

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE OF NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN AFGHANISTAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY

In the early 19th century, Afghanistan's population was predominantly composed of Sunni Muslims and various ethno-religious groups practising Shia Islam, including the local Hazara community and the Jamshida and Kyzylbash tribes, who were relocated to the region by different rulers. Additionally, there were adherents of pre-Islamic beliefs — indigenous peoples who maintained ancient religious practices and traditions but were forcibly converted to Islam by Afghan authorities in the late 19th century. Other small non-Muslim groups that migrated to these lands throughout history included Armenians, Jews, and Hindus, with the latter term often referring to all non-Muslim inhabitants from India. Despite their relatively small numbers, these communities played a significant role in developing Afghanistan's domestic and international trade. However, the social, political and economic conditions of Afghan Armenians, Jews, and Hindus during the 19th century have not received sufficient attention in Russian scientific literature. This paper aims to ascertain the main reasons for their migration to Afghan cities, to trace the historical shifts in their population numbers, to identify the factors that influenced these changes, to determine their role in the socio-political and commercial landscape of Afghanistan during this period, and to examine the attitudes of the Afghan government and society towards these groups during the 19th century.

Keywords: Afghanistan, Armenians, Jews, Hindus, society, church, synagogue, trade

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