemple, au Caucase". C'est facile de s'imaginer, que les envois a cette affirmation on été déjà utilisés par ceux qui ont une position radicale dans la problème de la légalisation de l'islam dans la République de Moldavie, en réclament son abolition ou révision. De ce point de vue, il est trop opportun un travail de nettoyage de l'espace pollué de l'Internet, et de fournir des informations précis pour les utilisateurs.

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CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND, PROBLEMS, AND PROSPECTS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN AZERBAIJAN

Hidayat Orudjev (Azerbaijan)

Throughout its centuries-old history, the territory of present Azerbaijan has always been a multi-confessional and poly-religious region of the world. In various periods, one religious belief was replaced by others. Originally pagan religions dominated. Subsequently, the most established religions were Zoroastrianism and Christianity. Eventually, Islam became the most widely-spread religion.

As in the whole South Caucasus region, the first missionaries of Christianity appeared in the territory of present Azerbaijan about 1900 years ago. Christianity was the dominant religion in Azerbaijani Albania, where the first Christians appeared in the first centuries of the Christian era. According to a church legend, one of the 12 apostles of Christ Bartholomew preached here. He was killed in the town of Albana, the location of which is controversial⁶¹. According to another version of the legend, he preached and was killed in the territory of present Baku, but this is not confirmed by any facts. According to church legend, other well-known saints of the early church, in addition to Bartholomew, were active in the Southern Caucasus: Andrew, Matthew, Jude Thaddeus, and Elisha. Poly-ethnicity, the absence of a single religion, and the coarse paganism of the local population favored the spread of Christianity in Azerbaijani Albania. In that period the ruler of the country, Urnair (III-VI centuries), adopted Christianity from the Parthian Gregory the Illuminator⁶². The sermon of Gregory the Illuminator played a role in spreading Christianity in the entire Mediterranean region and Middle East. Urnair wanted to unite the country consisting of different tribes, as well as resist the Zoroastrian Persia by means of the new faith.

The foundations of the Albanian church were laid down at the same time with the spread of Christianity. According to church legend, Grigoris — the grandson of St. Gregory the Illuminator — was among the leaders of the church. In the subsequent centuries, the Albanian Christians faced attempts by Persian kings, under whose influence they were, to impose the Zoroastrian religion. During certain periods there were even revolts against the Persians. Eventually the Persians ceased their attempts to eradicate Christianity in the South Caucasus. It is also known that beginning with the VI century the Albanian church was Monophysitic, although later, the church inclined toward Byzantine Orthodoxy, depending on the political processes⁶³.

⁶¹ Варфоломей // Православная Энциклопедия (под редакцией Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Кирилла). Т. 6. С. 706–711.

⁶² Моисей Казанкатвацци. История агван. Кн. I. Гл. 14. СПб., 1861.

⁶³ Иеромонах Алексий (Никоноров). История христианства в Кавказской Албании. Гл. VI. Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата богословия. Сергиев Посад, Троице-Сергиева Лавра. 2004.

After the conquest of South Caucasus by Arabs in the 7–8th centuries, the region became a scene of confrontation between the Byzantine Empire and Caliphate. The Caliphate supported the Monophysitic church against the Orthodoxy that dominated in the Byzantine Empire. The attempt by the Albanian Catholicos Nerses Baur to make the Albanian church Orthodox was stopped by the advocates of Monophysitism, supported by Arabs. They sought to prevent the strengthening of Orthodoxy, as it was a religion of their enemies — the Byzantine Empire. Thus, Arabs promoted the subordination of the Albanian church to the Armenian church by supporting the latter.

As a result the Albanian church was joined to the Armenian one⁶⁴. At the same time, the process of Armenization of Albanian tribes was in progress. This process was also favorable for and encouraged by the Caliphate⁶⁵. After the Arab conquest of Albania the majority of the population gradually converted to Islam. Christianity continued mainly in the mountainous regions where the power of the Caliphate was relatively weak. On the other hand, the position and influence of the Albanian church was weakened by Arab support of the Armenian church⁶⁶. However, the Albanian church survived and even expanded its influence during the periods of weakening of the Armenian church. In the 13th century, the Gandzasar cloister in Karabakh became the center of the Albanian church.

In 1836, after the conquest of South Caucasus by the Russian Empire, by the decision of tsar Nikolai I and the Holy Synod, the Albanian church was joined to the Armenian church. Currently, Udines residing in the Gabala region of Azerbaijan consider themselves to be direct heirs of the Albanian church. They resisted Armenization and Grigorianization. In 1867, they wrote a protest letter to the Russian authorities. They stopped going their churches and began to pray at home. Further, some of them had to leave Karabakh and settled in the Gabala region where they managed to remain as a nation. They have been trying to restore the old heritage of the Albanian Church and recently began working to regain the status of an autocephalous church. The official registration of the Albano-Udin Christian Community of the Azerbaijan Republic is one step towards that goal⁶⁷.

In the course of 19th and 20th centuries, the Russian empire and the Soviet Union actively changed the ethnic composition of the population of South Caucasus as Armenians from Turkey, Iran, and Arab countries⁶⁸, on whom they staked their future in the political confrontation with neighboring countries and other Christian nations⁶⁹ were transplanted to the region. Active Christian missionary work was implemented among the Muslim population and temples were built. In 1860, the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus” was established in Tiflis⁷⁰.

⁶⁴ *Мовсес Каланкатуаци*. История страны Алуанк. Перевод Смбатяна Ш. В. Кн. III, гл. 8. Ереван, 1984.

⁶⁵ *Иеромонах Алексей (Никоноров)*. История христианства в Кавказской Албании. Гл. VI. Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата богословия. Сергиев Посад, Троице-Сергиева Лавра. 2004. — http://baku.eparhia.ru/history/albania/viii_centure/

⁶⁶ *Мобили Р. Б.* Албанская церковь и армянская фальсификация. Сайт Албано-удинской Христианской Общины Азербайджанской Республики. — <http://udi.az/articles/3.html>

⁶⁷ *Мобили Р. Б.* Албанская церковь и армянская фальсификация. Сайт Албано-удинской Христианской Общины Азербайджанской Республики. — <http://udi.az/articles/3.html>

⁶⁸ *Шавров Н.* Новая угроза русскому делу в Закавказье: предстоящая распродажа Мугани инородцам. СПб, 1911. С. 59–60.

⁶⁹ *Грибоедов А. С.* Записка о переселении армян из Персии в наши области // *Грибоедов А. С.* Полное собрание сочинений. Т. 3. Пг., 1917. С. 267–270.

⁷⁰ *Лилов И.* Деятельность общества восстановления православного христианства на Кавказе за 1860–1870 гг. Тифлис, 1871.

This increased the percentage of the Christian population and led to further ethnic conflicts in this region. The policy of changing the ethnic picture of the South Caucasus Region continued in the Soviet period⁷¹. It was this policy that led to bloody conflicts which have not stopped thus far after the disintegration of the USSR. Nevertheless, the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia has rather more political hidden motives, than religious.

Authorities of modern Azerbaijan have established in the country equal living and development conditions for all nations. By the way, the Armenian Church in the center of Baku is remains safe and sound, as do other Christian communities functioning, developing, and missioning here.

At present, representations of various Christian confessions exist in Azerbaijan. Orthodoxy is the largest Christian community of Azerbaijan. The Baku-Caspian eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, established in 1905, is located in Baku. There is also representation of the Catholic Church in Baku. From the 18th century until the beginning of the 20th century, Catholics had their representations here. After the restoration of independence in Azerbaijan, Catholicism was restored in the country. Also after the restoration of independence, a number of Protestant churches passed state registration and began to function here.

After the Arab conquest of the territories of present Azerbaijan, Muslims long represented the minority of the population. They were mainly Arabs⁷². Islam was first adopted by the population in the south of Azerbaijan. By the end of the 8th century, the south was completely Muslim⁷³.

In the north of Azerbaijan, with its dominant Christian population, the spread of Islam progressed slowly. However, already in 9th century there were the first signs of the mass nature of the process⁷⁴.

Beginning with the period of Arab conquest, Azerbaijan entered the Caliphate. However, as the Caliphate grew weak, first Muslim states, the earliest of which was the State of Shirvan-shakhs (799–1539), began to arise in the territory of present Azerbaijan. All Azerbaijani states initially were mainly Sunni.

Shiism began to dominate in the territory of the present Azerbaijan after the rise of Safavis. They put an end to all the other states existing here. During this period, the entire territory was involved in a devastating war between the Safavis and the Ottoman Empire. Both sides used the religious factor and, from the ideological point of view, it was a Shiite-Sunni confrontation. This inter-confessional confrontation continued after the breakup of the Safavi state. However, later, there emerged a number of small confronting khanates (principalities)⁷⁵. Their conflicts did not have an actual religious component.

In the 19th century, as a result of the Russian-Iranian war (1804–1813), a significant part of the territory of Northern Azerbaijan was conquered by Russia, which ended the independence of the khanates. In this period, certain changes took place in religious life. In 1872,

⁷¹ Совет министров СССР. Постановление № 4083 от 23 декабря 1947 года. Москва, Кремль. О переселении колхозников и другого азербайджанского населения из Армянской ССР в Кура-Араксинскую низменность Азербайджанской ССР.

⁷² *Azərbaycan tarixi üzrə qaynaqlar*. Bakı, 1989, с. 75.

⁷³ Там же, с. 75.

⁷⁴ Мирза Джамал Джеваншир Карабагский. История Карабага. Баку, 1959. С. 64.

⁷⁵ *Мустафаев Ш.* Восточная Анатолия от Ак-Коюнлу к Османской империи. М., 1994. С. 38–69.

Shiah and Sunni Administrations were established, which administered all the works related with Muslims. They were located in Tiflis. Shiahs were headed by a sheikh-ul-Islam, Sunnites by muftis.

The major challenge for Russian authorities was caused by the dependence of Shiah believers in the Southern Caucasus on the supreme Iranian religious figures. In 1823, by decree of Russian authorities, the position of the shaykh-ul-islam of Shiahs of Caucasus was established. The position of the supreme mufti of Sunnites of the South Caucasus was established in 1832. During that, the Sunni-Shiah tension continued and Russian authorities skillfully used this factor in their Caucasus policy against Ottoman Turkey and Iran.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a growing national consciousness, the formation of a Muslim national bourgeoisie, and significant economic changes were underway in the territory of northern Azerbaijan. There began the movement of Azerbaijani educators, many of whom were educated in Russia and Europe. Secular trends and intensified calls for access to European values strengthened the general decline of Muslim countries and societies. The traditional Muslim way of life was criticized in newspapers and magazines, published then in Turkish. At the same time, there was a struggle for equalization of rights of Muslims with Christians, for the representation of Muslims in government⁷⁶.

At the same time a number of non-Islamic sects initiated activities among the Muslim population of Azerbaijan. Events that took place in Iran lead to the activation of the babids sect in Azerbaijan, along with Christian missionaries. Their communities existed in many regions of Azerbaijan up to Stalin's repressions of 1930s. They revived and continue to exist in the country even in the present time.

After the announcement of Azerbaijan's independence in 1918, representatives of the Muslim Religious Board of Caucasus moved to Baku where a single religious Board was established, on which Shiah sheikh-ul-islam and Sunni mufti of Azerbaijan had equal rights. In 1920, after the establishment of soviet power in Azerbaijan, the Board was eliminated by Bolshevik authorities, and the affairs of Muslims of Azerbaijan were transferred to the Central Religious Administration of Muslims (CRAM), located in Ufa.

From this moment of the establishment of soviet power in Azerbaijan, communists began a systematic struggle against the influence of Islam, which gradually led to the fall of the prestige of Islam in the society of Azerbaijan. Within the first of ten- years of Soviet occupation in Azerbaijan, there was created a special public organization for the struggle against religion "Society of militant atheist", and Sharia-based courts and study in Islamic schools (medrese) were eliminated. Travels of pilgrims to hajj in Mecca were prohibited, mosques were closed, and their buildings were destroyed. At the same time, throughout the Republic there was launched a campaign aimed at raising women's status and activeness. In 1929 the Arabic alphabet, which had been used by Muslims of Azerbaijan during several centuries, was abolished. In 1920–1930, repressions against Muslim clergy were carried out. Thus, Islam was ousted from all the spheres of social life.

This situation continued until World War II, when it became clear that the negative attitude toward religion could be used effectively as a German propaganda tool in the war against the Soviet Union. As a result, a number of atheistic organizations were closed, and there began a certain process of involving Muslim religious figures into social life. In 1944, the Muslim

⁷⁶ Али-заде А. А. Распространение и развитие ислама в Азербайджане // Ислам в СНГ. Ежеквартальный научный альманах. 2010, №1, С. 65. Сеидзаде Д. Азербайджанские депутаты в Государственной Думе России. Баку, 1991, С. 27.

Spiritual Board of Transcaucasia was established in Baku. The Board chairmanship was assigned to a Shiah, with a Sunni deputy who had almost complete freedom from the chairman, except for economic matters. This structure of religious administration continues today. The activity of the board, as well as all religious life in Azerbaijan, was under the strict control of authorities. Further, previously closed mosques were permitted to open. At that time, about twenty mosques functioned in Azerbaijan and there were a number of religious figures. Muslims were permitted to travel to haj and other holy places; however the number of pilgrims was restricted.

In postwar years until the 1990s, religious policy toward Islam varied depending on the situation and time. As a whole, the policy of radical secularism continued. The subject of atheism was still studied in school just before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Public lectures and events related to atheism were conducted. Religion existed within mosques, but there were not any religious schools.

During the last years of the soviet regime in Azerbaijan, the interest in Islam began to increase. However, as before, Islam did not have an active influence on the social life of the Azerbaijan people. The religiousness of the population remained at the level at which it was in previous years.

However, since the restoration of independence, the situation has significantly changed. New mosques were built, religious schools were created, and theological faculties were established in universities. Muslim preachers were permitted to conduct religious propaganda. Muslim youths began to observe the Islamic way of life and to comply with its basic provisions. Despite the fact that atheism had become unpopular, the religiosity of the population remained rather more declarative than real.

As in the previous centuries, “practicing” Muslims in Azerbaijan are divided into Shiah and Sunni. The north of Azerbaijan continues to remain predominantly Sunni, while the south is predominantly Shiite. Most of Azerbaijan’s Sunnis are Hanafis, but there are also Shaafais. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, foreign Muslim missionaries, mainly Iranian, Turkish and Arabic became active in Azerbaijan. Arab missionaries brought another branch of Sunni Islam — Salafism. However, in recent years, the activity of foreign Muslim missionaries in Azerbaijan has been reduced due to state policy. At the same time, it should be noted that there no prospects for the activation of political Islam in Azerbaijan, although this phenomenon exists in neighboring countries.

At present, the Muslim Spiritual Board of Caucasus continues to function in Azerbaijan. The following religious organizations also operate in the country: the Orthodox religious community of the Baku-Caspian Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Religious Community of European Jews, the Religious Community of Mountain Jews, the Religious Community of the Roman Catholic Church, the Religious Community of Christian Baptists of Baku, the Seventh-day Adventists, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Baku Society of Krishna Consciousness, Bahaites, the Religious Community of Lutheran Evangelists or Lutherans, etc. In 2001, a new central executive body was created — the State Committee for Work with Religious Associations. The Aim of the committee is to observe the articles of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic on religious freedom, to create appropriate conditions for the implementation of religious policy, settle relations between the state and religion, control the execution of legislative acts related to the freedom of religion, ensure a relationship between the central and local executive bodies in this area, and to settle other issues related to the scope of relations between state and religion.

The presence of various religious communities and confessions in the territory of modern Azerbaijan used to cause problems. Historically, there have been periods of religious and sectarian conflicts, and periods of peaceful coexistence and cooperation. During the period of Christian domination, there were serious tensions and conflicts between the Council of Chalcedon and non-Chalcedon movements, which finally led to the strengthening of the non-Chalcedon church. In those years, there were no foundations for peaceful coexistence and interaction of different confessions. In various regions of the Christian world the pre-Christian culture was violently destroyed, as the new religion was propagated. Further, in the Caucasus there were attempts of forced conversion of Christians to Zoroastrianism and reverse anti-Zoroastrianism actions against Christians⁷⁷.

The model of peaceful coexistence of religions was developed and applied for the first time after the spread of Islam. It constituted a qualitatively new stage in inter-civilizational interaction which was favorable for the peaceful coexistence of different religions and civilizations under certain conditions. Despite the fact this was achieved under Muslim domination, it was the first attempt to establish inter-religious peace and peaceful coexistence. The scheme was simple: payment of a special tax for protection by Muslims. Early Arab chronicles report that Muslim commanders concluded such agreements with the local Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish populations of Azerbaijan⁷⁸.

For many centuries, the non-Muslim population peacefully coexisted with the Muslim population under their patronage and continued to profess non-Muslim beliefs. At the same time, there were also periods of conflicts and confrontations, especially in periods of weakening power among Muslim rulers, internal strife, and external aggression.

Inter-confessional peace in the territory of Azerbaijan was broken during the Ottoman-Safavi conflict. Shiah-Sunni conflicts led to a number of tragedies, struggles, and riots⁷⁹. The territory of Azerbaijan was devastated by the war. Naturally during this period the sufferers included representatives of other religion.

At the beginning of the 18th century, by the initiative of Nadir-shah Afshar, there was an attempt to end the Sunni-Shiah conflict. Particularly, a suggestion was made to recognize the Shiite branch of Islam as one of the orthodox directions. In the territory of the empire of Nadir-shah, which included the main part of the territory of South Caucasus, it was forbidden to curse the first three Righteous caliphs⁸⁰. However, the Turkish side refused to recognize the Shiites as equals of the Sunnis. Despite the failure of this initiative, it was the first step toward further Shiite-Sunni dialogue, which was continued in subsequent centuries to the present.

After the Russian-Iranian and Russo-Turkish wars of the early 19th century, South Caucasus was joined to the Russian Empire, after which the Muslim majority of the region began to lose its dominant position in the region. For many decades, deportations of peoples were conducted and non-Muslim ethnic groups moved into Caucasus, artificially changing the demographics. Under such conditions, the Muslims had to fight for their rights. However, numerous revolts were suppressed.

⁷⁷ *Мовсес Каланкатуацци*. История страны Алуанк. Кн. II, гл. 2. Ереван, 1984.

⁷⁸ *Йакут ал-Хамави*. Муджам ал-Будан. Т. 5. Каир, 1906. С. 325–326.

⁷⁹ *Мустафаев Ш.* Восточная Анатолия от Ак-Коюнлу к Османской империи. М., 1994. С. 36.

⁸⁰ Указ Надир-шаха о почитании четырех праведных халифов // Краткие сообщения института народов Азии, № 39. Иранский сборник. М., 1963.

Interreligious and inter-confessional relations also underwent substantial changes. The Muslim system of paying taxes for immunity was completely eliminated. Muslims themselves became the minority in the empire.

At the same time, to maintain and strengthen their power in the region, Russian authorities relied on the Muslim elite and the clergy. In addition to the policy of ethnic change in the South Caucasus region, missionary activity was conducted among Muslims. The Russian empire skillfully used the Shiite-Sunni conflict to maintain its power in the region. Moreover, in the confrontation with Iran, the Russian empire relied on Sunnis, and, in the confrontation with the Ottoman Empire, on Shiites. They tried not to involve Muslims in senior government positions and the population remained mainly illiterate.

Interreligious relations were developed based on the inequality of the Muslim population, which did their best to show their loyalty to the imperial power. The state religion was Orthodoxy. Therefore, the Muslim religious and community leaders involved representatives of Christian denominations in all their affairs and they funded the construction of various Christian religious buildings and training centers which carried out missionary activity. For example, at the end of the 19th century, during the construction of the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in the center of Baku, the Muslim population of the city was actively involved in its construction and did extensive fund-raising for its construction⁸¹.

The tolerance of the Azerbaijani population to all religious confessions continues today. The tradition of dialogue, reconciliation, and mutual understanding among the religions in Azerbaijan continued in Soviet times, as under the policy of atheism and the repression of religion representatives of the various religions and confessions had to tackle some of their problems together. Overall, the Soviet authorities in Azerbaijan were more interested in suppressing the Islamic factor

At the same time, it should be noted that the traditions of good-neighborly relations which are characteristic of Azerbaijan, at present are continuously used in the state policy of the independent country. For example, joint actions, formal events, and mutual assistance in the construction of religious buildings continue to exist today. Some objective factors also facilitate this atmosphere. The fact is that the region is a center of interest for various world powers. Some religions, denominations, and confessions enjoy patronage from outside the country. Previously, when Islam was strongly dominant, representatives of other religious beliefs were forced to make peace with them by means of paying taxes and showing loyalty. Under the Russian Empire, the Muslims were in a subordinate position and were forced to make peace with the rest in the terms of the rule of Orthodoxy. At present, the interreligious peace is based on the parity between the interests of internal and external forces, as well as on current political and economic processes.

The problem of Shiah-Sunni relations in Azerbaijan is seen exactly from the same perspective. The confrontation existed⁸² before the Soviet period, but was settled by the authorities of the Russian Empire. They were not interested in complete elimination of the conflict because it prevented Azerbaijan Muslims from further joining with foreign Muslims. However, since gaining independence, authorities of the country are not interested in such contradictions. However, certain world powers are interested in aggravating the Sunni-Shiah conflict. In the first years following the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, preachers of various

⁸¹ *Süleymanov M. Eşitdiklərim, oxuduqlarım, gördüklərim.* Bakı, 1989, s. 219.

⁸² *Ibid.*, s. 219.

confessions of Islam functioned in the country, and the expansion of missions could lead to confrontations. However, further strengthening the power of the country brought the situation under control. At present, no signs of open confrontation are observed. Both confessions are subordinated under a single Spiritual Administration of the Caucasus, which has been functioning from the Russian and Soviet times. Notwithstanding, there is a division of confessional parities based on mutual understanding. Thus, northern regions of the country are predominantly Sunni. There the Shiite minority is subordinated to the Sunni mufti. In other regions of the country, the Sunni minority is subordinated to the Shiah clergy. Central mosques are not divided into Shiah and Sunni. Both Shiah and Sunni can pray in them. In recent years, even Friday prayers are carried out jointly.

Still theological debates are sometimes conducted at lower levels, in the fields of informal contacts between the Shiites and Sunnis. Such debates are especially manifested in various Internet forums.

Besides having a strong government in the country capable of preventing inter-religious contradictions from open conflicts, the peaceful religious climate in Azerbaijan is still influenced by the Soviet past. Secular authorities of the country support the maintenance of secular trends. As the Soviet past gradually fades into history the new generation grows interested in religious doctrines. To prevent fanaticism the authorities support works to enlighten the population.

The traditions of modern secularism in Azerbaijan began during the period of Russian Empire. Throughout all these years, Azerbaijani educators, politicians and public figures carried out extensive works aimed at educating the population of Northern Azerbaijan. One matter is that in the beginning of 20th century, the Muslim world and its social institutions were not able to compete with the rapidly developing European countries. As a result they suffered one defeat after another. Almost all countries the Muslim world became colonies of European countries. This situation affected the Muslims of the South Caucasus. Azerbaijani intelligentsia saw gradual access to European values as a way out of the situation. Yet a number of obstacles stood in the way. It was necessary to change the educational system, to eliminate the feudal orders, and to provide people with democratic freedoms.

By the beginning of the 20th century countries of the Muslim world were colonies and sub-colonies of western powers. In relating to this situation Muslim intellectuals sought a way out and began initiatives to enlighten the population. The Azerbaijan intelligentsia advocating European values joined in this work as well.

Naturally, this could be achieved only by means of a certain secularization of the society. However, conservatives supported by Muslim clergy who did not want to make any concessions stood in the way. They took advantage of the situation to keep uneducated or totally illiterate masses of people in full submission. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani educators systematically implemented their ideas, and as a result they managed to achieve certain success. In addition to religious subjects Muslims began to be taught secular sciences and new schools were opened at the expense of Azerbaijani sponsors. For example, a Muslim female gymnasium was constructed at the expense of Baku millionaire Haji Zeynal Abidin Tagiyev. Thus, the problem of illiteracy of Muslim women was partially settled.

A seminary in Gori, opened in 1879, taught in the Turkic language and played a big role in the secular education of Azerbaijani Muslims. Many outstanding Azerbaijani intellectuals, politicians, and public figures graduated from this seminary. In addition, Muslim people

could receive a secular education in the Russian language. Before then all students had studied in religious schools.

Azerbaijani philosopher Mirza Fatali Akhundov proposed the first version of Turkic writing, based on the Latin script, as he considered that the Arabic alphabet not suitable for Turkic languages. His proposal was implemented in Turkey, Azerbaijan, and other Turkic republics. Through the efforts of the educator Hasanbek Zardabi the first newspaper *Ekinchi* (Farmer) in the Turkic language was published in 1875–77. After that, many national newspapers and magazines were printed in Turkic and Russian. The Satiric magazine *Molla Nasreddin*, prepared by the outstanding Azerbaijani educators Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Mirza Alakbar Sabir, Azim Azimzadeh, et al, was especially popular. Public ignorance and religious fanaticism were often subjected to fierce criticism on the pages of these publications. The editors considered public ignorance and religious fanaticism one of the main obstacles standing in the way of progress of the people. At the same time, they did not oppose the foundations of Islam. In their view, the conservative Islamic clergy and feudal system established in the society had brought the society to the state of stagnation.

However, during Soviet occupation efforts to enlighten the population and secular activities of the Azerbaijani intelligentsia were focused on atheist works. As a result, the positions of all the religions existing in the country were undermined.

At present, the peaceful coexistence of religions in Azerbaijan has been achieved. The actions of religious communities are based on the legislation of the country, which complies with international legal acts. The relations between religious organizations and the state are governed by the State Committee for Work with Religious Associations. In 2009, some amendments to the previously existing law “On freedom of religion” were adopted⁸³. Foreign religious preachers are prohibited to head or represent religious communities in Azerbaijan, or to conduct illegal missionary activities. Cutting off the financial flows to some dubious religious organizations led to weakening of their positions. This situation will be maintained until the objective conditions change.

The ground has been prepared for this process. Azerbaijan encourages the development of thought, especially socio-philosophical thought, and works to improve the system of teaching liberal subjects in schools. Intellectual conversations on a variety of burning issues are conducted in the media and include the presence of the widest circles of the intelligentsia and the clergy. Active struggle is waged against various negative trends. All these measures are carried out systematically for the maintenance of secular values in the society, as it is impossible to achieve the goal only by means of propaganda of secularism against the dominance of religion.

A number of significant events concerning the problems of religious dialogues and religious tolerance have been held by government and non-government organizations in Azerbaijan. The most important international conferences dedicated the issue have been the following:

1. “Modernity and Religious and Moral values”. Baku, 29. IX. 1998.
2. “Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus”. Baku, 09. XI. 1998.
3. “Islamic architecture in the cross-section of the centuries”. Baku, 21. IX. 1999
4. “Cooperation for the sake of peace in the Caucasus”, Tbilisi, 17. VII, 2002 (in cooperation with Georgian colleagues).

⁸³ Али-заде А. А. Распространение и развитие Ислама в Азербайджане // Ислам в СНГ. Ежеквартальный научный альманах. №1. 2010. с. 65. Dini etiqad azadlığı haqqında Azərbaycan respublikası qanunu. Bakı, 2009.

5. “Heydar Aliyev and Religious Policy in Azerbaijan: Realities and Prospects”. Baku, 3–4, IV, 2004.
6. “Interreligious Dialogue: from mutual understanding to cooperation”. Baku, 6–7. XI. 2009
7. Baku Summit of Religious Leaders, 26–27. IV. 2010

In addition to the conferences, round-table talks are always held in Azerbaijan involving religious leaders. The State Committee for Work with the Religious Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan is conducting huge work in the sphere of religious tolerance and mutual patience, and is featured regularly in the newspaper *Jamiyet ve Din* (Society and Religion) and *Dovlet ve Din* (State and Religion). Moreover, books and other scientific and popular magazines on religious topics and other enlightening topics are being constantly published. The State bodies of Azerbaijan are interested in maintaining interreligious peace and conduct work in this direction. Special groups are created in order to hold lectures in prisons, secondary and high schools, and institutions of higher education. This type of work is also conducted by the non-government organizations. In addition, present religious unions accredited by the state avail rights to hold studies in their unions.

Developing the perspectives of society depends on the viability of constructive inter-religious relations, the policy of non-discrimination, and on tolerance in all spheres of life. At present, Azerbaijan experiences the process of strengthening and furthering the regulation of interreligious and inter-confessional relations in the context of secular trends of state building of independent Azerbaijan.

CHAPTER 5

ETHNIC-RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE ARMENIAN NATION AT THE END OF 20TH AND THE BEGINNING OF 21ST CENTURIES

Hovhannes Hovhannisyan, Sevak Karamyan (Armenia)

Starting in the late 1980s, especially after the collapse of the Socialist system, the model of the unified and new world system was organically connected with the policy of globalization and created a new situation in cultural, social, religious and other spheres of Armenia and Armenian society. For the Armenian people a number of new challenges arose with concerns for the preservation of the nation as well as of national, public, and cultural values under the trends of the liberation movement.

It is worth mentioning that in the 1980s a number of diverse non-traditional religious organizations penetrated into Armenia. The problems related to the inner religious life of Armenia are linked to those religious minorities. At first glance, in Armenia, which is considered to be a mono-ethnic country (98% of Armenia's population is Armenian), there is no problem of religious dialogue between Islam and Christianity or between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the religions of other nations. The only existing issue is between the Armenian Apostolic Church, considered the religion of the majority, and the diverse non-traditional denominations attended by Armenians.

One of the basic achievements of post-Soviet Armenia is the Article 26⁸⁴ of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which states that “everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion” supported by the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”, adopted in 1991 and supplemented in 1997 and 2001. Although in 2004 amendments were made to the Constitution of Armenia (Article 8. 1⁸⁵) giving more privileges to the Armenian Apostolic Church in comparison with other religious organizations. There are no exact data on the number of religious communities of Armenia. The census held in Armenia in 2001 did not contain any question on religious

⁸⁴ Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change the religion or belief and freedom to, either alone or in community with others, to manifest the religion or belief, through preaching, church ceremonies and other religious rites. The exercise of this right may be restricted only by the law in the interests of public security, health, morality or the protection of rights and freedoms of others.

⁸⁵ The church shall be separate from the state in the Republic of Armenia. The Republic of Armenia recognizes the exceptional mission of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as the national church, in the spiritual life, development of national culture and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia. Freedom of operation for all religious organizations in accordance with the law shall be guaranteed in the Republic of Armenia. The relations of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church may be regulated by the law.

belonging. For that reason we can come to conclusions only through considering data derived from self-estimation in those communities.

Besides the historically formatted traditional religious communities (Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenian Catholic Church) after the declaration of independence, various religious organizations penetrated into and became active in the whole territory of Armenia⁸⁶. Currently most of these organizations are registered with the Ministry of Justice of the RA and are functioning legally. In terms of their factual and legal status the religious communities functioning at the RA can be divided into three groups:

- Registered religious organizations,
- Religious organizations registered as non-Governmental organizations but apparently performing religious activities,
- Religious, philosophical, and behavioral organizations which are not registered and do not have legal status under the Laws of the RA⁸⁷.
- Armenian was the first nation in the world to adopt Christianity as the state religion in 301. Since the 4th century, the Armenian Apostolic Church has been responsible for the religious, spiritual, cultural, and educational spheres of Armenian nation. As a National Christian Church it became the main integrating force in the Armenian nation and satisfied the spiritual needs of Armenians in public life. The Armenian Apostolic Church is one of the traditional Eastern Orthodox Churches and has had great input in the history of development of global Christian culture.

After the Republic of Armenia declared independence in 1991 the role of the Armenian Apostolic Church increased again and the Church became more actively involved in public life, of which it was deprived in Soviet time. Today the role of the Church is extremely huge in the public spiritual-cultural life and, especially, in the Christian education of the young generation, as evidenced by the obligatory teaching of the “Armenian Apostolic Church history” under the decree of the Government of the RA. In recent decades the authority of the Armenian Apostolic Church increased substantially among the youth. The number of young people attending churches and participating in worship is quite high. A large number of young people are members of youth organizations and unions of the Armenian Apostolic Church. There are plenty of young people studying at the educational institutions of the Armenian Apostolic Church. A survey conducted among the youth is quite interesting:

⁸⁶ The religious organizations registered in the RA as of January 01, 2006 are:

4 traditional Churches — Armenian Apostolic Holy Church (with “Gandzasar” theological center), Catholic Church — 2 communities (with Mkhitarian Center), Russian Orthodox Church — 4 communities, Eastern nestorian Church — 1 community,
 4 Protestant, 4 Evangelical, 9 Baptist, 14 Pentecostal, 1 Adventist, 6 religious-charity organizations,
 6 organizations of new religious movement,
 1 Ecumenic movement,
 1 Jewish,
 1 Paganistic,
 2 Sun worshippers.

⁸⁷ These and further data are quoted from the survey published by the RA Government Staff Ethnic Minorities and Religious Affairs Department. See the details RA Government Staff Ethnic Minorities and Religious Affairs, “Freedom of thought, conscience and religion”, Yerevan, 2004. Recently the “Jehovah’s witness” religious organization was also registered in the RA.

Which religious organization you are affiliated with?⁸⁸ (%)

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| 1 | Armenian Apostolic Church | 89.4 |
| 2 | Armenian Catholic Church | 1.5 |
| 3 | Jehovah's Witnesses | 1.3 |
| 4 | Pentecostal Church | 0.1 |
| 5 | Armenian Evangelical Church | 0.8 |
| 6 | Nestorian Church | 0.1 |
| 7 | Sun Worshipers | 0.7 |
| 8 | Atheist | 1.4 |
| 9 | Difficult to answer | 4.7 |

One of the basic concerns of the Armenian Apostolic Church is to satisfy the spiritual needs of contemporary Armenian youth duly informed by Armenian ancient spiritual and cultural heritage. The Spiritual Service of the Armenian Apostolic Church has functioned within the National Army of the RA since 1997 and plays an essential role in the patriotic and Christian education of youth. The spiritual servants attached to the military units have input in the spiritual and military-patriotic education of military staff.

Despite the Church activities, the majority of young people today are not aware of the Church activities, of the dogmatic particularities of the Church. Although they carry the same spiritual-cultural values, they do not understand their role and significance in the preservation of national values. The way the youth approach religion and religious life is quite controversial, but it is logical. It is no secret that the majority of the Armenian population considers themselves followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church, but they have no idea of the obligations and responsibilities arising from their Church affiliation. In this sense Armenian youth is not an exception, because the 89.4% of respondents who affiliate with the Armenian Apostolic Church also mention that do not have any expectations regarding the Church (56.3%). Simultaneously, we should certainly mention that active youth involvement in Evangelical Churches substantially exceeds youth involvement in Armenian Apostolic Church activities⁸⁹.

Unfortunately, the majority of the young people with University education have no understanding of the significance and importance of many of the rituals and celebrations they attend. On the other hand, Armenian youth are mainly secular, which has consequences⁹⁰.

⁸⁸ The data is taken from the final results of the sociological survey carried out for the Youth National Report of the RA as of February, 2006.

⁸⁹ The youth organizations attached to some dioceses of Armenian Apostolic church, particularly to Araratian Patriarchial Diocese, Jrvezh, etc. and youth unions acting within the Church system perform great activities to integrate Armenian youth with Armenian Apostolic Church. However, we should mention that the integration with Church is taking place not in the account of "pure faith" but social, educational, cultural, ritual and other aspects of the Church. This is proved by the fact that the majority of young people pay great attention to the marriages in the Church (60.4%).

⁹⁰ The survey performed among the young people having high education by the Civilizational and Cultural Studies Center of Yerevan State University showed that many of them, considering themselves as true believers, have no idea on the activities, obligations or lifestyle coming from the faith. From this point the comparison with the youth from Western European countries because they are proud of speaking about their faith and religious practices while Armenian youth consider as public tabu to speak about their faith and avoid of talking about that. Moreover, "to be believer" is identified with a believer from a religious organization other than Armenian Apostolic Church which, certainly, raises a lot of questions and proves that Armenian youth is not only secular but also is far away from the real faith.

We think that the involvement of youth in various social activities is quite important for rooting faith and trust towards spiritual-cultural values among the young people. Greater importance is ascribed not to religious belonging but to the activities rising from that belonging and having national, public, civil, family, human nature.

In public and scientific discourse it is popularly acknowledged that there are many similarities between the spiritual-cultural and religious “fields” of Soviet Armenia and the Third Republic of Independent Armenia, in terms of actual challenges and threats. In Soviet time the communist atheistic ideology with its various manifestations and consequences was deemed a real challenge; in Independent Armenia “world globalization” and the “detrimental European freedom of conscience”⁹¹ are considered the real challenges. Thus, it is commonly preached that such values are forced on Armenia by the stronger and “immoral” Europe, and Armenia must adopt the obligatory rules of game. This is mostly the representation of fake reality.

The concept of spiritual security or the importance of spiritual security are considered relevant to Armenian national security. “Spiritual security” comprehends the security of the Church or the protection of the Armenian Church from foreign interests or strange and non-traditional elements. The issues of spiritual security or the immunity or superiority of the Armenian Church are tightly connected to the issue of national identity within the spiritual space of Armenian ethos. The Church is considered as the basic guarantor for preservation of national identity, while the foreign organizations are thought to undermine the national identity⁹².

The ongoing public discourse on national ideology within the context of national identity and spiritual security is an interesting phenomenon. Various political and public actors and institutions promote the idea of ethnic and religious identity and from time to time preach “One Nation, One Religion” or “One Nation, One Church”, slogans which show them as an integral part of the national ideology. We think such slogans and the possible processes they condition are not applicable to the integration and enforcement of society, but rather will serve to strengthen some institutions and organizations while endangering and violating the natural rights of people, the constitutional rights of citizens, etc.

If we compare the steps taken to preserve the national identity and the discourses on national ideology, it is possible to comprehend the political maneuvering of Armenian Apostolic Church clergy in trying to become leaders in national issues. Interestingly, in the cultures of various nations the basic element in their national ideologies is the belief that the nation has a specific historical mission. In this context it sometimes seems that the foremost concern of Armenian ideologues is not the historical mission of the Armenian nation but only personal interests and self-implementation coming from the ego. The Armenian Apostolic Church often tries to identify itself with the world Christian mission and tries to equate the national ideology with Church ideology, which in our view is an unsound argument. Understandably, the aim of such identification is the identification of the Armenian Apostolic Church with the Armenian Nation, however the Armenian Church can never be all-encompassing even though historically it has transformed from a national to trans-cultural institution by enlarging its sphere of activities and influence. It is unimaginable that the Church could encompass the national identity of citizens of various countries with Armenian origin and integrate them around one unique national ideology. A complete understanding of the religious iden-

⁹¹ *Маргарян Г.* Современные вызовы и Армянская церковь в контексте безопасности // Вестник. Вып. 5, Ереван, 2007. С. 8.

⁹² *Ibid.* P. 9.

tity of Armenians requires discussion of the relationship between the two Armenian Holy Centers — the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and the Great House of Cilicia, which have both impacted the formation, preservation and transformation of Armenian ethnic identity. After the Great Genocide of 1915, the Cilician Holy See was established in Antilias, Lebanon, which became the holy center for many exiled Armenians or those who fled during the generations of the massacre of Armenians. During the Soviet time Antilias was the refuge of the defender of the exiled Armenian Revolutionary Party (Dashnakcutyun). The Holy Center of the Great House of Cilicia, which is totally independent and not under the supervision of the Etchmiadin Holy See, sometimes opposes the Etchmiadzin. The relationship between the two Holy Sees has not been always peaceful and in some periods has generated controversies and mutual accusations based mainly on the discourse of hierarchic principles⁹³.

The political factor plays an essential role in the Etchmiadzin — Cilicia controversies, which still figures in the political agenda of both Holy Sees. During the Soviet period the controversies were developed within the framework of the Armenian Revolutionary Party (Dashnakcutyun) — Soviet Armenia. However, after the declaration of independence those trends continued to develop based on other political factors⁹⁴. The Armenian Revolutionary Party continues to consider the Diaspora its concern and it gives great importance to the Cilician Holy Center and its networks, continuing to provide scientific, financial and other support to preserve the power and use of its resources for political purposes. On the other hand, the Armenian Revolutionary Party is not eager to see the Cilician Holy See become so strong and independent that it would contradict the policy and plans of the Dashnakcutyun party. The Armenian Revolutionary Party has always deemed the rapprochement or good relationships between Etchmiadzin and Cilicia as a threat to the power and authority of the Dashnakcutyun in the Diaspora.

Some positive trends developed in the relationship between the two Holy Sees after the Earthquake of Spitak in 1988 when both Holy Sees jointly tried to remedy the damages caused by the Earthquake. Vazgen I and Garegin II, Pontiff of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin Holy See from 1995 to 1999, subsequently met and commenced a new relationship between the two Holy Sees, primarily focused on the collective interest of Armenians and preserving the unique identity of the Armenian nation. However, since the new diocese in Canada was established by the Cilician Holy See in 2003, the relationships between the two Centers has worsened⁹⁵.

⁹³ The relationship of Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and Great House of Cilicia became hostile especially in 1950s and prolonged for three decades. The political factor and hierarchic trends within the clergy played essential role in worsening of relationships

⁹⁴ It is interesting to make parallels with the fact of reunion of Russian Orthodox Church which did not take place because of the controversies between Russian Church and Soviet Union. The collapse of Soviet Union and the efforts of Russian authorities created totally other atmosphere enabling to sign the agreement of reunion in May 1997 in Moscow which had great significance for Russian Church authority and unity. It is worth to mention that the Russian authorities in the person of president V. Putin played essential role in the reunion process of Russian church who met with the representatives of both Churches and became non official mediator in the Church reunion. The process accelerated also by the work implemented by various commissions which solved the disagreements of the parties and prepared the representatives of the Churches to sign the reunion act. See www.interfax-religion.ru/?act=print&div=6016, “The Washington Post”: “Московский Патриархат и Русская Зарубежная Церковь: путь к единству. Интервью председателя Отдела внешних церковных связей Московского Патриархата”, May 2, 2007.

⁹⁵ More details: Оганесян О. В. Духовное единство Армянской Церкви как гарантия безопасности Диаспоры // Рабочие тетради, приложение к журналу «Армянская Армия», 1 и 2 (13–14). Ереван, 2010. С. 91–100.

In recent decades, the history of the relationships between the two Pontifical Centers has become quite interesting. Potentially explosive situations could develop when careless approaches exacerbate the clashes and alienation between the Armenian Centers in Diaspora and the representatives of the Holy Sees. The rapprochement of two Holy Centers is hardened by political factors. The issue is that the Armenian Revolutionary Party created a serious gap between Soviet Armenia and the Diaspora, which has automatically continued during the Independent Armenia. The Armenian Revolutionary Party continues the political line adopted during the Cold War, essentially impeding not only the improvement of Etchmiadzin-Cilicia relationships but also the deepening of relationships between the Great House of Cilicia and the Republic of Armenia. In other words the political factor plays an essential role in the Etchmiadzin-Cilicia relationship, and that role should be precisely evaluated and assessed to ease the situation and permit serious steps towards further improving their mutual relationships.

From another perspective, the worsening relationships between the two Holy Sees was conditioned by the divided spheres of influence, the struggle for power and the reallocation of financial resources resulting from the Diaspora. The Diaspora (the relocation of Armenians and Armenian Holy Centers outside Armenia) supported the differentiation of elements of Armenian identity, reflected by the labels “Armenian (hayastantsi)” and “Diaspora Armenian (spyurqahay)” and the content of their opposition in terms of their belonging to various Churches. The “Armenians (hayastantsi)” mostly come under the authority of the Etchmiadzin Center, while the majority of “Diaspora Armenians (spyurqahay)” come under the authority of the Great House of Cilicia. This quite dangerous situation may cause the nation to split apart. Such problems can be clearly observed in the American community, especially where the various divisions of Armenian identity are quite deep and vivid.

Among the problems and issues resulting from the Diaspora, we should mention the fact that the controversies of the two Holy Sees transfer into the public sphere, which is very dangerous in increasing the divisions among various groups of Armenians. As a result of such divisiveness, some parts of the Armenians community may ultimately lose their connection with Motherland and, not having any source of nourishment may become completely assimilated in the foreign environments.

During recent decades, one main speciality of Armenian spiritual reality is the vivid manifestations of religious pluralism and religious dialogue. Notwithstanding the problems in this sphere, there is strong religious pluralism in the religious life of Armenia because the traditional and non-traditional religious organizations can freely preach their ideas. In this sphere, the discrepancies regarding the legal recognition of religious organizations are not essential.

The Armenian Apostolic Church enthusiastically takes part in the works of the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenic movement. In addition, the Armenian Church also mediated between other Churches to solve their problems. The most remarkable intervention is the mission to reconcile differences between the Great House of Cilicia and the Coptic Egyptian and Ethiopian Churches, which successfully resolved the forty year conflict and established regular relationships between two Ancient Orthodox Churches.

Beyond supporting the normalization of Church relationships, the Armenian Church plays a significant role in the reconciliation of nations. The visit of Armenian Pontiff Garegin II to Baku and his meeting with the spiritual leader of Azerbaijan, Haji Allahşukur Paşazadə, was a very prominent step towards resolving Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. In this context it should be noted the visit of Spiritual leader of Azerbaijan plans to visit Armenia in the near future, which is an unprecedented step in Armenian-Azerbaijani relationships.

The dialogue between Christianity and Islam, in Armenia and beyond, requires special attention. Since the dialogue began, with the Arab conquests, Islam has penetrated into the region and settled there. Historically the dialogue has not always been peaceful, but it has allowed the coexistence of the two world religions in the region. However, the tragic events that occurred in the early twentieth century, namely the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the destruction of the majority Christian population and Christian cultural heritage, rooted negative attitudes towards Islam in Armenian society, particularly towards the Turks. This negative attitude has deepened with the Karabakh conflict.

On the other hand, the negative attitude towards Islam is selective in dropping from the religious level to the national and political levels. The presence of large Armenian communities in other countries, such as Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, and the favorable attitude of the local people to the Armenians and the Armenian holy sites have contributed to alleviating anti-Islamic stereotypes. It is important to recognize that most of the expatriate communities formed because of genocide, when fleeing Armenians found shelter in the care of local people. A monument intentionally constructed in Yerevan, in 2010, symbolizes the Armenian-Arab friendship.

In Armenian communities in Muslim countries, such as Syria, Iran, Jordan, and Lebanon, a high level of cooperation exists between Muslims and Christians. In these countries, the Armenians play a very significant role in political, cultural and religious life. The same is true in Iraq, which has unfortunately experienced a mass emigration of Armenians because of recent hostilities. The remaining Armenians in Iraq continue to be actively involved in the internal politics of the state. It is important to emphasize that there is a tolerant and caring attitude in the Islamic culture toward the Armenian cultural and religious heritage. In Iran, Armenians are not only respected citizens of the country, but the government also cares for religious rituals conducted by Armenians and reconstructs the Armenian churches. For example, every year Armenians conduct a pilgrimage to the monastery of St. Tadeos which is dedicated to Apostle St. Tadeos. For several days, Iranian public authority and various civil associations provide for their security. In Syria and Lebanon, where the Armenian genocide is officially recognized, April 24th is not a working day in Armenian-populated cities out of respect for the victims of genocide.

It is important to note that in most Muslim countries Armenians are known as loyal citizens of the state, which is the starting point for religious dialogue. The Armenian-Christians and Muslims in different countries intentionally engage in joint activities arising from the interests of the state. Armenian-Christian and Muslim dialogue is also favored by the presence of the Muslim community in Armenia. There are about about 8000 Muslims in Armenia⁹⁶, mostly Iranians and Kurds, as well as students and diplomats from various Muslim countries. The lack of active religious organizations in the Muslim communities is compensated by the activities of the Cultural Center of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which sponsors various cultural, scientific and educational activities, organizes free courses in Persian language, publishes journals in Persian and Armenian, and also engages in translating religious texts into Armenian. Notably in 2006, the Qur'an was translated into Armenian (Hayastan Press). An important step towards the Christian-Muslim dialogue was the resumption of the 18th century Mosque in Yerevan, which had not functioned since in the Soviet era. Restoration work on mosques is also happening in Karabakh.

⁹⁶ *Karamyan S. Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, Volume 2, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010. P. 19.*

The most important means of knowledge sharing and dialogue are the special programs for Armenian students in different Muslim countries. Each year, more than 50 Armenians students, mostly from the Faculty of Oriental Studies and International Relations at YSU, take language courses in Syria and Egypt.

Meanwhile, students from Syria, Iran, India, and other Muslim countries attend Armenian universities. In addition, the universities of Armenia pay more and more attention to Islamic studies. We should also note the development of tourism and business between Armenia and Muslim states. Each year, tens of thousands of Armenians rest in the resorts of Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan, and large numbers of entrepreneurs cooperate with business partners in Iran, Syria, Turkey, UAE, etc. In turn, a growing number of tourists from Muslim countries visit Armenia.

Despite the conditions of dialogue mentioned above, the distrust continues. The distrust has been exacerbated by the collapse of the so-called “football diplomacy”, where the efforts to normalize Armenian-Turkish relations and open the border with Turkey were not successful, which reinforced the non-positive attitude towards Turkey. We think, as the political problems are solved the historically established stereotypes will be overcome.

In conclusion, religious dialogue in the contemporary world has its particularities and may assist in restoring or establishing regular relationships, not only among Churches, religions, but also among nations and societies.

In this sense “Religion and its possibilities are the basic tools for enabling people and public and civil society members from both sides to commence the dialogue emphasizing the essential values shared by the world’s religions, such as love, compassion, equality, honesty and the ideal of treating others as one wishes to be treated oneself.”⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *Hovhannisyan H.* Religious Component as a Tool for Reconciliation of Armenian and Azerbaijani Populations, Caucasus Edition. Journal of Conflict Transformation, <http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/religious-component-as-a-tool-for-reconciliation-of-armenian-and-azerbaijani-populations/>.

CHAPTER 6

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM IN MODERN GEORGIA: THE EXPERIENCE, CHALLENGES, AND SEARCH FOR RESPONSES

Nino Chikovani (Georgia)

This article aims to present the dynamics and contemporary reality of the relationship between Christianity and Islam in Georgia. Two main factors determine the importance of the problem: 1) A stable development of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country is highly dependent on successful intercultural and interreligious dialogue; 2) The religious determinant of identity has undergone serious transformation in the post-Soviet period. After decades of official atheism, religion has “returned” not only to everyday life but it has become the crucial factor in the consolidation of society as well.

Intercultural and interreligious dialogue in Georgia: a brief historical review

Georgia is one of the most ancient Christian countries. Christianity has long been a defining factor of its cultural and political development. At the same time, ethnic, cultural and religious diversity was an ordinary reality for the country located on the crossroad of civilizations.

Being on the crossroad has placed Georgia in the role of cultural mediator. The constant exchange of cultural values and constant interaction and the coexistence of different cultural traditions are not as a rule perceived as a source of confrontation and conflict.

During the Middle Ages the self-identification of Georgians was much more flexible and inclusive than later in the era of nationalism. There was not only one general category of “different”, “strange”, and “hostile”. Being alien was determined by multiple different factors — economic, political, psychological, demographic, etc. In the most successful periods of Georgian history, the multicultural legacy was not neglected or contradicted but was preserved and protected.⁹⁸ The multicultural legacy did not demonstrate the unique tolerance of a concrete ethnic group; rather it was the only possible form of survival of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state. It was a kind of adaptation mechanism of a society existing in a dynamic and complex civilizational environment. The understanding of national belonging and patriotism was radically different in the Middle Ages. Speaking of the tolerance towards other ethnic and religious groups in the Middle Ages attempts to make the past a mechanical replication of modern concepts.

⁹⁸ Rapp S. Caucasias place in the Eurasian world: The testimony of “Life of the Georgian Kings”// Materials of the IV International Kartvelological Symposium. Tbilisi, 2005.

From ancient times, the Muslim world was an immediate neighbor of Georgia. Followers of Islam constituted part of its population. In ancient Georgian sources Islam was called *the faith of Muhammad*. Our Muslim neighbors were identified by names containing a confessional meaning: “Muslems”, “Musurmans”, “Magometans”, “People of Islam”, though one comes across ethnic names as well.⁹⁹

The spreading of Islam in Georgia began from the period of Arab conquest (7th-9th centuries). The Tbilisi Emirate was established in the 3rd decade of the 8th century. In 1222, King David the Builder liberated Tbilisi and moved the capital to Tbilisi from Kutaisi. According to Arab and Turkish historians of the 12th-13th centuries, the King gave tax exemptions to the Muslim population of Tbilisi, prohibited slaughtering of pigs in the Muslim quarters of the city, and restricted Georgians, Armenians and Jews from visiting bathhouses of Muslims. Every Friday the King went to the Mosque and listened to Qur’an readings, which he knew perfectly well. Georgian and foreign sources tell about similar cases in the history of Medieval Georgia. In addition, some Georgian figures made considerable contributions to the political and cultural life of Muslim countries (commanders and political figures at the court of the Shah of Iran during the Undiladze Dynasty, painter-miniaturists Siaush and Jabadari in Iran, Persian poets of Georgian origin, etc.). Some of the Georgians who converted to Islam continued to work and create in their native language, for example, the 17th century historian Parsadan Gorgijanidze.

In the Middle Ages and later, to the attitude of Georgia toward the Muslim world was not homogeneous and linear. Constant political opposition was accompanied by the continuous cultural interrelations, which had serious impact on the Georgian culture. In the “Golden Age” (11th-12th centuries) and in the period of the “Little Renaissance” (16th-17th centuries) almost all significant works of Muslim literature were translated in Georgian.

Religious and ethnic identities in the Middle Ages were tightly inter-linked. Correspondingly, a Georgian who adopted Islam was no longer considered a Georgian. In the 19th century, in the epoch of nationalism, Georgian public figures did a lot to overcome this attitude. The declaration of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1920) should be mentioned in this respect: “Every Georgian-Christian must always respect the religion of Muslims, which many people confess, our own brothers among them... Georgian-Christians and Georgian-Muslims have different faiths, but we all belong to Georgia.”¹⁰⁰

The second half of the 19th century saw the formation of nationalism in Europe and in Georgia as well. National movement and national ideology usually frames itself around the shared past which unites the people “under the common national ceiling” and within a common vision of historical continuity.¹⁰¹ As a rule, nation was perceived *vis-a-vis* others, who were often constructed as ‘national enemies’. Historians were trying to demonstrate the markers like language, common history, territory and culture as genuinely pure, important and durable.¹⁰² The theme of suffering and repression was prominent in the range of national histories, and it enabled historians to differentiate national history from the oppressive “other”.¹⁰³ In the case of Georgia,

⁹⁹ Дондуа В. «Витязь в тигровой шкуре» и грузинские историки // Грузия в эпоху Руставели (Сборник, посвященный 800 летию Руставели). Тбилиси, 1968. С. 239.

¹⁰⁰ Religiebi sakartveloshi. Tbilisi, 2008, P. 362.

¹⁰¹ Carvalho S., Gemenne F. Introduction // Nations and their Histories. Constructions and Representations. L., 2009. P. 1.

¹⁰² Ibid. P. 3.

¹⁰³ Berger S. The Comparative History of National Historiographies in Europe: Some Methodological Reflections and Preliminary Results // Nations and their Histories. Constructions and Representations. L., 2009. P. 30–32.

the “other” was represented in the form of neighboring Muslim states, opposition with which constituted the basic content of the political history of Georgia in the Middle Ages. Considering the special role of religion in the Middle Ages, stresses were put on the facts of religious distinctions. National heroes were fighting against Muslim conquerors; in the search for solutions, some politicians were obliged to adopt Islam in order to save the country or their throne, while at the same time looking for protection and allies. History of Georgia represented the fight for independence from Muslim conquerors. Thus the attitude towards the Muslim world as “the other” and a source of danger formed. A co-religionist protector saved Georgia from the threat of physical liquidation and national degeneration, which would happen if Georgians converted from the faith of their forefathers to Islam. Such an attitude was characteristic of both the Georgian and official imperial narrative as well. The Russian Empire appeared as the protector of the whole Orthodox Christian world from Muslim danger.

In the Soviet period, the Georgian constitution recognized the freedom of conscience, although religion was declared “the opium for the people” and atheism became the official ideology of the state. There was no uniform state policy towards the different religions all across the Soviet Union. Different factors determined policy, including the national policy. Ultimately, the policy of state atheism led to the weakening of the role of religious institutions.

Already in the period of *Perestroika* the signs of the religious revival appeared. In the scientific literature this phenomenon is seen as the accompanying process to the formation of the new national identity. In the newly formed states of the post-Soviet space the interest in religion has increased dramatically; consequently the significance of religion in the life of society has risen. Religion as a leading marker of identity defined ethnic consolidation, on one hand, and influenced the process of ethnic differentiation, on the other. The religious revival at the end of the 1990s started as a cultural movement, but later it took the political overtone. Ethno-religious nationalism was supported by the Church as a rule.

In the post-Soviet period, the number of those who consider themselves believers and who count religion as a basis of identity has increased significantly. For example, in 1978 only 1% of the students of Tbilisi State University regarded themselves as religious, whereas in 2000 the number rose to 88.8%¹⁰⁴. In the Soviet period, citizens avoided talking about their religious feelings, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union the total return to religion took place and religious belonging emerged as an essential marker of individual and group identity.

The process of the “return of religion” in the 1990s was termed “religious atheism”. Scholars stressed that the assertion “I believe in God” was more a refusal of atheism than a true belief.¹⁰⁵ Self-identification of an individual as a follower of any religion ensured his/her involvement in the processes of social mobilization.

Analysis of the role of religion in the Caucasian conflicts in the 1990s reveals the fact that religion did not play a leading role in these conflicts; it had a function of demarcation in the cases when the opposed parties represented different religions. The conflicts led to strengthening the mutual distrust, but the conflicts resulted from the politicizing of ethnicity, and not from religion.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *Religiebi sakartveloshi*. Tbilisi, 2008. P. 362.

¹⁰⁵ Ханаху Р. А., Ляушева С. А., Цветков О. М. Ислам у адыгов северо-западного Кавказа на рубеже тысячелетий // Мир культуры адыгов (Проблемы эволюции и целостности). Майкоп, 2002. С. 152–153.

¹⁰⁶ *Crossroads and Conflict. Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*. New York-London, 2000, P. 8.

The role of religion has especially increased in poly-ethnic societies, where ethnic groups are representatives of different confessions. Georgia is among them. Under such conditions, the stable and sustainable development of the society is highly dependent on relations between different religions.

Religions in Modern Georgia

According to the last Soviet census (1989), representatives of 90 nationalities lived in Georgia. The total population was 5.4 million. Ethnic minorities comprised 29.87% of the total population. In the Soviet Union there did not exist official statistics for the confessional composition of the population.

According to the General National Census of 2002, population of Georgia decreased to 4.6 million. In 2004, Georgians comprised 70.1% of the population, ethnic minorities 29.9%.

The confessional structure of the population of Georgia was first defined in 2002.¹⁰⁷ 88.6% of the population were Christians, 9.9% Muslim, 0.1 Jews, and others 0.8%; whereas 0.6% did not identify themselves with any confession.¹⁰⁸ 94% of Georgian believers are Orthodox. Among other ethnic groups residing in Georgia, most of the Ossetians, Abkhazians, Russians, Greeks, Assyrians and Udins practice Orthodox Christianity. The congregation of the Roman Catholic Church is made of Georgians (0.3%), Armenians, Polish, Assyrians, as well as a portion of Germans and Russians. A part of the Georgian and non-Georgian population (Abkhazians, Azeris, Kists, Lezgians) are Muslims. Muslims constitute 11.2% of the whole population. Jews, termed as the Georgian Jews, make up 0.2% of the population.

Orthodox Christianity is considered an attribute of national belonging in Georgia and one of the essential markers of ethnic identity. The Orthodox Church has contributed much to the maintenance of cultural originality; Orthodoxy has long been the fundament of Georgian culture. Due to a range of reasons Orthodoxy was identified with ethnicity and its protection was tightly connected with the problem of saving of the country.

In 2002 the Constitutional Concordat was signed by the Georgian state and the Apostolic Orthodox Church of Georgia. The role of the Church in the history of the country is recognized by the Constitution of Georgia (article 9). At the same time the State and the Church are separated constitutionally.

Today Muslims form the largest religious minority of the country. Islam is represented by both Shia and Sunni versions. Sunni are Muslim Abkhazians and Georgians in Adjara, also Daghestanians and Kists, compactly settled in some regions of Kakheti (Eastern Georgia).

Shiite are represented by Azeris, the largest ethnic minority in Georgia (6.5%). They are compactly settled in the southeast part of Georgia (Kvemo Kartli). According to the data of 2008, there were 286 Mosques and praying homes in Georgia.¹⁰⁹

Adjarian Muslims are ethnic Georgians; they differ in their traditions from other Muslims of Georgia. There are certain differences among Muslim communities of highlanders and lowlanders of Adjara. Muslims in the mountains are more religious than those who were influenced by the strong urban culture of Batumi. Highlanders have more time for active participation in

¹⁰⁷ Results of the first general census of the population of Georgia, 2002. State Department for Statistics of Georgia. Tbilisi, 2004.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Religiebi sakartveloshi. Tbilisi, 2008, P. 63.

religious life; they are more oriented to religious education, considering it the way to live better, while the population of the regions near Batumi is oriented to secular education and career.¹¹⁰

Followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church make up 3.9% of the population. They are under the spiritual protection of the Bishop, the seat of which is situated in the Church of St. George in Tbilisi.

Catholics comprise 0.8% of the population. Most of them live in Meskhet-Javakheti, both with ethnic Georgian as well as Armenian origins. The Lutheran Church has existed in Georgia from the 1840s. They constitute 0.01% of the population.

According to ancient Georgian historical sources, Jews appeared in Georgia after the siege of Jerusalem by Nabucodonosor. From the 1960s, the massive wave of *Alyah* from the Soviet Union came to Georgia as well. In 1991–1994 the social and economic hardships promoted emigration of Jews. During the following 30 years their number gradually decreased. Today there are 4000 Jews in Georgia; 89% of them are Sephardics and the rest are Ashkenazis. Synagogues are active in Tbilisi, Gori, Kutaisi, Oni, Akhaltsikhe and Surami.¹¹¹

Other religious communities and denominations include Baptists (0.1%), Pentecostals (0.1%), Dukhobors (0.03%), Molokans (0.04%), and Jehovah's Witnesses (0.3%).¹¹²

There is no mono-confessional ethnic group in Georgia. Adherents of traditional as well as various old and new denominations are represented in all ethnic groups.

The process of Globalization has brought new ethnic and religious minorities, though it is difficult to talk about masses of migrants, whose presence would create a new reality and new problems. The groups of migrants are represented mainly by students, entrepreneurs, and small traders from Turkey, India, South-East Asia and China, and are mostly concentrated in the cities. Their number fluctuates. Most of the problems faced by the new minorities have been due to the language barrier, which complicated communication.

Ethnic and religious diversity is a traditional characteristic of cities. Tbilisi is an interesting example in this regard. It is a place of blending cultures, where different nations meet and different faiths share the same courtyards. The city is home to more than 90 different ethnic groups. About 80% of the population is ethnic Georgians, with significant portions of other ethnic groups, including Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Ossetians, Abkhazians, Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Jews, Estonians, Germans, Kurds, Assyrians, and others. In recent years, the Turkish and Chinese populations of the city have experienced the fastest rates of growth. More than 85% of the residents of Tbilisi practice various forms of Christianity. There are the Georgian Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church, and Armenian Apostolic Church. Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, and other Christian denominations also make up the city's Christian minority. Approximately 8% of the population is Muslim (mainly Sunni). Sunni and Shiite pray together in Tbilisi Mosque. Judaism is practiced by the 2% of population of Tbilisi.

Challenges and responses

As it was already mentioned, the experience of intercultural and interreligious dialogue has a centuries-long tradition in Georgia. The dialogue, which is a natural phenomenon in

¹¹⁰ *Baramidze R.* Ethnic Georgian Muslims: A Comparison of Highland and Lowland Villages. *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, No. 20, 11 October, 2010, P. 13.

¹¹¹ *Religiebi sakartveloshi*, 2008, P. 103.

¹¹² *Ibid.* P. 63.

multicultural and multi-confessional countries, involves different forms and mechanisms existing beyond the official policy, not being a result of policy-making. Obviously, it is impossible to talk about interreligious dialogue during the Soviet time. Intercultural dialogue was promoted by state policy, aimed at the formation of the New Soviet Man. The Soviet culture — national in form and international in content — intended to become the basis of the new Soviet identity. The 1990s could be described as a period of inertia in this regard, when the multicultural heritage was referred to as a good heritage; but it was not quite clear how it should be dealt with. Cultural diversity was considered a separate aspect of public life. The policy of cultural pluralism inherited from the Soviet system has continued through financing and maintaining printed media, theatres, and schools for ethnic minorities, as well as some schools for religious minorities.

Let us discuss some problems of cultural and religious diversity in modern Georgia.

Social and economic hardships of the transition period were accompanied by the process of “identity crisis”. Already in the period of “perestroika” increasing conflict occurred among national minorities. The old offences, stereotypes and distrusts were recalled from memory. The experience of coexistence and shared history was suppressed by the conflicting memory. Religion became an important factor of national mobilization. It was actively used in general political rhetoric, and Georgian political leaders were no exception. Not surprisingly, the special role of the Orthodox Church in the history of Georgia was particularly emphasized. Print media and other mass information sources frequently voiced statements humiliating the religious feelings of the non-Orthodox population of the country. Within the Georgian Orthodox Church there were some radically minded clergy. In 1997, in order not to aggravate the situation, the Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia Ilia II decided to leave the World Council of Churches, which the Georgian Orthodox Church had joined in 1962. (In 1978 Ilia II was elected co-President of the Council).¹¹³ In 1999, some clergy and members of society protested against a joint service conducted by the Catholicos Patriarch Ilia II and the Pope of Rome John-Paul II, during the visit of the Pope to Georgia. There were cases of physical reprisals of followers of non-traditional religious movements.

The distrust and cautions were supported by the different factors. The national and religious minorities in the regions of compact settlements had poor knowledge of the state language; there was no unified concept or program for secondary schools. Meanwhile, national history, like in other post-socialist countries, became clearly ethnocentric, and the notion of tolerance took on essentialist meaning. Radicals appeared among the representatives of different confessions, who were distinguished for their irreconcilability to other confessions. The situation was further aggravated by the conflicts exploding sequentially in the South Caucasus. The conflicts generally resulted in post-conflict traumatic memory. As was mentioned, the religious factor did not play an independent role in the Caucasian conflicts, although the situation was complicated by the fact that in some cases the different sides in the conflict followed different religions.

It took some time for Georgians to realize the importance of overcoming of the conflicting memory and to comprehend the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the formation of civil society. There was a need to increase the feeling of belonging to a common motherland, in spite of national or religious identity. Diversity is considered a value, which has played an important role in the formation and development of the Georgian state.

¹¹³ *Religiebi sakartveloshi*, 2008, P. 42.

This value is reflected in the term “multiethnic Georgian nation”, which was introduced in the political vocabulary during the last several years.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia had “to get acquainted” anew with its Muslim neighbors, as the long experience of past relations had been put far behind during the years of isolation. The publication of the most complete translation of Qur'an from Arabic into Georgian, made by Giorgi Lobzhanidze, might be considered one of the most important occurrences of the post-Soviet period. The appendix to the translation includes a long list of scientific commentaries. In 2007, Giorgi Lobzhanidze received the highest prize in literature from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Civic integration cannot be achieved within a short time span. Nowadays, discussions on the issues of religion sometimes take a sharp form. The authority of the Church is quite often referred to for the fulfillment of political aims.

In spite of the existing problems, it is possible to say that the importance of thoughtful and balanced politics in the sphere of intercultural and interreligious relations is well realized on the state level. The search for ways to transform the cultural and religious diversity into the main value, aimed at mutual enrichment and civic integration, has resulted in certain steps being taken on both on the state and non-governmental level.

The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia is conducting a program for the support of cultures of national minorities. The program is aimed at the promotion and popularization of cultural diversity. The sponsors include the D. Baazov Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Jews, the Center of Cultural Relations of Georgia “Caucasian House”, the Mirza Fatali Akhundov Museum of Azerbaijan Culture, the Center of Russian Culture in Georgia, Tbilisi Petros Adamian Armenian Theater, and Azerbaijani Theater. They are creating an inventory of monuments and sites of cultural heritage located in the territory of Georgia.

The State ensures possibilities for the education of minorities in their native languages. At the same time, the state language is a compulsory subject in secondary educational institutions. Today the state finances 123 Armenian, 94 Azerbaijani, and 23 Russian schools, and 1 Ukrainian school. There are 417 mixed-type schools that offer bilingual education, and 6 schools offering education in three languages.¹¹⁴ From 2007, in order to implement a unified system of secondary education, the National Curriculum and Assessment Center translated the textbooks into Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Russian languages. History textbooks are translated into Ossetian and Abkhazian languages as well. In the Georgian history textbooks produced during the last couple of years, ethnic and religious minorities appear as participants of the history of Georgia. Representatives of minorities are proud of the heroism of their ancestors, who fought alongside Georgians against the foreign invaders.¹¹⁵

According to the Presidential decree of the August 8, 2005, the Civic Integration and Tolerance Council was established by the President of Georgia. On the August 8, 2009, the Government of Georgia approved the National Concept of Tolerance and Civic Integration. Its main goal is “to support the building of a democratic and consolidated civil society that is based on common values, which considers diversity a source of its strength and provides every citizen with the opportunity to maintain and develop his/her identity.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ <http://diversity.ge/rus/resources.php?coi=0|11|13>

¹¹⁵ Cities — centers of intercultural dialogue in South Caucasus. Project realized by the UNESCO Chair in Intercultural Dialogue, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, 2008.

¹¹⁶ National Concept of Tolerance and Civic Integration, updated. Nov. 1, 2008. P. 3. http://diversity.ge/files/files/National%20Concept_Rus_updated.pdf

Since 2006, the Center of Tolerance has functioned in the office of the Public Rights Ombudsmen of Georgia. It coordinates activities of the Ethnic Minorities' Council and Council of Religions. In 2008 the Center presented two important publications: "Religions in Georgia" and "Ethnic Groups in Georgia".

A talk show entitled "Italian Yard" has been broadcasted by Georgian Public Broadcasting (GPB) on a weekly basis for several years. The title of the project reflects the existing phenomena of Tbilisi and other cities of Georgia, being termed as "Italian yards". These are the inner yards, detached from the street where neighbors come together. Traditionally, such houses were extremely multiethnic. For decades, neighbors were united in meeting everyday needs (common tap water, common entrance, gate connecting and separating them from the rest of the world, etc.). The life in the yard was very active. Neighbors were familiar not only with each other, but also with their relatives and friends. As a rule, they spoke several languages used by the neighbors. Inhabitants with different ethnic and religious affiliation were pretty well aware of the traditions, habits, norms, behaviors, and ways of life of each other.

A collection of documentary films (9 films) on DVD about the history and culture of ethnic minorities residing in Georgia (Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Jews, Greeks, Kurds, Kists, Udines, Ukrainians, and Ossetians) was prepared by the Georgian Public Broadcasting in 2008, in cooperation with USAID and the UN Association in Georgia. The films provide us with the positive sides of diversity, contributing to the development of the sense of civic identity.

The First Electronic Database (www.diversity.ge) is fully devoted to and covers a full array of issues related to ethnic minorities. The web-site is trilingual (Georgian, Russian and English), thus improving the accessibility of the information resources for all audiences. The users can get information on ethnic minority related legislation and familiarize themselves with the projects and programs carried out by the state and different local and international organizations.

The project "Talks on Tolerance" was initiated and implemented by the Center for Democracy and Civic Integration. Citizens of Georgia, living in a multi-national country, need to know about each other's religion and culture for promoting and strengthening the process of mutual respect. Students from the 10th and 11th grades of various nationalities and religions participated in the project. They visited a Christian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, a Mosque, a Synagogue, the Evangelic-Lutheran Church of Reconciliation and a Catholic Church, holding meetings with clergy who talked about different religions. The participants had the task of writing essays on tolerance within the framework of the project. One participant wrote "Maybe you do not love everybody, but it is necessary to respect all. The respect is enough to elevate tolerance inside, and as soon you get to this state, you will understand that a load has been taken off. You will realize that life is much more beautiful.. . My advice would be: "Respect your neighbor and you will be respected too, if not by them — by the God for sure, and it is the most important thing in life. Try to be tolerant and encourage others. Make life beautiful for people in order to get happiness back".

According to data from 2008, three councils for religions function in Georgia: the Council of Traditional Confessions (Catholic Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, Evangelist-Baptist Church, Communities of Jews and Muslims); the Council of Religions at the Ombudsman of Georgia (almost all religious associations except Orthodox Churches and Jehovah's Witnesses); and the Coordinating Council of Religions for the support of State building. These councils act under the auspices of the Patriarchate of Georgia, in uniting traditional confes-

sions. The aim of the councils is to protect freedom of religion in Georgia and deepen the culture of tolerance.¹¹⁷

The clergy provide a good example of respect for *others*. During the working process on the project implemented by the UNSCO Chair in Intercultural Dialogue at Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, representatives of the clergy noted that they usually attend the religious holidays of other traditions. This practice is very common also among ordinary believers. Here is an interesting example: there is no Mosque in one of the villages not far from Tbilisi, where Azerbaijanis comprise the majority of the population. The reconstructed basilica of St. George is the shared Holy place for the Christians and Muslims. The villagers call the basilica *the Old Man* (mokhutsi in Georgian).

Summary

The centuries-long tradition of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in Georgia, which went through a range of difficulties during the last couple of decades, today is considered the main value of the country. Politics in the sphere of cultural and religious diversity nurtures respect towards *others*; the formation of civil consciousness has become more and more comprehensive and rational, a perspective that has a certain timeliness. From the strict “we — them” opposition, the accent has moved to the experience of shared history, which cultivated similarities between peoples with different cultural and religious traditions.

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¹¹⁷ *Religiebi sakartveloshi*. Tbilisi, 2008. P. 49.

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CHAPTER 7

ISLAMIC-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE IN CONTEMPORARY KAZAKHSTAN

Laura Yerekesheva (Kazakhstan)

The history of Kazakhstan as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious space has always been linked with the interaction between cultures and religions of the West and East. Intensive interplay of various cultural systems for more than two thousand years has paved a way to their co-existence and the elaboration of a specific cultural code that allowed synthesizing the best of different cultures. The Great Silk Route considerably enhanced and fixed this particular paradigm. On one hand, this caused the spread in the territory that now comprises Kazakhstan of all world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam) and pools of local and other beliefs (such as the Tengri cult, Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Mitraism). On the other hand, the Great Silk Road led to the creation of specific syncretism in the culture of the local population, which has always favorably distinguished this region, and thus paved a way to forming the tradition of tolerance and respect.

With the introduction of Islam, these vectors were given further boost. The Muslim Renaissance of the X-XIII centuries in the Arab world and Middle Asia became a linking thread joining the achievements of Ancient Greece with the European Christian Renaissance, which occurred later. One could say that without the bright figures of early medieval Muslim thought, such as al-Ghazali, ibn-Rushd (Averroes), ibn-Sina (Avicenna), and al-Farabi, it would not have been possible for European scholiasts to become acquainted with either Aristotle or Plato. Though it is also worth noting the tremendous translation work accomplished with the help of the Christian (particularly Nestorian) community, which speaks for itself.

Later, the spread in Central Asia of the ideas of Western enlightenment and modernity enhanced the understanding of co-existence and the interactions between different cultures. The idea of the complementarity of East and West cultures was highlighted and further propagated by XIX-XX century Kazakh philosophers and enlighteners such as Chokan Valikhanov, Abai, Shakarim, Mashkhur-Jusup Kopei-uly. The idea of the peaceful co-existence of the values of different cultures and religion thus became the basis for the further development of tolerance.

Religious Interaction in the Early Mediaeval Period

The affirmation of Christianity and Islam in various spaces of the world did not bypass Central Asia, and particularly the territory comprising what is now modern Kazakhstan. The appearance and spread of Christianity and Islam were due to the general developmental trends of the societies of the East and West, particularly of Byzantium, Syria, Persia, Turk khanates, Arab khalifats, and the Mongol empire. During rather short (from the historical

point of view) periods starting from their uneven origins, both Christianity and Islam were able to infuse their own ideologies and paradigms into the societies of Central Asia.

Historically numerous branches of Christianity developed in Central Asia. Long before the Russian colonization of the region, the spread of Christianity in Central Asia already had its bright history highlighted by the activity of the Eastern Syrian (Nestorian or Duophysites), Western Syrian (Yacobite or Monophysites), and Melkite (branch of Syrian Church which accepted the decisions of the Chalcedon Council of 451) Churches. Yacobites dominated in Armenia, Egypt and Western Syria; while Nestorians spread in the East (from Byzantium), i. e. in Eastern Syria, Persia¹¹⁸ (Sassanid Empire), Parthia, Sogd, Marghiana (Central Asia), China¹¹⁹, India¹²⁰.

The divisions among the Melkite, Yacobite and Nestorian Churches were mainly theological, concerning differing interpretations of the combination of the deist and human nature in Jesus Christ¹²¹. Nestorians and Yacobites began spreading in the region due to their persecution in Byzantium and further expulsion from the East (including China) in IV-V AD. Nestorians were condemned at the Efes Ecumenical Council (in 431), and the bearer of the idea — the bishop “Nestorius was deposed and after spending several years in a monastery in Constantinople, he was exiled to Egypt where he remained for the rest of his life”¹²². The main theme of the debates concerned the divine and human nature of Christ and their reconciliation: “the relation between this divine Son of God, the eternal Logos, and the human person Jesus of Nazareth who lived in the first century”¹²³. “The Monophysites, followers of the Kirill of Alexandria, believed that although Christ had two natures, he subsisted only in the divine nature, which they held had absorbed the human one. The Duophysites, followers of Nestorius, and therefore also called Nestorians, instead emphasized the dual nature of Christ. In 451, the Ecumenical Council held in Chalcedon stated that both natures coexisted in Christ, without their having been fused or subject to change, and that the two natures were separated

¹¹⁸ “In the V century the Persian Church officially split from the Church of the Western Roman Empire, particularly from the Church of Antioch. Nestorianism was officially adopted by the Persian Church in a series of synods which followed the Council of Chalcedon”. In: Zuanni Ch. *The Earliest Archaeological Evidence of Christianity in Kazakhstan // Kazakhstan. Religions and Societies in the History of Central Eurasia*. Turin, London, Venice, New York, 2009. P. 69.

¹¹⁹ See: *Mingana A. The Early Spread of Christianity in Central Asia and Far East // Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 9 (1925), P. 297–371. In China starting already since 635 there existed a Nestorian community founded by A-lo-beng. More in: Ломанов А. В. *Христианство и китайская культура*. М., 2002; Бартольд В. В. *Собр. соч. в 9 тт.* Т. 3. М., 1964. С. 275. Datsyshen mentions that there are the assumptions that the visits of Syrian missionaries to China could take place as early as in II century. Дацышен В. Г. *Христианство в Китае: история и современность*. М., 2007, с. 16.

¹²⁰ See: *Macbride J. D. The Syrian Church in India*. Oxford, 1856; Richards W. J. *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas, Otherwise Called the Syrian Christians of Malabar*. London, 1908. After Ecumenical Council in Efes (431), the Nestorian patriarch sent Nestorians with their families to Malabar Coast of India to set up a Nestorian community, which thrived there during IX–XIV centuries. In: Матвеев К. П. *Из истории несторианства в Индии // Советская этнография*. 1968. N 6. с. 123–127.

¹²¹ Nestorian Church (or *Duophysitism*) was condemned at the Oecumenical Council that took place in Efes in 431. The Duophysites view that distinguished two natures of Christ, admitted only relative conjunction between them. While the Orthodox formula adopted later at the Ecumenical Council taken place in Chalcedon in 451, stated the non-junction and non-differentiation of two natures of Christ — divine and human — and the preserving these special features that are coincided in one person. More in: Никитин А. Б. *Христианство в Центральной Азии*. 1984. с. 122.

¹²² *Wilken R. Nestorius // Encyclopedia of Religion*. Second Edition. L., 2005. Vol. 10. P. 6483.

¹²³ *Ibid.* P. 6482–6483.

or divided into two logical subjects. The Duophysites thereby refuted both the Nestorian and the Monophysite tenets¹²⁴.

The Nestorians became very active in Central Asia. The first mention of the Merv episcopate (near town of Mary in modern Turkmenistan), which later was transformed into the metropolis, is dated back to 334 AD.¹²⁵ Merv was an important center of the spread of Christianity under the Sassanids. In the V century the Merv episcopate was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan¹²⁶. This meant his becoming one of the high hierarchies of the Christian Church in the East, under which several Bishops were subordinate. Interestingly, Ilya, the metropolitan of Merv, was also known as the “Apostle of the Turks” because of the fact that he was the first who converted many of the Turkic tribes who inhabited the Steppe near the Merv oasis to Christianity¹²⁷.

As it was one of the cultural centers of that time, there was also an Orthodox (Catholic) metropolis in Merv. In the middle of the XIII century, Samarkand also became a Nestorian Metropolitan settlement¹²⁸. In Semirechiye and southern Kazakhstan, the Nestorian church became widespread in the VII-VIII centuries, a time marked by the opening of Christian churches in Taraz and its environs, Merke, Nevaket, and other places.

During the Arab conquering of the region there was competition between these Christian church branches. The Arabs mainly favored the Nestorians. The XI century «Khalifat decreed that the bishops of Yacobite and Melkit churches should subdue the Nestorian catholicos and fulfill its edicts ... since 987 the catholicos (even in spite of the desire of bishops) were approved and supported by khalif»¹²⁹.

This interesting fact can be interpreted as the khalif policy to establish a monopoly on governing the multi-religious sphere. It is worth noticing that in the first centuries of the Arab conquering of the region both religions rather peacefully co-existed, along with many others (such as Shamanism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism). It was the Arab historians, particularly, ibn-Haukal, who introduced and fixed the information about the Christian communities of that time¹³⁰. In general, during the Abbasids (750–1258) Nestorians like other Christian branches became known as *dhimmi*, being under the protection of the Muslims, but deprived of certain rights. This status paved a way to their activity in promoting the Greek culture in the Arab world, particularly, in translating the Greek scientific philosophical, and

¹²⁴ Zuanni Ch. The Earliest Archaeological Evidence of Christianity in Kazakhstan // Kazakhstan. Religions and Societies in the History of Central Eurasia. Turin, London, Venice, New York, 2009. P. 69.

¹²⁵ Бартольд В. В. Собр. соч. в 9 тт. Т. 3. М., 1964. С. 271; Никитин А. Б. Христианство в Центральной Азии. 1984. С. 121–137.

¹²⁶ Древний Мерв в свидетельствах письменных источников / Сост. Г. Кошеленко, А. Губаев, А. Бадер, В. Гаиров. Ашхабад, 1994. С. 61.

¹²⁷ Древний Мерв в свидетельствах письменных источников / Сост. Г. Кошеленко, А. Губаев, А. Бадер, В. Гаиров. Ашхабад, 1994. С. 95–96.

¹²⁸ Бартольд В. В. Собр. соч. в 9 тт. Т. 3. М., 1964. С. 275–278; Бартольд В. В. Собр. соч. в 9 тт. Т. 1. М., 1964. С. 317–318. As Bartold suggested, the Christians already had in the VI century their own bishop in Samarkand. — Бартольд В. В. Собр. соч. в 9 тт. Т. 3. М., 1964. С. 272.

¹²⁹ This interesting fact could be interpreted as the inclination of *Khalifat* to establish a specific monopoly on governing all religious affairs and not only as regards to Islam. At the same time it shows us a specificity of Islam and Islam-based governing connected with the junction and non-separateness of two spheres — religious and political.

¹³⁰ Zuanni Ch. The Earliest Archaeological Evidence of Christianity in Kazakhstan // Kazakhstan. Religions and Societies in the History of Central Eurasia. Turin, London, Venice, New York, 2009. P. 69.

medical treatises into Syrian and later into Arabic language¹³¹. The conciliation between the Nestorians and Yacobites took place in 1142¹³².

Under the Mongol rulers Christianity became further exposed in the region. Along with the Nestorians and Yacobites, the Roman Catholic Church in the XIII century also became rather active in the region. The missionary and strategic tasks set before the special missions headed by Plano Carpini (1245–1247) and Willem (Guillaume) de Roebruck (1253–1255) became a wonderful page in the book of history between East and West. Plano Carpini, an Italian born Franciscan monk and close friend and follower of Francisc Assisi, was given the *bull*a of Pope Innocentius IV to search outpossibilities for establishing favorable relations with the Mongol-Tatars (whose empire had reached the climax by that time and had expanded its power as far as Central and Eastern Europe) while, at the same time, learning about the religious situation and spreading the Christian teaching among the nomads. The second mission, lead by Minorit monk, participant in the VI Christian Crusade Willem (Guillaume) de Roebruck (1253–1255), was even more successful not only in depicting the religious and other traditions of the people of Central Asia, but also in spreading the knowledge of Catholic creed among the Mongols and the Nestorians who formed the inner circle of Mongol Great Khan — Mangu (Munke) Khan¹³³.

However, these branches of Christianity, like Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Manicheism, being popular mainly in oases and along Silk Road trade routes, never became totally mainstreamed, and step by step, during the XIII-XIV centuries were pressed back into the periphery of religious thinking and practice in the region¹³⁴.

The Specificity of Interaction between Islam and Orthodox Christianity in Colonial Kazakhstan

Along with the affirmation of Islam in the region as a key *modus vivendi*, and the decline of early eastern Christianity, mainly Nestorianism, and other religions such as Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, the religious picture became less of a mosaic, though it was still far from homogeneous. In the course of its spreading influence, Islam had to adapt its basic characteristics through adjusting more or less to the local socio-cultural features which were predominantly based on the pool of primordial beliefs such as Tengrianism and Shamanism. In the form of so-called “folk Islam”, with the considerable inclusion of Sufi elements, Islam gradually became the dominant trend of the religious life of the people in the region.

¹³¹ Moosa M. Nestorian Church // Encyclopedia of Religion. Second Edition. L., 2005. Vol. 10. P. 6480.

¹³² Бартольд В. В. Собр. соч. в 9 тт. Т. 3. М., 1964. С. 276.

¹³³ Путешествия в восточные страны Плано Карпини и Гильома де Рубрука. Алматы, 1993. С. 128–146. Although Great Khan — Mangu (Munke) Khan (1251–1259) was inclined to Christianity (known to him in a form of a Nestorian teaching), however he continued following the shamanic beliefs. As Guillaume de Roebruck witnessed, Mongu Khan kept the Fast in some days, celebrated the Easter, however everyday he followed auspicious rites, using the sheep's shoulder-blade to tell fortunes: “Khan doesn't do anything in this whole world without preliminarily finding a council in these bones...”. — Carpini, Roebruck 1993. P. 131. This episode is a bright sample of primordial beliefs so deeply embedded in culture that they became a culturally justified and culturally sanctified tradition with which other new beliefs should be reckoned with. This explains that Khan's Christian beliefs could be defined as nominal ones and from the normative Christian (Catholic) standpoint he was still regarded as a pagan.

¹³⁴ According to some researchers in Semirechiye (southern Kazakhstan) the Nestorian church existed relatively long, till the end of XIV century as was supported by the archeological discoveries of numerous religious artefacts. See: Орынбеков М. С. Генезис религиозности в Казахстане. Алматы., 2005. С. 174–185.

The Russian Empire's more than 100 year colonial policy in Central Asia (starting from 1731 when the ruler Abulkhair-khan of the Middle Horde in the Kazakh Steppe accepted the sovereignty of Russia), affected interactions in the religious field. One of the instruments of colonial policy, Orthodox Christianity, had to adapt to the local beliefs, as had Islam previously. In practice, the adaptation was seen, in the elaboration by the empire of such religious policy (especially in the early stages), as a means to attract the followers of other non-Christian beliefs (or so-called *inovertsy*) and thereby make Russia the patron (protector) of all the people. The policy of tolerating all beliefs, established by Russian Imperatriz Anna Ioannovna and Catherine the Great, became a specific characteristic feature of their reign and resulted, for example, in institutionalizing Islam. For example, the "Orenburg Mahomedan Spiritual Assembly", set up in 1788, became the first organized and state supported body, which was perceived as a tool of religion to use in strengthening the state. As such, the Assembly had to follow the example of the Sinod as the supreme governing body dealing with all matters relating to Orthodox religion.

On the other hand, in the process of governing the new Asiatic subjects, the evolvement of *inovertsy* into the orbit of the Christian (Orthodox) religious model, which was traditional for Russian society, also began to take shape.

These two dimensions, more or less, became the key elements in the Russian Empire's religious policy in Central Asia in the beginning stage of the process.

In the course of the Russian colonization of Central Asia, starting from the middle of the XVIII century, Christianity again, this time Orthodoxy, began penetrating into the region with the help of Russian settlements and the Cossacks concentrated mainly along the Frontier lines. With the fixing, affirmation, and spread of metropolis as well as with the slow but constant process of involving the local population into the orbit of colonial development, the contours of political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural inter-influence began to evolve. Orthodox Christianity played a significant role in this process, since the adaptation of the Russian imperial socio-cultural system to the new environment developed along religious lines, as Orthodoxy was the basis of the Russian socio-cultural space. Religion was able to stabilize the cultural space in the new environment and, at the same time, worked to transform this space according to its own algorithm.

The spread of Christianity was a prolonged process experiencing ups-and-downs and depending on the political situation in the empire. The relative success of early stage evangelization at the beginning of the XIX century was due to several factors. On one hand, one could mention the local specificity, such as a syncretic worldview of the nomads of the Kazakh Steppe or the low socio-economic status of converts, aggravated by crop failures or *dzhut*. On the other hand, many of the changes were due to the much broader political context of an empire trying to position itself as a faith protecting state. The policy of peaceful inclusion, initially based on the principle formulated early on by Catherine the Great and then generally supported by the Alexander I, stated the following: "We own you, you surrender to us and pay the taxes; for all this you may live and believe as you want"¹³⁵. In Eurasia this aspiration towards religious and social quiet had historical parallels with the Mongol Golden Horde whose sovereigns proposed the same views in order to allow the vast and multi-religious population

¹³⁵ Cited in: Ислам в Российской империи (законодательные акты, описания, статистика) / Сост. Д. Ю. Арапов. М., 2001. С. 19.

of the conquered land to adopt (as their own cultural system) ¹³⁶ the new reign eagerly. For the Tatar-Mongols themselves the objective was to build a safe system of socio-economic management and administering.

At the end of the XVIII century, the religious policy of the Russian empire also tried to reflect the principle of peaceful inclusion, mixed up with the ideas of the Enlightenment and humanism. As the policy took hold, it looked toward extending a political protectorate for economic interests and the status and stability of the great colonial power far away. As was mentioned above, in practice these ideas were reflected in the policy favoring Islam, which became officially institutionalized.

The local context and specificity of the nomadic way of life have played significant role in the culture of Kazakhstan. The world perception of the nomads followed the ancient ecological paradigm of cosmic rhythms in their economic, social, and spiritual life. Their nature-based philosophical conceptions contained the syncretic, holistic dimension and were characterized by tolerance, being open to the inclusion of new elements, a favorable perception of “the other”, and the strong influence of the archaic primordial layers¹³⁷. It could be said that these conceptions had a purely ecological dimension, but these features paved the way for the adaptation of any religion in the region and allowed Orthodoxy to find a positive response in the local population, as had Islam previously.

The specificity of social links in nomadic society was deeply connected with the general economic model of activity and was characterized by maintaining traditional kin relations within the vast dispersed space. This paved the way for the three-part (*three-Zhuz or three-Horde*) division, brightly reflected in the specific contacts of each *Zhuz* with its neighbors. The contact zones became a place of co-existence and inter-influence between numerous paradigms of development. Not surprisingly, the openness and favorable perception of “the other” simultaneously resulted in a wide interaction with others. For example, the interactions washed away existing divisions between separate “nomadic-settled populations” in contact zones, which led to the special type of economic activity¹³⁸, while the dispersed groups of the same ethnos drew into the orbits of neighboring cultures. geographically and historically the contact zones of the nomads varied, ranging from the socio-cultural spaces of the Russian empire (based on Orthodoxy) to Bukhara, Khiva, Samarqand, and Eastern Turkestan (based on Islam). All this activity could not help reflecting the quality, pace, and borders of inter-influence and inter-absorption of various cultural and, subsequently, religious models.

Based on what was said previously, the process of converting the Kazakhs to Orthodoxy took place during the early stage of colonization, in the late XVIII and beginning of the XIX

¹³⁶ Under the first Mongol-Tatar rulers the basis of the socio-cultural systems of Central Asia and Ancient *Rus* (Russia) — religion — was in fact unchanged. As such, “the Mongols, like all shamanists, equally treated and respected all religions and equally freed the Muslim, Christian and Buddhist clergy from all kinds of taxes and duties. In Mongolia itself Christianity was spread as long as before Genghis Khan; the strong tribe of *kereit* was known to follow the Christian faith... The most favourable condition for the Christians was during the reign of the great khan Guyuk (1246–1248), who had received the Christian upbringing». — Бартольд В. В. О христианстве в Туркестане в домонгольский период (По поводу семиреченских надписей) // Бартольд В. В. Собр. соч. в 9 тт. Т. 1. М., 1964.

¹³⁷ The archaic primordial layers were influential also because of the fact that the way of living of the nomads of the Steppe in fact had not basically undergone any radical changes till the end of XIX century.

¹³⁸ Khazanov, for example, states the inter-targeted influence of the nomadic and the settled societies that has led to such phenomenon of nomadism as its inseparable and indispensable link with the outer world. See: *Хазанов А. М. Кочевники и внешний мир*. Изд. 3-е, доп. Алматы, 2002, С. 68–69.

centuries, and it was caused mainly by economic factors, such as poverty or the loss of kin relations (although such cases were relatively rare). The interaction in the contact zones, mainly along the special Frontier Line that also formed a kind of buffer zone between the nomadic and settled population, has led to dissolving borders: geographic, behavioral, and mental. Economic factors—bad harvest, cattle plague (*dzhut*)—caused the Kazakhs to save the lives of their children by giving them to the Russian border officials or the Cossacks for upbringing. At the same time, people sought “eternal Russian citizenship” to avoid the economic calamities, for which the prerequisite was the conversion to Orthodoxy¹³⁹.

The other category of those who appealed for “introduction into the faith of the Christian law” was the indigenous population who, unlike the first, had no relatives. They expressed the desire to “take in the saint christening and to remain in the local place in the Cossack cavalry” or “to take in the faith of the Greek belief and obtain Russian citizenship...”.¹⁴⁰ The acceptance of Christianity was considered one way to achieve a relatively stable economic situation, whether within the Cossack service or as a serf (*krepostnoi*). Here one can eagerly see parallels with the circumstances of conversion in many parts of the world, for example, on the Indian subcontinent where the converts mainly belonged to the low caste or were “untouchables” (*harijans*) who considered the conversion to Catholicism or Islam as the opportunity to upgrade their economic and social status¹⁴¹.

The second half of the XIX century saw a change in the perception of life by the Asiatic subjects of the empire. By the end of the 19th century, the enlightenment processes among the local elites of Central Asia had paved the way for the growth of national consciousness and the formation of ethnic identity based on religion (Islam) and their own cultural traditions. It is significant that the focus had shifted by this time regarding the Asiatic subjects of the empire: from *inovertsy* (as was practiced in the XVIII and early XIX centuries) toward *inorodtsy* (i. e. those of “other” than Russians origin). As early as in 1822, General-Governor of Siberia M. M. Speransky redefined the focus, which took into account the Kazakhs way of life but aimed to prepare them for “settled living”. The shift in the focus, anticipated at the time, later became more profound.

This seemingly small accentuation of redefinition was a crucial one, as it reflected not only the changing perception by the Russian elite of the imperial subjects, but also reflected the changes the colonies were undergoing. The old principle of imperial identity was replaced by the ripening perception of the nation-state, which began to be channeled into new forms of administration. The shift from the religious (*inovertsy*) to ethnic (*inorodtsy*) identity was evident in the growing sentiments of ethnic (national) self-consciousness among both Russian and Asiatic subjects of empire. The enlightenment and nationalism, especially vivid at the beginning of the XX century, which grew along with pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic feelings, paved the way for actualizing the role of Islam among Central Asians. This actualization was further reinforced by the Tsar’s 1905 Decree on religious freedom (both as a forced measure towards pacifying the population and as an echo of the first Russian revolution) which further promoted the decline of the status of Orthodoxy among the “other believers”. At the turn of the XX century there was a de-evangelization process during which not only the Kazakhs, but

¹³⁹ ЦГА РК. Ф. 4. Оп. 1. Д. 205. Л. 63.

¹⁴⁰ ЦГА РК. Ф. 4. Оп. 1. Д. 205. Л. 63, 604.

¹⁴¹ In detail see: Ашрафян К. З. Шариат и власть в мусульманских государствах средневековой Индии // Восток-Ориент. 1995. N 1. С. 74–75; Юрлова Е. С. “Неприкасаемые” в Индии. М., 1989. С. 118–121; Алам М. Индо-исламское взаимодействие в Индии в средние века // Восток-Ориент. 1995. N 4. С. 43–45..

also the Tatars, Chuvashs, and even some Russians inhabiting the Steppe, petitioned to adopt Islam, although not all of them were granted permission [125, c. 37]. For example, in 1914 there were 30 petitions from previously converted people to the Semipalatinsk governor asking permission to revert to their previous beliefs [120, c. 119].

The main issue — the stability and maintenance of the empire — led, in particular, to the Stolypin reforms and modernization in general, one of the echoes of which was the new wave of Russian colonizers coming in the region who the locals considered a direct threat to both their economic security and cultural identity. Due to these considerations, the Christianization policy in Central Asia could not be a successful priority, which, as a result, led to a rather stable division between two worlds — Christian and Muslim, each based on the ethnic ground and, as a rule, defined by “center-periphery” links.

Thus, by the end of the XIX century Central Asian subjects of the empire had started to become more actively involved in the processes of affirming their own ethnic identity (made possible through the enlightenment, education, modernization). This, in turn, paved the way for reconsidering and affirming the symbols of their own cultural system and through that affirmation led to new perception of the vital elements of their own traditional religion. As a result, ethnic and religious identities became superimposed on nationalistic sentiments, which were growing stronger, and led to the simultaneous decrease in the status of the “other” or the “religious other”, particularly, the status of Orthodoxy.

In these circumstances, any missionary activity was doomed to failure and evangelization could lead only to ruptured relations with “the other”.

The steadiness of the traditional socio-cultural system expressed in Islam, which has adjusted to the local soil and absorbed the whole pool of primordial archaic beliefs, has had dual results. During the gradual appearance and slow affirmation in the Kazakh Steppe of a new — Christian — religion, priority was undoubtedly preserving the traditional world-perception.

The dialogue between old and new is not surprising, bearing in mind that the definition of the cultural system embraced all walks of life and considering the rather slow pace of the changes it was undergoing. From a historical viewpoint 100 to 150 years is quite a short period. Unlike Islam, which came to the region where the poly-religious background and poly-theistic views were a commonplace and national identity issues were not on the agenda, Christianity was less “fortunate” here. By the time of its appearance the local arena was already occupied by the same monotheistic religion of “the Scripture” that had actively been part of the process of forming the national identity. Islam had been interwoven into the culture and had become a significant part of the cultural identity in the Steppe. In this context, Christianity had relatively few chances to take hold, and it could not expect quick and energetic results. Religious transformation occurred only in the peripheral part of the Steppe, both in a geographical and strata sense. At the beginning of the XIX century, the Russian authorities did not force the evangelization process, but tried to adjust themselves to the new situation and elaborated a corresponding policy within the strict framework of the state-religion symbiosis ideology. Later, in the second half of the XIX century, on the contrary, they advocated a powerful, aggressive splash and pressure in this field, actively performed by such statesmen as N. Ilminsky (in the educational sphere) and G. Kolpakovsky (the general-governor of the Turkestan *krai*).

The historical experience of coexistence of various beliefs existed in the region. The specificity of the nomadic open, cosmic, holistic perception of the world played a significant part in their *modus vivendi* and paved the way for the precious phenomenon of tolerance that

enlarged the frames of perception of “the other” and their knowledge of the world in general. That is why Christianity among the Kazakhs, notwithstanding the modest results, nevertheless gained the right to exist (though full-scale evangelization, of course, did not succeed). In comparison with the southern contact zone, where the metropolis adapted to the Islam-based environment and was not aimed at changing it at all (from a religious perspective), in the Steppe the process of Christianization met with relative success.

The historical acquaintance with other religious systems never fades entirely, but has an input in forming the historical memory of this or that ethnos, cultural heritage, and intercultural interplay. Finally, any changes in the cultural system require time to develop, as does the all-embracing comprehension of this aspect of cultural and religious intersection. Changes occur when the participating cultures overcome ethnic and religious exclusiveness and, as colonial experience shows, imperial and colonial consciousness. In this regard, modern scholars have a unique opportunity to study these processes, abandoning lopsided attitudes in analyzing “the other”.

Modern Aspects of Islam and Christianity in the Republic of Kazakhstan

The specific feature of contemporary Kazakhstan is its multi-confessional and multi-ethnic heterogeneity — there are more than 40 religious confessions and denominations. As in the case of ethnic diversity, in 1990s religious plurality could have become the destabilizing factor. However, due to the historical traditions of rather peaceful coexistence of the various religious communities, primarily Islamic (Sunni) and Christian (Orthodoxy), and due to the high degree of tolerance embedded in nomadic culture, the absence of inter-religious strife and the rather well balanced state policy have made inter-confessional tolerance normative.

Considerable changes in religious sphere took place in independent Kazakhstan, including striking (compared to the Soviet period) growth in the number of religious entities, up from 661 in 1989, to 2192 in 1998, and 3259, as of January 1, 2006. In 2003, the proportion of religious communities was: Islam 53.7%; Orthodox 7.8%; Catholic 2.9%; Christian-Baptist 12.3%; Lutheran 3.2%; new sects 11.1%; and others 3%.¹⁴² It is worth noting the reduction Islamic dominance, which had never been absolute, which speaks to the multi-confessional character of Kazakhstani society: “During independence the number of Orthodox parishes increased in 4 times and Catholic parishes doubled. There are more than 1000 Protestant missions and prayer houses and 21 Jewish communities, and, for the first time in many centuries, a Buddhist temple was built”.¹⁴³ There number of followers of **Islam** also grew, from 46 communities in 1989, 679 in 1996, more than 1000 in 1998, 1652 in 2003, and 1766 as of 1 January 2006.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Джалилов З. Г. Ислам и общество в современном Казахстане. Алматы, 2006. С. 74–75, 185.

¹⁴³ Назарбаев Н. А. Выступление на втором съезде мировых и традиционных религий // Казахстанская правда, 13 сентября 2006 г.

¹⁴⁴ Султангалиева А. К. Ислам в Казахстане: история, этничность, общество. Алматы, 1998. С. 60; Джалилов З. Г. Ислам и общество в современном Казахстане. С. 74–75; Иванов В., Трофимов Я. Религии Казахстана. Справочник. Алматы, 1999. С. 5.

Data provided by the Spiritual Assembly of the Muslims of Kazakhstan (so-called DUMK) gives higher figures for both the followers of Islam and Islamic religious organizations: in 2008 “there were about 9 million Muslims in the republic, which comprises 67% of the population. Out of 2337 Muslim organizations acting in Kazakhstan, 2334 belong to Sunni and 3 to Shia Islam”; “Muslim organizations possess 2195 mosques”¹⁴⁵.

The historical form of Islam in Kazakhstan is Sunni Islam of *Khanafi mazkhab*, characterized by a rather high degree of tolerance towards other believers and the use of norms of regular law (*adat*) and analogous thinking in the legal field (*al-kiyas*), which in the theological field (in *fikh*) paves the way for the “use of rational attitudes in resolving legal issues”, and which originates in Aristotelian logic¹⁴⁶

The followers of *Khanafi Mazkhab* comprise a majority of the Kazakhstani Muslims of various ethnic origins. The exception is the Chechen and Ingush followers of the Sunnism of *Shafia mazkhab* which has been strongly influenced by *Khanafi and Malikit mazkhab*s¹⁴⁷. “Institutionally, the Sunnism of *Shafia mazkhab* is not a formal structure though there are some mosques, particularly the Almaty mosque that opened in 1998 and in Pavlodar the mosque “The House of Kazakhstan” or so-called Vainah mosque, officially registered in February 2001. The Muslim world the Sunnism of *Khanbali mazkhab* is characterized by the denial of the freedom of ideas in religion, fanatic observance of religious rites and the legal norms of *sharia*, and by the restricted usage of *kiyas*. Such practices “began pouring into the Kazakhstan”¹⁴⁸ with increased international links.

The institutional milieu reflected the changes in the religious sphere, first in the establishment in January 1990 of the Spiritual Body of the Muslims of Kazakhstan (or DUMK), headed by Mufti Ratbek-kazhi Nysanbayuly, and later, since June 2000, by Mufti Absattar-kazhi Derbisali. There is such specificity of Islam in the country that “the majority of the population of Kazakhstan consider themselves Muslims. But I’d like to stress that the dominance of Islam in Kazakhstan by no means opposes the full-scale functioning of other beliefs”¹⁴⁹.

The independent Kazakhstan **Russian Orthodox Church (ROC)** was also institutionalized. In general Orthodoxy can be considered the second, after Islam, historically developed traditional religion in Kazakhstan. While there were only 55 parishes in 1956, as of 1 January 2008 the Orthodox Church had 281 religious entities in Kazakhstan, including 257 cult buildings¹⁵⁰. As for of 1 January of 2003 the Russian Orthodox Church had 222 parishes and 8 monasteries, compared to 62 parishes in 1989, and 131 in 1993¹⁵¹.

Initially, in structural terms, the Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan performed as the Kazakhstan Eparchy, which in 1991 was divided into three eparchial bodies, Almaty-Semopalatinsk (with Astana), Shymkent, and Uralsk. Additionally, since 2002, “the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church decreed that Archbishop of Astana and Almaty Alexiy had to oversee the spiritual

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/121/37/lang,ru/>

¹⁴⁶ Ислам. Энциклопедический словарь. М., 1991. С. 137.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. с. 295.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/121/37/lang,ru/>

¹⁴⁹ The speech of the President of Kazakhstan at the Second Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/24/33/lang,ru/>

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/blogcategory/22/36/lang,ru/>

¹⁵¹ Иванов В. А., Трофимов Я. Ф. Религии Казахстана. Справочник. Алматы, 2003. С. 69–70.

life of Orthodox Christians living in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China (currently there are no Orthodox Churches in China)¹⁵². On May 7, 2003, the Synod decided to establish a Metropolitan district in Kazakhstan which would comprise the Astana, Uralsk, and Shymkent eparchies, with Astana as its center and Metropolitan Mefodiy (Nemtsov) as its Head¹⁵³.

The official visit to Kazakhstan of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill in January 2010 gave new impetus towards developing Orthodoxy in the country, and became a step in strengthening relations between Orthodox and Islam communities. The Uspenskiy Cathedral in Astana, blessed by the Patriarch, has come to be known as the biggest Christian Cathedral in Central Asia (its height is 68 meters and the footprint is 2000 square meters), which can embrace up to 4000 worshippers at a time.

The high status of Orthodoxy in the republic and the state policy in the religious field is evident in the institutionalization, since 2006, of the Orthodox Christmas and Kurban-ait festivals as non-working days: "For the first time in our history the important religious festivals were declared non-working days, so to let the believers fully perform the cults and rites"¹⁵⁴. It is also evident in the President's annual address, on January 7th, to all Kazakhstanis and especially to Orthodox Christians, congratulating them on the birth of Jesus Christ.

Kazakhstan constantly stresses that the idea of confessional interaction as vital for regional stability originated in its history and geography. The other form of this policy can be traced in the attempts to strengthen the dialogue between Islam and Christianity, both in national and foreign policies.

The state policy in the confessional dialogue with Christianity also embraces **Catholicism** and cooperation with the Vatican. The spread of Catholicism in Kazakhstan is related to the settlement of (starting as early as the XIX century) Poles, Germans, and Ukrainians in the region. Since the 1990s, the Catholicism has undergone some structural-administrative transformations. In spring 1991, in particular, the *Apostolic Administratura* of Kazakhstan and Middle Asia was established, which included also Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, with the centre in Karaganda. In August 1999, the *Apostolic Administratura* of Kazakhstan was transformed into the Karaganda Eparchy (embracing parishes of the Karaganda and Eastern Kazakhstan regions). Then three *Apostolic Administraturas* were established in Astana, Almaty, and Atyrau. Further, following decisions by the former Pope John Paul II, the *Apostolic Administratura* in Astana was upgraded to the Archdiocese of Saint Mary, and consequently the Episcopal Conference was established in Kazakhstan. Currently there are 90 Catholic communities in the structure of Roman Catholic Church in Kazakhstan, out of which 82 are registered as judicial entities and branches. They possess more than 40 temples, and about 200 chapels and prayer houses. More than 60 priests (mainly foreigners — Italians, Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Koreans, etc.) and 70 nuns work there¹⁵⁵.

In the international arena, Kazakhstan became the first CIS country to sign on September 24, 1998 the "Agreement on Mutual Cooperation between the Government of Kazakhstan

¹⁵² Ibid. P. 70.

¹⁵³ <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/blogcategory/22/36/lang.ru/>

¹⁵⁴ The speech of the President of Kazakhstan at the Second Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/24/33/lang.ru/>

¹⁵⁵ Иванов В. А., Трофимов Я. Ф. Религия Казахстана. Справочник. Алматы, 2003. с. 85; <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/blogcategory/22/36/lang.ru/>.

and the Holy See” (diplomatic relations were established earlier, in October 17, 1992).¹⁵⁶ The first official state visit of former Pope John Paul II to Kazakhstan, which occurred September 22–25, 2001, was an important event in the spiritual and political life. During that visit, the Pope performed a solemn mess in Astana, which embraced more than 20,000 pilgrims from Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

With the combined history and links between the Catholic Church (dating from the XIII century, and the travels of Franciscan and Minorite monks Plano de Carpini and de Roebuk) and the Orthodox Church (within the Russian Empire), Kazakhstan has now become a historically justified and convenient ground for the dialogue between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. It's worth mentioning that, on November 30, 2010, the Vatican donated the shrine with relics of Saint Andrew Protokletos to the Metropolitan district of the Russian Orthodox Church in Astana. The shrine was brought to Astana by the State Secretary of the Holy See, Cardinal Tarcizio Bertone, second in the Catholic hierarchy after the Pope, in cooperation with the Head of the Metropolitan Diocese, Metropolitan bishop Alexander (from the Orthodox Church), and others.

Along with Orthodoxy and Catholicism, the **Protestant Church** is also rather widely represented in Kazakhstan, what can perhaps be explained by the history of Kazakhstan as a multi-religious space. The beginning of the spread of Protestantism goes back to the colonial history of Kazakhstan and is related to the settlement of Germans — colonial army people and civil servants. In the XIX-XX centuries, the settlement of ethnic Germans, particularly during the Stolypin reforms of early XX century and especially during the World War II, resulted in the high increase of Protestants. Since the beginning of the XXI century, despite emigration of ethnic Germans after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Protestantism has continued to spread in the country, with “850 entities of more than 30 Protestant confessions”¹⁵⁷. According to 2007 data, the total number of all Protestant entities and groups (including traditional Pentecostals, Presbyterians, as well as representatives of non-traditional charismatic branches) comprised 1173. By this number Protestantism is second only to Islam, which numbers 2345 religious entities and groups¹⁵⁸. In general, the Protestant branch of Christianity has a rather considerable presence in Kazakhstan.

Nowadays Kazakhstan can be regarded as a convenient ground for institutionalized religious dialogue, which has been successfully developed within the frameworks of the Congresses of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in 2003, 2006 and 2009 (in international arena) and the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (on national level), all of which were aimed at promoting the ideas of the “culture of peace” and social cohesion.

The Congresses of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions were initially conceived as a common ground for convening various religious leaders to reflect on the mega-tendencies of modern time — globalization and simultaneous differentiation and the issues of identity. The leitmotif of the Congresses can be assumed-up as follows: Exiting from the dead-end of global culture is impossible through political actions only. The role of spiritual leaders is

¹⁵⁶ Визит папы Римского Иоанна Павла II в Республику Казахстан. Алматы, 2001. С. 6, 43.

¹⁵⁷ Иванов В. А., Трофимов Я. Ф. Цит. соч., С. 91.

¹⁵⁸ Svedeniya 2007.

decisive; the cultural and religious diversity of the world is a reality which must be understood and accepted. Any other approach by politicians can explode the world. The issue of today is not only about the interaction of religions; it is about the global dialogue between the religious and secular worlds as well, and there is need for balance between the traditions and the search for the new.

A sampling of these Congresses allows a better perception of the transformations on global level and it reflects the global-local correlation, highlighting the attempts of one particular state towards instituting a new paradigm of development.

The first Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions took place in Astana, September 23–24, 2003, and gathered 17 delegations. The second Congress, in 2006, gathered 29 delegations, and the third Congress, in 2009, gathered 77 delegations from 35 countries of the world.

Congress I adopted a resolution stating that confessional dialogue is a most valuable tool in sustaining peace and concord among countries. In addition, one of the most powerful results of the Congress was institutionalizing the idea of interaction among the leaders of various confessions and providing a framework for discussions on the international level. As President N. Nazarbayev mentioned, “There was no such universal forum before (for sharing the perspectives of confessions’ representatives)”¹⁵⁹. The first meeting established the working body of the Congress — the secretariat.

Congress II took place in 2006, and highlighted the new relations between confessions at a time of escalation of conflicts, particularly in Iraq, which was reflected in the key theme of the Congress — “Religion, Society, and International Security” — as well as in its decisions. The final Declaration stated views on the role of religion in the modern world and the role of religious leaders in maintaining global peace and international security.

Strikingly, the concept of the Congresses was expressed symbolically in the new Palace of Peace and Concord (in a form of a Pyramid) built by the time of the second Congress, as a project of Norman Foster.

The opening address by N. Nazarbayev was representative in presenting the traditional issues related to the role of religion in maintaining international security. He highlighted a range of conceptual philosophical ideas, which can be broadly summarized as the implementation of “the old principle of non-violence in thoughts, words and actions”. He relates non-violence in thoughts, i. e. in the inner spiritual world, to the field of religious searches, and non-violence in words, in mass-media, and non-violence in action, to the political field: “The abstention from violence on the level of religious doctrine, mass-media, and political action is the only basis for survival in the modern world”¹⁶⁰.

Nazarbayev considers this specific “triad” of religion, mass-media, and politics to be the basis of world peace, with non-violence in the religious sphere as the foundation: “when religious leaders seriously discuss the advancement of one religion — over the other, then it becomes clear that the conflict is laid at the beginning. When mass-media savors mockery over the sacred feelings of believers, sooner or later those journalists will face the mockery of their own beliefs. When politicians without hesitation order the use of force in ethnic-religious

¹⁵⁹ <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/24/33/lang.ru/>

¹⁶⁰ The speech of the President of Kazakhstan at the Second Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. — <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/24/33/lang.ru/>

gious conflicts, it becomes clear that the war will come to the threshold of their own houses. In this triad, there should be no aggressive parts, and the foundation attitude of religious leaders must be free of aggressiveness¹⁶¹.

This triadic principle of non-violence is further regarded in the context of modern life as “a carcass for understanding”. It is not yet a dialogue, but is the basis for dialogue. Without such basis, any dialogue is a “waste of time”. Beyond the basic structure, the principles of dialogue include the following: abstention from stereotypes and intrusion into other sacral spheres, and answers to new non-standard challenges developed jointly by world and traditional religions.

These principles define a certain framework for religious dialogue. In this sacred field one can carry the thesis directly leading to the theological level in order “to search for the basis of dialogue through the divine in a man, not through the human in the divine”. The purely theological thesis seems to bears a special meaning in modern world allowing us to find the basis for mutual understanding in religious interlinks.

The next two issues relate to the concepts of cultural and religious diversity and religious-secular dialogue. From the late XX century, these issues have been highlighted in the academic, theological,¹⁶² political, and social fields, including in the decisions of inter-governmental organizations¹⁶³. However, addressing the issues on the theoretical and policy levels does not deny the practical level.

The idea of maintaining cultural and religious diversity is highlighted here in relation to the multiplicity of cultures, based on a “cult of God”. “Through thousands of years, faith-based cultures based kept their word alive in history. In a certain sense, maintaining their religious spirit is the guarantee (pledge) of survival in a history of whole people”. Hence the idea that “the world cannot be built on the basis of only one civilizational project... The attempts of one cultural tradition to impose its own values on other cultures... will not lead to understanding. On the contrary, such tough cultural expansion elicits tough resistance. Only respect for the historical traditions of other people, justice, and sincerity among civilizations, religions, and people are able to create the world of concord and spirituality”¹⁶⁴.

Congress III of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions took place July 1–2, 2009 in Astana. 77 delegations from 35 countries participated in the Congress, which was organized with the technical assistance of institutions of the United Nations Organization. In 2009, the world situation was characterised by the problems of social instability, financial crisis, terrorism, nuclear disarmament, etc, which was reflected in the main topic of the Congress — “The Role of Religious Leaders in Building Peace Based on Tolerance, Mutual Respect, and Cooperation”. Socio-economic cataclysms caused the participants to look anew at the issues of spirituality, moral, and social solidarity and dialogue. The idea that the real probable cause

¹⁶¹ Ibidem

¹⁶² See in particular: *Ратцингер Й.* Чем держится мир. Дополитические моральные основы либерального государства / Хабермас Ю., Й. Ратцингер (Бенедикт XVI). Диалектика секуляризации. О разуме и религии. М., 2006. С. 77–107; Хабермас Ю. Дополитические основы демократического правового государства? / Хабермас Ю., Й. Ратцингер (Бенедикт XVI). Диалектика секуляризации. О разуме и религии. М., 2006. С. 39–75.

¹⁶³ See, in particular, UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity. In: Intercultural Dialogue and Cultural Diversity. The Proceedings of the International Round Table on the Exchange and Sharing of Good Practices in Intercultural Dialogue and for the Promotion of the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity. Almaty, 2007.

¹⁶⁴ The speech of the President of Kazakhstan at the Second Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. — <http://www.religions-congress.org/content/view/24/33/lang,ru/>

of economic and social cataclysms is the lack or even absence of spirituality was discussed at the Congress.

The sectional meetings were mainly defined by such themes as: 1) Moral and spiritual values, world ethics; 2) Dialogue and cooperation; 3) Solidarity, especially in a time of crises. The general concept of the Congress reflected the idea that current crisis cannot be overcome without a change of mind and the firm observance of moral norms and high principles: “only a just world order can become the basis of flourishing in human society”.¹⁶⁵

The activity of the new International Centre of Cultures and Religions should work to address these issues, and new ideas and policy recommendations will be elaborated in the specific laboratory of the Congresses.

The growing interest in the Congress, reflected in the growing number of participants, and the actuality of the issues discussed facilitates its becoming an effective meeting place for dialogue, as a part of a much broader global process of building and maintaining cooperation among religions. The Congress addressed issues also being addressed through such mechanisms as the “Alliance of Civilizations”, initiatives of Russia (International High Level Group of Religious Leaders, Consultative Council at UNO on Religions) and the Saudi Arabia Inter-religious Dialogue, which resulted in the adoption in 2008 of the Madrid Declaration on Inter-religious Dialogue.

One of the practical results of the work of the third Congress was the Address of the Congress participants disseminated in the United Nations as an official document of the UN General Assembly and Security Council. This document promotes the ideas and concepts of the forum in the international arena.

¹⁶⁵ The speech of the President of Kazakhstan at the Second Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions — http://www.akorda.kz/www/_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=8795FAE0041BDA65062575E6005D28F3&lang=ru&L1=L2&L2=L2-16

CHAPTER 8

PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES OF INTERFAITH AND INTERETHNIC DIALOGUE IN KYRGYZSTAN

Adash Toktosunova (Kyrgyzstan)

1. Kyrgyzstan on the Great Silk Road

Since the times of the Great Silk Road, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Kyrgyzstan has been one of the most ancient sources of the Eurasian and Central Asian culture and a bridge between religions, cultures and civilizations. The geographical position of Kyrgyzstan has pre-conditioned convergence and inter-penetration of cultures, traditions and customs of many nations and religions. Today, this region is a unique model of intercultural, interethnic and inter-faith mutual understanding and interaction in the history of the world civilization¹⁶⁶.

The international trade route passed through the land of Kyrgyzstan, and people exchanged not only goods, but also ideas and views — in ancient times, the early Middle Ages, and Middle Ages. Merchants or warriors were often accompanied by a monk or a dervish — Buddhist, Christian, Zoroastrian or Muslim. That is why the peoples living on the route of the Great Silk Road surpassed others in their cultural development. Nevertheless, when we say that the Great Silk Road was the road of dialogues between peoples, we should not forget that dialogues were waged not only by means of trade transactions and heartfelt talks in caravans, but also by means of swords in battlefields. It was not an idyll; it was a rigorous and sometimes bloody policy, regulated by economic interests.

The majority of countries in the modern world are multiethnic and multi-confessional. As the world experience shows, diversity, including confessional diversity, is an essential condition for the survival and development of societies. As was noted by the Head of the OSCE Office in Bishkek, A. Idil, closed mono-cultural and mono-religious societies are ultimately doomed to stagnation and entropy; the world community realizes the necessity of multi-polarity and multiculturalism.¹⁶⁷

2. Ethnic and confessional composition of the population in Kyrgyzstan

The ethnic and confessional composition of the population of Kyrgyzstan is very diverse. According to the National census of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2009, the population of Kyrgyz-

¹⁶⁶ Жоробекова Э, Токтосунова А., Токтосунова Г. Наследие кыргызов или Горный оазис на Великом шелковом пути. Бишкек, 2008. С. 342.

¹⁶⁷ Айдын Идил. Предисловие // Ярков А. Очерк истории религий в Кыргызстане. http://lib.uni-dubna.ru/search/files/rel_yarkov/-rel_yarkov.htm

stan is 5 million people, represented by more than 90 ethnic groups, 12 of which cover more than 20 thousand people representing different confessions. They are: Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Russians, Dungans, Uigurs, Tajiks, Koreans, Ukrainians, Germans, Tatars, Kazakhs, Turks, Kurds, Greeks, Azerbaijanis, Belarusians, Poles, etc. The biggest ethnic groups according to the 2009 census are: Kyrgyz (71%), Uzbeks (14.3%) living in the south of Kyrgyzstan, Russians (7.8%) living in the north of the country, and others (6.9%).¹⁶⁸

According to statistic data collected by the State Commission for Religion, 80% of the population of independent Kyrgyzstan is Muslim. The Islamic community is represented by 20 ethnic groups, where: Kyrgyz are 60%; Uzbek 15%; Kazakh, Tatar, Tajik, Dungan, Uigur, Turk, Bashkir, Chechen, Dargin and others are more than 5%. All citizens belonging to “Muslim” nationalities are automatically identified by statistics as Muslims, but among local Muslims one can also meet Russians, Gypsies, and Germans.

Orthodox Christians comprise 16%. The Orthodox community includes all Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and representatives of other “Orthodox” nationalities. Orthodox priests in different years have been not only Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, but also Germans, Chinese, Poles, and Moldavians. Other confessions constitute 3%¹⁶⁹. In Kyrgyzstan, as well as in other countries of Central Asia, **ethnic** self-consciousness is often identified with **confessional** consciousness.

During the years of its independence, Kyrgyzstan has implemented certain work on the development of state policies in the field of inter-ethnic relations, including the policy “Kyrgyzstan is Our Common Home”, which is a creation of the Assembly of Peoples of Kyrgyzstan based on the national cultural centers of ethnic minorities living in the Kyrgyz republic. The Assembly has certainly played a positive role in the formation of harmonious relations between ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan, but it has not worked purposefully for the formation of tolerance and the development of inter-ethnic, intercultural and inter-faith dialogues. Rather the Assembly had a decorative ostensible character and did not have any concrete mechanisms and institutes for implementation. State policy in the field of inter-ethnic relations has not been well-thought-out and systematic, though it should be noted that all ethnic groups have had equal rights in all spheres of social life and there have been no apparent inter-ethnic and inter-faith conflicts.

3. Increased influence of non-traditional religious trends and radical Islam in Kyrgyzstan

Since Stalin’s times, Kyrgyzstan has been the place where the central Soviet authorities exiled ethnic groups, members of different sects and religious trends who were out of their favour; which made the country tolerant towards different faiths. After gaining independence, Kyrgyzstan adopted the Law on Religious Freedom and Religious Organizations (December 1991). The Law proclaimed freedom of religious beliefs, simplified the procedure for establishing religious associations, and extended the labour legislative norms and property rights to religious cult attendants.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Kyrgyz Republic National census 2009. www.welcome.kg/ru/kyrgyzstan/population/sostav/

¹⁶⁹ Религиозные организации (неисламского направления) в Кыргызстане: их доктрины и учения. Государственная комиссия по делам религий Кыргызской Республики. Ош, 2010. С. 6.

¹⁷⁰ Закон Кыргызской Республики «О свободе вероисповедания и религиозных организациях» 16 декабря 1991 г. n 657–XII; www.cac-civillaw.org/gesetz/kirgisistan/ReligionsfreiheitsG.KIR.ru.rtf

This liberal legislation, on one hand, enhanced religious freedom, mutual understanding and mutual respect. On the other hand, it made Kyrgyzstan one of the most favourable countries for the activities of different religious organizations, including questionable ones, and has attracted all kinds of missionaries from around the world. Along with the existing organizations, many new previously unknown religious organizations started to work actively in the country. In the mid-1990s, there were nine hundred officially registered foreign missionaries; though some religious associations were registered as secular organizations (Moon Church, Centre of Dianetics, and others). Today, in Kyrgyzstan there are official education centres of different Christian confessions: The Bible College, Presbyterian education centre, etc.¹⁷¹

During the first years of independence, the traditional Islam and Orthodoxy found themselves unprepared for the rigorous competition on the part of Islamic radicals and numerous sects. Under the conditions of the atheistic state, which continued for many years, they lost their experience and skills of missionary activities among different social strata and groups of population. On the contrary, Islamic radicals and different sects and religious associations opposing the existing power and often using underground methods have prepared their followers, who have rich experience conducting missionary activities.

Traditional Islam can undoubtedly be considered an integrating and uniting factor; though it has intra-confessional diversity, there are no vividly expressed contradictions between its different trends. It should be noted that historical and difficult controversies still exist between Sunni and Shiah, but the conflict is characteristic of other Muslim countries, not Kyrgyzstan. Studies of intra-confessional diversity are of topical importance, especially taking into consideration the fact that it is often the source of conflicts and extremism.

Unlike the moderate Islam in the north of Kyrgyzstan, there is a quite radical Islam in the south of the country. Islamic radicals focus on the propaganda of canonic Islam, thinking that indigenous nations, Kyrgyz in particular, profess incorrect Islam. As it is noted by a leading Islam researcher of Uzbekistan, Bahtiyar Babajanov, the Islamic world is an infinite chain of intra-confessional conflicts which inevitably turn into dogmatic schisms and consequently into political confrontations. “It is natural that some theologians wish to eliminate these schisms so the Umma is not divided. But the history of any new round of “purification of Islam”, its “correction”, or “consolidation” has the same scenario and consequences: those who fight against mazkhab, against Sufism and against “disintegration of Muslims” finally unite into groups, movements and parties, thus multiplying the number of such “parties” and fostering the internal schism”.¹⁷²

In this way, theologians who allegedly fight against schisms, actually themselves stimulate schisms. Parties and movements created by them also facilitate splits, what inevitably leads to political and social conflicts. Thus, for example, the Islamized and nationalistic Uzbek part of Fergana Valley, the ideas of which are promoted by the Islamic movement of Turkestan (IMT), strives for the unification of Fergana and the creation of a united Islamic state — Caliphate. The same purpose is pursued by the religious party “Hizb ut-Tahrir”, which uses more sophisticated (peaceful in their opinion) methods. Battles in 1999–2000 in the Batken area of Kyrgyzstan, which killed Kyrgyz military servicemen, followed by the intrusions and terrorist

¹⁷¹ Религиозные организации (неисламского направления) в Кыргызстане: их доктрины и учения. Государственная комиссия по делам религий Кыргызской Республики. Ош, 2010. С. 19.

¹⁷² Бабаджанов Б.: «Нам, мусульманам надо привыкнуть к тому, что в пределах одной религии мы разнообразны, и в этом нашем разнообразии должна быть наша сила» (Жас Казах, 13. 03. 2009, No. 10 (218)).

acts of Islamic gunmen in the Kyrgyz cities of Kadamdjay, Jalal-Abad and Uzghen, and the series of terrorist acts in Osh and Bishkek in 2010 certify to the fact that all these movements for the consolidation of Islam and the creation of Caliphate lead as a matter of fact to the political and intra-confessional split of the country.

The success of Islamic extremists is fostered by the weakly educated local Islamic clergy most of whom are semi-literate self-taught men who cannot effectively oppose professionally prepared radical Islamists from outside the region. In opposing the government, the Islamic opposition dominating in the south of the country seeks to use the factor of regionalism and existing south-north differences. The positions of secular political parties are quite weak in the retarded and more Islamized south of the country. Today, most of the influential religious oppositionists in Kyrgyzstan come from the south of the country.

The danger of Islamic radicalism lies in the fact that unlike other confessions it uses religion first of all as a **political ideology** and seeks to oust secular governments in Kyrgyzstan and other states of Central Asia and to build here its own Islamic state. Therefore, the religious situation in the south of Kyrgyzstan is currently considered a real danger to successful development, state security, and independence, not only for the country, but also for the whole Central Asian region.

Today, it is quite difficult to counteract extremists because of the lack of well-prepared professional Muslim spiritual preachers in the south of Kyrgyzstan. Local Imams are not competent in Islamic tolerance and cannot uphold their positions in dialogues with representatives of such extremist radical parties and movements as “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” (Islam Freedom Party), Wahhabite, and Al Qaida, who openly propagate extremism in the south and have already penetrated into the north of Kyrgyzstan. Imams in mosques support the spread of radical Islam ideas; for example, in June 2010 some mosques were used as storehouses of guns, and imams of mosques provoked Uzbek youth to inter-ethnic conflicts which almost became a fratricidal war.

Under such conditions it is of vital importance to keep inter-confessional and intra-confessional stability in the country. It is of topical importance today to work out peaceful and tolerant Islamic alternatives to radical Muslim fundamentalists. It is necessary to show to Muslims that it is inadmissible and sinful to use Islam for political aims in multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies. Unlike Islamists, Christian organizations and groups do not divide their potential church members according to their ethnic features.

The “sudden” independence and sovereignty caused aggravation of social-economic situation and mass poverty of the local population of Kyrgyzstan. All this enhanced the efficiency of new religious teachings in sermons; the country has actually turned into an arena for activities of all kinds of foreign missionaries. They provide material support and carry out active spiritual work among all the population groups, focusing on the title nationality. As a result of such work, during recent years, a great number of Kyrgyz people (not only poor ones) have passed to Protestant churches. Today, the number of Kyrgyz who have adopted Christianity reaches from 15 thousand to 40 thousand people, according to different data.¹⁷³ This expansion is a result of good “management” implemented by Protestant organizations among the Kyrgyz population; they organized mass publication and distribution of Protestant religious literature in Kyrgyz language and preached sermons also in Kyrgyz language.

¹⁷³ Орлов Д. Символ веры или знак беды // МСН (общественно-политическая газета), 19. 12. 2008 -<http://www.msn.kg/showwin.php?type=newsportal&id=25839>.

Under the conditions of loyal legislation in the field of religion, there are tens of different confessional communities in the country. There are many cases among Kyrgyz families where members of the same family profess different religions: Islam, Baha'i, Protestantism, and Buddhism. In the north of the country there is a visible trend towards "Christianization" and "apostasy" in the Kyrgyz, but in the south Muslim fundamentalism and Wahhabism are gaining strength, which obviously highlights differences between the north and south of Kyrgyzstan and aggravates inter-confessional relations. Thus, for example, in rural areas people who have adopted another religion are considered apostates. They are excluded from "intimaks" (traditional system of mutual assistance) and subject to public accusations, even beatings and assassinations. The deceased are not allowed to be buried near the graves of ancestors.

The further development of the religious situation in Kyrgyzstan depends on how the official Islam and Orthodoxy can adapt to the new conditions, restore their influence among the local population, and, with the government, jointly oppose the Islamic radicals and totalitarian sects.

In the context of the increased confessional mosaics, which is characteristic of the whole world, it is unrealistic to count on full restoration of the former dominating position of the official Islam and Orthodoxy in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, developing dialogue between the official Islam and Orthodoxy and those religious associations and sects which are not totalitarian, and which reject violence and terror, can essentially enhance the stability of the religious situation in Kyrgyzstan.

4. Political and religious situation in Kyrgyzstan before and after the April-2010 revolution and the tragic events in the south of the country in June 2010

In the 18th-19th centuries the Fergana Valley was the centre of the Kokand Khanate, which basically consisted of more than ten Turkic and Iranian-speaking ethnic groups close to each other in language, religion and culture. In the beginning of the 20th century the division of the region by nationalities was imposed, which caused destruction of the old habitual types of self-consciousness. "It radically changed the ethnographic map of the Fergana Valley and caused, on one hand, mass assimilation and homogenization, and on the other, the formation of rigorous cultural borders between the officially recognized "title" nationalities".¹⁷⁴ The Fergana Valley was divided between Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In each country the mixed population of different ethnic groups continued to live. For example, two Uzbek enclaves — Soh and Shahimardan, and two Tajik enclaves Chorku and Voruh remained in the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz enclave Barak village remained in Uzbekistan. In the epoch of socialism, with its ideology of a "new historical community of Soviet people" and "friendship of peoples", this division of the Valley did not present a real danger. But the collapse of the Soviet system has caused not only an ideological vacuum, but has also aggravated interethnic and inter-confessional relations. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the border between these three states still remains unclear and undefined. Around the perimeter there remain a number of questionable lands which have become a reason for inter-ethnic conflicts.

¹⁷⁴ Ферганская долина: этничность, этнические процессы, этнические конфликты / Отв. ред. С. Н. Абашин, В. И. Бушков. М., 2004. С. 5.

Another source of conflicts is the “demographic outburst” — increased over-population in this agrarian region. (The population density in the Fergana Valley has reached 300 persons/square km on the territory of Kyrgyzstan and 425 persons/square km on the Uzbek part).¹⁷⁵ Historically, the northern region of Kyrgyzstan had more intensive socio-economic and cultural development; while the southern region has lagged behind considerably because of the limited land and water resources, underdeveloped economic infrastructure, hard economic and social problems, social injustice, mass unemployment, and poverty of the population. The northern location of the capital of the country has also enhanced the advanced development of the north compared to the southern regions. Together with the increased religious extremism in the south, the region has become a real “gunpowder-barrel” ready to explode at any moment.

The revolutionary events of 7 April 2010 in Kyrgyzstan were caused by a mass social and political outburst, which probably provoked similar outbursts of indignation in the countries of Arab world in 2011. Kyrgyzstan is the first country in which an unworthy president has been forced to appear before the people or leave the country shamefully. The short period of Bakiyev’s presidency was characterized by the unbridled and impetuous privatization of state properties, the dirt cheap sale of national wealth of a strategic nature, the unjustified increase in prices and tariffs for electric power and household utility expenditures, the creation of unconstitutional state units for the President’s son to laundry his money, and the criminalization of the whole structure of power, etc. To promote this plundering the country by state national security bodies and executive officers, criminals, and Islamic and terrorist organizations, the authorities persecuted, harassed and intimidated free thinkers, political opponents, human rights defenders and journalists, assassinated disliked politicians, and closed oppositional mass media. As a result, the situation in Kyrgyzstan, particularly in the south, was characterized by absence of firm and consolidated vertical power, the demoralization of legal bodies, and active organized criminal groups, extremists, nationalistic and separatist forces, and persons seeking political leadership.

According to information from the National Commission investigating the tragic events in the south of Kyrgyzstan in June 2010: “In order to achieve these goals, immediately after the April 2010 events, the President’s son Maxim Bakiyev initiated a meeting in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) with emissars of the extremist Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). In early May 2010, emissaries and regional commanders of the “Taliban” movement, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Tajik United Opposition, including the personal participation of Mullo Abdullo, and two representatives of the Bakiyev family, met in Bakhorak city, Afghanistan, where they reached an agreement for providing assistance in destabilizing the situation in Kyrgyzstan. These destructive forces had the following objectives: 1) to undermine the political, economic and social foundations of the State; 2) to ignite inter-ethnic, inter-confessional and intra-confessional conflicts; and 3) to frighten the public”.

They failed to ignite conflict in the north, but the south suited them very well. Firstly, the south of Kyrgyzstan has always been a potential source of conflicts; second, it is overpopulated under the conditions of limited land and water resources; third, it has an underdeveloped economic infrastructure; fourth, it has mass unemployment and poverty; fifth, it

¹⁷⁵ Заключение Нацкомиссии по расследованию событий «Июнь-2010» на юге Кыргызстана 20. 01. 2011 — <http://www.islamsng.com/kgz/report/991>

has increased religious extremism. These problems have always been a potential source of conflicts, a “gunpowder barrel” ready to explode at any time.

The South of Kyrgyzstan has specific features pre-conditioned by the historical development. Previously it was a part of the Kokand Khanate like the whole of Kyrgyzstan. The demographic “outburst” of over-population has been a permanent factor of inter-ethnic conflicts in everyday life, but in summer 2010 these conflicts resulted in tragic events in the south of Kyrgyzstan. The inter-ethnic conflicts in 2010 were provoked by mosque imams and Hizb ut-Tahrir leaders, who called for the abolishment of people who are not devoted to Islam and traditional Muslim rites.

The tragic conflict was made possible by the absence of strong power in the country, the absence of uniting supra-national idea (system of values), and the low level of inter-ethnic cultural communication and inability or unwillingness to develop dialogue. These factors:

Led to increased trends of discussing inter-ethnic relations (Uzbek-Kyrgyz) in a negative light, increased the potential of aggression in society, and passed the negative attitude from the level of everyday consciousness to the political level;

- Destroyed the educational system for teaching the culture of inter-ethnic communication and tolerance, due to the absence of relevant ideas and program objectives. (Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union there was a system of international and patriotic education);
- Strengthened economic, social, cultural, ethnic, and language barriers, due to the isolation of the population living compactly in mono-ethnic regions of the southern capital of Kyrgyzstan. For example, when attending sport clubs youths are divided into sections (Kyrgyz go to one sport hall, Uzbeks go to another hall) and schools and mosques are isolated according to ethnicity; all of which has a negative influence on mutual understanding, dialogue, and integration, and causes the inability to adapt in multi-ethnic communities.
- When a state does not develop systematic, well-planned and balanced policies in the fields of culture, religion, education, and inter-ethnic, inter-confessional, intra-confessional and intercultural dialogue, the region becomes a place where the seeds of intolerance, misunderstanding and hatred obviously grow. What is the most terrible — the integrity of the state is threatened not from outside but from inside. Today, the most important task for the Kyrgyzstan people is to overcome the consequences of the inter-ethnic conflict in Osh, which was a great shock for the whole country and for the region. The polarization of society be remembered for a long time. The reconciliation and dialogue of two ethnic groups is not a simple task; it will take many years to heal the wounds.

In order to develop constructive dialogue it is necessary: 1) to analyze carefully the reasons and prerequisites for the conflicts; 2) to develop preventive policies and implement regular and systematic explanatory and educating activities; 3) to resolve continuously problems that increase the potential for conflict; 4) to explain continuously the inadmissibility of any disintegrative steps; 5) to promote and facilitate dialogue regarding “national values and the world experience” that can enhance our multi-ethnicity and multi-confessionalism and which are key factors for ensuring the civilized future of Kyrgyzstan.

The concept of “National idea”, which is understood by Kyrgyz nationalists in its narrow sense, leads to the disintegration of society. The ideology of nationalism leads to fascism. Fascism did not die with the fall of the Third Reich; it has just transformed and continues to exist in spite of the totally false understanding of superiority of one ethnos over another ethnos or Aryan race over other races.

Ishenbay Abdurazakov, a prominent public figure in Kyrgyzstan is noted in one of his interviews: “We must build national policies taking into consideration the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional character of our society. Will we be able to ensure that all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic and religious belonging, consider themselves people of Kyrgyzstan, i. e. a nation in the Western understanding?”¹⁷⁶ The future of Kyrgyzstan is in indivisibility of the destiny of all ethnicities and representatives of all confessions living in the country. Today as never before, the development of harmonious relations between the different ethnicities and confessions is vitally important for sustainable development and security of the country and the formation of a political nation.

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¹⁷⁶ *Абдуразаков И.* Деление на «своих» и «чужих» антигосударственно // *Вечерний Бишкек*, 25. 11. 2010.

CHAPTER 9

FROM DIALOGUE TO AN UNDERSTANDING (THE EXPERIENCE OF TAJIKISTAN)

Munzifakhon Babadjanova (Tajikistan)

“Besides the diversity of confessions, cultures and languages, people should respect each other. It is necessary actively to promote a culture of peace and dialogue between all civilizations”

Declaration of Millennium

The region of the Central Asia is an extensive region without an outlet to the Asian sea. The region includes five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (Formerly called Central Asia and Kazakhstan, the region was part of the former USSR).geographically the region stretches from the Caspian Sea to Tibet and from Central Russia to the Himalayan steppes.

The Great Silk Road had a considerable impact on the formation of the historical, cultural and spiritual heritage of this region. The total population in Central Asia is 60 million, representing more than 100 ethnic groups. Most of the nations belong to the Turkic group, including the Kazakhs, Kara-kalpaks, Kyrgyz, Crimean Tatars, Turkmens, Uzbeks and Uyghur. The Tajiks belong to the Persian group.

During the Soviet time, more than one-quarter of the population of Central Asia consisted of Russian-speaking people, but the dissolution of the USSR forced them to migrate from the region. Currently, most of Central Asia populations profess the Sunni Islam.

Christianity came to Central Asia from Persia in the 1st century. Christianity existed in the region for a long period, even though at the time the dominant religion was Islam under the patronage of local authorities.

In the 1880s, the region saw the expansion of Evangelism. Christian immigrants from different parts of Russia had a great impact on the appearance and progress of Evangelism in Central Asia. They immigrated to the region for a number of reasons, such as new lands and to avoid political and religious persecutions. Christianity was seen as a religion of Russians and non-indigenous nations, though the locals were tolerant to both Orthodox and Evangelism.

After the October revolution in 1917, all confessional organizations in the USSR were subjected to persecution.

In Central Asia countries, the attitude towards the Evangelists was more quietly tolerant than in the Soviet Russian Federation.

Perestroika brought considerable changes related to religious freedom to the Soviet Republics of Central Asia. There was actively voiced support for traditional national religions. Islam started to become more active in the region. The governments began to support certain

religious directions and organizations; prompted in part by the desire to use certain religious doctrine and traditions, loyal in relation to existing authorities, as an ideological pillar for the government, and prompted in part by fears of the threat of destabilization and the occurrence of interreligious conflicts in the countries of this region. Islam started progressing in the region.. The Republic of Tajikistan is situated in the southeast of Central Asia. Its territory is 700 km from east to west and 350 km from north to south, totalling 143,100 square meters. The total length of its border is 3000 km with Afghanistan, and 1030 km with China. Tajikistan also lies very close to Pakistan and India, from which it is separated by the narrow Wakhan corridor (15 to 65 km). On the north, Tajikistan shares most parts of its borders with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.



Ill. 1. Piez. Photo by M. Babadjanova

93% of Tajik territory is covered by mountains. In the north, there are hilly deserts and semi-desert districts. In the east, there are the highest mountain ranges in Central Asia — the Tien Shan. The Pamir is known as “the roof of the world” and “the edge at the sun’s foot”. The mountain tops range from 300 m to 7500 m above sea level. Almost half of the country is situated more than 3000 m above sea level. Dushanbe, the capital, is situated at an altitude of about 800 m.

Before the October Revolution in 1917, Tajikistan was a separate district and Tajikistan belonged to different administrative-territorial possessions under the power of Imperial Russia. For example, southwestern part of Tajikistan was part of Bukhara Emirate and was called Eastern Bukhara, and the dominating administrative division was called “bekstvo”.

The other part of the current Tajikistan, Suhgd Oblast, formerly known as Leninabads-kaya, was the Samarkand and Fergana districts, which were both part of the Russian Imperia. Thus, before the October revolution, Tajikistan was not a single administrative-territorial or state. In 1924, Tajikistan was formed as an autonomous republic within Uzbekistan. From 1929, it was recognized as a Soviet Republic within the USSR. On September 9, 1991, Tajikistan announced its independence. Today there are three districts: Khatlon, Suhgd and Gorno-Badakhshan, and eight administrative divisions in Tajikistan. The Tajik nation is an ancient nation. According to historians, the Tajiks became a nation in the 9th-10th century. The current population of Tajikistan is 7. 5 million.

Most of the Tajik population (95–99%) profess Islam and are Sunni of the Khanif maskhaba (given an official status on April 2, 2009). Currently, there are 3715 registered mosques, 73 non-Islamic religious organizations, and one community Orthodox, Evangelical, Evangelical-Baptist, New Apostolic Church, Seventh day Adventists, Krishna, Baha’i, Lutheran Church, Pentecostalist, etc. There are three officially



Ill. 2. The Central Yakub Charkhi Mosque in Dushanbe. Photo by M. Babadjanova

registered active madrasas. There has been an Ismailite majority in Gorno-Badakhshan since the 10th-11th century. In 2009, the Ismailite center was established in Dushanbe.¹⁷⁷

Christians are the religious majority in Tajikistan, and most of them are Orthodox (mostly Russians). They form the Tajik Blagochinie of the Russian Orthodox Church under the management of Tashkent.

Baptists are the second largest community, with 1000 people, most of whom are Russians and Germans.

The Catholics merged into three communities in Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube, and Chkalovsk. The Catholic belief was brought by the Germans.

There is a community of Seventh-day Adventist and a separated German Evangeline-Lutheran community in Dushanbe. There is a Jehovah church, which has functioned on an illegal base since 1997. Two communities of the South Korea church of Son Min are also functioning.

In the modern world, dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration have become of great importance between religious and cultures. Previous events confirm that religion is often the basis of conflicts and it is therefore necessary to pay attention to solving problems related to interethnic, religious, political and social conflicts and contradictions in order to create an atmosphere of confidence in polytechnic societies between the religions, in particular among the representatives of Islam and Christianity.

How should the dialogue between Islam and Christianity be conducted? How can relations between Christian and Muslim countries in the Asia region be strengthened? What civilized bases are required for such developments? What kind of merits must political instruments have in order to make constructive use of the great potential of Islam?

The basis of dialogue is tolerance and finding ways to increase tolerance. Tajikistan, as an example, signed the general agreement on peace and national reconciliation on June 27th, 1977; a unique example of the peaceful coexistence of two outlooks. Tajikistan is a part of Islamic world and all its neighbors belong to Islamic culture.¹⁷⁸

Serious peace-preventing signals were the Civil war in Tajikistan, the conflicts in Chechnya, and the military clashes in Uzbekistan in 1999 and 2000.¹⁷⁹

Even before September 11th 2001, Tajikistan felt the necessity to change the paradigm in relation to secular Europe and secular representatives of the powers in the Central Asia, on one hand, and Islam, the Islamic population, and Islamic political movements, on the other hand.

The strategy for stabilizing interreligious relations and preventing religious hostility requires the consent between religious. The measures that must be taken include all sides concentrating on the essence of the problem, finding contradictory questions, and finding cor-



Ill. 3. Catholic church in Dushanbe, priest Pedro Lopez. Photo by M. Babadjanova

¹⁷⁷ See: Current Archives of the Committee for Religions under Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

¹⁷⁸ See: Рахнамо А. Хизби дини ва давлати дуняви. (Масъалаҳои фаъолияти хизби сиёсии дорои хусусияти дини дар шароити давлати дуняви). Душанбе, 2008.

¹⁷⁹ Построение доверия между исламистами и секуляристами — таджикский эксперимент. Душанбе, 2004. С. 12.

responding solutions to the problems. The working formula must be defined in the following way: *collaboration on the basis of general opinion and interests and peaceful coexistence on the problems having strong contradictions.*

The priorities include the mutual obligations of all sides to find, separately or together, permanent solutions for guaranteeing the security and stability of the country, of Central Asia and Euro Asian space, through strengthening and developing dialogue.

No political party has a directly religious attitude. The concepts of “party” and “religion” are simply incompatible. Some politicians try to attract religious affiliations to raise their image. But we can see the traditional Tajik Islam is looking for peace. The Church, in terms of its rules, is never against the state, because it has rather different views than politicians.

In Tajikistan, the Russian Orthodox Church has a great power. It is officially recognized by the state and religious figures. Orthodoxy is the second most meaningful religion after Islam in the republic.

Many Tajiks and Uzbeks have converted to Orthodoxy and attend the Sunday school. Among them are both young and elder people. There are five functioning Orthodox churches the country. In Dushanbe is St. Nicholas Cathedral. In Kurgan Tube is the Prayer house of St. Michael; church services are provided in the temple of St. George. In Tursun-Zade, people visit the temple of



*Ill. 4. The St. Nicholas Cathedral.
Photo by M. Babadjanova*

St. Virgin Mary. In Khujand there is the new built church (built in 2010) of Maria Magdalena, which replaced the temple that burned in 2005. In Chkalovsk there is the church of Our Lady of Kazan, as well as two new churches being built in Gafurov (near Khujand) and at the training center of the border troop of Tajikistan. All issues related to the spiritual and religious life in Tajikistan are under the control of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The lack of overt conflicts does not mean there are no problems between representatives of Islam and Christianity in the country. There should be freedom of choice for people and nobody has the right to rush into human being’s soul without a knock to make nice settings. Any state looks for the means to unite its society. There are common laws which regulate the life of a society. They should exist. Issues of belief have deep and sensitive features. We must together find solutions for the problems we have in our country, and the dialogue between Islam and Christianity, along with the government and the work of the state with religious organizations, makes it easier to find solutions.

According to the history of Judaism, Jewish people have often been persecuted. Due to the persecution, starting from their first fleeing in 587–586 BC, the Jewish people were a scattered nation. When they migrated to the West, in particular to Spain and Morocco, and to the East, in particular Iraq and Persia, the Christian and Muslim neighborhoods had an impact on the style of Jewish culture. Such influence made all types of Jewish society learn the local languages and, even more, affected such factors as style and behavior.

More than 12,000 Jews lived in Tajikistan before collapse of the Soviet Union, in particular in Dushanbe. They were called Bukhara Jews, as most of them lived in Bukhara city. They followed both the adopted Tajik culture and language and their own traditions. Nowadays,

more than 300 Jews live in Dushanbe and they all profess Judaism. According to the data given by Mikhail Abdurakhmanov, Rabbi of the Jewish religious community of Tajikistan, there are no more than 1000 Jews living in the country now. There is one active synagogue in Tajikistan, which is not yet re-registered in accordance with the Law about Religion Community. The deadline was January 1, 2010. As Rabbi Abdurakhmanov explained, they currently do not have enough parishioners to be in accordance with the new Law so they cannot be re-registered as a religious community.



*Ill. 5. Rabbi M. Abdurakhmanov.
Photo by M. Babadjanova*

In 2004 a number of European countries officially contacted me, as Secretary General the Tajikistan National Commission for UNESCO, to explain the situation of the synagogue. The old synagogue building was demolished along with an entire neighborhood, in accordance with the reconstruction plan of Dushanbe. Pictures of the synagogue (a small decrepit building) were taken and sent back, explaining that the building had nothing to do with historical and culture values.

Constant meetings were held at the City Council office in Dushanbe to discuss whether to give another building for the synagogue as a solution. For example, in June 2004, Abe David Gurevich, Chief Rabbi of Central Asia, and Mr. Ubaidullaev, Mayor of Dushanbe, agreed on the place for a new synagogue to be constructed. Among many other offers, the Jewish community chose the spot not far from the quay of the River Dushanbinka. But, as Rabbi Abdurakhmonov said, the community didn't have enough funds to start the construction. In March 2009, the Head of Orien Bank, Mr. Hassan Asadullozoda, donated a building to the Jewish community in the center of Dushanbe to be used for a new synagogue.¹⁸⁰ The matter of building is solved after 5 years of seeking a solution. And meetings and dialogue are still going on to achieve mutual understanding as life presents new questions.

The culture of dialogue is based on mutual understanding, taking into account the differences of religious cultures, mutual respect, trust and cooperation. This dialogue has a special place in intercultural and interreligious communications, the matter of working together, civil society, and religious associations in making decisions regarding social problems and settling questions related to inter-confessional and interethnic conflicts against extremism. A semi-formed culture of civil society has a negative impact on international and inter-religious relations. Low level of culture is the only reason why localities, nations, and religions fight from time to time. People having high culture education always express loyalty to other beliefs, opinions, behaviors and cultures.

Aggression toward another nation, religion or culture results from the absence of spiritual culture. The great William Shakespeare said: "Good legs sooner or later begin to stumble, the proud back will be bent, the black beard will turn grey, the curly head will grow bald, the beautiful face will become covered by wrinkles; the deep look will grow dull; but **kind heart** is the sun and the moon and even more like the sun, than the moon; **for its shining and bright light.**"

¹⁸⁰ <http://www.regnum.ru>

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CHAPTER 10

PARADIGMS OF INTER-RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN HISTORICAL AND MODERN UZBEKISTAN

Muzaffar Artikov (Uzbekistan)

Religion is (and forever was) the most simple and at the same time the most mysterious, the most universal and, in spite of this, the most unique phenomenon in the world. Each folk, each country for the millenniums of its development has accumulated its inimitable religious experience, its priceless spiritual heritage, which provides the legacy of the generations, the socialization of growing change, and the crystallization of national values. Uzbekistan is no exception. From ancient ages, different religions have coexisted peacefully in the land of Uzbekistan, in good proximity with the faith, beliefs, customs, and traditions of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. For a millennium, a high culture of international contacts and inter-religious dialogue was being worked out, as along with an unwritten charter of humanity and tolerance.

The Person stood in the center of the *weltanschauung*. All that in other conditions and regions was considered primary (faith, beliefs, skin colors, values and orientations), in this land became secondary. Old historians — Herodotus, Strabo, Arian, Curtius Rufus — indicated that in this land lived wise and human people practicing love of their native land, devotion, and tolerance. The inclination toward intercultural dialogue was noted by the Spanish ambassador Rui Gonzalez de Clavijo and the Arabic historian Ibn Batuta and, in Modern time, by Hungarian scientist Hermann Vamberi. But nobody mentioned the episodes of xenophobia and inter-ethnic or inter-religious conflict.

The main reason for such peaceful behavior can be characterized by the language of Avesta: “good thought, good word, good deed”. Thousands of years of philosophical thought were necessary to work out the formula. Orientalists know, by the way, that the book of Avesta was written in the land of ancient Khorezm.¹⁸¹ Through a decision of UNESCO, 2002 became the Year of the 2700th anniversary of Avesta, and a monument to this sacred book was installed in in city of Urgench.

The next great factor was the Great Silk road, which through cities of modern Uzbekistan, such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Termez, Bukhara, Khiva, and others.

Buddhism was mostly represented by the artistic endeavors of the Kushan Empire, which had its spiritual centre in Termez. This fact has recently been revealed by Uzbek and Japanese archeologists¹⁸², who carefully studied monuments of Termez and its environs. The territory of present-day Uzbekistan played the role of springboard for the migration of Buddhism to South-East Asia.

¹⁸¹ См.: Толстов С. П. По следам древнехорезмийской цивилизации. М.-Л., 1948.

¹⁸² См.: Кито Кюдзо. Памятники Буддизма периода Кушанской империи. Ташкент, 2004.

The local population, not worshipping fire, or, later, the Buddha, showed respect for these spiritual movements. At the same time, they didn't allow other traditions to destroy their traditional customs and rites. As the great Firdausi said, "Let my eyes not see the parental tradition would be destroyed by an alien one".

Christianity came to Central Asia in the 3rd and 4th centuries, that is to say long before Islam. According to written sources, there was a diocese active in 334 in Merv¹⁸³, which was possible only if a large Christian community existed in that region. The Clergy of Merv had great authority in the Eastern Church, and most probably participated in the Nicean congress of 325. Spreading Christianity in the East was most possibly linked to the activities of Apostle Thomas. In any case, in the first centuries of our era, Christians started to settle in Central Asia, coming from Persia and Syria. The Persian shah Shapur I (241 — 272) conducted wars against Rome; in the battle of Edessa he defeated the Roman army and took into captivity emperor Valerianus (259). Captive Romans, some of whom were Christians, were settled upon vast territories in the East. As stated by the Armenian historian Egishe¹⁸⁴, in the time of Shapur II (309 — 379), Christians lived upon a broad territory, from Baktria to India.

The following stage of the spreading of Christianity in Central Asia came in the times of the rule of the Sasanid king Yezdigard II (438–457).¹⁸⁵ In the 6–7th centuries, Nestorianity had the dominating position. According to modern scientists V. Bartold and E. Zakhau, Nestorian dioceses were created in Gerat, Samarkand, Kashgar, and etc. Along with Nestorians, Monophysites also existed in the region, as well as Yakobites, and Orthodox Melkites.

The information of the great medieval scientist Abu Reyhan Beruni is most important for history of the Melkite community in Khorezm. In the opinion of V. Bartold, the Christians of Khorezm were Melkites before becoming Muslims. In "Monument to the Past Generations", Beruni¹⁸⁶ noted that according to the calendar of Melkites of Khorezm, June 21 was dedicated to the memory of priest Barahiya, who brought Christianity to Merv 200 years after Jesus Christ. One may agree with Bartold's¹⁸⁷ supposition that Christians of Khorezm were subordinated to the metropolitan bishop of Merv, and that Beruni learned about their calendar in Khorezm, before leaving there prior to the year 995.

Islam came to Maverannahr ("Land beyond the River", so named by the Arabs in the 8th century, and conquered the minds and hearts of local dwellers in a short time. The "Main reason for this receptivity was the truthfulness and purity, the humanity and tolerance, the calling mankind to good, and the reverence towards values and traditions". Islam corresponded to local traditions, so it became a matter of conscious choice. Consequently, Uzbek scientists, such as Imam Buhari, Isa Termizi, Maturidi, Mahmud Zamahshari, Kaffal Shashi, Burhaniddin Marginani, et al. have contributed a lot to the development of the Islamic civilization.

Intolerance, xenophobia, and claiming to possess the Truth, which characterized the first generation of Muslims, were soon replaced by striving towards interfaith dialogue. Religious differences existed, but did not become essential.

¹⁸³ См.: Богомолов Г. И., Буряков Ю. Ф. Христианство в Средней Азии. // Из истории древних культур в Средней Азии. Ташкент, 1994. С. 10.

¹⁸⁴ См.: Егисше. Борьба христианства с учением зороастровым в пятом столетии в Армении. Пер. с армянского П. Шаншиева. Тифлис, 1853.

¹⁸⁵ См.: Ртвеладзе Э. В. Великий шелковый путь. Ташкент, 1999. С. 75.

¹⁸⁶ См.: Беруни. Памятники минувших поколений. С. 342

¹⁸⁷ См.: Бартольд В. В. Ислам и мелькиты // Он же. Сочинения. Т. 6. М., 1966. С. 655–656.

Abu Mansur Maturidi (870–944), commenting on the 40th ayat of the surah “Hajj”, wrote: “It is forbidden to destroy churches and synagogues in Muslim country; so they are intact and there is no discord about it by local ulems (Muslim authorities)”. Abu Lais Samarkandi, who died in 1003, stressed in his comments on the Qur’an (ayats 8–9, surah “Mumtahana”) that “Allah does not forbid Muslims to be good to those who did not fight against them because of religion and does not exile them from their houses”. The great Islamic lawyer, author of the “Hidoya”, Burhaniddin Marginani (1123–1197), stressed that “if a church were ruined, it is permissible to restore it”.

Beruni, in honor of whom the American scientist J. Sarton has named the 11th century “the Age of Beruni”, in discussing the main differences between Central Asian Muslims and Indians, first of all stresses the difference of their languages.¹⁸⁸ Only sccondarily, Beruni discusses religious differences, where he is quite laconic and objective: “We don’t believe in their gods, they do not believe in ours”. The third difference is formed by customs which can give rise to hostility: “However, prejudices are likely to dominate not only in our relations with Indians, but also between all people in their relation to one another”.

The “yellow crusade” of the Mongolian Nestorians delivered a serious blow to the Muslim-Christian commonwealth. According to L. Gumilev, Nestorians stood at threshold of creating in Asia an “empire of the third type”, wherein religion forms the backbone. And really, in the times of the first Chingizides, Nestorians were very close to seizing power over the Great Horde. Mongolian armies, led by a Nestorian called Kit-Bouka, conquered nearly all Muslim countries, burning mosques, killing the Muslim clergy. Kit-Bouka lost only after a decisive battle in Egypt.

Coming to Central Asia in the 19th century, Tsarist Russia started a new period in the dissemination of Christianity in Central Asia. Churches were built, starting from 1847. Orthodox communities were founded and churches were built in Tashkent (1865), Auliya-ata (1866), Zhulek and Merk (1866), Turkestan (1866), Dzhizak (1866), Ura-tube (1867), Chinaz (1868), Chimkent (1868). In the Zerafshan district, communities formed in Samarkand and Kattakurgan.¹⁸⁹

By resolution of the Holy Synod in 1865, the Tashkent district was founded, which unified nine Churches. In 1871, an edict of the Emperor created the dioceses of Tashkent and Turkestan. Later, the diocese of Verny (now Almaty) was created.¹⁹⁰

According to a principle common to many empires, no intervention into the traditional religious life of the local dwellers was practiced. The centre of the diocese was moved by the end of the year 1916 to Tashkent, where by that time there already existed 16 churches.

Studying the history of Christianity in Uzbekistan we see that Orthodox Church functioning in the diocese of Tashkent and Central Asia managed to work out constructive cooperation and peaceful coexistence with other religions, primarily Islam.

Already in the 19th century, three rural churches in Turkestan were built based on Muslim sponsorship. Muslims regarded it an honor to take part in the erection of Orthodox churches. They donated carved iconostases and icon cases for the Joseph-George cathedral in Tashkent, and cathedrals in Kokand, Andizhan, Namangan, Fergana, Kazakhstan, and other regions of

¹⁸⁸ *Беруни. Индия // Он же. Избранные произведения. Т. 2.. Ташкент, 1963. С. 65–66.*

¹⁸⁹ *См.: Буряков Ю. Ф. Жукова Л. И. Проскурин Б. Н. К истории христианства в Средней Азии (XIX–XX вв.). Ташкент, 1998. С. 15; Яковлев Б. А. Из церковной жизни Туркестана. Верный, 1902. С. 6–9.*

¹⁹⁰ *Владимир. Митрополит Ташкентской и Среднеазиатской епархии. Первые по времени // Восток свыше. Духовное и литературно-историческое издание. Вып. V. Ташкент, 2003. С. 10.*

Central Asia. In some cases, these works of applied art were unique. For instance, nowhere else in the world could one find alabaster (ganch) carvings in a Christian temple. In this way, majestic temples and mosques enriched the spiritual world of mankind.

Muslims and Christians together practiced charity and created orphan shelters where children of different nationalities were welcome, and where Muslim children received spiritual education from a mullah, Orthodox children, from an Orthodox priest.

At the beginning of the 20th century, about 6,003 million Muslims and 391,000 Orthodox Christians lived in Turkestan. There were about 5340 mosques and 306 churches. In addition, there lived about 101,000 old-believers, 8,200 Lutherans, 7,800 Roman Catholics, 28,000 Judaists, and 17,100 representatives of other religions.¹⁹¹

The First Lutheran community was registered in Tashkent on January 12, 1865. However, the inauguration of a Lutheran Church occurred only on October 19, 1899.

When Polish people started to come, Roman Catholic activities were initiated. In 1897, a Roman Catholic charitable society was created under the auspices of Bonaventura Pranaitis, a curate of Rome. Construction of the majestic building of a Roman Catholic cathedral was finished in 1917. However, it was not used for religious purposes prior to 1991.

During Soviet times, both Christians and Muslims of Uzbekistan had to live through a period of repression and militant atheism, alongside representatives of other religions.

When Uzbekistan became independent, normal conditions for religious life were restored and activities of religious organization were legitimized. In the present time, Orthodox life flourishes in the framework of 1 diocese, 1 seminary, 3 monasteries and 33 churches. As a whole, 38 Orthodox organizations have been registered according to the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan entitled “On freedom of religion and religious organization”. The more than 160 Christian religious organizations include 2 Lutheran, 4 neo-apostolic, 5 Roman Catholic, 52 Korean Protestant churches, 23 Baptist, 10 Adventist, and 21 Evangelical churches.

Of course, the situation can never be absolutely transparent and idyllic. Problems arise primarily having to do with the activities of uncertified missionary activities, or actions of the religious fundamentalists.

On the occasion of the 1995 Tashkent international Christian-Muslim conference “Live Together under One Sky”, both Muslim and Orthodox clergy of Central Asia addressed the adherents of their respective religions: “We are adherents of religious liberty; however, we look with concern at the activities of some foreign missionary organizations, which tend to grow in number. We are concerned by their introducing discord, being ignorant of our spiritual heritage, their aggressive religious propaganda, and their ruthlessness in conducting proselytism.

Leaders of both Islam and Orthodoxy, working as good neighbors and sincere adherents of the fortification of our state, are united in striving to withstand any attempts to discard the great message of our great world religions. We give every effort to provide the adherents of our faiths objective and positive images of the other religions, which can open their heads and hearts to due respect for the religious beliefs of the others.”¹⁹²

Uzbekistan is now an integral part of the open world. No wonder religious fundamentalists and international terrorists are constantly trying to break the rhythm of its life, dissemi-

¹⁹¹ Ибрагимов Э. Ф. Деятельность христианских конфессий в Узбекистане и их роль в формировании религиозной толерантности. Ташкент, 2010. С. 58.

¹⁹² Материалы конференции «Жить под одним небом». Ташкент, 1996. С. 34.

nate seeds of panic, and enforce Islamophobia and other types of intolerance. The republic was subject to several attacks of international terrorism in February, 1999, in Tashkent and May 12–13, 2005, in Andizhan, to name but a few. However the multinational and poly-confessional nation of Uzbekistan managed to protect its ideals and value and its adherence to democratic values and principles. Terrorism is a common enemy, equally opposed by both Orthodox Christians and true Muslims.

The Metropolitan bishop of Tashkent and Central Asia Vladimir said in one of his speeches: “Spiritual intervention joined the political, economic, national unrest in the post-Soviet territories. Thousands of propagandists have come to proselytize in the framework of the spiritual vacuum created by Atheists. This occult wave comprises the whole spectrum of temptations, from pseudo-Christian doctrines to exotic cults and real Satanism”. The Holy Patriarch of Moscow stressed: “I am sure that alien preachers wish not to enlighten, but to bring discord, to separate people, to join religious discord to the political discord”.

Religious solidarity is possible only on the basis of mutual respect, due tolerance, and intercultural exchange. The purpose of modern interfaith dialogue consists not in blurring religious differences, nor in stressing intra-confessional problems. Its main purpose is in searching for common values in reacting to what is occurring both in our country and beyond its borders. Stressing our differences, introducing unacceptable polemics can bring only harm. This is necessary for neither Muslims nor Christians. As is said in the Qur’an, “Allah is our God and your God; we have your deeds, you have our deeds. No argument between you and us, Allah would gather us, and our return would be to Him!”¹⁹³

Each world religion pretends to possess the full Truth of the Divine Revelation; each has its own unshakable foundation. The moral commitments of Christians and Muslims are almost identical. Christianity is often called the religion of love, Islam the religion of fairness. What is different is which of the two should dominate. But in mundane reality there is no argument between fairness and love.

For thirteen centuries, people of Central Asia have practiced Islam, and ancestors of the Russians became Christians more than a thousand years ago. Here Buddhism became the state religion during the Kushan Empire. All of these religions profess similar values, i. e. peace, mercy, labor, moral purity, love of children, respect for old people.

Cooperation between the adherents of these religions keeps being developed nowadays as well. They are united in striving to withstand sin, to support honesty, kindness and respect to senior, fairness, and labor.

Researchers who are able to separate religion from politics are united in stressing that there never have occurred sharp conflicts between the two religions in Turkestan. As Konstantin Leontiev, the great Russian philosopher, stressed, nations flourish only where different types of worldviews and national and religious traditions develop. The Muslim world forms an example of such flourishing.

In 1996, the 125th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox diocese of Tashkent was celebrated. On this occasion, the patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Alexy II came to take part in the festivities. In December the same year, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Lutheran presence.

¹⁹³ Коран. Сура 42 «Совет», аят 15. См.: Коран / Пер. и коммент. И. Ю. Крачковского. Изд. 2–е. М., 1986. С. 396.

Tashkent Islamic University was created by edict of the President of Uzbekistan in April, 1999. In May, 2000, President V. Putin visited the university and became its honorary student.

On October 14–16, 2000, an international conference under the aegis of UNESCO was conducted in Tashkent, under the motto “World religions on the Way to the Culture of the Peace”.

A conference, organized by the Academy of State and Society of Uzbekistan and the University of Osnabrueck, held March 28, 2003, in Germany, focused on the “Dialogue between Christianity and Islam”. Seminars dedicated to intercultural and interfaith dialogue were conducted in New York and Paris.

From February 20 to May 29, 2008, a series of meetings with students were organized by the Spiritual leadership of Muslims of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with the Tashkent diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In February, 2011, a seminar was organized in Uzbekistan as part of the “International Week of harmonious Interfaith Relations”, with participation of representatives of all major religions of this country.

This chronology of events — the list is far from complete — has contributed fortifying tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

“Together we live under the same sky” echoes the main paradigm of inter-religious dialogue, which is supplemented by another statement: “we have more in common than in difference”.

The leading role in shaping this dialogue naturally belongs to Muslim clergy. In 2007, the city of Tashkent was declared the “Capital of the Islamic Culture” by the organization of the “Islamic Conference”.

As to our conclusions, one is historical. People of other religions have never been perceived as aliens: their faiths, customs and rites deserved due respect. The great Beruni can be regarded the precursor of religious tolerance. As he wrote in “India”: “I have never assaulted an alien and never considered it damnable to cite his words, even if they disagreed with the true faith, so that an adherent has unpleasant feelings listening to the speech — precisely because an Indian knows his faith better than us. In this book there is no place for polemics and dispute, and I do not cite the arguments of an alien, or disclaim them, as they deviate from the truth. What I am doing is just citing Indian theories, and Greek parallels as well, in order to show their mutual proximity”.¹⁹⁴

Here we see the main principle of Beruni: describing the worldview of people belonging to other faiths without conducting criticism. This position was conducted by him in the course of his scientific career. Beruni felt respect for the ideas and cultures of Greeks, Khorezmians, Persians, Syrians, and Arabs, et al.¹⁹⁵

The main thing was the Person occupied the center of the worldview. All that in other countries tended to be regarded as principal (religion, race, nationality, political orientation), became secondary in this country. Interethnic contacts found deep expression in the creative activity of the great humanist Alisher Navoi as well. Titans of the Muslim Renaissance felt respect for the Person and for society, with no sympathy or antipathy to a given nation or credo.

¹⁹⁴ *Беруни. Индия*. Ташкент, 1968. С. 60.

¹⁹⁵ *Булгаков П. Г. Жизнь и труды Беруни*. Ташкент, 1972. С. 207.

The second conclusion is philosophical: the principal religion of society during each era provided the social basis for tolerance as a condition of the whole. The Muslim rulers of Uzbekistan did not engage in proselytism or missionary work. Tsarist Russia did not enforce Christianity on the territories of colonial Turkestan; ethical norms tended to prevail, not segregation through the enforcement of religion.

The third conclusion is ethical: social groups which were subject to tolerance practiced self-limitation and gratitude.

PART III.

**REFLECTIONS ON FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES
OF EDUCATION FOR NEW PROSPECTS
OF INTERFAITH DIALOGUE
IN THE CONTEXT
OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE**

CHAPTER 1

TAXIS — RELATIVE TIME

Efim A. Rezvan (Russia)

“...The area, which is subject to photographic fixation, is almost as broad and unlimited as the area of an artist. Meanwhile, a photographer will also have an advantage of quick work and fixation, which are absolutely unavailable to the latter... the material delivered by a photographer will have all the advantages of documentary, unbiased and accurate protocol...”

S. M. Dudin

“In the light of the theory of taxis some categories and notions of traditional linguistics that have to do with the expression of positional time — such as “relative time”, “relative times”, “sequence of tenses” — were subject to reexamination and thus were interpreted in a new way, which at times discovered quite significant divergences between various researchers”.

S. M. Polyanskii

For several years, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, has been carrying out the project “Ijma’ = concord”¹⁹⁶. Ijma’ is one of the bases of Islamic religious law, the unanimous doctrine and opinion of the recognized religious authorities at any given time. The project is based on interviews with most respected Islamic scholars, religious leaders and public men, living in Arab and Muslim countries as well as in Russia, China, the USA, Europe, and other countries. In general, the world of Islam will present its unanimous opinion — *ijma’*.

Within the frames of the project serious research program is realized, expeditions and topical art, ethnographical and photo exhibitions are organized, books are published. The project “Ijma’=Concord” is an attempt to gain an understanding of the tangle of problems

¹⁹⁶ The project was presented at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris as a part of the program of the international congress “Pluralism and Recognition” (June, 2006), at the World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” Fourth and Fifth Annual Sessions (October, 2006 and October, 2007, Rhodes), at the International Regional Conference of the “European Civilization Space: Baltic Dialogue” World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations” (June, 2007, Tampere), at the International Conference “Intercultural and Interconfessional Dialogue Aiming at Sustainable Development” (UNESCO and the Academy of Public Administration attached to the President of the Russian Federation, Moscow, September, 2007). At the moment the project is carried with the support of Academician Eugeniy Primakov (Russia), Academician and the State Hermitage Museum Director Mikhail Piotrovsky (Russia), outstanding politician, philosopher and writer Prince Hassan bin Talal (Jordan). The project documentaries were presented in Russia, France, England, Italy, Egypt, Finland and Greece. There Arabic versions were broadcasted by “Rusiya Al-Yaum” TV channel.

connected with modern Islam. It is an independent, non-governmental, civil initiative, the direct speech of the Muslim world aimed at all of us, both Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the spring of 2010 a joint Russian-Kazakhstan historical-ethnographic expedition was working in the Kazakh steppe land¹⁹⁷. Russia and Kazakhstan are united under centuries of common history. Thus, as historical luck would have it, the Islamization of Kazakh steppes happened when they became part of the Russian territory. Today the deep mutual influence of Eurasian cultures is often and quite truly spoken about¹⁹⁸. The ways of such influences are inscrutable, and there are myriad alternatives of their implementation. We learned of a Russian academician who became an advisor to a Muslim zealot, of an incredible story of the sacred cave, legends of which date back to great antiquity which have a great deal in common with the plots of Russian culture of the early 20th century. However, let's take it one step at a time.

An orientalist historian must first be a philologist. This is taught from the very first days at the Oriental Faculty of the University of St. Petersburg. Petersburg orientalists often see and describe the world in linguistic terms. The “mathematicity” of linguistics helps one see structure in chaos and gives a thread to a researcher, which will help him get out of any maze. I had a chance to appreciate the rightness of my teachers again in Kazakhstan, during a Russian-Kazakhstan historical-ethnographic expedition that began the end of May, 2010. The day before the departure I was working with an article of one of the most large-scale linguists of the 20th century, Roman Jakobson, where he for the first time introduced a very important term for modern linguistics — *taxis*¹⁹⁹. Perhaps, it was under the influence of this very article that our whole trip appeared to me in circum-linguistic images and notions.

The main task of the expedition was to collect material for the scientific support for publication of the St. Petersburg Kunstkamera Kazakh collections within the framework of the large-scale scientific project provisionally entitled “Traditional Kazakh Culture in the collections of objects and photographs in the MAE RAS”. The complex scientific expedition, exhibition, and publishing project was designed by the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), the Russian Academy of Sciences (MAE below), and the Central State Museum of Republic of Kazakhstan for the purpose of uniting the efforts of the leading scientists of the two countries in the field of research and publication of the Kazakh collection of the MAE, one of the most interesting and oldest in the world. The history of the collection is closely associated with the history of Russia and the history of Kazakhstan of the 19th – early 20th centuries. Among the collectors were Chinghiz Valikhanov, the father of the Kazakh enlightenment scientist Chokan Valikhanov, Vasilii Vereshchagin, a prominent Russian artist, Grigorii Grumm-Grzhimaylo, a well-known traveler and researcher of Central Asia, Nikolai Katanov, a prominent orientalist-Turkologist, Konstantin von Kaufman, the first Russian governor-general of Turkestan, Nicholas II, the last emperor of Russia, Friedrich W. Radloff, the director of the MAE, and many others.

¹⁹⁷ See: http://www.kunstkamera.ru/en/news/2010_08_31/

¹⁹⁸ One of the last exhibition projects of Kunstkamera Museum is devoted to the problem. The exhibition “Path Toward: the Cultural Unity of the Peoples of Eurasia” opened on November 23, 2010 in the National Folk Museum of Korea (Seoul), see: http://www.nfm.go.kr:8080/english/htm/muse4_news_viw.jsp?code=22&datafl=

¹⁹⁹ *Якобсон Р. О.* Шифтеры, глагольные категории и русский глагол // Принципы типологического анализа языков различного строя. М., 1972, с. 101; о развитии понятия таксис в современной лингвистике см., например, С. М. Полянский. Таксис - относительное время - эвиденциальность (к проблеме критериев разграничения) // Сибирский лингвистический семинар II. Новосибирск, 2001.

The first information on the objects of traditional culture of Kazakhs in the collections of Kunstkamera is found in the Catalogue Guide of the Museum, released in 1800. The photograph of the khan of Bukey Horde, Jangir, with his wife dates back to the period “between 1839 (the year photography was invented) and 1845 (the year Jangir–khan died), and therefore it can be considered the earliest photograph — and not a daguerreotype — among the photographic collections of the MAE on the theme of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, and one of the first domestic photographs in the history of this branch of arts”²⁰⁰. The Photographic collection of the famous zoologist Poleakov made among the Kazakhs of the Semipaltainsk province and passed on to the MAE is the oldest museum collection, totally dedicated to the study of one people group. Among the museum exhibits there is an antique belt, richly-inlaid with cornelian insets, silver, and gold. According to the legend it was kept in the clan of one of the most prominent khans of Middle juz — Ablai-Khan (1711—1781). The first Kazakhstan blockbuster “Nomad” (directed by Ivan Passer/Sergey Bordov, 2005) was filmed against the background of his biography. The list of interesting exhibits may easily be continued.

The collections of the MAE also include a unique collection of the photographic material of Samuel Martynovich Dudin (1863—1929), an artist, ethnographer-scientist, traveler and collector. He was one of the last direct participants in the “storm and onslaught” epoch in the history of the MAE RAS, which is also associated with the names of Vasilii Vasilievich (Friedrich Wilhelm) Radloff (1837—1918) and Lev Yakovlevich Sternberg (1861–1927). They set a goal before themselves — to create a *scientific museum of the culture common to all mankind*, which would be worthy of the capital of the great country.

After a series of arrests for participating in the revolutionary movement and an exile to Siberia, Samuel Dudin, on account of the petition of Radloff, the director of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology and full member of the Academy of Sciences, was given permission to take up his residence in St. Petersburg and participate in the scientific projects of the Museum. Radloff helped the ex-exile to enter the Emperor’s Academy of Arts in the capital. Having graduated with flying colors from the Academy, where he studied under famous Russian artist Ilya Repin, Dudin obtained the status of artist in 1897. Samuel Dudin took an active part in art exhibitions and actively worked as a book graphic artist. With all that in mind, the main role in his life was devoted to active participation in the series of expeditions dedicated to the study of the monuments of Central Asia; those expeditions were organized by the MAE. In particular, Dudin worked in the Central Asian expedition of Vasilii Barthold (1893—1894) and in both expeditions of Sergei Oldenburg to Chinese Turkestan (1909—1910 and 1914—1915). He soon became actively involved in the study of the artistic and ethnographic monuments. Samuel Dudin became an academic custodian and secretary of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, became the head of the Department of the Antiquities of the Eastern Turkestan in the Museum, and became an unchallenged secretary of Radloff’s readings, fundamental for Russian ethnographic science. From 1900 to 1908 he went to the land of Turekstan almost annually. Samuel Dudin became a pioneer of the collection at the Ethnographic Department of the Russian Museum (today it is known as the Russian Ethnographic Museum) of ethnography of the peoples of Central Asia²⁰¹.

²⁰⁰ Прищепова В. А. Традиционная культура казахов в коллекциях МАЭ (в печати).

²⁰¹ Here the collections, which have to do with his name, contain over 4,000 exhibits and about 1,500 photographs.

That was a romantic epoch, which today can be nicknamed the time of “the first media revolution”, the epoch of photographing travelers and discoverers. Portable still cameras and sound-recording equipment made it possible to take a different look at the field work. Ethnographers welcomed new opportunities with great enthusiasm. The significance of photographic equipment and materials is testified by the surviving archived materials regarding the preparation for the expeditions of those years. A substantial amount of funds designated for buying the equipment (which was about one fourth of all the expedition expenses) was used for buying photographic plates. A total of 60 poods (i. e. almost a ton!) was purchased on a yearly basis for the Second Russian Turkestan expedition²⁰², and that was the load for at least three camels.

Having taken a great interest in photography, Dudin became the founder and (after 1911) the permanent head of the specialized photographic laboratory of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography — one of the first in the world — and practically one of the founders of a scientific trend, which is today referred to as *visual anthropology*. The uniqueness of the artistic heritage of Dudin in many respects lies in his special approach to his material, an approach that combined the talent and professionalism of a true artist with scientific thoroughness and objectivity. That is why the monographic publication of Dudin’s collection will become the first stage in the realization of the project “Traditional Kazakh Culture in the collections of objects and photographs at the MAE RAS”.

The expedition’s route of 2010 was based on the material resulting from Samuel Dudin’s trip to Akmola, Semipalatinsk and Semirechnye provinces in 1899. Dudin’s expedition was made for the particular purpose of forming a special exhibition for the Paris World Fair. The project was realized by the famous “Ethnographic Bureau”, formed in 1897 by a Russian manufacturer and patron, Prince V. N. Tenishev (1843–1903). The main goal of this enormous venture was the organization and implementation of the mass collection of information about Russian peasantry under “The Program of Ethnographic Information of the Peasants of Central Russia, Compiled by Prince Vyacheslav Tenishev”. The Kazakh project of Tenishev reveals that he was ready to broaden substantially the research frames of the “Bureau” at a certain stage.

The newspaper “Russian Turkestan” published one and the same text in two of its issues (July 14th and August 11th of 1899) in the column of “Asian Echo”: “On the occasion of the Parisian exhibition the ethnographic bureau of Prince Tenishev will issue a spacious research about the Kirghiz, supplied with illustrations, executed by Dudin, an artist who was sent to the steppe lands specifically for this purpose”.

In the process of his Kasakh trip Dudin managed to take 500 photographs that pictured the nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakhs: everyday scenes and landscapes, human portraits, people’s occupation, interior design and decoration, winter and summer nomad camps, dress and musical instruments. Dudin also managed to sketch Kazakh ornaments²⁰³ and collect

²⁰² Протоколы заседания Русского Комитета по изучению Средней и Восточной Азии. 1914 г Протокол № 2 (заседание от 29 марта 1914 г), § 27, С. 19–20.

²⁰³ The album of Samuel Dudin dedicated to the Kazakh folk ornament and consisting of 60 watercolors is kept in the research museum of the Russian Academy of Arts. (The architecture department. A-21646–A-21705, annotated copies in the MAE, collections Nos 2450, 2530, 14 color copies — in the Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan). The collection is accompanied by drawings, drafts and plans made by Dudin in the course of the expedition of 1899 (interior view of a Kazakh farmstead, patterns of felt yurt coverings, types of men’s and women’s clothing, bags for keeping flint and steel, color sketches of the *changarak* supports, of the ornament on a reed mat — *chie*, 14 items in the keeping, collection No И-1446).

ethnographic artifacts²⁰⁴. On account of the diversity of the subject matter and the number of photographs, this collection No 1199²⁰⁵, given by Dudin to the Museum in 1907, can fully be considered a photographic encyclopedia of traditional Kazakh life.

The archive of Dudin's expedition did not survive, but the analysis of Dudin's photographs made it possible to establish the main way points of his route. As a result, two junctions of the active field work of Samuel Dudin were brought to light: Bayanaul in the Pavlodar *uyezd* and Karkaralinsk in the Karkaralinsk *uyezd* in Semipalatinsk province. At those spots particularly the main work of the expedition of 2010 took place. Our goal was to clarify and correct the attributions of the photographs of Dudin, and to collect material permitting us to look at the objects registered by Dudin, taking into consideration scientific perspectives and information collected by specialists throughout the years since his journey.

The cart road ran along the steppe, every now and then crossing a little river at the sand bars. Holding on to the video camera, which seemed to aim at tearing itself out of my hands at every pothole, I was looking intently through the dusty window of our UAZ²⁰⁶. The deeper into the steppe we went, the more the all-weather "Loaf" with the super-flotation ability, which I met on the roads from Ethiopia to Vietnam, reminded me of a time machine. Different epochs unceremoniously coexist on this fantastic soil; and today, when I remember our journey, it is our time traveling that seems to me more important than the geographically accurate and successive fixation of our space traveling. I lay out my impressions according to time, and, first of all, I find myself in the infinite traditional time (*traditus-continuus*) of the nomadic steppe, where little has changed since Genghis Khan.

We were going to the valley of Kent where one hundred years ago Dudin photographed ancient ruins, and the images outside the window looked more and more like illustrations of "The Secret History of the Mongols", a unique manuscript which is kept in the library of the Oriental Faculty of Saint-Petersburg State University, or of the celebrated "Compendium of Chronicles", compiled by the Jewish vizier, Rashid al-Din (circa 1247—1318), a wise reformer, doctor and historian, who before his execution managed to compile in his book all

²⁰⁴ «From the journey of 1899 Samuel Dudin brought fretted wooden cabinets, women's silver adornments, not well-preserved scoops and leather ware for koumiss, string musical instruments, items of household utensils, a flintlock made locally, and an antique support for the upper yurt circle — *adal bakan*, — which the collector acquired at the summer camp by the town of Yakshi Niaz. Part of the collection items were from Pavlodar — a men's belt *kse* with a hinting set and antique tambours with an embroidery sample. At the Kuyandinskaya fair he bought some bijouterie — several rings and pincers for hair plucking. They were pinned to the right side of the jacket together with a "hygienic set" and worn by men and women alike of middle and elderly age. From the son of a known Kazakh researcher, Musa Chormanov, Sadwakas, the museum received a spindle *urshuk* for thin-thread spinning, a spoon *ozhay* for koumiss, made of one piece of wood and a wooden spoon, which is a replica of sorts of a Russian spoon, and from Bayanaul, the ancestral lands of Chormanov, — a man's hat *tymak* and a snuffbox. (The MAE collection No 493)». (Прищепова В. А. Традиционная культура казахов в коллекциях МАЭ (в печати).

²⁰⁵ The Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan keeps a series of six photographic panoramas taken by Dudin. generally the collection is accompanied by a collection of stereo negatives (No 2181), given by Dudin to the museum in 1910. It consists of the views of steppes, mountains, winter camps of the Kazakhs, which the members of the expedition of Sergei Oldenburg came across on their way to Turfan, and also of the negatives of the journey photographs of the life of the Kazakhs on the way from Semipalatinsk to Chuguchak, made in the course of the expedition of 1914–1915 (No 2114, see also collection No 2491).

²⁰⁶ Russian made pickup-truck/minibus as simple and effective as Kalashnikov rifle. Its form reminds loaf of Russian bread, so it is often blandly called Loaf ("Bukhanka" in Russian).

the accessible information on the history of Mongols. We made a stop in order to photograph a herd of horses bunched closely together in the shade of a small group of trees. The great steppe, stretching east to the horizon, smelled simultaneously of bitter and sweet herbs. The immense dome of the sky covered this world, which, as it seemed, never changed for hundreds of years.

The sense of a different kind of time was reinforced in the valley itself — a natural fortress shut off from the sharp steppe winds, an ideal place for camping or a winter camp with the purest brook, currants and wild strawberries. Any of the episodes of the early history of Genghis Khan could unfold here. The only things that were missing were about ten yurts with women and children, guard dogs desperately barking all of a sudden, the hissing of arrows and horsemen grabbing somebody else's wives in the blink of an eye and at once disappearing into the boundless steppe. The ruins were exactly where Dudin photographed them, only one hundred years later they had lost the second story and turned into one-story ruins. Supposedly this is a Buddhist temple, built in the 16th century, but the aura of the valley automatically makes one dream of a princess, who stayed here for a winter on the way to her distant fiancé. The official plate, surviving since Soviet times, reads, "The Palace of Kyzyl-Kent, 16th-17th centuries. The monument is under protection of the state".

In the evening of the same day we were drinking foamy koumiss, watching as the hostess was whipping it exactly as it was done hundreds of years ago. Here people remember the names of at least seven generations of ancestors and hearing the songs of the Dzungar wars of the 17th-18th centuries they cry as though they literally mourn for their fathers or older brothers.

For an aboriginal of the Steppe the rhythm of the traditional time and the priorities it dictates today are exactly the same as they were one thousand, five hundred, or two hundred years ago. Traditional time always exists in relation to traditional space. Whoever has studied the history of Arabia and read ancient Arabic poetry or the memories of travelers who passed through Arabic deserts and traveled across Arabia, knows that for a local poet or a Bedouin guide there is not one visible rock, boulder or group of bushes or palms that doesn't have its own name and a history linked to it. In exactly the same manner our guide Altynbek, an employee of the local museum of Bayanaul, told us of the steppe places of interest, unmistakably pointing to the places of winter camps of the times long gone, telling of the battles, significant events, and births of important fellow countrymen. As for us, we saw nothing prominent in the "standard" rock deposits.

"Stop here," said Altynbek to the driver. "This is Ablaydyn Saryadyry, from here one can see as far as 45 kilometers in any direction. All the sacred sites of the Kazakhs are here. Khans were lifted up here on white felt mats. Everywhere around us is our history".

Closer to the evening we were standing at an oval hole in the ground about seven meters in diameter. The bottom could not be seen. "English gold-bearing mine", clarified Altynbek. "And over there", he pointed to the barely seen line of rocks protruding from the ground, "was a concentrating mill". Sometime later in the blacksmith shop, which has stood at that place for 300 years, he showed us a surviving tray for gold rinsing and told us one of his stories. An English entrepreneur, having started a business in the early 20th century, did not calculate his investments correctly — the fieldwork turned out to be more costly than he had expected. He left for London for money, but came back with two fine English racers and suggested a fifty kilometer horse race to a local *bay*. If the Englishman comes first, then the *bay* will pay wages to local workers and provide horses necessary for the goldmine. If a Kazakh comes first, then the entire goldmine will go to the *bay* as well as the horses brought from

London. There were judges at every ten kilometers — a Kazakh, an Englishman, and a Russian Cossack. The Englishman raced for himself; the Kazakhs sat a teenager to race on behalf of the *bay*; and the Kazakh horse came first. The Englishman honestly met the conditions of their deal. Altynbek also gave us his name — Urquhart.

I immediately translated the story of Altynbek to one of the members of our expedition, an English orientalist writer Antony Wynn, and soon after our return I received a piece of information from him, where he claimed that it was true that in the early 20th century a prominent English businessman — later a millionaire — John Leslie Urquhart (1874—1933)²⁰⁷ traveled and started his business in these places. A full-length English-Russian-Kazakh motion picture might be filmed as a result of our conversation at the neglected mine. And the almost epic story told by Altynbek will find itself on the pages of the reference book about business in various world countries; published annually by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Great Britain.

Then we went to a hospitable house, where the family of the brother of our guide lives. We were drinking tea from a samovar burning outside and eating freshly baked bread with homemade butter. I can still remember the taste of it.

In traditional time and space the role of a poet and poetry is traditional as well. *Akyn* – a Kazakh poet-improviser — in many respects is close to an ancient Arabic *sha'ir*: the oral nature of the art and the special social role it plays make a frequent connection to supernatural powers and poetic competitions.

The expedition bus drove up to the village of Toraygyr. Dudin took a great deal of photographs nearby. Mountains of striking beauty, the lake of the same name, a relict alder grove... The sacred spring known as “Awliya bulaq” gushes out by the memorial museum of the poet Sultanmahmut Toraygyrov, who passed away at the age of 27. Traditional time carries its own laws: the museum was opened in the arduous year of 1993 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the poet's birth, when the population of all of the post-Soviet territories first and foremost thought of how to feed their children.

Another example is the destiny of Mashhur Zhusup Kopeev (Kopeiuly) (1858—1931), a prominent *akyn* and collector of folklore. We visited the memorial museum of the poet, today revered as a saint in the territory of Kazakhstan, met his great grandson, headed for the burial vault, which has become a pilgrimage site for Kazakhs from all over the world (while we were there a young Kazakh banker from London came to pay his respects to the holy poet), and in Pavlodar we attended the Central Mosque named after the poet, one of the largest in the territory of the republic. Mashhur Kopeev was one of the informants of Academician Friedrich W. Radloff, the director of the MAE and a prominent Turkologist. Under Radloff's influence, in 1872, Kopeev proceeded to collect the oral literature of Northern and Central Kazakhstan, which in many respects formed his character²⁰⁸. Also back in 1891 in Siberia Radlov essentially predetermined the destiny of Dudin, having taken this young exile with him to the Orhon expedition in the capacity of a graphic artist.

...We are 30 kilometers away from Karkaralinsk; not too far away the Taldy river sparkles in the sunset. The highway turns towards the sun. I cover my eyes with my hand and through

²⁰⁷ About him see K. H. H. Kennedy. Mining Tsar: The Life and Times of Leslie Urquhart. Sydney, 1986.

²⁰⁸ See, for instance, Ремпель З. А. Роль В. В. Радлова в изучении культуры и этнографии Казахстана // Г. Н. Потанин — ученый, путешественник, общественный деятель: Российская интеллигенция XIX века и проблемы истории и этнографии казахов. Материалы международной научно-практической конференции. Павлодар, 2005. С. 248–251.

my fingers I can see four *mazars*, photographed by Dudin in 1899. Two photographs are simply signed with “Tombs”. We are at the burial site of four sultans, *volost* rulers. Today it is a pilgrimage site. These are the tombs of Sultan Tauke (1769–?) and his sons, Kusbek (1797–?), Sultan Tubek (1801–?), and Ismail-Khan (1828–?). Nearby there is the tomb of improvising poet and singer (*akyn*) Shozhe Karzhabayuly (better known as Shozhe Akyn) (1808–1895), who asked to be buried nearby the tomb of Kusbek, who also was a prominent *akyn*. Shozhe also became famous as a participant in and winner of many poetic contests (*aytys’es*).

*Neither glory nor a cow,
Nor a heavy earthly crown —
Send to me, O Lord, another —
To sing a song with me!
I don’t ask for stolen love,
Don’t ask for mercies for a day —
Please, send, O Lord, another —
So that I won’t be alone...*

Votive rags, tied everywhere, testified of this place being a pilgrimage site.

*That there’d be someone to walk with,
someone to halloo through the steppe with,
for my heart, not for ovations,
that we could sing a two-part song!*

The bus was driving us away, and my fingers were tapping the guitar rhythm of “The Song of Akyn” by the famous Russian poet Andrei Voznesensky (1971), performed by Vladimir Vysotsky, an iconic Soviet and Russian poet, singer and actor. It forever made the word “akyn” not indifferent to a Russian ear.

On one hand, the inclusion of the steppe into the composition of the Empire gave a high-power pulse for development, yet on the other hand it forced the steppe to share the fate of the entire country, including the economic and social experiments of the 20th century. On the way to Karaganda we made a stop in a small neat settlement stretching along the highway. In the course of reforms (1901–1903) instituted during the tenure of Pyotr Stolypin, Chairman of the Russian Council of Ministers, the settlement was founded by migrants from Estonia and was named Lifland. With the beginning of World War I. the overly “German” name was replaced by Pokornoe (*Submissive* in Russian translation). Its modern name — Bay Mirza — reflects the sudden change of the ethnical make-up of its population. After the break-up of the USSR Estonians and Germans, who used to live along the Volga River and were deported here with the beginning of World War I, departed for their historical homeland. Their place was occupied by the Kazakhs from Mongolia. The local Christian cemetery keeps the history of this settlement, where Estonian and German names are neighbors of the Russian ones, and the Kirillic alphabet stands together with the Latin one.

The second time, which is impossible not to notice in Kazakhstan, is the time of Stalin’s USSR, the infinite time of gun volley (*infernus-continuus*). “ALJIR” (‘Akmolinsk camp for wives of traitors of the Motherland’) is located by Astana. It is the 17th women’s special department of the Karaganda Corrective Labor Camp (1938—1953). This is the Soviet largest wom-

en's camp, one of the three "islands" of "the GULAG Archipelago". The camp was fenced with several rows of barbed wire; watchtowers were erected. In 1942 fifty women were executed here, twelve of whom by the decision of the Assembly of Hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church (August 2010) were "glorified in the realm of Russian neo-martyrs and confessors for the reverence by the entire Church". Browsing through the list of the ALJIR prisoners one can find the name of Rachel Mihailovna Messerer-Plisetskaya, a film actress and the mother of world famous ballerina Maya Plisteskaya (she was in the camp with the infant at the time); the name of the author of "Steep Route" and mother of the Russian writer Vasiliy Aksyonov, Yevgenia Solomonovna Ginzburg; the name of Anna Vasilyevna Kniper (Timiryova in her first marriage), a Russian poetess, the mistress of Admiral Kolchak and mother of the painter Vladimir Timiryov...

It was drizzling. Raindrops were trickling down the polished black granite wall, into which the names of all of the ALJIR prisoners are carved — twenty thousand women's names and destinies. Kazakh boys and girls in white shirts were firmly standing honor guard. Press photographers and television reporters were working. A great number of satisfied, well-dressed and well-groomed people, standing under umbrellas, were listening to the requiems, which one by one were read by the representatives of four confessions. Huge snow-white tourist buses were gleaming under the falling rain not too far away; they probably brought the tourists here. It is inconceivable that right here in the steppe, by the rush-rimmed lakeside, a branch of hell on earth orderly functioned over the course of 15 years.

"Karlag", the place of detention of many men of science and arts of the USSR, became an important culture center: prisoners held concerts and staged shows (including ballets!), artists were busy with design. Here significant prerequisites for a new phase in Kazakhstan art in general were laid. We were again reminded of all the aforementioned by the paintings kept in the Karaganda Museum of Art, from the brushes of remarkable artists, who found themselves in the camps formed in the Kazakh steppes. Millions of Soviet men of various nationalities passed through Karlag. A state program for the memory of the victims of the political repressions is being carried out in Kazakhstan today. Nothing of the kind exists anywhere else in the post-Soviet territories.

... Our UAZ was leisurely and confidently making its way through clusters of granite boulders. The rocks of fanciful shapes, wind-whipped pines; all of these pictures reminded me of my native Karelia vent. We were going to the sacred cave, one of the most ancient sacral sites on the territory of Kazakhstan.

"...According to the legend the name "Konyr Awlia" dates back to Prophet Noah (Nuh), the savior of the world, animals and birds. At the time of the world Flood three *awlias* were arriving late. When they arrived, Noah's boat had no room. Then, tying three logs together, they boarded the raft and tied it to Noah's boat. Their logs ran against a rock and tore off. The three foretellers on their logs were taken in different directions. After the waters receded, when mountains and hills began reappearing, the log of holy Konyr floated to the cave where he settled down. The cave was called "Konyr Awlia". There people observed stringent laws: first, natural cleanness was preserved; second, only sober people would attend the site; third, everyone was responsible for maintaining the cleanness of the territory surrounding the cave — this is the sacred duty of every man". This inscription greeted us at the beginning of the ascent to the sacred cave, one of the most ancient sacred sites on the territory of Kazakhstan. I read the inscription with great

surprise since in all the sources known to me this cave is referred to as Awlia-Tas. In 1903 the *Kirghiz Land* newspaper ran an article that said “Awlia-Tas” is a long cave of about ten *sazhens* (around 22 meters), at the western wall of which lays a large rock with a hollow in the middle. Cold and clear water trickling down from the walls and ceiling of the cave constantly accumulates in the hollow. The Kirghiz believe this water is very distinguished on account of its healing properties. Kirghiz visiting the cave drink this water, wash diseased members of their bodies, and use it for the ablutions established among Mohammedans. According to Kirghiz legend, a holy man once lived in the cave. At times there are great numbers of people visiting Awlia-Tas, and especially many women, as the Kirghiz believe the water cleanses women of infertility”.

As for the cave of “Konyr-Awlia”, it, as far as I know, was located about 200 km away from Semipalatinsk, on the slope of the Aktas mountain, where it is washed by the Chagan River. That enormous cave with a deep lake and either a statue covered in lime crust or a “petrified carcass, which for many years was exposed to lime water”²⁰⁹, we intended to see at the end of our journey. The cave of “Konyr-Awlia” was known to have a good reputation among women, who aspired to motherhood but were devoid of such a possibility. Among the legends connected to the cave one says that supposedly at the bottom of the lake there is a secret door that leads to a certain tomb which has direct channel linking it to Mecca through a network of underground tracks.

To my deep regret we could not make it to the cave of “Konyr-Awlia”: strict time-frames of the expedition ultimately did not allow us to make a detour of almost five hundred kilometers toward Semipalatinsk. However, I seemed to understand why the cave of Awlia-Tas borrowed its name and the associated legend from another cave, located many kilometers away.

On January 15, 1965, about one hundred kilometers from the “Semipalatinsk” downstream on the Chagan River, the first Soviet nuclear warhead was exploded in the interest of national security. The cylinder was 86 centimeters in diameter and three meter in length and contained a payload equal to nine Hiroshimas. Yet 94% of the energy of the explosion was provided by the reactions of thermonuclear synthesis, which did not release any radioactive products. The crater was thought to be a fine water reservoir, with a small area for evaporation and a smooth glass-like bottom, which would provide the safekeeping of water. Soviet newspapers wrote: “As a result of the nuclear test, a great lake of Chagan with pure clear water was created. The landscape and the country have undergone transformation.. . . The event, which had been awaited for so long, has finally happened. The day was hot, which was so usual for this area. People were languishing. It was a little cooler by the lakeside and the placid water mirror-like surface was beckoning! Indeed, so near and yet so far.. . Finally, the doctors gave “the green light”, and all the residents of the settlement ran to the beach. Everybody swam for a long time, from the bottom of the heart.. .”

Efim Slavskii himself, the Soviet “Atomic minister”, went for a swim in the “nuclear lake” and commissioned a documentary to be filmed about the experiment: in which a snow-white power boat is ripping across the surface of the azure lake.. . Despite the unique nature of the explosion, a significant territory, including 11 inhabited localities populated by about two thousand inhabitants, was left off the screen. To date, the level of gamma radiation around

²⁰⁹ Брюханов В. А. Конур-Аулиэ // Записки Семипалатинского подотдела императорского Русского географического общества, 1912, No. VI, С. 2–3.

the edges of the crater exceeds by 7 to 10 times the natural radioactive background. An experimental biological station installed on the lake, was nicknamed “Atom-kol” by the locals. The goal of the station was to research the impact of the residual nuclear radiation on living creatures. 36 species of fish were released into the water, including the Amazon piranha. Today, the lake and its neighboring territories are officially on the list of localities that seriously suffered from nuclear tests²¹⁰. In this regard, it becomes clear why the water in the cave of “Konyr-Awlia”, which is located within or nearby the contamination zone, ceased to be considered to have healing properties by local population. Hence the name and the popular legend were transferred to the cave of Awlia-Tas. Indeed, the condensed water accumulated in a small hollow in the upper part of the cave was considered an unfailing medicine for barrenness.

Regarding the legend of Konyr, it is certainly deserves to be seriously studied. The legend has many parallels, but the first thing that comes to mind is the story of the firstborn son of Adam — Cain, who withdrew into caves from the face of God²¹¹. According to the biblical legend, after the Flood, Noah was spared. He was not connected to the kindred of Cain. The forefather of “post-Flood humankind” was a descendent of Seth, the son given to Eve instead of the murdered Abel. According to some Apocrypha, however, several descendants of Cain survived the flood as well; they kept some ancient magic knowledge, and maybe even Cain himself survived. An early short story by the famous Russian poet Nikolai Gumilev (1886—1921), “The Daughters of Cain”, for instance, is a literary response to this legend:

The path snaked between the stony walls, rising and dropping and then suddenly leading him to a large meadow lit by the full moon. Pale silver herbs were quietly waving; the shadow of unknown gigantic trees fell on them, and a shallow grotto blackened in the deep. Seven motionless figures clothed in white were standing there as if stalactites. But they were not stalactites. Seven tall maidens, strangely beautiful and strangely pale, with their eyes bent strictly downwards and closed ruby lips, surrounded an open marble tomb. It contained an elder with a silver beard, dressed in fine clothes and wearing golden bracelets on his muscular arms. He was neither alive nor dead²¹².

Against this background the “nuclear” cave with its secret tomb and lime-encrusted “petrified carcass, which for many years was exposed to lime water”, is undoubtedly a plot worthy of Borges, with the moral of malignant artistic ingenuity and destructive experiments of the theomachist Cainites.

Kazakhstan is a special past-future tense (*perfectum consequium*), a curious interweaving of deep timeless history and space-age futurism. Atom-kol and Sary-Shagan, an experimental ground for antimissile weapon development and testing, are located to the north-west of Balkhash Lake in the Hungry Steppe. Star Wars indeed: all Soviet and Russian antimis-

²¹⁰ For greater detail see the article titled “The Chagan Project” in Russian Wikipedia and at <http://kursakov.narod.ru/ozero.htm>.

²¹¹ According to some interpreters this is exactly how the following Bible verse needs to be understood: “Today You are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from Your presence” (Genesis 4:14; New International Version).

²¹² Гумилев Н. С. Дочери Каина / Гумилев Н. С. Собрание сочинений. Т. VI. М., 2005. С. 34. See also a Masonic legend of the buoyant and creative “supreme” race of the Cainites (Жерар де Нерваль. История о Царице Утра и о Сулаймане, повелителе духов. М., 1996) and theomachist “Cain” by Byron.

sile systems were tested here, and the complex for testing battle lasers with nuclear pumping and electro-laser weapons operated here. It was from there that the laser locator probed the American spaceship Challenger on October 10, 1984, which provoked malfunctions in the on-board systems and complaints from the crew about unpleasant sensations.

Traditus-continuuus, infernus-continuuus, perfectum consequiuum ... In psychology the term *taxis* has its own special meaning. Here the term refers to an instinctive form of spatial orientation of living beings, in concordance with which they begin moving either towards favorable, vital and essential elements of the environment, or towards unfavorable elements. A member of our expedition, Anton Uspenskii, an art critic, accurately noted that modern Astana has been cast into the steppe by a fairy-tale *dastarkhan*²¹³. In the complex of the modern edifices of ministries and departments of Kazakhstan, from under the arch around one of the central squares of the city one can easily see a traditional Turkestan fortress (*qala, arq*) and the shape of the Petrine Twelve College, which for two hundred years has been the main edifice of the Petersburg University. Astana is the newest tense of Kazakhstan, the time which combines centuries-old experiences of the country with symbolic structures of the chosen developmental path.

The joint work of Russian and Kazakh scientists will result in an exhibition (2011) and catalogue album presenting unique photographic materials of Samuel Dudin together with a complex of research materials. Essentially, the exhibition and album represent the completion of work begun in 1899 by the Tenishev “Ethnographic Bureau”.

The exhibitions of the series “Expeditions Are Not Over” will present images and symbols of the traditional culture of the population of Kazakhstan, depicted in the photographic works of Samuel Dudin, and artifacts that he collected, as well as photo and video materials from the expedition of 2010. A special feature of the project is its comprehensiveness; items of traditional culture are displayed simultaneously with photographs and videos graphically illustrating their use in real life. The exhibition space thus gains a third dimension; the viewer has the impression of being present and gets a feeling of actuality in the presentation of the cultural and scholarly information.

An important part of the exhibition will be showing the early technical means of making and reproducing images: still cameras, the means of photograph printing and of their demonstration (stereoscopes, “Victorian TV”), etc.

The project is being carried out as part of the preparations for the 300th anniversary of the first Russian State Museum — Peter the Great Kunstkamera — within the framework of the Program of Fundamental Researches of the Presidium of the RAS “Historical Cultural Heritage and Spiritual Values of Russia” through the instrumentality of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and with the participation of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, St. Petersburg Museum of the History of Photography, the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkin House) of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Research Museum of the Russian Academy of Art, the Russian State Historical Archive, the St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Archive of the Russian Geographic Society.

²¹³ The name applied across Central Asia to the traditional space where food is eaten.

The following remarkable words belong to the famous Kazakh poet, composer and philosopher Abai (1845—1904). “Knowledge turns into bitterness, bringing old age prematurely, where there is no person beside you with whom you can share joy and sorrow”²¹⁴. We sincerely hope that young Russian and Kazakh researchers will be able to find themselves and one another in this project.

²¹⁴ Абай (Ибрагим) Кунанбаев. Книга Слов (Слова Назидания) / Пер. Р. Сейсенбаева, К. Серикбаевой. Слово первое (см. <http://abai.norbekov.kz/>).

CHAPTER 2

THE DAGHESTAN SHI`A COMMUNITY AS AN EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

Goulchokhra N. Seidova (Russia)

Rapt attention to the problems of religion, traditions, and folk culture of North Caucasus is conditioned by understanding exactly how effectively they have factored in the stabilization of peaceful life in both the region and country through the ages. Daghestan is a part of the Northern Caucasus and near-Caspian zone. Today, the notion of “Caspian region” includes “the region lying between the borders of Europe and Asia along historically lines established during the Cold War period creating a North-South corridor between two civilizations: Christian and Muslim”.²¹⁵ Among other areas of the Caucasus, Daghestan — “country of mountains” — is the most Caucasian area of whole Caucasus”.²¹⁶

Here, Islam has deep historical roots. It is possible that the spread of Islam through the territory of Russia began with the arrival of Arabs in Derbent in 642.²¹⁷ From the many ages of their joint residency, the people of Daghestan have accumulated unique experiences in solving international and interreligious oppositions. It is impossible to refer to questions of religion without paying attention to the cultures in which they are ingrained, as the existence of these spheres is not isolated, and they constantly affect one another.²¹⁸ Christianity was the first monotheistic religions in Daghestan. During several ages it dominated in some feudal possessions and communities, a position undermined only with the spread of Islam.

The Arabic conquests in Daghestan stopped by the beginning of the 9th century, but Islam continued to spread in Daghestan lands. Political and cultural factors proved to be more efficient in the spread of Islam than military actions. Derbent played a central role in the spread of Islam through the region. The geographic and strategic position of the city as a migration route conditioned its special fate. Shi`a communities have formed in the cities of Makhachkala, Kizlyar, and Buynaksk, and the village Miskindzha of Dokuzpara region, but the centre of the Daghestan Shi`a community is certainly Derbent and neighboring region. In general Derbent is the most ancient and firm Shi`a community in Russia. The historical,

²¹⁵ Дунаева Е. В. Каспийский регион и Иран // Исламская революция в Иране: прошлое, настоящее, будущее. Сборник статей. М., 1999. С. 129

²¹⁶ Cited from: Карпов Ю. Ю. Горное дагестанское селение: от традиционного джамаата к нынешнему социальному облику // Северный Кавказ: традиционное сельское общество — социальные роли, общественное мнение, властные отношения: Сборник статей. СПб., 2007. С. 5

²¹⁷ Силантьев Р. А. Ислам в современной России. Энциклопедия. М., 2008. С. 289

²¹⁸ Трансформация образовательных технологий гуманитарного профиля в условиях множественности культур и идентичностей: Научно-методические материалы / Астафьева О. Н., Губина М. П., Иконникова Н. К. и др. СПб., 2008. С. 28.

cultural, and spiritual background of this city, which became the southernmost city in Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, is very rich. In the Arabic caliphate, which equals the Roman Empire in size, there were many “Gates” (al-Babs), but the most important gate, judging by the name, was Bab al-Abwab (“Gate of Gates”) located in Derbent. The rulers of this distant border city sometimes left it for the throne of khalifs.

Early feudal associations throughout Daghestan were obliged to deliver payments in grain and people (slaves) to Derbent.²¹⁹ Having joined the Caliphate earliest of all, as far back as the 8th century, Derbent became the first centre of Arab-Muslim culture in the Caucasus. Historically, Derbent has been a stronghold of Sassanid Iran on its northern border, a centre of Christianity, the residence of the Patriarch of Caucasian Albania, the first Muslim city and stronghold of the Arabic Caliphate in the Caucasus, the capital of the Emirate of Derbent, and later the Derbent khanate.

During the Arabic conquest, the military leader Maslama settled people from Arabia in Derbent and divided the city into four parts.²²⁰ The emigrants from Kufa constituted the population of the second largest Derbent street, Emama or Kufa Street. The Iraqi cities originally were Shi`a opposition centers to the Omayyads, which explains the origins of Shi`a Islam migration from Iraq, which arrived in Derbent during the reign of caliph Abdul Malik. The Arabic warriors from Syria and Iraq conducted active missionary activity amongst the local population.²²¹ One of the most ancient disquisitions on Sufism in the East, “Rayhan al-hakaik va bustan ad-dakaik” (“Basil of truths and garden of delicacy”), written by Derbent native Abu Bakr Muhammad ad-Darbandi, contains data about Ahmad Ben al-Husain Ben Abu-Abdallah ash-Shi`i al-Gadairi, supreme judge, to whom all judges of the Derbent Emirate were subordinated.²²² Until he died in the mid-11th century, he was head of the Shi`a communities of the city, and his stance influenced the direction of Islam in this country.²²³

The academician V. V. Bartold, based on messages from the 10th century Arabic historians al-Istahri and Ibn Haukal, noted that Derbent appeared to be the largest city of Caucasus, dominating a larger area than even such centres as Tiflis and Ardebil.²²⁴ Shi`a Islam became the state religion of Iran at the beginning of the 16th century. Derbent was subject to Iranian political and cultural influence until it joined with Russia at the beginning of the 19th century.

During certain stages of Daghestan social development, Shi`a Islam was the dominant ideology, expressing the interests of the public masses and enabling its spread.²²⁵ Racial theories in religious studies, in the opinion of I. P. Petrushevsky, have brought about the false perception of Sunni Islam as the “religion of the Arab race”, with Shi`a and Sufi being the “religion of the Iranian race”, or a “reaction of the Iranian spirit against Arabism”.²²⁶

²¹⁹ Кудрявцев А. А. Великий город на Каспии. Махачкала. 1982. С. 33

²²⁰ Акташи Мухаммед Абави. Дербент-наме. Махачкала. 1992. С. 116

²²¹ Ислам на территории бывшей Российской империи. Энциклопедический словарь. Выпуск 1. М., 1998. С. 21

²²² Аликберов А. К. «Райхан ал-хакаик ва бустан ад-дакаик» Мухаммада ад-Дарбанди как памятник мусульманской историографии (конец V-XI вв.). Автореф. канд. дисс. Санкт-Петербург, 1991. С. 14.

²²³ Ислам на территории бывшей Российской империи. Энциклопедический словарь. Выпуск 1. М., 1998. С. 28, 33–34

²²⁴ Бартольд В. В. Дербент // Сочинения, Т. 3. М., 1965. С. 422.

²²⁵ Сеидова Г. Н. Шиизм в Дагестане. М., 2007. С. 61–63

²²⁶ Петрушевский И. П. Ислам в Иране в VII-XV вв. Л., 1966. С. 41.

In 1502, Shah Ismail Sefevi declared Shi'a Islam the official ideology of his state. In 1509, he claimed possession of Derbent with its outskirts. Shah Abbas I Great, who came to power in 1587 after having conquered the primordial Shi'a shrines Nedzhef and Kerbela, ultimately strengthened the Shi'a positions and influence of Iran in Derbent and coastal Daghestan, prior to its joining Russia. The historical, cultural and spiritual relationship of Iran and Derbent created the conditions for Derbent to become the largest Shi'a isle in the whole region. Beginning in the 7th century and continuing until the union with Russia, Daghestan was under the political and cultural influence of the Muslim Orient. From the second half of the 19th century, the culture of the region was influenced by Russian cultural and political thought.

In the history of Russian civilization there have not been any serious, large inter-confessional and interethnic conflicts. Relations between the state and religious organizations in the country have been quite pacific.²²⁷ In order to destabilize the situation in the region, destructive powers have to kindle interethnic discord and religious extremism. As a result of such destructive powers, this region, which is one of the geo-political vectors of Russia, has become one of the hottest places on the planet.

In recent years, researchers have developed significant interest in the spiritual culture of nations inhabiting the Russian Federation, their histories, religions, ethnic peculiarities, and their contributions which have enriched the treasury of national Russian culture. Events which occur in the regions where Islam has spread attract the scrupulous attention of many researchers from around the world.²²⁸

Islam in the territory of the former Russian empire and Soviet Union has some distinctive qualities, conditioned both by the specifics of Islam itself and by the Russian realities. The spread of Islam in the Northern Caucasus, which began in the second half of the 8th century, ended in the 18th century. One reason why Islam became firmly established in the conquered lands is that the Arabs brought "a new religion, majestic in its simplicity".²²⁹ Unlike the adherents of local primitive cults, the Arabs were more tolerant to "the people of the Holy writing" — the Christians and Jews.. In the 10th century in the region of Derbent, the followers of all three monotheistic religions were free to preach their faith and perform their rituals in mosques, churches, and synagogues. Christianity "peacefully got along with Islam" and "we are unapprised about confessional disputes or persecution against Christians".²³⁰

The analysis of the modern condition of interreligious dialogue in the region certainly cannot be limited to consideration of official actions and meetings. Far more important is the atmosphere, the spirit of tolerance which has reigned here for centuries. In Derbent tolerance is an integral trait primordially inherent in the local mentality. That is why it is really essential to trace the origins of how this Daghestan city manages to support the tradition of dialogue between the Shi'a form of Islam and Christianity. Our personal contacts with scholars in Iran and Azerbaijan confirm that they do not perceive Derbent, once a part of their history, as foreign. Certainly, no territorial claims are present. After all, even the name of the town is Persian. As expressed by Iranian scholar M. B. Vosoghi: "...Derbent may be considered the meeting place of different cultures and the main Gates between them, the key to the dialogue

²²⁷ Васильев Л. С. История религий Востока. Учебное пособие для вузов. М., 2004. С. 62–64.

²²⁸ Жданов Н. В., Игнатенко А. А. Ислам на пороге XXI века. М., 1989. С. 3.

²²⁹ Абдуллаев М. А. Из истории философской и общественной мысли Дагестана. Махачкала, 1993. С. 94.

²³⁰ Шихсаидов А. Р. Ислам в средневековом Дагестане (VII-XV вв.). Махачкала, 1969. С. 166.

of the civilizations in the region”.²³¹ The well-known orientalist V. F. Minorsky combined research of the past of Derbent with the Shirvan history.²³²

Due to its unique historical and cultural value, the complex monument “Ancient Derbent” was included in the List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of UNESCO in 2003. Derbent was the first city in the Russian Federation to be awarded with an Honorary Diploma and prize by UNESCO in recognition of Goodwill ambassador of UNESCO, Mananjid Singh, for his work in spreading the ideals of tolerance and non-violence. The award ceremony occurred on November 16, 2006, and was dedicated to the International Day of Tolerance.

Presentation of the project “Caucasian Network of Organizations working with Women and Children on Civil Education” took place in Paris on November 15, 2006, at the behest of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation under UNESCO. The decision to undertake this project was made at the International conference “Women of Caucasus for the Formation of Peace Culture, Tolerance and Non-violence”, conducted on June 1–3, 2004 in Derbent by the initiative of the National Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO, the UNESCO Office in Moscow, and Derbent Centre of Socio-psychological Rehabilitation and Peace Culture. Female non-governmental organizations of the Russian Southern Federal Region, as well Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, are united within the same structure.²³³

In June, 2010, the Directorate of the European Council for Youth and Tourism organized a training seminar for specialists in the organization of cooperation between state organs and young people, held in Derbent and the first ever in the Northern Caucasus. The seminar also looked at problems of interfaith dialogue, and it emphasized that everyday contacts between countrymen, neighbors, and colleagues provide the most efficient and practical framework for interfaith dialogue.

The favorite holidays in Derbent — Novruz, Passover, and Easter — are celebrated by all local dwellers. We feel that signing the “Memorandum on Joint Opposition to Violence, Extremism, Inter-ethnic Discord, in Support of the Peace process in the Caucasus”, which was proposed by a member of the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, M. Shevchenko at his meeting with the religious leaders and students of the Derbent branch of the Daghestan State University on February 25, 2010, would be most constructive for promoting the culture of peace. For many centuries Daghestan remained the centre where dialogue between the Muslim and Christian worlds prevailed over religious and national intolerance. Fruitful interactions between different spiritual traditions, primarily Orthodox Christianity and Islam, during more than thousand years, have provided richness to Russian culture, whose contribution to the formation of human civilization is universally recognized. Here, the experience of contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and Shi`a Muslims on various levels has been quite positive.

The main religious services dedicated to mourning the memory of the main martyr of the Shi`a Islam, Imam Husain, the Muharram month of mourning, normally take place in the Dzhuma mosque in Derbent. Adherents of Shi`a Islam come to participate not only from Daghestan, but also from Northern Azerbaijan. The Derbent Shi`a community has always been indissolubly connected with Azerbaijan, and via it, even in times of the “Iron curtain”,

²³¹ *Восоги Мухаммад Багир*. Дербент — город 72 народов. Экскурс в историческую географию Дербента в первые века ислама // Ирано-дагестанские культурно-исторические связи. Махачкала, 2006. С. 40.

²³² *Минорский В. Ф.* История Ширвана и Дербенда X-XI вв. М., 1963. С. 11.

²³³ *Дербентские новости*, 05. 12. 2006, № 97. С. 1.

with Iran. Though the possibilities for pilgrimage to the main Shi'a shrines were limited, the area was never fully isolated. In the post-Soviet period, instruction of clergymen for the Daghestan Shi'a community has been provided by educational centers in the Iranian cities of Kum and Mashhad. "Idzhaza" (permission) to conduct the Dzhuma-namaz in Derbent was granted in July, 2008, by theologians of the Islamic theological centre in Kum.

Personal contacts between spiritual leaders, representatives of the state, scientists, and ordinary religious people are very effective. The Head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims in Caucasus, Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahşükür Paşazadə, representing Shi'a Islam, met several times with the late Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Aleksey II, including their meeting in Moscow in March, 2004, within the framework of the Religious Peace-making Forum.

One of the persons present on the occasion of the visit of the Patriarch to Azerbaijan, was T. T. Sultanov, deputy mayor of Derbent, a Shi'a Muslim decorated by the Order of St. Daniel of Moscow for his activities dedicated to interfaith dialogue. The 11th Conference of Muslims of the Caucasus, held in Baku at the end of July, 2003, greatly promoted the fortification of interreligious dialogue and peace.

At present, we wish to stress the prominent role of Bishop Alexander of Baku and the Caspian region in the adjustment of interfaith dialogue in the Caucasus. His speech on December 15, 2010, at the 3rd Conference of Peoples of Daghestan, has been most constructive in pacifying the somewhat heated atmosphere. The news of his visit, accompanied by the sheikh-ul-islam, to the tomb of the main Shi'a martyr, imam Husain in Kerbela (Iraq), where both the Christian and the Muslim leader of the region prayed for peace and consent, made an enormous impression on Muslims. Their high personal authority greatly contributes to the cause of interfaith dialogue in the region.

There have been numerous cases of authentic religious tolerance in the history of Derbent. On the request of the Commander-in-Chief in the Caucasus, General A. P. Ermolov, one of the Shi'a mosques of the town was reconstructed as a church, named after St. George the Victor on June, 22, 1806. The mosque was returned to the Muslims after a new church was built in its stead in 1852; however it still bears the name "Kilisyia mosque" ("kilisyia" — church).

On the occasion of holidays, regularly conducted by the Shi'a community, devoted to the birthdays of the Prophet and members of His family, the representatives of the Suni mosque are present, as well as the abbot of the Pokrov church, and the rabbi of the local synagogue. Shi'a Muslims give a paramount, cosmic importance to the reverence of the Prophet's "itra" ("family", "relatives"), considering its members the carriers of "God's grace" and specific knowledge.²³⁴ At the same time, dozens of Shi'a Muslims attend the Beneficial fire brought from Jerusalem, or take blessed water. Offerings pledged by Jewish or Orthodox people to the Dzhuma mosque, or by Shi'a Muslims to the church or the synagogue, are by no means a rare phenomenon.

Only the new mosque, "Bab ul-Abvab", attended by recent immigrants, seems to be different. Its leaders seem on some occasions to practice radicalism and aggressive actions, though the bulk of the parishioners do not practice radical behavior. The tenor of the new mosque is quite unusual for Derbent, and seems to be an exception rather than the rule. We have had the opportunity to discuss these problems within the Days of Philosophy in St. Petersburg in 2008.

²³⁴ Ислам: Энциклопедический словарь. М., 1991. С. 27.

The picture of the religious situation in Derbent would never be complete without taking into consideration the presence of the significant Jewish community. 1897 is considered to be the apex of the last migration of the so-called highland Jews from the neighboring settlements to Derbent. They were in fact survivors of a pogrom organized by the troops of Surkhay-khan Kazikumukhsky. Having fled from the village of Abas-ova to Derbent, they finally found protection and peace. In 1914, a big synagogue was built (“Kele numaz”). In 2010 a new, beautiful building was constructed in the place of the old synagogue. On March 21, 2010, the Grand Rabbi of Russia, Berl Lazar, conducted an evening prayer in its new prayer hall. The next day, the synagogue was inaugurated, being visited on this occasion by an enormous amount of people. Many guests came, representing Jewish communities of different countries. A group of guests represented the Shi`a community of Derbent.

At the inauguration, along with Grand Rabbi of Russia Berl Lazar, other persons were present, namely the President of the Dagestan Republic, M. Magomedov, republican ministers, a group of rabbis from Israel, the Head representative of Dagestan in Azerbaijan, and representatives of the city administration. Despite the difficult situation in the region, the event turned out to be quite lively.

In olden times, the Jewish community was somewhat more numerous. After the end of the “Iron Curtain”, many Jewish people fled to Israel. However in recent years the number of Jews has started to increase again. For local dwellers, this is a sign of the situation returning to normal.

The leadership of the Shi`a, Orthodox, and Jewish communities of Derbent participate in different public and political actions and join in promoting moral and patriotic education of youth. Quite recently, a joint conference of army enrollment authorities and religious leaders took place, dedicated to the problem of suicidal behavior by young soldiers. On this occasion, the Ahund of Dzhuma mosque, the adviser of the President of the Dagestan Republic for matters of religion, Seyid-Hashim Mirteibov, archpriest N. M. Kotelnikov, and rabbi O. Isakov addressed the young people, bringing forth their viewpoints upon suicide. At all significant public meetings of the city, the three traditions share the same views.

I was gratified by the more than positive response in 2009 when I informed the leadership of the Derbent Dzhuma mosque about the new initiative “Stop Human Trade: A campaign directed towards the Enlightenment and Building of Coalitions in the Southern Region of Russia”, initiated by a number of female Jewish organizations as part of the Keshet Project.

In Derbent there has never been antagonism or any forms of opposition between Shi`a Muslims and the “Ahl ul-Kitab” (“People of the Holy Writing”). The increasing role of the spiritual factor brings about a need to return to origins of history, language, religion, the system of ideals and values, the norms of ordinary life, and conduct. It is necessary to work out a complex of measures for rapprochement with the Orthodox Church within the regions belonging to the Islamic civilization. The Dagestan Shi`a community forms part of the joint cultural space characterized in this way: “Russian civilization belongs to those syncretistic civilizations, which have generalized the main points and particularities of different folk cultures, having appeared in the history of mankind as a bright example of the possible overcoming of seemingly impervious barriers between races, languages, religions, spiritual worlds”.²³⁵

²³⁵ Ермаков И. А. Ислам в культуре России в очерках и образах. М. 2001. С. 43.

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CHAPTER 3

INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE: ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY, AND OTHER RELIGIONS IN AZERBAIJAN

Gunay Efendiyeva, Bakhtiyar Aliyev (Azerbaijan)

With globalization, dialogue among cultures and religions is essential for preserving the cultural diversity of human civilization. Dialogue between cultures and religions can be positive only when there is a common foundation that is acceptable by all parties. Ideas of universal and eternal values could serve as such a foundation.

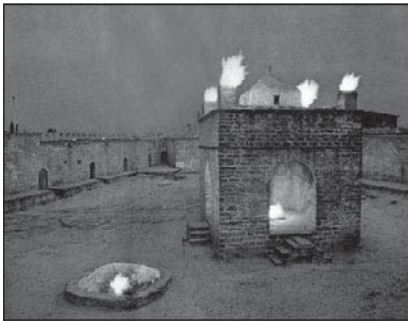
The experience of countries and regions with strong traditions of tolerance and indulgence can serve as an example in this direction. Azerbaijan, in this regard, represents a unique example of peaceful coexistence and cooperation of many nations and religious denominations.

Article 1 of the Law on Freedom of Religion states: “Each [person] independently determines [his or her] attitude to religion and has the right, individually or together with others, to practice any religion and to express and disseminate opinions in this regard”.

Modern Azerbaijan is a secular Republic, where religion is separated from the state. In the framework of the modern Azerbaijani model of state-religious relations, all religious confessions have equal status and are equal before the law.

History of emergence and development of religion in Azerbaijan

In the 7th century BC, the religion of Zoroastrianism started to spread in Azerbaijan where it subsequently had a great influence on the world’s greatest religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam. One of the most worshiped Zoroastrian temples was built in a natural oil and gas eruption site in Baku, “the City of the God of fire” in 6th century BC.



*Ill. 1. Ateshgah. Temple of Fire Worshippers in Azerbaijan. VII century BC.
Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev*

During the archaeological excavations, artifacts of Khojali-Kedabek culture of the late Bronze and early Iron Age (14–7th centuries BC), such as Bronze belts decorated with engravings depicting hunting, household and mythological scenes, were found in Azerbaijan in the territory of ancient settlements. Skilled craftsmen of antiquity, the Zoroastrians (fire worshippers) depicted the scene of the race of beasts on belts, symbolizing the struggle of life (lions) and death (unicorns). The struggle between two opposing forces and the dominance of the forces of good



Ill. 2. A monument of idolatry, VI-III century BC. Azerbaijan. Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev

(three lions against two unicorns) corresponds to the Zoroastrian religious doctrine that these two opposites are in constant struggle, and that good must prevail.

Idolatry, as a set of beliefs associated with polytheism, arose on the basis of primitive religions.

Pagan views of the Azerbaijani people have their roots in antiquity, including worshipping various gods, diverse beliefs — animism, fetishism, totemism, shamanism and etc. Archaeological excavations in the territory of Azerbaijan led to the discovery of large stone idols with an ancient history in Hynysly, Dagkolany and Chyragly, anthropomorphic figures in Ismayilli, and clay statues in Mingachevir. Examples of worshipping different gods can be found in the ancient Azerbaijani epos “Dada Gorgud”.

Zoroastrianism was declared a state religion after invasion of Atropathena (Southern Azerbaijan) by the Sasanian Iran in the 3rd century²³⁶.

The main temple was in Kazaka. Sasani rulers ascending the throne, made pilgrimage there.

At the beginning of our era, in the Caucasian Albania²³⁷, in addition to worshipping fire, people worshiped the elements of nature and natural phenomena such as lightning, heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars), as well as daeva and other mythical creatures, all frightening and incomprehensible to them. Thus, prior to the introduction of Christianity, astral religion and Zoroastrianism were predominant in Albania.

Large temples were surrounded by defensive walls and ramparts (the capital of Kabala). The moon, the sun, the images of sacrifice, and the tree of life are often depicted on historical items of that period. Many ceramic figures of idols, stone idols, and statues have been found.

Azerbaijan is among those countries where the first Christian communities appeared in the first century AD. The emergence of Christianity in the area is associated with the name of one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ — the Apostle Bartholomew.

Albanian tradition in the dissemination of Christianity distinguishes two periods succeeding each other.

The First period is the so-called apostolic period, associated with the names of Thaddeus, Bartholomew, and the disciple of the Apostle Thaddeus Elisha. During this period, episcopacy and metropolitan were created in the country. The first bishop of Albania was the founder of the first Episcopal in Kish (Sheki region of Azerbaijan) and the successor of Apostle Thaddeus Elisha.

According to the Albanian historian, Moses Kalkankatu, Elisha, with the blessing of the first patriarch of Jerusalem Holy Apostle James, arrived in Caucasian Albania, and here, in a place called Kish, built the first church and held the first worship service.



Ill. 3. Albanian Church, I-IV century. Kish village, Sheki region of Azerbaijan. Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev

²³⁶ According to the Gulustan 1813 and Turkmanchay 1828 treaties between Iran and Russia, Azerbaijan's territory was divided into two parts. The northern lands were passed to Russia, and the southern lands, to Persia (Iran).

²³⁷ *Тревер К. В. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании IV в. до н. э. — VII в. н. э. — <http://karabakh-doc.azerall.info/ru/azerpeople/ap051.php>*

This church, called the Church of St. Elisha, is still preserved in the Kish village of Sheki region of the Republic of Azerbaijan and is considered the “mother of all churches of the east”. Prior to the occupation of the Caucasian Albania by Arabs, the Albanian Church existed as an independent manorial church with its hierarchy, which allowed it to ordain the head of the Church from the local clergy. After the Arab conquest, for the sake of unity with Byzantium and the Universal Church of Rome, the Albanian Church was forced to submit to the jurisdiction of the Armenian Church.

However, this fact did not affect the election of the patriarchs of the Albanian Church, regardless of the Armenian Catholicos. In fact, the Albanian church existed until the 19th century.

After annexation of the territory of Azerbaijan to the Russian Empire, the Albanian Catholicos was abolished by imperial decree in 1836, and in 1909–1910 with authorization of the Russian Synod, the Albanian Church archives were destroyed in Echmiadzin²³⁸.



*Ill. 4. Gandzasar Monastery –
XIII century, village
of Vangli, Azerbaijan.
Photo by G. Efyndiyeva, B. Aliyev*

The second period (greekophile) of Christianity is connected with the name of Gregory the Illuminator (Parthian) and the Albanian king Urnayr (4th century). The duration of the Greekophil period was short, after which ethnic Albanian development and the development of Albanian literature passed to the Albanian Church.

The Albanian Church, in contrast to the Armenian, was originally initially linked to the Jerusalem church and to the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In this respect it has analogies with the Georgian church, the origins of which also date back to the Jerusalem church.

In 313 AD, the Albanian feudal aristocracy, headed by the king, accepted Christianity; however, Christianity failed to become the public religion. In the beginning of V century, the translation of the sacred books into Albanian language was initiated in Albania. The Bible and other religious literature appeared in the Albanian language.

In 488, King Vachagan III of Aguene convened a church council, which adopted the canonical order, whereby the Albanian church began to have jurisdiction regarding the immutable rules of church life. Church hierarchy and its inherent subordination started to take effect. This strengthened the principles of Christianity in Albania, and Christianity became popular in the north.

The establishment of the Arab Caliphate and the Arab conquest, which began in the middle of VII century, radically changed the lives of many nations. They disseminated Islam, although they did not force the people of Azerbaijan to adopt their religion. This particularly applies to Caucasian Albania, whose inhabitants were Christians, “People of the Book.” In the southern part of the country, Zoroastrianism was completely supplanted by Islam. Fire worshipers and polytheists were prosecuted. Policies regarding the “People of the Book” were based on knowledge of areas of strategic importance of the South Caucasus as a springboard in their struggle against Byzantium.

²³⁸ Католическая церковь в Азербайджане — <http://www.catholic.az/001-2.php>

At the end of the VIII century Islam became the dominant religion in Azerbaijan. First the upper class, then merchants and craftsmen converted to the new religion, for benefits from the Arab authorities. Thus, the spread of Islam in Azerbaijan contributed to the formation of religious commonality.

The period after the annexation of Azerbaijan to the Russian Empire can be regarded a new stage in the spread of Islam in the country. On April 5, 1872, “Regulations on the Shia and Sunni Moham-medan Spiritual Administration of Transcaucasia”

were approved by the order of the State Council of the Russian Emperor Alexander II. The principle of organization of the Russian Orthodox Church was used as a basis in the forming the structure of the administration. Two Muslim administrative bodies were created in the southern Caucasus: Sunni spiritual administration (muftiat) led by Mufti, and Shiite, led by Sheikh-ul-islam. However, after the formation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918–1920), the Ministry of Religious Affairs united the two bodies, and religious affairs of Muslims of the South Caucasus were governed by a single spiritual Department of Transcaucasia. During this period, the tendency to rationalize and modernize Islam strengthened.

After the establishment of Soviet authority in Azerbaijan in 1920, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Spiritual Board of Transcaucasia were dissolved (May 15, 1920), Muslim religious leaders were persecuted and most mosques and churches closed. The fierce struggle against religion began.

“Cultural revolution” was implemented and the aim was to propagate atheism and the destruction of intellectuals. Mosques were destroyed or turned into warehouses, religious literature was seized, and teaching religion, worshipping at schools, and celebration of religious holidays were also prohibited. So, if there were 2000 mosques in 1918 in Azerbaijan, in the years of Soviet authority their number decreased to 18. State policy tried to create an impression of religion as superstition, a sign of ignorance and darkness that must inevitably disappear through the elimination of illiteracy and development of scientific and technical progress. However, the resolute struggle against religion in the Soviet period failed to eradicate people’s religious views and beliefs, which are probably an integral part of human existence.

In 1944, the first Congress of Muslims of the Caucasus was held in Baku, and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus was created, with its center in the capital of Azerbaijan. For the first time in the history of the administration, the Sheikh-ul-islam was not appointed, but elected by the clergy (until finally all Sheikh-ul-islams were appointed by the state). In 1944, dualism was eliminated in religious organizations of the South Caucasus. The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus was a single center, managed by Sheikh-ul-islam; Mufti was the first deputy chairman of the administration and solved the problem of Sunni Muslims. The administration has the same structure today. There are no serious problems between Shiites and Sunnis, though some Islamic humanitarian organizations, in assisting displaced people from the territories of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent districts, built temporary Sunni mosques in the refugee camps and propagated Salafism among them. The situation changed with the departure of those humanitarian organizations.



Ill. 5. Bibi Heybat Mosque in Baku, the 1281-1282 years.

Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev

Thus, when independence was restored in 1991, Azeri society was characterized by a wide spectrum of attitudes toward religion: from the atheistic beliefs to the naive religious beliefs and practices. What kind of relationship with Islam may arise at this historical stage of development of Azerbaijani society? The question put before the national intellectuals in the last century was largely solved. Azerbaijani society has formed a sufficiently stable national identity and has developed a national consciousness, confirmed by the results of an investigation studying the development of national, ethno-linguistic and religious identity in children and adolescents.

Religious identity is associated with the concept of social identity and can be regarded as one of its forms. Religious identity reflects the awareness of a person of his belonging to a particular religious community. As the structure of social identity, religious identity involves the cognitive and affective components.

The cognitive component of religious identity is religious awareness, which includes knowledge of various religious groups — their history, customs, and cultural peculiarities. The set of ideas and features that create the system of religious differentiation are formed on the basis of that knowledge. The different features include language, values and norms, historical memory, notions of homeland, national character, folk and professional art, etc. The value and role of signs in the perception of members of religious groups varies depending on the context.

The affective component of religious identity is a sense or estimation of the significance of membership in the community. The affective component is reflected or manifested in the person's attitude towards the community. Positive attitudes reflect the satisfaction of the membership, the desire to belong, pride in the achievements. Negative attitudes reflect shame, humiliation, the denial of religious identity, preference for other groups.

From the cognitive perspective, the development of religious identity is that what happens to the child when he or she comes into contact with the group.

The study of the religious identity of Azerbaijani children and adolescents considered both the cognitive and affective components. The study was conducted from December 2000 to September 2001 in Baku²³⁹ and had a number of purposes:

- 1) to determine the level of religious knowledge, beliefs and perceptions, as well as the presence of religious feelings and practices inherent in Azerbaijani children;
- 2) to clarify how religion enters into the system of categorizing the child (Patterns described by researchers in the analysis of social identity, such as preference for “their” group and belittling the “foreign” groups, are also valid for the development of religious identity.);
- 3) discern if religion is a category that defines and differentiates people and understand the relationship between religion and national or ethnic origin;
- 4) understand what motivating factors underlie the importance and significance of religious identity.

The survey revealed that, by nine years of age, the category of national identity — “Azerbaijani” — has formed in the majority of Azerbaijani children. The same studies show that starting from age twelve the category of Muslim identity is formed in the children, and becomes linked to national identity. In other words, in the minds of children a fairly strong link is formed between the concept of being Azerbaijani and being Muslim. The question of

²³⁹ *Кадырова Р. Г.* Национальная идентичность азербайджанских детей и подростков: социально-психологический анализ. Баку, 2007.

whether one can be Azerbaijani but not a Muslim often brought our respondents to a standstill. Although ethnic groups living in the territory of Azerbaijan and professing different religions historically consider themselves Azerbaijanis, the children did not think of them as Azerbaijanis.

The same study showed that the vast majority of children have scant knowledge about Islam and do not practice it. Considering oneself a Muslim is, for the most, based on formal features — ethnicity, birth. “I am a Muslim, because I was born in an Azerbaijani family”. It should be noted that this strong link between ethnic and religious identity is inherent not only in children, but also the ordinary consciousness. Exactly the same linkage, “I’m Russian, so I am Orthodox Christian”, is observed in the everyday consciousness of Russians.

In other words, for our respondents, ethnicity serves as a basis for classifying themselves as Muslims. Although strictly speaking, from a religious point of view, only compliance with the covenants and the performance of rituals can be considered the basis for claiming to be of one religion or another. In this regard, the “religiosity” of our respondents is more “latent” or “formal”. The individual categorizes himself as “Muslim”, though hardly knows what it means. Such a situation of “latent” religiousness is a fraught with many threats to society, as the chance of mobilizing the masses through populist slogans and from various so-called teachers of faith and false prophets always remains.

The risk increases if you take into account that Islam in its traditional form claims the detailed regulation of all aspects of human life. For over one hundred years, this aspect of Islam — the literal adherence to every letter of the Qur’an, and its non-historical and non-contextual perception (let’s call it the principle of “absolutism”) and the desire for detailed regulation of human life and society (Muslim economy, the Shariat court, etc. — the principle of “totality”) — has been subjected to merciless criticism by Azeri intellectuals. In the heat of controversy, these critics have ignored the positive role that religion, including Islam, can play in society as a specific instrument of moral and cultural development. Such cultural tools are needed in a time when our society suffers from a profound moral and spiritual crisis.

Over the past hundred years Azerbaijani society has changed in many ways, and the world around it has changed. The educational and cultural level has increased. Globalization has greatly increased the flow of new ideas, norms and values, coming from the West to the East. In order for Islam to “be in demand” in Azerbaijani society, its approach must be modified and reformed.

Only by placing Islam within certain socio-cultural and historical contexts and modifying or adapting it to meet the needs of Azerbaijani society, can Islam compete with the ideas and values of other cultures and civilizations. Otherwise we will witness some sections of society, unable to find harmony within the framework of traditional Islam, turning to other faiths.

Historically, Azerbaijan was on the crossroads between West and East, Asia and Europe. As a kind of mediator between different cultures and civilizations, Azerbaijan, quite successfully played the role of mediator, catalyzing the process of innovation in the Islamic world. It is enough to remember that the first Democratic Republic in the Muslim east, theater, ballet, opera, operetta, symphonic music, and the first secular school for Muslim girls emerged in Azerbaijan. It is possible that in the future Azerbaijan will give impetus to the reformation and modernization of Islam, and become a model of religious tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

Religious tolerance in Azerbaijan and Interreligious Dialogue

According to the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO (1995), “Tolerance means respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of the world cultures, our forms of expression and the ways of individuality expression, it is harmony in diversity, it is a virtue, which makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by the culture of peace ..”.

It is noteworthy that the issue of tolerance first arose in Western civilization on the religious level, and religious tolerance has initiated all the other freedoms that have been achieved in a free society. Sometimes it seems nothing is harder than to be tolerant towards people who adhere to different religious beliefs.

Unfortunately, some separatist groups are using the religious factor to justify their activities, often with terrorist nature. In such circumstances, the dialogue between cultures and religions is very relevant to preserving the cultural diversity of human civilization, and the experience of those countries and regions with strong traditions of tolerance and toleration could be revealing. Azerbaijan in this regard represents a unique example of the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of many nations and religious denominations.

The International Day for Tolerance has been celebrated in Azerbaijan since 16 November 1999. According to the results of reports by international organizations and experts, religious tolerance in Azerbaijan is an example for many countries with different religious confessions. In 2009, Azerbaijan was elected as the capital of Islamic culture for the contribution made by Azerbaijan in the promotion of religious tolerance in the world.

Azerbaijan adopted the ‘Law on religion’, which institutes tolerance towards all religious denominations. Today more than 500 religious communities such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and others are officially registered and functioning in Azerbaijan.

In 2003, the Albanian-Udi Christian church was registered and resumed its activity in the old Albanian abbey in the village of Kish of Sheki region of Azerbaijan. This resumption of activities and official recognition shows respect for the culture and represents the revival of and preservation of the tradition of mutual respect for various religions in the national consciousness of one nation with different faiths.. We believe that the conduct and support of this policy creates the conditions for dialogue, understanding, cooperation, and tolerance in society and are important factors in the spiritual and moral development of personality.

The formation of strong links between the numerous ethnic and religious groups living in Azerbaijan is an important factor in our common fate. Throughout history, the people of Azerbaijan have often fallen under the authority of powerful states, and the generally poor conditions forced them to seek a rapprochement, notwithstanding the differences in ideology. The tradition of religious tolerance in this region was tested by the collapse of the Soviet Union, in which the nations of former Soviet republics gained independence and genuine religious freedom. Achievements in preserving the spirit of tolerance must be attributed to the Muslim clergy, who in every way have helped prevent the spread of reactionary attitudes in the society.

As part of the modern Azerbaijani model of state-religious relations, all religions have equal status and are equal before the law. In addition to ensuring the rights of Muslims, who are the overwhelming majority of citizens, the state takes care of all traditional religions existing in the country.

In 1991, the building of the Cathedral of the Holy Myrrh-Bearers was given to the Russian Orthodox Church, which was built in 1909 with financial support of a prominent son of the Azerbaijani people, philanthropist Haji Zeynalabdin Tagiyev, and later closed in the Soviet times in 1920. During his visit to Azerbaijan in May 27, 2001, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II conducted a great consecration of the temple and gave it the status of a cathedral.

The opening ceremony of the church was attended by the national leader Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev, members of the government, representatives of embassies, and the heads of the spiritual missions. It is remarkable that the funds for the revival of the Orthodox Church were donated by Azerbaijani philanthropist and businessman Aydin Gurbanov.

In addition in 1999–2001, another Orthodox church — Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin was rebuilt in the capital. At the moment, there are 6 Orthodox churches in Azerbaijan, 3 of which (the Cathedral of the Holy Myrrh-bearers, the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Michael the Archangel Church) located in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

The authorities recognize the Catholic community of the republic, which was registered in 1999 largely through the efforts of the Polish priest Jerzy Pilus. Roman Catholicism in Azerbaijan began to spread at the beginning of the XIV century, thanks to the efforts of numerous missions of the Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites, etc.

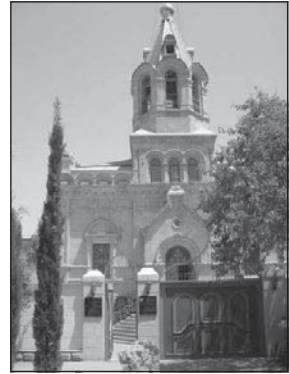
Many Catholic schools, abbeys and missions were established. In January 2006, the Order of the Sisters of Charity of Mother Teresa of Calcutta started to function in Baku and received direct custody of a shelter for the homeless in the Zigh settlement of Baku, which they opened. In February 2007, construction was completed on the Temple of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Armenian Church in the center of Baku was built in 1871.

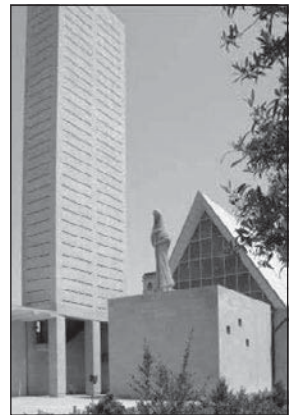
During the World Summit of Religious Leaders held in Baku on April 26, 2010, the Catholicos of All Armenians visited the Armenian Church and prayed there.

The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev received the Catholicos of All Armenians Karegen II. The significance of the Baku summit involving the world's religious leaders was noted during the meeting. The importance of such meetings in strengthening interfaith relations and expanding contacts between religious leaders was also underlined during the meeting.

The caring attitude of the Azerbaijani authorities is also shown towards the cultural traditions of the Jewish community, which has had a long tradition in the country. A



Ill. 6. Cathedral of the Holy Myrrh, 1909. Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev



Ill. 7. Catholic Church of Azerbaijan. Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev



Ill. 8. Armenian church in Baku, 1871. Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev

branch of Hebrew studies is offered in the Faculty of Oriental Studies of Baku State University. The Institute of Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, jointly with the Russian Foundation for the conservation and development of Jewish culture, has started to create a book “Jews in Azerbaijan”. In addition, in April 2001, the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan held an international seminar on “The Mountain Jews of the Caucasus”. In late 2000, chairman of the Religious Community of Mountain Jews Semen Ikhiilov was awarded with the Order of Glory of Azerbaijan and, at the end of the last year, with “the honorary diploma of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.”

There are memorial boards on the buildings of Baku, where prominent members of Jewish origin, such the houses where as theoretical physicist and the Nobel Prize winner Lev Landau, the honored doctor of the Republic Solomon Gusman, and war hero Albert Aaronson lived. The Azerbaijan village of Krasnaya Sloboda is perhaps the only place in the post-Soviet area densely populated with Jews.



*Ill. 9. Synagogue in Baku.
Photo by G. Efendiyeva, B. Aliyev*

Before the establishment of Soviet rule there were 11 synagogues in Azerbaijan. In Soviet times there was only one valid church. After 1996, the State returned the buildings of two more synagogues to the community. In October 2001, celebrations held to mark the revival of the two-story six dome synagogue were attended by Azerbaijani authorities and guests from all over the world. The synagogue opened on March 9, 2003, in Baku, is one of the largest

in Europe. In September 2003 the first Jewish school was opened in Baku.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation, headed by the First Lady of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva, has played a huge role in preserving the traditions of tolerance in the country. A number of religious centers were repaired and restored in the framework of Foundation’s project “Address of tolerance — Azerbaijan”. Thus, in recent years several mosques in various cities of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Orthodox and the Catholic Church in Baku have been reconstructed. An educational complex for Jewish children is under construction. The foundation is also implementing different projects abroad. In 2009, the Foundation provided assistance in the amount of 40,000 euro to the Cathedral in Strasbourg and contributed to the restoration of two large stained-glass windows of St. Mary Cathedral.

These developments are, of course, primarily the result of policies established in Azerbaijan, and are an indicator of respect for the preservation of spiritual values and traditions, which have historical roots.

The experience of Azerbaijan in establishing and strengthening inter-religious dialogue and cooperation has been appreciated and recognized abroad, as evidenced by an historical visit of the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II, to Azerbaijan (May 22–24, 2002). During his visit, the pontiff stressed the historical tradition of religious tolerance in Azerbaijan, and also underlined that the early Christians who sheltered here were fleeing persecution from Roman authorities.

On April 16–18, 2003, Patriarch Bartholomew I paid a visit to Azerbaijan. The purpose of the visit was to achieve understanding and agreement on many issues concerning the followers of different faiths, in order to further strengthen dialogue among civilizations.

Having visited other Muslim countries before visiting Azerbaijan, the Patriarch acknowledged that the state-confessional relations, as well as the relationship between traditional and non-traditional religions in the country are exemplary. “I am satisfied with the level of tolerance here. Everyone in Azerbaijan can practice religion and ceremonies as they wish” — said Bartholomew I.

Azerbaijani leaders often meet with the leaders of religious communities and express interest in the needs and concerns of believers. The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev regularly congratulates Christian and Jewish communities on major religious holidays. In his remarks to the Orthodox community in Azerbaijan during the Christmas holidays in January 2010, the President was noted that the tolerance and patience historically formed in the Republic are an excellent tradition that characterizes Azerbaijani society.

Constructive dialogue between religious leaders plays an important role in shaping the spirit of tolerance in Azerbaijan. The meeting of spiritual leaders of the Southern Caucasus and Russia in Moscow on November 26, 2003, can be considered a positive step in this regard. This historic event resulted in the adoption of a document which acknowledges that, in order to restore confidence between the peoples of the Caucasus, it is necessary “to integrate ethnic minorities into all spheres of public life, to provide them with freedom of religion, and to give them the opportunity to develop culture and language”.

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev repeatedly points out in his speeches that “in recent years repair and restoration operations are under way in all religious monuments of Azerbaijan. Hundreds of new mosques have been built. It indicates that there is no discrimination in this sphere. A human who loves his own nation and respects his own religion, must love people of other nationalities and respect other religions. Azerbaijan is successfully continuing the process of building a strong state on these bases and it is not accidentally that Azerbaijan has begun to play an important role in establishing and promoting inter-religious dialogue in a worldwide scale. I am very pleased that the progress made in Azerbaijan in this field is being appraised by the global community.

Various meetings and seminars with the participation of heads of religious communities contribute to the achievement of mutual understanding and to building closer ties. For example, a seminar on the theme: “Religious stability — an essential part of the overall stability” provided yet another platform for dialogue and understanding among faiths. The event focused on issues regarding the provision of religious tolerance and the role of religious communities in the fight against terrorism, and also underscored support for Azerbaijan’s participation in the international coalition against the evil. At the same time, the fallacy of identifying terrorism with Islam or any other religion was indicated.

The formation of an adequate religious consciousness as the regulatory mechanism of mutual inter-religious and intra-religious relations depends on the degree and character of mastering the basic moral values of this or that culture and religion. It is necessary to organize the correct religious education, capable of satisfying the moral hunger of the population after an atheistic devastation in the moral-spiritual sphere of individuals and especially for the youth who are searching for answers to the questions of religion. In this respect the great values are informed by religion. The role of religious training in the creation of a stable and reliable system of values and criteria, which is the basis of national-cultural wealth, is irre-

placeable, especially in transitional societies. This has real implications for the so-called “the atheistic countries” which after the disintegration of the socialist camp have followed the ways of market economy and religious belief.

New realities demand, on one hand, training or preparing experts with the higher religious formation and, on the other hand, issuing editions of religious literature for the population of all ages, especially considering the fact that people try to import religious literature from foreign countries aimed at forming certain types of religious thinking. For this reason, the writing, editing, and distribution of religious literature in the Republic is supervised by the basic religious faiths, in conjunction with the State Committee for Work with Religious Associations. The literature, concerning information on various religions, is translated and published in the Azerbaijani language and satisfies demand of the population.

Since the restoration of the state independence, considerable attention has been paid to religious formation in Azerbaijan. In 1992, considering the need to prepare religious employees and experts, the Ministry of Education of the Azerbaijan Republic decided to organize a faculty of theology at the Baku State University. To date more than 600 students have completed studies at the faculty, and some have continued their education abroad. In addition, the Baku State University Center of Science offers “Islamic studies”, which includes not only studying Islam, but also provides educational and other grants for studying the bases of religion.

Baku Islamic University also functions in the republic, with branches in the regions of Sumgait, Zakatala, and Lenkoran. The university prepares experts with a higher education, which radically changes the attitude to Islam in a positive direction and strengthens inter-religious tolerance.

The State Committee for Work with Religious Associations plays an important role in establishing close relationship and dialogue among faiths. Different seminars, meetings, discussions and celebrations of religious events are conducted by the Committee and attended by the representatives of all denominations. Thus, a series of workshops on the issues of state-religious relations and education of the spirit of tolerance among followers of different religions were organized by the Committee for the leaders of religious communities: “The State and Religion: the search for social peace and harmony,” “History of Christianity in Azerbaijan” and others. The series was completed with the seminar on “Religion — the path to peace,” which summed up the work done in order to achieve understanding and harmony among believers in the country, and outlined the main directions for further cooperation in the interests of the whole nation.

Non-governmental organizations and international structures also play a certain role in expanding cooperation between representatives of different denominations. A seminar on “Role of Islam in the formation of tolerance in the South Caucasus” was held in Baku. The event, organized by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (Germany), together with an independent consulting center “For Civil Society” (Azerbaijan), the International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (Georgia) and the American Jewish Committee (USA), was attended by representatives of different religious denominations, politicians, historians, experts from Azerbaijan, the United States of America, Germany, and Georgia. In his speech, German Ambassador Klaus Grewlich noted the value of a unique model of state-religion relations in Azerbaijan, in the framework of which representatives of religious communities not simply coexist, but also interact. “The Model of Azerbaijan in the relationship between state and religion can be exported to the other countries. Religious tolerance and patience are your wealth,” — said the German diplomat.

In the International Symposium on “Islamic Civilization in the Caucasus”, President Heydar Aliyev said: “In general, tolerance toward other religions and living near other religions in terms of mutual understanding — is a feature of Islamic values. Throughout history, this tolerance has been reflected in both Azerbaijan and the Caucasus. Along with the Islamic religion, the Christian religion and Judaism have existed in Azerbaijan throughout the centuries, and the tendency continues today. The same pattern is observed throughout the Caucasus. We believe that people, regardless of their belonging to any religion, should respect all other cultures, religions, and moral values, and should be tolerant to their customs, traditions, even those that they do not like.”

One of the biggest events of interreligious dialogue was the World Summit of Religious Leaders, held in April 2010 in Baku under the auspices of the “International Year of rapprochement of Cultures” declared by UNESCO. Participants in the summit from various corners of the world stressed that the development of peace and progress in each country is directly related to the stability and to the ability of different ethnicities and cultures to coexist within one state. In his speech, at the opening of the summit in Baku, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill said: “Interreligious dialogue must play a key role in the determination of all mankind in answering the challenges of today’s world. Today it is very important to make the voice of interfaith forums clearer and stronger, more specific and convincing. The time of common phrases has passed. Religious people should learn to speak a particular language, translating deep moral religious values into categories well-known to the secular people”²⁴⁰.

Examining the contemporary inter-religious situation in Azerbaijan, one can see that in fact Azerbaijan does not need any model of building inter-religious dialogue, since dialogue requires sides with differing views and existing problems. As has been noted, relations among the different denominations and religions in Azerbaijan have always been positive. In all the summits and conferences, the chairman of the Caucasian Muslims, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the head of the country’s Jewish community have always come out in terms of one common position.

However, the tasks of developing interreligious dialogue to conserve these friendly relations have been implemented in the country. Azerbaijan is actively and consistently pursuing a policy of inter-civilization and intercultural dialogue, not for the first time becoming a venue for international events in the search for new methods and means of dialogue.

The World Forum on intercultural dialogue held in Baku on April 7–9, 2011, supported by such major organizations as the Council of Europe, UNESCO, ISESCO, and the UN Alliance of Civilizations was a striking example. The initiative came from the country’s President Ilham Aliyev, who announced it at the 65th session of UN General Assembly. The Forum once again clearly demonstrated the desire of Azerbaijan to give the world a new evaluative format for international relations, which may be the beginning of a qualitatively new era of trust between countries.

The simultaneous participation of various international organizations in the Forum, as well as informational support from Euronews, representation from all continents, and the presence of about 500 delegates from 102 countries, establishes that Forum provided a unique opportunity to agree on the definition of core values and operational priorities in the promotion and strengthening of principles of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. All agreed

²⁴⁰ Speech by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Kirill at the opening ceremony of the World Summit of religious leaders in Baku. — <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1146762.html>

that a country that highlights the principles of intercultural dialogue and make it one of the priorities and policy directions of its foreign policy, can claim the status of being an active participant in a global system of international and inter-religious relations. Leaders on the global scale, community leaders, ministers of culture and diplomats, mayors, and scientists discussed the conceptual, managerial, political and practical aspects of the problem. Special attention was paid to the issue of dialogue within the world religions. At one of the sessions, the President of Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva underlined, “From the first minutes of communication with our citizens anyone can witness the high tolerance in our country. The example of a Muslim mosque, a Catholic church, an Orthodox church, and Jewish synagogue located side by side in Baku are a striking proof of it”²⁴¹. She also expressed the hope that different views and suggestions sounded at the forum and the results of the event will make a worthy contribution to the strengthening of intercultural dialogue.

Touching upon the politicization of religion, Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and IS-ESCO Mehriban Aliyeva called politicization one of the biggest problems facing humanity, noting that some forces are playing with the most sacred feelings of the people.

The First Lady of the Republic of Azerbaijan said, “All religions are very close to each other. We, the people professing different religions, pray to one God. And the essence of our prayers is the same. Unfortunately, today we face facts that are in no way consistent with humanity. A person calling himself a religious figure burned the holy Qur’an. How can you name this act? What is its purpose? Which forces have ordered it? Unfortunately, the international community has not reacted to the fact of the burning of the holy Qur’an and did not express its attitude”.

Today there is no alternative to intercultural dialogue and understanding, as history shows cultural differences in various stages of development of society lead to some collisions, causing hostility between nations. If, all world religions call for peace, goodness, and justice, we should listen to them. The preservation of friendly relations between the followers of different confessions in Azerbaijan is the duty of every citizen, because each of these individuals is a citizen of Azerbaijan, irrespective of religion.

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²⁴¹ Speech by the President of Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva in the session on “Women as a key member of Intercultural Dialogue” held at the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue. — <http://news.day.az/politics/261074.html>

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CHAPTER 4

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE IN CONTEMPORARY ART

Munira Shahidi (Tajikistan)

Muslim-Christian dialogue: to be or not to be? There are different approaches to this issue: scientific, historical, political, cultural, etc. However, life in all its diversity is so complex and, at the same time, simple and each approach has, along with its advantages, some disadvantages. I think the clearest expression of Muslim-Christian art has been expressed in the arts of literature, music, paintings, etc. Without pretending to an objective analysis of the situation in the dialogic sphere, I want to offer my own experience as a researcher in the practical implementation of Muslim-Christian dialogue in art and as a teacher at Tajik-Russian (Slavic) University. Muslim-Christian dialogue in art has been one of the lines of inquiry developed by the Ziyodullo Shahidi Museum of Musical Culture during the past two decades, as Tajikistan was gaining independence and beginning to create its own internal/external policy. The crucial aspect of this policy is intercultural dialogue as an important instrument for integration in the global peace-building movement. To promote that policy, teaching local and global values via the art of music and theatre is the basis of the activities of the International Foundation for Cultures, named after modern Tajik composer, Ziyodullo Shahidi.

Since its establishment in 1992, the International Foundation for Cultures has been constantly building dialogic space, gradually widening its local network of artists, poets and musicians. Although the civil war of 1992 to 1997 in Tajikistan was the most dangerous period in building dialogic space, the Z. Shahidi Museum of Musical Culture was and still is a meeting place for representatives of various categories of society. We have conducted seminars, poetry readings, and music performances, festivals, and international conferences. The Museum is a place where representatives of various religious denominations meet and Muslim-Christian dialogue develops as one of the active dimensions of a living organic process in developing the world peace-building policy.

At the present time, however, as the international community is developing the theoretical background, methodological options, and legislative and regulatory framework for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, Tajikistan is integrating that process in the context of the Hanafi branch of Sunni Islam, which is original and organic tradition formed in accordance with the geographical, political and cultural characteristics of Central Asia. During the last millennium, the Hanafi branch of Islam has been creating internal links first with all diverse religious sections within Islam, and second with other religions and, above all, with Christianity as the most widespread religion coexisting with Islam in the Mediterranean space. The most significant links between Islam and Christianity have been actualized in the world via science and arts.

However, the rivalry and confrontation in the “struggle for the minds” has been the main barrier in revealing those links in the dimension of time and space. Nevertheless, the toler-

ance and peacefulness of Hanafi in reconciling the diversity of contradicting and interacting cultures has deeply impacted the creation of the theory of intercultural dialogue, including the dialogue between Islam and Christianity. In this paper I will review and analyze the current situation not only from the standpoint of the media and Muslim tradition and as a researcher with years of experience of analyzing the cultural interaction between East and West, but also as a student of the academic school of cultural interaction founded by E. E. Bertels and Abdulgani Mirzoyev in Russia and Tajikistan during Soviet era. I will show how the school has developed today.

The Qur'an, as the sacred book of Muslims of the world, has been, according to E. E. Bertels, the main source of inspiration for many creative scholars and artists. Accepted in Bukhara in the second year of Hijra, the Book was immediately translated into the Farsi-Tajik, along with the original commentary regarding the fundamental values of Arabic Islam, such as justice, equality and fraternity. Traditionally, the practical realization of these values was developed via art and science. Deeply rooted in the tradition of Greek polis, the culture of the 'big Khorasan' — 'Khirosoni Bosorg', was oriented toward integration, not only in the Arab world, but also in the rising Europe of the Middle Ages. Thus, during the Middle Ages four pillars of Central Asian civilization were recognized: Old Persia, Greece, Arabic, and mixed modern Persian-Turkish cultures. These cultures were known through works of world literature authored by Farabi, Ibn Sina, Khayyam, Biruni, Khwarizmi, Djalaliddin Rumi, and many others. Their ideas of integration drawn from the main Islam formula: "Adam & Alam" (Man and Mankind) have been interpreted in both science and art. This interpretation was readily accepted by Christian Europe before Renaissance.

However, the interpretation was mastered by the Christian philosophers solely within the framework of their 'own' culture, marginalizing Islam as a partner in the civilizational dialogue. Further-more, in the context of nation-building in modern Europe, when the code of Islam had been totally broken, the idea of balance or of the dialogue of body and soul as a balance for creativity became totally marginalized by world policy. As a global danger, that loss of balance or loss of the dialogue of body and soul was identified by the new theatre movement, which brought the issue onto the scene. The genius of Shakespeare gave a push for the movement. The wave of Shakespearian art reached Central Asia only in the beginning of the last century. Via Shakespearean dramatizing of the clash between the man and mankind, the re-thinking of Muslim art has been gradually formed. The poems of the poets of the Muslim world, such as Nizami, Khayam, Navai, Jami, Khafiz Abdulqadiri Bedil, and many others were adopted by the modern theatre of Central Asia and the Soviet Union as a whole. The modern interpretation of classical Muslim art influenced significantly the cultural identity of the last century, which became the basis of intercultural Muslim-Christian dialogue of modern times.

I teach a course: "The Civilization Factor in International Relations" in the Tajik-Russian (Slavic) University. The course is oriented for the expansion of dialogical space, rather than the content of "piggy bank" knowledge. Thus, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue within modern and contemporary art is one of the main directions in my class. The study of the internal communication of Christianity and Islam, as well as Islam and Judaism, Buddhism and, more generally, the art of dialogue and communication, requires interdisciplinary knowledge, perceived by young people with very lively and great interest.

The process of building the legislative and legal framework for the dialogue of cultures, which has contributed to legitimizing interreligious dialogue, started in modern world only

after the Second World War. Together with the formation of the UN and UNESCO — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the international scholarly community has created a number of projects involving the scientists from Central Asia and aimed at improving the modern system of education and knowledge regarding their ‘own’ cultural and religious values. The scholars from Tajikistan, Bobojon Gafurov and Muhammad Osimi, headed the group of scholars from Central Asia who worked in cooperation with scholars from the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent to research the crucial periods of formation of intercultural space in that region, and identifying the interaction and interweaving of ideas in Central Asia and Europe in time and space. However, the gap between science and arts and the marginalization of artists from the process of international relations strongly restrained the formation of dialogic space.

Today, almost twenty years after the collapse of the Soviet system of education and culture, the inward/outward contacts of Central Asia are still complicated by bureaucratic distortions from one or other sides. The educational reforms in Europe, Russia, and Central Asian countries, representing correct knowledge about religious values, should build trust not only between teacher and student, but also between institutions and different categories of society in three areas: local, regional, and global. The first step for the formation of dialogic space is knowledge of and respect for religion as a political force. Unlike other Central Asian states, Tajikistan has a respectful attitude towards religion and that respect literally won the civil war of 1992 to 1997.

To build on that victory of modern intellectual achievements, it is necessary to examine European achievements of both travels and ‘openness’ toward the ‘other’ cultures to discover how the inspiration from the ‘others’ have been received by outstanding figures and how they have shaped enlightenments. As Fernand Braudel notes, Goethe’s inspiration to look for the truth went beyond geographical or religious borders. It’s true, that Goethe’s approach to the Qur’an moved him into a dialogue that has stayed alive for centuries and this moving has been expressed in the ‘Western-Eastern Divan’. I agree with Vatandust that the ‘Western-Eastern divan’ of Goethe is a poetic reflection of the Qur’an. Several centuries earlier, the Tajik-Persian poet Djalaliddin Rumi offered a poetic version of the Qur’an in his poetic narrative ‘Mathnawi Manavi’ (“Poem of the Secrets”) also called “the Qur’an of Pahlavi” (Farsi — M. Sh.). Undoubtedly, artistic comments on the Qur’an and the Bible, along with the legislative and legal discourse of the modern world, must be established as a basis of contemporary Muslim-Christian dialogue.

During the years of independence, Tajikistan has made a few crucial steps to enter the world space in the dialogue of cultures. The new laws, such as the law ‘On Education’, the law ‘On Culture’, the law “On public associations”, open the space for intercultural dialogue and opens new prospects for Muslim-Christian dialogue.

As a senior research associate at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, I was invited to the Muslim Institute in London to exchange experiences in the study of Islamic culture. Thus began my friendship with some of Sufi communities in Europe, which are called “Sufi meetings” or “Sufi gatherings”. The purpose of these “meetings”, led by European Sheikhs of Muslim origin, is to promote the integration of migrants from the Muslim East into the European and predominantly Christian environment, and, vice versa, to introduce the Christian values to Muslims. Traditionally, these meetings are really creative, where Muslims and Christians create projects for festivals, concerts, and seminars.

The tumultuous events of the 1990s coincided with the rapid growth of global public interest in Central Asia. My modest contribution to meeting that interest inwardly has been to give information about the basic, fundamental values of Muslim culture in its inner dimension, which has been based on the intention of integration and building dialogical space globally. That intention has been recognized by jadids-reformers since the second part of 19th century. The novel, a new national song, theater, cinema — all these new forms of modern and contemporary art — are consequences of the constant Muslim-Christian dialogue through the ages. My lectures about Poetics, which are usually decorated with samples of moving of that dialogical space from Central Asia to the south of Asia and on to India, raise real interest in any audience.

Apparently, as the logical extension of this activity, I was invited to Budapest to attend the inaugural meeting of United Religious Initiative (URI), headquartered in San Francisco and supported by the UN. The peacekeeping activities of the United Religions Initiative (I am a member of the URI board) are consistent with my principles of reform of international relations through dialogue of religions. The URI and many other organizations, universities and academic institutions have encouraged me to become more active and I have participated in a number of international seminars and conferences, discussions, and debates regarding intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in Tehran, Istanbul, Delhi, Barcelona, Paris, London, Washington. These activities have drawn me into a circle of authors whose work in the context of interreligious dialogue and the Declaration of Human Rights could be highly estimated on the local and national levels.

This engagement in the international dialogue gave the impetus to create the magazine *FONUS*. The idea was supported by the UN Office for Peace building in Tajikistan, as well as by the Swiss headquarters for cooperation in Tajikistan, along with the Institute of Open Society, the Bureau of democratization at the U. S. Embassy in Tajikistan, and the Embassies of Iran, Germany and Turkey. The seventh issue of *FONUS* was dedicated to promoting the “UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity” in the Persian-speaking world, and was financed by the intercultural division of UNESCO. Thanks to that support, the field team expanded to include Afghan and Iranian sponsors, exploring issues of peace and cooperation in the region and the world. An invitation “to share good practices” at the Central Asian Roundtable in Almaty, which was part of a UNESCO project on intercultural, interfaith experience, June 4–6, 2007, was provided with financial support from the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief in cooperation with the Institute of Oriental Studies by R. B. Suleymanova RK and the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan. In formulating the main issue of the Roundtable, Meruert Abuseitova noted that “In Central Asia, interreligious and intercultural dialogue has always had a special dimension.’ The measure of that dialogue is the human factor and the high humanism of ‘Khorasan style’ of thinking, which, unfortunately lost its magnitude because of the cultural isolation of the Soviet era, when a purely vertical relationship of society and power marginalized the original-regional Muslim-Christian dialogue as a social value — though that value has in a way been retained in the academic environment.

The modern discourse of Muslim-Christian dialogue was raised by the polemics of the Oriental Institute of Leningrad during 1920s and 30s. The core of that polemics was discussion of the publication of the Spanish Arabist Asino Palacios under the title: “Muslim eschatology and Divine Comedy” in 1925 in London. According to I. Krachkovsky that publication caused, a powerful flash of interest in Arab studies during the last century. However, further development of that discussion ended with the Stalinist terror, when the most outstanding

scholars in human studies were sent to Gulag. Re-evaluation of that type of discourse was initiated in the USA in the 1980s by Dimitri Gutas. The gap of knowledge on Central Asian studies and the legal and legislative focus of Central Asian scholars in these debates and discussions hinder the correlation of past mistakes in promoting of intercultural dialogue. I agree with B. Weiss, in referring to Huysenklewer: “The smaller the degree of religious education, the greater the potential for religious differences which are used as a tool for political mobilization.”

In my courses at the Tajik-Russian (Slavic) university in Dushanbe, I include Muslim-Christian dialogue as a crucial factor of civilization. I start with an overview of the translations of the Qur’an, which started at 1143 A. D. at Cluny, a monastery in France, and then continued to be published in various languages of Europe. Images of Moses, Jesus, Abraham, Mary, discourses between Jews and early Christians, the suffering of Joseph and Potiphar’s machinations and his wife, described in the Muslim Holy book, have interested Christian artists, creating a common inter-religious and intercultural space through theater, music and painting in various countries in Europe and Asia for many centuries.

Of the empirical methods, I use the involvement of students in the theater, while the performances are put on two or more languages. In this regard, I engage students in our experience of working on a joint project with three organizations in Norway and Tajikistan: Rumi-festival, Albatross, and Shahidi Foundation. The close cooperation of our cooperative circle, which involves the students, professors, and professional and non-professional artists started in 2006. An important part of the festival program is storytelling in the context of Mawlana Rumi and other great poets and thinkers of the Muslim world. Played by both Tajik and Norwegian actors and students, the performances are oriented toward creating intercultural space locally and inter-regionally.

The project aims to identify common positions of creative poets and playwrights in the struggle for good and justice against violence, discrimination and war. Another aim is to develop approaches and ideas that may help students overcome their “own” ideas and create Tajik-Norwegian mutual understanding. Theoretical knowledge gained from previous lessons helps them to understand not only the skill of the author of a drama, but also lays the ‘middle way’ to the “other” culture.

At the same time, the art education fills the vacuum of knowledge of contemporary European authors regarding Tajiks, and allows Norwegians to know the Tajik potential for peace building more fully and simply. Otherwise, this vacuum can be filled by religious dogmas and lead to a sharp decrease in women’s participation in the development of artistic culture, which has unpredictable consequences. Knowledge of poetry and, in particular, the contribution of Muslim scholars in the development of Aristotelian poetics and the fight against the domination of religious dogma improves the depth perception and analytical clarity for dialogue between the Tajik and Norwegian students. Most available for me, as the teacher, is comparative poetics of the two vertices of literary thought: Islam and Christianity, represented in the world literature by the names of Abu Ali Ibn Sina and Dante Alighieri. The point of departure I identify, together with the students, is that for both of these great figures — Avicenna, and Dante — the knowledge, intellect and an endless pursuit of truth through dialogue were common. The longing for the fullness of cognizing knowledge is symbolized by a poetic quest of lover for the beloved, who is the embodiment of divine wisdom.

The fullness of knowledge is almost unattainable, as unattainable as it is beloved. But the very desire for love, truth and creativity is a generator of life. In this case, according for Avi-

cenna, “good will is a good start”. Beauty and Love are the links for heavenly wisdom, which was for Dante, Beatrice. As she was for his disciple and follower Petrarch, Laura became a guide for the Land of Beauty. For Pushkin, it was a series of female images, etc. For the modern Tajik poet Mumin Kanoat, who brings together a common Muslim and Christian morality and love for knowledge, the image of Malika became the link between the Earth and Heaven. In his poem, dedicated to the 1000th anniversary of Ibn Sina and under the name: ‘The Cradle of the Poet’ the Tajik poet recalls the image of Leah by Dante:

*Dance, earthly young Zuhra,
Showing your beads, silver threads!
You’ve freed us from the mortal burden,
As the earthly world, you’re equal to the universe!*

Since the time of Avicenna and until today the development of inter-cultural dialogue can be quite clearly traced in the works of the scholarly and art circles. The ideas of the link of man and mankind expressed by Sa’adi now decorates the walls of the UN, as around the whole world man is seen as a part of mankind. Thus, the core of Islamic culture has been expressed. The manuscripts and miniatures by Nizami from Ganja, Jami, Navoi, Bedil, and thousands of scholars and poets are being carefully processed and stored at the archives and museums of the world. The lively transformation of their ideas in modern art is even more important. The love story of the Persian king Khusrau Parviz to the Byzantine beauty Shirin has been re-interpreted over sixty times in Ubekistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan. In Russia this drama has been translated by Russian writers G. Ptitsyn (1939) and P. G. Skosarev.

The name of the Muslim mystic and poet Mavlana Rumi Jelaliddin (1207–1273) is treated with special adoration in the Christian world. His art is the peak of openness and creativity in the perception of Adam and Alam (Man and the World). Even the nisba (pseudonym) of this most celebrated Tajik-Persian poet, is undoubtedly linked to his ideological formation of the dialogical space. He was born beside the rapid mountain river Vakhsh, in the territory of modern Tajikistan. Fleeing from the attacks of the Golden Horde and walking with his family down to the Mediterranean coast, he saw the destroyed theaters and stadiums from the times of ancient Greece and Roman Empire. Thus his meditation is a hymn to the ordinary man, the wandering dervish who created the music, dances, legends, and myths which unite people into one family. However, widely known in oral traditions of the world storytellers, his world-famous “Poem of the Unseen” — “Mathnawi Manavi” was first published in modern Tajik language only in 2007.

“Poem of the Unseen” was published in English in the 1950s and today has become one of the most read book in the West. Rumi’s ghazals are being sung with equal passion by many singers of the world, his poems are sung today in Central Asia by Tajiks, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmens. Composers create new music that vividly flies over every imaginable and unimaginable boundary and becomes an organic part of the modern world music. A new experiment Tajik theatre ‘Ahorun’ has the lines of Rumi as a guiding star: “Come to purify the soul of the spectacle, because the Prophet himself ordered us to take a holiday spectacles.” The first play opened in this theater under the title: ‘Iousufi gumgashta boz oyad ba Kanon’ — ‘The Lost Joseph returned to Canaan.’ The unique experience of the theatre was widely met by international audience.

In the context of the joint Norwegian-Tajik project, the performance of ‘The Lost Joseph returned to Canaan’ was taken in Oslo in 2009. The history of Joseph the Beautiful came to the Torah, the Bible and the Qur’an from Ancient times and became the common source of inspiration for both Muslim and Christian authors to bring to the stage of the theatres of Asia and Europe in the 20th century. Although it is widely known in Europe due to the tetralogy of Thomas Mann ‘Joseph and his Brothers’ as performed by the Tajik actors was quite unexpected for the Norwegian audience.

Both the classical and contemporary periods are attractive for the formation of dialogue through the arts. The main value of interfaith dialogue, which is nonviolence and peacemaking, formed the core of the joint celebration of the 65th anniversary of victory over fascism in interpretation of the contemporary poets of Tajikistan and Norway. This celebration was a great event in the life of the Z. Shahidi Museum of Musical Culture.

The idea of the joint celebration was to identify the common expression of Norwegian and Tajik poetry and poets regarding the world anti-fascist movement of the last century. In the evening staging of the poetry we used the method of reflection. The poems of the Norwegian poet Nordahl Grieg (1902–1943), recited by the Norwegian students of arts, were reflected in the verse of the Tajik poet Habib Yusufi (1916–1945), recited by Tajik students. The other important point was an interpretation of a popular song ‘Idi Zafar’ (‘V-Day’), composed by Ziyodullo Shahidi, performed by Norwegian singer Kristin Holborn. The hall, or rather the yard of the museum, filled with students from different universities of Tajikistan who were fascinated by the melody. They joined in the song. The answer to the question posed at the beginning of the article seems to be clear: dialogue was, dialogue is, and dialogue will forever last in the name of peace and eternity of life.

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CHAPTER 5

VALUE-CULTURAL PEDAGOGY AS A METHOD OF EDUCATION FOR TOLERANCE IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE POST-SECULAR SOCIETY

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Education is known to be among the most important systems aiding the functioning and sustainable development of a society. I prefer to compare culture to an organism, and to compare education to a system of generation and regeneration:²⁴² through this system, society programs its future. As this process unfolds, the sphere of education and pedagogy is impacted by a number of formal units that exist in a civilization: fundamental and applied science, economy, politics, arts, religion, philosophy—and it processes such impacts in a binary fashion.

First, education *localizes* specialized information coming from such units within its various institutions and programs (e. g., political information is localized as the academic discipline of political science; religious information is localized as theology, etc.).

Second and more important for my purposes here, education *synthesizes* these impacts within a special cycle of academic subjects that become the general education requirement in a given university or school system. In other words, through education, the student acquires specialized professional competence — but also a general worldview. Even when there is an attempt to minimize the worldview function of education (which has been a rather influential trend in positivist and science-centered models of education, including the post-Soviet ones), the complete elimination from university and school programs has not been successful. Minimizing the worldview component inevitably creates an effect whereby this function is assumed by academic subjects from the specialized professional cycle. The student would still graduate having acquired a worldview, but he would assign an exaggerated value to biology, law, or some other technical area, depending on their specialization in school.

The distortion I am describing can of course produce a positive effect (if one is inclined to look at it pragmatically from a social constructivist angle), but this cannot last very long. In contemporary dynamic societies, the worker who “does not like to think too much” and focuses exclusively on professional competence, may find himself unemployed — due to changed economic need and/or his own inability to adapt mentally. The collapse of the Soviet economic system, for example, created a vast pool of job-seekers with university degrees whose major setback was sticking to the type of thinking that I have just outlined. But forming a worldview in a student is essential not only for training him as a specialist in a given field, but also for his own advancement as a socially-responsible and free individual. By accumulating impulses from all other areas within society and culture, education contributes to civil

²⁴² Бурлака Д. К. Метафизика культуры. СПб., 2009. С. 86–89.

society, politics, science, art, and, indeed, to the whole of culture. The only difference is pace: whereas accumulation occurs here and now, the result becomes apparent only in the next generation; just as in a family: parents teach their children on a day-to-day basis, but see the fruit of their efforts only when the children are older. Thus, the politics of education becomes one of the key factors affecting the future of a nation.

A number of scholars have discussed the advantages of pedagogy oriented toward humanities vs. pedagogy based on a science-centered approach.²⁴³ In the past, I have proposed a type of personalist pedagogy named “the model of holistic culturological education”.²⁴⁴ The effectiveness of this model is witnessed by the fact that, in the last 20 years, it has been successfully implemented within a dynamically-growing institution of higher learning.²⁴⁵ Yet, my primary purpose in this paper goes further. Although I myself am in favor of the personalist model, I want to discuss the underlying values of humanism that this model is dependent upon, and by humanism I mean the specifically secular forms that grew out of the Enlightenment.²⁴⁶ I find such values insufficient, even as they constitute the philosophical basis for many contemporary models of pedagogy.

The Enlightenment is the classical period of the new European culture. We recognize it as Europe’s ‘Golden age’: one that was followed by a much shorter ‘Silver age’ (the term we use in Russia, with apparent European parallels), the inconspicuous ‘Bronze age’ and, finally, by the modern sort of ‘Iron age’ that entered the scene quite quickly and distinguished itself by two world wars and totalitarian governments. The outcome of World War II, Holocaust, Gulag, Hiroshima, the current ecological crisis — all make one ponder whether everything is indeed alright “in this State of Denmark.”

The origins of the Enlightenment are in the Renaissance concept of man: we no longer look up to the gods but want to “fashion our future independently,” with no recourse to our mythological past. Thus, modernity is usually approached as a culture built on anthropocentrism, yet anthropocentrism is inconceivable without its theocentric foundation that was built in the Middle Ages. The Renaissance and Reformation were the two key forces that transformed the Middle Ages into the Modern Age. But it was because of the Christian refashioning of the Graeco-Roman world, which also led to the development of modern European nations out of barbaric tribes, that the whole process became possible. If not for Christianity, there would never have been the cultural material required to build European modernity.

The Modern Age started by negating its medieval foundation. This is how the relationship between the new industrial economy and the old agrarian economy, between new democracy and old monarchy, between capitalism and feudalism, was construed. Finally, this is how secularization approached the clerical way of maintaining communication lines between church, state, and society. From a religious perspective, the clerical model is congruent with the theocratic one, and the latter may be quite organic for certain religious traditions. This is definitely the situation in Islam; in Judaism, the picture is more complex, whereas in Christianity theocracy is perceived as an atavistic element, more or less, that was inherited from the Old Testament. The new European secularization was therefore inevitable, in a certain sense

²⁴³ E. g., *Вербицкий А. А., Ларионова О. Г. Личностный и компетентностный подходы к образованию. Проблема интеграции.* М., 2009. (The two authors provide a rather detailed discussion of various concepts.)

²⁴⁴ Русский христианский гуманитарный институт. Концепция, программа, документы. СПб, 2001.

²⁴⁵ *Бурлака Д. К. XX лет русскому пути// Вестник РХГА, 2009, N 10(2). С. 9–57.*

²⁴⁶ Concerning the secular and the humanistic orientation of Personalist pedagogy see, e. g., *Огурцов А. П., Платонов В. В. Образы образования. Западная философия. XX век.* СПб., 2004.

of the word. As secularization gained ground, the Church found itself on the margins of social and cultural life, whereas in the earlier period it was at the center. The Church lost its managerial and policing functions — a rather welcome development indeed — but it did not stop acting as the keeper and translator of values, albeit in a diminished form.

Culture cannot exist without an axiological foundation, which also allows secularization its chance to take root as a result of an axiological paradigm shift. For a religious mindset, the axiological dimension is informed by the following two ideas: God and immortal life. But beginning in the Renaissance, the key human value became individual success, and it is this idea that ultimately informs the entire spectrum of current existential preferences and goals. However, the very concept of ‘individual’ as someone who fashions his/her own future is, in fact, borrowed from Judeo-Christian anthropology, and it is quite improbable that this concept could have emerged within any naturalized understanding of humanity.

The developed world currently lives in a ‘post’-mode in which it is clear that the past is already gone but the future remains hidden from sight. The postmodern situation mandates change from the industrial economy to the informational one, and this affects the entire realm of social communication. Ideologists talk about the end of liberalism and the end of post-liberal values, about the ‘Twilight of the West’²⁴⁷ and ‘Enlightenment Wake.’²⁴⁸ There is also a shift in how the religious aspect of social and cultural life is being approached. I am in total agreement with the following statement by the important scholar of religion and culture: “At the present time, scholarship takes it for granted that there were no non-religious periods in the history of humanity.”²⁴⁹ From a whole set of predictions that religion would surely ‘die out’ (e. g., by Comte, Marx, and Nietzsche) none has materialized thus far. A rather short (in terms of world history) period of enlightened liberalism was not totally atheistic in nature and it ended up producing a plurality of worldviews. But one can also read atheism as an inverted religion, which is the argument both in the classical discussions of the problem²⁵⁰ and in the contemporary ones.²⁵¹

One of the key trends of post-modernity is the shift towards post-secular modes of construing the relationship between society, state, and religions.²⁵² Religions are coming back into vitally-important areas of social development, with a new status. This is also their return into a changed social milieu: religions are becoming an integral part of this milieu, acting on the model of political parties and business corporations. But there is one other important development that should concern us here: ‘new Polytheism.’²⁵³ The old (classical) Polytheism was also termed paganism. As an institutionalized religion featuring a whole set of attributes, paganism has been formally dismantled and internally sublated by Christianity. This is how it transpired in Europe, Russia, and the United States, and so paganism can be either the lot of the underdeveloped or a spare-time interest for those who think they are ‘far ahead of every-

²⁴⁷ Коукер К. Сумерки Запада. М., 2000.

²⁴⁸ Грэй Дж. Поминки по Просвещению. М., 2003.

²⁴⁹ Шохин В. К. Философия религии и ее исторические формы. М., 2010. С. 223.

²⁵⁰ Вехи. Из глубины. М., 1989 (especially demonstrative are contributions by S. Frank, and S. Bulgakov); Бердяев Н. А. Истоки и смысл русского коммунизма. М., 1990.

²⁵¹ Пивоваров Д. В. Онтология религии. СПб., 2009. С. 29–35.

²⁵² Хабермас Ю. Постсекулярное общество — что это? Российская философская газета. 2008. N 4(18), N 5(19).

²⁵³ Кырлежев А. Постсекулярная эпоха // Континент. 2004. № 120 — <http://magazines.russ.ru/2004/120/kyr16/html>

one. 'New Polytheism' refers to a situation where the developed religious traditions (namely: Christianity with its various denominations, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, and, in certain countries, Hinduism) interact with one another within a unified cultural and legal field.

The return of religion is greeted with different reactions from national systems of education. The Reformation and Catholic-Protestant religious wars forced Europe to become tolerant — but under the protective umbrella of the secular state which makes everyone play by the rules. The social matrix of the United States, the country created by the Protestants, was from the very first moment programmed for pluralism — but still within the Judeo-Christian tradition. Fedor Kozyrev has analyzed how religion and the humanities became part of the national educational systems in the West.²⁵⁴ In Russia, the situation is different, but we too feel the post-secular moment in our country, as well as globalization, and we should not ignore such processes if we don't want to suffer the consequences.

The post-Soviet period is usually treated as our national postmodernity. Western scholarship assigns Russian modernization to the 'catching-up' type; modernization was initiated by Tsar Peter the Great and completed by the Soviets. The USSR accomplished a rather powerful industrial state, but insofar secularization was concerned, the Bolsheviks delivered on the dream 'to catch up and get ahead' of the West. There is, therefore, a special quality to Russian post-secularism, or, better said, post-atheism, which one can explain by the extremely severe degree of anti-religious persecution during the Soviet period and also by other reasons. Russia was formed initially as a mono-religious culture of Eastern Orthodoxy, the religion that was imported from Byzantium, which by that time had already passed its creative prime. For various reasons, the Russian Orthodox Church became even more tightly entangled with the executive branch of power than was the case in Byzantium. Russia never knew Reformation and so the policy of Enlightenment became the project of the state.

Finally, Bolshevik secularization was driven by dogmatic spirit, rather than skepticism. Whereas in Europe secularization exchanged Logos for *ratio*, Russians rolled Logos back into the communist myth. With all this in mind, one can describe the collapse of the Soviet empire as the greatest demythologization in history (Rudolf Bultmann could never have thought of this particular type). If one agrees with this account, one should also agree with the argument that secularization in Russia is just starting; at any rate, we are giving secularization a new turn within a post-atheist context.

The demise of communist mythology brought about a situation in which the old glue that was holding together various social, ethnic, and religious groups has lost its power. And so Russia today is facing yet another challenge: ethnic and religious diversity. While Russians were the biggest ethnic group in the Russian and the Soviet empires, they were by no means the only ethnic group. Wars, revolutions, and state-sponsored genocide have created a rather difficult demographic situation. The Russian Orthodox Church is still the most powerful religious group in the country and it once again is favored by the state. But her power is a far cry from the pre-Soviet period, whereas the post-secular context speaks against the reactionary utopia of a new Orthodox Empire. The spirit of xenophobia increases in Russian society due to a whole number of reasons: military conflict in the North Caucasus, uncontrolled immigration, the revanchist portrait of the 'country that won the great war' cultivated carefully by the mass-media, as well as other such portraits presenting cultural and religious difficulties in some Western countries as a failure of their 'silly' liberal-democratic project. But the unity of

²⁵⁴ Козырев Ф. Н. Гуманитарное религиозное образование. СПб, 2010.

the nation cannot be maintained exclusively by force or by the pay-out of social rent. Without a humanistic dimension (spiritual, moral, ideological), the nation dooms itself to disintegration, and the elite in this country is well aware of such a prospect.

The context which I have just outlined also helps in the analysis of the processes that have been occurring within Russian education, and in comparing Russian and Western experiences. I choose to define national policy in the sphere of education as a will to consciously program the future. I shall not speak of the downsides, such as the emphasis on economic pragmatics or inconsistent policy decisions, even as these often overshadow any positive will. One can observe the following two trends in the national educational policy of Russia: (1) professionalization of education and (2) reshaping the ideology. The first trend hearkens back to the goal of 'not losing it' to the West (and to the East), whereas the second one attempts to stop disintegration. The concrete decisions made in pursuit of these two trends may often contradict one another, as has been the case with frequently changing educational standards and programs. It would require a special study to examine how one may strike a desired balance here, but my choice in the remaining section is to concentrate on the philosophical problems of education instead.

In the Russian Empire, educational systems were built upon the ideological foundation of Orthodoxy, whereas in the USSR this was replaced by ideology of the communist type. While the latter had formally lost all religious connotations, its functional aspect was utterly religious. The post-Soviet pluralism has successfully de-monopolized the religious function and so the place of the ideological foundation has become vacant. Liberalism is too weak; Communism is despised so widely that it is highly unlikely that it will return one day. And so the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) is trying to recover what has been previously expropriated from it. This is basically the context explaining how religion was reintroduced into the programs of secular educational institutions, which is, of course, part of the global post-secular trend. At this point in time, there is no argument in Russia as to whether religion can be taught in public schools and universities alike: religious traditions *are* being taught there as an element of culture. On the other hand, private educational institutions have never faced such a problem. I am referring here particularly to the content of religious instruction and to the methods used.

In Russian higher education, the solution to this problem has been settled more or less: all students have to take an introductory class in Religious Studies. Since these are all mature individuals — or so one assumes — there is little room to talk about reshaping or reconstituting ideology. The situation is more difficult in public schools, since this is the age group for which the connection between teaching and personal formation is much stronger, and an individual worldview hasn't quite formed yet. There is currently no consensus among the pedagogical elite and the political elite as to the proper amount of religious instruction in the public school setting. But there are already some distinctive trends.

The joint statement by President Medvedev and Patriarch Kirill made on July 21, 2010, probably marked the turning point. The statement announced the launch of a large-scale experiment adding religious instruction to the public school curricula. The experiment is underway in 19 regions of Russia and it looks like there is finally an official name for this new academic unit: 'The Fundamentals of Spiritual and Moral Formation.' Religion is treated as a depository of moral teachings, and quite legitimately so. It is assumed that the methodology and the tools used by instructors will be culturological in nature so as to avoid outright preaching of religion and indoctrination, as this would oppress those who believe or think differently. Whereas recent

converts to Orthodoxy and some members of clergy have been pushing for quite some time for a special school course, 'The Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture' (OFC), the program offering has become 'The Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics' module instead.

Orthodox culture is taught along with three other traditional cultures of Russia (Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism), Secular Ethics, and World Religions: each student gets to elect just one module out of six. Nevertheless, a formally democratic model as conceived by the authors of this experiment would be almost impossible to attain in the conditions of the post-Soviet school system. Only a handful of specialists is trained to teach all the modules regardless of whether one hires them from the world of religion or the secular world, and very few of these can keep their teaching within culturological discourse by avoiding outright preaching. A free non-coerced choice of modules is impossible to guarantee as there is neither sufficient teaching material, nor, indeed, a sufficient number of qualified teachers.

There are therefore only two possible scenarios for Russian education and both seem to be negative. The first scenario is clerical (on the earlier *Komsomol* model) and the second is secular. The first scenario would lead to OFC's semi-forced introduction into public school curricula where it would replace earlier Soviet classes featuring 'patriotism.' The scenario is quite likely, but it would only result in a new ethnic and religious tension, while the coercion would only discredit the Russian Orthodox Church. The chances of its adoption are high, since the political class in this country is interested in promoting an ideology, but many religionists (particularly Orthodox and Muslim clergy, as well as some lay enthusiasts) are keen to use the culturological framework for covert indoctrination. On the other hand, the secular scenario, which has a chance due to the inertia of Russian society, is not, in theory, as dangerous. However, from a strategic viewpoint, it would only contribute to the continuing degradation of humanism among our countrymen.

Russian pedagogy is facing two sets of problems: ideological problems and methodological ones, and the two are intimately related. To teach religion in an objective and disengaged fashion forecloses the possible moral and ideological effect; on the other hand, teaching religion inclusively could lead to religious and/or legal conflict. The ideological dilemma has a methodological solution, but one can only arrive at it after the neo-clerical utopia is put to rest. By declaring Culturology the overall methodological framework of the experiment, one has not acquired a magic wand for stopping all conflict between representatives of different religions, or between believers and non-believers. Culturological methods are not all the same when it comes to teaching religion. It is easiest to approach the subject of religion phenomenologically: introducing all the various elements of a religious world (such as churches, icons, and liturgical worship) as objects of culture. This is also how one can discuss various religious themes and topics featured in art and literature. Culturological objectivism is quite appropriate in these particular areas.

But this methodology is not very helpful in terms of attaining the stated educational goals, and even less so, the ideological goals. Those seeking to convert school children into churchgoers (or mosque-goers, as is the case in the Islamic regions of Russia) cannot agree to it either. For these groups of religious enthusiasts, religious culture is always a subculture, a version of a particular religious tradition with concrete rituals, prayers, and texts. There is no argument that the latter list is composed of cultural phenomena, but they are still of the 'sub'-type in relation to the whole of civilization — as they indeed are in relation to the meta-cultural reality of Revelation, for rituals may change "but the word of the Lord abides forever" (I Pet 1:25).

When personal formation (and education) takes the form of inculcating the students into a particular religious tradition and a specific set of religious behaviors, this becomes one of the most powerful tools of indoctrination. The approach is not completely alien to Culturology, for some ways of making the sign of the cross are characteristic of the Orthodox culture, while other ways are characteristic of the Catholic culture. But even as the religious enthusiasts favor this particular methodology, it can only work in a homogeneous culture, whereas in Russia one finds such a culture in only a few regions. The confusion between the totality of culture and a particular religious subset also results in a theological problem, however paradoxical this may sound. By localizing the religious message in a prescribed set of cultural phenomena, the method takes the risk of creating an artificial barrier between the message and the student. The student may never get to hear the Word, because all he is getting is a particular religious tradition. In addition to this, the remaining cultural world, which includes arts, literature, politics, law, and philosophy, may end up outside of the student's perspective as it has very little connection with a religious subculture. To someone who defines spirituality squarely in ritualistic and liturgical terms, the arts and philosophy will necessarily appear as 'non-spiritual.'

Studying cultural values helps to avoid these drawbacks. One can schematically visualize this method in the following way. Within the body of culture, one distinguishes among three components: a nucleus consisting of values (the 'egg-yolk'), the symbolizations and conceptualizations that are accessible through various cultural phenomena (the 'egg-white'), and the level of objectified implementations present in the objects and the institutions of a civilization (the 'shell'). In this scheme, religion performs a cultural function that cannot be assigned to any other formal unit with a claim to a spiritual dimension, e. g., philosophy, art, and morality. Religion is not just the keeper of values, but it also transports such values into the horizon of eternity by aligning whatever is valuable to a human being with the divine will. It follows that whenever a sacred dimension of culture is gone, the values become relative. One cannot have a systemic version of the Model of Values and Culture without a religious component.

The proposed methodology helps solve a number of problems: problems of education, problems of formation, and inter-religious problems. Within the cultural value system, religion is approached not only institutionally through its various subcultures, but also as something that permeates the totality of social life. The approach is inspired by a number of theologians of culture: by Nicholas Berdyaev, George Fedotov, and Paul Tillich.²⁵⁵ For an axiological analysis of art, literature, and history one does not need to study dogmatic theology or delve into a religious subculture, because the formation occurs within the very process of education. In confessional terms, teaching the Methodology of Values and Culture (MVC) may be an initiating factor for inter-religious dialogue. While Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have different religious doctrines and models of worship, they have no insurmountable differences among them insofar as culture-forming values are concerned. Buddhism is also quite close to these three Abrahamic religions, although theologically it may lie on the opposite side of the spectrum. In the Sermon on the Mount Christians received values that meet no disagreement among their various denominations. On the other hand, disagreement is known to emerge when a particular religious subculture chooses to compare its doctrines and rituals to those of another religious tradition.

²⁵⁵ *Тиллих П.* Теология культуры. Избранное. М., 1995.

One no longer needs to argue for the crucial importance of values in pedagogy.²⁵⁶ The problem is how to move from the philosophical level (Level 1) to the level of concrete working models (Level 2); and how to make the practice of implementation — if this practice is indeed successful — accessible to the teaching community. Sharing the experience can be termed Level 3. However, in Russia, one faces problems already on Level 2. Framing the educational process in cultural terms has proved a rather difficult task. The official standards of education have not been very supportive of this goal as they still subscribe to a science-centered philosophy of education. In public institutions, there is also the barrier of poor administration.

One may therefore point only to a selected number of ‘experimental efforts,’ and success stories are still very local.²⁵⁷ On the other hand, there is much to say about similar efforts in the rest of the world. One may, for example, recall the educational system of the Jesuits²⁵⁸ or the Waldorf system of education. In Turkey, where the historic trajectory of church-state relations is similar to the Russian experience, there is an interesting example of Gulen pedagogy. However, these are all the examples from the private sector of education.

The assertion that teaching the Methodology of Values and Culture is preferable to all other existing methodologies stems from my experience as the Rector of the Russian Christian Academy for Humanities (RCAH). Private institutions are open for systemic experimentation. The RCAH is among a whole number of private institutions of higher learning that opened doors in Russia during the period of Perestroika. Their orientation was religious but the organization and the form of incorporation were secular. The difference between RCAH and all other colleges was nevertheless quite significant. Whereas all other institutions belonged to a particular religious denomination, RCAH was the only one built upon an inter-religious foundation — and it remains the only successful project of the kind today. At RCAH, students from different traditions inhabit the same educational space and share the same language. There are Christians of various denominations, Buddhists, and Muslims, as well as agnostics and nonbelievers. MVC not only creates a tolerant atmosphere within the walls of the Academy, but it also promotes an inter-religious dialogue.

In the difficult conditions of Russia, applying the Methodology of Values and Culture may be a rather good way to go about reforming education. One can approach this methodology as a tool for creating a free democratic society whose citizens will be equipped for positive action within a heterogeneous religious environment. There is still a lot to do in order to get this particular message across. But it is quite symbolic that the leader of this process is the pedagogic community of St. Petersburg, the city whose culture has always been inter-religious in its very nature.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁶ Никандров Н. Д. Россия: социализация и воспитание на рубеже тысячелетий. М., 2002; Корольков А. А. Духовный смысл образования. СПб., 2005.

²⁵⁷ Валицкая А. П. Культуротворческая школа: концепция и модель образовательного процесса // Педагогика. 1998, № 4.

²⁵⁸ Шмонин Д. В. О философии иезуитов, или «Три крупинки золота в шлаке схоластики» // Вопросы философии. — 2002. № 5. — С. 141–152; Шмонин Д. В. Regulae professoribus, или Как иезуиты учили философии // Вестник РХГА, 2009, Т. 10, Вып. 4. С. 84–89.

²⁵⁹ Бурлака Д. К. Воспитание к духовности в постсекулярном обществе. Петербургский образовательный форум — 2010: Модернизация образования и приоритеты развития. СПб, 2010, С. 30–41.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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Ill. 1 Participants of the International Expert Meeting in the framework of the Project 'World Religions in the Context of the Contemporary Culture: New Perspectives of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding'. St. Petersburg Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia. April 26–27, 2011. Photo by M. Stepanov

Илл. 1. Участники международной встречи экспертов в рамках междисциплинарного научно-исследовательского проекта «Мировые религии в контексте современной культуры: Новые перспективы диалога и взаимопонимания». Санкт-Петербургский Научный центр Российской Академии наук, Санкт-Петербург, Россия. 26-27 апреля 2011. Фото М. Степанова



Ill. 1. International Conference “Islamic Civilization in Central Asia”

Astana, 4–7 September, 2007. Photo by M. Abusseitova

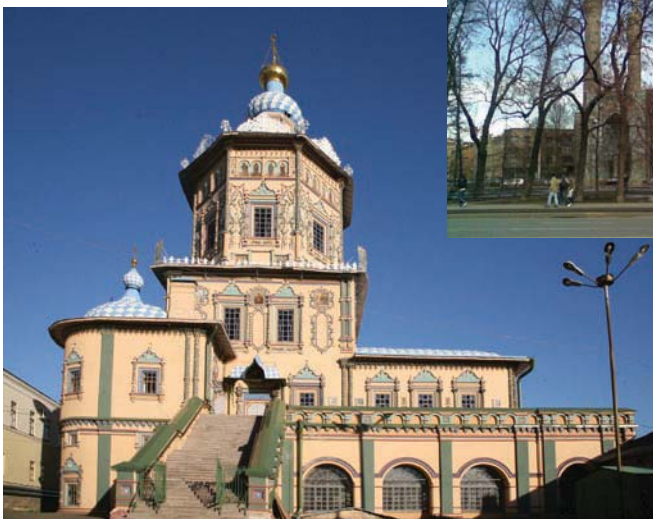
Илл. 1. Международная конференция «Исламская цивилизация в Центральной Азии», г. Астана, 4–7 сентября 2007 г. Фото М. Абусейтовой



Ill. 1. Suyumbike. Photo by E. Mineev
Илл. 1. Сююмбике. Фото Е. Минеева



Ill. 2. Kul-Sharif. Photo by E. Mineev
Илл. 2. Кул-Шариф. Фото Е. Минеева



Ill. 4. St. Peter and Paul Cathedral. Kazan. Photo by E. Mineev
Илл. 4. Собор Св. Петра и Павла, Казань. Фото Е. Минеева



Ill. 3. Mosque, St. Petersburg.
Photo by I. Kotin
Илл. 3. Мечеть,
Санкт-Петербург.
Фото И. Котина



Илл. 1. Бибиэйбат Святилище. Фото И. Оруджева.

Bibiheybat Sanctuary is located in the current Bibiheybat district on the shores of Caspian Sea. According to historical sources, it was founded in the VII-VIII centuries. It faced total destruction in 1934 under the Soviet rule. However, the foundations of a new mosque were laid down here by the national leader Heydar Aliyev on July 23, 1997. The inauguration ceremony took place in 1998. Thanks to the efforts undertaken by President Ilham Aliyev, the work of expanding and rebuilding the Bibiheybat Mosque and Sanctuary Compound was continued in the following period. Having passed the phase of full reconstruction and refurbishment, this Mosque and Sanctuary Compound was reopened on July 12, 2008.

Илл. 1. Святилище Бибиэйбат. Фото И. Оруджева.

Святилище Бибиэйбат расположено на побережье Каспийского моря, в поселке Бибиэйбат. Заложённое, согласно историческим источникам, в VII-VIII веках святилище, в советский период, в 1934 году было разрушено. 23 июля 1997 года общенациональным лидером Гейдаром Алиевым на этом же месте был заложен фундамент нового комплекса святилища, открытие которого состоялось в 1998 году. Благодаря вниманию и поддержке президента Ильхама Алиева работы по реконструкции и расширению комплекса святилища были продолжены. 12 июля 2008 года после капитальной реконструкции и окончания ремонтно-строительных работ, была проведена церемония открытия комплекса святилища Бибиэйбат.



Ill. 2. Nardaran Pir. Photo by H. Orudjev.

This Pir (the Holy Place) of the Nardaran district of Baku comprises the grave of Rahima khanum, the Sister of Reza, the 8th Imam. Due to natural calamities, Pir remained under the ground for a long time. Only at the beginning of the 20th century, it was dug up by the initiative of Sheikh Yunis, a resident of the village, and the Sanctuary was restored. After having restored its independence, a new round of reconstruction and refurbishment work was carried out at the Nardaran Pir. A magnificent Mosque was built and donated to the religious community.

Илл. 2. Нардаранский Пир. Фото И. Оруджева.

В святилище в поселок Нардаран находится могила сестры VIII имама Рзы — Рахимы ханум. В результате природных катаклизмов Пир долгое время находился под землей. Только в начале XX века, по инициативе жителя села Шейха Юниса, здесь были проведены раскопки, и Пир был восстановлен. После восстановления Азербайджаном независимости в Нардаранском Пире были проведены масштабные работы по строительству, реконструкции и благоустройству, возведена и передана в пользование верующих величественная мечеть.



Илл. 3–4. Synagogue of the European Jews. Photo by H. Orudjev.

Constructed in the so-called Jerusalem architectural style, this synagogue was inaugurated on March 9, 2003. Built on the place of an earlier synagogue, it is considered to be the largest in the region.

Илл. 3–4. Синагога европейских евреев. Фото И. Оруджева.

Синагога европейских евреев, построенная в иерусалимском архитектурном стиле, была открыта 9 марта 2003 года. Возведенная на месте старой синагоги, эта синагога считается самой крупной в регионе.

Ill. 5. Lutheran Church.

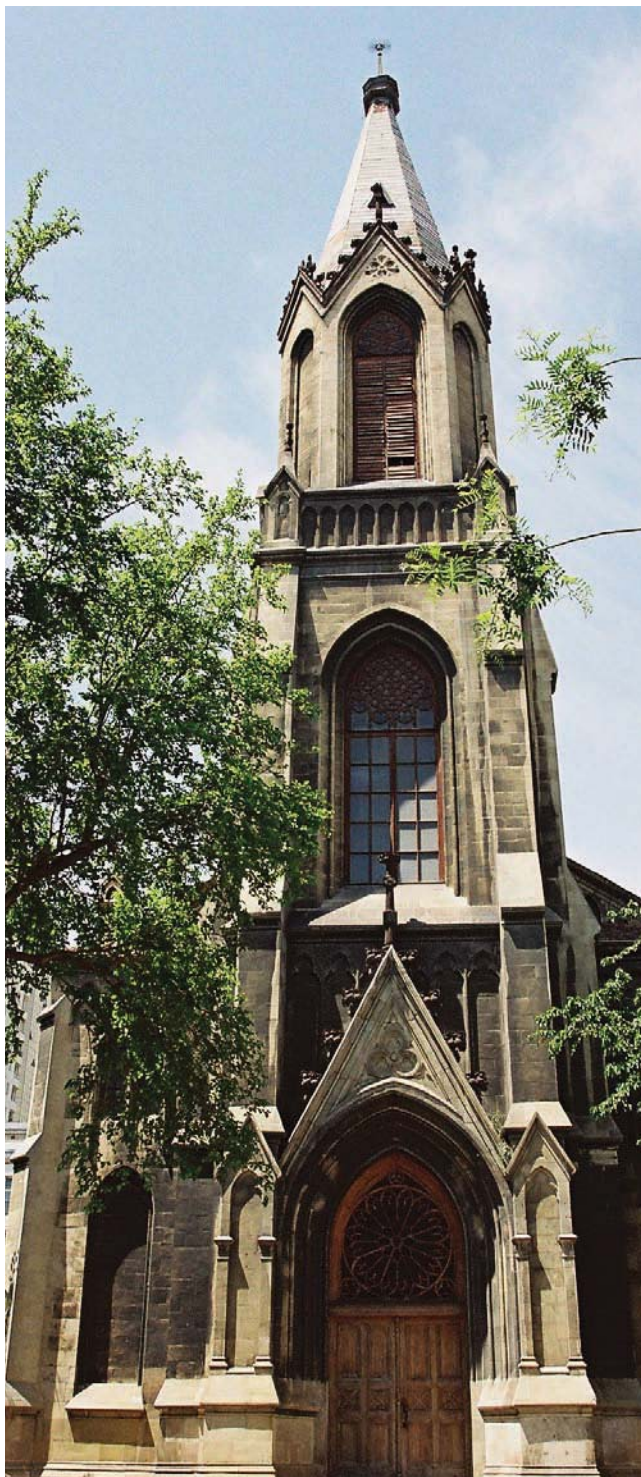
Photo by H. Orudjev.

Lutheran Church, situated in the center of Baku, was built upon private donations and funding from the Nobel brothers. It was opened in 1899. Serving currently as Chamber and Organ Music Hall of the Azerbaijan State Philharmony, named after Muslum Magomayev, this building is currently used by the local Lutheran community. Following a decree by Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the building has been fully refurbished and restored. It has reopened its gates in 2010.

Илл. 5. Евангелическо-Лютеранская церковь.

Фото И. Оруджева.

Расположенная в центре города Баку евангелическо-лютеранская церковь была построена в 1899 году на частные пожертвования и средства братьев Нобель. В настоящее время в здании церкви, функционирующем как зал камерной и органной музыки Азербайджанской Государственной Филармонии имени Муслима Магомаева, созданы условия для богослужения лютеранской общины. По Распоряжению президента Азербайджанской Республики Ильхама Алиева здание церкви было капитально отремонтировано и отреставрировано и в 2010 году открыто для посетителей.





Ill. 6. The Myrrhophores Church. Photo by H. Orudjev.

The Myrrhophores Church was built thanks to the financial assistance of the famous Azerbaijani philanthropist Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev in 1909. During the Soviet period, it was among the first churches to be closed. It was restituted to the Russian Orthodox Church only in 1991. Following the establishment of a diocese in Baku, restoration work was carried out in the Church, which was consecrated by Alexy II, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, in the framework of his visit to Azerbaijan in 2001. It was also granted the status of the main Cathedral. The national leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev participated at the ceremony.

Илл. 6. Кафедральный Собор Святых Жен-Мироносиц. Фото И. Оруджева.

Церковь Святых Жен-Мироносиц была построена в 1909 году на средства от благотворительных пожертвований и материальной помощи известного азербайджанского мецената Гаджи Зейналабдина Тагиева. В советский период храм был закрыт для прихожан. Только в 1991 году храм был передан в распоряжение Русской Православной церкви. После создания в Баку архиерейской кафедры, в церкви были проведены реставрационные работы. В 2001 году, во время визита в Азербайджан Патриарха Московского и всея Руси Алексия II, церковь была освящена и ей был придан статус кафедрального собора. В церемонии освящения церкви принимал участие общенациональный лидер Гейдар Алиев.

Ill. 7. Kish Temple. Photo by H. Orudjev.

Located in Kish, Sheki region, this Albanian Temple is the first Church built in Caucasus (1st century A.D.). According to some sources, it was built by St.Elisha sent by St.Jacob, the brother of prophet Isa, in order to promote Christianity in the Caucasian Albania. The Temple is protected as a historical monument. Full-scale reconstruction and restoration works were carried out there in 2003. It is currently used as museum.

Илл. 7. Храм Киш. Фото И. Оруджева.

Албанский храм Киш, находящийся в селе Киш, является первой церковью, построенной на Кавказе (I век). По некоторым данным, ее построил св.Елисей, посланец св.Иакова, соратника Иисуса Христа, для распространения христианства в Кавказской Албании. Храм охраняется как исторический памятник. В 2003 году в храме были проведены капитальные работы по реконструкции и восстановлению, после чего он действует как музей.





Ill. 8. Tazapir Mosque, Baku. Photo by H. Orudjev.

Being one of the architectural pearls of Azerbaijan, Tazapir Mosque was built in 1905- 1914. Architect Ziver bey Ahmadbayov, financial sponsorship - Nabat khanum Ashurbekova. The project related to restoration of the Mosque and reconstruction of adjacent territories was elaborated in 2005, upon the order of President Ilham Aliyev Following the refurbishment and reconstruction works, inauguration took place with the participation of President Ilham Aliyev on July 6 , 2009. Administrative Building of the Caucasian Muslim Board is located on the premises of this mosque.

Илл. 8. Мечеть Тезепир, Баку. Фото И. Оруджева.

Строительство одной из крупнейших архитектурно-монументальных мечетей Азербайджана — мечети Тезепир было начато в 1905 году и завершено в 1914 году. Мечеть была спроектирована инженером Зивербекком Ахмедбековым и построена на средства Набат ханум Ашурбековой. В 2005 году по поручению президента Ильхама Алиева был разработан и осуществлен проект по реконструкции мечети и прилегающих к ней территорий. 6 июля 2009 года после завершения строительно-реставрационных работ была проведена церемония открытия мечети, на которой принимал участие президент Ильхам Алиев. В комплексе Тезепир расположено административное здание Духовного Управления Мусульман Кавказа.

Ill. 9. Kurmuk Temple. Photo by H. Orudjev.

Located on one of the picturesque hills of the Gakh region, Kurmuk Temple was reopened as an Orthodox Church, on the basis of an Albanian Church, in 1892.

Илл. 9. Храм Кюрмюк. Фото И. Оруджева.

На одном из живописных холмов Гахского района расположен храм Кюрмюк, открытый в качестве православной церкви, на основании предшествующего албанского храма, в 1892.





Илл. 10. Синагога горских евреев в Баку. Фото И. Оруджева.

This synagogue was constructed at the centre of Baku by the initiative and with support of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. Official opening ceremony of the synagogue was held on April 5, 2011. The ceremony was attended by official figures, leaders of religious confessions functioning in Azerbaijan, members of Jewish community, as well as foreign guests from Israel, Russia and other countries.

Илл. 10. Синагога горских евреев в Баку. Фото И. Оруджева.

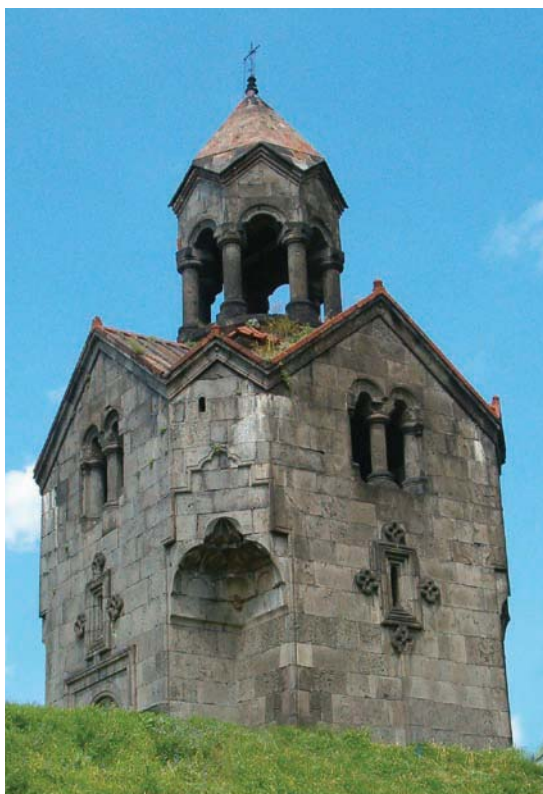
По инициативе президента Азербайджанской Республики Ильхама Алиева, в центре города Баку была построена новая синагога для горских евреев. Официальная церемония открытия синагоги состоялась 5 апреля 2011 года. В церемонии участвовали официальные лица, главы религиозных конфессий, функционирующих в Азербайджане, члены иудейской общины, а также гости из Израиля, России и других зарубежных стран.



Илл. 1–2. Genocide monument. Photo by H. Hovhannisyan
Илл. 1–2. Мемориал геноциду. Фото О. Оганнисяна



*Илл. 3. St. Thadeos Church in Iran. Photo by Н. Новханнян
Илл. 3. Храм св.Фаддея в Иране. Фото О. Оганнисяна*



*Илл. 4. Haghrat Monastery.
Photo by Н. Новханнян
Илл. 4. Монастырь Агпат.
Фото О. Оганнисяна*



Илл. 5. St. Noravanq Church. Photo by Н. Новханнысун
Илл. 5. Храм св.Нораванка. Фото О. Оганнисяна



Илл. 6. St. Stepanos Church in Iran. Photo by H. Hovhannisyan
Илл. 6. Храм св. Стефана. Фото О. Оганнисяна



Илл. 7. St. Kecharis Church in Tsaghkadzor. Photo by H. Hovhannisyan
Илл. 7. Храм св. Кечариса в Цахкадзоре. Фото О. Оганнисяна



Ill. 1. Christian Church and Muslim Mosque in Old Tbilisi. Photo by N. Chikovani

Илл. 1. Христианская церковь и мечеть в старом Тбилиси. Фото Н. Чиковани



Ill. 2. Armenian Church of St. George and Georgian Church of St. Nikoloz.

Photo by N. Chikovani
Илл. 2. Армянская церковь св. Георгия и грузинская церковь св. Николоза.
Фото Н. Чиковани



Ill. 3. Catholic Church in Tbilisi.

Photo by N. Chikovani
Илл. 3. Католический храм в Тбилиси.
Фото Н. Чиковани



Ill. 4. Kutaisi Synagogue.

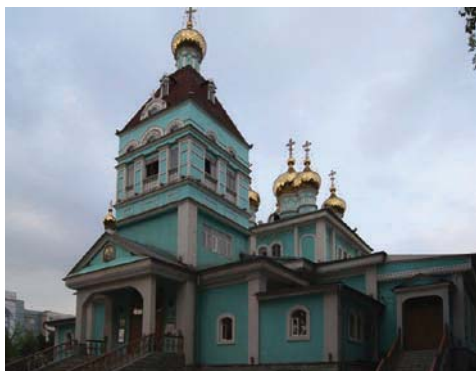
Photo by N. Chikovani
Илл. 4. Синагога в Кутаиси.
Фото Н. Чиковани



Ill. 1. Voznesensky (Ascension) Cathedral in Almaty. Photo by L. Yerekesheva
Илл. 1. Вознесенский собор г. Алматы.
Фото Л. Ерекешевой



Ill. 2. Central Mosque in Almaty. Photo by Z. Tabynbaeva
Илл. 2. Центральная мечеть г. Алматы.
Фото З. Табынбаевой



Ill. 3. St. Nicholas Cathedral in Almaty. Photo by Z. Tabynbaeva
Илл. 3. Никольский собор г. Алматы.
Фото З. Табынбаевой



Ill. 4. Palace of Peace and Concord in Astana (often called Pyramid), the place of conducting Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. Photo by L. Yerekesheva
Илл. 4. Дворец мира и согласия в г. Астана (т.н. Пирамида), место проведения Съездов лидеров мировых и традиционных религий.
Фото Л. Ерекешевой



Ill. 5. Signatures of religious leaders, who took part in works of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, as part of the Baiterek architectural composition, Astana. Photo by L. Yerekesheva
Илл. 5. Подписи религиозных лидеров, участвовавших в трудах Съезда лидеров мировых и традиционных религий, как часть архитектурной композиции «Байтерек», г. Астана. Фото Л. Ерекешевой



*Ill. 1. Funeral prayer for victims of the events at the Government building in Bishkek on April 7, 2010.
Photo by E. Boldzhurov*

Илл. 1. Чтение упокойной молитвы по безвинно погибшим 7 апреля 2010 года на площади перед зданием правительства, г. Бишкек. Фото Э. Болджурова



Ill. 2. Various nations, cultures, and religions have peacefully coexisted in Kyrgyzstan.

Photo by E. Boldzhurov

Илл. 2. Исторически в Кыргызстане мирно сосуществовали различные этносы, культуры и религии. Фото Э. Болджурова



Ill. 3. Conducting a Muslim rite. In the front seats, both Kyrgyz and Uzbek aksakals are sitting side by side. Photo by E. Boldzhurov

Илл. 3. Совершение мусульманского обряда. В первом ряду сидят рядом аксакалы: кыргызы узбеки. Фото Э. Болджурова



Ill. 4. Since ancient times, Tengri (from the Kyrgyz tenir – sky, universe) has been revered by the Kyrgyz people. Tengrian faith served as philosophy and religion by the ancient Kyrgyz. Photo by E. Boldzhurov
*Илл. 4. С древних времён кыргызы почитают тенгри (кырг. тенир -небо, космос).
Тенгрианство — философия и религия древних кыргызов. Фото Э. Болджурова*



Илл. 5. Burana Tower, situated at the Chu valley in Kyrgyzstan, where a Northern branch of the Great Silk way functioned. A coaching inn (caravan-saray) was situated nearby, where travellers in the 14-19th centuries stayed. Photo by E. Boldzhurov

Илл. 5. Башня Бурана. Находится в Чуйской долине Кыргызстана, по территории которого проходила северная ветка Великого шёлкового пути. Возле этой башни располагался караван-сарай, где путники в XIV–XV веках останавливались на ночлег. Фото Э. Болджурова



Ill. 1. Uspensky (Assumption) Cathedral in Tashkent. Photo by M. Artikov
Илл. 1. Ташкентский Свято-Успенский кафедральный собор. Фото М. Артикова



Ill. 2 Lutheran church in Tashkent. Photo by M. Artikov
Илл. 2. Лютеранская церковь в Ташкенте. Фото М. Артикова



Ill. 3. Scientific and practical seminar ‘World Week of harmonious Interfaith Relations’, Tashkent Islamic University, February 3, 2011. Photo by M. Artikov
Илл. 3. Научно-практический семинар «Всемирная неделя гармоничных межконфессиональных отношений» в Ташкентском исламском университете 3 февраля 2011 г. Фото М. Артикова



Ill. 4. Students of the Tashkent Islamic University talking to the metropolitan bishop of Tashkent and Central Asia, Vladimir. Photo by M. Artikov
Илл. 4. Студенты ТИУ беседуют с митрополитом Ташкентским и Среднеазиатским Владимиром. Фото М. Артикова

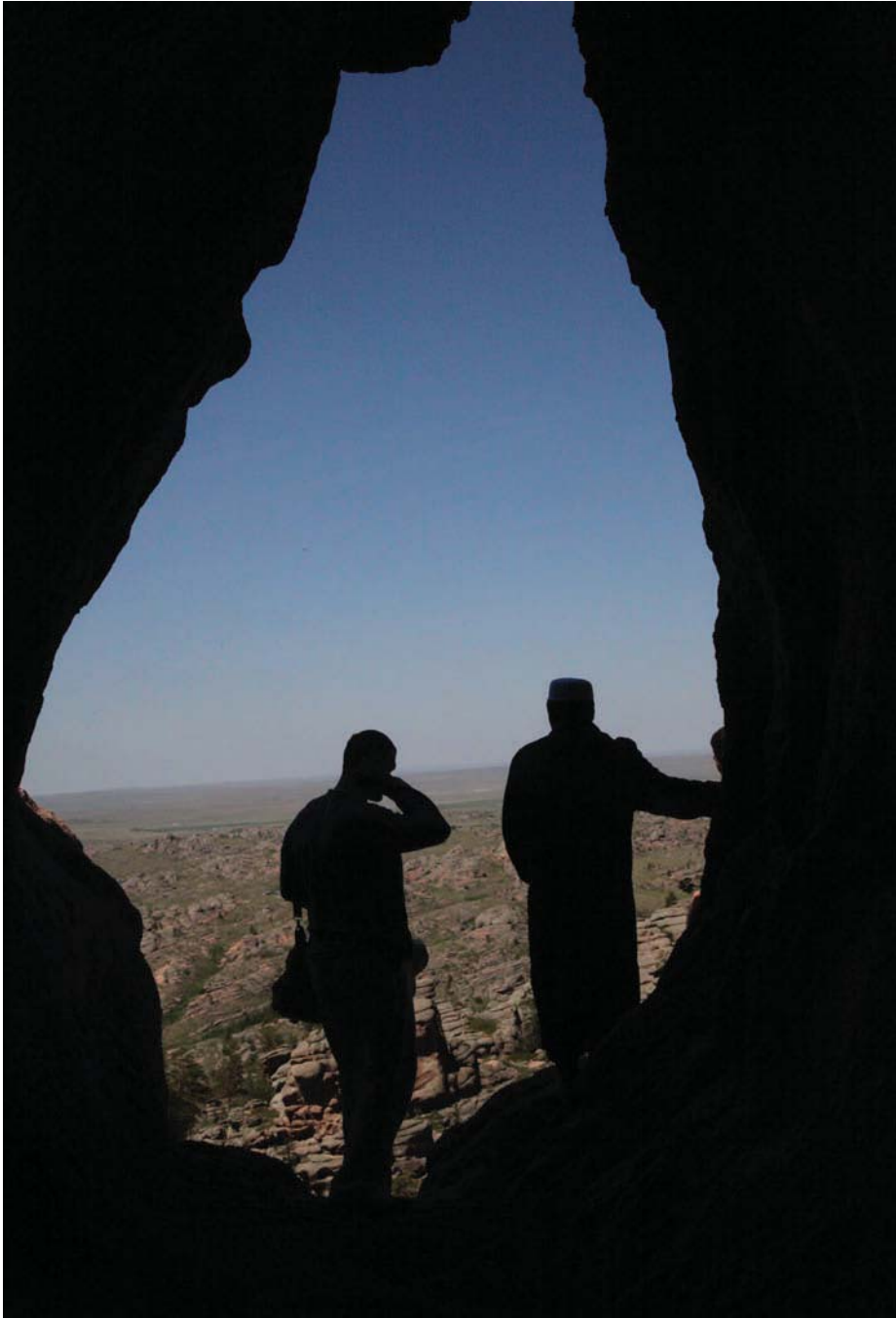


Ill. 5. Interfaith dialogues often take place at the Tashkent Islamic University. Photo by M. Artikov
Илл. 5. В Ташкентском исламском университете вошло в традицию проводить диалоги представителей различных религий. Фото М. Артикова



*Илл. 1. «Girl's dress».
Kazakhstan, 1899. Watercolour over
the photographic print, MAE RAS,
No. 1199-34-P2.
Photo by S. Dudin*

*Илл. 1. «Костюм девочки».
Казахстан, 1899 г. Акварель
по фотоотпечатку,
МАЭ РАН, № 1199-34-Р2.
Фото С. Дудина*



Илл. 2. At the exit from the cave of Awliya-Tas (Konyr Awliya). The MAE RAS and CMK expedition of 2010. Photo by T. Fedorova

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