

**Rudolf J. Siebert**

## **RELIGION AS PRODUCTIVE FORCE IN THE FORMATION OF A CIVILIZED SOCIETY**

### **I. Religion as Productive Force in the Formation of a Civilized Society**

#### ***Dear Friends:***

In 1972, Ivan Supek, the Heisenberg disciple, the quantum physicist, the writer, the President of the University of Zagreb, the Academician, the later President of the Croatian Academy of Science, founded the Inter-University Center for Post Graduate Studies (IUC) in Dubrovnik, in at the time still socialistic, self-management Yugoslavia. Three years later, in 1975, my late wife Margaret and I were invited by the Director General of the IUC, Johann Galtung, and his colleagues, to initiate an international course on the "The Future of Religion." It took Margaret and me two years to organize such an international course. Then, in 1977 we actually started and directed the international and interdisciplinary course on the "Future of Religion", which has most recently, in April 2002, celebrated its 25th anniversary without ever having had any interruption, not even during the terrible Yugoslav war, which costed the lives of 200 000 people.

#### ***Modern Antagonisms***

From 1977 on to the present, a group of about 30-40 scholars from Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, Near East and North, Central and Latin America - psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, comparative religiologists, theologians, etc. - has been meeting regularly in the IUC, in order to explore the modern antagonism between the religious and the secular consciousness, language and action, and its resolution in the form of possible, probable and desirable futures of religion in the 20th and 21st centuries. We were also concerned with the antagonism between the Left and the Right, collectivism and individualism, universal, i.e. anamnestic, present, and proleptic solidarity and personal autonomy, and its reconciliation in modern society. However, we kept the two dichotomies separately, and never reduced one to the other. From the very start it was the purpose of our course and discourse to explore empirically and theoretically and practically religion in all its forms as a possible productive force in the formation of a civilized society.

#### ***Future-oriented and Religious Spirit***

When In 2001 our course on the "Future of Religion" celebrated its 25th anniversary, it was the oldest course in the IUC, except Professor Supek's course on the "Philosophy of Science," which is reaching back to the very beginning of the IUC. Unfortunately, from 1978 on I had to prepare and direct the course on the "Future of Religion," without my dear wife Margaret, because she died from cancer in London, Ontario, Canada, where I was a visiting professor at the time, in the October of the same year. However, Margaret's very religious as well as future-oriented spirit remained very much present with us as we worked our way from one course to the next from 1978 to 2001 often most dramatically. Our course of 2002 is in the making. Throughout the past 25 years Western and Eastern intellectuals of different disciplines and persuasion met in the international and interdisciplinary course on the "Future of Religion" most peacefully and productively.

#### ***Western and Eastern Intellectuals***

However, since the break up of the Soviet Union in 1989, Western-European intellectuals inside and outside of our international course on the "Future of Religion" began to reproach, accuse and criticize Eastern-European intellectuals, for still not yet being able to not resign and reconcile themselves, and to come to terms with the condition of the present world not as hell, but rather as being so beautiful and peaceful as it had supposedly become after the liberal democratic society had finally conquered once and for all its own very opposite products: fascism and communism established in times of its own deepest crises of 1918 and 1945. Eastern-European intellectuals had of course a good right to demand an explanation from those

Eastern intellectuals with whom they had shared a common history. However, in the zeal, the eagerness and the enthusiasm, with which since 1989 Western-European intellectuals began to criticize intellectuals in the region of the former Soviet Union and its dependencies was present not only the moral sensitivity in relation to a keeping quiet during the so called communist period, which may be hard to differentiate from being accomplices. In this fervor of the Western-European intellectuals there also still betrayed itself something of the good, old, not only German, but in general Western - European and even American secret rancor, i.e. the bitter lasting hatred or malignant spite, the resentment, the wrath and the hostility against their Eastern colleagues their keeping quiet under the Soviet regime. The Eastern intellectuals also served the Western intellectuals as stimulus-dummies, as representatives for all, who had ever involved themselves heavily for something, that went beyond their juste milieu, and that promised a turn toward the better: a civilized society. According to the Western intellectuals, Stalinism was now to be traced to its true origins: namely to the Utopian stirring, feeling, and impulse, which hindered, hampered, obstructed, impeded and held up the general bourgeois agreement and consent. Finally, so the Western intellectuals insisted, an end was to be put to the Utopian project-makers and know-alls! West-German sociologists who took over the chairs of their colleagues in East German universities admonished their students who could not stop asking for ways to the better, the civilized society, simply to stick to what was the case in the civil society which had returned after the Berlin Wall had been opened: just to become good and well-behaved positivists and to stop to ask all these critical questions concerning a more humane future.

### ***The Utopian Function***

According to the Western intellectuals, the dream dancers had to be whistled back from the public into the private discourse under all circumstances and once and for all. In the newly reestablish as in the continuing civil societies the poets were to write poetry again. The thinkers were to think again. The research worker was to do research again. The statesmen were to make in state and politics again: at best with ringing and pealing church bells. Nobody was to be allowed to meddle in anybody's affairs. There was to be no standing up for or against something: the moral code itself was to be taken out of service. To the contrary, most Western and Eastern intellectuals, who met in the past 25 years and particularly since 1989 in the course on the "Future of Religion" in the IUC were no positivists or naturalists, but were characterized by moral sensitivity concerning issues in the West or the East. They were engaged in causes which went beyond their immediate environments and which promised something better than the status quo of late capitalist society. They were people, who had not yet repressed - what Ernst Bloch had once called-the Utopian function in their minds. Already the very title of our course itself could mostly only attract - what Erich Fromm had named - the revolutionary or democratic character, and only very seldom the authoritarian personality; more specifically, what Carl Schmitt had called the Prometheus-Christians and not the Epimetheus-Christians to whom he, Hitler's jurist and political theologian himself, belonged. Johannes Baptist Metz, the father of the new political theology, including the Latin and Central American liberation theology, and his disciples joined our discourse more often than the students of Schmitt, one of the initiators of neoconservatism and deconstructionism. Jiirgen Habermas and his disciples participated in our discourse more often than Gadamer or the revisionists from the German so called "Struggle of the Historians."

### ***New Formation of Society***

Of course some Western intellectuals had long agreed that one could not make out anything ultimate concerning the anthropological fundamental questions. If one wanted in spite of this necessary fundamental self-limitation and self-moderation draw conclusions from the historical analysis for the positive new formation of society, then the opponent had it of course always easy to point to the in spite of everything still hidden anthropology of such theses. According to he some Western intellectuals the radical attack against every form of limitation of

individual freedom had historically an unconditional right against the specific authority - forms of the capitalist society. Some Western intellectuals had only asked themselves, if in the face of the atomistic corrosion, decomposition and undermining of all human relationships in the late capitalist society not also the idea of a spontaneous collectivism had an equal right. For some Western intellectuals in psychoanalytical perspective the occidental society suffered not only from the brutality of the father, but also from the lack of a mother. According to some Western intellectuals in our Dubrovnik course it would have been in terms of the comparative study of religion extremely interesting to work out the defection and lapse of Protestantism of all shadings and nuances concerning this relationship between father and mother, patriarchy and matriarchy, in opposition to the Catholic idea: the Orthodox or Roman Mariology.

### ***Property Diabolism***

Some Western Intellectuals had to admit that it was difficult to decide, if the thought, that the future society, which would be liberated from the property-diabolism of capitalist society, could also not possibly allow the individual limitless self-realization, did not after all originate from a pessimism which was caught up in the old bourgeois order itself, or if it maybe anticipated the anthropology of the new post-capitalist society characterized by a genuine balance between father and mother, or what Johannes Bachofen had called father - right and mother—right or what Erich Fromm named the authoritarian or fascist personality, including brown and red fascism, and the revolutionary or democratic personality. To some Western intellectuals it appeared to be doubtful at least if in the new society of the future, the civilized society, de facto only the external nature would still limit the individual freedom. After all, also the primitive societies, which came closest to the ideal of anarchy, stood the more strongly under the norms of spontaneous self-limitation. For some Western intellectuals, from this perspective the English society was a particularly interesting special case, because here alone thanks to unique historical conditions in an industrial mega-society a similar spontaneous collectivism or self-limitation of the individual had been realized to a certain degree. Later on the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School did discover the dialectic of freedom on one hand and justice on the other and that each of them would limit the other even in alternative Future III - the right society.

### ***Full Individual Freedom***

In order to lead their discourse away from the anthropological level, Western intellectuals asked less principal and more practical questions. Some Western intellectuals could see and realize that the social-economical structure of a small-business - liberal society, e.g. in the sense of then Utopia of Franz Oppenheimer could make possible the full individual freedom in principle. Oppenheimer, the medical doctor, sociologist, economist, journalist stood for a liberal socialism, which was supposed to mediate Marxist and capitalist principles. However, some Western intellectuals questioned how Oppenheimer's Utopia was supposed to be possible in purely technical-organizational terms under the conditions of a planned economy. Those Western intellectuals assumed that the decisive problems of the planned economy did lay precisely not in the economical realm but rather in the sociological-political sphere. Some Western intellectuals tried to signify somewhat more precisely the starting points, where the social planning dominated the economic one. Unfortunately Western intellectuals could not expect that the supersession of the private property of the means of production alone would conquer all contradictions of interest in civil society. According to some Western intellectuals, it would after all be a regression into an abstract -Utopian harmonism to expect from the liquidation of private property automatically the solution of the contradictions between groups of production, between leading and executing work, between bureaucracy and consumer, etc.. Some Western intellectuals did not even want to mention the problematic which opened up between the genders, the generations, the races, the ethnic groups, the world religions and the project of modernity in its bourgeois or socialist form, etc. Some Western intellectuals had to admit of course that the property problematic and the lord's and master's will to possession did indeed play into all these conflicts under the present conditions of civil society. But in some

Western intellectuals' view, this will to possession did not exhaust these conflicts because in the phenomenon of the bureaucracy or in the struggles between the generations, genders, races, nationalities, organized religion and scientific establishment, etc. genuine matter of fact problems were indeed at hand. Western intellectuals were extremely and extraordinarily interested in the question, how the radical thesis of individual freedom could v. possibly be justified in the face of the necessity of social planning in a future civilized society.

#### ***Antagonism between Monotheism and Enlightenment***

It seems that the collapse of the real socialism of the Soviet Union in 1989 has somewhat verified the opinion of some Western intellectuals, that the supersession of the private property of the means of production alone could not yet conquer all other antagonisms in civil society beyond that between the classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The resolution of the class antagonism and - struggle in Eastern Europe did not only not yet mean that the gender - or generation- or national- or racial- or ethnic struggle had come to an end. Also with the settlement of the contradiction between the classes, the antagonism between the religious and the secular, between Jewish, Christian or Islamic monotheism and radical bourgeois, Marxian or Freudian enlightenment had not yet been resolved, which for our Dubrovnik circle was of greatest interest and importance. While all the different types of antagonisms in civil society play certainly into each other and are interconnected with each other, they are nevertheless qualitatively different enough that they can not all be settled summarily by economic or even by political or sociological measures alone. Such settlement is the task of a public discourse in which all expert cultures must participate fully if the hell of barbarism is to be avoided and the civilized society is to be realized.. Any attempt at regrouping of world socialism in the framework of the present global capitalist civilization must learn from history what not to do: namely not to reduce all the antagonisms of late civil society into the one between the classes and expect from its resolution that of all the others and also not to try to change the identity of late capitalist society from outside, if such still remains, but rather from inside.

#### ***Communism and Nationalism***

The political situation, in which we developed our international course on the "Future of Religion" in the IUC, was always very important for my colleagues and me. We were always very contemporary in our thinking. Our courses always contained a time analysis and prognosis. The former communist government of Marshall Tito had given us often more freedom to pursue the goals of our course on the "Future of Religion" than the nationalist successor-government of the youngest Tito-General, Franjo Tudjman. Dr. Tudjman was certainly not a democrat, but rather a dictator and an anti-Semite, who succeeded for a while to neutralize practically the whole Croatian opposition from Zagreb to Dalmatia, to control the mass media, and to use "the liberation" from "Serbo-communism" for his own personal enrichment, while 200 000 people became casualties of the Yugoslav civil war. Tudjman became the classical example of a nationalist dictator a la Dr. Ante

Pavelic, the head of the pre-communist Croatian state, who visited Hitler in the Wolf's Lair on April 29 1943; or Mussolini who had also converted from socialism to nationalism and who visited in the same place the last time on July 20, 1944, the day of Staufenberg's assassination attempt; or Franco; or King Boris III; or Antonescu, or Horthy; or Tiso, or Mannerheim, etc.. Tudjman's family became one of the richest in southern Europe. Helsinki Watch considered the Croatian censorship to be the strictest in all of Europe. Tudjman's daughter was the owner of all tax-free shops in Croatia. Tudjman's son was the chief of the Croatian secret service. Tudjman's grandson was the owner of a large enterprise, which bought in Germany the airplanes for the Croatian Airlines, the successor of the former Yugoslav airline Jat in Croatia.

#### ***Nationalism and Religion***

Early in the Yugoslav conflict, the Croatian priest Tomislav Duka, revealed already, that Tudjman had the most intimate connection with the Catholic Church of Croatia, and through it with the Vatican. Hitler had called already the Bishop of Zagreb, who after the fall of the Pavelic

regime was made Cardinal by Pious XII, the pillar of national socialism on the Balkans. Tudjman's priest Duka was a member of the strongest nationalist Croatian party, the HDZ (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica). Already in 1989 Duka declared in the Croatian Parliament in Zagreb, that Tudjman was a Croat, whom God had sent, in order to help his people, to create its own state. Later on Duka left HDZ, and asked about his conservative political theology, that Tudjman had been sent by divine Providence, he answered, that this had not been the worst of all the nonsense he produced while he was a follower of Tudjman. But of course in the meantime Duka's fascist nonsense had made history. To be sure, Tudjman and Duka and others in the nationalist Croatian government gave us more material for analysis in our course on the "Future of Religion" in Dubrovnik, than Marshall Tito's communist government had ever done. He taught us what not to learn from history. Under Tudjman's regime religion became the integrative and stabilizing factor in a nationstate, a contingency-experience management subsystem, rather than a progressive productive force in the formation of a civilized society based on human and civil right. To the contrary, our real concern was the open dialectic between Jewish, Christian and Islamic Monotheism on one hand and a radical enlightenment, including a constitutional patriotism, on the other, and to keep open the discourse between the two sides including a productive mutual role exchange and to avoid any premature nationalist-fundamentalist or scientific/ positivistic closure.

### ***Secularization Process***

It was one of our main theses in our international course on the "Future of Religion" in Dubrovnik, that in case the intense secularization process of the 19th and 20th centuries would prevail or even increase into the 21st century, and under the presupposition that religion had indeed contained some true semantic and semiotic materials and potentials, and motives and motivations in itself, which were necessary for the resistance against the rising neo-paganism and continuing rebarbarism tendencies in Western civilization, and for the further humanization of man, we would have to help to rescue those true religious representations for the secular world. We were sure, that the continual, almost weekly, most cruel practice of the death penalty in the United States, was not the only symptom of -what Sigmund Freud had called - the death drive, which seems no longer to be bound by libido and which thus appears to be running wild, and of a fast approaching new barbarism.

### ***Migration***

Among those religious motives and motivations, which we considered to be worthy of being tested by their migration and inversion from the depth of the religious mythos into secular scientific and philosophical discourses and into the likewise profane language of the everyday life world, and through them into communicative and political actions against the rebarbarization process, was e.g. the rather wide spread religious teaching on the original sin, without which the history of human suffering as well as liberation and salvation can hardly be understood. The Hebrew story of the fall of man seemed to us to indicate an instinctive desire to destroy and to kill not only in the snake, but also in man, and even in the Cherubim, the angles of destruction. The first son of Adam and Eve, Cain, who was a farmer and who like his brother Abel, a shepherd, a nomad, had a religious instinct and thus like him performed the first act of worship, the first sacrifice, also became very soon the first murderer, when he killed his brother. Cain's descendants reached - after the invention of the first weapons by Tubal-Cain - in Lamech, who killed two men and wanted to be avenged seventy and sevenfold in case of being killed himself, the climax of boastful and unrestrained violence. The murderous descendants of Cain forgot to call upon God under the name of Jehovah or Adonai. However piety did not perish with Abel and it reached a new development in the days of Enosh. According to the mythos, the Lex Talionis, the law of retaliation, seems to have been at work long before it was formulated in the Torah and the Coran and negated in the New Testament, through the fourth commandment of the Sermon on the Mount:

You have learned how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no

resistance. To the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well...

Adomo's theory of anti-Semitism finds some support already in the Hebrew mythos of origin: that anti-Semitic killing through the centuries up to its climax in the Shoa of the 20th century had its roots in the resentment of the farmers and the settled people in general toward the Jewish nomads, who could not or did not want to give up their nomadic life style and settle down in villages, cities and states.

### ***Semantic Potentials***

In Dubrovnik we identified other semantic potentials which could possibly be translated from the depth of the mythos into the secular discourse of the expert cultures: the second and third commandment of the Mosaic Decalogue, i.e. the prohibition against making images or name the Absolute; the love of the neighbor; the kairos, in which history is to be made; the nunc stans, the now-time; the Messianic future, energy, realm, nature, intensity, light and standstill; the Anti-Christ, who threatens even the dead; the concept of the guilt connection; the notion of grace as acceptance of what is unacceptable; the Last Judgment; the concepts of reward in paradise or heaven and of punishment in hell; the redemption process; the idea of sacrifice; the atonement; the redeemed society and humanity; the remembrance of the dead; the hope for the innocent victims of history, the poor classes, the slaves, the serfs, the wage laborers, who have never had their day in court; the angel of history; the prayers of those in distress; the notions of the Infinite, and of the finitude of man; the notion of faith; the martyrs and the saints; divine peace and earthly wars; the bliss or the blessed state; the compassion; the free will; the Transcendence; the arrival of the just man; the end of exploitation; the sanctity of life; the light of hope; forgiveness; etc.. We were certain that at least some of those religious representations could be demythologized, and could thus migrate into secular discourse and could penetrate the profane world, in order to rescue it from its own tendencies toward self-destruction. Thus religion could become indeed a progressive productive force in the formation of a truly civilized society.

### ***Sublation and Inversion***

In Dubrovnik we remembered, that Georg W. F. Hegel had already sublated religion into philosophy, which of course at his time was still very much theological and metaphysical. As a matter of fact, Hegel had already inversed idealistic religious statements into equally true materialistic ones. Thus Hegel inversed the idealistic Biblical demand-

Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on his righteousness, and all these other things (food, drink, clothing) will be given you as well -  
into an equally valid materialistic one -

Set your hearts first on food and clothing, then the realm of God will be given to you as well.

We knew only too well how hard and vain it was to preach the gospel to those, who are hungry and in rags.

### ***The Original Sin, Neighborly Love, and Non-Exploitation***

In Dubrovnik we remembered, that Hegel's arch-enemy, Arthur Schopenhauer, let the religious teaching on the original sin migrate into the secular, philosophical discourse, and understood it as man's inability to have compassion with others and their sufferings. Horkheimer inherited from Schopenhauer this secular inversion of the religious teaching about the original sin. For Horkheimer it became impossible to understand man's history of suffering without the inverted religious teaching on the original sin. Karl Marx and the labor movement inverted the Judeo-Christian commandment to love the neighbor, into the secular solidarity among workers. According to Alfred Sohn-Rethel, the truth of Christianity was the commandment of non-exploitation. However, in Sohn-Rethel's view the untruth of Christianity consisted in the fact, that this commandment of non-exploitation remained imprisoned in its religious form. In order

for Christianity to become fully true, the religious commandment of non-exploitation had to migrate into the secular form of political economics, or of the critical theory of society, or of a labor movement, or of social revolutions. While de facto the Christian religion had been interpreted in terms of neo-Platonism, à la Augustine, for many centuries, that was no reason for us in Dubrovnik not to appreciate the results of the new materialist interpretation of Christian and other religious texts, as e.g. Fromm had done it in his book *The Dogma of Christ*, or how Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin and Adorno had done it in their critical theory of society, or how Johannes B. Metz and the new political theologians in Europe and the liberation theologians in Central and Latin America are doing it. The sad fate of dialectical materialism, its arrest or its distortion in the former Soviet Union, was no reason for us to abandon centuries of critical, dialectical thinking in East and West, and to abstain from a materialist interpretation of society and world- history, and particularly of the history of religions.

### ***Reenchantment or Rationalization?***

In our discourse in Dubrovnik, our intent has not been the reenchantment or the re-auraization of the everyday life world, but rather its rationalization in terms of communicative rationality and mimetic action. With this intent, we have continued our discourse on "The Future of Religion" in Dubrovnik in every year from 1977 to the present. We met even throughout the horrible four years of Yugoslav civil war in the basement of Hotel Argentina, when Dubrovnik was besieged, and bombed and shot at from the surrounding waters and mountains by the Serbian-Montenegro navy and army, as well as in the following period of intense nationalism, which made our life and work so difficult as it had never been under communist rule. We even put our critical theory to the test, by practicing it through helping and supporting the innocent victims of the Yugoslav civil war with much money and medicine. Nothing taught us better than the Yugoslav civil war the necessity to rescue humane and true religious representations in secular form for the profane world, and thus to put them into the service not of the reenchantment of the life world, but rather of its secular none-instrumental, communicative rationalization. Very often during our 25 discourses on the "Future of Religion" my colleagues and I concentrated specifically on the role of religion in antagonistic Western civil societies, characterized not only by monopoly- and oligopoly capitalism, but also by the welfare -state - class compromise. Since the breakdown of the real socialism in Eastern Europe in 1989, we also discussed the possible role of religion in the now newly to be formed civil societies in the region with the specific/practical intent to help that they would become civilized societies.

### ***Functionalism and Critical Theory***

In our discourses in Dubrovnik on the role of religion in the old civil societies of Western Europe and America and possibly in the new civil societies in the post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, we were committed to a methodological pluralism. Thus sometimes we used the traditional positivistic, functionalist theories, and sometimes the dialectical critical theory of subject, society, history and culture, as it had been developed from the 1930 to the present first in the Institute for Social Research at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe Universität, Frankfurt a.M., Germany, and then during exile from fascist Germany at the Columbia University, New York, and then again after World War II at the University of Frankfurt a.M. With the functionalists - e.g. Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Nicholas Luhmann, etc.- we understood religion as integrative, balancing, equilibrating, contingency - experience - management-subsystem of bourgeois society. With the critical theorists - e.g. Horkheimer, Benjamin, Adorno, Sohn-Rethel, Leo Lowenthal, Jürgen Habermas, Alfred Schmidt, Karl Heinz Haag, Axel Honneth, etc.- we understood religion as longing for the totally Other, for perfect justice or for unconditional love; or as hope for the radically New and Non-Identical; or as the longing, that the murderer shall at least ultimately not triumph over the innocent victim; or simply as a specific cultural system of interpretation of reality and orientation of action.

### ***Structural-Functionalism***

Often before 1989 we from the West in the Dubrovnik circle had been astonished, that our Marxist colleagues had no difficulties at all, to argue in terms of the very bourgeois and anti-

Marxist and conservative structural-functionalism. As a conservative equilibrium-system, structural-functionalism knew of social change only either as unbalancing or rebalancing of the bourgeois system of human condition and action system. Certainly, functionalism was far from being revolutionary. It was rather counter-revolutionary. We could not see, how our Marxist friends could possibly try to strengthen, not to speak of rescuing their Marxism through the anti-Marxist structural functionalism. We could not understand, how our communist friends could possibly take the structural-functionalist concept of dysfunctionality as a replacement for the dialectic. The reception of structural functionalism by our Marxist colleagues in Dubrovnik was for us from the West a bad omen for the future of the Eastern-European socialist societies: and that rightly so, as we know today, 13 years after the breakdown of the so called Eastern European communism. For Eastern Europe structural functionalism was a Trojan Horse. The old Chinese knew already: the fish stinks first in its head. After the Soviet Union had been able to resist effectively the fascist form of the Western bourgeoisie, 50 years later Eastern Europe fell victims to its neo-conservative or neo-liberal form not only through the credit system but also through the intellectual infiltration of the structural-functional ideology.

#### ***From Cordula to Dubrovnik***

On the other hand, in Dubrovnik we from the West were in no way afraid for those Marxist colleagues, who -by using the critical theory of society seriously - tried to revise and revive the somewhat frozen and stagnant and arrested dialectical materialism in terms of a self-management socialism. Before our course on the "Future of Religion" started at the IUC in 1977, Yugoslav scholars, particularly from the Praxis Group in Zagreb, met regularly with critical theorists every summer in beautiful Cordula on the Dalmatian coast, not very far north from Dubrovnik. This very productive encounter between critical theorists and Yugoslav Marxists broke down shortly before we started our course on the "Future of Religion" in Dubrovnik, because of a lack of hospitality of the people of Cordula. In our Dubrovnik circle we felt to some extent as the heirs of the defunct Cordula project.

#### ***Peacemakers***

In Dubrovnik, we were mainly concerned with the mayor positive religions, which are situated particularly in Western as well as in Eastern Europe and in the Americas: Judaism, Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. We compared these five world religions in terms of their theological, ethical and socio-ethical potentials and their possible consequences for the old and new civil societies in America and Europe. We assumed that only in so far as these 5 world religions could enter into discourse with each other, would they also be able to generate solidarity and peace in and among the old civil societies of Western Europe and America and in and among the possible new civil societies in the post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, and would thus not be part of the problem, but would be a real help toward its solution and would become real peacemakers in terms of the Sermon on the Mount:

Happy the peacemakers:

they shall be called sons of God.

In our most recent discourses in the IUC, we had to admit, that before the hopefully by now ended Yugoslav civil war the Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam had not discoursed sufficiently with themselves and with each other, in order now to be able to appear as peacemakers, because they were too much bound to the nationalities struggling with each other: the Orthodox to the Serbs, the Catholics to the Croats, the Muslims to the Bosnians. While at the Easter-celebrations during the Yugoslav civil war, the Pope prayed for all nations, he forgot the Serbs and the Montenegrins, who may have needed his prayer most. Indeed, the four world-religions were more a problem during the civil war, than a real help toward peace. There were only a very few serious and heroic peacemakers situated in the three world religions as far as located in the Yugoslav war zone. One of these heroic people was a member of our Dubrovnik circle: the socialist, Ernst-Bloch-disciple, and Franciscan priest from Sarajevo: Father Orsolich. In the middle of the civil war, Father Orsolich called a peace - conference of Orthodox,



Catholic, Protestant, and Islamic Yugoslavs to Prague. But upon his return to Sarajevo he was crucified by the press in such a way, that he had to leave for exile in Germany. When after some time he returned, he was beaten up physically by Muslims near Mostar in Bosnia Herzegovina. Throughout our Dubrovnik discourse after the end of the Yugoslav civil war we followed the peace-program of another member of your circle< Hans Kiing which he expressed most adequately in the motto of his book Das Christentum. Wesen un Geschichte:

No Peace among the nations

without peace among the religions.

No Peace among the religions

without dialogue among the religions.

No dialogue among the religions

without foundation research in the religions.

After we have put this peace program into practice in Dubrovnik for many years, we would like to do the same in our newly founded international course, entitled "Religion and Modern Society", in Jalta, Crimea, starting in October 2003.

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