
THE WORD OF THE GUEST EDITOR

Nowadays Turkey is an important actor in world politics. At the same time, Turkey is witnessing the evolution of domestic political and socio-economic situation. The founder of the republic, Kemal Atatürk, created in 1923 a state whose model was based on the principles developed by Western democracies. Since the time of Ataturk, Turkey has been a secular country and even had cut off for some time cultural ties with Muslim countries. In Turkey 98% of the population professes Islam while the culture of the Turkish nation, from poetry and philosophy to music and architecture, has until recently been secular in nature. The moderate Islamic party that is in power in Turkey is committed to laicism.

However today, with the globalization, the migration crisis of 2014-2016, and difficult relations with the EU, the role of religion in the country is growing steadily. The history of Turkey is an example of the combination of secularism and desecularization, the latter referring to the revival of Islamic spiritual and moral values. The values of society, prevalent in a particular culture, are traditionally considered as one of the factors that influence its economic development. The influence of religion on the social system can be traced in the interconnection of religious norms and secular legal acts, in the spread of religious values and practices in the bureaucratic institutions of society, as well as in the perception of religious communities as a prototype of the economic system, in accordance with which the economic environment and economic policy are formed.

This issue of «Religion and Politics in Contemporary Turkish Speaking World» presents three articles of Russian Turkish studies' researchers that cover a wide range of topics: from highlighting the modern dynamics of an unconventional view of the relationship between state and religion in Muslim societies, the historical and political context of the struggle of supporters and opponents of Kemalists in Turkey based on the analysis of the primary sources, to the economic policy of the Islamic Justice and Development Party.

The first essay by "The Secularization and Desecularization Nexus in the Turkish Context: What is Behind?" Pavel Shlykov explores the processes of secularization and desecularization using Turkish society as an example. The author analyzes the inclusion of "Turkish Islamism" in the socio-political life of modern Turkey and pays special attention to such important phenomena as the constantly expanding religious sphere, the emergence of economic liberal conservatism, as well as to the growing revival of Islamism in various spheres of public life. According to the author of the article, the numerous manifestations of desecularization in social, political and economic life, its deep influence on the Turkish party system, the banking sector, education and the media indicates the dialectical nature of the relationship between secularization

and desecularization and reveals the flexibility of the border between religious and political spheres. Pavel Shlykov concludes that secularization and desecularization are complex, ambiguous, interconnected dialectical processes. In addition, desecularization, due to the influence of globalization, gives rise to combinations that were previously hard to imagine. The author shows how Erdogan is trying to promote his vision of an ideal state order defined by Islamic populism, thereby further complicating the connection between secularization and desecularization

In the second essay, Ilshat Saetov, "The Voice of the Vanished Empire from a Foreign Land: Turkish-Ottoman Medeniyet Newspaper in Bulgaria in 1930s." presents an analysis of the historical and political context of the Medeniyet newspaper's edition in Bulgaria (1933-1944). That newspaper was a platform for the expression of the religious Turkish minorities opposed to the Kemalists. The study provides information on the Turkish diaspora and an overview of the Turkish-Ottoman press in Bulgaria. The focus of the essay is on the characteristics of orientation, authors and specifics of Medeniyet materials. All headings of the first ten issues of the newspaper are analyzed and translated in detail. The essay constitutes an original research, being a result of working with primary sources, which makes it and the author's conclusions the most valuable for Turkish studies' researchers..

The essay of Natalia Ulchenko, "Economic policy of the Pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party: a "Non-Islamic" aspect" is the logical continuation of the previous ones. Author emphasizes that economic policy of Justice and Development Party (AKP) has a number of specific features, including those defined by its political identity as a pro-Islamic party. In contrast to the relationship between religion and politics, the relationship between religion and economy is more indirect, even though the Islamic way of life is considered crucial in that case. A significant part of Turkish society, which belongs to medium and small business, shares conservative Islamic values. However, although some of AKP economic policy principles are largely consistent with its political identity; other features rather disprove the classical doctrine of the Islamic parties and thus appear paradoxical. One of these features is that the economic policy during the period of the AKP has acquired an unprecedented globalized character in terms of the extent of interaction of the Turkish economy with the international financial market. The author poses question of whether it is worth insisting on a third, special, development path, taking into account conservative and liberal, pro-Western values? The economic program of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party envisioned the widespread creation and use of "new sources of financing". However, the economy does not adapt well to conservative religious, in particular, Islamic values and patriotic sentiments, which manifested itself in a slowdown of the Turkish economy this year. Analyzing the Turkish economy through the prism of Islamic values, the author concludes that the task of get-

ting rid of “dependence on global economic forces”, being substantiated by theorists of the Islamic economy, remains unresolved in practice.

The opinions expressed in these essays are those of the respective authors, not the journal. I express my deepest gratitude to the editor-in-chief of the “Politics and Religion Journal”, Dr. Miroљub Jevtic, for inviting me to share the little-known pages of historical factual material on the history of Turkey, the processes of secularization and desecularization of Turkish society, and the connection between economic development, religion and politics.

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