

## THE PROTEST MOVEMENTS OF THE VOLGA TATARS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XIX CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

The topicality of the research problem is caused by the fact that, by studying the protest movements of non-Russian peoples, founded on the opposition to the confessional policy of the state, it is possible to avoid mistakes and to identify ways of solving problems in the sphere of Church-state and interreligious relations. The time under study – the second half of the nineteenth century - was the time of profound transformation of the Tatar ethno-nation. A unique and very valuable experience of peaceful coexistence of Orthodoxy and Islam today is very popular due to the growth of international tensions and conflicts of civilizations. The article is focused on the study of the religious policy of the authorities towards the Muslim Ummah of Tatars of the Volga region and the protest movements of the Tatars in the second half of the XIX century. A leading approach to the study of this problem has become the problem-chronological method of study. The article considers the inter-ethnic and inter-confessional processes in the Volga-Ural region in the second half of the XIX century. A number of the reasons for the falling away of the baptized Tatars to Islam has been studied in the article. The article is written on the basis of documents from the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan and published sources of the XIX century. The article materials may be useful for further development of the research topic and during teaching courses on the history faculties of universities and teaching Native History course in higher and secondary educational institutions of the country.

**Keywords:** *ethno-religious politics, Christianization, Russification, baptized Tatars, Muslims, missionaries.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the era of "great reforms" confessional policy of the government towards the Muslims of the Volga and the Urals regions has not undergone any changes. But the period of counter-reforms caused an infusion of energy for the leaders of the Church. In the sixties of the XIX century in the political circles of Russia there was a spirit of mistrust and suspicion towards the Muslim confession. Gradually anti-Muslim sentiments were increasing. This might have been associated with the Crimean war and, in this regard, with attitude to Turkey, as well as with outbreaks of anti-colonial struggle in Central Asia and in the Caucasus. In periodicals there appeared a series of articles about the danger of Islam, as outside the country and inside. There have been calls for its elimination in Russia. These sentiments were expressed most clearly by the governors of the Eastern regions. For example, the Orenburg Governor-General said: "The diversity of beliefs has a harmful effect on the moral and political life of the people."

He suggested, "to reduce ...the root of all evil, i.e. the diversity of faith." Ufa Governor believed that the main and ultimate goal of the Russian state must be "consistent expansion of the Muslim system of life"

because it is "by its very nature incompatible with the interests of the state and a true civilization." [ 1.134]

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK:**

Theoretical and methodological basis of research are the conceptual provisions of scientific research in the field of studying the problems of policy of state and Orthodox confession in relation to the non-Russian peoples of the Volga and Ural regions in the second half of the XIX century. The problem of separation for the newly-baptized Tatars to Islam is rather a well-studied topic in Russian historiography. Lately it was studied by such researchers as R. R. Iskhakov (Ishakov, 2011), I. K. Zagidullin (Zagidullin, 2014), L. A. Taimasov (Taimasov, 2010). This theme is well reflected in the missionary literature of the XIX century (Mozharovsky(1870), Malov(1872,1892), Mashanov(1892), etc.) Among domestic scientists, who directly examined the legal regulation of religious life in Russia, including the historical-legal aspect, it should be noted such authors, as X. Abdullin, I. Andreevsky, M. F. Vladimirsky-Budanov, I. Nasyrov, A. I. Nagmanov, N. D. Sergeevsky, N. Talberg, M. N. Tikhomirov, Y. N. Shchapov. State-religious and state-Islam relations are analyzed in the works by D. Y. Arapov, R. A. Nabiev, R. G. Landes, G. B. Faizova, D. D. Azamatov. As for foreign researchers, different aspects of the topic are revealed in the works of M. Kemper, Anke von Kugelgen, Alain Franc, Ahmet Kanlidere, Najip Hablemitoglu, Ibrahim Marash, Fanny Benigsen-Brian, Paul Vert, etc.

Recently this problem was investigated in details in the works of I. K. Zagidullin[2] [3], therefore in this study, we'll point out only the main trends and distinctive features of this process, and we'll stop at discussion issue, regarding the date of ending persecution of Tatars that have turned to Islam.

Among the most important methods of historical knowledge, we use the principle of historicism that require consideration of any historical material in its dynamics, identifying as the specific characteristics of each phenomenon and its causing factors, as well as historical - comparative principle that compares the different stages of religious policy in dynamic development. Problem-chronological principle allows us to point out different aspects of Orthodox-Muslim relations and to study them in chronological evolution.

## **RESULTS**

In the mid-sixties, as before, most of the newly-baptized Tatars (1) continued to maintain their Muslim religious identity, and the process of open departure of baptized Tatars to Islam increased again. In 1826, 136 470 of Muslim Tatars lived in the Kazan province, and in 1897 the number of them was 774 627. This five-fold and more (545 %) increase in the number of Muslim Tatars during 70 years, was officially associated, primarily, with the Islamization of the Chuvash, the Finno-Ugric and the baptized Tatar population of the region.[8. 67]

One of the main reasons for the falling away of the baptized Tatars to Islam at this time was a sharp deterioration in the economic situation of state peasants after the reform of 60-s. To this was added: burdensome Church taxes and corruption of Orthodox priests, the weak organization of religious and secular education in newly-baptized parishes, as well as the strong desire of the baptized Tatars themselves to return to the fold of the old faith. According to the Vice-Governor E. Rozov, they were hung by "tribal kinship with the Muslims, the unity of language and the full impact on them of the Muslims." [15. 299 ] A distinctive feature of the falling away of the baptized Tatars in the old belief was that from December, 1865, among baptized Tatar population, the rumors spread quickly that the Tzar has issued a decree on the resolution to the baptized Tatars to return to Islam. In addition, this movement involved not only the newly-baptized Tatars, but the lately-baptized ones.

From all over the province trusted people began to arrive to Kazan, to submit petitions to the Tzar. Petitions were usually composed in the bazaars, on behalf of several villages. After the submission of petitions, baptized Tatars began to live according to Muslim laws and customs openly.

The Muslim clergy and Muslim population of the region carried out active support of the baptized Tatars in this movement. Zagidullin notes that "mainly the newly-baptized Tatars, and only two villages of lately-baptized ones were involved to the movement".[3.67]

In August 1865 the newly-baptized Tartars of the village of Upper Nikitino of Chistopol province, built a mosque but without a minaret without permission from the authorities, and strongly defended the building from government's arbitrariness.[13] Here is what the Vice - Governor E. Rozov writes about this in a Memorandum to the Minister of Internal Affairs: "In the village of Upper Nikitino, Chistopol province, in the month of June, the mosque was sealed by the province police. Currently, when their religious movement in favor of Islam is still going on, to cool the zeal of advocates (in favor of Islam), admonition of backsliders, and in the prevention of further propaganda, in my opinion, you need to refer to administrative-repressive measures, but on the other hand, I think it would be necessary, for the first time, to move out of the province Halim Samigulloviç and Gizatulla Abdushev, the instigators and leaders in the apostasy of the baptized Tatars."[5. 291]

Having received a large number of petitions, the local authorities asked the Department of religious confessions. The instruction has come immediately. It was suggested to the Kazan Governor, "personally" or through trustees, to declare that the baptized Tatars were refused in their requests.[9]

This mission was entrusted to the Vice-Governor Rozov, who, along with Ilminski and translator of the Provincial Board, Prince Davlet - Kildeev were to go round the falling away Tatar villages. Neither repression nor exhortations helped. Only one village, namely Elyshevo of Mamadyshsky district, managed to keep in Orthodoxy, but it has fallen away later.

The authorities made great efforts to stop the process. Among them were: eviction to the Church "according to compel of the province authorities," amplified exhortations, the opening of graves of buried according to Muslim canons, arrests, imprisonment, exile to Siberia, etc. Repressive measures of the authorities had not any positive results. The population refused to testify, refused to give up their Russian names and surnames, bribed the priests to ensure that they did not inform the authorities about the falling away of the baptized. These phenomena have especially spread in the villages, where the baptized lived together with the Muslim population.[12]

Thus, the falling away of the baptized Tatars to Islam suggests, that by the mid-sixties of the XIX century, self-consciousness and unity of the Tatar people have greatly increased, but they were characterized by faith in a good Tzar.

According to the Professor of the Kazan Theological Academy, M. A. Mashanov, "since the sixties Islam raised it head proudly and decided to start the fight against Orthodoxy. The result is a massive falling away of Christians to Islam. Only in Kazan province about 9,000 people has fallen away at that time."[7. 12.] I. K. Zagidullin believes that in the period from 1865 to 1868 about 12 thousand baptized Tatars have fallen away to Islam.

It should be noted that at this time many non-Russian peoples of the Volga region depart from Orthodoxy to Islam. In particular, the Udmurt pagans of villages Buyar, Lower Uraska, Pachinok, Supor, Lower Rus[14], baptized Chuvash of the villages Boinka, Siushevo, Chepkasy, Ilmetyevo, Chikildym, Duvanova, Shimurzino and Three-Boltaevo, the Mari of villages Nizhnyaya Knya of Mamadyshsk

district of the Kazan province and the Mari of various villages of Malmyshky district of Vyatsk province. [16.142.]

The authorities did not stand on ceremony with "fallen away" for a long time. Having accused Muslims for "Islamic proselytism", they organized typical reprisals for the "accomplices of backsliding": "the peasants Elendey Eshmulin, Mahmut Ulendeev, Antip Bikkulova, Abdeen Ablyazov, Alexey Alekseev, Matvey Semenov and Yemelyan Fedotov, should be deprived the rights for property and exiled to hard labor in the fortress for 8 years, for seduction of peasants of New Duvanovo village and surrounding villages, from Orthodoxy to Islam, on the basis of 184, 19, 25 articles of the penal code. For those, who have abandoned from Orthodoxy, to recover the benefits that they have been using for over three years and to recruit." [6.73.]

Documents testify the extraordinary spiritual strength of those Muslims, who have fallen away from Orthodoxy. Both in Siberia, in settlements, and among the lately-baptized Tatars, who were forced to resettle, the Muslims tried to adhere strictly to the canons of their faith. They tried by hook and by crook to enroll their children in Muslim congregations and to marry their daughters with Muslims. One of the most discriminatory laws against those "fallen away" was the law about removal of their children with the subsequent baptism. (Decree of may 29, 1855), At the request of the liberal Minister of State Property P. D. Kisilev and with support of the Minister of Internal Affairs P. A. Valuev, this decree was repealed by Alexander II on June 14, 1861.

## DISCUSSION

As R. R. Iskhakov writes: "It was actually sanctioned by this legislative initiative to stop administrative proceedings of "informal" Muslims. Finally, the cases of the baptized Tatars of the Kazan province, who returned to Islam in 1820-1850-s, were stopped in 1867. All the "unofficial" Muslims, who "have fallen away" until 1864, were excluded from the diocesan registers of Saints, any correspondence about them was stopped." [4.61]

However, this view can not be agreed with. Administrative and repressive methods against the Tatars - Muslims continued in the third quarter of the XIX century until the 90-s. For example, in 1875 the Kazan District Court sentenced two peasants of Upper Otary village of Mamadyzsky district "for abuse to Islam, to hard labor for 6 years, for the transition to the old faith - to deprivation, until return to Christianity, to use the rights of property." [10] In the Kazan province for participation and organization of the movement for the "departure from Orthodoxy" in 1865-1866 the court sentenced to exile in Siberia 31 people, four of them were Muslims. [11]

As for the date of the ending of the prosecution of "fallen away", Zagidullin is right, who writes: "The principal position of returnees to Islam, despite of intimidation, threats of criminal punishment in the conditions of persecution in 1860-1880-s., their boycott of the Orthodox Church institutions and enduring commitment to the Muslim way of life have forced the authorities to reconsider their policy in the 1890s and stop the prosecution and application of criminal punishment." [2.94]

## CONCLUSION

History has shown that Volga Tatars are people more stable in their tradition and culture, than many baptized peoples of the Volga region, such as Chuvashes, Udmurts, Maris, Mordva. Their cultural stability was manifested in all spheres of public life and allowed not only to preserve their national identity and religious affiliation, but also to spread their influence to neighbors, which, in turn, have brought the Tatars to the fore in the struggle of the non-Russian peoples against Christianization and

Russification. The strong commitment of the Tatars to Islam has contributed to the keeping of identity of Tatar culture and Tatar people. Rude and heartless policy of the missionaries and of the Russian government towards the Tatars, has led to the opposite result for the authorities: to more rapid realization by the Tatars of their ethno-religious interests, as well as to acceleration of the process of consolidation of the Tatar ethno-nation.

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(1) *Newly baptized («novokreshenye») Tatars– in pre-revolutionary Russia it was used to call this way the Tatars, whose ancestors accepted Orthodoxy after 1722 .*