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PAKISTANI PHILOSOPHERS

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Relations between Russia and Pakistan have always been comprehensive. They were not limited only to pragmatic state goals of a material nature, but embraced a wide range of spiritual life inherent in our peoples. In the practice of international state relations, there are very rare cases of priority establishment of relations between philosophers. But this is exactly what happened thanks to the initiative of Pakistan philosophers. Two months before March agreement on the development of bilateral economic ties the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR received an invitation to participate in the work of the Pakistan Congress of Philosophy (January 11–14, 1961, Karachi). The author of this article was fortunate to be one of the three members of the delegation. Marietta Stepanyants has been a fellow of the main academic Center of research in philosophy since 1959. Here she got her academic dissertations, received Ph.D., Professorship, created and chaired during 32 years the Center for Oriental Philosophies Studies. Now at the age 88 she continues her research and teaching as the principal researcher of the Institute of philosophy of the Russian Academy of sciences.

Prof. Marietta Stepanyants shares her personal experience of meeting Pakistani philosophers and intellectuals at the Eighth and Twelfth Philosophical Congresses (1965, Lahore), at the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the famous Lahore Oriental College, at international conferences, congresses and forums in Great Britain, Greece, Egypt, Iran, Canada, At the same time, two persons are singled out: the founder of the Pakistan Congress of Philosophy, the creator of the world-famous encyclopedia of Islamic philosophy — Muhammad M. Sharif and the son of Muhammad Iqbal Senator Javed Iqbal, who received a brilliant philosophical and legal education (University of Cambridge), a member of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, a member of the Senate (Upper House of Parliament of Pakistan).

A special place in the article is given to the poet-philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, who was and remains a “spiritual father” for Pakistanis. Marietta Stepanyants translated in Russian Alama Muhammad lectures “The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam” and widely commented them. She argues that the significance of the project to reconstruct the religious thought of Islam allows to consider him the most Enlightened Muslim thinker of the twentieth century, whose influence of ideas will continue and will increase in the transforming world in general and the Muslim world, in particular.

Keywords: Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal, Russia, congress, philosophy, reconstruction

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ПАКИСТАНСКИЕ ФИЛОСОФЫ

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Отношения между Россией и Пакистаном всегда были всесторонними. Они не ограничивались только прагматическими государственными целями материального характера, но охватывали широкий спектр духовной жизни, присущей нашим народам. В практике международных государственных отношений встречаются очень редкие случаи приоритетного установления отношений между философами. Но именно это и произошло благодаря инициативе пакистанских философов. За два месяца до мартовского соглашения о развитии двусторонних экономических связей Институт философии Академии наук СССР получил приглашение принять участие в работе Пакистанского философского конгресса (11–14 января 1961 г., Карачи). Автору этой статьи посчастливилось быть одним из трех членов делегации. Мариэтта Степанянц является научным сотрудником главного академического центра исследований в области философии с 1959 г. Здесь она защитила научные диссертации, получила степень доктора философии, звание профессора, создала и возглавляла в течение 32 лет Центр изучения восточной философии. Сейчас, в возрасте 88 лет, она продолжает свою исследовательскую и преподавательскую деятельность в качестве главного научного сотрудника Института философии Российской академии наук.

Профессор Мариэтта Степанянц делится своим личным опытом встреч с пакистанскими философами и интеллектуалами на Восьмом и Двенадцатом философских конгрессах (1965, Лахор), на праздновании 100-летия знаменитого Лахорского восточного колледжа, на международных конференциях, конгрессах и форумах в Великобритании, Греции, Египте, Иране, Канаде, выделяя двух из них: основателя Пакистанского философского конгресса, создателя всемирно известной энциклопедии исламской философии — Мухаммада М. Шарифа и сына Мухаммада Икбала сенатора Джаведа Икбала, получившего блестящее философское и юридическое образование (Кембриджский университет), члена Верховного суда Пакистана, члена Сената (Верхняя палата парламента Пакистана).

Особое место в статье отведено поэту-философу Мухаммаду Икбалу, который был и остается «духовным отцом» пакистанцев. Мариэтта Степанянц перевела на русский язык лекции Аламы Мухаммада «Реконструкция религиозной мысли в исламе» и всесторонне прокомментировала их. Она утверждает, что значимость проекта по реконструкции религиозной мысли ислама позволяет считать его самым просвещенным мусульманским мыслителем двадцатого века, влияние идей которого будет продолжаться и усиливаться в трансформирующемся мире в целом и в мусульманском мире в частности.

Ключевые слова: Пакистан, Мухаммад Икбал, Россия, конгресс, философия, реконструкция

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The establishment of diplomatic relations is the first step, followed by the development of relations in many other spheres of public life, in which trade, economics and politics up to military cooperation are in priority. This is followed by science, education, culture. Politicians are not always aware of the importance of understanding public consciousness, formed by historical experience, traditions, culture, religious faith, in the successful development of priority practical areas of cooperation.

The first after the establishment of relations between the USSR and Pakistan was a bilateral trade Agreement (1956). The starting point in the development of economic cooperation was the March 1961 Agreement, which was followed by the development of scientific, technical and cultural ties in the 2nd half of the 60s. Surprisingly, philosophers of Pakistan initiated communication with colleagues in the

USSR before many others. Two months before the above-mentioned March Agreement, the Institute of Philosophy of the USSR Academy of Sciences received an invitation to take part in the work of the Pakistan Congress of Philosophy (Jan. 11–14, 1961, Karachi). No less striking is the fact, that the Soviet bureaucracy worked astonishingly quickly, giving permission for scholars to fly out on time. The delegation included Deputy Director of the Institute of Philosophy E. V. Shorokhova, Editor-in-Chief of the journal “Problems of Philosophy” V. S. Semenov and one of the youngest fellows of the Institute. By virtue of happy circumstances, it turned out to be a graduate of the Oriental Faculty of the University, who received in 1959 a referral to work at the Institute of Philosophy. This was explained by the fact, that the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences needed employees with the knowledge of oriental languages in preparing world history of philosophy (in 5 volumes). The trip to Pakistan was an incredible success for me, truly fateful.

Six years of university education allowed me to master the Urdu language, gave knowledge of the history and culture of India, in general, and of Indian Muslims, in particular. Thanks to the wonderful Indian Muslim teacher Zoe Ansari, I was fond of translations, some of which were published. Moreover, my master’s thesis was devoted to the work of Saadat Hassan Manto, an outstanding master of the short story, who was compared to Chekhov in Urdu. But all this was bookish knowledge, incomparable with being in a country whose people professed Islam and spoke Urdu [Stepanyants M. T. 1966, 304–307; 1962, 180–192].

Our delegation was fortunate enough to participate in the Pakistan Congress of Philosophy, led by its founder and President for life Muhammad M. Sharif (1893–1965), a recognized authority among Muslim philosophers in India and Pakistan. It is noteworthy, that he was the president of the Indian Congress of Philosophy, before the formation of Pakistan.

Muhammad Sharif was born in Lahore, the true center of British Indian Muslim culture. He received his primary and secondary education at the Anglo-Eastern College of Aligarh and at the Aligarh Muslim University. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in philosophy, he continued his studies in the UK, where he received a master’s degree at the University of Cambridge, and then defended his doctoral dissertation under the supervision of the famous English philosopher George Edward Moore, who, together with Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, was one of the founders of the analytic tradition of philosophy. Upon his return to his homeland, M. Sharif was the head of the Department of Philosophy at Aligarh Muslim University. In 1945 he became Rector of the Institute of Islamic Culture (Lahore). In the years preceding the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan, M. M. Sharif was a supporter of the Muslim League and shared its idea of an independent Muslim state. Until the end of his life, he remained a member of the Council for Islamic Ideology and a professor at Islamiyah College. His most famous work is the fundamental 8-volume “History of Muslim Philosophy”, in which he acted as a developer of the concept, compiler and author of many articles [Sharif, M. (Ed.) 1963–1966].

In total, I was presented with two large boxes of books and magazines, including the Pakistan Philosophical Journal and Iqbal Review sets. This book “treasure” allowed me to prepare and successfully defend my dissertation in 1963, on the basis of which a monograph on philosophy in Pakistan was published in 1967, soon translated into English and published in Pakistan [Stepanyants, M. 1967, 1972].

The publication unexpectedly attracted attention abroad (in England and Germany) even before it was published in Pakistan [Evans H. 1967; Braker H. 1969]. In Pakistan, however, my modest book in translation was reviewed in 1972 by an authoritative philosopher, as well as by a journalist-columnist [Qadir, C.F. 1972]; Zeno. 1972]. I confess that I had to hide my foreign responses before the political and ideological changes that took place in the country, since the reviewers drew attention to the difference in my attitude towards Islam in comparison with the previously dominant one in the works of the famous

Soviet atheist L. I. Klimovich. As for the Pakistani reviews, they supported me in their determination not to succumb to criticism from domestic colleagues, who argued, that my work would cause an “anti-Soviet explosion” (on this occasion a denouncement was even written to the director of the publishing house “Eastern Literature”) Oleg Dreyer.

M. M. Sharif died and was buried in his native Lahore in 1965. Hence, our second meeting with him could not take place when I took part in the work of the Pakistan Congress of Philosophy (12th session) in Lahore for the second time. Finally, in 1973, I was able to visit Pakistan in connection with the celebration of the centenary of the famous Lahore Oriental College, the graduate of which was Muhammad Iqbal. Subsequently, my personal life developed in such a way that it was no longer possible to visit Pakistan, but this did not prevent me from continuing to write about Allama Muhammad Iqbal for almost all subsequent years, whom I value as the most enlightened Muslim thinker of the twentieth century. I have spoken about this in reports and speeches not only at the scientific conferences in the USSR, but also at sessions of the World Philosophical Congress (Great Britain, Turkey, Greece, Korea, China), as well as at “Congresses of Philosophers of the East and West” (USA, Honolulu), at the international conferences in Egypt, India, Iran, Canada, Morocco, Turkey, USA. There are published by me articles about Iqbal’s philosophical views in Russian encyclopedias (included sections on Iqbal’s worldview) in various textbooks, in the university textbook of anthology on Eastern philosophies (three editions in Russian, one in English) [Stepanyants, 1997, 2002, 2011]. The main thing is that it was possible to prepare and publish 2 editions of the academic translation of M. Iqbal’s famous lectures “Reconstruction of religious thought in Islam” [Степанинц, 2002, 2020].

Thanks to the philosophical legacy of Muhammad Iqbal, I was fortunate enough to meet a number of prominent Pakistani intellectuals outside Pakistan. First of all, I mean Hafiz Malik, professor of history and political science at Villanova University (Pennsylvania). As Managing Editor of “Volume 7 of Iqbal” in Columbia University’s Studies in Oriental Culture series, he invited me to contribute to the preparation of the volume. The invitation was a great honor. In 1971, by a happy coincidence, I found myself in New York as part of a delegation of Soviet women. Hafiz took the opportunity to meet (before that, we had only corresponded) and specially came from Villanova to hand over the volume that had just been published [Stepanyants, 1971]. The meeting marked the beginning of our long-term correspondence and several meetings: my month-long visit to the Center for Islamic Studies of Villanova University in October 1992, initiated by Hafiz Malik; a few years later, I organized the visit of Hafiz and the rector of his university to Moscow.

In January 1995 the VII East-West Philosophers’ Conference took place in Honolulu. The Hawaiian conferences had laid the foundation for the institutionalization of the comparative philosophy. These Conferences were always held by the University of Hawaii and are distinguished by the highest professional level of invited participants. While being a Director of this high forum, I had the privilege of preparing the Conference for five years (1990–1995) and then serving as its President. Representatives of Western, Chinese, Indian and Japanese philosophical traditions were usually invited as plenary speakers. Using my right of the Program Council’s Chair, I decided to ensure the participation of intellectuals from the previously ignored Muslim world by inviting plenary speakers from Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan and Iran. The Conference theme “Justice and Democracy: Cross-Cultural Perspectives” determined the choice of Javed Iqbal as the Pakistani participant. Nobody could be better than the son of the world-famous poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, who received a brilliant philosophical and legal education (University of Cambridge); for many years had legal practice, judicial — in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, and finally — parliamentary, as an elected member of the Senate (Upper House of Parliament of Pakistan).

Javed Iqbal's report was one of the best and had been included in the volume of selected presentations at the VII Conference [Iqbal J. 1997]. I believe, that the success of the report was due to the fact that it refuted two common stereotypes. The first is about the legal system of Islam, which is supposedly fundamentally incompatible with democracy. Javed Iqbal noted the fallacy of this point of view, referring to the (sura 3:159): "It is reported that Prophet said: "Differences of opinion in my community are [a manifestation of Divine] Mercy" and "My community will never accept a mistake." The command to the Prophet in this regard was for no other purpose than to emphasize the importance of "consultation" (*shura*) to the Muslims in the managing of affairs of state. The Prophet is reported to have said, "Difference of opinion in my community is [the manifestation of Divine] Mercy", and "My community would never agree on an error". The Prophet always consulted with a group of prominent members of the community on the conduct of public affairs. It was an advisory body, and this practice was subsequently followed by its successors, the Righteous Caliphs (632 CE to 661 AD). The second stereotype, refuted by Javed Iqbal, is that justice is achievable only by the Western democratic system. I believe, that the theme of the Conference was conceived as a demonstration of the justification of the Western world claim to exclusive possession of the practice of a democratic state system. However, unlike the American and European participants, representatives of India, China, Korea, the USSR and the countries of the Muslim world argued the possibility and, moreover, the need for a democratic legal system, taking into account historical experience, cultural and religious traditions. In this regard, Javed Iqbal reminded that "Muhammad Iqbal was the only thinker who used the expression "spiritual democracy" to define an Islamic state. However, if the state is an integral part of Islam, his conception, at least in a political sense, was a departure from the conventional wisdom. But it should be understood that the traditional literature on the Islamic political order was compiled at a time when the world of Islam was touched by an absolute, or rather perverse, monarchy, and when, in Iqbal's terms, the political ideals of Islam were "repaganized" [Iqbal J., 1997, p. 243].

Pakistan for me has always been personified by Allama Muhammad Iqbal. This explains why, during my 60 years of academic career, I have maintained an interest in writing articles about his philosophy. With future generations in mind, I named a recent article "I am the voice of the poet of tomorrow" [Stepanyants, 2022, pp. 13–25], using Iqbal's self-evaluation in his widely known poem "Secrets of the Self". The Russian-language textbook on Oriental philosophies for university students is addressed to the younger generations, in which an anthology of selected sources translated into Russian is attached to the lecture course, including the final lecture from "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" by Muhammad Iqbal.

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