

DOI 10.23947/2414-1143-2017-12-4-33-41

UDC322

RELIGION AND SECULARISM IN MODERN BULGARIA

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In recent decades, the classical theory of secularization has been criticized because it does not make it possible to provide an adequate analysis of the religious situation in the world at the end of the 20th - beginning of the 21st centuries. New theoretical approaches that take into account activation of religions in recent decades and conversion of forms of religiosity are emerging. However, criticism of the secularization theory does not mean that all of its conclusions were erroneous. According to this theory, the most important aspect of secularization was the process of separating religion from other social institutions, in particular, from the state. As a result of the secularization process in Western societies, a secular state was formed, and religion turned into a private matter of an individual, that was reflected in the concepts of the privatization of religion, the invisible religion, etc. The result of secularization was the dominance of secularism as a form of world outlook and the appearance of a way of social life that implies not only separation of religion from the state and other social institutions, but dominance of secular values, ideas and norms in the public and worldview sphere. In the modern globalizing world, the spreading of secularism is a part of the global spreading of Western values. However, outside Western European societies, secularism can take forms which are different from the Western model historically based on the rethinking of the Catholic and Protestant heritage. This article examines the specific form of secularism that developed in Bulgaria and was called by K. Ghodsee "symphonic secularism." It is based on the idea inherited from Orthodoxy about interrelation between religion and politics, church and state, allowing even in modern conditions state intervention in regulation of religious issues. This form of secularism does not exclude religious pluralism and does not imply a deep personal religiosity. Religion appears as not so much as the doctrine of an individual salvation, but rather as the basis of cultural, ethnic and political identity. Specific forms of secularism and understanding of religion affect the religious situation in modern Bulgaria.

Key words: secularism, secularization, religion, identity, Orthodoxy, tolerance, modernization, globalization.

[Матецкая А. В. Религия и секуляризм в современной Болгарии]

В последние десятилетия классическая теория секуляризации подвергается критике, поскольку не позволяет адекватно анализировать религиозную ситуацию в мире на исходе XX – начале XXI вв. Формируются новые теоретические подходы, учитывающие активизацию религий в последние десятилетия и изменение форм религиозности. Однако критика теории секуляризации не означает, что все ее выводы были ошибочными. Согласно этой теории, важнейшим аспектом секуляризации был процесс обособления религии от других социальных институтов, в частности, от государства. В результате процесса секуляризации в западных обществах сформировалось светское государство, а религия превратилась в частное дело индивида, что нашло отражение в концепциях приватизации религии, невидимой религии и т.д. Результатом секуляризации стало доминирование секуляризма как формы мировоззрения и возникновение способа социального бытия, подразумевающего не только отделение религии от государства и других социальных институтов, но доминирование в публичной и мировоззренческой сфере светских ценностей, идей и норм. В современном глобализирующемся мире распространение секуляризма является частью процесса глобального распространения западных ценностей. Однако за пределами западноевропейских обществ секуляризм может приобретать формы, отличающиеся от западной модели, исторически сложившейся на почве переосмысления католического и протестантского наследия. Рассматривается специфическая форма секуляризма, сложившаяся в Болгарии и названная К. Годси «симфоническим секуляризмом». В его основе лежит унаследованное от православия представление о взаимосвязи религии и политики, церкви и государства, допускающее даже в современных условиях вмешательство государства в регулирование религиозных вопросов. Такая форма секуляризма не исключает религиозный плюрализм и не подразумевает глубокой личной религиозности. Религия предстает не столько как учение об индивидуальном спасе-

нии, сколько как основа культурной, этнической и политической идентичности. Специфические формы секуляризма и понимания религии влияют на религиозную ситуацию в современной Болгарии.

Ключевые слова: секуляризм, секуляризация, религия, идентичность, православие, толерантность, модернизация, глобализация.

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At the end of the XXth– beginning of the XXIst centuries for most researchers of religion it became apparent that the classical concept of secularization is not a sufficiently efficient instrument for analyzing current trends in development of religion. Religions did not hurry to leave the historical scene, on the contrary, in the world there was a rise of religious activity. Evidence of this rise was emergence of new religions, and activation of traditional religions. Along with the theory of secularization, a whole series of new theoretical approaches to the analysis of contemporary religiosity and the religious situation arose: the concept of P. Berger's desecularization, the concept of the post-secular society of J. Habermas, the S. Warner's "new paradigm" in the sociology of religion, etc. "A sociology of spirituality" which studies fluent, diffuse forms of non-confessional religiosity, popular, first of all, in Western societies, but widely represented beyond their borders are forming.

The politicization of religion, the problem of the interrelations of religion and secular outlooks, including religion and science, attract more and more research interest. The modern dynamics of religions and religiosity, the diversity of forms of religious behavior and experience, the disappearing of the boundaries between religion and other spheres of sociocultural activity have actualized discussions about what constitutes religion and even raised doubts about necessity and scientific status of this concept. An additional impulse to modern studies of religion is given by globalization. The problems associated with the religious aspects of globalization are very extensive: they cover the dynamics of the global spreading of new and historical religions, the response to globalization processes on the part of various religious denominations, the analysis of the interrelation between religiosity and the crisis of collective identities and national awareness, and much more. However, we will only be interested in one aspect of religious globalization – the global spreading of secularism as an element of the Western modernization project.

By itself, secularism and the wide dissemination of its principles suggest that the concept of secularization or the "secularization paradigm" is not completely exhausted, although it needs additions and clarifications. Contemporary Western secularism is a consequence of the secularization of Western societies, the most fundamental results of which cannot be denied. Secularism is not just a "liberation from religion", but a complex contradictory phenomenon that has recently been studied more and more actively: one can refer to the studies of Ch. Taylor [3] and T. Asad [4].

The most basic principle of secularism as a world outlook, but also a way of social life, is the division between religion and power, but also other sociocultural spheres: science, economics, art, education, morality, mass culture. All these spheres in secular societies function on the basis of their own value-normative systems and are free from symbolic control and influence of religion. Presence of religion in society is limited by the religious organizations themselves and the inner world of individuals who are free in their worldview choice.

It was the concentration of religion in the sphere of the individual that gave a rise to the concept of the privatization of religion, the invisible religion, etc. In the secular world, in the secular era, religion ceases to be common, but becomes a private matter. Public, social space is free from presence of religion – with exception of certain specialized areas or specially designated time for religious ceremonies. Even with a critical approach to the concept of secularization, it cannot be asserted that this state of affairs is completely gone. The activation of new and traditional religions in secular societies did not change significantly the alignment of forces between religious and secular, which had formed as a result of the secularization process in Western societies.

Separation of religion from politics or the church from the state, as well as individualization of religion, acquired the status of a norm in secular societies and were closely related to the liberal concepts of individual rights and freedoms and the liberal understanding of the state, main function of which is to ensure and protect rights and freedoms of citizens, including the right to practice any religion or not to practice any of them. All this predetermined the configuration of relations between religious organizations and authorities, the policy to protect freedom of religion. This configuration, being a part of the Western modernization project and modern Western culture, has become widespread in the world and is regarded as an integral element of modern democracy, the norms of which are promoted by globalization. However, the problem is that such a system of relations derives from specific worldview principles that had been formed in European societies for centuries. But these worldview principles are not obvious and convincing for the bearers of other cultural, religious and political traditions. The spreading of Western secularism gives a rise to some problems even in the countries of Eastern Europe – both close to the European "West", and different from it. The problems become even more noticeable outside the Western world, which was one of the prerequisites for a criticism of the theory of secularization, which implied the universal nature of secularization processes. The religious situation in many modern countries is such that it is possible to speak about the implementation of secularization only with reservations, and in some cases – it is completely impossible.

Pioneers of modernization and secularization have historically become countries with dominance of Catholicism, later – Protestantism. It is the internal dynamics of these spheres of Christianity that largely predetermined the dynamics of the secularization process. However, next to Catholic and Protestant Europe, there is another Europe – Europe of Orthodox heritage. Both modernization and secularization were carried out differently here and led to a different result. It can be said that a model of secularism is being formed in Orthodox Europe, which differs from the Western one. Based on the Orthodox idea of symphony, K. Ghodsee[7] uses the term "symphonic secularism". In this article we will scrutinize the specifics of the "symphonic" or "Orthodox" secularism, more exactly, one of "Orthodox secularisms" – on the example of modern Bulgaria.

The religious situation in modern Bulgaria is characterized by a certain paradox – with the declared Orthodox identification of the vast majority of citizens, the level of real religiosity and participation in established religious practices remains low. The same contrast between the declared and real religiosity is characteristic of the Muslim minority in Bulgaria, although it is not so expressed. At the same time, Bulgarian society is not too receptive to preaching non-traditional religious teachings for Bulgaria, and the state intervenes from time to time in religious disputes, that causes criticism from international human rights organizations.

Christianity and Islam are the main traditional religions of Bulgaria. According to Kanev [6, p.76], at the turn of the 90's-00's of 20th century Christians accounted for 79% of the population as a whole (96% of them are Bulgarians and 48% of Gypsies). Among the adherents of Christianity, 86% defined themselves as Orthodox and 13%-as Christians without belonging. Adherents of Islam accounted for 16% of the population. The Muslim

minority in Bulgaria is represented by two ethnoconfessional groups – Muslim Bulgarians (Pomaks), whose share is 1% of those professing Islam, and Turks, among whom 98% are Muslims. Muslims are also 30% of Gypsies. The percentage of non-believers among respondents is 5%.

The above data demonstrate one of the features of religious identity in Bulgaria, its ethno-confessional nature. Major ethnic groups follow their own religious tradition, without showing a tendency to dissolution or mixing. The most heterogeneous in terms of religion is the Gypsy minority. Among Gypsies, there are Orthodox, and Muslims, and Protestants, and adherents of new religions, which in Bulgaria exist not so many as a whole. Religious pluralism is connected, apparently, with the absence of the Gipsy's own ethnic religious tradition. The religious affiliation of Gypsies depends on both the dominant religion in their area of living and free choice, while for members of other groups religious affiliation is more a part of the cultural heritage and identification with the group constituted by this heritage.

The religious composition of the population according to the later data of the 2011 census [8, p. 26-27] practically did not change in comparison with the data given by Kanev. However, 21% of respondents of the census used the right not to answer the question about their religious affiliation. Among the respondents who answered this question are the Orthodox – 76% (4,374,135 people). 0.8% (48,945) of the respondents – Catholics, 1.1% (64,476) – Protestants. Muslims are 10% (577,139 people) of respondents who answered the question about religious affiliation. Representatives of other religions account for 0.2% (11,444 people). 4.7% (272,264 people) attributed themselves to "no religion". 86.7% of Orthodox are Bulgarians; Bulgarians also predominate among the "no-religion" and "undecided", 88% of the Turkish minority are Muslims, among Gypsies are 37% of Orthodox, Protestants – 10%, Muslims – 18% [8, p. 26-27].

Thus, most Bulgarians correlate themselves with one of the two religious traditions, the proportion of atheists and undecided is not very significant. However, beyond this simple classification, a more complex picture is observed. Kanev noted that 8.2% of those who do not belong to a particular religion, consider themselves "very religious", while 24.4% of Christians consider themselves as people not religious, and 1% as atheists. 22% of respondents who do not belong to a particular church say they believe in God, while 12.3% of Orthodox say that they do not believe in God [6, p. 90]. 49.3% of Orthodox, 41.9% of Muslims, 15% of those who identified themselves as no-religion, stated that they are religious "in their own way", while "follow the regulations and rules of their own religion" only 10% of Orthodox and 36.8% of Muslims [6, p.91]. The data of the European research in 2000 [6, p.77] make it possible to value the level of religiosity of Bulgarian believers (Tab.1).

Table 1

Degree of religiosity	Total amount – %	Bulgarians	Bulgarians-Muslims	Turks	Gypsies
Deeply religious	12	9	29	28	15
Religious to some extent	49	50	48	47	49
Not religious in the main	24	26	24	19	16
Not religious at all	12	14	–	2	12
Don't know/No answer	2	2	–	4	8

According to the study of national values provided by Bulgarian Sociological Association in 2009 [10], 67.3% of respondents believe in God, but only 24.1% believe in after-life. Religious services are almost never visited by 24.9% of respondents; only 45.5% visit them on holidays. Education of children in a religious spirit is not important for a significant part of Bulgarians. However, the studies record a certain increase in importance of religious education of children among Muslims, as well as a growing interest in questions of belief among Muslim youth [9, p. 285]. This may be due to the growing activity of Islam on a global scale and study of young Bulgarian Muslims in Islamic educational centers outside of Bulgaria. The clash of the two models of Islam could be potentially fraught with conflict.

It is interesting that with the dominant religious indifference, one out of every four Bulgarians believes that non-believers are not suitable for social activities [10]. Quite a wide distribution of this opinion is indirectly confirmed by existence of ideas about need for a connection between religion and politics. The data show that the claimed belonging to one of the two confessions that dominate in the Bulgarian society does not mean real worldview and behavioral uniformity, as it does not always imply existence of religious belief, performing of established religious rites and feeling of being deeply religious. Weak and superficial nature of normative religiosity is characteristic of both Orthodox and Muslims, although among Muslims the level of religiosity is higher.

The studies show a low level of religious radicalism and fundamentalist sentiments in Bulgarian society. According to Kanev [7] and Bogomilova [5], in modern Bulgarian society there is practically no connection between Orthodoxy and nationalist ideology, which is an important difference between the Bulgarian type of Orthodox religiosity. In a number of other Orthodox states, in particular, in Serbia, Orthodoxy and nationalism often intertwined and strengthened each other. K. Buchenau notes: "Orthodoxy in Serbia since the late 1980s has played a central role in the national discourse, shaping the notion of national identity and collective messianism. In Bulgaria this trend is much weaker; for the last decades the church attracted attention primarily in connection with a serious schism in the church, as the result of which it was largely paralyzed and limited in its influence, including the political way"[2, p.34].

Against the background of societies that are by ethnic and religious contradictions, Bulgaria demonstrates an example of interreligious and interethnic peace, nationalism is present only in a marginal way. Preservation of interethnic peace in Bulgaria, despite not always conducive to this action of the authorities, modern researchers attribute to tolerance, traditionally inherent in Bulgarian culture, including with a specific Bulgarian model of Orthodoxy: "Regardless of the political regimes that have changed over the past one hundred and thirty years ..., the ethnic world, in general, is preserved. Liberal institutions are not the only condition for its existence. ... The preservation of peace is not a consequence of ethnic models planted on top, but above all the result of a tolerant political culture in the country. Typical features of this culture are the antinomic attitude of the Bulgarian ethnos to the power (combining subordination to unavoidable pressure with a mocking and suspicious attitude to its representatives) and the Orthodox religion (lack of mobilization movements and militant dogmatism)"[9, p. 255].

As Bogomilova notes [5, p.6], as a result of the peculiarities of the historical path of Bulgarian Orthodox Church in modern Bulgarian society, the myth about its own God's choice, special mission, which is a characteristic of many Orthodox (and not only) people is not almost pronounced, that is also define the weak position of religious nationalism. The myth of God's choice existed at an early stage in the development of Bulgarian Orthodoxy and the might of the Bulgarian rulers, but later was lost or dissolved in other myths associated with collective identity. In recent history, the legacy of this myth, according to Bogomilova, "broke up" into several competing ideas about Bulgarian identity (Slavic, Eu-

ropean or specifically Bulgarian, associated with the peculiarities of religious tradition and national character). A long period of Ottoman domination led to the weakening of Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the loss of its previously won positions in the Orthodox world. Orthodoxy ceased to be the religion of the elite of society, but survived as part of the people's tradition. During the Ottoman domination, it was Orthodoxy that allowed Bulgarians to preserve their ethnic identity. And in modern Bulgarian society, Orthodoxy remains its importance as a cultural and ethnic identifier.

For Bulgarian Muslims, the Islamic tradition fulfills the role of a guardian of cultural heritage and collective identity. Although Bulgarian Muslims, speaking about their adherence to the Islamic tradition, based on other historical narratives than Orthodox Bulgarians, common to both groups is the significance of the historical past in maintaining their own religious identity, which is at the same time cultural and ethnic. K. Ghodsee quotes the words of a Bulgarian Muslim, a representative of the Pomaks minority: "We were Muslims even before the Turks. After the Prophet – peace be upon him – died, he sent his followers to spread the true teachings of God, and some of them came from Arabia and settled here. We were Muslims before Boris christened the Slavs. We were forced to become Christians, then forced to be Muslim Turks, and then – atheists – Communists. But we were Muslims from the very beginning. We are the true Muslims of Bulgaria "[6, p.236]. The interethnic and interdenominational world, a model of tolerance formed in Bulgarian society, has historical preconditions that differ from those that formed the modern Western liberal model of tolerance, the semantic core of which is the idea of human rights and freedoms. The Bulgarian model goes back to the practice of non-violent, although not always equal, coexistence of representatives of various recognized denominations within the framework of a single political whole. It is based on the recognition of certain groups of the right to adhere to their traditional belief, but does not involve conversion to a different belief or active missionary work. It is significant that the group most susceptible to external religious influences (Protestantism, new religions) turned out to be Gypsies, a group that is the most religiously heterogeneous and does not have its own stable religious tradition.

In the maintenance of such a model of the interconfessional world, a big role belongs to the state, which has the right to intervene in religious disputes and regulate the activities of religious groups. The Bulgarian model of tolerance implies respect, mainly, to traditional religions, based on the historical heritage rooted in this region. But in relation to new religions (or updated versions of the old ones), both power and public opinion are skeptical and wary. In the short period of the prosperity of the "cults" experienced by almost all post-socialist societies after the collapse of the former regimes, the Bulgarian media, without any pressure from the authorities or the Church, were mainly critical to the representatives of the new religiosity. The actions of the authorities, aimed at to limit unconventional religious activity, did not encounter significant resistance or condemnation from the side of the society.

At the same time, representatives of international human rights organizations have repeatedly considered such actions as violations of freedom of conscience or state interference in the internal affairs of religious organizations. K. Ghodsee notes: "Bulgaria was accused of violating religious freedom by the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in 2007 by the government of the United States – in its annual reports on the state of religious freedom in the world (2007, 2004). In 2009, the European Court of Human Rights accused Bulgaria of violating Article 9 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the European Convention on Human Rights, as the Bulgarian government intervened in overcoming schism in Bulgarian Orthodox Church. From the Court's point of view, the government exceeded its authority by interfering in the internal affairs of the spiritual community. However, Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Bulgarian government responded that the European Court chal-

lenges the millennial principle of the Orthodox symphony, which provides for an active role of the state in resolving religious issues"[6, p. 229].

According to Ghodsee, the legacy of ideas about the Orthodox symphony serves as one of the factors contributing to the opinion prevalent in Bulgaria today that the state has the right to interfere in religious issues and solve the problems of religious organizations. For Bulgarian Muslim Turks, the idea of such a symphony is also not alien, a significant part of this community views Islam "more as a cultural identity than a question of belief or spiritual obligations" [6, p.242].

Synthesis of the ideology of symphony and the perception of religion as an integral element of ethno-cultural identity makes Bulgarian society immune to the preaching of representatives of other religions, which is noted by some Western missionaries. But this is hardly an attempt on freedom of thought or rejection of the value of tolerance, and rather it is a manifestation of one's own type of sociocultural regulation of the relations between religion and other spheres of social life rooted in Bulgarian history. Accusations of a lack of tolerance raise objections – and not only from officials and religious organizations, but also from the society itself. Indeed, Bulgarian society is difficult to blame for the absence of religious or ideological freedom. In 2006, Bulgaria ranked 17-th among the 50 most atheistic countries in the world, entering the twenty other European countries. According to some estimates, 34-40% of Bulgarians were atheists, agnostics or no-religions [6, p. 233].

Religious freedom and individualization of religion for the majority of Bulgarians is expressed, most likely, not in the choice of religious affiliation, but in the choice of the model of behavior regarding this belonging as certain given. Recognition of yourself as an Orthodox, resulting from the Bulgarian collective identity, does not interfere with the interest in modern diffuse "alternative spirituality", traditional and modern witchcraft and sorcery, and does not exclude atheistic convictions. (At rejection of organized forms of non-traditional religiosity). If religion acts as a symbol of cultural affiliation, then its ideological content is not of decisive importance and does not affect not only the world view, but also the everyday behavioral practices. Religion is intertwined with these practices when historically it is part of them, part of the "national" or "household" tradition, which is less affected by secularization than institutional religious structures or attitudes toward religious doctrine – for the reason that it is often not recognized as something specifically religious. But at the level of ideas and beliefs, Bulgarian society is mainly secular.

"In Bulgaria ... there is a tendency to treat "happiness" in the spirit of modern secular values; here usually the authority of science is higher than the religion's one. In Bulgaria, the growth of Orthodox self-awareness "did not lead to an increase in churching: 70% of Orthodox people never received the sacrament, 60% never observed fasting, 20% never prayed. Also, accompanying rituals here in Bulgaria are much less common than in other parts of Europe: there are fewer candles and less often priests are being blessed. Instead, in Bulgaria there is a strong interest in religious healing, including among educated and urban residents" [2, p.33].

But this does not mean that religion does not influence the behavior of the Bulgarians at all. According to Kanev (shared and several other researchers), religious regulation is carried out mainly in two forms: through national (cultural, ethnic) identification and – at the level of everyday existence – through the remaining cultural attitudes, customs, and traditions. Such religiosity is difficult to observe empirically and remains hidden – not only for researchers, but often for the bearers themselves. The appearance of this latent religiosity can be attributed to the positive attitude to the state's interference in religious issues and the Church's affairs, as well as the spontaneous rejection by the majority of Bulgarian society of preaching "alien" religions – with a calm attitude toward diffuse forms of archaic and new religiosity. Specific religiosity predetermines a specific version of secularism, which was designated by K. Ghodsee as "symphonic secularism". The most impor-

tant feature of symphonic secularism is the permissibility of close interaction between the state and religious organizations and a specific understanding of religion. This specific secularism needs further research. Here you can only identify its most prominent features.

Unlike the Western model of secularism, symphonic or Orthodox secularism does not imply a clear separation of religion and politics. Religion appears as an instrument of the state and a basic element of ethnic identity, and not a search for individual spiritual salvation. This understanding provides for state intervention in the solution of religious issues and respect for politicians to traditional religions – those that have historical roots in a given society. But such the understanding of religion practically does not touch upon questions of belief and worldview problems. In other words, a person, considering himself an Orthodox, can believe in anything – the main thing is that his religious identity ensures belonging to a certain political, ethnic and cultural unity, symbolized by the Church or another traditional religion.

The paradoxical ideological pluralism noted above, within the framework of the dominant religious tradition, has as its point of departure not the idea of freedom of religion, but the secondary nature of the very question of the content of belief. In this regard, we can recall that the understanding of "belief" as the essence of religion is not a cultural universal unit, as is the existence of a clear conceptual nucleus for religion. Similarly, the cultural universal unit is not an orientation to the personal experience of an individual. Individualization of religion, growing importance of personal realized belief is the result of the evolution of religion in specific historical and cultural conditions. In another situation, these features of religiosity may be absent or of less importance. Religion as the basis of collective identity and political unity does not require theology and personal experience of communion with God, does not even imply personal salvation, although it does not exclude all of the above.

The Bulgarian model of secularism resembles the situation in other modern states, where Orthodoxy is the dominant belief, in particular, the Russian experience of interaction between the church and the state, the church and the society. But it cannot be asserted that there is some common "the Orthodox model of secularism". Orthodox societies and Orthodox churches have experienced a different story, but in the case of Bulgaria, according to the researchers, is something exceptional. On the other hand, not all existing Orthodox churches are associated with certain national and political communities, but this link, in many ways, contributed to the development of that particular form of secularism, which is described above. However, the specificity of secularism in those societies where Orthodoxy historically dominated, is unquestionable, as well as the need for further research of the nature and characteristics of the secularization process in these societies. The thesis of the diversity of secularization and forms of secularism can be considered within the framework of the concept of "multiple modernities", which denies the universal approach to the modernization process.

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December 21, 2017