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NATIONAL AND CONFESSIONAL TOLERANCE OF STUDENTS TRAINING AT UNIVERSITIES OF THE USA

Keywords: national and confessional tolerance, dialogue of cultures and confessions; cross-cultural and interconfessional interaction; religious pluralism; multinational environment.

National and confessional tolerance of students training at Universities of the USA has been examined. Cross-cultural and interconfessional interaction of students has been revealed. Activity of the organizations, established for cross-cultural dialogue among the religious groups on Campuses has been marked.

Ключевые слова: национальная и конфессиональная толерантность, диалог культур и конфессий, межкультурное и межконфессиональное взаимодействие, религиозный плюрализм, многонациональная среда.

Рассмотрена национальная и конфессиональная толерантность студентов, обучающихся в университетах США. Выявлено межкультурное и межконфессиональное взаимодействие студентов. Обозначена работа организаций, образованных для межкультурного диалога среди религиозных групп в университетских кампусах.

As we see from the history, the USA have always been and is still crossroad, venue for meetings and dialogue of various religious traditions, cultures and civilizations. Since the United States has received repeating waves of immigrants, a persistent theme of American history has been that of the incorporation of the foreigners into the political and social system of the country. The dominant interpretation both in American historiography and nationalist ideology had been one of rapid and easy assimilation.

The study of the historical background of the ethnic and religious acceptance phenomenon in the U.S. involves access to resources, especially public education, as an incentive to contributing to the overall socio-economic well-being of society. Modern world-wide conflicts, which are often rooted in or connected with differences in religious practices, dictate the need to improve mechanisms for harmonizing religious relations. Historical forms of interaction between cultures and ethnic groups in the poly-confessional and multi-national states take on the function of models. A correlation with them helps optimize the options for a way out of the modern conflicts of the world community. In fact, dialogue between cultures is the way to ensure, preserve and promote cultural diversity, awareness of identity and accelerate the increase in the total range of values [1].

The United States occupies a special place among the multinational countries. The breadth of countries of origin comprising this nation influences the initial mood of the inhabitants to cross-cultural communication and leads to the level of the existing multi-ethnic environment intercultural communication. An unbiased analysis of historical experience, a retrospective of the relations of bodies of government with poly-confessional community of the country is the condition for an adequate assessment of the current state of the United States, cross-cultural and interconfessional communication of its peoples [2].

Differences between the peoples belonging to different cultures and religions are the realities of the existence of human society. Encouragement of harmonious relations between nations and ethnic groups, between people of different faiths is an important issue of our time. It is particularly relevant for the United States because of

the heterogeneity of its people. Long standing traditions of the neighborhood and residence in one area is important, particularly, for the people of the U.S. We can see a deep history of cross-cultural and interconfessional cooperation in this country.

Usually cross-cultural interaction is a special kind of relationships and connections that are emerging between cultures, as well as mutual influence, reciprocal changes that develop in the course of these relations. Change in the state, field of activity, values and spiritual orientation of a particular culture over the long time – become crucial in the process of cross-cultural interaction. It is believed that occasional contacts and other relationships that do not reach the deep level the structure of cultural activity, the value orientations, and lifestyle of a particular culture cannot be attributed to cross-cultural interactions, and they are the forms of coexistence and cultural contacts with each other. The organization and content of teaching the humanities in schools is important in promoting cross-cultural interactions [3].

It should be noted that the American nation is a relatively young multi-ethnic community that was formed in the long process of cultural, economic, social and consumer interactions, as well as in the process of mixing and assimilation of the descendants of people from different ethnic backgrounds, representing all major races of world.

In general, the USA is a diverse country with a multitude of religions. But historically, the first immigrants arrived to the United States were (according to religious affiliation) Protestants, who fled to the New World from Europe. The Protestant religion greatly influenced the course of history of the United States. One of the main concepts of the religion is the desire to work and the promotion of labor, which is a significant factor in economic development of the country. The religious spectrum of the USA covers Protestants, Roman Catholics, other Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Mormons and members of unspecified religions [4].

The United States has consistently been opposed to extremism, the use of religion to undermine

social stability, the spread of hostility and xenophobia. The leaders make a significant contribution to the preaching of acceptance, mutual understanding between people of different nationalities and faiths.

Thereupon analysis of national and confessional tolerance of students training at Universities of the USA is demanded in the context of present political realities. It is remarkable that Universities of the USA are the surprisingly diverse Campuses, diverse in ethnicity and nationality. There are students who came to study from many countries of Europe, South America, Asia and Africa. The Universities create an atmosphere of cross-cultural and interconfessional diversity. While studying at the university, students have a great experience of communicating with people of different nationalities and religions. They co-exist in harmony and friendship, despite the diversity of their traditions and cultures.

US University is a diverse community made up of people from different cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, and physical abilities. These differences result in a diversity of ideas, knowledge and worldviews that enhance our education and preparation for work in a global economy. History and personal experiences have shown that when diverse ideas interact, the potential for innovation, creativity and understanding increases. There are also students of different nationalities, who came from other countries and children of immigrants at US Universities. Many students want to know more about the religious traditions of other nations. Realizing that the world is multinational, the students want to peacefully co-exist in it.

University Campus life reflects a world in which there is religious pluralism. Foreign students show awareness of the politics in which religion plays an important role. Students understand that interconfessional cooperation is not only important in the formation of national identity, but also in the prevention of ethnic and religious conflicts, in the dialogue of cultures. At the same time, religious conflict can lead to hostility, cultural divisions and religious intolerance, even within a single state.

Students of US Universities are aware that in modern society the dialogue between Christianity and Islam, Christianity and Judaism, among other faiths is very important. With all the cultural differences, all extraneous features in their history, they share the wisdom, the appeal to the best qualities that are inherent in man. This brings to the ability to search for a common language between confessions. Dialogue between religions is an important component of the dialogue of civilizations.

At US Universities the diversity makes people strong. They will continue to initiate academic curricula and courses, research areas, outreach programs and a Campus culture where diversity of ideas and people is embraced. Student groups are an excellent way to expand a circle of friends, learn new cultures, and challenge existing ideas and viewpoints. It is important to note that the University administration pays attention to the religious and racial diversity of students. There are a lot of organizations within the University Campuses that were created to support students of different religious beliefs [5].

The mission of the organizations is to promote good will, cooperation and dialogue among all of the religious and faith-based groups represented on the University Campuses without any compromise of the beliefs of the particular faiths represented. The organizations work to help build and foster an atmosphere on Campuses conducive to religious life and scholarly pursuit, services, support and opportunity.

Students affiliated with these organizations at US Universities meet periodically to discuss anything relevant to the academic study of religions. All students are welcome and encouraged to join; they need not be involved in a Religious Studies major or minor. Everyone is encouraged to attend events that include lectures, film viewings, performances, trips to local places of worship and respect. They do not endorse any particular religion or lack thereof. They talk about religions and learn about them, enhancing their knowledge of peoples and their traditions.

These organizations represent a diverse variety of faiths, traditions, and beliefs. Despite the differences in faiths that exist between them, the groups work peacefully and diligently on behalf of the University community to provide religious services, spiritual counseling, education, support, and opportunities for involvement. The majority of members actively sponsor student faith-based organizations at US Universities and work together to guide, strengthen, and enhance the college experience. As a whole, the different organizations participate in volunteer opportunities on Campus, assist with fall welcome activities, help students move in to the residential halls, and hold spiritual fairs on Campus to educate the community about religious opportunities and different faiths.

Despite the differences in religious faiths, the organizations work quietly and diligently to provide religious services and counseling, education, support and opportunities for involvement into multinational environment. The organizations sponsor student activities at the University and work together to improve the lives of students of different nationalities. Due to the work of the organizations, the students become more familiar with each other, have active student life, and arrange various festivals, events and holidays.

Thus, national and confessional tolerance plays an increasingly important role in the cultural, historical and political evolution of modern society. Interacting with other cultures, confessional factor influences the development of relations between peoples, in particular, students. Even for the "multicultural" countries of modern Europe and the USA, the combination of ethnic and religious-communal, social and national identity is of great importance [6]. Historical forms of interaction between ethnic groups and cultures in the poly-confessional and multi-national states take on the function of models, a correlation with them helps optimize the options for a way out of the modern conflicts of the world community [7]. The United States is a country, where, despite the tradition of cultural unification, there is still emphasis placed on ways to enhance the relations between ethnic communities.

If to compare Universities of the USA and Universities of Russia, it is important to note that Russia is the polyconfessional country, and students of different nationalities study at the Russian Universities, but the administration of Universities does nothing for creation of the amicable polyconfessional atmosphere. Students peacefully coexist without organizations, established for cross-cultural dialogue among the religious groups. But it would be better to accept experience of the American University organizations in order to improve the lives of students of different nationalities.

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