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STATE AND RELIGION IN AFGHANISTAN: STRUGGLE FOR INDEPNDENCE (1800-1919)

***Summary.** The article updates the term "Islam factor" regarding Afghanistan statehood. The author traces the impact of Islam factor in the development of Afghanistan, governmental structure and international relationships between Afghanistan and third parties. New historical sources were used by the author including the archival materials. The article accumulates the analysis of a range of Russian, Soviet and international sources that highlights the complex approach to the research. It is the first attempt to characterize the Islam in the framework of statehood development in Afghanistan.*

***Key words:** Afghanistan, Islam, religion, independence, Russia, USSR, Islamic factor, history of Afghanistan.*

The issue of struggle for independence was a huge problem for all old colonial countries of for countries under control or protectorate. In particularly, Afghanistan has a long period of resistance in claws of a number of countries which disseminated their influence. However, Afghan history of the struggle for independence has determined peculiarities.

The examining of the Islam factor due to Afghan history, indeed, helps to realize the problems and reality of the 21st century. The cooperation of religion

and governmental institution defined in general the position of Afghan international relations.

The relevance of Islam for Afghanistan is indisputable, this religion is a part of history, culture and the most important side of the life of its peoples. The region has made a significant contribution to the development of Muslim culture, general theory and practice of Islamic law. The works of outstanding Islamic enlighteners and theologians: Al-Afghani, Khushkhan-khal Khattak, Abdulhak Betaba (king of the Poets), etc. are studied with interest today.

Islam within this state is a pillar in the socio-economic and cultural life, the structure of the political organization. In the historical past, religion has had a huge impact on the building of statehood in Afghanistan. To conclude that a comprehensive study is focused on the defining of the role and the analyzing of the dynamics of the influence of the Islamic factor on the statehood of Afghanistan in the period from 1800 to the beginning of the 20th century.

Recently, the term "Islam factor" has been used more often in political practice and historical research, so an explanation should be given of what needs to be understood by this concept.

Islam has acted as an ideological, spiritual, political and ethnic community and has acquired the importance of a mechanism with which one can come to a consensus with the Muslim society.

The "Islamic factor" contains a set of various Islamic values, including legislation, traditions, morals, customs of Muslim peoples, which are in close and constant interaction with the specific historical, political, economic, socio-cultural practice of these peoples.

As applied to Afghanistan, the term "Islam factor", along with general features, hides specific features associated with history, culture, political and economic levels of development, even ethnopsychological features of peoples, for example, the Pashtunwali code of laws, councils of different levels - jirgas and others.

The source base on this issue seems to be rather limited due to the specifics of the research topic, for this reason it needs a deep analysis. Sources are of a different nature: narrative and documentary.

The sources can be divided chronologically, since this option is more convenient for the perception of information about the dynamics of the change in the role of the Islamic factor and better corresponds to the goals and objectives of the study. Therefore, it seems possible to distinguish three periods that correspond to the main periods of the historical development of Afghanistan. The first stage dates back to the beginning of the 19th century, when the establishment of a single centralized state formation began, until 1919, that became the date when Afghanistan gained independence from England. This period includes treatises and works by Muslim authors, which describe various aspects of the history of Afghanistan, from the 10th century to the 19th century.

Moreover, Afghanistan had a lot of contacts that we can characterize as international relationships.

It also includes sources that are of Russian and English origin. Russian authors paid attention often to trade and cultural relations with Central Asia, and the British analyzed the military-political situation that has developed in Afghanistan due to the confrontation in the Anglo-Afghan wars.

Particular attention is drawn to documents from the funds of the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, which characterize the foreign policy of Russia and Afghanistan at the beginning of the 20th century, declassified in 2005 and first introduced into scientific circulation by S. Khomenko. Personal documents from the funds of G.V. Chicherin and Raskolnikov F.F. contain detailed correspondence between Amanullah Khan and V.I. Lenin regarding the recognition of the independence of Afghanistan and the correspondence of V.I. Lenin and fellow party members on the future plans of the world revolution and the use of Islam as a leading force in Afghanistan.

Mention should be made that G.V. Chicherin was the first People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in the Soviet government and F. Raskolnikov was mentioned by Russian and Soviet governments as a politician. Later he was a famous diplomat who worked in Central Asia region.

As for historiography on this issue, full-scale research has hardly been carried out. It can be argued with full confidence that only the historian M. Guldzhanov devoted an article to the clergy and Islam, but during the reign of Abdur Rahman Khan, as well as the historians V.G. Korgun. and Bosin Yu., who in their articles linked this issue with ethnic and national factors, and did not consider Islam as a separate category. Korgun V.G. also belongs to a general work on the history of Afghanistan, which contains a detailed description of the stages of development of the state. The author analyzes all spheres of life of Afghans and does not exclude the influence of the Islamic factor on the life of the Afghan population.

The works of English historians for the most part is contradictory in relation to each other due to the concealment or omission of certain facts. But you should certainly pay attention to the work of Sykes P. "A history of Afghanistan", where the author traces in sufficient detail in Afghanistan's foreign policy the use of the Islamic factor by England, Russia, Turkey, Germany and others. A lot of scientific works were created in the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th centuries [7]. At the beginning of the 21st century researchers took an interest again in Afghanistan problems [11, p. 235-256; 12; 16]. It could be correlated with the events in Afghanistan regarding the development of statehood and civil war conflicts.

Nowadays, the results of the study will be the construction of a systemic pre-definition of Islam and its shutter to Afghanistan as a whole (society, domestic and foreign policy). To a greater extent, the content of the Islamic factor is revealed through the prism of interaction between social and political institutions and interaction with the ethnic factor.

In the 19th century Afghanistan has an advantageous geographical position, which is why it has become an object of foreign policy of Russia and Great Britain. Afghanistan's struggle for independence was accompanied by the direct intervention of the two empires in internal political processes.

But the question of the subordination of the Afghans remained open for a long time. The diplomatic missions tried to understand the principle according to which it was necessary to build relationships with Afghanistan, where Islam was the basis of the state. In parallel, other military-political conflicts developed: the war with the Sikhs for Kashmir, the war with the emirs of Sindh (the British signed a treaty with them). The goal of the British government in this region was to destabilize the country for its further disintegration. For this reason, the East India Company began distributing recruited Muslim traders or Englishmen disguised as mullahs throughout Afghanistan to carry out propaganda work [32 p. 61]. The goals of their subversive work were selected socially significant objects: markets, roads, military formations.

After the collapse of the Durrani Empire, the Emirate of Afghanistan represented an assembly of khanates, where the Muslim clergy played the role of the ruling elite. When Britain presented territorial claims to Afghanistan on the issue of the areas adjacent to India, but inhabited by Afghans, the clergy agreed to conduct the negotiation process, but they failed to reach an agreement, which led to a military clash of interests [30].

Under Emir Dost-Muhammad Khan, Herat attracted special attention from the British, where the interests of Afghanistan and Iran also clashed. The signing of the treaty by the Shah of Herat with the East India Company led to an aggravation of relations with Great Britain. The text of the treaty stated that the interests of the British government are identical with the interests of the Afghan nation [21]. But after the failure of the British to fulfill their obligations, the Afghans "gained a grim notoriety for their hereditary hatred" [22].

Then E. Pottinger arrived in Herat [10, p. 21], a political employee of the East India Company, posing as a Muslim, promising that England would defend Herat within the framework of Islam. In Afghanistan, society was split into two parts: those who maintained trade and economic relations with England and those (mostly Muslim fanatics) who demanded the reconquest of Herat [31, p. 148]. England was ready to make concessions and promise to fulfill its promises up to the observance of the norms of Islam in order to suspend the advance of Iranian influence together with the Russian Empire. But, in the state, a partisan movement [19, p. 149] developed under the influence of Islam. The movement gradually developed into a war. The propaganda of the Muslim uprising against the "infidels" was spread. Proof of this is the fact that the Afghans during the first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-1842) rushed into battle under the slogan "Islam! On the infidels!" [24, p. 151].

Besides the internal policy initially included the impact of Islam ideology [6, p. 158], because Dost Muhammad Khan was proclaimed as the head of Kabul further as King within a religious meeting and accordance with Islam. Moreover, Dost Muhammad Khan preferred to organize his legitimacy ignoring traditional ethnic values.

After the end of the war in the 50s of the 19th century. The Iranians agreed to abandon military oppression on the condition that England would provide security for Herat, namely that they would not allow any third party, including Afghanistan [26], into this region. The Russians remarked: "In the hearts of the Muslims who live here, the British government, through its decrees and actions, also settled hatred and contempt for itself," which led to another wave of discontent from the Afghans [22].

The 50-60s of the 19th century were marked by the fact that the Afghans attracted the Muslim movements of India [19, p. 156] to fight the British, which took an active part in it. In this case, when England was rejected irrevocably, Afghanistan, attracting new allies [24, p. 20], tried to create the basis for a

strong Islamic monarchy. This was due to the fact that the Afghans were tired of bloody battles and civil strife and the constant cruel treatment of their children and women by the British soldiers [25].

After coronation of Emir Abdurrahman Khan, the situation in the country became so aggravated that Abdurrahman Khan executed the leaders of the partisan movement. But after the intervention of the clergy as a conservative element of Afghan society, the emir reconsidered his position in relation to Islam, the Afghan people and the clergy in general. At the same time, it was necessary to pacify the Ghilzai tribe, which expressed its protest in connection with the restriction of the privileges of the clergy. After that, Abdurrahman Khan became a fierce opponent of any innovations [20, p. 49], isolated the state from the outside world and became one of the main leaders of Islam.

He also provided active foreign policy to increase territory of Afghanistan. For example, region Nooristan became as a part of Afghanistan with inhabitants [6, p. 167]. Abdurrahman directed his activity to convert people to Islam. As a result, Islam was a unity power to build prosperous Afghan state.

Essentially, the emir began preparations for a "holy war" against the British by strengthening faith and took steps to unite and bond the Afghans culturally. Thus, the English system of government itself gave rise to a sense of independence and firmness of character in Muslims, the need to rely only on their own strength. England was well aware that "Islam is one of the most dangerous enemies for her." [17]

After the death of Abdurrahman Khan, Durbar chose Khabibullah Khan as Emir of Afghanistan, who made it clear to the British that it was impossible to count on a protectorate. The fanaticism of the Afghan people has grown since the beginning of the 18th century. Britain made attempts to declare jihad [23, p. 30] to Russia through Afghanistan under the pretext that the foundations of Islam were oppressed by the former. However, the lack of money, military

manpower and the disposition of Afghans closed this issue until 1919, but in the third Anglo-Afghan war, the question of independence was raised.

As for the relationship between Afghanistan and the Russian government, especially at the last stage (1918/1921), they were complementary, since the countries used each other to achieve certain goals: RFSR - for world recognition, and Afghanistan - to achieve the independence and integrity of the state. Moreover, successful relationships were built with a diametrically opposite state only due to the fact that Russia showed loyalty to the "lamp of the nation" - Islam, and later simply overestimated its capabilities (including material ones) and gradually began to wind down plans to spread the world revolution.

Since the end of the 18th century, the Russian Empire was involved in the conflict between Great Britain and Afghanistan. Moreover, Afghanistan has officially maintained relations with the Russian Empire since 1835. During all three Anglo-Afghan wars, the "Afghan monarchy", as LN Sobolev writes, needed protection from destruction by England. Due to the constant 'sabotage on the basis of Islam' by the British government of India, Afghanistan was forced to "turn" its interests towards Russia [28, p. 1:100-109].

Since 1836, the Afghan emirs have openly provoked Russia to intervene in internal affairs in order to help unite the country, but at the same time hinting at a difficult relationship with England. the alliance with Russia was approved by the Islamic elite, which was even ready for a while to accept a position of religious tolerance towards Persia [28, p. 2:156] in order to come to terms with the Russian Empire. According to the letters of the British officers of the Bombay division, it is known that the Khan of Herat very often received letters from the Persians, with wishes to establish contact with Russia [9, p. 141].

Since 1842, a new stage of relations between Afghanistan and the Russian Empire begins. In Afghanistan, Russian spies [8, p. 131] were seen, who, as it turned out, arrived through the religious center Balkh, which until

1850 belonged to Bukhara. In this regard, and based on the agreement with Dost Mohammed Khan, the struggle against the Shiites of Iran is sharply intensifying in Afghanistan in order to weaken Russia's position in the Middle East. Shir-Ali, despite the national-religious interests of the population, deployed troops in Balkh and Herat to oppose the Russian Empire and Bukhara, although under Ahmad Shah and Timur Shah Balkh was the center of religious unity.

Only in the middle of his reign (1870) did Shir Ali Khan realize that Afghanistan should not undertake anything hostile against Russia. The Russian government responded by encouraging the "non-Christian commanders" of Afghanistan [29, p. 186], who helped to pacify Bukhara. And by the end of 1879, it became clear to the Emir of Afghanistan and the Muslim intelligentsia that Russia acted in accordance with the laws of international law, trying to preserve its historical and spiritual heritage and "[...] be content with the guarantees of good native governance" [28, p. 2: 259].

Among the population and Islamic theologians of Afghanistan, the conviction spread that Russia, conquering the country, leaves the right to choose a religion, preserves traditions and customs. The Russian Empire has been taking an active part in the internal politics of Afghanistan since 1878. At the same time, Russia set certain conditions for Abdurrahman Khan [1], in which it spoke of ending disputes with the retreating British, so as not to aggravate the contradictions between the clergy and local tribes. With the establishment of order by November 1880, Russia conducted agitation among the population of Afghanistan, after which the Afghans began to consider the empire as their "old patron" [5].

The Russian Empire influenced more on the stabilization of the internal life of Afghan society, both secular and Islamic. Afghans boldly recognized the "Russian candidate" Abdurrahman Khan as the emir of Afghanistan. "The presence of several Russians among the Afghans was enough to instill in them

... such a religious conviction, spirit and strength of consciousness ... that they are not helpless" [28, p. 3:1012].

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Russian Empire began to lose interest in the lands of Afghanistan. Initially, this was dictated by the treaty of Khabibullah Khan with Britain in 1905, and then by the Petersburg Convention of 1907 [2], where Afghanistan was outside the sphere of Russian influence.

The emirs and clergy were outraged by the destruction of the traditional foundations of the Islamic world in neighboring Muslim countries, therefore the Afghan government was forced to change its priorities in foreign policy. The seriousness of the situation was complicated by the fact that Russia, referring to the strengthening and spread of pan-Islamist movements, declared the country's isolation. In turn, this separation became the reason for the penetration of a large number of weapons by illegal means into Russia through Bukhara [2]. According to the notes of Sergei Dmitrievich Sazonov [27], an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 1904, the Russian government already then warned of a possible danger from the Muslim East.

The Russian Empire, in a letter to Khabibullah Khan in 1902, offered duty-free, free trade within the "Russian borders" [19, p. 316] and unhindered border crossing. To which the Shah's council intended to answer: "Let the Turkish dog carry out the orders of the infidels!" [19, p. 316-317] No consensus was reached, the council was disbanded. Habibullah Khan began to pursue a foreign policy aimed at improving the position of Afghanistan as the main Islamic center among other Muslim countries. But Shah was under influence of Islam Ummah even after the World War I. Anyway, he was forced to make a choose between the Afghan interests and foreign policy concerning the Unity of Turkey and Britain.

The entire domestic policy of the Afghan monarchs and the foreign policy of the aggressors and allies led to the fact that Afghanistan became an

independent, freedom-loving and militant (according to religious principles) state. And every Afghan, in fact, was a warrior for the faith [18, p. 671].

At the end of World War I, Afghanistan reached a new level of relations with Russia - not an empire, but a state that demanded recognition. In 1918, the Russian Federative Soviet Republic concludes the Brest-Litovsk Peace, in which in Article VII it first recognizes the independence and integrity of Afghanistan [4, p. 1:119-166], even if under pressure from the German side.

In March 1919, on the eve of the third Anglo-Afghan war, with the accession to the post of Emir of Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan V.I. Lenin and his government announced the recognition of the independence of Afghanistan [14]. After that, for several months, correspondence between V.I. Lenin and Amanullah Khan. The Soviet government understood the importance of these relations based on the position of the USSR in the foreign policy arena, therefore it could not do without expressing support for the internal political course of Afghanistan, which was aimed at consolidating all religious forces. "Afghanistan is the only Muslim state in the world, and fate sends the Afghan people a great historical task to unite all the enslaved Muslim peoples around them and lead them on the path of freedom and independence," V.I. Lenin [15], although 10 years ago this was completely unacceptable for Russia. But in the same letter, Russia viewed Amanullah Khan as an advanced monarch and at the same time possessed somewhat different views on imperialism, which could in no way be compared with this statement. The Soviet government tried to "lend a helping hand" in transforming religious courts into secular ones [15], thereby not taking into account the internal moods among the country's population.

In Soviet Russia, relations with Afghanistan were carefully concealed, which is noticeable in the publications in the country's main newspaper, "Pravda". For example, the establishment of friendly ties with Afghanistan was publicly announced only on April 29, 1928 [3], but the text was printed with bills. And according to the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History

documents declassified in 2005, at that time, relations between the countries had already begun to deteriorate. Moreover, it is noticeable that the RFSR, and later the USSR, intentionally avoided the use of words with a religious-nationalist character and allowed this only in extremely secret documents.

It is also worth noting that the policy pursued by Russia in Bukhara was necessarily reflected in Afghanistan as an Islamic state. This is precisely what Foreign Minister G.V. Chicherin Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (bolshevik) since 1921, that any violation of the unity of Muslims would cause outrage in the Muslim world of Afghanistan [13].

Consequently, the process of statehood formation in Afghanistan has its own characteristics and was accompanied by constant interaction with Islam, on the basis of which all spheres of life were built. At the initial stage, Islam played the role of an integration force, with the help of which the Muslim clergy finally determined the future socio-economic and political development.

Despite the feudal strife of the Afghan khans and inter-tribal strife, the position of Islam in society has never been oppressed. The nature of civil strife was caused either by political problems or by discontent in the field of economic cooperation. Actually, when Islam became a unifying force, at the same time there was a tendency when the khans more often turned to religion as a law and solved all problems through the Koran.

Throughout the existence of the empire, Islam became part of the state mechanism of the country, merged into economic life and began to regulate the order in the social structure. The mullahs took part in the establishment of the trade and economic system of Afghanistan. Agitation methods in government have demonstrated their effectiveness for the consolidation of Afghans and clergy, with the aim of further uniting the country. Islam, the "beacon of the nation", once again stood at the center of the state system. Freeing the country from the colonialists and uniting the population according to the religious principle is an idea that dates back to the 60s. 19th century in Afghanistan. It is

to this principle that the Afghans tried to be faithful until 1919 - before gaining an independent state in which Islam would not be threatened.

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