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TOLERANCE AND MULTICULTURAL TRADITIONS IN THE NATIONAL CULTURAL HERITAGE OF AZERBAIJAN

Abstract. Azerbaijan has been a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multilingual country since ancient times. Ethnic-religious communities living in Azerbaijan understood the essence of diversity as a result of mutual culture and relationship in all periods of history. Since the atmosphere of tolerance in Azerbaijan is always at a high level, many international events and scientific conferences dedicated to multiculturalism, relations between nations and religions and dialogue are held here.

The article deals with the promotion of multiculturalism and tolerance in Azerbaijan at the level of state policy, the development of these traditions, and the holding of many international events. At the same time, the work carried out on the project “Address of Tolerance – Azerbaijan” with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation is discussed in this article.

Key words: multiculturalism, tolerance, national minorities, Heydar Aliyev Foundation, cultural diversity.

Introduction. Cultural diversity is a key factor of culture. Azerbaijan has been a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multilingual country since ancient times, and the reason for this is the country’s unique cultural, geopolitical and geographical location. Ethnic-religious communities living in Azerbaijan in all periods of history formed the unity of diversity as a result of mutual culture and relationship and defined its essence. There is no religious and ethnic hostility in Azerbaijan, no discrimination against religious minorities, regardless of their number. Our state cares for each of them individually, translates films and programs covering the cuisine, traditions, and folklore of

minority nations and presents them to European audiences, preserving their own traditions and cultural examples. Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan states that the State guarantees the equality of everyone regardless of race, nationality, language, religion and origin. It is forbidden to limit the rights and freedoms of citizens according to their nationality, language, religion, race, belief, origin, political and other affiliation.

The interpretation of the main material. National Leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, noted that each nation is recognized, considered and distinguished among other nations for its many characteristics. The most important and most valuable of them is culture. Cultures within countries are created by the small number of peoples who live and settle in that area. It would be more correct to call those few peoples as national minorities. Every nation living in Azerbaijan speaks the Azerbaijani language and its own ethnic language, maintaining its ethnic characteristics, celebrate national and ethnic holidays, create their own cultural centers, associations and other institutions, publish various newspapers and materials in their own languages, and they study in Azerbaijani and their own language, learn the history of their country and their nation. Cultural centers were established in our republic for the purpose of protection of ethnic and national minorities, study of material and spiritual cultures. Several societies of national minorities operate in Azerbaijan: “Turgan-tel” Tatar culture society, “Crimea” Society of Crimean Tatars, “Vatan” society of Ahiska Turks, Georgian society, Ukrainian society, “Sona” society of Ahiska Turk women, Avar society and other amateur societies, national and state theaters, amateur associations.

Since the atmosphere of tolerance in Azerbaijan is always at a high level, many international events and scientific conferences dedicated to multiculturalism, relations between nations and religions and dialogue are held here. The event on “Globalization, religion, traditional values”, which was attended by more than 200 representatives representing different countries and religions of the world, was held in Baku in April 2010. This can be associated with the recognition of Azerbaijan in the international world, the expansion and development of the atmosphere of tolerance. Starting from 2011, the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue is held in Baku every two years on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. These Forums are realized in partnership with UNESCO, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the Council of Europe, the North-South Center of the Council of Europe, ISESCO, and the UN World Tourism Organization.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation has invaluable services in the development and promotion of religious tolerance, religious diversity, national and religious tolerance, multiculturalism, and national-spiritual values in our republic. The 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations was held in Baku on April 25-27, 2016. The holding of the 7th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations in Azerbaijan is an indicator of a multicultural and tolerant atmosphere in the country. The broad recognition and application of multiculturalism in this form is one of Azerbaijan's contributions to the world. Unlike isolationism and assimilation, multiculturalism is the existence of cultural diversity of not only one dominant ethnic group in the society, but also of other national minorities and immigrants [5].

Protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities is one of the main directions of the policy pursued by the Azerbaijani state, and Azerbaijan, which has confirmed itself as an exemplary state in terms of tolerance, is a state where all peoples living here and where people of all religions live freely. The main provisions of the national policy, which ensure the equality of rights and freedoms of all citizens, regardless of race, nationality, religion, language, gender, origin and affiliation, are specified in the constitution of Azerbaijan (Articles 25, 44). The national policy concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan is also based on the following international documents:

- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;
- UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- Final act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe;
- Copenhagen document of the OSCE Conference on Human Rights;
- Commonwealth of Independent States' Convention on Ensuring the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities.

Representatives of different nationalities in Azerbaijan work productively in different areas of society, make worthy contributions to the country's development, and work in state structures. A number of ethnic minorities of the country, including Russian, Lezgi, Tat, Talysh, etc. are represented in the Milli Majlis (Parliament) by their representatives. The State Advisory Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan on international, multiculturalism and religious issues was established in February, 2014. Taking into account the importance of the wider recognition of Azerbaijan, where multiculturalism has become a way of life, as well as the importance of analyzing and

promoting the philosophical, social, political and other aspects, which are specific to various multicultural models in individual countries, in the reality of Azerbaijan, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan signed a decree “On the establishment of the Baku International Multiculturalism Center” on May 15, 2014. In accordance with the ideology of Azerbaijanism, the center is doing consistent work to ensure the protection of tolerance and cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Being recognized as a country of multiculturalism in the world, Azerbaijan studies and promotes existing multicultural models. The center implements various projects on studying and promoting the experience of our country in the field of inter-ethnic, inter-confessional and inter-cultural relations [3, pp. 6-7].

Like all the peoples of the world, the people of Azerbaijan have reached this day by passing through difficult and very merciless tests of history and making millions of sacrifices. There have been glorious victories, defeats, progress, decline, celebration and sadness. However, the ethno-cultural phenomenon called “Azerbaijani” never envied someone else’s home, property, destiny, despised the neighbor, did not encroach on the rights of the stranger [4, p. 337].

The basis of the promotion of multiculturalism, tolerance and religious tolerance in Azerbaijan at the level of state policy is the country’s history of statehood and the development of these traditions. Whether the Safavid State, the enlightenment movement in the 19th-20th centuries, or the political behavior, which included the representation of representatives of various ethnic groups and religious groups living in the country, were transformed into the ideology of statehood by National Leader Heydar Aliyev at the end of the 20th century. He played an invaluable role in preserving the culture of tolerance in Azerbaijan and in carrying out major reforms in this field in general. Heydar Aliyev said: “Tolerance and endurance are very broad concepts. It means not only the tolerance of religions, but also the tolerance of each other’s customs, spirituality and cultures. As an independent state that adheres to the principles of democracy, Azerbaijan provides opportunities for freedom and liberty to all peoples and nationalities living in its territory, regardless of their religion, language, race or political affiliation”. Since the first days of his return to power, the Great Leader defined equal attention and care of all religions by the state as a priority of state policy. The political foundations of Azerbaijani multiculturalism are reflected in his decrees and orders, as well as in other legislative acts [1, p. 77].

Azerbaijani mentality, Azerbaijani national character has always played the role of a unique humanitarian-political bridge between the East and the West. The modern state and nation of Azerbaijan has fully confirmed this communicative image, which is real and effective between the mentioned civilizations. So, the unique energy created by the synthesis of Western and Eastern civilizations has historically settled in the blood and soul of Azerbaijanis. Another specific point in Azerbaijan's national character is related to Islamic ideology. The people of Azerbaijan are a society that carries high Islamic values in their heart, soul, behavior, morals and spirituality throughout the Middle Ages and modern history continuously. Our people are loyal to these values even today. The main important principle of Islam formed in Azerbaijan, such as its openness to modernity and tolerant attitude towards other spiritual values, has proven itself long ago. Ahmed Bey Agayev (Ahmed Agaoglu – 1868–1939), one of the prominent representatives of the intellectual elite of Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 20th century, defined the contours of the political strategy of the Azerbaijani society based on the abovementioned principles. He believed that the transition from the idea of the umma (public) to the idea of the nation should be the main condition for the formation and continuous development of the modern ethnic unity in the East and the Islamic world. So, tolerance, which is the most progressive element of Azerbaijan's national character, rose to the level of multiculturalism policy in the 90s of the 20th century. Today, Azerbaijan cooperates with the UN, OIC, OSCE, UNESCO, ISESCO, CE and other organizations in the international arena with the aim of promoting and spreading the rich historical experience gained in the spheres of tolerance and multiculturalism. The “Baku Summit of Religious Leaders” held in Azerbaijan on April 26-27, 2010 was a great opportunity to promote the state policy implemented in the religious sphere of Azerbaijan. Representatives of all religious centers of the world – the Russian Orthodox Church, the Georgian Orthodox Church, the Armenian Gregorian Church, as well as the Vatican, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the religious institutions of the Islamic world took part in this event. A conference called “Religious tolerance: culture of coexistence in Azerbaijan” within the framework of the “Azerbaijan in the heart of Paris” project was held with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation on October 8, 2015. The “International Forums on Intercultural Dialogue” held in Baku have a special value and importance in glorifying the policy of multiculturalism implemented in Azerbaijan in the international arena [4, p. 339-340].

The state of Azerbaijan has implemented a correct and healthy national policy towards all national minorities, peoples and ethnic groups and ensured their equal rights. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the culture of ethnic groups and national minorities living in Azerbaijan is preserved as a part of the country's culture and conditions are provided for its development. The protection and support of cultural diversity is reflected in the state policy of Azerbaijan. The state of Azerbaijan always supports and encourages the works carried out in the direction of the national minorities and peoples to keep their traditions alive here and transmitting it on from generation to generation.

The goal of Azerbaijan's policy is to preserve the cultural heritage of national minorities and to show that it encourages friendly coexistence, sincere communication, and brotherhood between peoples. The national and international events implemented by the Azerbaijani government strengthen the solidarity of the Azerbaijani people and increase the reputation of our country in the international arena as a place where cultures and civilizations meet.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation always contributes to the establishment of human values such as unity and tolerance among different ethnic and religious groups. The work done by the Foundation has a great impact not only within the country, but also beyond its borders. The "Address of Tolerance – Azerbaijan" project is one of the progressive works done in this direction. A number of mosques, churches and synagogues were repaired and restored within the framework of the project:

- The Orthodox Church in Baku was renovated and the facade of the temple was changed in 2007;
- The Heydar Aliyev Foundation and the Roman Catholic religious community signed a Memorandum of Understanding in September 2008;
- A new mosque was built in Gabala by order of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in 2010-2013;
- The Heydar Juma Mosque in Mardakan settlement has been reconstructed at the initiative of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, etc. since 2012 [2, pp. 327-328].

At the same time, the work of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation under the "Address of Tolerance – Azerbaijan" project is reflected in the holding of a number of prestigious events abroad and the restoration of various monuments:

- New halls dedicated to Islamic art were opened in the Louvre museum of Paris at the initiative of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in September 2012;
- An agreement was signed between the Heydar Alitev Foundation and the Vatican Apostolic Library on “Restoration of new manuscripts and their digitization in 2015-2016” on June 2, 2020;
- The catacombs of St. Marcellinius and Pietro were restored within the framework of the “Bilateral Agreement on the Restoration of Roman Catacombs” signed between the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Vatican in Rome, on June 22, 2012 under the “Address of Tolerance – Azerbaijan” project, etc. [2, p. 329-330]

Conclusion. The state of Azerbaijan has implemented a correct and healthy national policy towards all national minorities, peoples and ethnic groups and ensured their equal rights. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the culture of ethnic groups and national minorities living in Azerbaijan is preserved as a part of the country’s culture and conditions are provided for its development. The protection and support of cultural diversity is reflected in the state policy of Azerbaijan. The state of Azerbaijan always supports and encourages the works carried out in the direction of the national minorities and peoples to keep their traditions alive here and transmitting it on from generation to generation.

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Fərqanə Hüseynova (Azərbaycan)

AZƏRBAYCANIN MİLLİ-MƏDƏNİ İRSİNDƏ TOLERANTLIQ VƏ MULTİKULTURAL ƏNƏNƏLƏR

Azərbaycan qədimdən çoxdinli, çoxmillətli və çoxdilli ölkə olmuşdur. Tarixin bütün dövrlərində Azərbaycanda məskunlaşan etnik-dini birliklər, qarşılıqlı mədəniyyət və münasibət nəticəsində müxtəlifliyin mahiyyətini dərk etmişlər. Azərbaycanda tolerantlıq mühiti hər zaman yüksək səviyyədə olduğu üçün burada multikulturalizmə, millətlər və dinlər arasında olan münasibətlərə, dialoqa həsr edilmiş beynəlxalq səviyyəli bir çox tədbirlər, elmi konfranslar keçirilir. Məqalədə Azərbaycanda multikulturalizmin, tolerantlığın dövlət siyasəti səviyyəsində təbliğindən və bu ənənələrin inkişafından, beynəlxalq səviyyəli bir çox tədbirlərin keçirilməsindən bəhs edilir. Eyni zamanda Heydər Əliyev Fondunun dəstəyi ilə “Tolerantlığın ünvanı – Azərbaycan” layihəsi üzrə görülmən işlərdən söhbət açılır.

Açar sözlər: multikulturalizm, tolerantlıq, milli azlıqlar, Heydər Əliyev Fondu, mədəni müxtəliflik.

Фергана Гусейнова (Азербайджан)

ТОЛЕРАНТНОСТЬ И МУЛЬТИКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ТРАДИЦИИ В НАЦИОНАЛЬНОМ КУЛЬТУРНОМ НАСЛЕДИИ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА

Азербайджан с древних времен был мультирелигиозной, многонациональной и многоязычной страной. Этно-религиозные общины, населявшие Азербайджан во все периоды истории, в результате взаимной культуры и взаимоотношений осознали сущность разнообразия. Поскольку среда толерантности в Азербайджане всегда была на высоком уровне, здесь проводятся многие мероприятия международного уровня, научные конференции, посвященные мультикультурализму, отношениям между нациями и религиями, диалогу. В статье говорится о пропаганде мультикультурализма, толерантности в Азербайджане на уровне государственной политики и развитии этих традиций, проведении многих мероприятий международного уровня. В то же время обсуждается работа, проделанная по проекту «Адрес толерантности – Азербайджан» при поддержке Фонда Гейдара Алиева.

Ключевые слова: мультикультурализм, толерантность, национальные меньшинства, Фонд Гейдара Алиева, культурное разнообразие.