

ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

2021.03.002. VALENTINA SCHENSNOVICH. HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGE OF IRAN AND SOCIAL POLICY OF THE COUNTRY AT THE PRESENT TIME // *Condensed abstract.*

Keywords: historical and religious heritage of Iran, Zoroastrianism, Islamic world, Sunnis and Shiites, Nawruz, Judaism, Christianity, the Islamic Revolution of 1979, modern social policy of the country, Islamic government, Islamic foundations, waqfs.

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1. Maslakova-Clauberg Natalia I. Iran Opening up to the World: Historical and Religious Heritage // *Vestnik Diplomaticheskoy akademii MID Rossii. Rossiya i mir*, 2019. – № 2 (20). – P. 171–187.

2. Mamedova Nina M. The Role of Social Policy in a Culturally Complex Society Management (the Case Study of Iran) // *Vestnik Instituta vostokovedeniya RAN*, 2020. – № 1 (11). – P. 255–271.

The article by N.I. Maslakova-Clauberg “Iran Opening to the World: Historical and Religious Heritage” [1] examines the history of the emergence and formation of various world religions on the territory of modern Iran in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. The main attention is paid to Zoroastrianism

as the first monotheistic religion and national-state religion – Shiite Islam.

In modern Iran, along with the state religion – Shia Islam, other world religions and confessions are represented: Sunni Islam, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. Most Iranians identify themselves as Shiite Muslims (85), Sunni Muslims make up about 9 per cent of the population, Christians – 4, and 2 per cent include Jews, Zoroastrians, as well as other religious minorities – Bahais, Mandeans, Hindus, Yezidis. Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are officially recognized in Iran and protected by the country's Constitution.

The first monotheistic religion on the territory of Ancient Persia was Zoroastrianism, which emerged in the East Iranian tribes. This religion was named after its founder – the prophet and priest Zoroaster (or Zarathushtra). In the period from the 6 century BC to the 7 century AD Zoroastrianism was the national-state religion of the Persian Empire. In the 1930s, during the reign of the Shahs of the Pahlavi dynasty, the religious symbols of Zoroastrianism began to decorate governmental agencies, Zoroastrian schools appeared, adherents of this religion were given the opportunity to occupy senior positions, that was previously not allowed. In the late 1930s, Iranian clergy announced in a special fatwa that the Zoroastrians were under the protection of Islam.

Currently, Zoroastrian communities have survived in Iran and in India, there are small communities in the United States and Western Europe. By various estimates, there are 100–200 thousand adherents of Zoroastrianism in the world from 25 to 50 thousand of them live in Iran. In modern Iran, Zoroastrians have the same rights as other religious minorities do.

During the reign of the Sassanid dynasty in 637 AD the Arabs captured the capital of the empire – Ctesiphon, and Persia came under the rule of the Arab Caliphate. The Zoroastrian community became a religious minority. As a result of the Arab conquest in the 7 century AD and the incorporation of the

country into the Umayyad Caliphate, Islam became the dominant religion of Persia.

The Islamization of Persia influenced the cultural and religious component of the state, while preserving the ancient civilizational heritage. Islam emerged as the youngest world religion, and before the first century of its existence split into three main directions - Sunnism, Shiism and Kharijism. The impetus for the religious split was the disagreement over the character and nature of the supreme power in the Islamic state.

Shiism (from the Arabic "shi'a" - "party", "the political group of Imam Ali") is a major religious trend in Islam. By 1698, Shiism had become the country's state religion for the majority of the Persian population. Since then, Iran has been a Shiite Islamic state.

There are a number of differences in religious rules and traditions between Shiites and Sunnis. Both directions honour the prophet Muhammad as the last prophet and messenger of Allah. Shiites venerate imams as intermediaries between Allah and believers. For Shiites, the imam is the spiritual leader and the chosen of the prophet, his representative on earth. Sunnis see Imam Ali as only the last of the four guided califs.

Shiite Islam in Iran was created as a form of national religion and became part of the national identity, this gave it a religious identity in the Muslim world. Along with the fact that Iran remains a Shiite Islamic state, the country retains the status of a multinational state with a rich historical and religious heritage, the researcher concludes.

Mamedova N.M. in her article "The Role of Social Policy in a Culturally Complex Society Management (the Case Study of Iran)" [2] notes that social policy for the country is of particular relevance due to the uniqueness of the power structure of the Islamic regime and the historically established cultural and ethno-confessional heterogeneity of Iranian society. The existing system of power is only four decades old and the social policy pursued by it as a factor of governance of the society is formed

and evolves under the influence of both Islamic principles and the changing needs of the country's population.

Since the Islamic regime proclaimed the achievement of social justice as one of its main goals, the author analyzes the socio-economic differentiation of the Iranian population, the dynamics of poverty and inequality indicators.

The Iranian revolution of 1979, which changed the course of the historical development of Iran as the world's oldest monarchical regime, was civilizational by nature. It replaced the secular nature of the shah's regime with a religious one and brought the clergy to power. The Iranian revolution set goals: social justice, freedom, democracy and independence from the influence of great powers. These goals were supported by the majority of the Iranian population, regardless of ethnic and religious affiliation. The main thing that attracted the country's population was the achievement of social justice and raising the living standards of the poorest segments of the population. The Islamic principle of justice explained the need to nationalize large property after the revolution in favor of the entire Ummah.

The Islamic regime retained its pre-revolutionary social security system, but made significant adjustments to it. Currently, the entire population of Iran is covered by the social insurance system. The pension scheme provides living standard above the poverty line. To strengthen the authority of the power and stability, social assistance is also provided through Islamic organizations. These are, first of all, Islamic foundations created after the revolution, waqfs and public charitable organizations. The preservation of public confidence in the Islamic form of government largely depends on the effectiveness of social policy, the researcher emphasizes.