Invitation of Papers for the
32nd International Course on the
The Future of Religion:
The Wholly Other, Liberation, and
the Rescue of the Hopeless

IUC, Dubrovnik, Croatia,
April 28 – May 3, 2008

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Call for Papers for the 32nd International Course on the
Future of Religion: The Wholly Other, Liberation, and the Rescue of the Hopeless

Dear Friend:

We are writing this letter to you, in order to invite you wholeheartedly to our 32nd international course on the Future of Religion: The Wholly Other, Liberation, and the Rescue of the Hopeless to take place in the Inter-University Center for Post – Graduate Studies (IUC) in Dubrovnik, Croatia, from April 28 – May 3, 2008. We invite you to our discourse, because we are convinced that you, as a scholar, are most competent to contribute to the clarification, understanding, explanation and further development of our new topic.

Dedication

We shall dedicate our 32nd international course on The Future of Religion to our great friend, Professor Dr. Ivan Supek (1915-2007). His whole life and work was driven by the insatiable longing for the totally Other, including the yearning for enlightenment, friendship, and love, as well as liberation, happiness and the rescue of the hopeless victims of society history. I met Ivan the first time on his trip to the United States in 1974. He was a guest at Western Michigan University. At that time he invited me, to come to the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik, which he had founded in 1970. A year later I participated and gave papers in his course on the philosophy of science and in another course on Marxism and phenomenology. At the end of both courses, Professor Ivan Supek and Professor Branko Bo-niak asked me, to found a course of my own. I agreed and took the title from the end of one of my two papers: The Future of Religion. Two years later we started our course. From 1977 on I met Ivan almost every year in Dubrovnik. We had wonderful discourses with each other on quantum physics, the law of gravity, religion, novels, history, dialectics, positivism, politics, the principle of uncertainty, the freedom in the atom as well as in society, and the God, who gambled, etc. in the Inter-University Centre, or in Hotel Lero, and after the war in Hotel Argentina. We talked about his studies with Werner Heisenberg. We remembered his arrest by the Gestapo in Germany in 1941, because of his antifascist activities. His Professors Heisenberg, Hund, and von Weizsäcker intervened to release him from prison. We talked about Ivan’s return back to Croatia in 1943 after his doctoral work with Heisenberg had been completed, and about his time in the Croatian anti-fascist movement, and about his struggle against the German occupation forces. We reflected on his
time as Minister of Education and Science in Zagreb. Ivan was a humanist and a man of peace. Already in 1944, fourteen months before Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Ivan warned of the danger of the newly developed atomic bomb, which had the potential to destroy all life on earth. We talked much about war and peace, particularly his unwillingness to participate in a project for building the atomic bomb for the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. We reflected on his consequent turn from active research in theoretical physics to researching more in philosophy and literature. In the year 1960, Ivan became not only the Rector of the University of Zagreb, but he also founded the Institute for the Philosophy of Science and Peace. The Institute was also a center for the nuclear disarmament movement. Ivan was also the founder of the international organization World Without a Bomb. Ivan formulated his famous ten humanistic principles, which were repeated at almost every later peace summit and event. Ivan also established the International League of Humanists. Ivan did not stop his humanistic peace work with his retirement in 1985. Ivan was a critic of the globalization process and a proponent for the Global Justice Movement. His life long struggle for peace, human rights, and democracy made Professor Supek one of the greatest humanists of the 20th century. Also after his death on March 5, 2007, in his home in Zagreb, after a long illness, his heroic peace advocacy remains of highest actuality. Ivan continually legitimated and protected our course on the Future of Religion in the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, and thus made its uninterrupted continuation through 32 years possible. While for Ivan art had become his religion, he at the same time showed a wonderfully wise tolerance toward and understanding for the Abrahamic as well as all other world religions. He was amazingly objective, truthful, and honest in his academic work, and in his novels in an always changing and often very difficult political and cultural context. He had many friends at home and abroad, not only in Europe, but also in the United States and Canada. Ivan was not only an outstanding scholar and artist, but also a great, and wonderful, and most friendly and warm-hearted human being, who deserves our remembering solidarity, as well as our admiration, and our love, and our imitation, if also on a much smaller and modest scale. Ivan will be with us in spirit in our courses to come, and he will continue to inspire us to work for peace among the nations through promoting peace among the world religions in continued open discourse.

**Presentation of Papers**

We hope, very much, that you can follow our invitation, and that you can come to the IUC in beautiful Dubrovnik during the last week of April/May 2008, and that you can join us in our 32nd international course on the “The Future of Religion; The Wholly Other, Liberation, Happiness, and the Rescue of the Hopeless,” and that you can present a paper to us out of the center of your own presently on-going research-activities, interests, competence and teaching, and in the framework of the general thematic of 2008. Of course, you are also very welcome, if you do not want to be a resource person and to read a paper, but rather prefer to appear as participant, and thus contribute as such to our, to be sure, very lively discourse. Our course will be part of a very rich IUC Program of courses and conferences in the Academic Year of 2007/2008. Dubrovnik and the IUC are indeed alive and well and even growing again in spite of all the tragic events of the past decades! We hope very much, that the whole region of the former Yugoslavia will soon become part of the European Union, We hope, that the further trials in Den Haag will be guided not by the Jus or Lex Talionis and by the motive of retaliation, but rather in
the perspective of the Golden Rule, which is present in all the living world religions, and of its secular inversion into the categorical imperative, and into the apriori of the universal communication community, and of a global ethos built on these religious and secular principles, and of an international law, which is rooted in it and will, therefore, never be without mercy and the power of atonement and of reconciliation. All ethics and legality must – in order to have motivating power – ultimately be rooted in the longing for the totally Other than the horror and terror of nature and history.

**Publication**

Please, prepare your paper out of the material of your present research, in the horizon of our specific theme of this year, and in the context of the present historical situation. It must not be perfect. Nobody is perfect! You can still complete your paper to the level of publication-maturation after you have presented it, and after we have discussed it together, and after you have returned home. Our discourse may help you, to complete your paper, and to make it ready for publication. Finally, we would like to collect our research papers once more for a third volume, following Professor Reimer’s excellent first volume - *The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology: Critical Theory and the Future of Religion* - Dubrovnik Papers in Honor of Rudolf J. Siebert (1992) and Professor Michael Ott’s most outstanding second volume *The Future of Religion: Toward a Reconciled Society* (2007), which we shall celebrate especially and publicly during our upcoming meeting. Maybe Jim Reimer and Michael Ott will assist us once more with their great publishing experience, to bring out our third volume in the not too distant future.

**Resource Persons and Participants**

Thus, we - the Director, Professor Rudolf J. Siebert, Western Michigan University, and the Co-Directors, Professor Mislav Kukoc, University of Zagreb, Professor Gottfried Künzelen, University of the Federal German Army, Munich, Denis Janz, Loyola University, New Orleans, Professor Michael Ott, Grand Valley University, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Dr. Dinka Marinovic-Jerolimov, Institute for Social Research Zagreb, and the Coordinators Professor Tatiana Senyushkina, Taurida National University, Simferopol, Ukraine, and Dr. Goran Goldberger, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb, invite you very personally in the name of the IUC, to join us as resource persons or participants in our 32nd international course on *The Future of Religion: The Wholly Other, Liberation, Happiness, and the Rescue of the Hopeless* in the IUC Building, from April 26 – May 3, 2008. We chose this year's course title once more in a democratic procedure. It grew almost logically out of the texts and the contexts of our previous discourses on the *Future of Religion*. This year’s theme is certainly once more of highest actuality considering the present world situation: the so-called war against terror, which is continually fought on both sides according to the Jus Talionis, without any redemption in sight, as the possible result of the praxis of the Golden Rule in personal, national, and international affairs: a praxis driven by the yearning for the totally Other, including the longing for light, friendship, love, as well as liberation and happiness, and the rescue of all the hopeless victims of society and history, who have never had their day in court.
Contact Information

In case you have any further questions, please address them to me at the following addresses and through the following media:

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For further information concerning the broader context of our international course on the Future of Religion, please visit my web site: http://www.rudolfsiebert.org

If you plan to come, please contact directly the Secretariat of the Inter-University Center at …

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Accommodation options:
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http://www.hotel-lero.hr
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Notes: You can probably get a lower hotel price, if you make your reservation through the IUC Secretariat. You may also look for other hotels in the area or private pension of your choice in Dubrovnik for room and board. Grand Villa Argentina is the more expensive of the two hotels listed and most of us will probably stay at Hotel Lero.

Suggestions

Please, allow me to make a few more concrete suggestions concerning the content of our discourse on The Future of Religion for 2008. One reason for such suggestions is to constitute further continuity between our past 31 courses on one hand, and the coming 32nd discourse, on the other. In fulfilling this task of continuity, we are greatly supported by Professor Reimer’s book The Influence of the Frankfurt School on Contemporary Theology and by Professor Ott’s new book The Future of Religion. The other reason for the following suggestions is to indicate the possible direction, which our new international discourse on The Future of Religion may, or could, or should take, when we meet in Dubrovnik from April 28-May 3, 2008. The few suggestions may indicate the possible level and goal for the texts, that we shall produce in writing or orally in and for the new Dubrovnik - and world-situation, and toward the goal of further human emancipation as reconciliation on the long road of human kind from animality to
post-modern, global alternative Future III: the reconciled, free, just and therefore peaceful society, instead of alternative Future I – the totally administered society as predicted by Huxley, Orwell, Kafka, Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse, etc., or alternative global Future II – the entirely militarized society continually engaged in conventional wars and civil wars, and in the preparation of ABC wars, and the consequent environmental disasters, maybe in the framework of a collision of religion-guided civilizations as predicted by Samuel Huntington, a disciple of Carl Schmitt, Adolf Hitler’s political theologian and main jurist, and a Pentagon advisor. The following suggestions are, of course, only that - suggestions - and you may feel entirely free, to follow your own dialectical imagination and creativity, and to move in other directions as well, inside, of course, of the wider framework of the general thematic.

**Religion and Scientific Enlightenment**

Our new theme *The Future of Religion* is situated in the present transition period between Modernity and Post-Modernity, and more precisely in the prevailing and deepening modern antagonism between religion, e.g. the Abrahamic religions on one hand, and scientific enlightenment and counter-enlightenment, revolution and counter-revolution, on the other. Since the end of world War I Modernity has been in the process of being determinately negated by Post-modernity in the possible forms of alternative Future I – the totally administered society, or alternative Future II – the entirely militarized society, or alternative Future III – a more reconciled society. Our theme is of highest actuality in the present globalized, rather oppressive and troublesome world-historical crisis – situation. It is dominated by Right-Hegelian neo-conservatives, or neo-liberals, or conservative revolutionaries, or better still very successful counter-revolutionaries, and their economic, political, and military agenda, rather than by deconstructionists, or post-modernists, not to speak of the Left-Hegelian praxis philosophers in Europe and America, e.g. the critical theorists of society. We don’t have to start with a definition of religion, or of enlightenment. We remember the warning by Friedrich Nietzsche, not to define anything, which has a history and is still moving. Religion, certainly, has a long history and is still developing. Also what is called enlightenment has a history of hundreds of years, and is still in process. Even the second Bush Administration has found out, that Francis Fukuyama on the Hegelian Right was wrong, when he stated, that history had come to its end with the climax of the victorious neo-conservative counter-revolution: the fall of the Soviet Empire. Recently Fukuyama was, nevertheless, intelligent enough, to leave the neo-conservative movement and their think tanks in time. Obviously the Jihadists have helped to re-started history again. In any case, the second Bush Administration seems to continue history for better or for worse toward a clash of civilizations guided by Christianity and Islam. It was not post-modern, but rather still very modern, when it engaged in Machiavellian style in globalization, a very old modern phenomenon, in neo-imperialism to the point of imperial hubris, and in neo-colonialism in the service of the oil magnates, not to speak of nationalism and fundamentalism. It seems, that critical religion and critical theology as well as the modern enlightenment are still - as communicative and critical praxis - unfinished projects. We may help ourselves with at least a working definition of religion as the longing for the totally Other than the world of appearances with its many injustices, and of enlightenment as the attempt to free people from their fears and to make them masters of their fate.
Opposition

According to Max Horkheimer, the founder of the by now worldwide Frankfurt School, religion stood really already since the Renaissance, i.e. since the beginning of the great progress of scientific enlightenment in opposition to it. Horkheimer was of the hypothetical opinion, which he could not prove, that a large number of people, who still in modernity confessed unconditionally to faith and religion, had – in opposition to the Medieval times, in which religion had been as obvious and natural as science, - nevertheless a doubt, which they repressed, because they could now not consider it any longer as self-evident, that this world was governed by a benevolent, almighty God: that this world was so to speak the center of the universe, and that it had been particularly created by God. This large number of people had really in principle doubts about this Creator God, who governed the world, without being fully conscious of their doubt, Horkheimer had always emphasized, that religion was in general only thinkable with doubt. For Horkheimer the repression of this doubt generated the aggression and the horrible things, which referred to religion for their justification and legitimation. Therefore, Horkheimer was of the opinion, that the critical theorists of society had on one hand to hold on to the thesis, that infinitely important notions, feelings, and thoughts had been rooted in religion and theology, but that on the other hand today the theology could no longer be accepted as dogma. Thus, for Horkheimer there remained the longing – not for heaven – but, nevertheless, that this horrible world was not the only truth: the longing for perfect justice, not the dogma, that there was a God, who performed it. Horkheimer counted this yearning and everything cultural, which was connected with it, among the traits, which had to be preserved also in the historical progress, so that one did not only adapt oneself positivistically, scientistically, naturalistically to the facts and data, which characterized the actual course of history. In the meantime, the new cognitive theory of religion, which concentrates on animal- and human rituals, and particularly on religious rituals, has lost all genuine faith and doubt, and has completely adapted itself positivisally, scientistically and naturalistically to the facts of nature and society, and beyond that it has cancelled all Transcendence, and is merely concerned with gods, ancestors and spirits, etc. as illusionary parts of the world of appearances, which appears to be ultimate, and all there is, and all there will be, including the horror and terror, by which it is characterized. There is no longing for a wholly Other left, and no liberation, and no happiness, and now rescue of the hopeless victims of society and history. Positivism has come to its final and full climax and conclusion.

Science and Instrumental Rationality

Whoever reads the new encyclical Spe salvi by Pope Benedict XVI of 2007, will find, that Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno were quoted in it more than once as great thinkers, and that he regards the Frankfurt School as his genuine discourse partner. Benedict XVI must have forgiven the students, who in the 1960s - influenced by the Frankfurt School, but also misunderstanding it - drove him, when he was still Professor Ratzinger, from the University of Tübingen, where he was teaching dogmatic theology, to the more conservative and quieter University of Regensburg through their sometimes even blasphemous protest. Only a short time ago, Benedict XVI had returned to the University of Regensburg, where he had found peace, before he became Archbishop of Munich and Cardinal in Rome, and had given a speech on Faith.
and Reason, which stirred up the whole Islamic world, against his own better judgment and intentions. Long before Cardinal Ratzinger entered discourse with the critical theorist Jürgen Habermas in 2005, Horkheimer had already agreed with some non-theological, moral aspects of Paul VI’s encyclical letter Humanae Vitae of 1968. Most recently – in January 2008 – Italian journalists have accused the Pope of being against scientific enlightenment, and hence a reactionary: a Taliban. There were protests at the University of Rome against an invitation, that asked the Pope to speak at the University. The journalists did not understand that opposing what Horkheimer had called the domination of instrumental or functional rationality and action in Western Civilization, did not already necessarily mean, that one was against science. As not only the Frankfurters, but also my late friend Ivan Supek, always suggested: there may be the possibility of a post-positivistic science, not only rooted in the human potential of work and tool, and in instrumental or functional rationality and behavior, but also in the evolutionary universal of language and memory, and of mimetic or communicative rationality and action.

**Incongruity of Secular Science and Religion**

What the Italian journalists had been so excited about in January 2008, was the fact, that 61 Italian scientists had signed a letter protesting against a planned visit in the third week of January 2008 by Pope Benedict XVI to Rome’s Sapienza University, because of his stated views on Galileo. In a letter to Renato Guarini, the university rector, the scientists explained that the visit of the Pope was incongruous. The signatories included distinguished physicists such as Andrea Frova, author of a study of Galileo’s persecution by the Church, and Carlo Maiani, the recently appointed head of the Italian National Council for Research or CNR. The letter said, scientists felt offended and humiliated by a statement, made in 1990, by the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith – the modern descendent of the Holy Inquisition – suggesting that the trial of Galileo for heresy, because of his support for the new Copernican paradigm, was justified in the context of the time. The scientists said, they hoped the visit by the Pope on Thursday, the 14th of January 2008, would be cancelled out of respect for the secular nature of science, and the fact that the university was open to students of every belief and ideology. Students at the University said they were preparing to welcome the Pope with banners of protest and loud disco music. Cardinal Ratzinger once attacked rock and pop music as the work of the devil. However, Bruno Dalla Piccola, Professor of genetic medicine at the University said, that the protests were a shameful episode, which did no credit to a great and important University. Professor Dalla Piccola said, that both professors and students should be ashamed of themselves for trying to prevent someone, who enjoys respect at a world level, from speaking, and added: Perhaps they are afraid of what the Pope has to say.

**Two Wings: Faith and Reason**

Benedict’s predecessor Pope John Paul II had acknowledged, that the Roman Catholic Church had erred in condemning Galileo in 1633 for asserting, that the earth revolves around the sun. The Pope had told the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, that those who condemned Galileo – who was forced to recant and spent the remaining 8 years of his life under house arrest – had failed to recognize the distinction between the text of the Bible and its interpretation. According
to John Paul II, this had led them unduly to transpose into the realm of the doctrine of the faith a matter, which had to do with scientific investigation. But Pope John Paul II added, that the Holy Inquisition had acted correctly in the sense that it was working within knowledge available at the time, and had therefore been consistent in guarding the integrity of the Catholic faith. The then Cardinal Ratzinger also observed, that at the time of Galileo the Church remained much more faithful to reason than Galileo himself. The process against Galileo was reasonable and just. The Italian Catholic writer Vittorio Messori agreed, saying Galileo was not condemned for the things he said, but for the way he said them, He made statements with sectarian intolerance ... Anyone who would not immediately accept the entire Copernican constellation was an imbecile with the head in the clouds, ‘a stain upon mankind,’ ‘a child who never grew up,’ and so on. In December 2008, it was disclosed, that Pope Benedict XVI had asked the Vatican’s astronomers to move out of Castel Gandolfo, his summer residence in the Alban Hills, into new premises in a disused convent. However, Vatican officials said this was not, because the Pontiff was anti-science, but rather because the space used by the Vatican Observatory was needed for diplomatic meetings. The Observatory’s Jesuit director, Father Jose Funes, agreed there was no downgrading of science in the Vatican. In 2008, Benedict XVI told the Observatory’s summer school: The Vatican Observatory has sought to demonstrate the Church’s desire to embrace, encourage, and promote scientific study, on the basis of her conviction that faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.

Atheism and Theism

Pope Benedict XVI was in discourse with the Frankfurt School not only because of its critique of instrumental rationality and behavior as the basis of scientific enlightenment, and because of its promotion of anamnestic communicative rationality and action, but also because of the highly deficient and often terrible world, which positivistic functional science helps to reveal as its truth, step by step and with great precision: the horrible contingency or theodicy problem: that organisms are programmed to assimilate each other for their own survival, and that they become ill, and old, and must die and that there are the continual wars, and Auschwitz and Treblinka, Dresden and Hamburg, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, etc. etc.. According to the Pope, modern scientifically oriented atheism was in its origins and aims a form of moralism: a protest against the injustices of the world and of world history. For the atheists, as the Pope understood them, a world marked by so much injustice, innocent suffering, and cynicism of power could not possibly be the work of a good God, A God with responsibility for such a world would not be a just God, much less a good God. It is for the sake of morality, that this God has to be contested. Since there is no God to create justice, it seemed to the atheists, that man himself was now called to establish justice on earth. The Pope was indeed not less insensitive to the terrible theodicy or contingency problem of the modern world than the scientifically informed and enlightened atheists, in spite of the fact, that he had no theoretical answer for it. However, so the Pope argued against modern atheism, while in the face of this world’s suffering the protest against God was certainly understandable, the claim that humanity could and had to do, what no God actually did, or was able to do, was both presumptuous and intrinsically false. For Benedict XVI, it was no accident that this idea had led to the greatest forms of cruelty and violations of justice. It is rather grounded in the intrinsic falsity of the claim. For the Pope, a world which had to create its own justice, was a world without hope. No one and
nothing could answer for centuries of suffering. No one and nothing could guarantee, that the
cynicism of power – whatever beguiling ideological mask it adopted – will cease to dominate the
world. According to the Pope, this was, why the great thinkers of the Frankfurt School, Max
Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, were equally critical of atheism and theism. Horkheimer
radically excluded the possibility of ever finding a this-worldly substitute for God, while at the
same time he rejected the image of a good and just God. In an extreme radicalization of the
Torah prohibition of images, Adorno and Horkheimer spoke of a longing for the totally Other
that remained inaccessible: a cry of yearning directed at world – history.

**Docta Ignorantia**

This insatiable longing for the imageless and nameless wholly Other, which includes and
transcends the yearning for liberation, and happiness, and the rescue of the hopeless victims, was
deeply rooted not only in Judaism, but also in Christianity. Saint Augustine, the initiator of the
Roman Catholic Paradigm, longed only for one thing – the blessed life, the life, which is simply
life, simply happiness. He asked for nothing else. The human journey has no other goal – it is
about this happiness alone. But Augustine also said: looking more closely, we have no idea, what
we ultimately desire, what we would really like. We do not know this other reality at all, even in
those moments, when we think we can reach out and touch it, it eludes us. Already Saint Paul
said, we do not know, what we should pray for, as we ought. According to Augustine, all we
know is, that this blessed life, we are longing for, is not this unreal, alienated, or damaged life,
which we are actually living. Yet in Augustine’s view, in not knowing, we know, that this reality
must exist. There was, therefore, in us a certain learned ignorance – docta ignorantia. We do not
know, what we would really like. We do not know this true life. Yet we do know, that there must
be something, we do not know, toward which we feel driven. According to Benedict XVI, this
unknown thing was the true hope, which drove us, and at the same time the very fact that it was
unknown, was the cause of all forms of despair and also of all efforts, whether positive or
destructive, directed towards worldly authenticity and human authenticity. Adorno and
Horkheimer also firmly upheld this total rejection of images, which naturally meant the
exclusion of any image of a loving God. On the other hand, Adorno also constantly emphasized
this negative dialectic and asserted, that true justice would require a world, where not only
present suffering would be wiped out, but also that which was irrevocably past would be undone
Adorno had also formulated the modern problem of faith in historical progress quite drastically:
he said that progress seen accurately, was progress from the sling to the atom-bomb. For the
Pope, this was certainly an aspect of historical progress that had not to be concealed. The
ambiguity or dialectic of historical progress became evident.

**Resurrection of the Flesh**

However, for Benedict XVI such undoing of not only present, but also irreversibly past
human suffering would mean – to express it with positive and hence, for Horkheimer and
Adorno, inadequate symbols – that there could be no justice without a resurrection of the dead.
Yet this would have to involve what Adorno called the resurrection of the flesh, something that
is totally foreign to idealism and the realm of the Absolute Spirit. For the Pope, the resurrection
of the flesh was the central hermeneutical category. According to Benedict XVI, Christians likewise could and had to constantly learn from the strict rejection of images, that was contained in Judaism - in God’s first, and second commandment – *You shall have no gods except me and You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth…* which was also together with the third commandment, - *You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God to misuse it …* the central concern of the critical theory of society. The Jewish community had very often – particularly after the exile – substituted Adonai, Lord, for God’s name Yahweh, which was used more sparingly, because of its great sanctity. The Pope remembered, that the truth of negative theology, which was rooted in the first, second, and third commandment of the Mosaic Decalogue, had been highlighted by the Fourth Lateran Council, which explicitly stated, that, however, great the similarity that may be established between Creator and creature, the dissimilarity between them was always greater. The Pope stood firmly to the principle of the analogia entis, analogy of being, not only against the dialectical theology of Karl Barth, but also against the critical theory of Horkheimer and Adorno, a theology and a philosophy both situated in the transition period between Modernity and Post-Modernity. In any case, so Benedict XVI insisted, for the believer, the rejection of images could not be carried so far, that one ended up, as Horkheimer and Adorno would like, by saying no to both theses: theism and atheism. The Pope would like to rescue theism, and thus to bring back the whole Christian world of images concentrated in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, as God’s Messiah and Son, without which traditional Christian theism could not exist and survive.

**Discourse**

Here the Roman Catholic Paradigm of Christianity and critical theory of society depart from each other. But that does not mean, that the discourse between Christianity and critical theory of society must come to an end. To the contrary, it means, that the discourse may and should continue in terms of an open dialectic concerning the longing for the imageless and nameless wholly Other, including the yearning for light, friendship and love, as well as for liberation, happiness, and the rescue of the hopeless victims, in the context of a post-modern and post-theistic City of Being, in which the City of God, which motivated the Middle Ages, and the City of Progress, which motivated Modernity, shall be concretely superseded. This demand of the critical theorists for a new non-theistic, non-dogmatic, non-institutionalized religiosity was not an attack on the existing world-religions. It did mean, however, that e.g. the Roman Catholic Church, beginning with the authoritarian Roman bureaucracy, including a Secretary of State, an apparatus of Ambassadors or Nuntii, and their diplomatic activities, etc. must convert itself in theory and praxis to the spirit of the Gospels: the Sermon on the Mount, the Golden Rule, in which is summed up the whole law and the prophets, and which all world religions and world humanisms have in common: good religion and genuine enlightenment. Such self-conversion of the Church had been suggested already by the Jesuit priest, Alfred Delp, a member of the Kreisauer Kreis, in his letters from prison, before he was executed by the Hitler Government, - which had concluded an Empire-Concordat with the Vatican, which is still valid today in the German Federal Republic- in consequence of the Staufenberg assassination attempt of 1944, and thirty years later it was promoted by the critical theorist Erich Fromm in his most outstanding *To Have or To Be.*
General Orientation

We hope very much, that those few concretizing suggestions may give you some general orientation for your own preparatory work for our international course on *The Future of Religion*. You can make your own comments and objections to those suggestions and to this general orientation, when we come together in Dubrovnik. We hope very much, that you shall be able and willing to come to our discourse, and that you shall, if possible, present a paper, or papers, concerning aspects of our general theme, unfolded in the above suggestions and orientation, or not. The general theme is broad and gives you much freedom to adjust your paper to it. If you have a hard time to connect your paper to our general theme, we shall do that for and with you in our discourse. Please, let me know as soon as possible, if you shall join us in Dubrovnik in the last week of April /May 2008, and if you like to give a paper during the week available to us in the IUC Building? Tell me also, if you desire to give your paper at a specific day and hour, and how much time you would like to have. I shall do what I can, to give you as much time as possible.

Yalta

In conclusion, I may happily report to you that we met again in Yalta in November in our seventh international course on “*Religion and Civil Society,*” the sister-course to our Dubrovnik course, which will continue to take place every November. The *Saint Petersburg and Yalta Report* is available on my website. We had once more a wonderful experience at the shores of the Black Sea: academically and socially. Our friend Tatiana did an excellent leadership – job: in terms of academic and organizational skills! Thank you again from all of us! Our next, 8th international course will take place in Yalta in November 2008. From now on we have the opportunity to meet for international discourse twice a year, in Dubrovnik in April and in Yalta in November. You have a standing invitation for both events.

I am with all my best wishes for you and for your dear family, and for your good work, your

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Professor of Religion and Society
IUC Course Director
Director of the WMU Center for Humanistic Future Studies
Appendix

Professor. Siebert and his colleagues will conduct a course, entitled *Future of Religion: The Wholly Other, Liberation, Happiness and the Rescue of the Hopeless*, at the Inter University Centre, Dubrovnik, from April 28, - May 3, 2008. You are invited! If you would like to read the *Call for Papers*, please follow this link:


**IUC - INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTRE DUBROVNIK**

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APPLICATION FORM FOR HESP/OSI BUDAPEST SCHOLARSHIPS

The purpose of the HESP scholarship grants is to help the academic development and improve teaching skills for young scholars from selected former communist countries. Scholarships are available only for selected courses in the field of humanities and social sciences.

Eligibility Criteria: The applicants must be either
- graduate (primarily Ph.D.) students or young faculty members,
- studying or teaching in the field of social sciences and humanities,
- under 40 years of age, or
- nationals and permanent residents of one of the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Republic of Georgia, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine.

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Course

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Surname Mr./Ms.

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First and other names

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Date of birth

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Citizenship

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Country of residence (permanent / temporary –please indicate both)

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Field of study (in humanities/social sciences)

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Degree(s)/ institution

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Current academic position / Institution (Students enrolled in a Masters or Ph.D. program should state so. Young faculty members should also state courses taught at home institution)
The HESP/OSI Scholarships may not be used to cover the 40 EUR fees, which each participant must pay.

Please enclose:

- a short CV,
- a single page statement of purpose describing the reasons for participating in the course and requesting financial support, and
- a reference letter; for graduate students, a reference letter from their advisors; for faculty, reference letter from the head of the department.

Scholarships will cover expenses, which occur in Dubrovnik (accommodation and meals) only. There are a very limited number of partial travel grants available for participants coming from the following countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijani, Belarus, Kosovo, Moldova, Republic of Georgia, Russia and Ukraine.

Signature and Date

Applications should reach the IUC Secretariat at least one month before the start of the course. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.