

wouldn't agree with acceptance in their territory of people of other culture. The provided quotas for countries of Eastern Europe were rather small – 7 thousand people for Poland, 1.6 thousand for the Czech Republic and 1.3 thousand for Hungary. Representatives of these states voted against acceptance of refugees. However the decision was taken by a majority vote. The Czech Republic considers that the policy of the European Union concerning new members of the EU leads to deprival of national identity. In the context of the conflict between the Czech Republic and the European Union the Czech Muslims supported the government of the country because they believe that among “new Muslims” there can be also former terrorists whose presence on the Czech territory can destroy the interethnic concord which was being created during many years.

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IRINA BABICH. STATE MUSLIM POLICY IN CONTEXT OF MODERN RELIGIOUSNESS IN SWITZERLAND // *The article was written for the bulletin “Russia and the Moslem World.”*

Keywords: Switzerland, Islam, Muslims, Islamic ideology, state power, Swiss, citizenship, tolerance, identity.

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Abstract: Switzerland is a country, where migration flows have constantly been growing during the 20th and 21st centuries, and whose authorities have to think constantly of how to restrain them. This article, prepared on the basis of two sources: newspaper material and field ethnographic material collected by the author, examines state Muslim policy in the context of

modern religiousness in Switzerland. The author emphasizes that Switzerland has become the first country which renounced the idea of cultural tolerance so widespread in Europe in postwar time. The authorities themselves call their political course a “policy of zero tolerance,” which they actively pursue toward Muslim migrants.

Switzerland is a country where migration flows have constantly been increasing for the past two centuries. This is why its authorities have to think constantly of how to restrain them. In the past decades there has been an intensive emigration to the country of Russians Kurds, Turks, Frenchmen, Portugueses, Caucasians and Muslims from all corners of the world (primarily, Balkan, and Eastern Muslims).

Swiss Muslims form a well-organized community headed by the Central Islamic Council of Switzerland (CCIS) headed by a Swiss citizen Nicolas Blanchot, who adopted Islam. He is not the only one among the native Swiss citizens who have adopted Islam in recent decades. Naturally, among them are, above all, women who have married Muslims. Besides, there is the Federation of Islamic Organizations of Switzerland (FOIS) headed by Montassar Ben Mrad.

We should note that the civilian community of Switzerland is represented not only by Muslim émigrés living in the country, but also by Muslim tourists whose flow has increased considerably over the past years. According to press reports, in 2015 Switzerland was visited by almost one million well-to-do people from Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the OAE.

One of the aims of the Muslim community in Switzerland is the promotion of their people to various posts in the state or cantonal management. For example, a Muslim medical doctor named Khisham Maizar became the head of the Swiss Council on Religion in 2014. He was born in Jerusalem, studied medicine in Heidelberg, and is working in Switzerland. The aim of this Council

is to ensure a peaceful dialogue between representatives of all confessions.

This article examines state Muslim policy in the context of modern religiousness in Switzerland and on the basis of two sources: mass media material and field ethnographical material collected by the author.

Switzerland bases its entire migration policy on the preservation of Swiss identity. Everything is subordinated to this idea. The religious policy of the Swiss authorities has undoubtedly become a major part of migration policy and one of the instruments of the preservation of Swiss identity. Migrants and their specific life should in no way weaken Swiss identity based on the combination of civilian, territorial (cantonal) and national-cultural identity. There are at minimum four basic models of cultural identity – German (covering the German cantons of the country, which is in a majority; Italian (covering the Italian part of the country, mainly Ticino), French (covering French cantons), and Ladin (covering cantons with predominantly the Ladin language)

The Swiss authorities have to display much flexibility and understanding to keep four different people – Italians, Germans, French and Ladins – within the bounds of one country. This is why the migrants are the additional “pay in the neck” for the Swiss authorities in their complex situation.

On the whole, migration policy in the country is rather strict. There are quite a few laws legalizing advantages of the local population in different spheres of life, primarily in the sphere of employment. This is why, there is nothing surprising in a harsh attitude to Muslims and Islam as religion and religious institutions in Switzerland. Here are a few examples. First of all, we should note that although there is no open radical confrontation or terrorist acts, the authorities have earmarked considerable means for preventing the emergence of extremism in the nearest decades. This is why even the smallest manifestations of radicalism are thoroughly investigated. For instance, in 2016 Swiss Muslims were shown a film made by one of the leaders of the Islamic Council of

Switzerland Naim Cherni about his trip to Syria without any special mentioning that he did not support the activity of terrorist groups. As a result an action was started against the heads of the Council for their alleged propaganda of the jihadist movement. Or another example: One of the imams distributed a Salaphite pamphlet of Saudi origin among the Muslim inmates of the Zurich prisoners praising the Sharia law and corporal punishment. The prison administration confiscated the pamphlets and destroyed them.

Nevertheless, loyal Swiss Muslims are trying to create a comfortable situation for themselves to live in the country in accordance with their religious and ideological values. Here is an example:

In 2013–2014 Muslims in Folketsville commune (Zurich canton) and the “Al-Huda” association decided to set up an Islamic kindergarten. Presenting their idea and submitting concrete plans the teachers promised to train the children for entering the local schools in accordance with the curricula worked out and endorsed by the Ministry of Education of Switzerland, but organize additional lessons of Arabic and Islamic theology. The children had to be reared in Islamic traditions. However, the cantonal authorities of Zurich not only banned the opening of such kindergarten, but also deprived the “Al-Huda” Association of its license. It became known that the Swiss citizen Melanie Muhakseri is an active member of the Islamic Council. The canton authorities did not like the idea that the curricula for the children would be compiled by a representative of a fundamentalist organization.

In 2015 a campaign began in Switzerland against wearing Muslim women’s head-dress and garments. In 2016 one of Swiss cantons – Ticino (Italian part of the country) – adopted a law prohibiting wearing this dress. Similar law have already been in force in France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Several well-off Muslims specially walked along the streets of one of Ticino cities – Locarno – to see whether the law was observed. The Swiss Muslim Nora Hilli, together with the Algerian millionaire Rashid Nekkaz

and his daughter were detained by a local police patrol and fined for wearing Muslim dress. Rashid Nekkaz born in a migrant family near Paris, graduated from Sorbonne University, went in trade of real estate, and amassed huge fortune. He had French citizenship and had paid fines several times in France. As a result Rashid Nekkaz renounced French citizenship and came out against the ban on wearing Muslim dress in Switzerland and other European countries. He proclaimed himself fighter for human rights everywhere, including Arab countries. We should note that in other cantons of Switzerland, especially in Montreux, where rich Muslims have settled on the shore of the Geneva Lake, one can always see Muslim women with covered face and body, even in 40-degree heat.

The Swiss authorities tried to spread the law banning purdah all over the country, but failed. The lower house of Swiss parliament adopted the law by 88 votes, with 87 against. The violators of the law are to be fined 9,200 euros. Control over its fulfillment was entrusted to the police. A special duty officer was appointed at the police department to supervise the observance of the law - "intercultural mediator," who is to teach employees of the law-enforcement agencies to deal with its violators. Meanwhile, the Federal Council has examined this proposal and turned it down, because it envisaged a uniform decision for all cantons, which contradicts the principle of federalism. The standards and rules regulating behavior are in the competence of the cantonal, but not the federal, authorities. In other words, the government will not make changes to the Constitution and grants the cantons the right to decide what to ban or what to allow. The cantons should decide themselves how to deal with women-tourists wearing purdah.

Views on this problem in various regions of Switzerland differ. The cantons of Zurich, Solothurn, Schwitz, Basel and Glarus come out against the ban. Opposite views are expressed by Ticino and St. Gallen.

But the biggest complications arise in connection with the attempt to introduce Islamic canons in the educational system of Switzerland. We should note that it is shown by interviews with Caucasian emigrants, the educational system of the country is aimed not so much at teaching school pupils as at creating a system of comprehensive integration of schoolchildren in Swiss society. Children of emigrants studying at Swiss schools become one hundred percent Swiss, following the Swiss way of life, right up to never crossing the street at red light. An adolescent of Georgian nationality on leaving his school building in Switzerland will never violate traffic rules.

In 2016 debates began in the country concerning Muslim schoolchildren's unwillingness to shake hands with their lady schoolteacher (traditional handshake is common at Swiss schools). One of the leaders of the Islamic Council Nicolas Blanshot maintains that handshake is not one of the values mentioned in the Constitution of Switzerland, and this gesture contradicts the religious beliefs of the Muslims of the entire world (a woman should not be touched by man if she is not a member of his family). First, at certain schools in Switzerland, for example, in the Basel rural canton the local authorities allowed school pupils to ignore this habit. The head of the educational department of Geneva Anne Emery Torracinta announced that pupils should abide by the rules set by the school authorities, otherwise they may face expulsion. The teachers' association of Basel was also against this instruction, regarding it "discriminatory with regard to woman" and at variance with Swiss traditions. The Chairman of the Committee of Heads of Educational Departments of Switzerland Kristoph Eimann said: "We should not allow deviations from the rules on religious grounds." As a result, the school administration annulled its permission not to shake hands, and even envisaged a fine reaching 5,000 francs.

Muslim school children refuse to attend swimming lessons. One such case has taken place at a school in a Basel commune, or another case was registered with the Muslim emigrant from Bosnia

Emir Tahirovich who did not allow his 14-year-old daughter to attend swimming lessons at school. Sometimes Muslim school pupils do not want to attend summer or winter sports camps, which the authorities regard as their unwillingness to integrate in Swiss society. Swimming lessons and sport camps are an inalienable part of the Swiss educational system. Simonetta Sommaruta emphasized that "handshakes are part of our culture and daily life."

The main argument against the introduction of a number of Islamic canons in the Swiss educational system was the contention that due to certain Swiss habits and methods used by the Swiss school migrant children go along the path of integration in Swiss society. This is quite important for the country. This is why if school children refuse to fulfill the major requirements of the Swiss school, this is the basis for refusal to grant Swiss citizenship. This rule concerns not only Muslims, but all migrants. Their representatives told us that when they submitted documents for citizenship, they were asked to present documents testifying to their participation in various Swiss societies, for example the "Red Cross." The Swiss authorities, indeed, attach great importance to the wish and ability of the applicant to become a Swiss citizen and integrate in Swiss society. And the educational system of Switzerland is one of the key instruments of the émigré's adaptation to Swiss life, culture daily behavior, etc.

In 2017 the European Court on Human Rights turned down the complaint of two citizens of Switzerland of Turkish origin who banned their daughters to attend mixed swimming lessons. The Swiss authorities did not violate the religious rights of these Muslim schoolgirls having ordered them to attend these lessons together with boys. The European Court on Human Rights turned down the complaint against the Swiss authorities, who demanded the fulfillment of the curriculum for the successful integration of Muslim girls in Swiss society. The Court decision noted that the Swiss authorities acted within the framework of the law aimed at protecting students of foreign origin from public isolation.

The Federation of Islamic Organizations of Switzerland (FOIS) has told Swiss Muslims that handshakes of man and woman “is theologically allowed.” The FOIS head Ben Mrad said: “I recommend school pupils to shake hands with their lady teachers, thus demonstrating their respect for them. But one should also display tolerance toward people who think different. A talk to pupils and their parents will help find out their motivation and explain the importance of this greeting in Swiss culture.” Muslim leaders say: “impermissibility of handshaking with woman may be justified by Hadis standards, but it is not mentioned in the Koran.” True, the head of the Central Islamic Council of Switzerland (CCIS) Nicolas Blanshot said that “handshaking is one of the values mentioned in the Constitution of Switzerland.”

The Swiss Muslims are striving to take active positions in the country. In March 2014, for the first time in the country’s history a Muslim was elected head of the Swiss Council on Religion. A medical doctor by education Hisham Maizar was born in Jerusalem studied in Heidelberg (Germany) and lives and works in Switzerland. He is in charge of organizing a peaceful dialogue among the representatives of all confessions.

Conclusion

As we see it, Switzerland has become the first country in Europe, which renounced the idea of cultural tolerance so widespread on the continent in postwar years and up to these days. Switzerland actually combined such concepts as civil, Swill and cantonal identity. In essence, all aspects of the Swiss way of life include elements of these three identities. Even handshaking can become, under certain conditions, an element of Swiss identity. The values of Swiss identity are more important for the people of Switzerland than the observance of the rights of religious minorities in the country.

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