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"Friends" and "Foes" in the Social Space of the Tatar Ethnic Group

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Abstract

The history of the World Culture is a demonstration of the "war" between the two opposites: on the one hand, we see a trend towards unification of all aspects of life on a global scale, and on the other, there is a clear confrontation between different groups of mankind. Of the many causes of the disunity of the people, the authors' focus at the opposition "friend – foe" as a metaphysical principle of formation of social space wasn't chosen by accident. The fact is that any culture, in principle, is dichotomous, and the opposition "friend – foe" is the fullest incarnation of this dichotomy. As a universal principle of the formation and functioning of the cultures, it originally manifests itself in every one of them. And, as the authors of the study suggest: this opposition could either "work" in general on the cross-cultural cooperation and unity or be one of the confrontation sources. The main result of the study is that history has prepared and put forward the Tartars for carrying out a special mission, to unite peoples and cultures. But the revolutionary social upheavals that take place in the modern world pose a threat (in the circumstances of forced migration of peoples, the growth of national consciousness of the former Soviet Union space, and especially in the face of Islamic fundamentalism) on fulfilling this function.

Keywords: Eurasianism, Foe, Friend, Islamic fundamentalism, Jadidism, Tatars.

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Introduction

The opposition "friend – foe" is one of the oldest and most fundamental foundations of the culture. The multifaceted nature of its manifestation, it has two interdependent functions which can be roughly defined as constructive and destructive. Identification of something as "friendly" helps bring people together; and so the families, social groups, states, and civilizations. However, by designing some kind of unity the opposition "friend – foe" at the same time contributes to the destruction of the relationship between the people. The fact is that something unrecognized as "friendly" becomes distinct, which could lead to its interpretation under certain conditions as a "foe – enemy" (see, for example Huntington, 1993 and 1996; Harrison, 2001; Sacks, 2002).

This, so to say, common fundamental truth uniquely manifests itself in each culture at different stages of its existence. This latter circumstance is of particular interest of the authors. The answer to the question of how the "friend – foe" opposition reproduces the social space of the Tatar ethnic group helps understand the historical role of the Tatars in the modern world and in the past of its history.

Methods

The path to the truth requires a method that corresponds to the objectives of the research, and, therefore, the problems of theoretical and methodological nature are brought to the foreground. The authors do not accept the theory of God's chosen people of whatever ethnicity as well as the absolute predestination of the peoples' (and cultures') fates, and, therefore, build their research based primarily on the principles of dialectical analysis of the problem.

Discussion

Among the problems of theoretical and methodological nature, there is the problem of clarifying the ethnonym "Tatars". We believe that a clear definition of the content and the scope of this definition is, so to speak, half of the successful research. Meanwhile, the history of the ethnonym shows a clear ambiguity in its interpretation. With this in mind, the authors consider it is necessary to declare their solidarity with the opponents of the supporters of the "Bulgarizm" theory. And it is not about their (supporters') dubious call to rename the Tatars into the Bulgars. The point is in the scientific failure of the attempt to reduce the entire history of the Tatars to the history of one ethnic group. As the facts show, the ancestors of the Tatar people are not only Bulgarians but also the Huns, Kipchaks, Noghais.

The concept of "Tatar – Mongols" also needs clarification which has the theoretical and methodological significance for achieving the goal of our research. The question is how justified is the connection of the two ethnonyms "Tatars" and "Mongols" in one. On the one hand, the history of the two nations are so closely intertwined that the social space of the Mongols and the Tatars at times of Genghis-Khan and his immediate successors is in fact difficult to distinguish. Even in the culture of modern Tatars, as special research indicates, there is (albeit minimal) the Mongolian element. Is this not what is evidenced by the fact that Khans buried in the Kazan Kremlin are Genghis-Khan's genetic successors? On the other hand, these ethnonyms are two different nations and, therefore, they are at least two different social spaces. Moreover, according to ethnographers, modern Tatars cannot be identified even with medieval Central Asian Tatars.

Another group of theoretical and methodological problems is associated with some terminological difficulties in the study of Turkic history. This refers to the question of the applicability of the ethnonym "Tatars" for the interpretation of the history of the Turkic Khanate, the Mongol Empire, and the Golden Horde from the ethnic point of view of the Tatar history; and this also refers to the issue of finding adequate ratio between the Turkic and the Tatar history. In the latter case, according to historians, it would be better to use two concepts, i. e. the "Turkic-Tatar History" for the interpretation of the Middle Ages and the "Tatar history" in relation to the subsequent periods.

Thus, the discussions about the history of Tatars' origin lead us to draw a conclusion about multi-ethnicity of their roots. Ignoring this fact will result in not only misunderstanding of the social space of the Tatars, both in the past and in the present, but also in a distortion of their role in the area of inter-cultural relations; the basis of those is served by the opposition "friend – foe".

The confessional factor has played and continues to play an important role in the formation and functioning of the social space of the Tatar ethnic group. With regard to our research, the confessional factor is of interest in the following aspects. Firstly, as a factor of interfaith (and, in fact, ethnic) tolerance and stability. Secondly, as a spiritual power driving social transformation. In the first case, it is the fact that the Tatars' living area had never had serious religious conflicts, especially at the level of the masses. Meanwhile, multiculturalism as the phenomenon exists more than a thousand years here. Of course, this period is also marked by the conflicts, including inter-religious and inter-ethnic ones (they were the cause, in particular, of the persecution of the Tatars and Islam after the conquest of the Kazan Khanate by Ivan the Terrible), but the mutual tolerance and respect became the dominant relationships. This is evidenced by various sources. The well-known ethnographer G. Miller at the end of the 18th

century, wrote: "... some of Cheremissians hold Mohammedan law and are circumcised soon after the birth: and this, perhaps, came from the fact that both Cheremis and other heathen nations along with Mohammedans celebrate Friday as a great day in the week in which they do not work. On this day, there are no any services, and they do not know the reasons why their Friday is celebrated more than the other days of the week; and this seems to me the mundane habit that came to them from their neighbors, the Tatars" (Miller, 1791). In special studies, there are some changes noted that were taking place under the influence of Islam in the pagan ritual culture of the Tatars' neighbors. So, the meadow Mari pagan priests became known as the Tatar word "kart" ("old man"), and the Eastern Mari in the second half of the XIX century called their priests by other Tatar word "mullah" (Molotova, 2010). From here, the joint celebration of the adherents of various religions became a matter-of-course: "In Sviyazhsk County, the residents of the Tatar village Utyak celebrate Holy Mother of Tikhvin day. In the village of Indyrchah, Muslims celebrate Petrovka. About 20-30 villages of Tetyushi County celebrate Holy Protection. At Christmas, in Yelabuga district's village of Biektau, Muslims visit each other's homes, using mutual refreshments" (Stolyarova, 2016).

The above facts should be interpreted exactly as the evidence of religious tolerance, but not as indifference to the confessional features. With all the religious syncretism, in-house religious rituals, however, dominated in the daily life. This, for example, is evidenced by the following – even in the case of transfer to another faith the old rituals were actually respected. This is also a characteristic of modern Tatarstan (Stolyarova, 2016).

After the adoption of Islam in 922, Tatars have become part of a huge and one of the most advanced civilizations of its time. The most important feature of the "Tatar" Islam is in its ability to change, to adapt to the requirements of the time and, thus, to act as a factor of progress. In this capacity, it announced itself at the turn of XIX – XX centuries in the face of the reformatory religious and theological movement called "Jadidism", which aimed at the necessity to change Muslim education as well as the integration of Tatar schools in a secular education system, and the study of the Russian language. It advocated reforming the intra life by, for example, the separation of Sharia and madhhab, by gaining more independence by faqih, by dismissal the scholastic philosophizing on basic issues of social and legal practices of Muslims. Another position, in their view, would be a crime against the people. Thus, Jadidism, professing the principle of openness of Islam to the world, was pulling out Muslims from the state of isolation, stagnation and conservatism. Consequently, the Tatar version of Islam, as well as religious syncretism that has a place among the Tatars, reproduces an important feature and the characteristic of the social space of this nation – the tolerance, mutual patience of the various ethnic groups to each other.

Conclusion

And so, the argument about the history of the Tatar ethnic group brings us back to the starting point of the research – to the question of how the "friend – foe" opposition manifests itself in their social space? The answer, in our opinion, is fairly obvious, it is a reflection of the multicultural vision of the world. But this is not the case when a plurality of ethnic groups live in a state of voluntary isolation preventing the penetration of "foes" in their own world and hardly obeying the laws of the country. And it is not even the case when in a society the tolerant relations established on the basis of natural law because even then there is no genuine cultural integrity. Formation of the Tartars' social space for centuries followed the path of formation of the unity of the set of mutually exclusive cultures. Here is a case of multiculturalism, to describe which the further need to draw, as we see it, the possibilities of language philosophy of Eurasianism and the philosophy of Marxism is required. In the toolbox of the latter, the most appropriate to the situation is the concept of "internationalism". It reflects the state of relations between the nations, when a "foe" is such "different" from the "friend" like brothers and sisters from each other. However, in the area of inter-ethnic relations it is rather ideal, but it was admitted as realistically achievable in certain social conditions.⁶

In the Eurasian philosophy, the most suitable for the objective analysis of the problem is the concept of "Eurasianism". One of the founders of Eurasianism, S. Trubetskoy has defined this concept as follows: "The national substrate of the State, which formerly was called the Russian Empire, now called the Soviet Union, can only be the totality of the peoples inhabiting this country, considered as a special multinational European nation, and as such has a special nationalism (emphasized by authors). This nation we call Eurasian, its territory is Eurasia, its nationalism is Eurasianism" (Lavrov, 1993).

This Eurasian nation is a fusion of Slavic and Turanian (Ural-Altai – auth.) nations, the core of which is made by the Turkic-speaking ethnic groups. In turn, it formed a special Eurasian nationalism among the latter thanks to the Tatars. Another representative of the Eurasian theory, P. Savitsky considered that the Tatar culture which accepted "all sorts of gods" and tolerated "any culture" was for Russia not only the God's punishment, but also its salvation. "If Russia was conquered by the Turks which were infected by "the Iranian fanaticism and exaltation", its experience would have been more difficult and its fate would have been more bitter. If the West took Russia, it would have pulled Russia's soul out... The Tartars have not

6. Perhaps, the concept of "Soviet people" was an expression, to some extent, of the reality of the Marxist ideal of social space as a reflection of the multi-ethnic world (See, for example Ankerl, 2000; Köchler, 1999 and 2004).

change the spiritual being of Russia...", he wrote (Savitsky, 1993). Thus, at the heart of the Eurasian nationalism is the ratio of the "friend" and the "foe", where the latter is such "different" so that it complements and enriches the former. Something like that embodies the social space of the Tatars and, therefore, the assertion of the special peacekeeping potential of Tatar culture has objective grounds.

But everything flows and everything changes, and, therefore, it can be changed in the opposite direction. Among other things, this may be motivated by the growth of national consciousness of the people (an obvious fact in the former Soviet Union), and the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism, which is also true for Muslims of Tatarstan (See, for example, Khaziev et al., 2015; Khazieva et al., 2015; Stepanenko, 2016). Hence, there is a risk of substitution of the "Tatar" Islam by the different variants of the Islamic fundamentalism. And this is highly likely to mark a new line of the Tatars world split into "friend" and "foe". And, most likely that (by observing Islamic fundamentalism in reality), in their opposition to others, the others will not simply be a "foe – different" but will become "foe – enemy" (See, for example, Lewis, 1990; Barber, 1996; Harris, 2004; Toft, 2003). With regard to the growth of national consciousness, this process, as history shows, can be done either by mainly driving the traumatic memory, or by strengthening the international education of the people. In Tatarstan, they have chosen the second way and conduct a deliberate policy aimed at strengthening mutually respectful relations between the peoples living in it and also between the existing confessions. This gives us the cautious optimism and hope that in the social space of the Tatars and Tatarstan, the "friend-foe" opposition will, as before, "work" for the peace and creation.

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