

## **A Word from the Editor-in-Chief: 20 years of the Journal and How Karl Marx Deeply Misjudged Religion**

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Politics and Religion Journal is entering its twentieth, jubilee year since its launch and first publication. During this period, several hundred researchers from around the world have sought, using scholarly methods, to show that politics cannot be fully understood without an understanding of religion. This implies that no political scientist can be truly competent without knowledge of religions—yet, unfortunately, more than 90% of political scientists lack such knowledge.

A particular case is the brilliant Karl Marx. However, he fundamentally misunderstood religion. He failed to see that religion is not a product of social relations, but rather a product of consciousness, and that its existence is not primarily shaped by the material base of society, as he believed. On the contrary, religion shapes social relations. For this reason, his theory of the economy is flawed at its core, despite the many useful analyses he offered. This did not go unnoticed. For instance, the French thinker Jean Jaurès strongly criticized Marx’s claim that “the proletarians have no homeland,” a view that proved mistaken in 1914, when most proletarians entered the war at the call of capitalists—against proletarians of other nations.

Contrary to Marx’s belief that social relations are driven by developments in the material base of society, it has become clear that religion is the primary driving force. This does not mean that the economy has no influence on social relations—on the contrary, its influence is significant. Still, the main impulse comes from the sphere of religion. This can be illustrated by a simple example: imagine having the most advanced car, with a full tank of fuel—this represents the economy. However, without a key, the car cannot start. That key, which makes movement possible, is religion.

A practical example of this relationship can be seen in the issue of the Temple Mount in Palestine, an area of 14 to 15 hectares that remains a central and unresolved problem. There is no financial compensation that one side would not be willing to offer the other for control of this site—yet neither side would accept such an offer, even at the cost of its own survival. There is no price that the World Jewish Congress would not be willing to pay Muslims for relinquishing it. One could imagine Jews

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offering a blank figure starting with a 9, to which Muslims could add as many zeros as they wished—and the same would hold in reverse. Neither side would accept, even at the cost of total destruction. It is widely understood that, if faced with an existential threat, Israel could resort to its nuclear arsenal—an act that would also bring about its own destruction, while causing the deaths of at least a billion Muslims. Since such a conflict could not be contained, it would likely lead to a global catastrophe.

All of this underscores the importance of this jubilee. Thus, *Politics and Religion Journal* serves as a unique global forum capable of bringing together representatives of different religious traditions—Jews, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Confucians, and Shintoists—with the aim of finding solutions and preventing global conflicts, including nuclear war.

For this reason, this issue of the journal is devoted to jihad, a topic that undoubtedly represents one of the most important contemporary scholarly efforts in the social sciences. I am convinced that no institution, not even the entire Ivy League, could produce a work comparable to this issue of *\*Politikologija religije\**. As Editor-in-Chief, I am especially proud of the effort invested by the guest editor and the authors in bringing this issue to publication. I have been preparing for this moment since my first public appearance four decades ago—following the bombing of Libya during the administration of Ronald Reagan, when Muammar Gaddafi called on the Muslim world to engage in jihad.