

UDC 93/94

A little-known confessional history of Russia: the Baha'i Faith and Ahmadiyya

Aleksandr V. Martynenko

Doctor of History,

Professor,

Mordovia State Pedagogical Institute named after M.E. Evsev'ev,

430007, 11a Studencheskaya st., Saransk, Russian Federation;

e-mail: arkanaddin@mail.ru

Abstract

The article aims to analyse the history and the doctrinal features of the international religious communities of the Baha'is and Ahmadi in the context of their spread in the Russian Federation. The Ahmadi and Baha'is have found its niche in the religious life of many countries and regions. These international movements are believed to develop further, as their main potential consists in many enthusiasts and devotees, supporting and realising the ideas of the Baha'i Faith and Ahmadiyya around the world. The author of the article points out that the majority of Muslims has a negative attitude towards the Baha'is and Ahmadi and identifies the reasons for this situation. The article reveals that these communities have little influence on the confessional situation in Russia. The modest success of the Baha'i Faith and Ahmadiyya in the post-Soviet space in general and in the Russian Federation in particular allow the author to make the following conclusion: it will take a long time for the Baha'i Faith and Ahmadiyya to lose the status of "invisible communities" in the confessional landscape of the Russian Federation, especially in the context of the growing influence of traditional confessions, in particular the Russian Orthodox Church and Sunni Ummah.

For citation

Martynenko A.V. (2018) Maloizvestnaya konfessional'naya istoriya Rossii: bakhai i akhmadi [A little-known confessional history of Russia: the Baha'i Faith and Ahmadiyya]. *"Belye pyatna" rossiiskoi i mirovoi istorii* ["White Spots" of the Russian and World History], 3, pp. 36-51.

Keywords

Baha'is, Ahmadi, Islam, Russia, confessional situation.

Introduction. General characteristics of the communities analyzed in the article

For the researcher, who is not a follower of either the Bahá'í faith or the Ahmadiyya, it's easy and difficult at the same time to write about these international religious movements. It is easy, because a third-party observer who is somehow familiar with the Baha'is or with Ahmadis, feel sympathy to these multi-million and multinational religious communities. Sympathy is caused by the large-scale charitable and philanthropic activities of Baha'is and Ahmadis around the world, the unrequited willingness to help people in distress, whether it is a natural disaster, famine, epidemic or armed conflict. It is the way of life and behavior of believers of these two confessions that cause sympathy: people who are always friendly and open. Sympathy is caused by the situation of persecution that has developed in a number of Asian countries. The Ahmadis believers are subject to legal discrimination in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the Baha'is are primarily in Iran, and if to take extrajudicial executions, to which the authorities usually don't pay attention, then the list of countries can be continued.

On the other hand, the author also faced a negative attitude to both Ahmadis and Baha'is from their familiar Muslims – by the way, not at all extremists and far from religious fanatics, but, on the contrary, they can be intelligent and "advanced" who know various directions and currents of the world Islamic community. In conversations with Muslim religious leaders who professed Islam, orientalist and believers, one heard that Ahmadis and Baha'is are dangerous "heretical" "sects" designed to bring schism and confusion into the world Islamic community – umma. In many respects, that is why an objective and impartial analysis of the history and doctrinal features of the international movements of the Bahá'ís and Ahmadis is a difficult task, since the researcher in this situation is likely to fall under the charm of these communities or under the influence of the arguments of their irreconcilable opponents.

It should be noted that Baha'is and Ahmadis do not actually interact, they exist as if "in parallel" and even relate to each other with a certain degree of vigilance (for example, the author noticed this attitude towards the Bahá'ís during his communication with the Pakistani Ahmadis in Britain). This situation becomes understandable if we look more closely at the history and self-identification of the two communities. Both originated in the depths of the Islamic world. Both are persecuted by Muslims as "heretics." But Ahmadi consider themselves to be Muslims (naturally, from their point of view – the most true direction of Islam), and the Baha'is think they have an independent religion, and also claim the status of a "new world religion".

This article is an attempt to create a brief, detailed and adequate portrait of international movements of the Baha'is and Ahmadis in the context of their place in the confessional history of Russia.

The international Baha'is community is a religious trend that was formed in the historical and cultural boundaries of Muslim civilization in the second half of the XIX – early XX centuries. Subsequently, the Baha'is experienced a profound transformation from a small religious community

of local significance to an international movement widely spread in many countries of the world. On the other hand, the desire to synthesize the Islamic tradition with elements of Western culture has determined the marginal position of the Baha'is in relation to the world Muslim community – umma. In the eyes of orthodox Muslims, Baha'is practically from the beginning became dangerous heretics who fell into "disbelief" (Arabic "kufr").

The formation of the Baha'is community is inextricably linked with the Iranian religious movement of Babism, which the Bahá'ís themselves see and interpret as the beginning of their history [Martynenko, 2005, 137-153]. In the mid-1840's in Kajar Persia, there was a preacher Ali Muhammad, who took the sacred title "Bab" (Arabic and Persian "Gate", "Doors"), which, in fact, gave the name of the movement of his adherents – Babism. According to the Bab, the history of mankind is divided into closed cyclical epochs, each of them has its prophet. The Bab was a new prophet, opening a new era. Accordingly, he actually "abolished" the Koran and proclaimed the creation of a "sacred realm" in Iran, that is a closed theocracy.

Armed performances of his supporters, which were included in the history under the name "Babid revolts", were suppressed by the authorities in 1848-1852, and the Bab was publicly shot in 1850, several years before the complete defeat of the movement named after him. The massacre of Babism was so fierce that the surviving adherents of this community went to neighboring Iraq, then it was a part of the Ottoman Empire.

Among the refugee Babism settling in Baghdad, there was a rise of a new leader, the Persian aristocrat Mirza Hussein Ali Nuri. In 1863, he declared himself a new prophet under the name Baha'u'llah (Arab, Persian "Glory of the Lord"). His supporters (Baha'is) formed a new religion [Ibid, 2005, 153-166].

The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are described in numerous works, among them are the *Kitab-i-Iqan* (Arabic, Persian Book of Certainty) and especially the peculiar "Bahá'ís Bible" *Kitab-i-Aqdas* ("The Most Sacred Book", or "The Most Holy Book"). The main place in the Baha'is religion is the concept of a "new world order", that is, the unification of all mankind into a single world, "planetary" state with a single world government, economic space, even a single language of international communication. Thus, the message of Baha'u'llah "Bisharat" is: "It is not the one who loves his country who is fond of his country, but who loves peace" (Baha'u'llah, 1982, 87-88). The Baha'is declare the cultural mutual enrichment of all nations and peoples of the Earth, their unification into a single planetary society: "Be like fingers of one hand and, be like the main parts of the body," says the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* [Bahá'u'lláh, 1899, 15]. The Baha'is believe that such a world order will be achieved exclusively by peaceful tools, including propagation of values of their religion, such as hard work, equality of men and women, cooperation of religion and science.

From 1868 until his death in 1892, Bahá'u'lláh lived under the control of the Turkish authorities in the city of Acre in Palestine. From 1892 to 1921 the Baha'is community was led by his son Abdul Baha, and from 1921 by the great-grandson of Shoghi Effendi Rabbani. After the death of the childless Shoghi Effendi in 1957, the community was led by a group of the most influential

Baha'is preachers, known as the hands of God. In 1963, in the city of Haifa (Israel), in connection with the centenary of the proclamation of Baha'u'llah by the prophet, the Baha'is created the supreme collegiate governing body of their community, the World House of Justice. It consists of nine people who are re-elected every five years at the World Baha'is Congress.

In Baha'is religion there is no clergy and any church organization, but there is a global administrative system divided into two branches. The first branch is elected, it includes local and national spiritual councils of the Baha'is. The second branch is appointed, it includes auxiliary and continental boards of advisers, who control the elected branch.

The Baha'is have their own cult – prayers, fasts and religious holidays, as well as their own calendar. The centers of the cult of this religion are the Baha'is temples – the so-called "houses of worship" (Arabic "mashrig al-azkar"). To date, there are eight "houses of worship" of Bahá'ís in various regions of the world: the European temple is in Frankfurt am Main (FRG), the Asian – in New Delhi (India), the African – in Kampala (Uganda), the North American – in Wilmette (USA), Central American – in Panama, South American – in Santiago (Chile), there is an Australian temple in Sydney and a temple "for Oceania" in the city of Apia, the capital of Samoa.

At present, there are 5-7 million Baha'is in the world.

Ahmadi (Ahmadiyya, Ahmadiyyat, kadiani) is a Muslim community that was formed in the territory of British India in the late XIX – early XX centuries. The founder of the community was the preacher Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani (1835-1908), who proclaimed himself a new prophet and Mahdi (the Muslim Messiah is God's messenger who will appear to mankind on the day of the Last Judgment). He described his ideas in a number of works, such as "Jesus in India", "Philosophy of Islamic teachings", "Message of Peace", "British Government and Jihad."

It must be noted that the Ahmadis generally adhere to the basic ideas and prescriptions of Islam. Thus, they follow the five pillars of the Muslim faith (Arabic: arkan al-Islam khamasa, arkan ad-din); recognize the shahada ("There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah"), read the daily fivefold prayer, keep fasting in the holy month of Ramadan, provide assistance to the poor and consider it an important duty to perform the hajj to Mecca. Like all Muslim communities and currents, the Ahmadis believe in Allah as one and only God, as well as in scriptures, angels, prophets and the Day of Judgment.

At the same time, an important part of Ahmadi's teaching is the belief that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is a prophet, the promised Messiah and Mahdi, whose appearance was prophesied by the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. They believe that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a true reflection of Muhammad's prophecy and was sent to once again defend the principle of tawhid – the unity and uniqueness of God the Allah, i.e., in fact, the principle of strict monotheism.

Ahmadi believes that founders of all religions somehow contributed to the creation of Islam in the broadest sense, declaring thereby the universality of all religious revelations, teachings and traditions. In this regard, unlike other Muslims, the Ahmadis claim that the Vedas of the Hindus and Avesta of the Zoroastrians, i.e., books that are outside of the Abraamistic tradition, also have a

divine origin. Moreover, in addition to the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, Ahmadis are revered as such by Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Confucius. According to the views of Ahmadi, the concepts of "prophet" (Arabic "nabi") and "messenger" (Arabic "rasul") are synonymous. At the same time, they distinguish between two kinds of prophets. First, they are prophets who brought a new law, such as Moses, who brought Torah to people, and Muhammad, who transmitted the Qur'an to mankind. Secondly, these are prophets who came without a new religious law (Jeremiah, Jesus Christ). Among them is the founder of his community – Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of the Qadian. On the basis of this thesis, the Ahmadis explain why the phenomenon of the world of the new prophet Mirza Ghulam Ahmad does not contradict the well-known Islamic position of Muhammad as "hatm an-nabi" (Arab "seal of prophets"). Ahmadi, like all other Muslims, believes that the prophet of Islam gave the final and perfect law for all mankind, which would not be changed. However, this, in their opinion, does not exclude the possibility of the appearance of prophets after Muhammad. These prophets are completely subordinate to Muhammad and can not change the norms of Islam or create any other doctrinal system. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad became such a prophet, according to the Ahmadi dogma. In this sense, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani is perceived as a kind of prophet-reflection – a reflection of Muhammad.

A special place in the doctrine of Ahmadi is the person of Jesus Christ, who in Islam is revered as the prophet Isa. Ahmadis believe in the salvation of Jesus from death on Calvary. the Ahmadi theologian Hazrat Maulana Abul-Ata Jalandhari writes about it, referring to the authority of the Quranic text, in his book "Death on the Cross. Ten arguments from the Holy Bible: "But the Holy Qur'an declares that Christ did not die on the cross. God saved him from dying from crucifixion, just as He saved his beloved companions from reprisal "[Hadrat Maulana Abul-Ata Jalandhari, 2015, 4]. This Ahmadiy author categorically and even emotionally denies the general Christian interpretation of events: "The Christian version of his death is not only inaccurate, but contradicts historical evidence and logic itself. They believe that Jesus really died on the cross, and on the third day he rose again and ascended to heaven. What a paradox! What a myth!" [Ibidem, 6]. For their part, the Ahmadis believe that Jesus then traveled to India, where, according to their ideas, he lived to a very old age and died at the age of one hundred and twenty years in Kashmir, in the city of Srinagar. The purpose of Jesus' journey to India was the search for "the ten lost tribes of Israel," that is, the Jewish families who did not return to their homeland after the Assyrian captivity in the 8th century BC. According to Ahmadi, the grave of Jesus Christ under the name of Yuz Asaf is in the city of Srinagar.

Akhmadi has their own interpretation of such a complicated and ambiguous concept of Islamic doctrine as jihad (Arab "diligence"). According to them, jihad has three varieties. First, it is a "big jihad" (Arab "jihad al-akbar"), which is a person's struggle against his own baser desires. In fact, this is moral self-improvement of the individual. Secondly, it is the "great jihad" (Arab "jihad al-kabir"), which is the peaceful spread of Islam through preaching. R.V. Bukharaev, Russian Ahmadi, poet and essayist, figuratively combined these two closely related concepts into one: "The

great jihad is the invisible and never-ending battle of man with evil in himself and with evil in the world, but not with weapons, but through the preaching of Truth, through words and persuasion "[Bukharaev, 1999, 18]. Thirdly, it is "small jihad" (Arabic "jihad al-asgar"). Here it is necessary to make a reservation that the Ahmadi concept of jihad allows military operations only for the purpose of self-defense (for example, in the situation of persecution of Muslims for their beliefs). At the same time, according to Ahmadi's teachings, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad abolished military jihad as unacceptable for the modern era. This thesis is argued by the fact that Islam as a religion is no longer subjected to armed attacks. Islam is attacked by its opponents by writing books, articles or using the media. And the answer of Muslims should be adequate, i.e., the same. R.W. Bukharaev writes on this occasion: "The Ahmadi Muslim community ... opposes all, even forced, violence. The Ahmadi Muslim community is the movement of a true, great jihad in Islam, that jihad, the only weapon of which is the Holy Quran" [Ibid.].

Accordingly, the Ahmadi community categorically condemns any manifestations of extremism and terrorism as having nothing to do with true Islam. For example, the current spiritual leader of this community Mirza Masur Ahmad, speaking in the British parliament in 2008, said: "In order to achieve their goals, allegedly on behalf of their religion, some Muslim groups resort to illegal, terrorist methods, considering themselves having the right to kill non-Muslims and inflict damage on them, and do so with respect to both military and civilians. At the same time, they brutally kill innocent Muslims, women and children. Such cruel acts are absolutely unacceptable from the point of view of Islam. Because of this ugly behavior of some Muslims in the non-Muslim world, a completely wrong idea about Islam was created. As a result, some part of Western society openly opposes Islam, and the other part, although it does not act openly, still thinks wrong about this religion "[Hazrat Mirza Masur Ahmad, 2014, 13].

After the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani, his community was led by special spiritual leaders – caliphs (Arab "deputies"). The second caliph Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad (born in 1889, led the community in 1914-1965) and the fourth caliph Mirza Tahir Ahmad (born in 1928, led the community in 1982-2003) made a particularly significant contribution to the development of the doctrinal complex of the writings of Ahmadiyyat. Since 2003, the fifth caliph Mirza Masur Ahmad Shah is the leader of the community. Ahmadi revere his caliph primarily as a spiritual leader, although he is undoubtedly endowed with the highest administrative authority in the community.

In the XX century the Ahmadi movement has spread to more than 200 countries around the world. The number of its followers, according to various estimates, varies from 10 to 20 million people. Especially widely Ahmadi communities are represented in the countries of the West and in Tropical Africa. Small Baha'is communities exist in the Russian Federation, as well as in some Central Asian states of the post-Soviet space. Ahmadi implements large-scale charitable and socially oriented programs: the opening of schools and hospitals, assistance to the poor and victims in the course of natural disasters, wars, etc.

Since 1984, the headquarters of the Ahmadiyyat is in London, UK (the Caliph's residence is located in the Fasl mosque in London). The "spiritual" headquarters of Ahmadiyya is the city of Kadian in India, the birthplace of the founder of the movement. Another important center of the community is the Pakistani city of Rabwa, in which additional structures for community management are located – the Central Ahmadiyi Council, the Council of the New Circuit, the Council of the New Initiation. All these structures are subordinate directly to the Caliph.

Baha'is and Ahmadis in the Russian Empire and the USSR

The author of this article devoted to the study of the Baha'is and Ahmadis for about twenty years, communicated with the followers of these faiths in Moscow and Kazan, England and the Middle East, repeatedly came across the fact that for the majority of Russians these two communities are the absolute "Terra Incognita". In our country, Baha'is and Ahmadis are original "invisible communities": few have heard of them and few people know, although their penetration into Russia began in the imperial period of our history.

The first Baha'is appeared on the territory of the Russian Empire in 1883-1884: "Soon after the conquest of the Akhal-Tekinsky Oasis by Skobelev (1880-1881 – AM), immigrants from various regions of Persia began to move to the Transcaspian region. Among them were Babis (here we mean the Baha'is – A.M.) "[Tumansky, 1898, 3]. They were traders, artisans and builders from the city of Sabzivar, the eastern Iranian province of Khorasan, they were running from the Shiites. The center of concentration of Central Asian Bahá'í-emigrants was the city of Ashgabat, where in 1890, there were more than a thousand Baha'is. In 1913 A.E. Krymsky cited data on one million Russian-speaking Baha'is (however, he doubted this figure) [Krymsky, 1912, 25].

Haji Muhammad Reza Isfahani headed the Ashgabat community of Baha'is. The community maintained close ties with the main Baha'is center in Akko, in Palestine, and personally with Bahá'u'lláh. The very idea of creating the Ashgabat community belonged to Seyyid Muhsin-i Afnan, who visited Turkestan in 1884, and subsequently presented Baha'u'llah with his plan of mass resettlement to Ashgabat, which was approved. Bahá'u'lláh himself repeatedly sent messages to Ashgabat to his followers and even corresponded with individual believers, for example, with Abdul-Kerim Ardebili Asadov [Tumansky, 1898, 6-7]. Through the efforts of the Ashgabat Baha'is, the preaching of Bahá'u'lláh and the wandering Mumbell preachers were often translated into Russian [Umanets, 1904, 41]. Thus, the Babid agents (that is, the Baha'is agents – A.M.) in Ashgabat undoubtedly reported to Akka about their relations with the Russians, about their conversations with them and, about other issues that were often offered "[Rosen, 1898, 316]. First Russian explorers of this religious trend, V.R. Rozen, A.G. Tumansky, A.E. Crimean, S.I. Umanets were also directly acquainted with the Ashgabat Baha'is. The Baha'is were willing to provide Russian scholars with materials about their religion and way of life, and even amended certain works. S.I. Umanets, for example, noted the fact that the Baha'is criticized the book "Bab

and Babis" by Mirza Kazem-Bek: "Babis (Baha'is – A.M.), with whom we had a talk about Mirza Kazem – Beka, positively deny the professor's belief in the relocation of souls and the fact that, according to their teachings, the attributes of God turn into their leaders and scientists "[Umanets, 1904, 42].

Since the Russian authors persistently used the name "Babis" in relation to the community, the latter considered it their duty to explain their difference from the traditional Sayid worshipers Ali Muhammad Baba. A.E. Krymsky wrote; "Let's note that the followers of Behoallah (Baha'u'llah – A.M.) do not even want to be called Babis. One Samarkand beyaiite, Sabit (from the Omid society) wrote to me in a letter (in Persian) on December 14, 1911: "We must distinguish between the Bheuids and the Babis. The present stage (en che hast al-an) is the same as the behuids, not the babis. Babis are found in some cities, there are few of them, and it is not easy to count them. The one who lives in Akka is the head of the Bahuids, and not the Babis, and the Babis of his teachings do not recognize, and their blessed teaching does not agree with the teachings of the Baha'is" – A.M.)" [Krymsky, 1902, 83].

Ashgabat Baha'is occupied the district of Mervsky Prospekt in the city, where they "owned a vast piece of land" [Umanets, 1904, 40-41]. A.G. Tumansky characterized the situation of the Ashgabat community in the following way: "Thanks to their dignified way of life, they (Baha'is – A.M.) were treated by Russians as best they can. Some of the more prosperous Babis were even members of the municipal public assembly "[Tumansky, 1898, 2]. This is also evidenced by A.E. Krymsky in his work "The general historical sketch of Babism and a review of the latest literature about it": "The Russian authorities accepted them cheerfully, and in Turkistan several years ago the construction of the extremely beautiful Babid temple in Askhabad on Mervsky Prospekt was completed" [Krymsky, 1902, 82].

Such favorable attitude towards the Baha'is was closely connected with the missionary policy of the Russian Empire in Central Asia. In the opinion of the representatives of the tsarist administration in this region, the appeals of the Baha'is preachers to the books of the Old and New Testaments made them potential allies in popularizing the values of Christianity among the Muslim population. This view was held, in particular, by I.L. Segal, who advocated the ubiquitous spread of "cultural Babism" in the Muslim regions of the Russian Empire: "Babism (here again we are talking about the Bahá'ís – A.M.) is the path on which Christianity and enlightened Islam stretch each other's hands" [Segal, 1893, 27].

Conflicts between the Muslim population of Ashgabat and the Baha'is did not stop until they led to a bloody denouement. The hostile attitude of Muslims towards the Baha'is was fueled by the Shiite emissaries from Khorasan, and it was probably decided by their orders to kill Haji Muhammad Reza Isfahani, the head of the Baha'is community of Ashgabat: "But since it was not in Persia, and the Shiites were well aware of the consequences such a murder, they decided to cast lots, who will have a godly destiny to finish off the despicable apostate from Islam and suffer for the faith of the Prophet" [Tumansky, 1898, 4].

At 7 a.m. on August 27, 1889, two Shiites, Meshhed Ali Akbar and Meshhed Hussein, attacked Muhammad Reza Isfahani with daggers on the Piazza de Ashgabat "in the presence of the people and a police minister" and inflicted forty-two wounds, from which he died on place: "Having committed murder, they surrendered to the police, and while they were going in a cab, they licked the blood flowing from their daggers in a fit of fanatic frenzy" [Ibid.].

Protection provided by A.V. Komarov, the Baha'is Governor-General of the Transcaspian province, and the arrest of the guilty caused riots among the Shiite population of the city. The Baha'is petitioned for pardon of the murderers sentenced in 1890 by the Ashgabat military court to death by hanging, emphasizing and thereby demonstrating the non-violent nature of their faith. For Meshhed Ali Akbar and Meshhed Hussein, the death penalty was replaced by life imprisonment in Siberia, and Baha'u'llah's personal blessing was given to Baha'u'llah: "You were murdered and did not kill. Good to you!" [Ibid, 6]. On this occasion, Bahá'u'lláh also spoke with the praises of the "radiant power", "the greatest emperor" and "most respectable general", implying respectively the Russian empire, Alexander III and A.V. Komarov: "We pray to God," wrote Baha'u'llah, "let Him (Alexander III. – A.M.) help this community (Bahá'í-A.M.), praise him, serve him and let Him manifest in them what is required for his deed is pure, holy, glorious, great "[Ibid, 7]. At the same time in Iran, among the Baha'is there was written a laudatory hymn in honor of the "Sovereign Emperor" Alexander III. Such strong expressions of gratitude were connected with the fact that the Baha'is for the first time in their history received official support from the government.

So, by the beginning of the XX century Ashgabat has become one of the largest centers of Baha'is faith. By 1907 the construction of a complex of temple buildings, called Mashrig al-Azkar, was completed in this city. The construction of the first "house of worship" in the history of the Baha'is was held under the guidance of the architect Ustad Ali-Akbar. Other major centers of the Baha'is on the territory of the Russian Empire were the cities of Transcaucasia. By 1904 about 7000 Bahá'ís lived in Baku, Shemakha and Elisavetpole, "in Tiflis they were only few, about hundred families" [Umanets, 1904, 41].

The Russian Orthodox Church initially welcomed the emergence of the religion of the Baha'is within the Russian Empire and considered it as a means of bringing Muslims to Christian values. N. Bernasovsk, the Orthodox missionary in the Persian city of Qazvin, unequivocally commented this fact: "Undoubtedly, Babism (meaning the Bahá'ís Faith – A,M,) borrowed and borrows a lot from the Christian doctrine for the development of its moral sides and, with this point of view, its distribution among the Persians can only be welcomed" [Bernasovsky, 1909, 13].

The relatively prosperous existence of the Baha'is in the Muslim regions of Russia continued until the establishment of Soviet power. In the 1920s the Bahá'ís communities in Transcaucasia and Central Asia were still quite numerous and active. For example, the Ashgabat Baha'is even published their own magazine "Khurshide Hover" ("The Sun of the East").

However, the preaching of the Baha'is about the class world and the abandonment of violent methods of struggle very soon came into conflict with the revolutionary and atheistic ideology of

the new Soviet regime. The irritation of the new government was also caused by the fundamental idea of the Baha'is – the idea of a "new world order", which offered a model for the development of mankind, an alternative to the Marxist one. In September 1929 at the All-Union Party Conference on Anti-Religious Propaganda in the Soviet East, an installation was adopted for the eradication of the Baha'is communities in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan as a harmful current "serving the bourgeois reaction". Besides, the Baha'is formally gave rise to persecution, continuing to engage in private order customary for them trade-usurious operations, banned by the legislation of the USSR. An example of this is the TASS report from Ashgabat on January 12, 1930: "It was discovered that the largest sectarian organization of the Baha'is (which is widely spread in the East, especially in Persia) was engaged in usury and subsidized merchants. The Baha'i Council in Ashgabat illegally carried out ordinary banking operations, taking profit. The Council accepted values from minors whose parents died, gave them interest, and transferred money to traders" [Klimovich, 1965, 21].

The apogee of the persecution of Bahá'ís in the USSR was in 1938, when the Ashgabat house of worship of Mashrig al-Azkar was confiscated under Soviet institutions (it was finally destroyed already during and after the earthquake of 1948); the Bahá'í community was banned; part of the Central Asian Bahá'ís were deported. Thus, during the period of Stalinism, groups and communities of Bahá'ís in the USSR virtually ceased to exist. The history of the Baha'i faith in our country was stopped for almost half a century.

The history of the Bahá'ís communities in the Russian Empire shows a unique experience of social partnership, cooperation between the imperial authorities on the one hand, and the religious community on the other, and also a non-traditional and emigrant community in Russian Turkestan and Transcaucasia due to religious persecutions in homeland, in the Kajar Persia. At the same time, the specificity of the situation was that each of the parties pursued its own goals and tasks which did not coincide with the goals and tasks of its "temporary ally". For the Russian authorities, cooperation with the Bahá'ís provided additional resources (human, ideological) in answering the challenges of the national peripheries of the empire, namely, Orthodox missionary politics among Muslim subjects of Turkestan and the Caucasus (we repeat that at that time the Bahá'í teachings were assessed by the ROC as approaching Islamic dogmas to Christianity and was welcomed in every possible way). For the Bahá'ís, the support of the administration of the Russian Empire, firstly, created the first precedent of patronage by the authorities in their history; secondly, it provided the conditions for further dissemination, growth of influence and organizational strengthening of the community. But all this was interrupted by the repressive policies of the Soviet authorities, whose "steel fist" fell upon all the confessions of the country, including the small Bahá'ís community.

The first attempts to organize Ahmadiyya sermons on the territory of Russia fall at the initial period of the establishment of Soviet power – the end of the 1910s – the first half of the 1920s. So, in 1919 Ahmadi named Fatih Muhammad, who served in the British army, was sent as part of his battalion to the Russian-Iranian border, and then as an English serviceman took part in one of the reconnaissance raids of the interventionists in Central Asia. According to Mirza Tahir

Ahmad, Fatih Muhammad discovered a small community of Ahmadis in Ashgabat [Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, 1990, 40-41]. In Ashgabat since the end of the XIX century there was a fairly large Baha'is community. Like the Bahá'ís, a few Ashgabat Ahmadis experienced constant hostility from the Muslim clergy (not Shiite, as in the case of the Bahá'ís, but Sunni). Mirza Tahir Ahmad even claimed that this enmity was provoked and fueled by emissaries from British India (whom he called the "Indian Ulema") [Ibid, 41].

In 1922, Ahmadi Muhammad Amin Khan arrived in Soviet Central Asia through Iranian Baluchistan. He preached for about a year; was repeatedly subjected to arrests and, in the end, was deported to Turkey. During his mission, Muhammad Amin Khan visited Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent and was able to convert to Ahmadiyya several people: Abdullah from Tashkent, Muhammad Khusain from Bukhara. On this occasion, Mirza Tahir Ahmad made a rhetorical remark: "I wonder if their beliefs are still Ahmadi? We can only hope for it" [Ibid, 42].

In 1924 Maulavi Zahur Hussain, another Ahmadi preacher, arrived to USSR by the order of the second Ahmadi Caliph Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Ahmad. Mirza Tahir Ahmad wrote: "His mission was very difficult, and the path was thorny, because in the atmosphere of the recently victorious Bolshevik revolution, everyone was suspicious of British subjects" [Ibid.]. Maulavi Zahur Hussain was arrested by the Soviet authorities. Ahmadiyya authors claimed that he was tortured and even temporarily lost his reason. However, according to the same Mirza Tahir Ahmad, even in prison, the Ahmadi preacher managed to attract to his faith several converts led by a certain Abdul Kadyr. Later Maulavi Zahur Ahmad was deported to British India.

Thus, during this period the Ahmadiyya propaganda in the USSR did not achieve such great success as the preaching work of the Bahá'ís (although both were eventually defeated by the Soviet authorities).

Bahá'ís and Ahmadis in Post-Soviet Russia

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, during the crisis and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, the Bahá'ís resumed their preaching work in the USSR and then in the post-Soviet space. In 1986 the World House of Justice in Haifa adopted the next plan for the spread of the Baha'is faith, which paid close attention to the development of the countries of Eastern Europe and the USSR, previously closed for this religious movement. Since 1989, there have been Bahá'ís communities in Moscow, Kazan, Yekaterinburg, St. Petersburg, and other Russian cities. Bahá'ís began to operate in Volgograd, Krasnodar, Orel, Tobolsk, Petrozavodsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Saransk. In December 1990 the first All-Union Baha'is Conference was held in Moscow, which 244 delegates from local spiritual councils and 17 foreign guests took part.

In the spring of 1991 the delegates of the National Convention from Bahá'ís communities from 42 cities of the USSR elected the National Spiritual Council of the Bahá'ís of the USSR. And from April 30 to May 2, 1992 in connection with the dissolution of the USSR, five congresses on

elections to the spiritual national assemblies of the Bahá'ís were held simultaneously on the territory of the CIS (the Baltic States, Ukraine with Belarus and Moldova, Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Russia with Georgia and Armenia). Thus, a network of local spiritual assemblies was created, which became an integral part of the world "administrative order" of the Bahá'ís. Despite the vast geographical distribution of the Baha'is faith in the Russian Federation, Baha'is groups in Russian society are still few and, as a rule, rarely exceed a hundred people. So, in 1992 the Baha'is community of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk numbered about 240 people, Chita had 15 Bahá'ís, Yakutsk – 9 [Express Bahá'ís, 1992, 9-10]. At present, the Russian Bahá'ís are about 3 thousand people.

Interest in the Baha'is faith is shown mainly by school teachers and university professors, journalists and scientific and technical workers, students, artists. Domestic Bahá'ís maintain close ties with foreign co-religionists, travel to other countries to study in Baha'is centers or participate in a variety of international Baha'is-actions. In addition, foreign "wandering teachers of the faith", also called "pioneers", often visit or permanently reside in the Russian Baha'is communities. The propaganda of the teachings, the Sunday schools of the Bahá'ís are in operation, videotapes and radio programs are being recorded, charitable events are being held, persistent attempts are being made to establish cooperation or at least enter into a dialogue with other religious associations and confessions.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ahmadis succeeded in creating large communities in Kaunas (Lithuania) and Grodno (Belarus), that is, in regions where Muslim ummahs were enclave and largely isolated from their co-religionists. In 1992, the delegation of Ahmadis was even adopted at the state level in the Supreme Council of the Russian Federation, receiving a favorable assessment of some domestic lawmakers.

Since 1995 the Ahmadis headquarters has been working in Moscow: its employees are mainly from Pakistan, who are engaged in business in the Russian capital. In the Russian Federation, the Ahmadis seek to extend their influence to areas with a predominantly Muslim population, for example, in Tatarstan [Suleimanov, 2014]. It is known that, according to their order, the Tatar poet Ravil Bukharaev even performed the translation of the Quran from the English Ahmadis edition into Russian. While engaging in active publishing activities, Ahmadis often succeeded in spreading its religious literature, including the Quran with Ahmadiyya commentaries, in the mosques of the country.

However, this success is relative. So, in the same year 1995 in Kazan, Ahmadiyya missionaries were attacked by Muslim (Sunni) activists and forced to leave the city. To date, we can state that the influence of Ahmadis in Russia is even more insignificant than the influence of the international Bahá'ís community.

Conclusion

Ahmadis and Bahá'ís have their niche in the religious life of many countries and regions. It is obvious that these international movements will not only survive, but will continue to develop,

since their main, perhaps, potential is a lot of enthusiasts and devotees who carry and realize the ideas of Bahá'ís and Ahmadis around the world. At the same time, the modest success of Bahá'ís and Ahmadis in the post-Soviet space in general and in the Russian Federation in particular make it possible to conclude that for these denominations the status of "invisible communities" in the confessional landscape of Russia will be of a long-term nature, especially in the context of strengthening the influence of the traditional confessions of the country – primarily the Russian Orthodox Church and the Muslim Sunni Ummah.

References

1. Baha'u'llah (1982) Tablets of Bahauallah. Haifa: Baha'i Publishing Trust.
2. Baha'u'llah (1873) The Kitab-i-Aqdas: the Most Holy Book. (Russ., Ed .: Baha'u'llah (1899) Kitabe Akdes. "Svyashchenneishaya kniga" sovremennykh babidov., St. Petersburg.)
3. Bernasovskii N. (1909) Babizm. Istoriya vozniknoveniya. Ego razvitie. Dogmaticheskie i npravstvennye nachala [Bábism. A history of the rise. Its development. Dogmatic and moral principles]. Tiflis.
4. Bukharaev R.V. (1999) Doroga Bog znaet kuda (Velikii Dzhikhad). Kniga dlya brata [The road to God knows where (the Greater Jihad). A book for a brother]. St. Petersburg: BLITs Publ.
5. Ekspress Bakhai [Bahá'í express] (1992), 7.
6. Hadrat Maulana Abul-Ata Jalandhari (2015) Death on the Cross. Ten arguments from the Holy Bible. Tilford: Islam International Publications Ltd.
7. Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1944) Jesus in India. Available at: <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/Jesus-in-India.pdf> (English ed.: Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1991) Iisus v Indii. Islamabad: Islam international publications Ltd.)
8. Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (2012) World crisis and the pathway to peace. A compilation of speeches and letters. Available at: <https://www.alislam.org/library/books/World-Crisis-and-Pathway-to-Peace.pdf> (Russ. Ed .: Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (2014) Mirovoi krizis i put 'k miru Sbornik rechei i pisem. Islamabad: Islam International Publications Ltd.)
9. Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad (1990) Narodam SSSR – s lyubov'yu [To the peoples of the USSR – with love]. Islamabad: Islam international publications Ltd.
10. Klimovich L.I. (1965) Islam [Islam]. Moscow: Nauka Publ.
11. Krymskii A.E. (1912) Istoriya musul'manstva. Ocherki religioznoi zhizni [A history of Islam. Essays on religious life]. Moscow.
12. Krymskii A.E. (1902) Obshchii istoricheskii ocherk babizma i obzor noveishei literatury o nem [A general historical outline of Bambism and a review of the recent literature on it]. Moscow.

13. Martynenko A.V. (2005) Bahai i akhmadiiat: novye religioznye soobshchestva v kontekste modernizatsii islama [The Bahá'í Faith and Ahmadiyya: new religious communities in the context of the modernisation of Islam]. Ulyanovsk: Ul'yanovskii Dom pechati Publ.
14. Rozen V.R. (1898) Eshche raz o poslanii "Blagie vesti" [Once more about the epistle "The good news"]. St. Petersburg.
15. Segal 'I.L. (1893) Musul'manskie sekty v Persii i Zakavkazskom krae [Muslim sects in Persia and the Transcaucasian territory]. Tiflis.
16. Suleimanov R.R. (2014) Akhmadiy v Respublike Tatarstan: samoorganizatsiya obshchiny, zarubezhnoe vliyanie, vzaimootnosheniya s gosudarstvom i religioznom bol'shinstvom [The Ahmadi in the Republic of Tatarstan: self-organization of the community, foreign influence, relations with the state and the religious majority] . Materialy Vtorogo kongressa rossiiskikh issledovatelei religii "Nauka o religii v XXI veke: traditsionnye metody i novye paradigmy" [Proc. 2nd Cong. "The science of religion in the 21st century: traditional methods and new paradigms"]. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Petersburg Philosophical Society, pp. 478-479.
17. Tumanskii A.G. (1898) Dva poslednikh babidskikh otkroveniia [Two recent Babi revelations]. St. Petersburg.
18. Umanets S.I. (1904) Sovremennyi babizm (raskol v magometanstve) [Modern Bábism (a schism in Mohammedanism)]. Tiflis.

Малоизвестная конфессиональная история России: бахай и ахмади

Мартыненко Александр Валентинович

Доктор исторических наук, профессор,
Мордовский государственный педагогический институт им. М.Е. Евсевьева,
430007, Российская Федерация, Саранск, ул. Студенческая, 11а;
e-mail: arkanaddin@mail.ru

Аннотация

В статье анализируется история и доктринальные особенности международных религиозных общин бахай и ахмади в контексте их распространения на территории России. Отмечается, что ахмади и бахай заняли свою нишу в религиозной жизни многих стран и регионов. Очевидно, что эти международные движения не только сохранятся, но будут развиваться и дальше, поскольку их главным, пожалуй, потенциалом является множество энтузиастов и подвижников, несущих и реализующих идеи бахай и ахмади

по всему миру. Автор статьи обращает внимание на отрицательное отношение к бахаи и ахмади со стороны большинства мусульман и раскрывает причины данной ситуации. Делается вывод о незначительном влиянии данных общин на конфессиональную ситуацию в России. Весьма скромные успехи бахаи и ахмади на постсоветском пространстве в целом и в Российской Федерации в частности позволяют сделать вывод о том, что для данных конфессий статус «общин-невидимок» в конфессиональном ландшафте России будет носить долговременный характер, особенно в условиях усиления влияния традиционных конфессий страны – прежде всего Русской православной церкви и мусульманской суннитской уммы.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

Мартыненко А.В. Малоизвестная конфессиональная история России: бахаи и ахмади // «Белые пятна» российской и мировой истории. 2018. № 3. С. 36-51.

Ключевые слова

Бахаи, ахмади, ислам, Россия, конфессиональная ситуация.

Библиография

1. Бахаулла. Китабе Акдес. «Священная книга» современных бабидов. СПб., 1899. 160 с.
2. Бернасовский Н. Бабизм. История возникновения. Его развитие. Догматические и нравственные начала. Тифлис, 1909. 15 с.
3. Бухараев Р.В. Дорога Бог знает куда (Великий Джихад). Книга для брата. СПб.: БЛИЦ, 1999. 277 с.
4. Климович Л.И. Ислам. М.: Наука, 1965. 334 с.
5. Крымский А.Е. История мусульманства. Очерки религиозной жизни. М., 1912. 494 с.
6. Крымский А.Е. Общий исторический очерк бабизма и обзор новейшей литературы о нем. М., 1902. 91 с.
7. Мартыненко А.В. Бахаи и ахмадийат: новые религиозные сообщества в контексте модернизации ислама. Ульяновск: Ульяновский Дом печати, 2005. 400 с.
8. Розен В.Р. Еще раз о послании «Благие вести». СПб., 1898.
9. Сегаль И.Л. Мусульманские секты в Персии и Закавказском крае. Тифлис, 1893. 52 с.
10. Сулейманов Р.Р. Ахмадиты в Республике Татарстан: самоорганизация общины, зарубежное влияние, взаимоотношения с государством и религиозным большинством // Материалы Второго конгресса российских исследователей религии «Наука о религии в XXI веке: традиционные методы и новые парадигмы». СПб.: Санкт-Петербургское философское общество, 2014. С. 478-479.

11. Туманский А.Г. Два последних бабидских откровения. СПб., 1898. 8 с.
12. Уманец С.И. Современный бабизм (раскол в магометанстве). Тифлис, 1904. 47 с.
13. Хазрат Мирза Гулам Ахмад Кадиани. Иисус в Индии. Islamabad: Islam international publications Ltd, 1991. 119 с.
14. Хазрат Мирза Масрур Ахмад. Мировой кризис и путь к миру. Сборник речей и писем. Islamabad: Islam International Publications Ltd, 2014. 317 с.
15. Хазрат Мирза Тахир Ахмад. Народам СССР – с любовью. Islamabad: Islam international publications Ltd, 1990. 50 с.
16. Экспресс Бахаи. 1992. Вып. 7. 18 с.
17. Baha'u'llah. Tablets of Bahau'llah. Haifa: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1982. 269 p.
18. Hadrat Maulana Abul-Ata Jalandhari. Death on the Cross. Ten arguments from the Holy Bible. Tilford: Islam International Publications Ltd, 2015. 29 p.