

PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASSUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

2021.04.001. KSENIA ATAMALI. INTRA-ISLAMIC CONTRADICTIONS IN THE UMMAH OF CRIMEA AND ETHNOPOLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS IN THE CONTEXT OF EXTERNAL INFLUENCE // *Condensed abstract was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

Keywords: Crimean Tatars, deportation of Crimean Tatars, Turkish elite, Muslims, Turkey, Arab East, ethnopolitical mobilization, Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, political subjectivity, symbolic politics, Neo-Ottomanism.

Ksenia Atamali,
Asia and Africa Department member,
INION RAN

Citation: Atamali K. Intra-islamic contradictions in the ummah of Crimea and ethnopolitical mobilization of the Crimean Tatars in the context of external influence // *Russia and the Moslem World*, 2021, № 4 (314), P. 24–30. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2021.04.02

1. Bibishev Dzhemil Sh. Intra-Islamic Contradictions in the Muslim Ummah of Crimea as a Factor of External Influence of Foreign Clerical Centers* // *Pozitivnyj Opyt Regulirovaniya*

* Translation of the title is presented in author's version.

Etnosocialnyh i Etnokulturnyh Processov v Regionah Rossijskoj Federacii, Kazan, 2020. P. 15–19.

2. Grigoryan D.K., Kondratenko E.N., Faraponova T.K. Ethnopolitical Mobilization of Crimea Tatars in the Context of Interests of the Turkish Elite* // *Gosudarstvennoe i Municipalnoe Upravlenie. Uchenye Zapiski*, 2020, № 2. P. 178–182.

D.Sh. Bibishev [1], former Deputy Mufti of Crimea and a religious analyst, examines intra-Islamic contradictions that emerged at the start of the revival of Islam in Crimea in the 1990s, following mass return of the Crimean Tatar people from the places of deportation. In their homeland, the Crimean Tatars found themselves separated from their religious roots due to the almost 50-year exile under the regime of state atheism. The issue of revival of religion and the study of history and culture, inseparable from Islamic traditions, was especially relevant. In the beginning the repatriates had no own financial, religious and human resources, making the construction of mosques and the revival of Islamic institutions in Crimea impossible. Therefore, the Crimean Muslims turned towards Muslim states, primarily Turkey and the Arab East, which were eager to respond to requests for help. This resulted in an unspoken rivalry between the Turkish and Arab clerical centres. In the end, different religious doctrines contributed to revival of the Ummah of Crimea, but in no way helped revive the model of Islam that is traditional for the Crimean Tatars.

The author notes that over time three main ideologically different and competing religious structures have been formed within the Muslim community of Crimea: traditional 'Crimean Islam', orthodox fundamental Islam and politically-orientated Islam. The Religious Administration of Muslims of Crimea (RAMC) that takes guidance from the state and public religious centres in Turkey falls into the first category; Muslim Salafi

* Translation of the title is presented in author's version.

communities adhering to the pro-Arab model of Islam are qualified as fundamentalist; and the representatives of the religious and political party Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) are focused on building a Muslim model of society. These religious organizations and movements had confrontational relations and no communication. Each institution rejected ideologies they classified as "non-traditional" for Crimea. Muslim leaders believe that this led to radicalization of part of Muslims and departure from the traditions of tolerant Sunni Islam. The existing administration of the Ummah of Crimea faced heavy competition from parallel spiritual administrations and centres on the basis of "independent" Muslim communities.

The author points to the fact that the clash of interests between the RAMC and various Islamic movements gave rise to conflicts in the Muslim community of Crimea. Clashes took place mainly over the control of Crimean mosques. For instance, in 2007–2008 there were some clashes between the RAMC and the representatives of the Ahbash movement – alumni of the Kiev Islamic University under the Religious Administration of Muslims of Ukraine (RAMU), headed by Mufti of Muslims of Ukraine Sheikh Ahmad Tamim. Similar incidents occurred in 2008–2009 in several Crimean mosques following the RAMC statement about the expansion of influence of the HT party members on the Crimean mosques.

The author concludes that the conflicts were said to have been fuelled by almost ineffective RAMC propaganda, which can be explained by the RAMC dependence on foreign Muslim states and funds. Moreover, the lack of a standard of Islamic education in Crimea consistent with local traditions resulted in a divided Muslim Ummah. Following the change in the political and legal status of Crimea, the activities of a part of the Muslim Ummah conflicted with the legislation of the Russian Federation; representatives of religious groups banned in Russia were prosecuted. Since 2014 Islamic education has been provided in accordance with the system of spiritual education adopted in

Russia, i.e. Crimean Tatars now study at the Russian Islamic University in Kazan. Thus, the period of intra-Islamic Contradictions in Crimea has ended.

D.K. Grigoryan, E.N. Kondratenko and T.K. Faraponova [2] from the Department of Political Science and Ethnopolitics of the South-Russia Institute of Management (branch of Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration) consider the main factors of the ethnopolitical mobilization of the Crimean Tatars and the role of the Turkish elite in this process. The authors note that the term “ethnopolitical mobilization” was coined in the 1970s, when the German sociologist K. Deutsch conceptualized “social mobilization”, singling out the ethnic factor as an important aspect. Deutsch lists social and economic modernization, national self-determination and political democracy as factors that give rise to a mobilized state of ethnicity. Researcher Milton Esman defined ethnopolitical mobilization as a process by which an ethnic community becomes politically active, i.e. ready to defend its resources, demand public benefits, and formulate its own policy. Historian and ethnologist M.N. Guboglo believes that mobilized ethnicity has a common political purpose. Ethnopolitical mobilization includes social mobilization, politicization and identification of ethnicity.

The authors note that the development of society is impossible without ethnopolitical mobilization. In Russia, this process is most intensive in the republics and, in particular, in the Republic of Crimea due to its multi-ethnicity. The Turkish political elite, among others, seeks to influence ethnopolitical mobilization in Crimea due to shared history and social, cultural and economic ties. By expanding its influence on the strategically important peninsula, Turkey is strengthening its own positions in the Black Sea region.

There are a number of factors for ethnopolitical mobilization of the Crimean Tatars. The first factor is the cohesion of the ethnic group and the formation of an ethno-national coalition. The Turkish elite keeps reminding the

Crimean Tatars that the Crimean Khanate was once under the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey will always protect their interests. The second factor is the recognition of an ethnos as a political subject, which started in 1991 with the establishing of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people. The Mejlis sought the autonomy of Crimea within Ukraine, but opposed its integration into Russia. The Turkish elite widely supports the Mejlis, which is recognized as an extremist organization and was outlawed by Russia in 2016. After that, an interregional public movement of the Crimean Tatar people "Qırım" ("Crimea") was formed, which was recognized by the regional authorities as the legal representative of the Crimean Tatar people.

The authors point out that social and economic factors play a significant role, for they include a decline in production, unemployment, increase in inequality, etc. When certain ethnic groups fail to get access to economic benefits, the protest potential of ethnicity surges. Unemployment makes ethnic groups fight for their rights at the political level, and ethnic protest could escalate into an interethnic conflict. In the 1990s there was practically no infrastructure in Crimea, and complicated social and economic situation triggered consolidation of ethnic interests of the Crimean Tatars, encouraging them to fight for their rights by establishing the Mejlis.

The social and cultural factors (historical memory, religion, ideology, law and other cultural characteristics of a particular ethnic group) are an integral part of ethno-political mobilization. It is with the help of cultural values that ethnic mobilization begins. First, historical memory and religious norms help explain some special mission of a particular ethnic group, and an idea of the chosenness of ethnicity takes root. This idea unites the ethnic group, and with the addition of the political aspect it evolves into a fully-fledged ideology. Then, the most active individuals become political subjects, voicing the interests of their nation. Thus, this process becomes ethno-political mobilization.

The authors note that the Turkish elite makes use of the social and cultural factor within the framework of the ideology of Neo-Ottomanism aiming at expanding Turkish influence within the former territories of the Ottoman Empire. Neo-Ottomanism is based on Pan-Turkism, which implies the unification of all Turkic peoples. Crimean Tatars are Turkic ethnic group and share history with the Turks, giving the Turkish elite ample opportunities to influence the Crimean Tatars. The Turkish elite also fosters anti-Russian and nationalist sentiments in Crimea.

The authors emphasize the importance of symbolic politics. A political symbol is a sign of some kind that fulfils a communicative function by establishing a connection between the authorities and individuals. With the help of political symbols, those in power influence society, consolidate it and manipulate public consciousness. A political symbol can be a flag, anthem, slogan, memorable date, a particular individual, etc.

Political symbolism performs a number of essential functions:

- Integrative function, i.e. blurring the boundaries between social groups and the ruling elite, facilitating social mobilization;
- Regulatory function, i.e. influencing political behaviour of people in order to stabilize or destabilize the situation.

The authors note that national and ethnic symbols can become political. For example, one of the ethnic symbols of the Crimean Tatars is the historical fact of deportation, and nationalist and separatist movements build on this fact (May 18 was established as the “Day of Remembrance of the victims of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars”). Since the integration of Crimea into Russia, new holidays and memorable dates have appeared, e.g. “Day of Reunification of Crimea with Russia” is a holiday celebrated on March 18. The Russian political elite supports the Crimean Tatar identity and strives to erase the fact of deportation from the national memory of the Crimean Tatars.

The authors note that national movements sometimes even create new symbols to make sure there is no deficit of ethnic

symbols. Although national and ethnic symbols can influence shaping of ethnic and national consciousness, their transformation is rather difficult. Also, artificially created symbols are often unable to replace deep-rooted symbolism.

The authors conclude that today the level of ethnopolitical mobilization of the Crimean Tatars is quite high. Crimean Tatars are integrating into Russian society, but at the same time they retain their identity and are a political subject. Turkey influences the Crimean Tatars at the cultural and ideological level, seeking to increase interethnic conflict in Crimea, and thereby expand Turkish sphere of influence. By providing assistance to the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, the Turkish elite destabilizes political situation in Crimea. This, in turn, may destabilize domestic political situation in Russia, thus facilitating Turkey to enhance its own status in the Black Sea region.

SVETLANA AKKIEVA. CONFLICTOGENIC FACTORS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROCESSES IN KABARDINO-BALKARIA // *Article was written for the bulletin "Russia and the Moslem World."*

Keywords: the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, public organizations, funeral rites, COVID-19, extremism, repatriation, land disputes, celebration of the accession of Balkaria to Russia.

Svetlana Akkueva,

DSc(Hist.), Leading Research Associate,
Kabardino-Balkarian Scientific Center of the RAS

Citation: Akkueva S. Conflictogenic factors of social and political processes in Kabardino-Balkaria // *Russia and the Moslem World*, 2021, № 4 (314), P. 30–45. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2021.04.01