

Reviews. Reports

Recenzje. Sprawozdania

Dorota Maj, Kamil Aksiuto, State-wide Scientific Conference “Political Science of Religion”, Lublin 10–11 May 2017

The changes occurring in the contemporary world clearly indicate that religion is no longer confined to the private sphere and becomes one of the factors shaping the domain of politics. This thesis seems to be confirmed not only by the revival of the fundamentalist Protestant movements in the USA, the development of the theology of liberation, the Iranian revolution and the involvement of the Catholic Church in “Solidarity”, but also by other, often local in character, events in which the politics and religion are intertwined.

The growing interest in the links between religion and politics becomes an argument which justifies the development of a new subdiscipline of political science known as political science of religion. This development is supported both by scholars representing the domain of religious studies and political scientists.

The scientific conference “Political Science of Religion”, organized by the Department of Political Movements of the Faculty of Political Science of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, was intended to order and systematize the results of the research conducted by Polish scientists working within subdiscipline. The organizers of the conference invited the participants to focus their debate on a number of thematic issues: terminological and methodological questions; relations between science and religion; religious factor in the political studies; social thought in the religious systems; religious movements; relations between religion and politics/state; institutionalization of religion; the place of religion in the democratic order; religious freedom; religious conflicts and wars; religious minorities; secularization, privatization, deprivatization of religion; religious fundamentalism; religious leadership; religious ritualism and religion in the contemporary world.

The conference attracted the attention of 72 participants from 21 scientific institutions (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Jagiellonian University, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University of Zielona Góra, University of Warsaw, University of Gdańsk, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, University of Silesia in Katowice, University of Łódź, University of Opole, Cracow University of Econom-



ics, Akademia Ignatianum, Kazimierz Pulaski University of Technology and Humanities in Radom, Pomeranian University in Słupsk, Jerzy Popiełuszko Higher School of Democracy in Grudziądz, War Studies University, University of Białystok, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, University of Rzeszów, Gdańsk University of Technology), Scientific Association of Płock and “Christianitas” quarterly.

During the plenary session 6 papers were presented. Professor Maria Marczevska-Rytko (head of the Department of Political Movements) presented the main assumptions underlying the political science of religion as a subdiscipline of political science. Professor Roman Tokarczyk focused in his paper on the main epistemological and practical theses of political science of religion. The main theme of Professor Piotr Mazurkiewicz’s presentation was the indispensability of religion for politics. Professor Janusz Węgrzecki conducted a thorough analysis of the output of Polish scholars working in the field. The luminous ruminations of Professor Kazimierz Banek were devoted to the image of Moses in the Bible and other ancient sources. Last but not least, Professor Wojciech Nowiak presented the results of the project which deals with the protestant work ethos among the Polish emigrants in Norway.

The other conference proceedings were divided into 9 panel sections. The first panel was concerned with definitional issues and theoretical approaches applicable to political science of religion as well as with issues of religious persecutions and demography of religion. The second panel dealt with the historical aspects of relationship between religious organizations and state authorities in countries such as: Great Britain, France and V4 states. It also touched upon the topics of puritanism, religious and ethical neutrality of the state in American liberalism and the relations between religion and a state in the thought of Baruch Spinoza. In the third panel, participants discussed the impact of the religious factor on the internal and external political affairs, including the importance of religion in the presidential campaign in the USA, in the

politics of Iran, the Grand Principality of Moscow and the Czech Republic. The speakers in the fourth panel focused their attention on contemporary religious movements, including the revival of Buddhism on the territory of China and the importance of new religious movements and sects in Poland, Armenia and Italy. The fifth panel dealt with the concept of religious freedom in Poland, the European Union and the USA. Furthermore, it also brought into light the issue of religious freedom in penitentiary institutions. The sixth panel was devoted to the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism and religious conflicts. The participants in the seventh panel discussed the importance of religion in political thought and doctrines. The panel presentations offered insight into Christian radicalism, Catholic social teaching and principle of subsidiarity, the thought of Charles Taylor and Peter Berger as well as the attitude of libertarianism towards religion. The eighth panel was concerned with religion in public sphere and religious leadership. In the ninth panel, the attention of participants was focused on the complex relations between religion and society.

Cultural events were also an integral part of the conference. Scholars participating in the conference had an opportunity to take part in a guided tour in Lublin (which included visiting the unique chapel of the Lublin Castle) and to visit Nałęczów, a well-known health resort.

The conference will also result in the publication of a scientific monograph titled "Political Science of Religion" by the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press in 2018.