

The interest of readers of the *As-Salam* newspaper in politics in general is accompanied by low rates of interest in Islamic political activity. Based on this study and earlier researches conducted by the author, it could be concluded that faithful choose to see religion not as a political force, but as a spiritual guidance that supports them throughout their lives.

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VALENTINA SCHENSNOVICH. THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN INTERFAITH RELATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF BASHKORTOSTAN. *Analytical review*.

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Abstract. 160 nationalities and ethnic groups live in the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic Republic of Bashkortostan. There are about 20 different religions and religious groups represented there. Islam and Orthodoxy are the most numerous, their associations make up more than 90 percent of all religious organizations. The articles on the basis of sociological surveys consider interfaith relations in the republic, positive and negative trends in their development.

Introduction

The Republic of Bashkortostan is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious subject of the Russian Federation. According to the 2010 Russian Census, 160 nationalities and ethnic groups live in Bashkiria. The most numerous are: Russians (36.0 percent), Bashkirs (28.8 percent), Tatars (24.8 percent), Chuvash (2.7 percent), Mari (2.6 percent), Ukrainians (1 percent), as well as Mordovians, Udmurts, Belarusians, Germans, Latvians, Jews. About 20 different religions, denominations and religious groups are represented in the republic. The largest ones are Islam and Orthodoxy. Their associations make up more than 90 percent of the total number of religious organizations: about 70 percent are Muslim, 20 percent are Orthodox. Protestant formations (Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Mormons, etc.) and other beliefs (Old

Believers, Buddhism, heathen beliefs) – about 10 percent. In the articles researchers refer to interfaith relations in the republic.

Believers of the Republic of Bashkortostan

Doctor of Political Sciences R.M. Mukhametzyanova-Duggal, chief researcher at the Institute of Ethnological Studies of R.G. Kuzeev (Bashkiria, Ufa) [1] analyzes the ethnic composition, attitude of members of Orthodox and Muslim religious organizations of Bashkortostan to traditional faiths and new religious movements (NRM). The article presents the results of a survey of the republic's believers on ethnic composition and identity; a comparative analysis of the characteristics of active members of the Orthodox and Muslim communities of Bashkortostan associated with interfaith relations is given.

Surveys of believers carried out by the IES USC RAS in 2017 and in 2019 contained questions regarding the ethnodemographic composition of respondents [gender, age, education, marital status, nationality, employment, volume and structure of family income, national identity (nationality of the respondent, his/her spouse, mother, father, etc.)], religious behavior and religious consciousness (including religious education), religious tolerance, the influence of religious organizations on various aspects of public life. Surveys were conducted in the city of Ufa (128 people) and in small towns and settlements of the republic – Buzdyak, Davlekanovo, Neftekamsk (49 people).

The selection criteria for the sample representing the “core of believers” of the Orthodox and Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan were 5 indicators of religious behavior - visiting a church / mosque, confession and communion, reading the Gospel / Quran, prayer, fast.

Islam and Orthodoxy are leading faiths, their associations make up 90 percent of the total number of religious organizations: about 71 percent are Muslim, 19 percent are

Orthodox. (Protestant formations (Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals, Mormons, etc.) and other beliefs (Old Believers, Buddhism, heathen beliefs) - about 10 percent.) As a result of the processing of personal data, the following ethnic composition of respondents was obtained: Muslims - Tatars 52.8 percent, Bashkirs - 37.5 percent, Russians - 0.9 percent, Orthodox - Russians 80.8 percent, Tatars - 8.2 percent, Bashkirs - 1.4 percent.

Thus, among Muslims, the most numerous groups are Tatars and Bashkirs, among Orthodox - Russians and representatives of other nationalities. Gender composition: Muslim believers, mainly men - 87.5 percent of respondents, Muslim women - 12.5 percent; Orthodox believers, on the contrary, are dominated by women - 69.8 percent of respondents, men make up 30.1 percent.

Religious identity among Muslims ranks foremost (80.8 percent). The same place is occupied by confessional identity among the Orthodox - 78 percent consider themselves Christians. The second after confessional is family identity - 13.7 percent among Orthodox, 45.2 percent among Muslims. Civil identity is in third place among the Orthodox - 32.9 percent, among Muslims - ethnic one - 28.8 percent. The fourth place among Orthodox respondents is dedicated to professional identity - 24.6 percent, among Muslims - civil (31.7 percent). The fifth place among the Orthodox is occupied by ethnic identification (34.2 percent), among Muslims - professional (38.5 percent).

The answers of believers in Bashkortostan showed that the unifying principles for Muslims are: religion - 42.3 percent, traditions and customs - 41.3 percent, common land - 31.7 percent, language - 23 percent, mentality - 21.2 percent, history - 14.4 percent, political views - 5.8 percent, good - 1.9 percent, family ties and state protection - 0.9 percent. For the Orthodox, the unifying principles are: traditions and customs - 38.4 percent, common land - 35.6 percent, religion - 34.2 percent, history - 27.4 percent, language - 15.1 percent, mentality - 10.9 percent, political views - 1.4 percent, good - 1.4 percent. The

author points out that 89.1 percent of Muslims and 84.6 percent of Orthodox Christians do not have a negative attitude towards traditional religions, 8.9 percent of Muslims and 15 percent of Orthodox Christians demonstrate it.

According to respondents, the most acute problems in Bashkortostan are socio-economic ones: drop of morality is in the first place for both Muslims (56.7 percent) and Orthodox (69.8 percent), in the second - corruption (55.8 percent among Muslims and 41 percent among Orthodox), in the third - economic difficulties (43.3 percent among Muslims, 32.9 percent among Orthodox). In fourth place among Muslims - religious extremism, among Orthodox - interethnic relations. The problem of interfaith relations among Muslims is in eighth place (0.9 percent), among Orthodox - in sixth (9.6 percent).

Muslims put negative value upon the diversity of brands in Islam - half of the respondents (49 percent), almost the same number of those who found it difficult to answer or are neutral (44.3 percent), a small number of respondents have a positive attitude (5.8 percent). The attitude of the Orthodox to other denominations of Christianity (Protestantism and Catholicism) is largely neutral - 54.1 percent, positive - 21.2 percent, negative - 16.4 percent, and 5.4 percent were undecided.

The research results demonstrate a negative attitude towards new religious movements - neopagan, eastern and mystical religious sects (MRS) in more than half of the respondents: 65.3 percent in Muslims and 67.1 percent in Orthodox. 18.3 percent of Muslims and 16.4 percent of Orthodox people are neutral to MRS. Muslims have 2 times more positive attitudes towards MRS (2.9 percent) than Orthodox (1.4 percent). The data obtained by the IES USC RAS indicate the importance of traditional religions; religious needs and feelings are expressed in institutionalized Russian religions. They correlate with the results of sociological studies of the state of interethnic and interfaith relations conducted annually by the Center for Humanitarian Studies of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of

Bashkortostan (CHS MC RB). According to the Center, relations between representatives of various religions in the republic were estimated as positive by the majority of respondents – 91.1 percent in 2017 and 90.2 percent in 2018.

In the article of A.N. Klyashev, Candidate of Historical Sciences, and R.R. Mukhamadeeva, Associate Researcher of the Institute of Economics of the IES USC RAS [2], there were identified the main trends in the choice of religious identity among regular members of religious communities of the Republic of Bashkortostan living in various types of settlements.

The research results demonstrate that the largest group among Muslim respondents are believers who came to Islam on their own, with 34.2 percent and 48 percent in 2017 and 2019, respectively; those whose adoption of Islam was influenced by parents – 22.8 percent and 24 percent and friends – 21.5 percent and 8 percent, relatives contributed to the coming to faith – according to 16.5 percent and 16 percent of respondents.

The role of spouses and personally unfamiliar Muslims is insignificant – respondents who became Muslims with their assistance, 2.5 percent and 4 percent, respectively, in 2017 and 2019. Thus, relatives play a significant role in the process of adopting Islam (including parents and spouses – 41.8 percent); personal existential searches are in second place (34.2 percent), friends are in third place (21.5 percent). 69.6 percent of Muslims surveyed in 2017 and 70 percent in 2019 believe that they have always been Muslims – 22.8 percent (2017) and 20.0 percent (2019), former atheists account for 5.1 percent (2017) and 4.0 percent (2019). The large contribution of relatives (including parents and spouses – 41.8) to the adoption of Islam and the significant number of respondents who identified themselves as believers who have always professed Islam (69.6 percent), according to researchers, testifies to the significant role in the religious choice of permanent members of Muslim religious communities in Bashkortostan primary agents of socialization – parents, under whose direct influence the adoption of social

norms and attitudes of religion takes place. Religious mobility as a change during the life of an individual of one religion to another under the influence of various factors (intra and non-family) is less characteristic among representatives of the "religious core." Islam is an ethno-confessional marker, in the opinion of the authors, it is referred to a deeper involvement in the implementation of religious practices. This conclusion is confirmed by data on the ethnic composition of Muslims of the Republic of Belarus: Tatars 57.0 percent, Bashkirs 30.4 percent, Russians 1.3 percent (1 respondent), another nationality 8.9 percent, no options 2.5 percent. 87.4 percent are Turkic-speaking respondents – Tatars and Bashkirs, considered by ethnological science as carriers of Islam. 34.2 percent of respondents who came to Islam on their own turned in their existential searches to the traditional (Tatar or Bashkir) denomination for their ethnic group.

The results of studies of regular members of Orthodox religious organizations in the territory of the Republic of Belarus revealed that relatives play the greatest role in the process of their adoption of Orthodoxy (including parents and spouses – 42.8 percent in 2017 and 62.5 percent in 2019); personal existential searches are in second place (34.2 percent in 2017 and 29.2 percent in 2019), friends are in third place (approximately 12 percent each in 2017, 2019). 53.1 percent of respondents have always been Orthodox Christians in 2017 and 78.3 percent in 2019, they believe that they have always been Orthodox – 28.6 percent of believers, former Muslims and atheists account for 6.1 percent, former Protestants – 4.1 percent.

From the point of view of researchers, Orthodoxy, like Islam, is also (although to a bit lesser extent) an ethno-confessional marker for Russians, of which 81.6 percent (Tatars 12.2 percent, Mordovians 4.1 percent, Bashkirs 2.0 percent) – the number of respondents who identified themselves as believers who have always professed Orthodoxy is 53.1 percent (among Muslims – 69.6 percent). In this case, according to the authors,

this is mainly about deep involvement in the implementation of religious practices. At the same time, a slightly larger percentage of Orthodox respondents who previously practiced Islam, Protestantism and were atheists, testifies that the adoption of the Orthodox direction of Christianity is largely the result of transformations of religious identity.

According to the research of the Institute for Socio-Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ISPS RAS) 2004-2012, the structure of the religious population of Russia consists of the following subgroups: the "core of believers," which most fully carry out religious practices in their lives (including those visiting the temple/mosque once a month and more often), the number of "core of believers" is 10-15 percent of the population, of which Orthodox less than 10 percent, the rest are Muslims and representatives of other faiths. Around the "core" there are 30-35 percent of believers identified as "periphery," of which 30 percent are Orthodox, they exercise their rights to religious freedom to a somewhat lesser extent, however, they believe that religion plays an important role in their lives. The rest of the group of respondents can be defined as "cultural Orthodox and Muslims" - for them, religious identity is an ethnocultural marker, and religious values are not identifying in life. The materials of the IES USC RAS concern respondents who make up the "core of believers" who most fully implement religious practices in their lives. 93.7 percent of respondents are Muslims and 69.4 percent of Orthodox people visit mosques and churches weekly and more often, 5.1 percent of Muslims and 22.4 percent of Orthodox people - once a month and more often.

The data provided in the article allow us to draw preliminary conclusions regarding the main trends in the choice of religious identity among carriers of Islam, Orthodoxy and Protestantism in the Republic of Bashkortostan: - for Muslims, coming to Islam in most cases it means deeper involvement in the implementation of religious practices (transition from the category of "cultural" or "peripheral" Muslims to the "core"), as

well as conversion in their existential searches to the traditional for their ethnic group (Tatar or Bashkir) denomination; – for the Orthodox, there is also a predominantly transition from the category of “cultural” or “peripheral” Orthodox to the “core,” however, a significant percentage of Orthodox respondents who were previously Muslims, Protestants and atheists indicate that the adoption of Orthodoxy to a greater extent than the adoption of Islam, is the result of transformations of religious identity. The religious choice among both Muslims and Orthodox is primarily determined by the primary agents of socialization - by mother and father, as well as first-degree relatives. The primary choice of religion by a individual is conscious and not conscious. Secondary religious choice can occur under the influence of various internal and non-family factors, but may not occur throughout the life of an individual; - the religious identity of an individual in the 20 century was a choice (or lack of conscious choice) of religion once and for life; - the religious identity of an individual in the 21 century as a result of globalization, the mobility of social groups sometimes represents a set of religious choices, which requires further religious studies.

R.M. Mukhametzyanova-Duggal and R.R. Mukhamadeeva [3] on the basis of sociological data analyze value and moral ideas about the role of religion in the life of believers of the Republic of Bashkortostan, consider state-confessional relations, spheres of cooperation of religious organizations with the state, as well as the problem of missionary. The authors rely on the materials of a study organized and conducted by the Department of Religious Studies of the IES USC RAS in 2020-2021. The article shows the results of a survey of believers of the Republic of Bashkortostan (active members of religious organizations), summarizes ideas about the role of religion, gives an assessment of state-confessional relations; a comparative analysis of opinions on these issues among representatives of Orthodox and Muslim communities of the Republic of Bashkortostan was also carried out.

Islam in the republic is practiced by the two largest ethnic groups – Bashkirs and Tatars, Orthodoxy is mainly adhered to by Russians. The selection criteria representing the “core of believers” of the Orthodox and Muslims of Bashkortostan were five indicators of religious behavior: visiting a temple / church; confession and communion; reading the Gospel / Quran; prayer; fast.

Researchers note that the principle of secularism, general approaches to understanding the optimal model of state confessional policy continue to be at the center of modern scientific and public discussions. According to surveys of active members of religious associations, the overwhelming majority of believers (Muslims – 82.3 percent, Orthodox – 71.0 percent) recognize that cooperation between religious organizations and the state in various fields would be desirable. More than half of the respondents (59.8 percent of Muslims and 50.6 percent of Orthodox) believe that religious organizations should influence government decision-making. At the same time, among the “core of believers” there are also supporters of the principle of secularism, who believe that religious organizations should work only in the field of meeting the religious needs of (believers) people (40.7 percent of Muslims, 40.0 percent of Orthodox) or should not interfere in public life at all (13.7 percent of Muslims, 14.8 percent of Orthodox).

The aspects given in the article on the scale of the Russian population, divided into 4 groups (followers of Orthodoxy, Islam, non-denominational religious persons and atheists), were studied as part of an all-Russian survey by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 2014–2015. According to the results of this survey, 30 percent of Russians (28 percent Orthodox, 24 percent Muslims, 46 percent non-denominational believers, 42 percent atheists) are supporters of the principle of secularism. Among the areas in which the activities of religious organizations could be the most positive, the believers of Bashkortostan put the spiritual and moral education of people, as well as mercy and charity in the first place; in third place: among Muslims – the

resolution of interethnic disagreements, among Orthodox – the preservation of cultural heritage; on the fourth: among Muslims – preservation of cultural heritage and education, among Orthodox – education. The scale of priorities in determining the areas of positive activity of religious organizations among Muslims and Orthodox practically coincides.

As for the assessment by believers of the republic of state confessional policy at the federal level, the answers demonstrate that more than half of the respondents of both Muslims (65.5 percent) and Orthodox (52.2 percent) consider it positive, neutral or tolerant. The study also examined the problem of missionary and proselytism as an activity to spread and convert to one religion or another, including in regions where this religion is not traditional for people. According to 56 percent of believers – regular members of religious organizations, there should be no obstacles to the spread of the religious worldview, and the worldview choice is a personal matter of everyone, while both Muslims and Orthodox agree in answering this question. At the same time, 14 percent of respondents adhere to the point of view that the spread of non-traditional religions is associated with increased conflict. Both Muslims – 15.3 percent and Orthodox – 11.8 percent demonstrate concern about this problem.

Civilizational priorities when choosing a country's development strategy reflect answers to questions from a couple of judgments: "Russia is a special civilization, it will never implant a Western way of life" and "Russia must live by the same rules as modern Western countries." The perception of Russia as a special civilization is typical for 82.6 percent of Orthodox and 62 percent of Muslims, only 5.6 percent of Orthodox and 10.9 percent of Muslims support the idea that the Russian Federation should follow the rules of Western countries. A study by the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences emphasizes that from 2005–2015 two-thirds of Russians demonstrate their perception of Russia as a special civilization. These findings testify to an important role for universal values,

shared history and historical memory, shared traditions and value landmarks. The latter include love for the native country, land, family, peaceful and good relations with neighbors. In multi-ethnic and multi-religious Bashkortostan, such ideas reduce the risks of conflicts on religious grounds and social tensions.

The noted trends are confirmed by the results of studies conducted in Bashkortostan by the Department of Religious Studies of the IES USC RAS on interfaith relations. According to them, the overwhelming number of Muslim respondents (89.1 percent) and 84.6 percent of Orthodox respondents do not have a negative attitude towards traditional religions. The presence of conflict potential is demonstrated by 8.9 percent of Muslims and 15 percent of Orthodox. Answering the question: "What are the most acute problems in the Republic of Bashkortostan, in your opinion?" the respondents mainly noted socio-economic problems: a drop of morality, corruption and economic difficulties.

Thus, the results of the polls reflect the following trends: religious associations of Bashkortostan are striving to influence various spheres of public life of citizens; active believers determine socially significant areas of activity of religious institutions - this is spiritual and moral education of people, mercy and charity, the cultural sector and preservation of cultural heritage, as well as education. At the same time, a significant part of believers supports the principle of secularism and, in general, positively assesses the state's policy towards religious associations. The perception of Russia as a special civilization reflects the belief in the unity of the multicultural space of the republic, based on universal values, common history and historical memory, common traditions and values within the updated National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, approved in July 2021, where, among the priorities, in addition to the need to improve the defense potential and development of the country's economy, special emphasis is placed on the importance of preserving and protecting traditional Russian spiritual and moral values, culture and historical memory.

Religious organizations of Bashkortostan

The article by R.R. Mukhamadeeva [4] examines the dynamics of registration of religious organizations of the Republic of Bashkortostan (according to the Ministry of Justice of Russia), as well as the ratio of religious organizations by type of denomination, belonging to the administration of Muslims, the eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, type of settlement, districts and cities of the Republic of Belarus, districts of Ufa in the total composition of all religious organizations registered on the territory of the republic.

The research results given in the article demonstrate that a fifth of religious organizations registered today in the Republic of Bashkortostan officially registered their activities in 2003; Muslim religious organizations made up 72.3 percent of all registered ones; the predominance of Muslim religious organizations among other religious organizations annually registered in the republic remains. The overwhelming number of Orthodox religious organizations belongs to the ROC MP, among Protestant religious organizations of Pentecostal more than half about 61 percent (60.5 percent).

During the work, data from the website of the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, in particular, the information portal on the activities of non-profit organizations, were used. The obtained information formed the basis of the database of religious organizations of the Republic of Bashkortostan created with the participation of the author of the article, registered from May 7, 1999 to September 23, 2019, reflecting the information according to the following criteria: 1. Confessional affiliation of a religious organization: Islam, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Catholicism. 2. Spiritual Administration of Muslims: Central Spiritual Administration of Russia (CSAR), Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Republic of Bashkortostan (SAM RB). 3. Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church: Ufa, Salavat, Neftekamsk, Birsik. 4. Type of Protestant religious

organization: conservative, late, Pentecostal. 5. Type of settlement: city, rural community, village, urban- village, closed administrative-territorial entity (CATE). 6. Cities of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

As of 23.09.2019, 1,683 religious organizations are registered in the Republic of Belarus. The author states that a fifth of the religious organizations registered today in the republic formalized their own activities in 2003. One of the reasons for this phenomenon was the enactment of the Law "On State Registration of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs" on July 1, 2002, which changed the procedure for registering companies. Almost 60 percent (58.7 percent) of religious organizations registered in 2003 were Muslim religious organizations, 31.4 percent were Orthodox, and about 10 percent were Protestant. In subsequent years, the predominance of Muslim religious organizations among religious organizations annually registered in Bashkortostan remained. The statistics of the Ministry of Justice correlate with the data of sociological studies, during which it was revealed that most of the population of the republic shares Islam.

In general, Muslim religious organizations, then Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic ones, occupy a leading position in the structure of all religious associations registered in the Republic of Bashkortostan. Muslim religious organizations made up 72.3 percent of all registered religious organizations, 41.7 percent belong to the CSA of the Russian Federation, 56.3 percent to the SAM of the Republic of Bashkortostan.

The author considers the dynamics of registration of religious organizations in the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Bashkortostan from 1999 to 2019. According to sociological monitoring data, about 42 percent of all religious organizations registered in the cities of the Republic of Bashkortostan are in Ufa, 8 percent in Sterlitamak, 6 percent in the cities of Neftekamsk and Oktyabrsky, other cities amounted to less than 5 percent. Of all religious organizations registered in

the regions of the Republic of Bashkortostan, the majority is located in the territories of Baymak (4.6 percent), Abzelilovsky (3.9 percent), Tuymazinsky (3.5 percent), Karmaskalinsky (3.1 percent), Ufa (3.0 percent) districts; the least of all registered - in the Kiginsky and Mishkinsky districts (0.6 percent).

Information on the dynamics and structure of religious organizations is the basis for understanding religious organizations as a social phenomenon, they are necessary for the interaction of state authorities and religious organizations, building a concept for the development of religious organizations in the Republic of Bashkortostan, as well as understanding the problems and causes of the activities carried out by religious organizations.

State-confessional policy of the Republic of Bashkortostan

In the article of the adviser on state-confessional relations under the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan, senior teacher of the Bashkir State University R.D. Karamyshev [5], the mechanism of the state-confessional policy implementation of the republic is considered. As of 01.01.2020, it has 14 religious centers, 2,050 religious associations of various faiths, including 1,686 religious organizations and 364 religious groups. On the territory of Bashkortostan there are 1,433 Muslim religious associations that are divided between two spiritual centers: the CSGM of Russia, headed by the Supreme Mufti Talgat Tajuddin, unites 644 communities and the SAM of the Republic of Bashkortostan (mufti Ainur Birgalin) includes 789 communities. On the territory of the republic there are 1,057 standard mosques and 181 buildings adapted for mosques, 228 standard Orthodox churches and 92 buildings adapted for churches, 45 religious buildings and adapted places of other faiths. In total, without taking into account small single groups, there are 20 different religious directions in Bashkortostan.

State-confessional relations (SCR) in modern Russia suppose the presence of relations between state (federal and government bodies of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation) and municipal institutions (local self-government bodies), ministries and departments with believers and their religious associations. As the author notes, state-confessional relations still do not have a single concept, despite numerous attempts to develop it. From a legal perspective, the model of SCR in Russia can be defined as a separation, i.e. religion is separated from the state. But, being an important regulator of public relations, religion cannot be separated from society and, from the point of view of modern political realities, the model of SCR in Russia is increasingly approaching the model of cooperation. The state today considers religious associations loyal to it, as its allies and colleagues, in the implementation of social and domestic policy, including: in organizing and supporting positive social action, working with the poor and needy, young people, military personnel and those deprived of their liberty, in preventing and combating negative social phenomena (alcoholism, drug addiction, crime), as well as extremism, terrorism and radicalism in a religious environment.

The main goals of modern state-confessional policy in the republic are: - compliance with federal and republican legislation on freedom of conscience and religious associations; - organization of the necessary interaction of state authorities and local self-government with religious associations, development of state-confessional cooperation; - preservation of interfaith peace and harmony, harmonization of interfaith relations.

At the present time, the state continues to play the greatest role in the confessional sphere of Bashkortostan through the implemented domestic policy. Issues of the implementation of state-confessional policy are addressed by the Council on State-Confessional Relations under the Head of the Republic of Bashkortostan. Among the main tasks of the Council: strengthening interfaith harmony; formation of equal attitude of

state bodies and officials towards religious organizations of different faiths; organization of methodological and advisory assistance on SCR issues to state authorities, local self-government and religious associations. One of the main activities of the Council is to increase the efficiency of state policy in the field of SCR and expand interaction with religious associations. The tasks of the Council are also: conducting systematic work with the clergy, providing assistance in the development of religious education, participation in advanced studies courses for state and municipal employees on improving the SCR, support for religious and social media covering the history, culture and activities of religious associations, supporting specialized scientific research, countering the manifestations of extremism, terrorism and the spread of radical ideologies in the religious environment on the territory of the republic. The Council constantly analyzes and monitors the religious situation in Bashkortostan, participates in the organization of interdepartmental interaction. In framework of implementation of the state-confessional policy, the Council relies on the Commission on Public-Confessional Relations and interaction with religious associations operating in municipal districts and urban districts (a total of 70 Commissions). The Commissions, along with representatives of faiths, include employees of state authorities, law enforcement agencies, the media, scientific communities, education and culture, enterprises and organizations. The main areas of work of the Commissions are the organization of cooperation between religious associations and believers with the authorities, countering the spread of xenophobia and extremism on religious grounds, prevention, peaceful resolution of conflict situations in the field of intra-denominational and inter-religious relations.

The Council implements a three-level system of religious monitoring and prompt response to confessional conflicts according to the following scheme: Commission - Head of the municipality - Council for the SCR - leadership of the Republic of

Bashkortostan. In addition, the Council pays special attention to gathering information on the religious situation through experts, opinion leaders, the scientific community and other sources, including the results of the FANA monitoring system in the field of interethnic and interfaith relations and early prevention of conflict situations. Interfaith relations still remain in the area of special attention of the state, since these relations can have a significant impact on the state of society, and during periods of their aggravation can be a factor in both stabilization and destabilization of the socio-political situation.

In the Republic of Bashkortostan, interfaith interaction in the field of cooperation with state and local authorities is developing in line with the Agreement on Social Partnership signed in 2015 between the Republic of Bashkortostan and the main faiths, which today are filled with real content. Spiritual leaders of the (main) faiths are given the opportunity to speak regularly on television, republican electronic and print media. The spiritual and educational television projects "Road to the Temple," "Yoma," "Al-Fatiha" are released on the BST TV channel.

The language of interfaith dialogue and cooperation has been developed and supported in the republic. Annual international, all-Russian and republican conferences are held, organized with the active participation of the main faiths: "The Ideals and Values of Islam in the Educational System of the 21st Century" (CSGM of Russia), "Tabyn Readings" (Bashkortostan Metropolitanate of the Russian Orthodox Church) and others. Youth confessional organizations jointly perform in significant social projects. During the period of restrictive anti-epidemiological measures (according to the COVID-19), "Orthodox Volunteers" of the Bashkortostan Metropolitanate of the Russian Orthodox Church, volunteers of the MSA RB and the CSGM of Russia, took part in the republican actions "We are together" and "Our care," and also organized targeted assistance to those in need. In 2019, the project "Development of volunteer

movements of youth departments of the MSA RB and the Ufa Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church” began within the framework of which training seminars and meetings of youth activists are held. In 2020, events were held dedicated to the “Day of Commemoration and Veneration” in the republic. By the forces of volunteer movements of the SAM of the Republic of Bashkortostan and the Bashkortostan Metropolitanate of the Russian Orthodox Church, volunteer clean ups were organized at general and religious cemeteries, special attention was paid to the burials of participants in the Great Patriotic War. At the initiative of the Council, three interfaith youth forums were held in the republic, with the participation of delegations (up to 100 people) of faithful youth (Orthodox, Muslims, Jews). The forums discussed topical issues of the volunteer, sports, military-patriotic movement, the prevention of radicalism and extremism, held competitions, discussions, mutual visits to temples and mosques.

In recent years, there have been carried out interdepartmental lectures on the prevention of extremism and radicalism in the religious environment in the republic on the basis of the Bashkir State Pedagogical University named after M. Akmulla. The work of lecture groups during 2015-2019 annually covered 15-20 municipal districts and cities. The lecture groups were attended by priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, teachers of the Russian Islamic University and imams of the SAM RB and the CSGM of Russia. According to the author of the article, the most effective in the context of maintaining interfaith peace and harmony in the republic are the forms of direct interaction between clergy and believers in various forums, actions, events and everyday life, which must be positively covered in the media and the Internet space. As a result of the analysis and constant monitoring of the religious situation in the republic carried out annually by the Council, it can be stated that there are no tensions in the field of state-confessional and inter-religious relations among residents and clergy of the main faiths

in the republic. This conclusion is confirmed by the results of scientific research in recent years. Scientists record a high level of tolerance and trust among believers of the faiths of the republic (in 2013 – 80 percent of Orthodox and 79.9 percent of Muslims). In 2018, many believers understand the need to live in a common country, the percentage of interethnic marriages is high (20 percent). The absolute majority of the surveyed residents of the republic (91.1 percent) in the course of sociological studies of the GAI “Center for Humanitarian Studies” of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bashkortostan in 2017 assessed relations between representatives of various religions as positive (25.5 percent – friendly, 65.5 percent – normal, conflict-free). In 2018, 90.2 percent of respondents positively assessed interfaith relations, and in 2019 – again 91.1 percent. In 2020, the results of research by the IES USC RAS also demonstrate that the overwhelming number of respondents (Muslims – 89.1 percent, Orthodox – 84.6 percent) do not have a negative attitude towards traditional religions.

The author emphasizes that in interfaith and state-confessional interaction, relations are built largely on the basis of the medium- and long-term development prospects. The very nature of spiritual power exists in longer distances of social time, and the power of hierarchs is usually lifelong. The subjective factor of the relationship between spiritual leaders among themselves and with the officials responsible for the SCR in the region is of great importance in these conditions. That is why the degree of qualifications of employees, their knowledge and skills are significant, special training and continual improvement of competencies are needed.

The implementation of state-confessional policy, the researcher concludes, requires constant attention, serious sociological and analytical work, coordination of the activities of state authorities and various departments, the organization of the necessary interaction with religious associations and continues to

be a fairly dynamic, significant tool for the implementation of domestic policy at the regional and federal levels.

Conclusion

The Republic of Bashkortostan is in line with all-Russian trends, such as the revival of spirituality and respect for historical memory; the recognition by society of the important role of religion in the lives of many people; stabilizing the growth rate of the number of believers and religious communities; increasing the level and importance of general civil identity; close cooperation between the state and religious associations. Research results indicate that the overwhelming number of respondents (89.1 percent of Muslims and 84.6 percent of Orthodox) do not have a negative attitude towards traditional religions. However, the presence of conflict potential is demonstrated by 8.9 percent of Muslims and 15 percent of Orthodox, and this causes some concern. A significant number of respondents (65.3 percent of Muslims and 67.1 percent of Orthodox) have a negative attitude towards new religious movements.

An important role is played by work on the prevention of negative trends, as well as on the further improvement of state-confessional relations. It is necessary, the authors believe, to improve the qualifications in the field of state-confessional and interfaith relations for both believers, clergy, and civil servants, government officials, primarily municipal authority, because they are currently responsible for interethnic and interfaith peace and harmony at local level.

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ELENA DMITRIEVA. THE IMPACT OF THE SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN UKRAINE ON THE GEOPOLITICAL SITUATION IN THE CASPIAN REGION.
Condensed abstract.

Keywords: Russia, security, Caspian region, post-Soviet space, geopolitics, Special military Operation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, national interests, USA.

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