

education, and representatives of the middle class, was not confirmed either. There was no confirmation of the provision of "Rallying civilizations." The results of the study demonstrated the complete absence of favoritism from both Muslims and Orthodox Christians in relation to "civilizationally close" visitors from other regions of the Russian Federation.

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The article examines processes going on in the Muslim community of the Crimea, beginning from the historic stage connected with the emergence of Islam in the region. Special attention is devoted to Islam in the Crimea in the period between 1991 and 2014, when the Crimea was reunited with Russia on the basis of a referendum. The new model of relations between the state and Islamic religious organizations is analyzed, which took shape in the Crimea in 2014–2016 in the conditions of the integration of the Crimean Muslim community in the Russian socio-cultural and legal area.

Historically, the Crimea is characterized by a polyethnic and poly-confessional composition of its population; but at different time the peninsula was dominated by definite faiths which were preserved to this day in the form of rather small ethnic groups. Christianity and Islam were an exception – they are the dominant traditional religions on the Crimean Peninsula.

Crimean Islam is a moderate Sunna trend of the Khanafite mazkhab, which began its history in the region from the 13th century along with the Mongolian conquest of the Crimea and its inclusion into the Golden Horde. The first mosque in the Crimea appeared in 1219. In 1443 the Crimean Khanate was formed, which became part of the Ottoman Empire. Since then Islam became state religion in the Crimea. In 1783, according to a manifesto of Catherine the Great, the Crimea was incorporated in the Russian state. By the end of the 18th century, there were about 1,600 mosques, two madrasahs and a network of Muslim schools in the Crimea.

The next stage of Crimean history is connected with the Russian revolution of 1917 and the formation of the U.S.S.R. The Crimean Autonomous Socialist Republic was formed in the peninsula, which was part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) up to 1954, and then it was transferred to Ukraine. Religious life in the Crimea during that period was similar to that in other republics and regions of the Soviet Union. The destruction of religious buildings, including Muslim mosques, was a common phenomenon in the country, just as reprisals against the clergy. The system of religious education was also destroyed, including Muslim education. Religion was ousted from the public discourse, however, among the Muslims, it was preserved at an everyday level and was passed on from generation to generation through family values and traditions.

In order to better understand the confessional processes in the Crimea it is necessary to become acquainted with certain facts connected with the deportation of Armenians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Germans and Crimean Tatars from the Crimea during World War II. The Crimean Tatars were deported from the Crimea on May 18, 1944,

having been accused of collaboration with the German Nazi troops during the occupation of the peninsula. They were sent to Central Asia, and their return home began in the latter half of the 1980s. The integration of Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks and Germans in the local community bore a peaceful character. At the same time, along with the return of Crimean Tatars to the peninsula, conflicts began to flare up, including in the sphere of religion. Assessing the development of the conflict situation in the Crimea, the author notes that the most acute confrontation in the past was not connected with the religious factor. Among the reasons for mass protest actions of Crimean Tatars, whose peak was reached in the 1990s, was the problem of the absence of citizenship and access to land resources. Along with this, a number of conflicts were due to the religious component, for the most Crimean Tatars are distinguished with coincidence of the ethnic and religious identities, which was often influenced by ethnic and political leaders with a view to fanning inter-ethnic and inter-confessional discord in the region. As a result, the conflict potential was presented by ethnic leaders as an argument and used as a resource in their own conflict with the state authorities, which was of a permanent character right up to 2014. On the basis of the referendum carried out in March 2014 and according to the will of the majority of the Crimean population, the peninsula entered Russia as an independent subject of the federation.

Confessional processes in the Crimea, which acquired a new vector in 2014–2016 have special features in connection with religious distinctions within the Crimean community. This is due to the presence and coexistence of the three dominating ethnic groups: Russians, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars. According to the 2014 population census, representatives of 175 nationalities live in the Crimea. The most numerous are Russians (68.3 percent), Ukrainians (15.8 percent) and Crimean Tatars (10.6 percent). Russians form not only the ethnic, but also religious majority. Both Russians and Ukrainians are Orthodox Christians, Crimean Tatars are Muslims.

Beginning from the spring of 2014, in the conditions of Crimean integration in the Russian political and legal space, changes have occurred in the religious sphere. The organization Khizb ut-Tahrir has ceased its activity on the peninsula, inasmuch as it is banned in Russia. From March 2014 onwards, a new system of relations between the state and the Islamic religious communities has been formed. All Islamic religious organizations have joined the Tauric muftiyat, part of the official Board of Muslim religion, which made it possible to overcome an internal conflict in the Crimean ummah. Special courses for preparing imams have been opened. After the Crimea has joined Russia, the financial donations from abroad for the construction of mosques have been stopped. Great financial assistance to the Islamic religious organizations in the Crimea is given by Muslim regions of Russia, for example, Tatarstan and Chechnya.

The researcher concludes that all conditions have been created for the Muslims living in the Crimea necessary for satisfying their religious requirements – mosques and religious schools are functioning, and the Muslim clergy are trained.

The Crimean ummah is integrated in the Islamic community of Russia, interregional cooperation is developing with Tatarstan and Chechnya.

A new system of relations between the state and Islamic religious organizations has been formed, creating better conditions for the activity of religious communities, and at the same time preventing the spreading of religious extremism.

Along with this, there is the need to overcome stereotypes circulating in the European public opinion about the violation of the rights of the Crimean Tatars. These stereotypes are invented by foreign political forces in order to worsen the ethno-confessional situation in the Crimea. In actual fact, this situation is characterized by the lowering of the ethno-conflict potential. The situation on the peninsula now is calmer and more predictable than in previous years.

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