

Divided God And Intercultural Dialog







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Divided God
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DRAMA OF THE TENSIONS OF A DIVIDED GOD

Tomislav Žigmanov

Tt is not rarely the case that projects, regardless of their intention and Lontent, end with some sort of a publication. There are a few reasons for this. The first is a greater "visibility" of the activities realised in the project and thus their different accessibility, which is especially valuable in the case of a project that relies exclusively on examining its subject matter by video and public debates. The second reason is contained in the need for a final presentation and summing up not only of the realised activities but often also of the achieved results, which is always done at the end of the project. The third is the fact that the main message of the project can, it seems, most effectively be presented in the form of a book since it, in a comprehensive way, transmits the most important moments to every distant interested person. Last but not least, the publication is a testament to the efforts of a number of people in view of the challenges they faced and the way they responded to them.

eligious plurality in Europe is not only a simple fact but also a challenge! This is not something recent. It has probably been so since there have been people on this territory. We repeat, a simple fact and a challenge! In view of this duality, it has been differently contextualized in history and societies, it appeared also as a plurality and often acted as a functionalising factor, from serving as the main reason for waging war to being a source of serious efforts towards building peace. Indeed, every micro region of Europe has its own local experience of confronting and resolving a plural realisation of a human being's relationship towards God. But the mentioned confrontations and resolutions can, whenever and wherever - that is, in Germany as well as in Slovenia, the countries of Southeast Europe and Turkey - always be reduced to the fact that they cause an absence of indifference in people. Namely, practically never and nowhere, did religious plurality go without a constant "drama of tension"!

This is how it is in Europe even today. Nothing new, we could say. Europe continues to be, also in the religious sense, essentially plural which, from time to time, leads practically of itself to an exhibition of tension, somewhere even to an open conflict in the relationships between various monotheistic believers. And herein, it seems, lies the greatest challenge today – how to reduce the tension! The tensions are most often generated by worldly reasons and religious distortions – facts that have nothing to do with the original religious teachings. In such cases, the religious is but in the role of a functional factor, sometimes, indeed, even of crucial importance in creating tension! Among the divided, the power that the "divided" God possesses can cause effects that are directly opposite to God – hatred, killings, wars, etc. This is probably the deepest paradox of religiosity that has not been solved in practice so far.

The last was in a special way actualised in the world at the beginning of the 21st century. Not even Europe is exempt from this. We do not want to list the consequences in detail – but we will mention just Madrid, London and Paris. What followed was a painful confrontation of Europeans with the fact that the religious was again (also) disturbing. But we ask what this confrontation was like? Was it adequate? Who was involved in it? And where did it all take place? Why did it quickly adopt an academic overtone and a moralizing air? Why were the reactions of the state ineffective? Is this the reason that, for the Europeans, the space of fear is still so great? There were civic initiatives in the beginning, but why did they stop so quickly?

mong such questions, the Divided God project was born, whose main intention was, on the one hand, not to consent to the various monopolies in thematizing the problems that a "divided" God brings to Europe today and, on the other hand, to directly address the "divided" ones who are still in their youth, by way of interpersonal dialogue and the use of contemporary art media, such as film and video, thus attempting to contribute to the reduction of the negative consequences of the existence of such a God. In this, the creators – the project team (D.Pintarič, Ž.Žilnik, S.Marijević, B.Matjašič, A.Tutta...) and the participants in the project – young people and theoreticians of religion from five European countries (Germany, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Turkey) did not presume that they would thus give their crucial contribution to a lasting resolution of the "drama of tension" of a divided God here and now, but wanted to keep the problem open by constantly pointing to it, thus increasing the space for reducing the tensions. In the project, this was done by focusing on dialogue between the divided, addressing the young, using video as a means of expressing one's own stand. All this took place in various regions of Europe that are all in a special way religiously plural. This publication represents a compiled document on one such attempt at an inter-religious dialogue. We believe a successful one.





AS AN INTRODUCTION. Drago Pintarič

Dear readers,

In order to assist you in reading and, of course, watching the DVD, I will first state the reasons, motives and other circumstances that contributed to the Divided God project. I will partly also touch upon the realisation of the project, adding certain observations.

This publication and the accompanying DVD both complement each L other and form an inseparable whole. But you will not find a unified opinion, a common conclusion or any final answers to the many open questions. This publication is a collection of various views, ranging from the "naïve" and curious explorations of youngsters to expert texts and analyses of particular problems. Both approaches are equal and aim at a fruitful dialogue. This was also the main purpose and represents one of the project's messages.

POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES, YOUNGSTERS AND THE NEW MEDIA

The Divided God project represents the second, more complex re-L search that we, as an educational and non-governmental organisation dealing with youngsters and the broader related topics, undertook in the last three years. Regarding the content and methodology, it is a continuation of the youth exchanges conducted in the past. We

again tackled the issues of tolerance, social exclusion and discrimination with the help of research workshops related to contemporary visual and (multi)media arts, supported by a greater social commitment, theoretical framework and background.

Por a better understanding of how the Divided God project came **L** about, I will briefly present a project that preceded it. In 2005, we started examining the phenomenon of the Exit Festival with our partners from Novi Sad. The mentioned festival was created at the end of the "bloody 1990s" on the territory of the former Yugoslavia as a rebellion of young people in Novi Sad and Serbia against the infamous regime of Slobodan Miloševičev. The first five years of the festival and its development can be seen also as a reflection of a certain period of jointly crossing over to the new millennium that, in its essence and message, transcended the local and regional frameworks. What caught our interest was, above all, the fact that, every year, increasingly larger groups of youngsters from all the countries of the former Yugoslavia came to the festival. It was a peculiar celebration of youth, of its openness and curiosity directed towards the future. It confirmed the importance and irreplaceability of young people meeting and socialising. It proved that sympathy and empathy take away the power of selective and stereotypical truths that are (un)intentionally spread also by new information and communication technologies and tools.

The Divided God project is a successor and a continuation of the ■ Petrovaradin Tribe* project, with a new "global" dimension. In the organisational and logistic sense, it was the new partners who added this dimension, whereas its content was a consequence of the escalation of events following the new circumstances after 11 September 2001. The

interest in creating a new project was again connected to the topic and partners in the project. In addition to the old friends from Novi Sad and Mostar, we drew to the project also youngsters from Berlin and Istanbul.

The new partners came from two "global" capitals that are multicul-L turally inseparably connected to each other. A historical connectedness of all is substantially deeper than we are perhaps aware of and this gave the project a new dimension and an appropriate research framework.

fter 2001 and 2005, it became obvious that the escalation of xenophobia and intolerance is no longer in the domain of post-communist societies and the countries of the East, but that it has broken out also in Western, traditionally open societies.

The riots, that is, the rebellion of the migrants of later generations ▲ in France, the bomb attack in London (it happened precisely during the Exit Festival 05), the outbreaks of intolerance and conflicts in the Netherlands, etc., proved that the gene of destruction, intolerance and violence took hold also of the broader European space and became a realty of global dimensions. At first sight, the collision of cultures in these societies, which was, in a large part, reduced to a religious conflict between Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc., confirmed Huntington's thesis on the inevitable ideological war of global dimensions.

In the riots so graphically presented in the media, it was the young Legeople who were in the forefront. We can also find them in all other accompanying phenomena of contemporary intercultural conflict, be it young migrants travelling in boats towards European shores, struggling for their existence, or girls who are banned from educational institutions for wearing a headscarf as a religious symbol. There are practically no programmes for youngsters that would contribute to the understanding of these problems and see to their interests. Politics has again acquired a monopoly over the thematization and determination of these problems. It is more than obvious that young people are often tools in the hands of politics and unequal partners in solving problems that actually concern them and their future. We have become witness to an excessive emphasis on the attachment to local environments and traditional family values. A question arises: Is the rise in new conservatism, xenophobia and religious fundamentalism merely a reflection of the basic human need for identification, security and belonging to one's own community? Is this also a consequence of a purposeful social "engineering" performed by manipulating religious teachers, politicians and adults who, in the first line, want to influence the education of children and youngsters?

The numerous questions that emerged were, in the project, summed Lup into one basic question: Do religions and their main protagonists contribute to tolerance and the resolving of concrete conflict situations? This would be expected in view of their declarative advocating of the good and the just. Perhaps the truth as it appears today is completely different?

A LINK THAT IS OFTEN MISSING

The word dialogue, today, often appears in various contexts and **L** meanings. The frequency of its use is significant. As the old Chinese wisdom says, in a country where there is an abundance of laws and law is mentioned too often, it means that there is actually a lack thereof. Today, this is surely true of dialogue and understanding. The two concepts have become unavoidable and crucial at all social levels and relations.

D ut as we discovered in the project, intercultural dialogue must **D** not be restricted to experts, politicians and other elites, it must go substantially further. It demands communication and respect and the consideration of all social groups and individuals. This dialogue must also be intergenerational since the young people who have inherited this world and represent its continuation should not stop where the communication among the older people came to a halt. In "divided" cities that we visited and where we conducted our research, we faced this problem quite often. The efforts aimed at preserving the divisions and the young perpetuating the divisions and conflicts of the "old" world were evident at many levels of everyday life.

Including experts in the project represented one of the important in-Leentives to overcome this division. On the one hand, a parallel "theoretical" consideration with accompanying discussions provided the project participants with an appropriate distance and the possibility of a simultaneous reflection while, on the other hand, it contributed also to a fruitful communication within the project. This preserved a certain openness and honesty, a relationship between teachers and students

where both learn and gain. We proceeded from the belief that a special value of an open dialogue that searches for actual answers lies precisely in letting the questions and opinions of those who "do not know" and "are not right" be heard. That it is precisely these categories that form the concept of contemporary social reality is as plain as day, as is the fact that they should be taken into consideration and be counted on.

eaving our project aside for a moment, let me round off this consid-✓eration of dialogue by stating a relative truth of our time. The paradigm of the post-Einstein period says that there is no absolute truth, that we can only speak of effective descriptions. The technological aspect of existence and also a large part of social reality is regulated in accordance with this paradigm, with the young in the front lines. For the good of the world, the outdated ideologies and institutions will inevitably have to take it into consideration. The latter still abide by the first and build on it their authority, power and privileges.

ITS COURSE OF EVENTS AND REALISATION

T et us return to the project. For a more comprehensive understanding of it, we should give a few basic pieces of information (the rest will follow later) and some comments. The project started in the beginning of 2007 when the members of the narrower circle of the project group - consisting of mentors and young partner group coordinators visited the cities and places included in the project. Between July 2007 and May 2008, it continued in the form of youth exchanges, expert symposiums and Internet communication. The content was presented

at research video workshops, lectures, theoretical discussions and public discussions. The project included young people interested in video research and the humanities, joined by experts from the participants' environments.

During this time, the exchanges were carried out in partner cities: Mostar, Novi Sad, Ljubljana, Berlin and Istanbul. A great amount of recorded video material was created in the research video workshops; over 40 short documentary films were shot. More than 20 lectures, public discussions and panel discussions were organised. We visited numerous religious communities and other sacred and secular institutions related to religion and intercultural dialogue (you can find the exact list of productions, lectures, visited institutions, etc., in this publication). Over 70 young people were included in the exchanges and over 40 older participants cooperated (in various ways, forms and intensities).

In the exchanges, the young "pilgrims" - researchers faced various as-Legislation pects and questions that directly or indirectly refer to the question of religion. The topics we were interested in and examined were very diverse. For example, we examined: educational systems in particular environments and the places where religion and ethics are taught; the question of building religious facilities for minority religious communities in other cultural environments; new sacred architecture in the "postcommunist" period on the territory of former Yugoslavia; the question about the causes leading to the Balkan wars in the 1990s and the role of religion in this; the possibility of free coexistence of various religious communities and various marginal groups in Berlin. We faced the other multicultural capital - Istanbul - up close, with all its oppositions and current dilemmas whose significance transcends this space...

DIALOGUE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The young "guides" and expert workers enabled us an insight into L their local environment that, as a rule, ran against the stereotypical notions we brought with us. The result of concrete experiences was a realisation that things are not black and white and that the problem of multiculturalism is a complex phenomenon. The reader or viewer will find many examples of this in the publication and the accompanying DVD.

That was less visible, but definitely importantly contributed to the successfulness of the project was the socialising of the young and their joint work within the project. It was the year and a half of socialising - from online communication to over two months of cohabitation - that led to the main achievements of the project. An appropriate atmosphere was created that enabled a series of positive consequences.

pollowing the initial joint exploration in particular environments, the youngsters, apart from socialising and taking interest in other and different people, turned their gaze inwards. A "laboratory" was created that enabled a confrontation and exchange of opinions at the individual as well as the group level. The main events were not planned and occurred spontaneously. The most important discussions were not scheduled in the programme but were "ad hoc" events. They came about spontaneously, provoked by concrete events where all the dilemmas and limitations of intercultural communication came to the fore. The "collision of civilisations" assumed the form of confrontations with dialogues that the young tackled well.

The discussions, as a rule, ended in a compromise, which was cer-Lainly achieved through friendship, interest in the other and the understanding of reasons and culture-dependence. This experience leads us to the conclusion that tolerance and the understanding of other and different people in everyday life is possible. This is enabled by personal contacts and live communication based on mutual affection and the capability of empathy.

But it is different when tolerance is dictated by religious systems and everyday political interest. It is here most probably that the contemporary conflicts with all the violence and consequent bloodshed originate. The mentioned two findings or realisations are more or less known and actually do not represent anything particularly new. They are important because they are based on experience which is irreplaceable for young participants. I believe that the main value of the project lies precisely in new friendships and new partner connections. I am convinced that the cooperation will continue at various levels, through personal contacts as well as project work and networking. This will also be the true indicator and the final confirmation of the successfulness and justification of the Divided God project.











INSTEAD OF Esperanto - Video ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK

In autumn 2006, after many years of experience coordinating and mentoring art workshops (No mans Land, Petrovaradin Tribe, Vitae impossibile and many others), Drago Pintarič and I talked about the phenomenon of how incredibly simple it is for young people from various countries speaking different languages to establish communication and even long-lasting friendships. Quickly, on the first day they spend together, they discover their common interests, form groups and, in a short time, manage to produce together a video, theatre performance or a piece of music. And, in this product of their invested talents and energies, the diversity of their backgrounds and cultures proves to be an advantage.

uring our conversation, we asked ourselves the following question: How come this communication runs normally at the "micro level", while, at the same time, the epoch we live in is torn apart by everyday religious and national conflicts and ethnicity is again put on the pedestal of tribal attributes?

esides, what do the media report on, 24 hours a day: the conflicts and massacres between various religious, ethnic and racial communities.

Te talked: perhaps, in the workshops we organised, we always put a certain socio-political topic in the forefront, such as EU enlargement (No Man's Land workshop, 2003), or a cultural phenomenon, such as the huge music festival in Novi Sad - Exit (Petrovaradin Tribe workshop, 2004), and it was this that ensured an "emotional neutrality" of the participants. They approached the topic under consideration as a "collective" when it would be politically "incorrect" to propound individualities.

These considerations led us to the decision to try and think of such a topic for the next workshop which would focus on the fact that the group is composed of young people of various cultures, languages, ethnic and religious backgrounds and which would put the observation and questioning of these differences in the forefront. We wondered whether the joint travels, visits to various towns, living and working in "unfamiliar" countries would answer the question: under what conditions are ethnic and religious particularities exhibited in a conflictive way and when are they realised "creatively".

7e thus devised the plan for the "Divided God" project, emphasising the opposition of monotheistic religions: the power structures of these religions, the church hierarchies and, under their influence, also believers appropriate the Only God Creator (which none of the mentioned religions doubts) exclusively for their own, strictly limited religious and church community.

Tt goes without saying that the title of the project was also a sort of a provocation, in view of inviting several tens of participants from five cities, scattered from the South to the North of Europe, and the participants being members of the Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and other religious communities.

🔭 7e also invited brilliant analysts – experts in religion – in order for $^\prime$ them to give competent lectures and conduct discussions at the workshops. As the main tool for young people to establish communication with the new cities and cultures as well as with other group members, we offered them video recording and editing equipment.

The experiences gathered in the few months of travelling, socializing, talking, filming and discussions are very encouraging. First, the participants socialised intensely and learned from each other.

econdly, the youngsters detected many topics and, using a video, told a story of how a young person faces their identity and the social hierarchy that tries to manipulate that identity. With their simple, direct and, at the same time, practically innocent observation of the life they were "thrown into", a few authors touched me, more than their much more experienced colleagues.

Thirdly, a few research videos were made, revealing that also, in the L environments known for their "tolerance", there are hidden but for the affected individual - painful discriminations. The young documentary-makers knew how to approach people and provide them with the space to express their stand and experience.

Turthermore, several works of an innovative visual and kinaesthetic representation of the Divided God "video package" could be measured against the results of a far more experienced and better technically equipped production.

The first town we travelled to was Mostar. For us who followed the war conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the media, the encounter with the town – once known as the urbanistic pearl of Herzegovina, a town of multinational culture and special Balkan elegance – was full of uncertainty and concern and, indeed, you run against the traces and wounds of war everywhere: a lot of destroyed houses, people who still talk about their losses and difficulties, public signs of a town divided along ethnic lines. While, during the first days, the older generation "was sorting through their impressions", the younger participants established contacts with their generation. Not turning too much towards the past, they started filming the present-day life and the issues that concern their peers - what will happen tomorrow when they grow up. After a few days, we watched brilliant video documents and people's testimonies. With clear conclusions: life and understanding among ethnic communities would be simpler if the politicians and ideologists did not try to complicate it with their manipulations, phrases and their struggle for offices and privileges.

In Novi Sad, we were caught by the hottest days that the town had seen Lin the last 90 years. During the day, it was practically impossible to be in the streets. In a large part, the workshop took place in the pupils' residence hall "Brankovo kolo" and the cultural centre "Crna kuća", with the presentations of videos, public discussions, followed by DJ parties at night.

Tere, too, the concentration of energy and the exchange of experi-Lences produced a few videos that were interesting and unexpected. For example, "Balkan Blues" – a video essay that, from the perspective of the young, condemns the destruction of the previous generation that drove the country into the state of chaos and war, or "Escape" - a documentary about a church that the prisoners in Novi Sad built themselves. Although of different religions, they find consolation and forgiveness in prayer and talking to the priest. An intense and emotional confrontation of prisoners with their identity and a new beginning.

rom Novi Sad, travelling on a big and comfortable bus, the workshop headed for Ljubljana. At this point, everybody had gotten to know each other well. Many who were at first practically without any experience in filming and editing were informed about the medium, so that, at the Dijaški dom Ivana Cankarja in Ljubljana, where the accommodation was the most comfortable, an intensive editing of filmed material, image

processing and translations began. The lectures and public discussions continued. We could then already establish that the project was developing successfully and that the main goals were being achieved: with cooperation, exchange of experiences and open conversations about the differences, authentic videos were created. Simple, yet not bypassing the dilemmas of a Europe "in motion", with the students, workers, businesspersons and tourists - much more often and in greater numbers than ever before – crossing borders and changing professions and employers, seeking their happiness. The filming was continued. Another surprise: our colleagues from Istanbul focused on the life of the Muslim community in Ljubljana from a perspective that we had not seen until then.

fter a few months, we gathered in Berlin. At every step, this big City displays its dynamic modernisation as well as the deposits of traditions and memories. From streets and monuments dedicated to Frederick the Great, Marx and Engels to the reminders of Hitlerism, the devastation of the city in WWII and the division by the wall and barbed wire all until 1989.

rere, the young participants – many of them in Berlin for the first time – experienced the wildest days and nights. The sightseeing itself was tiresome and then the shootings and clubbing at night.

Berlin was simply made for our topic: large immigrant communities. There are a few hundred thousand Muslims to start with. It is understandable that it is impossible to live normally in this enormous city without finding a model of communication.

Te met great people – leaders of religious communities who manage to pass on the openness and love towards one's neighbours the essential postulate of religion. They bring together people, help and

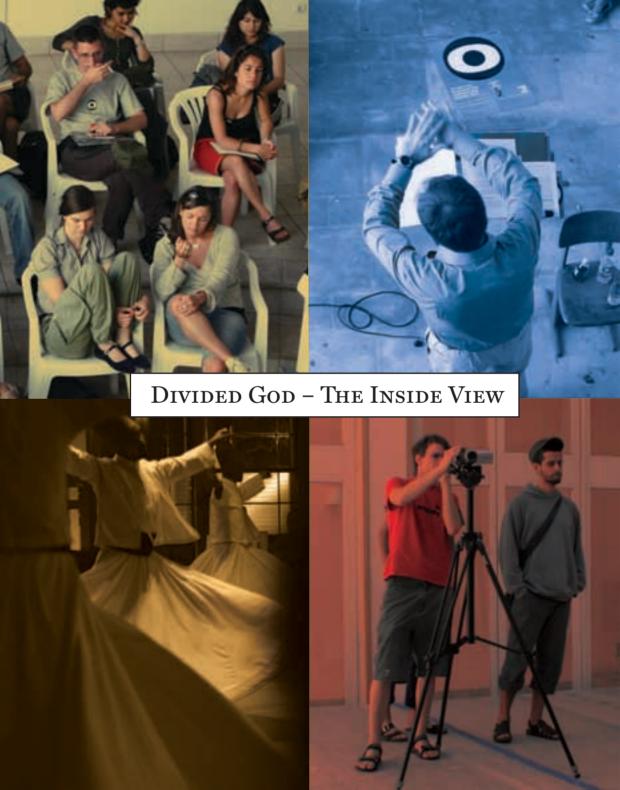
advise them. They work on spreading their religion but also tolerance. These meetings have been documented in the videos.

The final destination in April was Istanbul. At every step, you see L the synthesis of the East and the West. You feel it through people, languages, clothing, food, shop-windows, sounds. Hysterical traffic and crowds of people like in New York or Tokyo and, in the same square, a bakery or a pizza shop that a vendor is pushing on two wheels. And on a wall or stair - remains form the Byzantine period - a tired passer-by is sleeping...

▲ s the colleagues from the four towns which we stayed in before, Athe hosts - our workshop members from Turkey - prepared and planned our stay exceptionally well. In a short period of time, we met a lot of people, saw impressive things and parts of the city and filmed a lot. I believe that, during those days crossing the Galata Bridge, visiting the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia, living in a camp at the Bilgi University and in the backyard of the Patriarchy, all of us thought about the new picture of the world created by digital technologies and fast travels, about the picture of the world, virtual and real, since we ourselves are part of that picture.

n Istanbul, you become aware that it is only the established UNIFIED WORLD ON AN LCD SCREEN that represents a chance for the millions of people from out-of-the-way corners of the globe, with no political power to SURFACE AND SHOW THEIR INTELLIGENCE AND CREATIVITY. But, at the same time, you are aware that THE MIRROR IN WHICH WE ALL SEE OURSELVES CAN BE BROKEN. And that tribalism and fanaticism are a possible alternative as much as the magic technological progress and communication are.









Y've learned a lot from other people, **⊥**so I am very satisfied about the knowledge I've acquired here, I haven't changed my opinion and I still have the same beliefs that I had before. People from 5 countries were connected and worked together and, during this, we all learned. I must say that I am really thankful for everything.

ANA LAKATOŠ, 23, Novi Sad, Serbia

 T ntil now, I haven't had much experience in documentary filmmaking. This was indeed a groundbreaking experience for me and it will certainly influence my attitude towards this kind of films. Also, no matter how little time in my life I have spent analysing the aspects of religion and human beliefs in my own and other cultures, this experience made me think about many new aspects of our lives. Also, it was the first time I worked in a team of more than two people. The minor communication difficulties that I had with the participants of my group (which were successfully resolved) were in fact a good learning experience for me. Now, I have a comprehensive view of working in a team.

DARKO BUBONJA, 26, Novi Sad, Serbia



've learned about different cultures, **⊥** different religions and filmmaking. I met with very different people and their ideas, not only in the project but also in the countries we visited.

ESRA BAYHAM, 19, ISTANBUL, TURKEY



rirst of all, I'm happy that I've learned some basics about filmmaking. I've learned a lot about Islam, Catholicism and Hare Krishna, but my opinions haven't changed during the project, I still think that all organized religions are used only to control people and that religious persons can't be free from prejudices.

ILIJA KUZMANOVIĆ, 25, Novi Sad, Serbia

of really great material for the documentary. This was one of the main purposes of the project and we've already achieved it. I've learned a lot about different religions and cultures, things that I didn't know before. I really appreciate the opportunity I had to learn about everything and I hope that I did my best to achieve this!

It is great!!!!!!!! I love it!!!!!!!!!!

MATEJA PERIĆ, 18, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

've found some proofs supporting **⊥** my thoughts about cultural differences. And I've found out that religion really is a BIG word for the world and the way people live and behave in different countries...And its role in war, of course.

I would really like to join other similar workshops and projects...and I believe that we will work together somehow...

METIN OSCAKIR, 26, ISTANBUL, TURKEY



Y've learned many things about ■ Islam and was able to eliminate many prejudices. I can understand the religion more and am also more certain in my opinion that it is not a religion for me. But it is important for me to be able to defend Islam against the prejudices of others and I can do this only if I know Islam.

I've gotten much more interested in the history of the Balkans. This is certainly positive. I would like to come back and explore these countries more by myself. It is very exciting to get to know some bits of this very different lifestyle.

I expected a more professional attitude of some people - also in the sense of exchanging general ideas about filmmaking, religious approach and cultures. I cannot say that this has been achieved.

But other things were achieved:

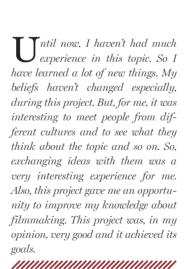
Many important impressions that will always remain.

Many solved prejudices that will never come back.

Many memories of times and places that I could never have acquired without this project.

Thank you very much!!!

ANA ZIRNER, 24, BERLIN, GERMANY



Bogdan Jankovič, 24, Novi Sad, Serbia

his exchange was one of the best L things that have happened to me so far. I've learned a lot about camera and editing and about the whole concept of making documentary films. Regarding the idea of changing my opinion and beliefs, they stayed the same, I have the same beliefs as before, I am faithful but not religious. But I saw that such a concept of belief was present in a large part of the group. Also, I've learned a lot about the cultures and people in the group, about their traditions and customs. I saw a lot of different parts of regions and the goal of the exchange was fully achieved because I met a lot of new people, made new friends, learned about the filming process and had a really great time. A vacation well spent!

DENIS TOMIĆ, 18. Mostar, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Por me, this project was very fruitful in many aspects. This project assures me in my atheistic position and I am convinced now, more than ever before, that organized religion is bad for the planet. So I will try harder to prevent any bad influences of organized religions on the humanistic society in the 21st century. I think that many other participants feel the same way and also that some of their prejudices towards atheistic or secular society have disappeared. If that is the case, then the project was very successful...

ZORAN PETAKOV, 30, NOVI SAD, SERBIA I've learned a lot of things, especially about other countries and their cultures. In my opinion, the purpose has been achieved. I consider the greatest benefit of this project to be meeting other people and talking with them. I think the main goal of such projects will always be the communication between people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, so I think the purpose has been achieved.

Janus Pintarič, 18, Ljubljana, Slovenia

The time we spent together was crazy, like riding a roller coaster. However, some work was done, especially in the video workshop, and some of that work is quite good. Also, there were some lectures, debates that were perhaps useful for some people in terms of education, expanding their knowledge and encouraging creativity. I didn't do much work, as everyone knows, actually everything I did (and am still doing) was write this travel journal which is really literary and is not just a simple résumé of what went on; I found myself doing that and didn't want to force myself into other activities (which, honestly, didn't interest me that much). I had and still have tons of material for my writing so that sometimes I panic in the sense of "will I be able to edit everything". So, the first main thing (on a totally personal level) that I got from this ex-



change is a chance to do the thing I'm still doing under the terms and conditions that I have never had before - to write and that is priceless. Secondly, there is a whole bunch of people that I got to know and will probably think about in the next days, maybe dream about them, which is also - priceless. I believe that, apart from the videomaking and research, which are categorized as workshops and are, in this sense, there to teach interested people to work in these fields, people from different cultural contexts becoming friends, hugging each other goodbye, saying "I'm really happy to have met you" - a pure example of multicultural relationships - is the main purpose of the project and, in this sense, it has been achieved.

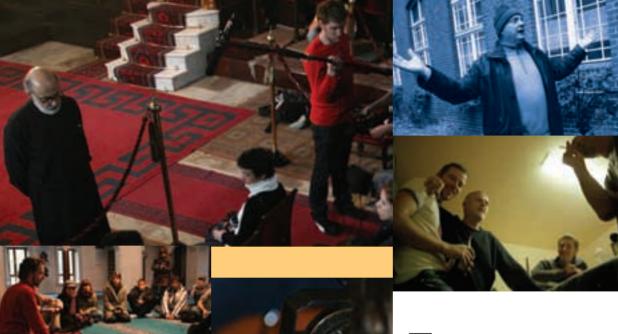
MATJAŽ ZOREC, 22, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

T saw the lives of people in Bosnia af-**⊥** ter the war, heard people's thoughts about war and peace, how they live together... In the group, we learned about different people and cultures. Although the way I see things stayed the same, I'm sure there have been some changes in the background that are not apparent, but they will affect our thinking from now on. Also, I've learned about the technical aspects of video editing and photo developing which will help me a lot. I've made new friends, got to know certain people, talked about prejudices... Although our short films don't reflect the subject of "the role of religion", we tried and saw what we could get and that was the important thing, we worked in mixed groups, got into the group spirit. Thanks a lot.

NUR YILDRIM, 20, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

 $oldsymbol{\mathsf{T}}$ 've learned about the Balkan lacksquar war, I saw the differences between Muslims in Turkey and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. My beliefs haven't changed after the project. In this project, I've learned about documentary videos, video editing, shooting, I met good people. I've learned what tolerance towards people is and I think good work has been done in this project...

OZAN GURSEL, 23, ISTANBUL, TURKEY



uring this exchange, I've learned a lot about other religions, their customs and beliefs. I've also learned a lot about filmmaking, which I'll be able to use for my personal improvement and in my further work. As regards the newly gained perspective on religions, I'm still an atheist but I respect other religions more.

SAMO GNEZDA, 19, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

fter the exchange, I can say that The new generation is more optimistic. They try to connect to other people. I've gotten a lot of benefits from this exchange. I've learned the basics of filmmaking and technical equipment. On the other hand, I observed the differences in cultures. I've changed my mind about conservatives. I have learned to understand them. The problem is in our minds. We are responsible for our behaviour. So we create diversity. Thanks to this exchange, I can talk about my experiences in my country.

Ані Соксе, 24, ISTANBUL, TURKEY

he main thing for me was the **L** social and creative interchange. The discussions, public and personal, about religion are interesting, but a very interesting area of comparison is also how everyone deals with the theme. Some do it through long observation and a contemplative form, some with direct questions, some with humour and aggressive camera and editing.

I haven't changed my personal beliefs nor do I think that my respect for other religions has changed. Well, it was nice to see a participant I learned to appreciate, Esra, pray and feel respect for her praying.

The resulting benefit is not clear yet, we are a little more than half way. I don't want to draw any conclusions at his point. Anyhow, I can say that I had an intense time with my colleagues and learned about them and their way of seeing and presenting things.

Leon Geyer, 30, BERLIN, GERMANY



n general, this project is one of the **■** most important things I have experienced in my life and, although the project's proportions are globally small (for now), it works. Most importantly, accepting differences is crucial and we must all learn to do this somehow (in order to evolve, by gods!!!). The participants, around 50 of us, will certainly never forget how to work, sleep, eat, drink, occasionally smoke and so on, with people who are different from us. Have we (I) learned anything? A lot. And I am still learning about it. Fun at work? 300%. Does it work?

For now, absolutely, but only time will tell what the results of these "international dialogues" have been.

NEJC BAHOR, 20, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

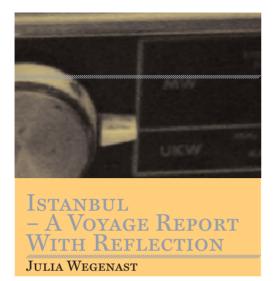
T think this was a very good project **▲** and a very successful one, as well. I truly believe and sincerely hope that this project becomes a reality really soon and that people can be brave enough to forgive each other and carry on with their lives in a normal way.

ENA BALAVAC, 18, Mostar. Bosnia and Herzegovina

or me, "Divided God" was the Γ first project of this kind, with religion in focus, and I must say it has been very beneficial for all the participants, I think. In the three exchanges, I had the opportunity to visit the places that I would probably never have visited on my own, to meet the people that I would rarely have had a chance to meet and I can tell that I've learned a lot, especially about religious practices that I haven't had a chance to see before, but also about different customs, ways of living and thinking in the cities that we visited and also among us, the participants of the project.

MERI MUSA, 29, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina





Ty German friend Sara and I arrived at the XI Sabiha Gökçen Airport in the middle of the night and went by bus to Harem. Not knowing if our friends would be there to pick us up, we where a little bit nervous - fortunately, for no reason: our Turkish friend Volcan and our Slovenian friend Rado, who actually works and lives in Istanbul as a social volunteer, appeared as punctually as the Germans. They were waiting for us to take us to our first base: the volunteers' apartment on the Asian side. We were to stay there that night since the fairies stop crossing the Bosporus at approximately 1 a.m.

The first impressions I could get of Istanbul ■ were through a window of a taxi: I could see the silhouettes of the mosques and the wooden houses which I had read about in Pamuk's descriptions of his favourite city. The night was quiet and peaceful; we were in one of the most traditional neighbourhoods, which is very different from Taksim, the quarter with the highest density of night-life in Istanbul, where we were supposed to stay the next nights.

n ado gave us a very warm welcome at his Thouse, offering us fresh water and two nice

beds. We talked with him about his experience in Istanbul till the morning hours. Asking him what he thinks about Istanbul, he answered that he would like to stay there for the rest of his life. Him saving this with such certainty in his voice surprised me. Despite encountering a lot of problems in his work and in integrating into Turkish society – for example, his neighbours didn't accept the volunteers because, in their eyes, they should lead their life according to Islamic rules – his passion for social and cultural work and his will to make changes in the cultural education system in Turkey seemed to be stronger and gave him all his motivation.

TX7e would have talked much more if the V imams had not started singing loudly at the minarets at five o'clock in the morning. This was the sign to finally go to bed and try to get some sleep before sunrise.

fter a good Turkish breakfast with strongly Abrewed Chai, we were ready to go on an adventure in Istanbul's Asian side. Descending down the hill to the seaside, my first impressions were full of contrasts: from poor traditional fishermen to modern and expensive fish restaurants for the upper classes, from centuries-old mosques to very modern buildings, standing side by side, from completely covered women walking behind their husbands to young stylish couples walking arm in arm on the pavement... What mostly drew my attention were the different appearances of women: from women with long black burgas or women with scarves and long coats covering their female silhouettes to women with scarves wearing jeans or skirts combined with attractive shimmering tights and legwarmers and, last but not least, women with a more European look, with fancy hairstyles and feminine clothes. These very different ways of female expression - with a scarf and without it - was the subject I would come to explore during my stay in Istanbul.

The scarf subject was one of the most discussed **** subjects in the media at that time: The opposition had just opened a procedure to ban the AKP - the Islamic conservative party of Prime Minister Erdo an with the majority in parliament. The opposition justified their course of action with the argument that the AKP were going against the Kemalist law, which prohibits wearing the headscarf in public buildings. The AKP wanted to allow women to again wear the headscarf at the universities, on the basis of religious freedom in the social and professional life of women. The opposition interpreted this as a step towards an anti-laic society and presumed that Erdo an had hidden plans for an Islamic Turkey. So the scarf once again - was one of the most discussed issues and the people of Istanbul seemed to be divided into two groups:

ne group that believes in AKP's idea that women with scarves should not be discriminated against in their individual right of religious expression. This also means that they should have the same access to university and professional life as women without scarves.

A nother group that believes that women Ashould not wear scarves in public buildings because they want Turkey to be a secular country. For some people, mostly women, the scarf represents also the suppression of women in Turkish society. They do not believe Erdo an's words and think that the AKP hides some plans for a more conservative and Islamic, male-ruled Turkey.

Oo, actually, the scarf – besides being, first of all, a personal choice of women, seems to be full of different meanings. The lecture by Kenan Cayir* at Bilgi University pointed out that women wearing the scarf do not represent only one homogeneous group with one identity and one political idea. There are very different reasons for wearing the scarf: there are women who follow Islam in a conservative way, they are housewives and mothers, they depend mostly on their husbands and do not have any kind of higher education, and then there are women who wear the headscarf because of familial traditions, but do not live sticking strictly to religious rules and then there are those with higher education, criticising the male dominant discourse.

This last group of women is part of a new phe-▲ nomenon in Turkey. Cavir says that, since the late 1970's, new Islamic movements have emerged as an Eastern answer and counterpoint to Western capitalism, materialism and even socialism. They argued that Islam is in decline because of Western modernization. From this starting point, many different Islamic movements arose: some of them opine for scarf-covered women and support right wing parties, others are against the voting right and yet others are against Kemalist reforms on the whole and against Western modernity. And then there are even Kurdish Muslims who condemn nationalism and are against right wing parties. Despite being very heterogeneous in their goals, all of these Islamic movements have one thing in common: they differentiate themselves from traditional Muslims and call themselves Islamists. In their opinion, Muslim refers to a passive, intrinsic category: one is born Muslim. To be an Islamist means to them to be a conscious Muslim. They idealize Islam, not comparing it to other religions, but comparing it to capitalism. Their idea is of a revolutionary nature: they want to construct an Islamic social and political system.

The novelty was that they moved to big cities, **■** started entering universities and graduating from them. This was possible because of increased educational facilities. From the late 1980's to the beginning of the 1990's, they with their university degrees entered the labour market and acquired modern professions: an Islamic middle class was born. One could observe this in the opening of Islamic beauty salons, Islamic fashion shows being seen on TV and luxury hotels offering special holidays for Muslim people. On the one hand, this was part of a new modernization, on the other hand, this way of living faced them with a dilemma: How can a manager of a fashion show, for instance, contract women to expose themselves publicly? How can a headscarfed woman work in an international company when she is religiously not allowed to shake hands with her international colleagues? Real life started to conflict with political life. Suddenly, the new Islamists found themselves between old Islamic rules and new capitalistic rules.

Come of them started to rethink their Islamic Dideals and to reformulate their concept of an Islamic system. They want it to fit their modern world. An increasing secularism in Islamic movements began. We are still witnesses to an ongoing process of trying to rethink and reformulate an Islamic response to Western modernity. It is a process of weighing old values against new rules and habits. In this process, all poles are represented:

The radical right wing goes towards a conser-L vative interpretation of Islam and wants an Islamic state where sharia is law and order.

The radical left wing supports Kemalist re-I forms and is in favour of Turkey entering the European Union.

The center-to-right-wing wants an Islamic L country that preserves Islamic rules and values and is, at the same time, open for capitalistic rules and for a process of individuation.

O - returning to the scarf subject matter - when Owe talk about what the scarf represents today, it is not possible to say that it has one meaning and one message. It represents at least so many different ways of being a woman as we can see different ways of being Turkish in a country which is European and Asian at the same time, from Kemalism to Islamism, between old values and new capitalistic rules. The scarf discussion shows us that the whole country is fragmented between two or more systems and/or beliefs and that women are the ones who take a stand when going out into the streets with a scarf or without it.

Ty interest in this voyage was to find out how $oldsymbol{1}$ women – with a scarf or without it – as well as men:

-interpret the scarf;

- -think about AKP's attempt to again allow the scarf at universities:
- -think about headscarfed women in leading posi-
- -What they think women could contribute to the society if they were notably represented in leading positions (whether in social, political or business life).

-What would they want Turkey to be like in 10 years. And what should be done/should change, so that this could come true

Therefore I did a few interviews with:

-two participants of our group - Esra (head-covered) and Gizem (not head-covered);

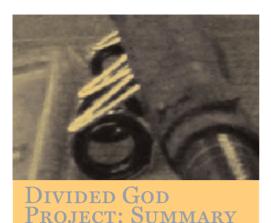
-an Alevi woman:

-people in the streets.

Tnfortunately, except for Esra, I couldn't get head-covered women in front of the camera. There can be a lot of different reasons for this: one might be the Islamic conviction that it is better not to be pictured; another one might be a fear of the Western media, which often have a very lopsided and negative way of reporting about Muslims, seeing mostly terrorists in headscarfed women or men with long beards.

Oo the report I will give in my film will not be as balanced as this one. But what it can be, at least, is an idea of a Turkey that is going through a crucial period of changing identities and re-inventing itself.

> *Kenan Cayir is a Teaching Assistant at the Department of Sociology, Istanbul Bilgi University, and a PhD candidate at the Department of Political Science and International Relations. Bogazici University, Istanbul. He is working on Islamist movements in Turkey, mainly focusing on their literary representations.



PETAR ATANACKOVIĆ

The Divided God project was (as I expected) a good opportunity to meet new people, to visit different cities, learn something new about different cultures (more than religions) and different ways of thinking. And I think that the project had more or less met all of my expectations.

√y knowledge about the general topic was pretty good, but it simply can't be enough. I have learned something new at the theoretical level, especially during the exchange in Istanbul. On the other hand, filmmaking was a totally new field for me, so one of the biggest benefits of this project was acquiring new knowledge about filming. But what I have found the most interesting is the exchange of ideas and simple conversations with lots of different people. It's quite interesting to see the reflection, logic and argumentation of different people from different cultural backgrounds in one single field - the area of religion, religiousness, cultures and other social topics. I will especially remember a few discussions among the project participants in Ljubljana: I do not mean the final discussion, which was senseless from the beginning and was, in many ways, complete bullshit for me, even if many people think the opposite. What I have in mind are the several non-official discussions that were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and developed in very interesting ways, also lasting for hours.

It was interesting to see different levels of ■ knowledge about the general topic: some of the people did not know so much about it, some of them knew something, some of them lots, but it's interesting to notice how most of them know (or can see) only one side of it. I think that this project was definitely very educational for those people. For me, it was mostly a confirmation of the things that I already knew before, but I also filled them with new and interesting details

T did not become a believer after this project (and **▲** I think that was not the intention of the project!). Quite the opposite, I am convinced that, in the contemporary world, there is not much need for religion, especially in its rigid forms. There are so many other interesting things, the world itself is one interesting thing and, as you learn more and more about it, you find out that religious and national boundaries are irrelevant and stupid. And it will be best for this same world to overcome them as soon as possible!

Tam not sure what to say, actually, about the Loncept of "intercultural dialogue" defined in the project description. If this phrase means a dialogue between cultures, mutual influences and improving cultures in general, their progress towards new, richer and better forms, then I can support it. And I think that this kind of projects can play an important role in this process (at the micro level). On the other hand, I can't accept the point of view that "everything is equally good", regardless of something similar being the motto of this project. I simply can't accept the fact that any point of view, any cultural or national or religious tradition, no matter how rigid, primitive, stupid or inhuman, is the same, equally good and should be respected and not criticized. This concept, which is, I believe, called "multiculturalism", is essentially wrong because it conceals many traps. It can be a good excuse for racism and the concept of "not doing anything about some wrong thing". I

mean, if it's true that "everything is equally good", then the burning of widows together with their husbands' bodies in India is just a nice and exotic custom and we should not do anything to prevent it. Because, who are we to break someone else's "cultural tradition"? If everything is equally good, then it's the same to be racist and antiracist, to be fascist and antifascist and so on...

uring the project exchanges, there were lots of good lectures and some not that good and there were also some good excursions and some not that good. The lectures by two sociologists from Istanbul, the lecture by Rajko Muršič in Ljubljana and the discussion in Münz Salon in Berlin (even if it was too long and became exhausting at the end) were the best "theoretical inputs" of the project. The lectures by Želimir Žilnik are always special, so they were also very interesting. The filming activities were a very interesting experience, especially in Mostar. Later in Ljubljana, it was interesting to follow the work of a director and editor from the Serbian team: both of these work-processes were new, interesting and useful for me

Occializing during the exchanges was more Othan satisfying: maybe the participants from ex-Yugoslavia had an advantage over the participants from Germany and Turkey because they can easily (or more easily) understand each other. Also it was interesting to watch how people from different countries face their prejudices about others (if they had prejudices and some of them definitely had some prejudices). So, I do not mention prejudices together with the sentence "participants from ex-Yugoslavia" for no reason...

Tew knowledge, new experiences, visits to new and different places, etc., were very important parts of this project, but the most important were new contacts, connections with new people. I mention this "human factor" because I find future cooperation a crucial result of the entire project. Namely, this project is worthless if everything ends only with "good experiences and new knowledge" and some "NGO tourism". Simply put, the project's greatest value is the possibility of making new contacts, forming new ideas and then using these new connections for their implementation. Divided God, from my point of view, should be repeated all the time in other shapes, in different areas and with new persons, because projects like this make real intercultural dialogue possible. Only in this way, can phrases such as "connecting people", "cultural cooperation", "dialogue", "new ideas", "exchanging experiences", etc., have good practical results and can overcome the level of "good god-fearing wishes".

Prerything previously said, goes double for Lisocieties commonly seen as the "gunpowder barrels of Europe" and for people who come from those societies. So I can conclude in a very simple way: participating in this project was one of the best things that has happened to me in the last five or I don't know how many years. Hopefully, I will not wait another five or I don't know how many years for another opportunity like this one...



Reflection by:

BENAN ORHON

The DividedGod Project was a good opportu-I nity for me to learn many new things and gain new experiences. First of all, there was this multicultural atmosphere correlating well with the project's topic. Speaking about religion, attending lectures and expressing your views or digging inside by making movies was a good triangle of the project. In all the cities we visited with the group, we were able to get the feel of the city through city tours, lectures and the help from the participants of the host countries, making it easier to decide what we wanted to work on in a particular city. Especially in the Berlin exchange, the city tour at the beginning and other planned trips to the museums, mosques and churches were very helpful.

Through discussions, sometimes with the **▲** whole group or sometimes in smaller groups during our free time, I was able to learn more about different religions. At the end, my ideas didn't change that much, but I was able to broaden some of my views and acquire a different perspective on religion and religious dialogue in my country. I saw how delicate it could be in some cases. Even if I think that religion shouldn't be an obstacle for communication or living and sharing in one community, I've realized how hard it is to make it come true. Especially, when people get extremely defensive about their religion, it becomes easier for them to be offended or annoved even though it is simple for the others. For the ones looking in from the outside, it may look different and that makes it easier to speak about it in a wrong way. Religion, of course, has an influence on culture, but sometimes culture has more effect on religion. Born into an atmosphere of one religion, people get used to the culture of their religion and then it becomes their identity. I feel that religion is more of an identity for most of the people (also the project participants), a feeling of belongingness, a kind of solidarity. When this kind of idea occurs, it comes naturally to take the others as the opposite of you. Sometimes it's not only this which makes religious dialogue harder, also some other things like history, traditions, sometimes politics, the attitude of the media, etc. They all make it hard to have a neutral opinion... After the project exchanges, my point of view about

religion didn't change personally, but I still don't have a very concrete idea about how to spread it. But, in the project, sharing and searching for those things was a good way of establishing a dialogue between us. For me, one of the important aims of the Divided God project was this intercultural and social dialogue and I think it was very well achieved through the atmosphere in this project. On the other hand, I was able to advance my knowledge in the video workshops, I became more involved in this field, too. As a result. I'm very happy to have been part of this project and very satisfied with what we have done so far. Now after the exchanges, I hope that the second phase of the project will be successful as well.



REFLECTION BY:

HRVOJE BAGARIĆ

eeting new people is always a special ex-LVI perience. Meeting people of different cultural backgrounds is a privilege. The "Divided God" project offered me that opportunity. The people - approximately of my age - proved to be very interesting, as did the time spent with them. The addition of working on movie projects and learning quite a few things about how documentaries are made from a personal experience was a great thing. In my personal opinion, the time when I learned the most about people and their customs was when they were hosts. Also, that was

the time I did the most extensive self-evaluation during this project. I was able to use and share the knowledge of my city and my culture with people of different backgrounds. It made me question my customs more deeply than ever before.

Travelling to other places and meeting people **** at those places made me realize how different we all are, but also that we are all the same, in some sense. I wouldn't have visited the places I visited and, also, I wouldn't have interacted with the local people in the same manner if it weren't for our hosts. They made us a part of the community instead of ordinary tourists. The cities we visited had a great and rich history and some amazing events took place when we were there. We also did an extensive research of the cities we visited in order to be able to shoot a truthful documentary.

The lectures given by Mr. Žilnik focused on the L various ways of shooting movies and on the ethics of shooting a documentary and someone's life story. He gave a few lectures for the beginners among us. These really helped me in finding my role and also allowed me to participate in the shooting of a film. Also, in every city, we had a couple of speakers who gave us a perspective on the city's history and the current affairs there.

Thelped in the transcriptions of lectures given by ■ Drago Pilsil, which were later published online. Since I was a beginner, I felt I could contribute best by translating and helping make subtitles, so I focused my work mostly on that.

Tn the end, I feel that I have learned a lot in the ▲ Divided God project and I will keep some of the memories for some time. Also, I hope that I will be able to implement the knowledge that I have gained about multicultural contact and filming in other projects like this, in the future.



KATARINA REŠEK

7 Then I look back on the Divided God project, I can only say it gave me so much... so many opportunities, experience, so much inspiration.

Tremember when Drago told me about this pro-Liect. When he mentioned religion, I got frightened a little bit. But when he explained the whole concept, I was almost ashamed of my primary reaction. I started to wonder how something so sacred and intimate like religion, could get such a negative undertone in every day life. And that's why I decided to take part in the project. (Also, all the cities we went to sounded tempting.)

Oo, as I've mentioned before, this project gave Ome so much it's hard to describe. In less than one year, I've travelled throughout the Balkans, I visited the "multi-culti" capital of Europe - Berlin and I enjoyed the beauty and charm of Istanbul. I love to travel, so I really enjoyed this part of the project. I met a lot, a lot of people, I had the honour to listen to people such as Želimir Žilnik, Mirko Djordjević, Drago Pilsel, Ferhat Kantel, Dori, etc. And also work with some of them.

ne of the best things in these kinds of exchanges is that you stay in contact with a lot of the people you've met, even friendships can develop. I can say that some really have. And besides that, intercultural dialogue was constantly in progress. We, the participants, come from really different environments, backgrounds, we have different lifestyles, but the things that connected us were our youth, our love towards making movies and towards the truth. The title "Divided God" itself proves that it doesn't matter into how many parts you divide God, there is just one God a human is a human and it does not matter what God they believe or do not believe in. It is precisely the really similar religious rituals that show that everything came from the same foundation - a human being. And that's the beauty of intercultural dialogue - no matter how different our opinions and mentality are, we can still find a common language if we just try to. Intercultural dialogue cannot exist without effort. Even if the differences are really big and seem insurmountable, they are not. Intercultural dialogue is a result of compromise, so it is necessary to adjust to each other.

et's go back to the project. I like it because of Lathe fact that it connects lectures (so, education and knowledge), shooting, filming (the practical part and research) and also fun and uniting people. Above all, I have wonderful memories of this project. We became really close with the participants, we met them, felt the beat of their cities, they felt the beat of our little capital (Ljubljana) and we saw how they live, their temperament, their mentality and their culture.

Talso like the project because I've always been ▲ and I still am very curious and I notice some facts really fast, so I could express and film that. And I think that the results speak for themselves. T've learnt a lot! About religions, of course, about history, culture, politics, the system, I've also learnt a lot about life and about myself!

↑ nd after the praise comes the acknowledgement! I would like to thank all the project participants, all the people who told me their stories, all the people who just were there and did what they do every day - live their lives - because they thus helped me to realize and understand their culture, their beat. Of course, thanks to those who enabled this project (sponsors) and especially

to the person without whom this project wouldn't have succeeded - Drago Pintarič.



OLGU DEMIR

s a social project, Divided God provided re-Ally useful debates and conversations with people who belong to other cultures, other lifestyles and thoughts. We travelled to five countries altogether, with people from five different countries. This was very meaningful for me since one of our goals was "To probe and collect opinions, experiences and standpoints of young people regarding religious and cultural tolerance, co-existence and co-operation with those who have different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs". This was done within the Divided God project group, which consisted of about 50 people. This amount of different people enabled us to examine each other's thoughts on life and the way of analysing the problems that had occurred in the black pages of history. Also, we had some lectures that explained, more or less clearly, about cultural diversities and institutional problems, such as religious institutions and politics.

T found the project very useful in view of us I making films together. The process of making documentary films is a great ground for understanding each other. Within the project, there were also smaller projects done in smaller groups which made us more open to understanding other cultures. And, now, when I look on the outcome of the project published on the web site, I can still say to myself that I can learn more things from the Divided God project.



SARA BUNGARTZ

T was a participant of the Divided God project. I was in the Balkans and Turkey and now I'm back in Berlin, where I live.

T've never felt more like a German than after L this project. Because I never thought that there were so many rumours about the Germans in other countries. But now I know there are and. maybe, I'm exactly the kind of a German other people think I am.

This project was supposed to be an intercultu-**I** ral event with young people from five different countries. Before the project started, I thought I was really open-minded and interested in other countries and cultures. I know I am, but maybe that is not enough to make this project work.

t the end of the day, I think the most impor-Atant thing is to talk. To communicate. And I think we didn't do that enough. Or maybe we didn't do that at all. Because maybe everybody, myself included, didn't think that this should be soooo important. And we didn't want to force

things. And thus a lot of misunderstandings arose. And I think there are still a lot of them.

The only way to clear these kinds of problems is to communicate. And this is also not that easy when you speak a different language or when you're afraid of being honest. Or whatever. It's so easy not to talk. I've learned a lot about human behaviour in other cultures

nd that was really important for me. And it will be also later in my life.

recording that I learned during the trip, even Lwhen it was negative, will be important in order to avoid similar problems.



EMRAH GURSEL

T ntercultural dialogue is a very popular concept, I nowadays. We, as NGO workers, video activists, and anti-fascists can achieve several things. Divided God is a very important project aimed at changing ourselves, our values, and our view of "other" cultures. But, is it enough?

T any countries, international organizations, IVI policymaking bureaucrats, NGOs, artistic groups, etc., approve of the dialogue in discourse, but they don't take full responsibility to fight against discrimination, Islam phobia, anti-Semitism, sexism or racism. At best, they try to find solutions within the system itself and do not see the deeper structural problems. Therefore, all this multicultural language remains very shallow.

Tatred among people can appear in any so-▲ Lciety. Even in a very pluralistic society, discrimination could occur between individuals. Nonetheless, real trouble doesn't occur due to individual tendencies. The problem is so consistent because of structural problems, which constitute the chain of hostilities. School, the media, the army, the family, political parties and the state in general are mostly the main producers of hatred and intolerance. If we don't change these institutions, we cannot move forward even one step. Of course, we should create an atmosphere for individuals to change their attitudes and be more pluralistic, but a more general vision is quite necessarv.

Hatred is very much welcomed by the ones who benefit from the continuation of this structure. Without their institutional support, it would be much easier to overcome hatred. Let's see things from a more general perspective, continue what we are doing already, but also let's fight against the structure creating the "division".



Volkan Pirincci

T can say that Divided God is one of the most im-**■** portant projects I have attended so far. It made me question so many things. I even questioned myself and my relation to religions. Using video as a tool is another thing that makes the outputs of the project permanent and more effective.

T met many new people from whom I gained I many new skills and knowledge. Skills in video making – a big thanks to Želimir Žilnik and the knowledge of history and different cultures and religions.

↑ s an author of a few videos and some discussions, I can honestly say that the project is perfect and can be an example for future video activism projects.

↑ nd, finally, as one of the organizers of the Istanbul exchange, I am really happy to have enabled you to see my country and culture during the last exchange.

A LECTURE BY DRAGO PILSEL:

Political Theology - The Theology of National Anti-Myth

(THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN WAR AND POST-WAR PERIOD)





Želimir Žilnik:

Yood morning everyone, today, as we have Talready announced, we have very special guests, Mr. and Mrs. Pilsel. I told you what you are going to hear in today's lecture and that there will be time for discussion. It is a very special day today for us who are examining the role of religion in today's society since Mr. Pilsel is a great expert in that area. He is not only an excellent essayist and journalist in this field, but he also has an interesting background regarding his schooling in South America and here in Europe. So, today, we have someone who can tell us a lot of interesting things and whom we shall be able to ask some really serious questions about religion, Christianity and about the role and position of the Church in today's society. So I will give the podium to Mr. Pilsel. He will speak Spanish because that is his native language. Mrs. Pilsel will translate into English. Afterwards, you can ask questions and you can speak German, as Mr. Pilsel speaks German, or English, French and Italian, the languages they both speak as well. Some of you speak Italian and Portuguese, so you can ask questions in those languages, and of course in Croatian, and I think that you can understand Bosnian and Serbian as well.

Drago Pilsel:

Dlease, if you cannot hear or understand me, raise your hand. It is not a problem to repeat because I do not know how the acoustics are and if you can hear me. Or do I need to speak louder? Let me know. Is it OK over there? OK!

/ ost informal presentations start with a little IVI humour. Drago has asked me to tell a joke that is actually a German advertisment for a language school. It shows how easily language and communication difficulties can cause huge problems or misunderstandings. The joke is called 'The German Coastguard'. A young man is on his first day at work with the coastguard. His boss shows him the control buttons, the microphones, the centre of communication for boats and coastguards. He finishes and leaves, wishing the young man good luck. Everything starts easy enough. The young man is enjoying himself, everything is going well. There are no calls, everything is quiet. And then, all of the sudden, a panicky voice calls: "Mayday, mayday, we are sinking." The young man runs around trying to find where the voice is coming from. He finally finds the button and hears again: "Mayday, mayday, we are sinking. Can anybody hear us?" He pushes the microphone button and says (with a German accent): "Zis is ze German coastguard. Vat are you sinking (thinking) about?"

First of all, let me give you a few words of introduction about troduction about who we are. Tomorrow, the topic will be my autobiography, how I was raised as a Nazi-Fascist nationalist and how I became an anti-fascist and a fighter for human rights. This will give you an idea of who we are and what I am talking about.

Tstudied journalism, political science and the-Lology. I was born in Buenos Aires in 1952, to a Croatian refugee family in Argentina. I arrived in Yugoslavia in May 1989. At that time, I was a Franciscan monk. In October 1991, my brother's boat was hit by a missile from a Yugoslav navy ship and, together with five other soldiers, he disappeared. Their boat sank and there was nothing left. The place is just an hour from here. When this happened, I quit my theological studies and became a volunteer in my brother's former brigade. I, more or less, took his place as a solider. During the five months I was fighting, I was in a process of re-examining many things and especially the concept of my identity: Not just my ethnic or national identity, but also my cultural identity and especially my religious identity.

Tarrived here in '89 and by '91 I had reached the **I** point where I realized that my attitude and my relationship to the Catholic Church in general, and especially the Catholic Church in Croatia, was not what I had expected it to be. This is probably due to my Argentinean roots. Back in Argentina, I was very involved in a theological movement called "Liberation Theology". Its base is the people of the Church and the hierarchy is very, very flat. This is completely different compared to the Catholic Church in Europe, which has a very steep hierarchy. So the Catholic Church in Croatia not only has a hierarchy that is very, very visible, but they also still have a very feudal mentality, attitude and structure.

ne of the reasons why I, more or less, became an enemy of the politics as well as the person

of Franjo Tudiman in the 1990's was that he used Catholicism to create a new national identity to replace the Marxist identity of Yugoslavia. I was also very much opposed to his very autocratic style of leadership, which did not allow for the development of a civil society in Croatia. When Tudjman and Milosević agreed to divide Bosnia, it was the final reason I needed to oppose Tudiman. I have Bosnian roots. Both my grandmothers were from Bosnia. I am from a very mixed Austro-Hungarian family.

ater, I completed my theological studies, but LI did not want to have a degree from the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Zagreb. It was a way for me to show my opposition to the Catholic Church and its role in the nationalistic movement in Croatia. So, shortly before finishing my studies, I moved to the Protestant Seminary in Osijek, Croatia. My field of specialization is political theology.

booklet are the topics that I have dealt with on a daily basis. In September, I will be finishing my master's degree and the title of my thesis is "The Theology of Anti-Nationalism".

Thave worked as a correspondent for many in-Laternational media. I have written for El Pais, which is the most important daily in the Spanishspeaking world. I have also worked for a number of newspapers in Slovenia. For the last 12 years, I have been working for Novi List, the only independent daily newspaper in Croatia not controlled by Tudjman in the 90's.

▶laudia is from a German family but she was born in the Philippines. Her parents were missionaries doing development and aid work in the Philippines. Claudia grew up in a very rural region with a people group called the Dumagat. It is a very small minority. Later, she went to school in Manila and because there were not any German schools there at the time, she attended an international school following the American system. After finishing high school in Manila, she went to Germany to finish high school also there and then to study in Heidelberg. She majored in English Philology with minors in Spanish and Education. She also worked on a project at the Heidelberg Academy of Science, working on a dictionary of medieval Spanish. Medieval Spanish has a lot of words that are of Arabic or Hebrew origin. She also taught Spanish, German as a foreign language, business English and intercultural relationships for managers. She trained people working in Southeast Asia, teaching them about cultural differences.

The title of my talk today is "The Moral Foundation of Our Society". Why does political theology interest me? My path or journey of faith started with my experiences in Latin America. It cannot be separated from the Words of God and the Scriptures or from the point of view of the victims - the victims of racial discrimination or racial acts of violence, victims of sexual abuse, ethnic abuse or religious discrimination.

In view of this background, it seemed "natural" Lto me to become the first Croatian journalist to write about the war crimes committed by Croats against the Serbian minority after the liberation of Croatian territories that had been occupied by the Serbs. As you can imagine, I was called a traitor. However, for me, the most important thing was to serve and represent the victims. Similarly, I did not have a problem being the representative speaker at the first Croatian Gav Pride held in March 2000, in Zagreb.

D ut let us go back to the victims. We choose **D**absolutely independently to believe or not to believe in God. Metaphorically speaking, all of us have a moral obligation to take the victims off the cross. This is one reason why I am interested in political theology. Another reason is that it is necessary to de-mystify the concept of "nation" and "nationalism".

Tust a few weeks ago, for example, Croatian Car-J dinal Bozanić said a very strange thing during a commemoration service in Bleiburg, Austria.

This is a place that has mythological meaning for Croatian nationalists. As some of you may know, during WWII, the Independent State of Croatia was declared. Back then, it also included the whole of BiH, parts of Serbia, the city of Zemun and a part of Montenegro. It was a fascist state that collaborated with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. So when it was clear that Germany and Italy were losing the war, many fascist Croats left for Bleiburg to meet the English troops. They thought that the English would help them fight against the Partisans in Croatia - especially since a large part of Austria had already been occupied by Stalin's troops. Of course, these Croats were quite stupid because it was already clear that Tito had a pact with the allies, which included the repatriation of all who were considered enemies. So Bleiburg is the place where Croatian fascist troops went to meet the English troops, hoping to be able to fight together against Tito's Partisans. There were not only Croats in this group, but also people from many other ethnic groups, such as Serbian Chetnics, Slovenian Belogardists and Bosnian Muslims, But Croatian nationalism likes to present Bleiburg as the place where the Croatian nation was betrayed and sacrificed. So every year, on 15 May, a Croatian bishop goes to Bleiburg to hold a mass. The Cardinal of Zagreb held the ceremony this year and, at one point, he said that he was a bishop of the "Church of the Croatian Nation".

ccording to the Second Vatican Council, Asomething like this cannot exist within the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is universal. It is not about ethnic groups or nations. The message of Christianity is a personal message to all people, men and women, of different ethnic groups and nations. Anyone is free to accept it or not. Those who accept it are baptized and become part of the new community of people belonging to God. The strength of this new community does not come from any sense of national pride. It is a gift from the Holy Spirit. This is the explanation

of Christian theology.

Tt is very similar in the Orthodox Church and in Islam. According to Islamic theology, it is not about the conversion of ethnic groups to Islam. But here, again, the message of the Prophet is a personal message and requires the submission of each individual to the will of God. In the Orthodox Church, even though they are structured as national Churches, there is the Russian Orthodox Church, the Polish Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, etc., which are all national Churches, the Church itself always requires an individual response and an individual relationship with the Creator.

Oo the reason I am interested in political theol-Ogy is because of the concepts of "nation" and "nationalism". They have been one of the defining powers in the creation of nations, not only in the 1990's, but also throughout history.

****7ou can find a good example of this type of **I** nationalism in connection with religion, right here in Mostar. The huge cross on the hill across from here and the huge tower were built by Bishop Perić and the Franciscans. That tower has nothing to do with Franciscan spirituality or Franciscan teachings, which are about humility, minorities, serving the small - most of all, they stress the need for dialogue. Let us go back and remember the Crusades in the middle of the 13th century. St. Francis, who started the Franciscan order, was against the Crusades. He took a boat and went down to the Holy Land to talk to the Muslims. Since that time, the Franciscans have been present in the Holy Land. Their main goal there is to develop a dialogue with the Muslims. Have a look at what they have done here, in this city, after the war. Look at what they have done here, in Mostar, after the war, by placing the cross up on the hill and building a bell tower, which is hugely out of proportion. It is an act of domination, arrogance and provocation, which goes absolutely against the principles, the function and the

ideas of religion.

X Thy? The problem is that they have lost their V roots and have forgotten what they actually stand for. You can find the same in the Vatican and its latest declarations. The focus has shifted away from theology and individual human beings to the nation and the state. I believe that the Church and all religions need to transcend nationalism and nations. If we identify ourselves with a certain church, religion, religious group or with a certain ethnic or nationalistic group, we exclude everyone who does not belong to our particular ethnic or religious group. God in Christianity, Islam, Judaism and in every monotheistic religion is a personal God and has universal relationships. On the other hand, by combining religious identity with a national or ethnic identity, the Church loses one of its most important functions. When I talk about the Church, I am talking about any kind of religious community and wish to include the Muslims under this term as well.

The role of any religious community is to ex-**L** amine itself and to accept and recognize the sins or mistakes made by this particular group in the past and the present. I have a quote here from an important person of the 20th century who was the first post-war Chancellor of Germany. In February 1946, Konrad Adenauer wrote a letter to a friend who was a Catholic priest in Bonn. "I think that the German nation as well as the Catholic clergy and Protestant priests and bishops are very guilty and carry part of the responsibility for what happened in the concentration camps in Nazi Germany. This lack of responsibility started long before the war because the nation, the people as well as the Churches supported the Nazi agitation and campaign and many of them were in fact very enthusiastic supporters of the Nazi regime."

denauer said this and, for this reason, my friends, I think that the moment has arrived when we need to start talking about the responsibility for the sins of our generation and the generation of our fathers and to stop playing around

with fascism. We need to stop allowing fascists to influence faith by raising the nation up to the level of a divinity and making it sacred.

T am aware of the fact that some of the Catholic ▲ bishops in Argentina supported the dictatorship that started in Argentina in 1966. I was 14 years old when the dictatorship started, so you can tell I am not that young anymore. In 1983, when the dictatorship ended and democracy returned, various human rights groups began to publish information. Argentinean society had to accept not only the loss of the war for the Falklands, but also the figures which showed that more than 30,000 people had been killed or had disappeared during the dictatorship. The Church never said anything to condemn this. Not even when two left-oriented bishops, who were fighting for human rights, were killed because they had spoken out about these facts.

Tam studying political theology because I am Laware that the role and the responsibility of a theologian and a journalist working to promote civil society is also to be able to work in times of difficulties. At first, it seems like a very abstract concept. The job of religious ideology is to promote freedom, peace, justice and reconciliation. This is not only the ideology of Christians, but also of every religious group in the Balkans. There are different types of religious ideologies that deal with political ideologies. In Latin America, Liberation Theology wants to liberate poor people from any kind of oppression. This is especially so because their poverty is a result of unfair and uncontrolled capitalism.

Tere, in the Balkans, the focus is more on humans being enslaved. For example, many young people feel trapped in their countries. It is very difficult to travel abroad. There are regions and cities with mixed populations where the educational system is still completely segregated and very nationalistic. There are schools where, for example, in the morning, there are classes for Croats and, in the afternoon, for the Muslims and, at

some other time, for the Serbs.

X Te are, therefore, looking for a way to liberate the individual. In the communist age, an individual was considered an instrument of ethnic propaganda. Today, for example, if you are not a good Catholic, you cannot be a good Croat; if you are not a good Orthodox, you cannot be a Serb; if you do not wear a scarf, you cannot be a faithful Bosnian Muslim, and so on.

Oo, we are talking about a kind of criticism that Owants to introduce new values, such as love, solidarity and compassion, into society. The goal is not only to bring changes to society in general, but also to bring more democracy into institutions and especially into religious structures.

Oo, to conclude this introduction, according to Othe definition of freedom in political theology, or the sacrament of hope, as it is called in dogmatic theology, it is our job and it is our responsibility to liberate people from any type of slavery.

Tam going to skip some of the more theoreti-Leal topics, so that we have time for discussion, which will be more interesting.

T would like to invite you to think about the fact **⊥** that the building right next to the Pavarotti Centre is completely destroyed. It is in ruins. The international community, people like Pavarotti or Bono, have reconstructed this building as a musical and cultural centre. But the community of Mostar, the politicians here in Mostar, people who have money here in Mostar, the young people in Mostar have not done much. This represents not only the problem of a lack of identity at the national level in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also a lack of values that has allowed this building to continue to be in ruins for years.

Travelling from Slavonski Brod to Sarajevo, **■** you can see destroyed houses everywhere. Where are those people now? Where are the children of those who lived in these houses? Many of them left and never came back.

T lived in Sarajevo for 3 years, from 1996 to 1999. **▲** During that time, I studied Islamic theology

and investigated the results of the war. I am aware of the fact that many people left to save their lives because Sarajevo was completely under siege. It was basically a lottery whether you would stay alive or not. There were many people who said, "I don't want to sacrifice my vouth and I don't want to face the people who burned houses, destroyed churches, killed people and created concentration camps." There were actually concentration camps set up by all sides in the conflict. I do not want to say that all ethnic groups share the same degree of guilt and responsibility in the last war. I accept the fact that, in this last war, Bosnian Muslims suffered a much higher rate of destruction and a higher number of deaths and that, at the political level, they were victims of the conflicts created by Tudjman and Milosević.

We cannot deny the fact that religious representatives worked together with nationalistic leaders to promote nationalism and xenophobia, to scare people and to create areas and regions that are completely ethnically cleansed.

The result of all of this is that a large part of L the population is confused, unmotivated and without any creative capacity or energy. I am talking abot the general, national level. On a more informal level here in Mostar, those of you who are local can confirm this, there is a movement for change among young people. People are mixing more and disregarding whether one is a Croat, a Bosnian or a Serb. The aim is to simply go and meet in cultural cafes and bars. But this level of motivation, desire and attitude does not exist on a national level.

The political climate in Croatia, for example, has changed radically since the 1980's. First of all, people have come to understand that international laws, conventions and agreements are above local legalisation. It is much more important what Carla Del Ponte says than what the Croatian Prime Minister or President say. As the work of the Tribunal in The Hague comes to a close, the cases that are left will be handed over to the Croatian, Serbian and Bosnian courts. People have recognized that international law is more important than local legislation. They think that the nation state can function to a certain degree if they respect the minorities and if they give them certain rights.

↑ n example from another region is the situation of the Kurds. They want more than the Turks will ever give them. Although it is an internal problem, it will not be solved. Not even Angela Merkel will be able to help, as she has a different policy on her agenda.

Any questions?

Question: Sometimes, when we speak about multicultural development, what are we talking about? This political union of regions - can it really affect the world in a positive way? As vou mentioned, in one part of Europe, national identity is growing simultaneously with religious identity and, in another part of Europe, in my experience, the opposite process is happening - the religious identity is getting messier.

D.P.: What is clear now is that in the next twenty to thirty years there will not be this kind of a situation in the EU. So why don't we suppose, for example, that Albania will be a member? As you know, Albanians are atheists, Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. With further democratisation, there are absolutely no obstacles to have the same situation among the Albanians in Kosovo. If you talk with an Albanian Catholic from Kosovo or a Muslim Albanian from Kosovo or even with Catholic or Muslim Albanians from Tetovo in Macedonia, you can feel the same intensity of nationalism and the strong support for the independence of Kosovo. This is just an example of one state. For Albanians, religious identity plays absolutely no role.

D ut if you take Ireland, on the other hand, the Dreligious question is absolutely fundamental. And after thirty years, they finally have a new constitution and a new parliament. So, for the first time, the Orange march took place without any violence. What will happen in the future depends mainly on the educational system.

The policy of segregation starts with the children in the city of Vukovar, in Croatia. The Serbs and the Croats have separate kindergartens - one building with two kitchens, two playgrounds, two doors and everything is absolutely separated. But now, young people are getting together in cafés. This is something that is also happening now in Mostar. This is the result of the efforts of some NGOs, which have created projects for starting dialogues and getting young people together. For 7 years, we worked together with an NGO that was doing projects to connect Serbs and Croats for 3 weeks. Vukovar has seen the first mixed marriages again. So all this depends on the social and political climate and the system of education. The desire or willingness of religious communities to promote reconciliation and dialogue is also crucial.

D ut your question was the future of civil soci-Dety. Civil society requires that all the members of society have an equal status. It requires stability and tolerance, so that we are able to say, "I don't really like that person, but I respect their lifestyle". This is just the first step.

Cuch communities or regions already exist in Europe. A part of Croatia is involved in an experiment called 'Alpe-Dunay-Adria', which includes Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Hungary. These countries cooperate in various cultural and economic projects. For example, there are industrial areas in Croatia, especially in the area of the city of Varaždin, where local authorities grant special status and conditions to any regional company if it wants to open its offices there. Students also study the culture of different parts of the region: Slovenian culture, for example, or the German language, Hungarian folklore, Italian civilization, etc. This is very important for Istria, a part of Croatia. It is a region that is becoming truly multicultural - more than any other part of Croatia. I do not know what the final result of this experiment will be, but in my opinion it is a positive process.

↑ nyway, we want to change the political model in Croatia and create five regions. We also hope to create more cultural and political dialogue between the regions. For example, Croatia is not aware of the fact that it is actually part of the Mediterranean. In Croatia, everything is still centralized in the capital Zagreb - the economy, the education, just to give you two examples. Zagreb has a predominantly Central European cultural identity.

There is no space for the identity of the Dan-▲ ube Region. And, vet, Croatia has so much in common with the Serbs and the Hungarians. Not to mention the history of the city of Dubrovnik. Dubrovnik was a city-state with a lot of cultural identity. This was 700 years ago. Dubrovnik also had a lot of trade with the Turkish Empire.

Tbelieve in the future, especially if you analyse Let the level of respect towards civil society in regions like Istria or Bavaria in Germany, where cultural life is very rich. Istria has the best film festivals, the best school of alternative music, the best ecological organizations, the highest level of respect for human rights and is the part of Croatia where local legislation works best and there is no separatist activity or attitude. At the same time, they have a very strong identity. They are open towards their neighbours and conscious of the fact that they were an important part of the Partisan movement. Istria will always be a part of Croatia. People in Istria are very much aware of all of this and it would be very offensive to see Istrian people as bad Croatians. That is another example of people with different cultural and religious identities within one nation being able to work together.

The problem is that, at the moment, there is **I** no political desire or motivation to accelerate these processes of regional cooperation within the European Union. Part of the problem is that

there is a conservative nationalistic movement in Poland, for example. The Catholic Church in Spain is fighting against the government in Spain because they do not want to accept that, in public schools, the subject "Citizen's Culture" is taught. We are not talking about private Catholic schools, but public state schools. The Catholic Church is against a subject called 'Citizen's Culture' which has been introduced. In this course, for example, a marriage is not defined only as a union of a man and a woman, etc. As you may know, in Spain, homosexual relationships can be given legal status and they have the right to adopt children. The Catholic Church wants to put a stop to this.

In 2000, after Tudjman died, the bishops of L the Catholic Church in Croatia were so furious when the Social Democrats won the elections that they did not attend the annual President's New Year's reception. Traditionally, the representatives of the Catholic Church attend this reception. Their boycott sent the message to the general public that the victory of the Social Democrats was a revival of Yugoslavia. That was because the new government re-established economic relationships with Serbia and the other republics of the former Yugoslavia. An intelligent and smart person would respond to this by not attending the Catholic Church mass. You have the same conflict between the left and the right all over the EU.

TX7e see the results of the war against terrorism every day: in Iraq, on a daily basis, the attacks on Spanish tourists in Yemen, the war in Lebanon, the fighting between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine, etc. The fact that Bush is using the fundamentalist religious position for his politics shows that nothing would be possible if people were not ready and willing to behave in a fanatical way. Mostar is an example of ethnic and religious fanaticism. It is more prevalent on the Croatian side than on the Bosnian side.

said it before, but I want to repeat it again: ⚠ When religion takes a nationalistic position, it says that a person cannot be a good representative

of their religion if they are not, at the same time, a good patriot. Let us remember what the Catholic theologians who supported Mussolini said: "We can be moral, only according to the degree that we identify our morality with Italian patriotism." And Croats said the same thing. And so did the Serbs. And so has al-Qaeda. They speak about ethnic or religious identity in the wrong way. The result is a breakdown in communication within civil society and in the effectiveness of NGOs. This creates fanaticism. If someone has not developed a high personal awareness, they are only a small step away from entering this circle of national hate.

TAThat happened in BiH was absolutely disastrous. The objective of the respective wars was to create ethnically clean regions. It would never have been possible if it had not been for a discourse that was both religious and nationalistic at the same time and which produced fanatics. There is absolutely no difference between the attitude of the Scorpions who killed Muslims in Srebrenica and the Muslim brothers who behead people in Egypt, the al-Qaeda or the Ku Klux Klan. These are the same forms of behaviour that I saw in Argentina. So when I arrived here, I immediately understood what was going on.

This type of hypocrisy, which began in the 1950's, has now transformed itself into the hegemony of North America. Not to be critical of Bush and those who support him is to be hypocritical in the same way as Nixon, Johnson and even John F. Kennedy were by not recognizing or admitting that they had lost the war in Vietnam. It is hypocritical of Bush that he does not want to admit that he has lost the war in Iraq and that they have a civil war there. What is he doing now? He is blaming Iran for financing the terrorists in Iraq. It is probably true. But, at the same time, it is also a consequence of US politics. It has been proven in the US Congress that Americans had plans to invade Iraq long before the attacks in New York and Washington. And it was not by accident or by chance that Donald Rumsfeld, the

former defence minister, financed Hussein's army after '92. The plan was to allow Hussein to stay in power in order to have a reason for invasion later on. In the same way, Franjo Tudjman allowed Muslim soldiers from Arabic countries to enter Bosnia. The Croatian secret service not only provided clean papers for mujahideens, but also for those who killed the Serbian Prime Minister Zoran indić. This was Tudiman's political tactics: to keep the enemies in order to justify future attack. This policy works all around the world and vou can find it in Africa, Asia or South America.

D ut fortunately, there are some societies that Dare under control and that do punish violations of the law. For example, in Germany, you cannot walk around wearing a t-shirt showing fascist symbols. In Croatia, vou can. Recently, some 50,000 people attended a concert of a very controversial singer who keeps claiming that he does not have anything to do with this ideology. The same concert was shown on Croatian television. At the same time, Croatia wants to be a member of the EU! Croatia likes to think of itself as a much better society than Bosnia or Serbia. From an objective point of view, it is better organized, ves. But personally, I am not sure if the creative potential of Croatian youth is better or higher than that of those in Serbia, Bosnia or Slovenia. In Slovenia, the situation is better because the country is organised. They have managed to enter the European Union and there are more possibilities. But in all the other countries of former Yugoslavia, young people have no way to express themselves.

emocracy returned to Argentina not only because of the political opposition or because the military party lost the war against Britain, but because there was a very strong democratic movement at the universities during the dictatorship. Sixty-five percent of the victims of the dictatorship who were vounger than twenty-five years were students.

Question: Do you think it is necessary for a

nation or a country's existence that religion can be practiced?

D.P.: No. The main issue is cultural identity. The Croatian cultural identity, for example, is basically inseparable from the Catholic element. For example, the first document written in the Croatian language is on a stone, two metres long and about one meter high, and is written in the Glagolitic script - a unique Croatian alphabet, which was used before. This document says that, in the year 1060, King Zvonimir gave a piece of land as a present to two Benedictine monks in order to construct and build the monastery where they would pray for the king's soul.

This is the first document of Croatian culture **I** in history. In this document, you find the union between the Church and the state. This is something, which has continued throughout the history of Croatia. On 30 May 1990, when the first democratic elections in Croatia were held, as a symbolic act, a cradle was placed in front of one hundred thousand people in the main square in Zagreb - a child's cradle with a loaf of bread, which symbolized life. The President of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman, and Cardinal Kuharić, the head of the Croatian Catholic Church, stood side by side beside the cradle. Cardinal Kuharić blessed the loaf of bread in the cradle as a symbol of the resurrection of the Croatian nation.

O what does this have to do with civil society? And this is part of reality! What are people like me - the journalists and theologians - trying to do? We want to introduce a new social concept and a better understanding of the concept of a nation. The fact is that the message of Christianity can help improve the quality of a nation if it promotes solidarity - if it is not a school of fascism.

Tf in order to be a Croat, you need to be a Cath-Lolic, it means that it is more important what happened between your mom and dad in bed than the fact that you were baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. And so baptism and religion are reduced to folklore and we return to the theory of blood and land and we return to Nazism. At the same time, we are trying to accelerate the process of integration into the European Union.

For this reason, the last time I was on TV, I attacked Cardinal Bozanić and other Church leaders in my interview. They were saying that the Croatian language will be lost in the EU. They also have two very different messages depending on whether they are speaking in Brussels or in

Croatia. If you are aware of the fact that 40% of Croatians are illiterate, that 42% of them do not participate in elections or that only 6% have a university degree, you understand that you have a situation in which the leaders of political parties as well as the leaders of religious groups can very easily manipulate the people.

We will talk more, later. Thank you.



Drago Pilsel (MSc.) Born in Buenos Aires in 1962. He studied Mechanical Engineering, Journalism, Christian Spirituality, Literature and Political Science in Buenos Aires, Argentina and in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He has lived in Croatia since May 1989, where he continued his studies in Philosophy and Theology. After the degree in Theology, he finished his Master's Degree in Political Theology and Ethics. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. He is one of the founders of the Croatian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and a well-known public figure in the area of human rights and the freedom of speech. He is a columnist for the dailies "Novi List", Rijeka and "Glas Istre", Pula. He is also a commentator for the Slovenian daily "Večer" based in Maribor. He writes columns for the Serbian monthly "Identitet" and for the Yewish magazine "Ruah Hadasa", both based in Zagreb. For many years, he also worked as a foreign correspondent for different electronic and print media. He teaches journalism and is doing research in the fields such as the de-mythologisation of religion and nation, the role of Christian Churches in the 20th century and in the recent post-Yugoslav wars, as well as the process of reconciliation in Southeast Europe and the management of the geopolitical crisis in many countries of that region. He is also an analyst in various fields of international politics. He is a member of many cultural institutions and also the Council for Civil Society and Human Rights of the Social Democratic Party in Croatia.



FINAL DEBATE

Introductory remarks

The following discussion happened spontaneously, unannounced, the last evening before the end of the exchange in the summer of 2007. It was instigated by the premier screening of the film Babelia by Martin Capatinta and Lee Bomm. The meeting was organized on the request of the members of the Turkish group who felt provoked by the film's content, but especially by the use of their voices/prayers in the film. The following record of the discussion was made on the basis of a video transcription, but does not represent the whole discussion or all the statements uttered by the participants. We sent it to all the main participants and obtained their consent for publication. Volkan Pirinççi gave his consent under the condition that we include, at the beginning, his personal opinion on the discussion.

Volkan Pirinççi: "It was a debate on different cultures and the ethics of filmmaking. The manipulation of my rights was the biggest issue. As a "group leader", I was also supposed to take care of any participants' objections and share them with the whole group. There was a big reaction from Esra, who is a practicing Muslim. And I tried to help her voice her reaction. As a participant, I was disturbed by the manipulation and, as a believer. I was disturbed by the prayer. But it does not mean that I was against the film or that I was in favour of forbidding it. After I first saw the film. I congratulated the author and just asked him to remove my voice and name. In the debate, I could not explain myself correctly and I was shown as if arguing for forbidding the film. Although I was disturbed because of my beliefs, I am strongly against forbidding art or violating the freedom of speech. I do not agree with what Esra said in the debate. I want to add that Esra's sensitivity reflects the perspective of many people in Turkey. That is why I said I could not show and distribute this film everywhere in my country."

THE DISCUSSION

Drago: Everybody here knows the reason for this meeting. We are here because of the film made by Martin Capatinta, who left this morning and is unfortunately not here. Yesterday, there were some reactions of some participants who think they were manipulated for the film because he didn't tell them how he would use the filmed material. And so, I think this is a subject we have to discuss. I also have my stand but, in the beginning, I think, it is good to hear the statements of, maybe, Volkan from the Turkish group. And also, if any participants have something to say, we want to hear your statements as well.

Volkan: I guess that I can express two points of view. One is my point of view, about me, because, personally, if you just ask me to pray, I will, because we are a group and I trust everyone. If someone else asked me to do that. I'd ask him why he needs that. I thought Martin would just use it as a soundtrack or something like that for the project, of course. And I praved the most important prayer in my religion and, as a believer, it is important to me, and so I prayed. He could at least have told me, how he would use it, tell the story. As a movie, I cannot say anything, I want to talk about it later. That's one topic. But, now, about the movie - I like the idea, to be honest. about the idea I have nothing bad to say. Because nudity maybe symbolizes purity, I don't know what the director meant.

Bomm: Ha-ha.

Volkan: Bomm will say.

Bomm: Maybe later (smiles).

Volkan: The second one is the religious point of view, as a group leader, I cannot distribute it because, for me, it is OK, but Esra, for example, is disturbed by this film. I don't know, maybe we are so sensitive about religion...but it disturbs us.

Esra: I think not only for my religion but for all religions it is something insulting - this nudity. Because when people go to holy places, they cover their bodies and go pray. And so - if there are people naked, without clothes, there is a sentence from the Holy Book, so when people read it, they cover up and respect it. I'm not talking just about me, if I go to a church, I respect everything. So, if when they are praying, they put a hat on the head, I will also do it. And the topic of our project, when we say Divided God, people are afraid because it's hard to talk about religion generally. Maybe when you talk about God, it seems weird for some people. So in that way, people who are very religious don't like to talk about religion too much. I cannot imagine talking about this movie in Turkey. We plan to show all movies from this project, but we cannot show this one because people will say: "Are you making fun of our religion? " You remember there was a film called "Charlie's angels". In it, there was a woman dancing to a song and, in it, was a little sentence from Koran. This became a big scandal in Turkish televisions. They said: "Are they making fun of us, of our religion?" If they don't know anything about our religion, don't use it in a film. It's not for a documentary, it' not for art or something else. It's something holy. For all religions! If you want to make art, you can use a lot of things, but not a holy thing.

Drago: This – what Esra said, especially about the presentation of this material... I say - as a manager of this project - that this is not the aim and is not in the concept of the project to make conflicts and provocations. This is one thing and I think that this can really disturb our intentions in the project. The other thing is the manipulation inside the project, inside the group, because Martin did not explain how he would use the material.

Volkan: On the other hand, it is provocative, but I want to give some examples. Of course, on the one side, now, we are reacting and it seems, maybe, we're so sensitive or this personally offended us. OK, but today in the world there are some people that are fighting against discrimination between all religions and they sometimes provoke people to see the reaction. But just for example, maybe you remember...two or three years ago, a director from Holland shot a movie about one naked girl, some pages of Koran were falling on her body and he was killed! Yes, someone murdered him because of this! It's not my opinion; I'm just talking about reality. I'm just giving some real examples.

I mean, sometimes, to change something, you should make a movie about it to provoke someone. But still, for the billions of people in the world, religion is something important. They may not have food in Africa, but they believe in my religion. In a way it's a sensitive subject, so I cannot show this movie in my country.

Bara: Mhmm, we are here stepping into the field of an intimate place of the sacred, of the religion of one person. And I think provocation on this level is really stupid. I think provocation is good for institutions; you can make provocations towards, for example, a church and, ves, big institutions. Why provoke somebody's personal belief? I don't see the point. That's it.

Meri: We have one author of the movie and we haven't heard anything from him, yet. So, maybe, it would be good if he explained why he decided to make such a film.

Bomm: Does anybody need to say something?

Meri: No, you can just explain what your intention was and so on

Bomm: I will give four answers. As a participant, I agree with you, Volkan. It was not correct not telling you what we would use the prayer for and, maybe, I and Martin don't really know the highlight of your prayers, but I can say for the German prayer Fater unser that it is the higher prayer. The idea was to have eight national prayers because, maybe, they pray all the same; I don't know what you pray, Volkan. And it fits very well the topic of Divided God because, in every nation and every religion, we have different prayers, or maybe not - we don't know. But, in some religions, they pray in a different way, for example, Julia did it in Portuguese and they don't talk blahblahblah. They sing. So it has a different effect on you because you don't know the language, but you recognize the melody. And then, in the ending, when the pictures and the prayers get more clear because, in the first part, it is very weird and nobody knows what it is, in the middle, you see the different prayers that are written (waves his hands in the air) form and then you get it: "Aaah, that was that. Aaah, OK." So it is getting calmer and, in the end, it's like, first it's divided and in the end it's united. Something likes this.

Drago: But we must be responsible – concerning the production... yes, it can be interesting for anybody from here. But this movie cannot be publicly presented because of the possible consequences, as we see...if we consider the aim of the project, it is also misleading.

Sandi: But where's the difference, then, between us and the people we're fighting against with this project? If you want to forbid one work and those people are forbidding me to live in my home country and in my home city, then I don't see any difference between us and them. Because they are forbidding things and we are also now starting to forbid things. And what I saw in this movie is a naked guy who's walking and I saw some other movies where I saw two thousand naked people walking – by Steven Spielberg, by Tarantino and by bullshit. So, for me, it is really funny that we are discussing, actually start to discuss one thing and I also agree with everybody here that it is not



right how they did the movie, this is really important. But, now, to forbid the movie, I see this authorization right more of blahblahblah.... I mean, how can you forbid something? Or I?

Drago: The rule of the project is a rule! Sandi, you will go into this work, into making movies and you have to take also the responsibility. There's also the common law that says, as Bara explained, you cannot manipulate people! If you have the permission of these people, OK.

Bara: That's the point, yes.

Drago: And also, I – as the responsible person - will say if this is in the project or not.

Sandi: We are pushing here something that is nothing. And those people are also using the same tool that we are using now. They are pushing some problems in Mostar, anywhere, about some religious problems where there's no problem. And then people are fighting. And this is what we are doing now; we are pushing some problems where a naked guy is walking. And this is how...

Bomm: ... It's not just about the prayer...

Volkan: Yes, and it's not about...between the religions or anything, you know. As Esra said, there are many religions and I don't know, maybe, there are some other prayers...

But I said it's not between religious institutions: Christians - Muslims, it's not like that. It's about me, it's about Esra and it's about someone else. It's OK, we can do anything about the discrimination of religions, wars or anything, but the belief is about me, it's about here (points at his heart).

Sandi: Yes, but who forbids you to believe? So don't forbid me to make a movie!

Bara: It's not about that. Yes, I agree with you

on this point. Of course, but it's just about the ethics, I think, it's just about the ethics that you tell somebody what you will do with this and maybe he will decide not to. It's just about the freedom of decision.

Sandi: Yes, but we can change the voices, OK. I will pray. No problem.

Zeka: For example, I'm an atheist and I'm critical towards any religion - in the same way. So, you said some people were very and are going to be very angry and offended because of this movie. But I will say just one simple thing. In 1945, 95% of the people in Germany were for Adolf Hitler. But they were wrong, proved wrong. It's not good to kill people because they are different. And also religions, different religions are in the Fundamentalist way, in the same way they are doing the same thing as the Germans did from 1941 to 1945. So I'm not going to speak about it because, as far as I'm concerned, the question of the freedom of speech and the freedom of creativity, of art does not belong here, in this discussion. The only topic that belongs here is not telling the people how they (Bomm and Martin) will use their prayers.

Nora: I just wanted to say that we all agree that this behaviour of not telling the truth was not good, so I don't think that we have to speak about this anymore. I agree with Meri, who was talking about cultural differences, because if they now recorded the same prayers from the people who agreed with the idea of this film, would this film still be shown? This is the question. Does somebody feel offended by the film itself? We agreed that it was wrong behaviour, even Bomm said it was wrong and he, in a way, apologized for it. So we are talking about this sensitivity of you, with hearing the prayer, seeing the naked man. If you are personally really offended by this film, this is something we should discuss. But I know about these cultural differences because, for example, when you sing a national anthem, it can be felt as an offence for the German people. Maybe, to somebody else, it feels like a compliment. And this is no big deal; it's just something about the communication. This is what we're talking about.

Volkan: I mean, first, forbidding the movie is another subject, I cannot say I am for forbidding the movie. Because also when we (the Turkish group) were talking at lunch, I told them that we can discuss what he did wrong, but I cannot directly discuss and block his way of telling his truth. Because if it is his truth, it is OK. But first of all, as I said, I feel first like I'm cheated and I am cheated against my own religion. Also, my prayer starts with the name Allah and if Allah is something important for me, I don't want to see the letters written on Bomm's body. That's a problem for me. It's a really simple thing, personally.

Nora: If the people in Turkey say they will not show this film, it's OK because they understand the cultural circumstances in Turkey and they decide not to show it. You as the project co-operator and manager, you can decide at a public screening with journalists, where you are presenting it, not to show it. But we cannot forbid the film to be on DVD and it should have the titles. Because it was made as a part of this. And it set off this discussion, which we will also put in the "making of".

Volkan: With any movie, if I provoke people, that's something completely different. Because, maybe for him (Martin), I don't know what his relation to religion is like, because we didn't choose the prayer, he chose it - the most important prayer. He asked me: "Can you pray this?" And I said: "OK." Because I trust him, I trust any of you, if you call me, I will pray again. For the project, it's not about my religion or...

Bomm: So I have a question. If we find another person who will say any prayer in Turkish and we can change "the most important prayer", too, what would this situation change? So, vou're not in the film and nobody is cheated, what's the problem still existing? Is the problem that some savings from the Koran are still written on me?

Volkan: Yes, exactly.

Bomm: Maybe we have also prayers that are not in the Koran

Volkan: Sure, But as I said, for us, it is not the only prayer... and it is not anything, I don't know what it all means

Bomm: Yes, because we didn't compare the sentence in the first line with the sentence in the last line, we wanted to show the division. And, maybe, if we had three lines...

Because there is only one God and this God is divided...that everybody can have a God or something like that.

Rado: Sandi asked me to make him a cross and I said: "OK, but explain to me why you need that cross," and he explained everything about the cross, about television, about the movie. He explained to me everything about what he's recording. So I made him a cross. No problem. But you cannot use things if you don't ask first and explain why you will use it, how you will use it.

Petar: And you cannot use it. But we have already discussed that, now the question is what to do with the movie or - in another way - if the movie will stay a part of the project? I mean, we are talking about freedom of speech, of course, but we cannot screen this in Turkey. I mean, we can screen it maybe in Hagia Sophia, but tomorrow you will be killed and the price of screening is your death. I mean, that doesn't make any sense.

Drago: OK, so we should stop repeating

things. Maybe it would be good if Želimir said something.

Želimir: Well, first of all, of course everybody agrees that there is a certain mistake in the fact that actually Martin did not tell the people for what he would use the voices or their contribution to the film. Unfortunately, a lot of you have not been there when we were discussing the main principles of documentary film. Not once, I was explaining exactly that question and some people have been asking me about that aspect of using and misusing and manipulation. I told them that there's not only the question of the manipulation, there is also a strict, legal aspect of that - making movies, documentaries. In all European countries, the codes are the same: you cannot use anyone's personality, face or even voice if that person did not give approval or did not agree. Maybe Martin did not know that this legal aspect exists.

So Volkan – as someone who doesn't want to be in that video - can go to a lawyer and say: "Please, in my name, stop the film because my voice is used in a way which I did not agree to." It's the legal aspect.

Another aspect of the thing is what Martin filmed. What is his video telling? When I saw it, I felt: "Martin came close to the main topic of our workshop." He is raising the issue that various religions have divided the God, the Only One, the creator of the world. How did Martin articulate his concern? Martin filmed the naked Bomm, God's creature. And had used different prayers and different languages.

Martin's video tells us: God should be honoured for all his creations. Not as the creator of Catholics, Orthodoxs, Muslims, Buddhists or some other particular religious group.

In our discussion, we learned about some real problems, the author of the video, Martin, has to solve. That is, to find a collaborator, who will agree to his voice being used in the film, not Volkan's. But we also hear some statements I cannot agree with. I do not agree that our workshop comes out with pretensions how we, he or she, only know what God is like, what God agrees to and what God approves. It is even ironic to "explain" how God "can be angry or hurt with a nude body".

That type of statements are a privatisation and dividing of God. That type of statements are making misunderstanding and intolerance. That is the way conflicts start.

All of us know how the most sacred places in the world built to honour God, constructed by the most devoted believers, painted by the greatest talents of mankind, do not hide the naked bod-

Walk through museums, churches, galleries. Read the books. Look at the sculptures.

Our workshop will not take the role of some ridiculous censorship commission.

Also, we cannot make the conclusion to intervene in the video, without the director. He has a legal responsibility. Martin has also to be informed about problems and threats he could face in some Muslim countries. Then, it is up to the author... is he going to run the risk.

In many situations, the artist is ready to take the risk, otherwise culture and art would not exist. As you know, a lot of artists, a lot of thinkers, a lot of the greatest intellectuals of mankind have sacrificed their own lives for freedom of expression. So, let Martin decide.

Esra: First, the voice of Volkan is not a problem and also the nudity of Bomm is not a problem. I think it's a general thing. If you take Volkan's voice from this video, it's still a problem for me. If you also take out the prayer of my religion, it's still a problem for me because there is something as respect for the Christians also, for the Jews also, not only for my religion. If something is mine, it is valuable for me. And if you want to use it, I will say take care of it, please. I use it like this and you will use it that way, too. So, I think that praying is something personal, something valuable and individual for every person that believes in Islam or other religions. But it's something valuable and if you want to use it for something, which will be discussed, you have to go to every Christian, Muslim, everyone and ask them: "Can I use your prayer?" Because it's everybody's prayer. It's not only my prayer because my prayers pray all Muslims. So, for me, it is not logical to use it on a human that is naked because that's disrespectful towards the believers.

Bomm: But Esra, if I ask every Muslim who believes like you, everyone will say: "No." So where's the difference in asking and saying "no" and doing it without permission?

Esra: So find other materials to do on your project, find another thing to make art about or with it. You can use another scene, but it's holy to me. There are a lot of things you can use but there aren't....

Bomm: ... I just asked Volkan what if we change this "only prayer" to, maybe, a prayer that children pray every night or before lunch, dinner, breakfast, what then? And he said, maybe it will be OK, maybe it's OK. But what do you say about this? Is it a problem for you as a more religious person than him?

Esra: But they don't misuse it. You know, in my religion and also in Christianity, maybe, and also in Judaism, nudity is something...also in culture – if you see a naked human on the street, you don't think he/she is normal. People would say he's crazy. There is something not normal here.

Želimir: You're a very clever girl and you surprise me now. Just think: there is, in the world today, at least ten million people who live naked in Africa and some other parts of the world. Do you think...are they created by God? Who created them?



Esra: God created them

Želimir: And Bomm, and Martin, how did they come on Earth?

Esra: ... Are you talking about my religion and a religion which I am talking about?

Želimir: ... no, because you said...

Esra: Please, only use their prayers, not mine.

Želimir: Are you talking about all religions?

Esra: Please, take the prayers the Africans do, just use that.

Volkan: Can I say something? I think this is not the right place to discuss Esra's beliefs or my beliefs...

Želimir: ... We're not discussing beliefs... Please, do not apply something which is a personal view of you few, as the Only Religion and the Will of God. It is not realistic.

Esra: But I'm talking about a prayer which is saving that...

Želimir: ... No, you have been telling here that it is not normal for human beings to be naked...

Esra: ... In my count... Well, if somebody naked came here, what would you think about that person? Maybe it's normal for you, but for me, for Volkan...it is not something normal.

Želimir: Yes. but...

Esra: ... If I see a person who is naked walking on the street, it's not something normal.

Drago: Maybe we should stop at this point

because we're now going into a discussion about religion, but we started...

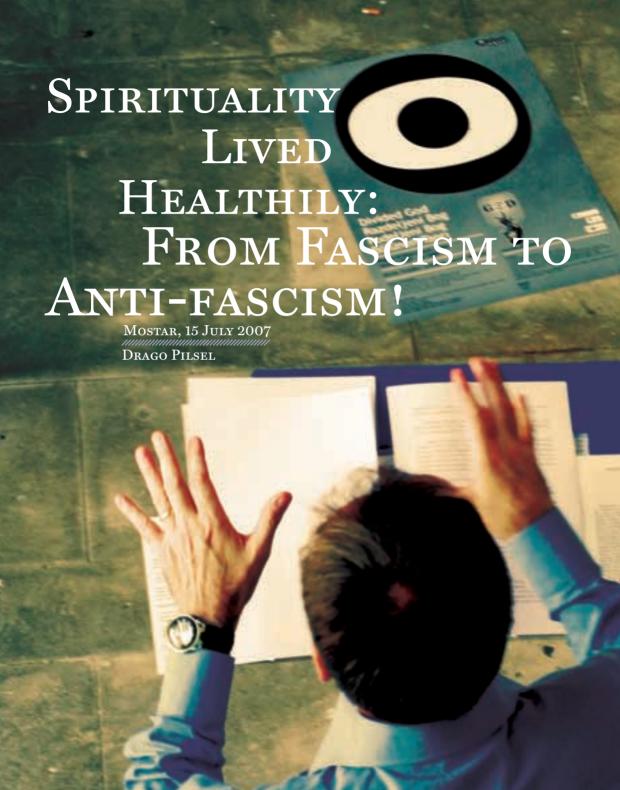
Bomm: ... But this is religion.

Drago: Bomm, please! We started with this - that you used this material of people without permission and this is not possible and also I - as responsible for this project...

Bomm: ... something...

Želimir: We have concluded and everybody understood that in that process of filming a wrong method was used from the legal point. This means that the film will not be shown publicly until Martin solves the question of Volkan's voice. But the final decision of how the author will treat the naked body will be absolutely his responsibility. When he takes out the prayer of Volkan, Martin has to think about all these discussions we had. But, we are not the forum which has the right to forbid art expression. And we will not do so.





Drago Pilsel:

ood morning, did you get some rest? I'm going to give a short con-Iclusion or summary of what we talked about yesterday. Later, we will talk about an example of how religion and faith can be positive forces in society.

peligion cannot be reduced to a private thing or a private matter of **L**any person. We did say yesterday that religion, if it is truly lived, always requires and presupposes a personal relationship with God. We also said that, at the same time, religion is also a social phenomenon. And, for this reason, not only individuals, not only different people, but the whole society and community have a responsibility.

The second point: We talked about the community of believers, the ▲ religious community of the church, of whatever form. Society in general has the role to testify to the presence of God. It shows God as the only absolute; everything else that we call the world, politics, society, social values or religion should never be made absolute. What religion says is that God is absolute and that politics cannot be, the society and the world around us cannot be absolute. And this means that the role of religion in society is, as we said yesterday, to promote human dignity. This is in contrast to making things of the world "holy" or "sanctified". It becomes dangerous when we make things, objects or ideologies divine and give them this kind of a status. This is important to know because, as we have seen in the last war here in the region and in many other parts of the world, very often within the state or the nation certain political systems or ideologies become idols. This, in return, demands sacrifices. And the first thing that is usually sacrificed is personal freedom. This is very, very dangerous for society and for democracy. And this is what is so important in political theology. Its duty is to sound an alarm when something that is an ideology is turned into something divine.

nolitical theology promotes a political system and a political dialogue where the most important values are solidarity, service, the promotion of human rights and the rule of a free government under law. This is something I did not understand when I was young. And there are people who are much older than I am who still do not understand this. Some of them are popes, some of them are bishops and some of them are presidents or heads of state, or heads of political parties governing cities. Some of them are even just family fathers, grandfathers or uncles.

n the one hand, I was very fortunate and, on the other hand, very unfortunate to have been born into a family that was very politically active. As I said yesterday, my family name is of Czech origin – "Plzn". This name was Germanised in the middle of the 19th century. My family lived near Berlin and the name was changed to Pilsel. As German constructors, they went from Bavaria to Romania and that is where my grandfather was born, in the province of Bukovina. The family then moved from Romania to Bosnia. They settled in the town of Prnjavor, which is not far from Banja Luka. My grandfather was a policeman when he was young. One day, he was sent to the house of a woman who had been robbed. This woman became my grandmother. That is how they met. She was Croatian, but her mother was Slovenian. She was from a small town near Mrkonjić Grad, called Varcar Vakuf. The family was in the construction business, building houses and churches. They moved from Bosnia to Macedonia, from Macedonia to Kosovo and, in Kosovo, they were in Priština and in Prizren. There, the youngest child of the family, my father, was born in 1936. And since my grandfather was a

supporter of Hitler, he named my father Adolf. In 1941, when the Independent State of Croatia was declared and the Germans entered Croatia and Bosnia, the family moved from Kosovo to Sarajevo and worked for the German army, constructing buildings. My father's older brother became a member of the SS. And, as I mentioned vesterday, at the end of 1944, my grandfather realised that Germany was losing the war and decided to take the family and leave. First, they went to Austria. At the end of the war, they were in Poland and from there they went to Germany. They got German papers and they passed through Geneva as political refugees and took a boat to Argentina, Buenos Aires.

Tn 1945, Argentina was under the government of Peron, who was a Lateral fascist and had received his military education from Mussolini. The policy that he learned from Mussolini was to welcome fascist immigrants into Argentina. In this way, he was able to enlarge the fascist community in the country, which served as a counter balance. This is why we have a very broad political spectrum in Argentina today: Nazis, on the one hand, and communists, on the other, and everything in between. The government of the fascist Independent State of Croatia fell, so the government leaders also fled to Argentina. My grandfather became a personal friend of Ante Pavelić, who had been the head of the fascist State of Croatia. On Fridays, Ante Pavelić would come to our house and he would play chess with my grandfather.

Tn the middle of the 1950's, the Israeli secret service, 'Mossad', start-Led to look for Nazis. So who did they find in Argentina? Eichmann. When they found him, they realised that he had a circle of friends and among these friends was Ante Pavelić. And Pavelić had a circle of friends and among these friends was Pilsel. And Pilsel also personally knew

Eichmann, But Peron did not allow Mossad to touch the Nazis, Mossad had to wait until Peron's government fell. In 1955, a military government took over and Peron ended up in prison. And this was the beginning of the hunt for the Nazis. They started with Eichmann and then caught the others.

Then the Yugoslav secret service realised that there were Ustashe and Nazis collaborating in Argentina, they decided to kill Pavelić. A group of young men with guns was gathered to serve as bodyguards for Pavelić. My father was one of them. So, at their parties, when I was still a small boy, they would put me on the table to dance while my father played the accordion. I was five or six years old at the time. I had a good voice so I would sing the Ustashe songs. And that is what things were like until I was 15.

n my mother's side, my grandfather was also Ustasha. He was born in Graz, but he was Croatian. He married my grandmother, who was a Hungarian that had been born in Sarajevo. After the assassination of Francis Ferdinand in 1914, she left Sarajevo and went to Zagreb.

no, from both sides of the family, I have strong Ustashe roots. The Ustashe government was not a democratic government. It was a dictatorship under the Nazis in Zagreb. Pavelić had to give a large part of the coast to the Italians. That is way the Partisan movement was very strong in Dalmatia.

Then the war was over, my mother's family also left for Argentina. My father and mother met in Argentina. They were among the young people around Pavelić. In 1959, Pavelić was shot by the Yugoslav secret service. However, he did not die right away and the Croatian Catholic Church dressed him and moved him, first to Paraguay and then to Madrid, where he died in 1960.

T was born in 1962 and, when I was a boy, my grandfather had a parrot Lathat was trained to say: "Viva Ante Pavelić." So I was basically bombarded from all sides of the family!

The fascist Croatian State was founded on racist laws. We know that ▲ 90% of Jews, not only in Croatia but also in Bosnia, were wiped out. Of all the concentration camps in Croatia, the largest was in Jasenovac. The Jews in Croatia were rounded up and brought to Jasenovac, Auschwitz and others. My family never told me that the Croatian government's plan regarding the Serbs was simply to kill a third of them, expel another third to Serbia and try to assimilate the last third! So what HAD my family told me? That our family were the victims and that we lost our state and our freedom. First of all, they said that a large part of the Croatian population betrayed the Croatian State and joined the Partisans and fought against the Ustashe, against the Croatian State.

p ut they also never told me that a part of the Partisan movement was Dmade up of Croatian communists who wanted a communist Croatia separate from Yugoslavia and connected to Stalin. And they never told me that the Partisan movement did not start as a communist movement, although the first armed uprising, which took place in Sisak, some 60 km from Zagreb, was organized by the Communist Party. Tito was a Communist. In 1943, the Communist Party took control over the Partisan movement. But there were many Partisans who were Catholic or Protestant or Orthodox. Yesterday, I was reminded that one of the ministers under Tito, the Minister of Culture in the first post-war government under Tito, was a Slovenian. So my family told me that we lost the war because we were victims of a conspiracy by the Jews, the Communists and the Serbs. And this, of course, is not the truth.

Intil I was 26 years old, almost 27, when I came to Yugoslavia, I actually had no idea about the history of Yugoslavia. I was actually educated to hate the Serbs. And in Argentina, I was actively involved in acts of violence against the Jews. We attacked the synagogues many times. We either painted slogans or graffiti or threw rocks at the windows. Once, we threw Molotov cocktails. This was during the military dictatorship. What I was doing against the Jews, I was doing as a Croat, not as an Argentinean. I was actually a leftist, fighting against the dictatorship, helping poor people and those people who were the victims of the dictatorship.

ne day, when I was 16 years old, a priest who was a friend of mine asked me a question which basically changed my life. He said: "How long, Drago? How long will you be an Argentinean leftist from Monday to Friday and a Croatian fascist on Saturdays and Sundays? How long will you have these two identities that are actually in conflict with each other? Who are you? What do you want to do with your life?"

This was actually the start of a process. I had a picture of Ante Pavelić ▲ hanging above my bed. The first thing I did was take down the picture and replace it with a cross. And I started to read. And I started to look for friends who had a lot of knowledge, who read a lot, who knew history, politics, sociology and who also received and read illegal press material from Croatia.

momething else that is very important in my biography is the year 1982. I was 20 years old and my country started a war with Britain. I lost many friends in this war, including some Croats. This was also when the movements to end the dictatorship started. At that time, I was work-

ing on an oilrig even though I had started working as a journalist when I was 17. I decided to stop my studies in mechanical engineering and switch over to studying journalism and political science. While studying journalism and political science, I discovered that there were several different movements in Latin America that were fighting for human rights. One of these movements, as I mentioned yesterday, was Liberation Theology, which has its roots in Peru and Brazil. I had a girlfriend in Sao Paolo in Brazil, who I went to live with. From there, I went to Petropolis a number of times where a very famous theologian Leonardo Boff gave private classes. So, I had the opportunity to listen to Leonardo Boff, as well as to hear Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian priest who is considered the father of Liberation Theology, and Jon Sobrino, who is actually a Spanish priest who went to El Salvador as a missionary. In 1985, the year I lived in Brazil, 32 Catholic priests were assassinated by the mafia because the Catholic Church was pushing for an agrarian reform. The problem of agrarian reform has still not been solved! Even today, the President of Brazil has not been able to solve the problem of those who do not have land, who do not have any property. The fact that a large number of these priests who were killed were Franciscans motivated me to start studying the life of the Franciscans.

In March 1986, I began my life as a Franciscan. I spent five years liv-Ling as a Franciscan, wearing the habit, the robe, and everything. As a Franciscan, I came to Yugoslavia in 1989 to study theology. You can probably imagine the cultural, political and social shock that hit me when I got here. I understood absolutely nothing. I spent the first three years studying the political reality and the history of Yugoslavia. But somewhere in my heart I still rejected, avoided and did not like the Serbs.

One of the things that confused me the most when I got here was that I could understand Serbs when they spoke. I read some articles written by Croatian linguists who said that, from a linguistic point of view, the Croatian and Serbian languages are not actually two different languages, but are two varieties of one language. Of course, I did not accept this theory right away. But by this time, I had enough life experience not to simply reject something, but to say: "Ok, wait a minute, let's think about this." And at same way, slowly, I also started to recognize the positive aspects of Yugoslav society. The fact that, in the Yugoslav state and society, there was such a thing as social security, which was much better than in Argentina; the fact that there was a very low crime rate and that, for example, you could walk in the streets at night and nothing would happen to you. Or you could leave your car unlocked and nobody would touch it, even your house.

uring this time, I also started feeling dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation for continuing to live as a Franciscan. Not only because the Catholic Church in Croatia was much too nationalistic, but because of a process that had already started in Argentina. I had problems accepting some doctrines and teachings, especially moral teachings of the Church. I had a very hard time accepting the very steep hierarchical structure of the Church in Croatia and the absolute lack of dialogue within the Church.

Tn 1991, on Easter, the war in Croatia started and my younger brother, who was 22 years old at the time, volunteered for the military. In July 1991, he turned 23 and, on 23 October, he was killed in action. I had a very hard time dealing with the fact that he was out fighting and I was living in the very quiet and protected world of the Franciscans, in a mon-

astery. So when he died, I left the Franciscans and I volunteered for military service in order to replace my brother. In March 1992, the international troops of the United Nations arrived in former Yugoslavia. My superior, the head of the Fourth Brigade, which I was a member of, offered me a military career but I declined. I did not want to continue in the military. I wanted to go back and just be a civilian. I wanted to go back to studying theology.

Tn April 1992, I arrived in Zagreb and **▲**I started working in television. I had two programmes. In one of them, which was broadcast on Monday nights, in prime time - between eight and nine, I analysed the characteristics of society. And slowly, using the show, I started to talk about human rights.



▲ t the end of 1992, a group of people decided to found the Helsinki Committee of Human Rights in Croatia. They invited me to be one of the founding members. And all of a sudden, I found myself defending the rights of the Serbian minority in Croatia. As a result of this, my mother stopped talking to me. All my Croatian friends in Argentina turned their backs on me because they still continued with the fascist mentality. My mother had a very hard time accepting the fact that her younger son died in battle. Her reaction was to blame all the Serbs for

the loss of her son. My brother also killed some Serbs and the fact that there were Serbian mothers in the same position because her son had killed their sons was very hard for her to understand. I tried to explain to my mother that she was not right in blaming all the Serbs for the death of her son.

t the same time, I was fighting with myself to accept the fact that I had changed so much – that I was not a truly committed Catholic any more, that I did not hate the Serbs any more. Not only did I not hate them, I was actually helping them now. I was not a Croatian nationalist any more. I had become a leftist liberal. In just a few years, my identity had radically changed.

necause of the nationalist attitude of the Church, I started polemics with the Catholic Church and attacked its leaders in my articles. For example, in 1995, after the liberation of the territories that were occupied by the Serbs in Croatia, I registered and found about five hundred bodies of Serbs who had been killed. I found the last of these in February 1996, in the town of Komič in the region of Lika. The oldest victim was 92. She was killed together with her son who was 62. They were killed on 12 October 1995. And their bodies had staved there unmoved, untouched until February 1996, when I found them. You can imagine the picture. We had specific orders, instructions about procedures from the investigators from The Hague about what to do every time we found dead bodies, how to fill in the protocols, take pictures, etc. It was a type of forensic work we were doing. After all that, we buried the bodies. But before this, we would notify the Croatian police in order to be sure and have the documents that the Croatian authorities were informed about what happened.

Twas also a war correspondent from Bosnia and especially from Sara-Ljevo. All the violence and all the dead bodies, this whole machinery of violence that I had seen led me to specialize in the analysis and reporting of war crimes, political theology and human rights. After nine years, in 1999, I started speaking with my mother again.

Today, sixteen years after the death of my brother, my mother has stopped blaming all the Serbs for what happened. It took a lot of work to get her there, to get her to this point. In 1997, it was very important for me to find the person, who killed my brother, to talk to him and to tell him that I forgive him. I realized I could not and I did not want to live with a burden of hate inside me.

no at this point, I want to take a break from talking about myself and Nowould like to talk about something that I think is very, very important and that is that each one of us will, at some point in their lives, find themselves in conflict. It is important to stop and think. I think this is an excellent opportunity since the topics and subjects we have discussed do not apply only to the Balkans. I just spoke to our Turkish friends and they said that there are many similarities in Turkish society today because of the tensions that are going on. So it would be interesting to hear your questions and then the answers and maybe have some discussion. So please, go ahead.

Petar:

Twas asked by one of the Turkish participants here how you knew ▲ about the situation in Turkey since you described exactly what has been happening there?

DP:

Thave been to Turkey, but only as a tourist. But, for a number of years ▲ now, I have been following the happenings in Turkey. Especially, since I started studying Orhan Pamuk as a writer. As you know, he applied for residency in the United States. I also lived in Sarajevo from 1996 to 1999. I spoke with many Turks and many Bosnians who went to Turkey to study and had a lot of discussions with them. One can find a lot of information about the political situation and climate in Turkey also on the internet.

T have a magazine in Croatia that is very similar to the original "Le Monde Diplomatique" and there are a lot of articles and political analyses in it. I was especially interested in the dialogue between civilisations. There is an especially interesting dialogue that started in 2004 between the Spanish Prime Minister Zapatero and the Head of the Turkish State. This initiative was a response to a book written by Samuel Huntington, which is very conflictive. The title of the book is "The Clash of Civilizations" and I think that in BiH you can find some elements of this question of civilizations.

n a broader level, however, I believe that it would be very dangerous if we accepted that the future will be defined by this clash of cultures. The war for oil, which has already started in Iraq and Afghanistan, will extend to Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In 20 or 30 years, there will be wars for drinkable water. This is a topic that I am very interested in.

n important part of this project is to create a dialogue between cultures and civilizations. I can give you an internet address for a project about world ethics. In 1994, in Chicago, there was a meeting of the representatives of all the Churches of the world. They wrote a document about the foundation, the minimum of what every religion and religious individual can accept as a basis for creating the minimum of values that all religions can agree on. The author of this project is a Swiss theologian Hans Küng, who has lived in Germany for many years. In 1979, the Vatican withdrew his license to teach at Catholic universities. He is a professor of Ecumenical Theology at the Faculty of Protestant Theology in Tübingen, Germany. It is a shame for Croats and for Croatia that it was Croatian Cardinal Šeper who withdrew Küng's teaching license. Ratzinger, the current Pope, used to be the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and, before him, it was Croatian Cardinal Šeper.

Emrah:

TAThat do you think about national identities? Should we overcome nation states and create a different form of organized society? And do you think that Europe could be a model of that for the rest of the world? What kind of solutions can we find? Do you think nationalism and national states are obstacles in that?

DP:

The European Constitution was rejected for many reasons. In **▲** France, for example, one of the reasons that French workers were against the EU Constitution was the fact that Polish workers can do the same work for a third of their salary. This has led to decreased wages in France. In the Netherlands, on the other hand, there were elements of xenophobia and not just economic aspects that led to the population

rejecting the EU Constitution. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has made a huge effort in the last six months to try to bring all these parts together and find a compromise. We will see what happens when Portugal takes over EU Presidency. Merkel was trying to convince the Netherlands and Poland that they are not being discriminated against in the EU. The problem that the Polish government is raising, with the Kaczynski brothers in power now, is that the present system of voting in the European government, the way that things are structured now, will always leave Poland in a minority position and they say that Poland will be discriminated against. If you analyse the political discourse of these two brothers, you see that, for example, they are saying things like: 'If the Nazis had not attacked Poland, there would be many more Polish people today and they would therefore not be a minority'. But knowing that the Poles, Ukrainians and the Yugoslav and Romanian Communists and many others were also guilty of carrying out campaigns of ethnic cleansing against German minorities in their countries, this argument is not just stupid but also pointless.

Ilaudia's grandfather was born in Vojvodina and was killed by the Partisans because he was a German soldier. So her grandmother became a refugee and had to start a new life in Germany. The same thing happened to part of my family. They lived in Sarajevo with a German family name, which has Czech roots. The original family name was Plzn. The surname was Germanised. The family moved from Germany to Romania, from Romania to Bosnia, from Bosnia to Macedonia, from Macedonia to Kosovo, from Kosovo to Sarajevo. In 1944, my grandfather worked for the German army and also had a son in the SS troops. He realised that it would not be very intelligent to stay in Sarajevo and wait

for the Partisan liberation, so they left.

That am I trying to say? It is not just the question of the lack of understanding between the countries of Western and Eastern Europe. If you remember what happened in Estonia not too long ago, in Tallinn, the Estonian capital, there were demonstrations against the statue of a Russian soldier. Protesters were young people, pro-Nazi youth. Almost all the Baltic states did the same because all of them want ethnically clean states. So there is another question of the nation state. Spain, for example, has huge problems with the immigrants from Northern Africa, especially from Morocco. One of the things that Sarkozy needs to solve in France, hopefully not the way he did it as Minister of the Interior, but now as the President of the country, is to create a new model of society that will integrate these young people from Northern Africa, so they will not have reasons to start riots as they did not long ago.

Tbelieve that Iraq will be divided into three parts. In the northern part Lof the country, there is already a Kurdish state. It is still not recognised internationally, but the fact is that they have their own economy, police force, flag and the support of the USA. Whether Turkey likes it or not, it is a reality. What will happen to the Kurds in Turkey if Turkey does not agree to give them political and cultural autonomy is one of the questions that will determine whether Turkey enters the European Union or not. Turkey has to change its concept of the nation state.

The situation is the same in Croatia. In 1995, Tudjman started burn-▲ ing Serbian houses, saying that we have solved the problem of the Serbs in Croatia. With this policy, the number of Serbs living in Croatia was reduced from 11% to only 4% of the population. We said to Tudjman: "Mr. Tudjman, whether you are still alive or not, whether you like it or

not, but one day Croatia will enter the European Union. The EU will not accept the fact that you took away from the Serb minority their property and citizenship. Within the EU, these are inalienable rights." And what happened later? The nationalist Prime Minister of Croatia, Ivo Sanader, had to change his political language and policies. He changed into someone who had to go into a coalition with the party of the Serb minority in Croatia in order to be able to stay in power. Almost all the houses of the Serbs that have been destroyed have now been rebuilt. Any Serb who wants to return to Croatia is allowed to. Even those Serbs who were part of the insurrection are allowed to return due to the abolition law. But as things have become clearer, Serbs who committed war crimes have also been arrested by the police.

Olgu:

an you tell us something about the concept of human rights in Mus-√lim countries?

DP:

The Islamic concepts of human rights are different from the Western **** ones. Even within the Muslim world, the position of women is very different. Take, for example, the situation in Iran compared to Turkey or compared to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen, Tunisia or Morocco, which are the most liberal Muslim countries. It is very important to be aware of all these differences. So, in the same way as it is necessary to have a dialogue between religions to establish the minimum of ethics that all can agree upon in the West, it is also necessary, within the Muslim world, to have this kind of a dialogue - and not only to discuss the future of OPEC and

the price of oil.

Bojan:

Te are mainly talking about the religious, ideological concepts that are connected to society and politics. I will pose this question by telling you a simple story that I read in a book: There were some tribes living at some locations. And then a man came and he taught them how to make fire. The first tribe was very happy and successful. They learned how to make fire. So the man went to another tribe and he taught them the same thing. There were some priests there and they felt endangered by this man, so they killed him. But to satisfy the people, they took his tools and made an altar. They said to all the people that he was a holy man, who died there, and that they should respect his relics and that they were the people's medium to God. So, I actually wanted to ask: Where actually is God in religion? Is religion just using God for positing ideas to influence people or is there God in religion? Where exactly is the place of God if religion comes from the people?

DP:

The bottom-line idea is God. God is present in any religious system L that promotes the dignity of human beings. If the religious structure or the religious activities, in the Catholic Church for example, do not produce the phenomenon of solidarity, then God is not present. He is always present in that sense – but He is not always present in the acts of the people. If we act in a way that does not promote solidarity and human rights, we are acting without the blessings of God. There is a discussion that has been going for centuries, which began with Luther, Leibniz and many other philosophers, about the necessity of a religious system in order to establish a connection with God. In our case (Drago and his wife), we do not actually belong to any official Church. But we live our lives aware that we are nothing without the existence of God. We pray together, we read the Bible, we read spiritual texts. We also visit different Churches and different services which our friends attend. But after my experience with the Catholic Church, it is absolutely not necessary for me at the moment to officially belong to any kind of organised religious group.



Claudia:

rago asked me to tell a story that demonstrates that it is not necessary to have an institution, but if the individuals have faith and are committed to establishing human dignity, solidarity, if they are faithful to these values as individuals - even when the Church is not - they CAN actually change the course of history.

There is a popular song "Amazing grace", which is known all over the world. It is usually associated with black Americans, as their anthem. Does anyone know the story behind it? Does anyone know who wrote this song? Ok!

The song was actually not written by a black American or a (former) ■ slave, but by a man named John Newton. Newton was an Englishman who had been very active in the slave trade. This slave trade involved ships that sailed from England to Africa to pick up slaves, they then sailed across the Atlantic to America where the slaves were sold. With this money, cotton and other products were bought and taken back to England. He was an active part of this slavery cycle. One day, he had an experience with God that turned his life around. He started to seriously study God and the Bible. He began to understand what God expected of him, which values he should live by. It was as if a curtain was pulled to the side and he saw his whole life and all he had done from a different perspective. It was a shock when he realized what he had been doing all those years to other human beings. This experience inspired him to write the song. Knowing this and hearing black people, the former slaves, singing it, makes it even more powerful.

D ut the story did not end there. He did not just write a song and stop Dthere. He actually got together with another British man – William Wilberforce, who was a member of the British Parliament. They found others who shared their view that the slave trade was absolutely morally completely wrong before God because of how it treats other human be-

ings. They were way ahead of their time because they recognized these black people, these Africans, as human beings. They started a movement in the Parliament to have the slave trade abolished. It was a big scandal at that time because the whole economy in Britain depended on the slave trade and what they were proposing would destroy the economy. However, they insisted on their position that what was going on was morally wrong before God. It is never justified to sacrifice other human beings, just so that we can live happily.

or more than 40 years, they fought in Parliament for the abolition of the slave trade. They never stopped talking about it and bringing in more facts. Shortly before William Wilderforce died, the British Parliament not only passed the law to abolish slavery, but also guaranteed the freedom of all the slaves in the British Empire.

This caused a domino effect all around the world and everybody who was involved in the slave trade was shocked. The reason is simple: If one country stands up and says, "this is morally wrong, we stop", then you cannot pretend and you cannot fool yourself anymore. It took a couple of centuries more for slavery to be abolished in other parts of the world as well. It even took much longer for the US to get there. But it started because a few individuals decided to stand up for what they considered right before God - and it changed the course of history.

This was just one example of how, not an institution, but individuals **_** motivated by their faith were able to change history.

Esra:

This question is to all of you and it is about the headscarf. As you know, in Iran, Iraq and Arabian countries, women have to wear a

headscarf and in some other countries, like France or Turkey, women who wear it cannot go to schools. The French Parliament passed this law and this has created a big issue in the whole world. How come that a piece of clothing created such a big problem and do you think that wearing a headscarf is a restriction for a woman or does it make her free?

DP:

T think it is hypocritical of the Western world to forbid Muslim women Let wear the hijab. Why can Catholic nuns wear their habits and no one has a problem with that? Also, some orders of nuns have their whole face covered. There are also different kinds of hijabs. So, in your example, you can see a little bit of hair, but there are Catholic nuns where everything is covered and nobody has a problem with them going to schools like that. What I am saying is that there are certain prejudices against Muslim women and what is behind these is fear. It is an irrational fear: What will happen if we allow Muslim women to go to the hospital, the Parliament, public offices wearing the hijab? So, one day, they may come and demand the robes that Taliban women have to wear. The problem is that these prohibit communication or make it difficult.

Thave not thought about this topic much. But, in Turkey and Tunisia ▲and in Bosnia, when I see women that are completely covered, my reaction is not a positive one. I do not feel comfortable if I cannot see the face of a person. I understand their arguments, but I do not think it is necessary. And I do think it is a cultural derivation of Islam because, in original Islam, it does not exist. The same way that the Christians have added many things to Jesus that were not there in the origins of Christianity, they were invented and added on later. The position of women in

the Hebrew and Greco-Roman society was a lower one and one of submission. In the 12th century, St. Thomas defined women as a mistake of nature. Today, women and feministic theology are trying to put women in the same position as men. But I cannot be a Catholic if I believe that a woman can be a priest.

Emrah:

T find it very dangerous to talk about the clash of civilizations because Lif you talk in this terminology, then we accept an attitude that there are civilizations that are naturally against each other and that there is no need for dialogue.

DP:

O I think we should talk in another framework because they are like Two sides of a coin. One side says, ok, there can be dialogue between civilizations, but we must open a third front which says that the problem is not about civilizations but about democracy or social justice, etc. In Turkey, a Muslim villager feels closer to a Venezuelan worker than to a Turkish boss with whom they share the same religion. It does not matter if the boss is Muslim or Christian because there is some kind of exploitation going on in both places.

I find it very tricky to use the words dialogue, civilizations or whatever because Turkey is not just a Muslim country. There are also people from different religions living there. I think that Turkey is different from Algeria. Maybe Turkey has more similarities with Greece and also some similarities with France. So, what we need is to find a different terminology to overcome this ideology of hate.

Then I use these terms, I use them as a journalist and a theologian to explain what is happening in terms of theology and politics in the world. What I was saying is not my personal opinion, it is a general description about what is happening in the world. It is clear and obvious that there are people like you who are aware of the importance of things like labour unions and syndicates, who understand, for example, how important it is to work on solidarity and communication between workers in various countries in all parts of the world. You are the people who understand that it is not enough only to discuss topics like religions and civilizations.

In the other hand, you have to accept the fact that there are very strong prejudices among religions and that there are conflicts that need to be resolved. If Pope Benedict XVI has repeated – for the second time in 7 years - that the Catholic Church is the only right Church of Christ and that the Protestant Church cannot even be called a real Church and that the Orthodox Church can maybe be called a Church, but it is not as complete as the Catholic Church, this thesis requires responses from theologians. And theologians like myself will answer the Pope: "You are wrong, sorry, Sir. But when you were a child, you were a member of the Hitler Youth. And when you were young, Hitler was saying that the German race was the only true race. And what is happening with you, now? Are you repeating what is still in your subconscious? Where in the Bible does it say that anyone has a monopoly over the Word of God?" The Word of God is on offer and if you want, you can accept it. And if you do not want to, you do not have to accept it. Jesus always said: "If you want to follow my words, take your cross and follow me." But he respected the will of those who did not accept it.

The Second Vatican Council concluded that the Holy Spirit is pres-L ent in all religions. So, what does this mean? It means that Muslims who live their faith to perfection reach the same level of salvation as Christians do.

Esra:

Tfind religion very important, but sometimes in some misinterpreta-Lions of religion, there is a strange ethics that obligates people and limits their freedom, like in the case of gay couples. In Islam, they are not allowed to marry, in Catholicism also. So I am just asking questions...

DP:

We really have to be careful about these things. For example, after 11 September 2001, we started talking about Islam. It existed before and nobody was talking about it. And all of a sudden everybody talks about it. Before that, communism was the main enemy. And, in general terms, the enemy of this time is Islam. The next could be maybe Latin America, who knows. You see, before, we talked about communism and I do not know what could be next. What about other kinds of dictatorships or the like, for example, Iraq? There are Shiites and Sunnis there. They are fighting each other. Saddam was a tyrant and dictator.

Theology, politics and culture are areas where there are no easy solutions. Forgiveness, for example. I am forty-four years old, and I have to say that I am just now starting to understand my identity – and I started this journey when I was sixteen. Can you imagine, now, how difficult it is for a country that has centuries of history and traditions behind it to start this process? It is especially difficult when you know that the capacity for internal dialogue is lacking, that universities do not encourage dialogue between students and professors, that there is no freedom of press, that it is not allowed or possible to have a party that can criticise the government and where it is almost impossible to create a climate of dialogue.

Twant to repeat that none of these topics are easy. But we will not get **L**anywhere if we do not start to move and start to do something. The small step is just not enough. The point is to be intelligent and to take the step at the right moment and the right place. Maybe Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi would have staved completely anonymous in world history if they had not had patience and if they had not had the ability to form a group of friends around them. In history, these types of events were always motivated or run by a group of people and they changed something in the course of history.

Tf I understood correctly, the purpose or one of the goals of this pro-Lject, maybe the most important one, is to create a network to help you all or enable you to communicate, to exchange information. Maybe in twenty years, you will be a university professor. And, for me, it is important that you are an open-minded professor and not one of those narrow-minded ones who will only repeat what they have read in other books. It is not the same thing if you are a person with international connections who attends seminars in other countries and has experience in dealing with different cultures, if your films have participated in international film festivals – or if you always just talk with a group of people who think the same as you.

Nora:

Thave a question. You mentioned Peron, you mentioned Adenauer and, Levesterday, you also spoke about heroism. I lived in Argentina, too, and, nowadays, Peron is received very positively because of the rights he established for the workers. The same is true of Adenauer in German memories. He is received very positively because he rebuilt the Western part of Germany and nobody really mentions things like him putting a lot of Nazi people in office in his government, for whatever reason. This is a complicated issue. And he also participated in dividing Germany into two countries by not having any contacts with the communists at all. So this is really a complicated issue. But I read that people do need hero leaders in some way. But it is also very dangerous how political leaders are received in memories.

DP:

The point is that there are some historical events that actually require ▲ several generations to be seen realistically. Germany would not be what it is now if, after Adenauer, they had not had people like Schmidt, Willy Brandt, who opened the communication and politics towards the East and who also introduced the new policy. Or people like Helmut Kohl, who was there when Germany was reunified, and people like Gorbachev, who opened Russia to the world.

This is very closely related to the process of gaining maturity in soci-L ety. The responsibilities do not lie only with politicians. Milošević is not the only one guilty and he is not responsible for everything that happened. He was used as an element of political power by a group of people who had a specific idea. And the same thing happened with Tudjman. He became the head of the Croatian State by accident. In the beginning, he was not the candidate for the head of state. But apparently the secret service and the Church did everything they could to help Tudiman become and stay President for ten years. The result is that, today, young people in Croatia do not know the difference between fascism and antifascism.

There are also fascist movements in Serbia, such as the radical party ▲ of Vojislav Šešelj led by Tomislav Nikolić – because the party leader Šešelj is on trial for war crimes in The Hague. It is the largest political party in Serbia and they claim that they are anti-fascist. This is just one of the results connected to the lack of understanding and education in politics.

The important thing for you is to try to be sure that at least YOU try **1** to find the meaning of your existence and give direction to your life. This direction depends on what you decide to do.

The most important thing is to stay authentic. Listen to the voice **_** inside and what your heart tells you. This is the most important thing for you. As an intelligent person, you have a responsibility. It is very important to eliminate all these things – a lack of education, a lack of understanding. When you need to dedicate yourself to study, you need to be sure that you will not be wasting your time. You need to be certain that, at the end of your life, you will be sure that you did not miss anything and that you did not make a wrong pattern in your life. Be sure that you did something good for others, that you knew you were able to love, to forgive. To be able to do this, you have to put order into different concepts. You have to understand that you are a part of a process, a cultural process, a process of maturity between relationships, a process of clarification of your identity. It is important to understand that our world has a lot of details.

ometimes our life is a little boring because we are not able to capture These little details. A very good movie director or producer knows that if he wants to make a good film, he needs more than a camera to capture what happens in the foreground. You also need to have an actor who will be able to interpret details, who can make facial expression or show emotions. Sometimes we lose too much time discussing things that are highly theoretical like religion, nation, culture, identity and we forget that life is made up of small details. Why are documentary films produced by the BBC or the ARD in Germany so good? For example, they show a countryside, a panoramic view of, let's say, the Goby desert. But then you see how a tarantula eats an insect. This composition of the universal and the local makes a movie good in our eyes and gives it quality - regardless of whether they are talking about politics, nature, culture or living in Europe.

Tn the Balkans, we realize that we are surrounded by holes. These ▲ holes are purposeless and you have to give them some purpose. I do not know if, maybe through this seminar, you will create something that will start a revolution. This seminar will be a success if you are able to convince yourself that it is necessary to abandon, to live beyond any types of stereotypes, attitudes, hypocrisy and if you allow others to define themselves as they like. This is the core, the foundation of any political or cultural activity. In any type of situation, society should be constructive and should allow every individual and every group, of course, if they respect the constitution, the state and the freedom of others, to feel accepted and to be free to express themselves. It is also important to find the truth about human beings. Not only the one truth, but many truths

and, as a theologian, I can say only that every human being is created by God. I do not have the right, as a member of Croatian society or as a journalist or as a professor of journalism or as a member of the Social Democratic Party, to say that my view of the world and the process of democratisation in Croatia is the best. I cannot say that my view is more important than the view of an atheist.

The motivations that I have are the right motives for my life. To a L certain point, it is like the life of Che Guevara. However, the moment that he became an authority in Cuba, he renounced a number of his ideas, which were very important, and became an assassin. He killed people without justice and lost his idealism. But when he was young, he was a revolutionary. He talked and focused on what good politicians do to defend the people's identity and their concepts of life. There are some words that Che Guevara said that were good: "You have to become firm, but without losing tenderness." Think about the dynamics of this, please. Become firm, be firm, be strong, to be able to lead a revolution - but do it without losing the capacity to see the other as a human being, even if they are completely wrong in their ideas.

What I wanted to say yesterday and today is that we need to fight against any type of hegemony. We need to find a simple answer to complicated questions. We need to promote human respect. We need to renew and recreate our relationships with other human beings and nature in a way which is pacifist and which includes dialogue. We need to know that we are only passing through this world and that we do not own it, but that we are here to serve.

Sara:

Thave a more private question. Can you tell us something about why Lyou left the Franciscans and went to the military in your brother's place?

DP:

Yes, that is a contradiction. Franciscans are actually pacifists and it ▲ is a contradiction that someone who is a pacifist should take a Kalashnikov and be ready to kill other people. I am aware of the fact that these were very confusing times for me. I do not think that I actually killed anyone. I did shoot, but my task in the army was to scout out enemy territory during the night. I was also a translator for an Argentinean instructor. We trained Croatian soldiers to enter enemy territory at night and to check what was going on - using night vision devices and in silence. Mainly, we took pictures and filmed, marking enemy positions on the maps, so that the artillery could shoot and hit these targets the next day. We worked in silence, but a number of times we were discovered and we had to escape. And when you are escaping, you do fire at the enemy in order to protect yourself. But I do not think that I actually killed anvone.

nyway, the fact remains that I was ready, I was prepared to act vio-Lently. These are maybe the reasons why I became a defender of the human rights of those who had actually been my enemies. And I had the necessity to find the person who had killed my brother and establish contact with him. I established human contact with him in order to liberate myself from any feeling of vengeance.

Thy did I leave the Franciscans and go to the army? Because even while I was with the Franciscans, I continued to be a nationalist. It just did not seem right that my younger brother, who did not have any type of political identity or ideology and was only twenty two, was out there risking his life every day and that I was safe at my home in the monastery. I was the one who was the nationalist, who had all these ideologies and a political identity. Before the war, when I arrived in Croatia, I started this internal process of criticism. And during this process, I noticed that my motives for being a Franciscan were not pure anymore. They were not idealistic. I also had problems accepting this type of a lifestyle.

Question:

o what is the difference between religion and moral principals, eth-Dics, like in philosophy? Everything that you talk about in religion is based on morals and ethics. So, where is God in this? I mean, why do we need God when we have morals and ethical principals?

DP:

To behave in an ethical way, you do not need to believe in God. But L to give your life a purpose and to be able to accept such things as injustice and suffering, it is easier if you believe in God. The gift of faith and that is what it really is – a gift. That is why someone who is a believer should actually be a very humble person and conscious of the fact that they have actually received a gift. And that is also why someone who is a believer should have an attitude of dialogue towards an atheist or agnostic, not only verbal or philosophical dialogue, but a dialogue of ethical

behaviour.

Tf you are someone who knows me, someone who has listened to me L speak or if you know about my life, you should be able to recognize that I am a believer in God, even if I do not verbalize it. But I want to repeat my experience: I have found a lot of humanity, a lot of capacity for sacrifice, the capacity to give up yourself among people who are not believers. That is why I believe that there are two types of believers, those who are believers consciously and those who are not. Both of them have the same values. In the eyes of God, the ones who do not consider themselves believers are not less worthy. In God's eyes, they have the same value.

Tt is difficult to know why one person believes and the other person ▲ does not. It is not just a question of education or culture, maybe, it is a genetic problem. Maybe, there is a psychological explanation. There are lots of people who believe, their belief or their faith is motivated by fear or by insecurity. The reasons why some people define themselves as believers could be different. We can discuss this, there are many kinds of reasons. It can be a problem of family tradition, like in my case. But at one point in my life, I had to say: "The God that you showed me is a God of war and I do not want to believe in this God. I want to believe in a God of peace and reconciliation." This attitude created a huge conflict in my family and among my friends. I was expelled from the Croatian Association of Catholic Journalists. Bishops and priests attacked me publicly. I received death threats numerous times. So the price of living ethically and morally is sometimes a very high price to pay. I opposed the Church because it was serving a dictator, such as Tudjman. They said absolutely nothing to defend human rights, especially of the Serbs in Croatia. I op-

pose this Church because it does not serve the poor. The Church needs to have as its absolute priority to serve the poor. That is the example of Jesus.

Julia:

Thave another question. You said that you found the murderer of your ▲ brother. So maybe you can tell us something about it because you said that you forgave him. But how does it work? So you talked about it, maybe he apologized, I don't know... Maybe you can talk about that?

DP:

Tdid not find him by accident. I looked **▲** for him for years. It was a very conscious decision I made. I had a plan with different options. Because maybe he would not want to talk to me. One of the conditions was that I did not want to know his name. Why? Because he could be afraid that I would use the meeting to reveal his name to the judicial system because his boat had also attacked Dubrovnik. I was aware that he was just obeying orders. My brother also blew up two tanks. He killed at least



seven people. It was war. And, for me, it was necessary to say that there are mothers who are still suffering for something that he did. If he thinks of what he did, I believe he should not feel guilty. Not only because we were just very small elements in the whole scene of what was happening in the war, but because no amount of hate or desire for vengeance would ever bring my brother back or be able to bring peace to my mother - and it would not give peace to this man.

Tt was just a very short conversation of five minutes. He was on the **▲** boat, he was a first officer then, and I was on the pier. Maybe it was something huge, a scene that would need to be described and written down in more depth in a chapter of my autobiography or something. But, for me, it was very, very important spiritually and internally. It was something that actually set me free. It liberated me inside.

Ana:

T'm particularly interested in what happened in Argentina during the ▲ dictatorship. Is it true that people who were against that government were taken into planes and thrown into the ocean?

DP:

Yes. In the trial of the former police captain, some paramilitary activities were proven. For example, when the police was interrogating people, they also made prisoners suffer. They gave them drugs and then threw them out of the helicopters into a river or into the ocean. Some had weights on their feet, so that they would sink immediately. Others were thrown just to make them suffer more and to drown slowly. The level of sadism was very similar to the level of sadism that you can find in regimes like Pyongyang in North Korea or like the Nazis had in their concentration camps.

ast week, a trial against a Catholic priest started. He had been a police chaplain in the province of Buenos Aires and he is of German origin. He was accused of participating in the murder of seven people,

the disappearance of 47 people and the torture of 34 people. During this trial, they also proved that he had actually used, or better, "misused" the secrecy of confession, giving information to the police. In the Catholic Church, it is considered a mortal sin to abuse the secrecy of confession. A priest who violates this vow of secrecy of confession is supposed to be expelled from the Church immediately.

This is just one example of what was happening in Argentina at that **L** time. I was only 14 years old when the dictatorship started. My school was controlled by the military. I was in secondary school, which lasted for six years, and in the final grades there were some young people who were engaged in revolutionary activities. These kinds of schools were actually Catholic and the close collaboration between the Catholic Church and the military dictatorship was always present. The director of my school was a criminal. After many years of political and social development, in 1983, democracy returned and, in 2000, Pope John Paul II actually made numerous public declarations asking for forgiveness because of the activities of the Catholic Church under the dictatorship. He obligated all the bishops in Argentina to ask the people forgiveness for having participated in the dictatorship. This was in September 2000. In October 2000, the generals who had been in power at that time did the same thing. They asked the people of Argentina for forgiveness.

pope John Paul II was a very contradictory person. He put a lot of effort into facilitating ecumenical dialogue. He also fought for human rights and he also faced many internal conflicts in the Church. He also did some other things that were very good. For example, he demanded that all North American bishops come to the Vatican to have an open discussion about the problem of paedophilia in the Church. He demanded that they ask all those victims of paedophilia their forgiveness. He decided to punish those bishops and priests who were guilty and to provide them with psychological aid. It was also decided that compensation be paid to the victims. Five parishes in the US had gone bankrupt because of this. The last one was in San Diego. In California alone, there are, at this point, nine hundred cases of paedophilia that are being processed. And yesterday, the parish of Los Angeles had to pay 600 million dollars to the victims. All this happened because of the sense of responsibility that Pope John Paul II had.

pefore that, the Catholic Church tried to hide the cases of paedophilia **D** and not to talk about them. In Argentina, the same thing happened. The Catholic Church did not want to talk about the violation of human rights during the dictatorship. Afterwards, they said that they had followed the example of Pope Pius XII who was the Vatican Ambassador in Berlin at the time of the Nazis and later became Pope. He avoided criticizing the Nazis publicly because he was afraid that this could provoke reactions that would be much more violent than the behaviour of the Nazis.

The conclusion of this internal dialogue in Argentina was that the L truth must be told, no matter what the cost. War crimes do not age or become "outdated". Sooner or later, the judicial system will find those who committed war crimes if they are still alive. Today, the tribunals in Argentina are absolutely full because the Supreme Court has all the old cases of amnesty - but if there is evidence of some atrocities, the investigation starts immediately. The same thing will happen in Croatia. It is already happening.

would like to finish with a quote from the Nobel Prize winner in Lit-Lerature, a Polish woman named Wisława Szymborska. She wrote that

life is a theatre performance without the possibility of prior practice and that the only thing that we can do is to improvise. The title of her speech when she received the Nobel Prize was "Life is a Stage". A large part of your life will be improvisation and you should try to do well. It is about being conscious of your bodies, without being afraid of its limitations. It is about being conscious of our heads and minds and being open to any type of thought even if it is completely heretical. It is possible to develop instincts and to be able to improvise. It is the capacity, ability to find happiness, even if the scenes of life are cruel. It is also about patience because at any step in life we can stumble and fall.

That is why I said before that it is important to become aware of all L the details in our lives, to be able to ask for forgiveness, especially in cases when our own attitudes or actions are very nervous due to the lack of patience. It is the ability to resist the frantic phases of life, to be able to slow down and the ability to be able to control our emotions. Because many times we say and do things and other people say and do things to us that we do not understand or that we cannot control.

Many thanks for your kind attention.

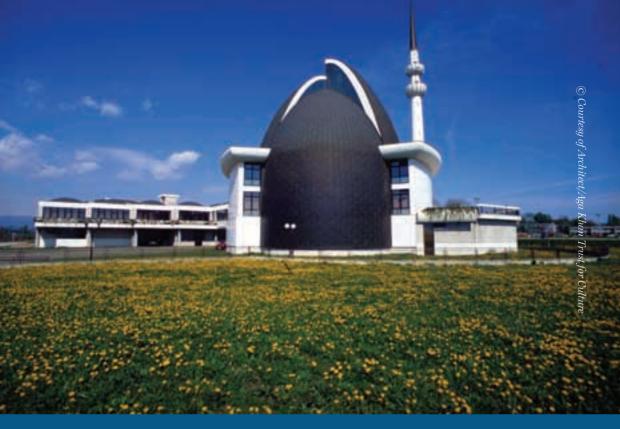


FIGURE 1:
Islamic Center of
Zagreb (1987)

(RE)CONSTRUCTING HISTORY: POST-SOCIALIST MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Azra Akšamija

When the memory of the earliest races grew overburdened, when mankind found that the baggage of its recollections had become so cumbersome and disordered that naked and fugitive speech was in danger of losing them all on the way, they were recorded upon the earth in a visible form that was at once the most durable and the most natural. Every tradition was embodied in a monument.1

-Victor Hugo, Notre Dâme de Paris (1830-32)

It is not unusual that this mosque was destroyed several times and that we managed to rebuild it every time. Here are our roots, which make us what we are! I would like to congratulate you who came to water these roots, from which our homeland, our faith, our honor, and our pride grow!2

-Raisu-l-Ulama Mustafa ef. Cerić at the opening of the new Truhan Emin-Beg Mosque, Ustikolina (July 7, 2007)

Then the Bosniak nation arose from the ashes of the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new era of mosque building began. The notion of a resurgent Islamic identity is now negotiated on the ground, yet with no coherence to the plot: as one mosque reaches back to the glorious Ottoman past with its double minarets, another offers a tribute to the great Age of Secularism with its simplicity; the marble walls of yet another celebrate the Pan-Islamic vision of its Saudi donors. This essay proposes to examine ways in which different layers of history have come to define the architecture of contemporary mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Seeking to understand how cultural memory is spatially erased and reinvented, I will examine the mosque's evolving meanings over time – I will begin with a historical perspective of the region's mosque architecture since the fifteenth century, when Islam was first brought to the Balkans with the Ottoman conquest. The temporal focus of my inquiry will be the post-socialist period, within which I will discuss the architecture of the newly built mosques that are representative of the ongoing identity-formation processes.

The mosque design embraces elements of a complex and multiethnic L cultural topography that developed within diverse power systems - starting in the medieval Bosnian Kingdom (1180-1463) and continuing in the Ottoman (1463-1815) and Austro-Hungarian (1878-1914) Empires, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1941), the Independent State of Croatia or NDH (1941-1945), the Socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1992) and, finally, the multinational democratic state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (since 1992).

The disintegration of the socialist Yugoslavia has enabled the Muslims lacksquare of Bosnia and Herzegovina to strive for a "Bosniak" nation, endowing them with political sovereignty within the newly-created democratic state. The genocide and cataclysmic devastation of their homeland's cultural heritage during the war of 1992-95 have greatly intensified this quest for national identity. By looking at the visual and cultural contestations of this quest through the lens of mosques built in the unstable and difficult post-war geopolitical context, I will investigate whether or not the mosque is increasingly becoming the place where the incipient Bosniak nation visually and symbolically expresses itself.

ISLAMIC PRESENCE AND MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE IN BOSNIA AND Herzegovina between the FIFTEENTH AND THE TWENTIETH **CENTURIES**

The Islamisation of the predominantly Christian Southern Slavs began in the fifteenth century with the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans.³ During the Ottoman imperial rule between 1463 and 1878, Islam played an important role in the region as a new common ideology that served to unify various social classes under the single political and cultural umbrella of the Empire, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina functioned as an autonomous administrative unit. 4 The majority of mosques in the region were erected between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Architectural historians, such as Medžida Bećirbegović or Edin Jahić for example, group them into two categories of design. The first includes major congregational mosques consisting of a single-dome structure with a stone minaret, built in the cities with the support of local wealthy benefactors. 5 While these domed mosques tie into the religious architecture in the centre of the Ottoman Empire, the second category encompasses the majority of neighbourhood mosques built according to the regionally characteristic building traditions. These are inexpensive smaller structures with pitched wooden roofs (or stone roofs in Herzegovina) and small wooden or stone minarets, built primarily in rural areas by the local communities.⁶ The political and economical decline of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had an effect on the building activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a notable decrease

in the number of new mosques and a few exceptions typify the Ottoman-Baroque style.⁷

Following the weakening of the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia and Herzegovina was annexed by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878, but kept its status of an autonomous province until 1918. The Austro-Hungarian colonial project in Bosnia and Herzegovina brought about an increase in regional building activities of primarily urban public infrastructure. The realm of religious architecture also witnessed notable changes: while numerous churches and cathedrals were built (predominantly in the Neo-Gothic style that was foreign to the indigenous building culture), the number of mosques was significantly smaller.8 Notwithstanding the possible unrecorded projects built by local communities, two known projects built by the Austro-Hungarian authorities advertised their patron with the Neo-Moorish style, which represented a break with the Ottoman building traditions.⁹

In the period between the two World Wars, Bosnia and Herzegovina was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, in which Bosnian Muslims did not possess a national status, but were regarded as either Muslim Serbs or Muslim Croats. This constitutive lack of national acknowledgement continued in the decades of the post-WWII era, when the communist regime of Yugoslavia recognized Bosnian Muslims only as the Serbian, Croatian or Yugoslav nationals. Within this political and economic context, the building of mosques was prohibited. During the Yugoslav period, the region was guided by secularist principles of the communist regime whereas religion was regarded as backward. Although communist, Yugoslavia was not part of the Eastern Bloc, but rather one of the founding member-countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.¹⁰ As such, it existed as a European void during the Cold War, supported as such by both sides.

In 1968, Bosnian Muslims were finally recognized in national terms with a decision by the Bosnian Central Committee, despite the fact that a religion-based nation ostensibly contradicted the very principles of the communist regime. Mosque architecture of the subsequent decades reflects this political shift with a new stylistic language. Two significant projects from the 1980s point to a twofold proliferation of mosque designs, as Jahić argues – one oriented towards the Ottoman building traditions, as exemplified by the Islamic Centre in Zagreb (1987), and the other towards the Western European architectural trends, as rendered through the famous Šerefhudin's White Mosque in Visoko (1980), which received the Aga Khan Award for architecture in 1983 (Figure 1). Is



FIGURE 1: Šerefudin's White Mosque in Visoko (1980)

The political trend towards a decentralization of Yugoslavia from the 1960s to the 1980s was strengthened through the decline of the Yugoslav "self-management" economic system, the accumulation of national debt and Tito's death in 1980. The subsequent economical crisis and the loss of a unifying leader-icon paved the way to power struggles between nationalist groups. The rise of resentful nationalism, which instrumentalized religion for its ends, finally culminated in a brutal conflict between the former republics of Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOSNIAK NATION IN THE POST-SOCIALIST PERIOD

With the end of the socialist era, the collapse of Yugoslavia affected Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 1992, when the war began on the heels of the international recognition of the country's sovereignty.¹⁴ The conflict was conducted between its predominantly ethnically (and religiously) defined parties: Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Croats (Catholics), and Bosniaks (Muslims) with diametrically opposite outlooks on the country's future: the separatist and nationalist against pluralist and multiethnic visions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁵ Amid the fluctuating goals and alliances, the concrete territorial line of separation that emerged was created by means of population displacement and the so-called "ethnic cleansing" carried out by the predominantly Serbian and Croatian nationalist extremists. It involved eviction and mass murder of civilians - identified as enemies because of their ethnicity and religion - as well as the extermination of their cultural and historical traces.16

This process of territorial and cultural "decontamination," which proceeded unhindered in the presence of international peace-keeping forces for over three and a half years, resulted in a demolition of over seventy percent of the significant cultural monuments and institutions, including over one thousand mosques and hundreds of churches (predominantly Catholic, with a smaller number of Orthodox ones).¹⁷ The large numbers point to the fact that places of worship were particularly targeted and this form of cultural warfare was pursued by all sides, to a greater or lesser degree.

The NATO intervention in the late summer of 1995 against Serb military forces made the Bosnian war an international conflict. Refugee displacement, ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, mass rape and other human rights violations that Bosnian Muslims, among others, suffered finally came to an end with the signing of the controversial Dayton Peace Agreement in mid-December 1995.18 The compromise made for peace included further division of the country into two ethnically homogenized entities: the first, controlled by the Bosnian Serbs under the name of Republic; the second, tensely governed by the Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks under the name of Federation.¹⁹ Yet, although the end of fighting was eagerly awaited, peace was, in fact, not achieved since the set of limitations that the Dayton Peace Agreement placed on the accumulation of materiel ironically provoked what the Slovenian social theorist Rastko Močnik recognized as the "societal militarisation" of the Balkans. 20 That is to say, if an open accumulation of weapons was now banned, the fight was bound to go underground and perpetuate itself as a militarised contest between different forms of ethnic nationalisms, which is to a significant extent aggravated through religious architecture, as I will argue in this essay.

Post-socialist mosque ARCHITECTURE IN Bosnia and Herzegovina

Tithin the past two decades, the region's mosque architecture has been shaped by four factors: 1. a shift from socialism to multiparty democracy; 2. the devastating impact of the 1992-95 war on the country's social and physical strata; 3. the political provisions established through the Dayton Peace Agreement, and; 4. an increasing foreign influence in the cultural, political and economic spheres. In the following section, I will investigate the continuous impact of these forces on religious architecture of the region, to understand how the mosque itself has become the place where their effects are played out and reproduced.

To begin with, the new mosques point to the return of the diaspora and the revitalization of Muslim communities after the war. Those who survived "ethnic cleansing" build or rebuild mosques as a means of asserting material evidence of their existence, while simultaneously recovering from traumatic experiences. For example, the village community of Srednje has built a new mosque for the service of some two hundred households. The Imam of Srednje, Mr. Avdo Hasanović, had motivated the village's youth to rebuild the new mosque, whereby the construction process was aimed at fostering the regeneration of social networks.

The new mosque is set next to the place where the old one once stood, which was destroyed by the Chetniks during the war (Figure 2).²¹ Following the destruction, the Chetniks also erected a pigsty on top of the ruined mosque. As Muslims are forbidden to eat pork by religion, many consider pig to be an "impure" animal. Not only did the act of putting up a pigsty on top of the ruined mosque communicate ethnic difference – this dietary constraint represents the major distinction between Muslim Bosniaks and Serbs in their otherwise shared traditional cuisine

FIGURE 2:

the Village of Srednje. Imam Avdo Hasanović

- it rather aimed to desecrate the place and humiliate the returning refugees.

Tsing pigs as a means to degrade both Muslims and their mosque, this particular act of humiliation assumes that architecture can stand for the values of these people. Furthermore, the equation of architectural symbols with people attributes an enormous power to architecture.22 Witnessing human deeds and accomplishments, architecture as a form of visual language becomes a soundless communicator, a form of writing and documenting history.



Tn this respect, the reconstructing of old and the creating of new ▲ mosques offers opportunities for writing a new history. Yet, this process involves difficult questions of when, how and, most importantly, where to define and reconnect the path of traditional religious and building practices - a path that was repressed during the Yugoslav regime and was then resumed in the recent war. Many communities just

ruined mosque.

build a prayer space with their own funding and then look for a further donation for the interior furnishing and the minaret. Such a building practice mostly starts informally and is later accepted by the Bosnian Rijaset in Sarajevo, the central administrative institution of the Bosnian Islamic Community.

These self-initiated and informal projects represent the most com-■ mon approach to mosque construction in Bosnia.²³ However, the eventual critique of "building in unknowing" must be balanced against the fact that the majority of the archival material has been burned to ashes and that this loss also makes adequate research almost impossible.²⁴ At the same time, the eradication of the historical evidence of Muslim existence in Bosnia allowed for a breaking away from the Ottoman tradition by inventing new traditions – an opportunity of perhaps redefining the nation that arose from a crisis.

iven these dilemmas, the Ottoman precedents are then not just Identically reproduced; they also acquire new features that Eric Hobsbawm would characterize as "invented traditions," whereby mosque architecture now acts as a tool for "writing" national history.25 For example, many mosque builders chose the Ottoman models as a stylistic frame of reference for their contemporary designs. For instance, this is visible through the frequent choice of the pencil-shaped minarets or central domes, such as in the mosques of Otoka or Izačić (Figure 3). While built in concrete, many new mosques emulate Sinan's cascading domes, without the actual structural necessity for this kind of a load transfer. Given the half millennium of imperial Ottoman past in the region and its impact on the Bosnian material culture, such stylistic choices are understandable, yet, this could also be interpreted as an attempt to anchor

the origins of the Bosniak Muslim identity in a long-lasting building tradition.²⁶ The continuation of the Ottoman tradition, therefore, for some communities, automatically implies a "continuity with a suitable past".27

The invention of tradition, according to Eric Hobsbawm, "occurs **I** more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designated, producing new ones to which they were not applicable." ²⁸ In other words, the flexibility in design evolves from the "inability to use or adapt" the tradition that is usually perceived as unchanging.²⁹ In this respect, the building of new mosques in Bosnia with one's own means allows for more freedom in the choice of design. At the same time, the limited funding culminates mostly in a cheap minaret production. Consequently, the financial difficulties condition the emergence of new privately owned construction companies specialized in ready-made minarets that guarantee a successfully standing structure in absence of an engineering supervision.

or instance, the minaret of the mosque in Srednje was built by a private company from Tešanj (Figure 2). Having built over 90 minarets throughout the country, this company became best known for its prefabricated concrete minaret parts. Instead of a "catalogue," from which a client can choose the minaret design, individual communities decide on this comparatively, by selecting elements they liked in the mosques of their neighbouring villages. The serefet (the minaret balcony) of the mentioned mosque, similarly chosen for many other projects, represents a novelty in design evolving from a standardized production of prefabricated concrete minaret parts. This so-called "balustrade on meter" is a



Figure 3: Inventions of tradition: Mosque in Otoka

very popular feature in the contemporary housing design in Bosnia, currently characterized by an eclecticism of kitsch, such as horses, pink flamingos, sleeping beauties and upside down ancient columns made in concrete. Emulating the "American dream," these symbols of wealth and prestige point to the presence of a transnational taste in Bosnia. The infiltration of American domestic paradigms into sacral architecture, together with pre-fabricated technology, has led to the standardization of the Bosnian minaret as a ready-made product.30

Tet, these phenomena not only bring ■ about an "Americanisation" of the minaret-design, but they also affect the social practices of Muslim communities. Some communities choose to apply illumination to the entire minaret, which creates a disco-ball-like effect at night. Unlike before the war, these illuminations are employed to signalise the evening prayer on a daily basis and not only for religious festivities.31 Consequently, the possibilities of such new "disco-minarets" condition changes in religious tradition.

THE MOSQUE AS A CLAIM TO TERRITORY, HISTORY AND NATION

Ontemporary mosques also give visual form to the regional pres-✓ence of Bosniak communities, demarcating their territories among and against their Christian neighbours. The ongoing political tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina between the Republic of Srpska and the Bosniak-Croat Federation are aggravated by ethnic nationalism, which manifests itself primarily through an aesthetic instrumentalization of cultural heritage, language and religion. Although the country's many ethnicities share a common history and geography, Vjekoslav Perica in Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States argues that the crucial difference between them is not necessarily their religious affiliation, but the myth of a unique national origin.³² Lacking the dominant ethnic base and the legal framework to forge their nationalist ideology as a claim to power, these groups now produce their own national consciousness and cohesion by strengthening their ethnic ties within the cultural sphere. As religion becomes crucial for generating cultural strength, it also tends to provide (or not) a framework for defining nationhood: Orthodox Christianity for Serbs, Catholicism for Croats, and Islam for Muslim Bosniaks.

eligious architecture, in this context, not only articulates and rein-Inforces national sentiments of Bosnian ethnicities, but it also provides a cultural backdrop from which their national ideals can be fostered. As objects of shared memory and culture, mosques and churches incorporate the common myths and histories of these ethnic groups, relate those to a specific territory, but also distinguish them from one

another. By providing a visual code for ethnic belonging, they also signal individual national and territorial claims. Used to validate ethnic origins that predated these modern nations, religious architecture – more than any other type of architecture - has become both the product and the producer of competing national discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina.³³ As minarets and church towers now mushroom throughout the country, the building process is characterized by competitiveness for visibility and overt signalling of territorial dominance (Figure 4).

Nonsider, for example, the Serbian Orthodox church in the township of Jezero, which marks the presence of the Serbian population in the region. The church is neither finished nor consecrated. Yet, the completion of its bell-tower was a priority because of its visibility from the main traffic route, which ensures the edifice's presence in public space. A similar, yet more explicit, signalisation of ethnic supremacy can be observed in the silhouette of the city of Mostar, where the gigantic church tower of the late nineteenth-century Franciscan monastery presently dominates the skyline of the old city.³⁴ The monastery was heavily damaged during the war along with many other religious buildings in the city. The subsequent process of reconstruction became an opportunity to enlarge the church tower so that it now reaches more than twice its original height. Enhancing the changing physical fabric of the city, Catholics have also erected a colossal cross on a nearby hilltop. Its monumental dimensions and nightly illumination underscore Croatian territorial dominance beyond the city's periphery. Seemingly in response, the Muslim community of Mostar validated their regional ancestry by building a mosque with two minarets whose stylistic elements advertise their Ottoman architectural heritage. While the implementation of a double minaret histori-



cally refers to the royal patronage of mosques in the Ottoman context, what, today, matters to the builders in Mostar is simply the monumental impact.35

The current impulse to monumentalise sacral architecture corresponds to the radically changed post-war demographic structure.³⁶ In many instances, mosques and churches in Bosnia have, in effect, replaced the national flags that might have marked an ethnicity's territorial control immediately after the war. Religious edifices are now flags made of stone, as it were, and point to the infiltration of politicised ethnic boundaries into architecture. As such, they typify how sacral space has been co-opted by the ongoing local power struggles. Utilized to inscribe land, mosques have indeed become an instrument for reclaiming Muslim territories, thus generating a counter-discourse to the Serbian and Croatian nationalist (Christian) agendas. In this context, the political role of mosque architecture within the early stage of state-formation

FIGURE 4: Vrapčići (suburb reconstruction of Monastery in

in Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes clear - it serves as a visual apparatus for communicating the Bosniaks' national and ethnic claims within a multinational state.

↑ this point in the essay, it is important to note that the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a hybrid one. Pre-war regional ethnicities did not manifest themselves explicitly through religious affinities, but lived their culture of peaceful co-existence. This was rapidly forgotten during and after the war. It is also important to emphasize that both mosques and churches, as part of the country's material culture, belong to its symbolic landscape that is characterized not only through Islamic, but also through a multicultural heritage.³⁷ The negation of such a diverse legacy, as well as the destruction and debasing of such a symbolic landscape contributes to the erasure of the Bosnian diverse and mixed cultural identity and thus feeds into the agenda of 'ethnic cleansers, 38

This agenda was architecturally investigated by the historian Andras ■ Riedlmayer, who was commissioned by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to inspect the destruction of religious architecture during the 1992-95 war. He reports that the destruction of mosques and churches, among other cultural monuments, represented a deliberate act of violence on the part of nationalist extremists to eradicate any material evidence that a peaceful multicultural coexistence in Bosnia and Herzegovina had ever been possible.³⁹ The long-term goal of this aggression, Riedlmayer contends, was to produce the newly conquered territories as "ethnically and religiously pure." For this reason, religious edifices were destroyed in such a way that future reconstruction would be almost impossible. 40 The devastation of the mosques and

churches was then aimed at a revision of Bosnian collective memory from a hybrid, multiethnic and pluralist society to three religiously and ethnically homogenized entities.

iven the numbers of killed and displaced persons in the recent war, as well as the devastation of libraries and archives, the verbal conventions that once stood for archived memories – that according to Maurice Halbwachs "constitute [...] the most elementary and most stable framework of collective memory" - will not necessarily remain the chief means of keeping that memory alive. 41 Architecture however, lends itself to recollection and encompassing of the "fragmentary images" of memory.42 Then, the destroyed and the currently built mosques constitute a part of Bosnian collective memory. Comprising a particularity of a place, as analysed by Pamela de Condappa, architectural monuments further "act as narratives of collective memory that underpin the cohesion and identity of groups."43 As such, they will also have an impact on shaping the national identity for the generations to come.

THE MOSQUE AS A YARDSTICK OF RELIGIOSITY

Ontemporary mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina function as markers of very specific interpretations of Islam – whether conservative or liberal - that define various communities. As such, they act as literal yardsticks of a community's or a patron's religiosity. Regional expressions of monumentality stand against the new luxurious models coming from outside the country. Since the end of the 1992-95 war, a new architectural language of "airport-style" mosques has appeared all



FIGURE 5: King Fahd Islamic Centre in Sarajevo (left). tural models of and a model of is mapped with

over the country. Such large-scale mosques are built mostly in the capital Sarajevo and other larger cities, and are closely tied to the monetary donations from Saudi Arabia. In addition to the King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo, Saudi Arabia is currently sponsoring a wide range of mosques and large-scale Islamic Centres (Figure 5).44 The models of these donations are currently exhibited in the foyer of the King Fahd Islamic Centre in Sarajevo, rendering a new map of the Islamically globalised Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosniaks' quest for identity is thus further complicated by the pressures of global Islam propagated through ideological and financial influences from Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries. Mosque donations thus point to an increasing influence of foreign Islamic communities that signal their presence in Europe by building mosques in styles characteristic of their countries of origins, such as Kuwait, Malaysia, Jordan and Indonesia. These edifices are indicative of the way the globalisation of culture affects vernacular mosque design. While international tastes compete with indigenous ones, the donors of mosques sometimes bring in missionary programs that are, at times, completely incompatible with local desires and circumstances.

Thile the ambitions of the national and international elites are mostly expressed through large-scale mosque projects, there is also a range of bottomup vernacular building strategies initiated informally by local communities, including both regionalist and trans-national statements of identity (Figure 6).

At the same time, it is important to note that mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina still primarily function as places of worship, providers of social services and meeting places for a community's secular activities, such as debating differing political, legal, scientific and religious issues. As a social-binder and a means of an individual representation of an Islamic community, the mosque provides the likely place for Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina to express their different identities as modern European Muslims.



FIGURE 6: built Mosque Sarajevo

Conclusion

Tn sum, mosque architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina reveals the I many levels on which identity is produced through built forms, giving insight into the relationship between culture and politics that goes far beyond this regional case study. While the extent of the war devastations in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the reason why so many new mosques (and churches) are being built today, these edifices are neither used as purely religious sites, nor are they symbols of a great religious revival. Rather, they are symptoms of the socio-political transformation of Yugoslavia in

the 1980s and 1990s, which are increasingly functioning as the markers of the national and trans-national identity formation processes today.

The crux of the issue here is the negotiation of competing nationalist **_** and religious ideologies in the space of architecture, a competition whose global and local dominations are carried out within the cultural sphere of a single democratic state, often in the context of the built form of the mosque. The wide spectrum of rival identities, as the ones that are presently articulated by local and expatriate builders and reinforced through mosques, encompasses very diverse people, ranging from those who regard themselves first and foremost as Europeans to those who associate themselves exclusively with the religion of Islam and see themselves as disconnected from Europe. As a result, mosque architecture speaks to the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the world at large through a variety of visual codes. What differentiates these different designs is how far back historically and how widely geographically the respective mosque builders go in search of stylistic referents for expressing identity, in order to propose an image of a Muslim, a Bosniak or a member of a European nation.

Thile much more scholarly work needs to be done to document what has been lost in the ashes, I would like to suggest that a critical approach to contemporary mosque designs is crucial for the processes of the ongoing rebuilding and reconstruction of religious monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Re-examining the notion of the mosque as a territory of multiple meanings, of recollected cultural memories and histories and of new social practices would shed light on the importance of cultural history as a resource pool for invoking collective memories and defining the origins of imagined communities. A more critical historical

analysis of contemporary mosques needs to be conducted to conceptualise the Islamic presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not as a contemporary phenomenon, but as an enduring component of the history of Islam in Europe. That European Muslims may develop identities that are not only religious, but simultaneously cultural, economic, modern and even secular; indeed, all these issues are spatially intertwined in the architecture of the contemporary mosque in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 45

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Notes

1 Victor Hugo, "One Shall Destroy the Other," in Notre Dâme de Paris, (Paris, 1830-32), 259-260.

2 Raisu-l-Ulama Mustafa ef. Cerić heads the Riyasat, the main executive body of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ICBH) and represents the supreme authority in the ICBH. "Ustikolina Otvorena Turhan Emin-begova džamija", Dnevni Avaz, 18 September 2007. http://www.avaz.ba/absolutenm/ anmviewer.asp?a=3005\Genegrationz=12\Genegrationsing is is is a specific and a sp September 2007).

3 The dominant Christian confessions in Bosnia in the fifteenth century before the Ottoman conquest were Bogomilism, Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

4 The historian Aydin Babuna argues that the conflicts between Bosniaks and their Christian neighbours strengthened the formers' Islamic identity and, with this, their allegiance to the Ottomans. See: Aydın Babuna, "National Identity, Islam and Politics in Post-Communist Bosnia-Herzegovina," East European Quarterly 39. 4 (2006): 405.

5 The largest and most famous example is the Gazi-Husrevbeg's Mosque in Sarajevo (1531), designed by Esir Ali (or Ad emi Ali), one of the main Ottoman court architects. Other significant projects of this group include the Mosque of Muslihudin Čekrekčija (1526) and Alipašina Mosque (1561) in Sarajevo, as well as Aladža Mosque in Foča (1550), Karađozbeg's Mosque (1557) and Mosque of Mehmed Paša Kosko (1612) in Mostar, Hadži Alija Mosque (1563) in Počitelj. See: Edin Jahić, "Funkcionalne i oblikovne karakteristike džamije kao izraz suvremenog arhitektonskog stvaralaštva" ["Functional and Formal Characteristics of the Mosque as an Expression of Contemporary Architectural Creation"] (PhD diss., University of Sarajevo, 2006), 126-129; Madžida Bećirbegović Bećirbegović, Džamije sa drvenom munarom u Bosni i Hercegovini [Mosques with Wooden Minarets in Bosnia and Herzegovina 7 (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1990).

6 Typical examples in this category are numerous mahala mosques in Sarajevo, such as the Brdo Džamija and the Magribija or the Ferhadija in Tešanj, as well as the Mosque of Ustikolina, the oldest known mosque in Bosnia dating to 1448. Ibid., 121-122. For a more extensive study about mosques with wooden minarets, see: Madžida Bećirbegović, Džamije sa drvenom munarom u Bosni i Hercegovini (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1990).

7 Such as the Husejnija Mosque in Gradačac (1826) and the Azizija Mosque in Brezovo Polje (1862). Jahić, 126.

8 Jahić notes that, at this point of time, a large amount of mosques had existed in the country. In this respect, he contemplates whether the erection of new ones perhaps did not represent an urgent matter. While the number of new mosques and other Islamic monuments is significantly lower than that of other buildings erected by the Austro-Hungarians, his observation excludes monuments that were possibly built by local Islamic communities, but are not recorded. Ibid., 122.

9 The Moorish influences can also be found, for example, in the Mosque of Behrambeg or the Šarena Džamija in Tuzla (1888), which was designed by Franc Mahnovič with Mamluk-inspired minarets, and the mahala-mosque in Hrasnica (1895) with a pitched roof that points to the architect Ludwig Huber's intention to bridge vernacular and colonial building cultures. Ibid., 138, 140.

10 On 18 July 1956, Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser and India's Prime Minister Jawaharal Nehru issued a joint statement of "Non-Alignment."

11 Noel Malcolm argues that this drive for the national recognition of Bosnian Muslims in the socialist federation was not based exclusively on an Islamic religious movement. Rather, it evolved through two simultaneous religious and political trends: first, the movement of secular "Muslim nationalism" led by Communists and secularised Muslims, and second, a "separate revival of Islamic religious belief". See: Noel Malcolm, Bosnia: A Short History (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 198-200.

12 The "Non-Aligned" politics of Yugoslavia also increased its contacts with other Islamic countries, which might have had an influence on the religious architecture in this period.

13 The Islamic Centre in Zagreb, designed by the architects Mirza Gološ and Džemal Čelić, signalled a Muslim presence in the Catholic centre of Croatia with a monumental and revivalist approach to classical Ottoman mosque architecture. By contrast, the White Mosque in Visoko, designed by the architect Zlatko Ugljen, is influenced by the architectural language of the International Style and represents one of the most distinguished examples of contemporary mosque architecture worldwide. See: Jahić, 145-147. For more information about the mosque in Visoko, see for example: Brane Bernik, Arhitekt Zlatko Ugljen

(Tuzla: Međunarodna galerija portreta, 2002).

14 The disintegration of Yugoslavia resulted in the establishment of six new states in the following sequence: Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991), Macedonia (1991), Montenegro (2006) and Serbia (2006). Since 1999, Kosovo has been governed by NATO and Russian forces, but the province is still internationally recognized as part of Serbia. Following a declaration of sovereignty in October 1991, a referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was held on 29 February and 1 March 1992. While a great majority of Bosnian Serbs boycotted the referendum, the turnout was 64%. Of those voting, 99.4% were in favour of independence, which was then declared, despite the referendum's failure to meet the constitutional two-thirds majority requirement. On 27 March 1992, Bosnian Serbs reacted by declaring a "Serb Republic." The subsequent period of tensions and military incidents finally culminated in an open warfare in Sarajevo, which was attacked by the Yugoslav National Army controlled by the Serbs, on 6 April 1992. The same day Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized as an independent state by the European Community. The "Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna," a Croat counterpart to the Serb Republic, was proclaimed in July 1992. See: Noel Malcolm, Bosnia: A Short History (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 213-252, and Ivan Lovrenović, Bosnia: A Cultural History (London: Saqi, 2001), 195.

15 These parties however also include people from "mixed" backgrounds and ethnic minorities.

16 András Riedlmayer, "From Ashes: The Past and Future of Bosnia's Cultural heritage," in: Islam and Bosnia: Conflict Resolution and Foreign Policy in Multi-Ethnic States, ed. Maya Shatzmiller (Montréal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 98-135.

17 While all ethnicities suffered destruction or damage of their cultural heritage, the quantity of destroyed mosques far outweighs the number of destroyed churches. In reviewing the indictments of Karadžić and Mladić, the Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) stated that: "Throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina under their control, Bosnian Serb forces...destroyed, quasi-systematically, the Muslim and Catholic cultural heritage, in particular, sacred sites. According to estimates provided at the hearing by an expert witness, Dr. Kaiser, a total of 1123 mosques, 504 Catholic churches and five synagogues were destroyed or damaged, for the most part, in the absence of military activity or after the cessation thereof. ...

Aside from churches and mosques, other religious and cultural symbols like cemeteries and monasteries were targets of the attacks." (Karadžić and Mladić, Review of Indictment Pursuant to Rule 61 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, 11 July 1996, pasra. 15) See: ICJ Judgment of 26 February 2007, Destruction of Historical, Religious and Cultural Property. pp. 121-124, para. 336. http://www.icj-cij.org/cijwww/cdocket/cbhy/cbhyjudgments/cbhy_cjudgment_20070226/ibhy_judgment.pdf (accessed10 September 2007).

18 Given the fact that many deaths occurred without being recorded and that the process of recording became chaotic and uncontrolled during the war, it is very difficult to provide the exact number of victims. According to the research conducted by demographic experts from the International Criminal Tribunal, "the number of war-related deaths in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be estimated as 102,622 individuals, of which 47,360 (46%) are military victims and about 55,261 (54%) are civilian war-related deaths." The same experts contend that "the size of emigration from Bosnia (forced and voluntary) at the end of the Bosnian war has been estimated by UNHCR at approximately 1.2 million persons." See: Ewa Tabeau and Jakub Bijak, "War-related Deaths in the 1992-1995 Armed Conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Critique of Previous Estimates and Recent Results," European Journal of Population 21 (2005): 207, 210. This data exclude that a great number of Muslims could not become refugees, as they were imprisoned in concentration camps, where they suffered physical and psychological damage through torture, mass rapes and other violations of human rights.

19 Two years after the war started, the Bosniaks and the Bosnian Croats joined forces against the Bosnian Serbs, forming the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which is now divided into ten semi-autonomous regions called cantons: Una-Sana, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Bosnian Podrinje, Sarajevo, Posavina, West Herzegovina, Central Bosnia, Canton 10 and Herzegovina-Neretva.

20 Rastko Močnik, "The Balkans as an Element in Ideological Mechanisms," in: Balkan As Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation, eds. Dušan Bjelić and Obrad Savić (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 82.

21 Chetniks are Serb nationalist extremists.

22 Victor Hugo once described architecture as a signifier of a society, whereby he understood that architecture can reflect different stages of human physical or intellectual achievements. Accompanying the development of human thought, he argued that architec-

ture phrases human progression with visual means. Considering the constantly evolving character of architecture as a language that is open to reading, Victor Hugo also described architecture as "the great book of humanity," evolving through time into a giant "mass of floating symbolism". Hugo, 25,9-261.

23 After returning to the village of Srednje in 1998, imam Avdo Hasanović also organized the community to build a new mosque.

24 The devastation of the Oriental Institute's archive represents one of the major losses not only for Bosnian, but the wider Mediterranean cultural heritage. The cultural damage caused by the impact of nationalism on politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been much studied and considerable work by both Bosnian and international scholars has focused on documenting the extent of war devastation and recovery on the writing that has been lost in the ashes. See for example: Lejla Gazić, "Stradanje Orijentalnog instituta u agresiji na Bosnu i Hercegovinu 1992-1995," in: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu 1950-2000 ["Destruction of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo during the Aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995," in: Oriental Institute in Sarajevo 1950-2000], eds. Amir Ljubović and Lejla Gazić (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, 2000), 24-35, and Martin Coward, "Urbicide in Bosnia," in: Cities, War and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics, ed. Stephen Graham (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 154-171.

25 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

26 Over 490 years of the imperial Ottoman past had a significant impact on the Bosnian material culture since their first invasion in 1386, their completed conquest in 1463 and the final disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in 1878 and the annexation of Bosnia to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1908.

27 Hobsbawm,1.

28 Ibid., 4.

29 Ibid., 5.

30 In his "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue", Fredric Jameson analysed how high capitalism leads to the commodification of culture in the context of globalisation. Jameson ascribed enormous power to commodities. While his position renders an understanding of culture in direct service of the market, his account of globalisation in terms of American cultural dominancy still operates within the categories of the binary oppositions of "us versus them" the paradigms of the hegemonic discourse he aims to criticize. This paradox of Jameson's critique thus assumes the centre-periphery relationship of the West victimizing the rest of the world through its dominating influence. See: Fredric Jameson, "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue," in: The Cultures of Globalization, eds. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham: Duke University Pres, 1998): 54-77.

31 Despite existing loudspeakers, most minarets in Bosnia are still used for their traditional purpose as a place from where the call of prayer can be widely perceived. Yet, the new technologies of communication have brought an additional function to minarets as holders of telecom antennas, which now became a new source of income for some mosque communities.

32 Vjekoslav Perica, Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

33 Ibid., 5.

The idea of continuity with these assumed origins is central to the creation of national (imagined) communities. Therefore, the ethic and religious bond with previous collective structures can reinforce Serbian, Croatian and Bosniak group solidarities for their nations in the present. For a more theoretical background to this idea, see: Anthony D. Smith, "Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism," International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 72, no.3, Ethnicity and International Relations. (July, 1996): 447.

34 The Franciscan monastery was built from 1890-1894.

35 The Ottomans completed their conquest in 1463 and the occupation ended with the final disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in 1878 and the annexation of Bosnia to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1908.

Ottoman presence in the country. For the history of Ottoman architecture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, see: Machiel Kiel, Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans (Aldershot: Variorum; Brookfield: Gower Pub. Co., 1990), Husref Redžić, Studije o Islamskoj Arhitektonskoj Baštini (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1983) or Adem Handžić, A survey of Islamic Cultural Monuments Until the End of the 19th Century in Bosnia (Istanbul: Organization of the Islamic Conference, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), 1996).

36 The ethnic maps of Bosnia from 1991 and 1996 (before and after the war) clearly indicate a tremendous shift from ethnically very mixed to highly consolidated and homogeneous territories. See: <www. ohr.int/ohr-info/maps/>.

37 Pamela de Condappa, "Cultural Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Destroying Heritage, Destroying Identity," Metamedia/Stanford University. http://metamedia.stanford.edu/projects/culturesof-contact/121> (17 April 2006): 6.

38 John Gillis, ed., Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

39 Andras Riedlmayer presents a quantitative survey of the destruction of Islamic religious buildings in the period between 1992-95. Among data about the destruction of Qur'an schools, Dervish lodges, mausoleums and buildings of religious endowments, his records render the devastation of 255 or 92% of surveyed mosques as heavily damaged or destroyed. "Of these, 119 mosques were heavily damaged while 136 mosques were almost or entirely destroyed." Riedlmayer also notes that there are no complete and exact numbers about mosque devastations and the actual figures might be considerably higher. See: András J. Riedlmayer, "Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-1996: A Post-War Survey

Of Selected Municipalities," Expert Report commissioned by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (2002): 9, 10.

40 Riedlmayer, "From the Ashes," in: Islam and Bosnia: Conflict Resolution and Foreign Policy in Multi-Ethnic States, ed. Maya Shatzmiller (Montréal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 98-135.

41 Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago, 1992): 45.

42 Ibid., 45.

43 Ibid.

44 This kind of development does not only affect the building of new structures, but it also influences the reconstruction of older monuments, resulting in "tabula rasa" (re)building strategies of mosques that were only slightly damaged during the recent war.

45 For more on this idea, see: John R. Bowen, "What is 'Universal' and 'Local' in Islam", Ethos 26, no.2, Communicating Multiple Identities in Muslim Communities. (June 1998): 260.



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THE TRIALS OF CLERICALIZATION

MIRKO DOPPEVIÓ

Not long ago – during election time in Kosovo – the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church issued an appeal inviting the Serbian community there to boycott those elections. The community did precisely that. This appeal in itself is nothing new because it is also a prime example of how the church has no patience for changes in the modern world - regardless of what those changes might be. To make things worse, Patriarch Pavle himself made an announcement in the same vein, but this surprised no one. The problem is much more complex. Some of the ministers in the cabinet – and even the prime minister quickly followed suit - made some rather remarkable statements. "No one should add anything to what the Patriarch says," one of them announced. It is unclear where, and how, this minister found the basis for such nonsense in our cultural tradition; indeed, the tradition offers an abundance of examples to the opposite. Altogether, this shows the extent that the process of clericalization has reached in our public life - there is a sort of consensus that the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) is "the only integrating factor" and that it ought to play a leading role in society. The SOC has long been part of the authority structure of society and the constitutional definition of the separation of church and state means very little. This phenomenon – taken in this way – occurs nowhere else in modern Europe, even if one includes all the lands with an Orthodox tradition in the East. Serious analysts in Europe thus speak with reason about "medieval clericalism in the Balkans" and cite the case of modern Serbia. Examples of this abound, but the purpose of this text is to offer a different view of the relationship of church and state.

Tt is obvious that there is a desire, no matter how odd it may seem, to ▲ maintain continuity with the medieval Serbian state, which has literally not existed since the mid-15th century. Concepts such as clericalization or secularisation – we will note that there is also mention of another form, desecularisation – have become so muddled on the semantic level that their meaning is lost, meanings that are otherwise quite clear.

A BRIEF EXEGESIS OF CONCEPTS

Tn terms of the Middle Ages – this text is not intended to be a historical ▲ analysis – things are clear because the dominant role of the church in the society of the time is familiar to almost everyone. "The Middle Ages lived on the idea of holiness and died from it, too," says J. Maritain in his famous book where he attempts to establish "integral humanism". However, not even here can we be absolute about matters. As indicated by historians of the SOC, there was resistance in the lower ranks of the priesthood against church hierarchy in alliance with the nobility and against a church that was "subjugated to the nobility and the world". Therefore, it is necessary to return to the key positions that J. Benda takes in his work The Betrayal of Intellectuals.³ Benda returns to the old word clerc which is also at the root of the word clericalism. The intellectuals in question are priests who played the part of those spreading the teachings of the church and belonged to the ruling class in the Middle Ages. Yet, and the good translators noticed this very early on, Benda does not really address the Middle Ages and uses the term clerc to include intellectuals in general, and so this word in the title is translated as such. According to him, a clerc is not just a priest but can - especially in modern times - also be a layman who creates ideas. The system of those ideas - regardless of how it defines itself - has a clerical meaning. Benda intentionally "expands" this concept and, as time went on, it became clear that the "betrayal of intellectuals" was a certainty. Today, not only priests – intellectuals in the

¹ Jacques Maritain: Cjeloviti humanizam (Integral Humanism), Kršćanska sadašnjost, Zagreb, 1989.

² Đoko Slijepčević: Istorija SPC (History of the SOC), BIGZ, Beograd, 1996.

³ Julien Benda: La trahison des clercs, this book appeared as early as 1927 - Bernard Grasset, Paris, 1977.

church - but also representatives of the "national elite" basically function according to this model. Benda himself is quite clear about it: "A nation cannot be founded exclusively on clerical values." His work was published during the rise of French clero-nationalism because Bares and Moras were "lying for France" together with the bishops. His work was not aimed at the church but at that part of the elite-intelligentsia, especially the intellectuals-laymen, "who can be found in the street". This explains the ease with which the bond between the "national elite" and the conservative members of the church was established. In an atmosphere of imposed clericalization, the cultural role of the church in the history of the nation becomes neglected and its political role comes to the forefront. 4 Many of the signs indicate that what is happening in Serbia today can be interpreted using this as a "key".

n order for this concept to be proper and complete, a few more remarks ■ must be made – especially now when clericalization has taken a further step towards another unusual form that the clericalists call "desecularisation". The first is related to a key question for Christianity in the modern world. The question was posed by the famous Russian Orthodox thinker G. Fedotov, who asked something very important: "Are freedom and democracy compatible with Christianity?" 5 Actually, Fedotov is even more precise - he is interested in the question of whether Orthodoxy and democracy are compatible categories. He deals concretely with the place of the church in the modern secularised world - "Orthodoxy lived for fifteen hundred years in an organic, and even more so, sacral relationship with royal governments and often gave into the temptation of dogmatising such governments." In his further considerations, Fedotov is even clearer, "There is a certain contradictoriness in the fact that Orthodoxy, which is so adversarial towards the monarchical-papal principle in the

4 In this sense, the very concept of intelligentsia demands a few remarks. It is easily notable that the French write it in a way that is uncommon for their orthography - l'inteligentsia. The same is true of other Romance languages. The authoritative dictionary Robert explains this in the following way: the word is Russian and has been in use since 1920. Namely, Berdyaev had already derived the word from the concept of clerc - even before it arrived in France - collectively appearing on the scene as "elite". So a special social class appeared that looked like a "monkish order" intending to take power, neglecting its original mission. That is the idea Benda is thinking about in "the betrayal of intellectuals". Intellectuals are loners who connect themselves informally with those like them in defense of the sum of universal

church, not only blesses the monarchy, which is guite in the spirit of the law, but was often even ready to dogmatise it." Fedotov's comments are rejected as "Orthodox modernism" in the conservative circles of Orthodoxy. His ultimate answer lies in the thesis, explicitly found in all of his essays, that the only solution can be the separation of church and state. Clericalization is only a sporadic phenomenon that can be found in history in the form of waves of varying intensity while desecularization is a specific form of utopia – it is practically impossible because one has to imagine a society that is differently structured because the process of secularisation is irreversible. No one today can re-establish the class structure of society, but that does not mean that such ideas are not encountered. Modern democracy is founded on the freedom of human personality which is the measure of freedom for significant others as well.

In terms of the church in society, another concept is even more impor-Lant, arising from the historical situation: although this text does not deal with history as such, we should turn for a moment to the distant year 1905, when the church was officially separated from the state after almost an entire century of highly tense relations - from the Revolution to Napoleon's deal with the Pope - and when the model was established that, beyond all doubt, has withstood the test of time and is used even today in the EU Constitution. The sense and essence of this model can be defined in the following way, of course, in summary form: in a free republic of man and citizen, the church is completely free – especially from the pressure of the state - and this was the first time that the church got such an opportunity. Of course, at the beginning, a portion of the hierarchy experienced this as a shock, but time showed that the model was a good one. This is well-known history. The meaning of this commentary is a different one – while the model of the separation of church and state

values and they are leftists "in the metaphysical sense", as Benda himself notes. When this is neglected, betraval is unavoidable.

⁵ Georgij Fedotov: Carmen saeculare, "Gradac", 1995.

was successfully applied in the Christian West, in the Orthodox East this process lagged behind. The church remained an institution of the state which – differing in various periods – became combined with the state. The church remained imprisoned by the old model that is, reasonably so, described as "Constantine's embrace". The changes of government and regime were held in church and they were accompanied by aftershocks; relations were unpredictable even though they were formally and legally regulated by the "concordat" – but still, church and state were not separated. The official separation of church and state came after World War II, but nothing much really changed in their relations – the separation was de iure but not de facto. Misunderstandings in those relations characterized the entire period - the church generally oriented itself to the state and when they did come into conflict, the reasons were always different. Certain incidents in those relations were repeated, confirming that the process of the "laymanization" of the state did not occur and that, actually, there was not any kind of a model, as long as one does not take as a model the ancient Byzantine tradition that allowed the ruler to make decisions about the church as well. In any case, the church was part of state authority and, on that basis, it also received certain privileges - this was especially suitable for parts of the upper hierarchy, but not for the parochial priesthood that was subjugated and enslaved by "obedience".

The power attained by the church had its consequences – in 19th cen-L tury Serbia, conflicts with the ruler were frequent and cruel. Examples abound, but the most important were those that were repeated like a sort of "anti-model" - chaotically and incidentally.

Tn an attempt to modernize Serbia after the model of the Western LEuropean states, King Milan came into conflict with Metropolitan

Mihajlo who was a proponent of an openly Russophile policy. The king expelled the metropolitan from Serbia because, among other things, the day came for signing a concordat with Rome. An even more unfortunate incident occurred with Mihajlo's successor, Inokentije, whom the last of the Obrenović family brought into that position from the parish; in his sermons, he called Queen Draga "the Pigeon" and "the Dove", but when the members of the Black Hand had carried out their evil intentions, he showed another face. Already giving the blessing at the Orthodox Cathedral, when the murderers elected by acclamation P. Karadordević the king of Serbia, he, in his sermon, publicly praised the "Christ-loving warriors who had removed tyranny from the face of the earth". There is also a difference - in our churches, this was not overlooked. In the official organ of the Serbian Patriarchate in Sremski Karlovci - in the July edition of Srpski Sion/Serbian Zion - Dimitrije Ruvarac wrote that the act of the Black Hand and the conduct of Metropolitan Inokentije were "the shame and disgrace of Serbia" and "a new blemish on the reputation of Serbia" that had "humiliated us in front of the entire Orthodox world".

There was a whole series of such incidents in the relations between L church and state, but there were others as well that had to do with other things.6

The conservative revolution

In itself, this old phrase does not contain profundity and it is even contradictory – in the speeches of B. Mussolini or in the allocutions of Marshall P. Petain, it is a kind of a standing phrase. It is often replaced with a similar phrase – "national revolution" – but in both cases we are talking about a phrase that was used by the old conservative thinkers

6 The following example speaks of a situation when the SOC was legally and constitutionally separated from the church. In 1972, the head of state, Josip Broz Tito, mobilized all the institutions in the state to support him in his nomination for the Nobel Prize. Everyone got involved in this, but - and this was a novelty - the Serbian patriarch at the time, named German, refused, explaining that the SOC had done so in 1939 when, in a similar situation, Prince Paul demanded it - both Tito and the patriarch knew where the "boundaries" were between the state and the church in a situation where they were indeed separate. The head of state himself received this without resentment and the wider public received it with affinity.

from de Mestro to his followers in the 19th century. It is actually nothing more than a catchphrase.

In modern Serbian journalism, the phrase "spiritual and national re-▲ birth" or "spiritual renewal" is used. The ideological basis for such a "teaching" is rooted in the ecclesiastical tradition. Although the church is, by definition, conservative because it stands on tradition, in societal relations it certainly does not have to be - and, oftentimes throughout history, it has not been. Things are quite different on an ideological level. The Manichean fanatics, for example, turned Serbian Orthodoxy into a monistic model that was supposed to encompass all the wealth of culture that is essentially pluralistic. This leads to the misuse of religion. In this sense, official documents were conceived, such as, for example, Načertanije za XXI vek/Principles for the 21st Century from February 2004. Somewhat earlier, Vojislav Koštunica offered guidelines with a programmatic tone - in Politika, 5 January 2002 - in which one recognizes quite clearly the conservative image of society and its possible structure within the boundaries of the state. Not a single one of Koštunica's ideas was original - all of them were literally taken from the Ljotić-like (ultranationalist) ideology of Nikolaj Velimirović. Koštunica does not even try to hide that when he speaks of a "middle system among the Serbs". Similar ideas are encountered in the work of the Russian conservative thinker A. Dugin, whose book is actually entitled *The Conserva*tive Revolution. In his thinking, offered as a kind of a missive, Koštunica says that he has been inspired by Velimirović, who is "our guide who is among us and with us, and will ever be with us". Velimirović is clear in terms of the relationship of church and state - "Where church and state are separated, things are in a bad condition". It is not clear, either in Koštunica's or Velimirović's thinking, what that "middle system" is

that meets Serbia's needs and does not exist either in the East or in the West. It is built "in the domestic spirit" on the foundations of the most archaic forms of economic life - the role of shepherd and farmer - and Velimirović intended to proclaim it as something important for all of the Slavic world. "The Russians will accept the Serbian middle system," Velimirović wrote as he developed his "teaching" about theodulia, which Koštunica calls "the middle way".

Tn all of these texts, the SOC is given a special place and a role that it **▲** cannot fulfil as a Christian church.

This is possible to some extent, but with the misuse of religion, which L can easily be seen under the conditions of imposed clericalism. The connections between power structures are created at the "level" of church and state and they are political by background. This is what causes Europe to wonder. The attempt is quite visible, for example, in subordinating the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Education and marrying them to the Ministry of Religion. The SOC, and the patriarch himself, were arbitrators in the adoption of state symbols and in the very form of government - they publicly declared their position and led the campaign for the monarchy under the slogan "without the King there is nothing". If the monarchy as a form of government is absolutized in this way, then a deviation is made from the Biblical teachings about rulers. The church is monarchistically and charismatically structured and that is nothing new, but this certainly does not mean that it must necessarily be monarchistically disposed in a political sense. Throughout history, the church has had more trouble with monarchs than it has in the modern republic. Of special interest are the ideas of the Minister of Religion that have medieval overtones - "It is necessary to protect the insurmountableness of the church canons from civil authorities". Even

in the Middle Ages such things were rare, both in Europe and in Serbia, at least there are no documents similar to that. However, this member of the Serbian government, whose function is necessarily to mediate in the relations between state and church and, in doing so, to protect the interests of the laymen's republic, offers the following "solution" as well, "If the oath that a priest gives to the church comes into conflict with the duties of that priest as a citizen, the church's laws are to have priority." Another document - the *Preobraženjska declaracija/Transfiguration* declaration of 19 August 2004 – is even more precise. The task of the church and the state is a common one and it is the effort "to protect modern Serbian society from secularism and globalism". All institutions of the state become superfluous and the single lasting legitimate institutions are the ecclesiastical-national councils which are given a role that such councils did not have even in the Middle Ages. The councils dealt with ecclesiastical issues and if they addressed the issues of state, it was done so under the strict control of the nobility and royalty. Now, in the 21st century in Serbia, the role of the councils is defined as follows, "These councils are to make decisions about all the central questions related to the survival of the state and of the nation." If other laymen's institutions of state do exist, "they are required to follow the lead of the SOC". Some of the demands seem even stranger, like the one announced by a minister in Koštunica's government, all the while having to admit that such a demand cannot be met.⁷ The demand came from the Eparchy of Žiča, stating the following, "The Eparchy of Žiča proposes that, first, a constitution be passed declaring Orthodoxy as state religion and the SOC as the official church of the state and then the legislation can be written on that basis." This confirms the thesis that such imposed clericalization turns into - however improbable it may seem - the demand

⁷ Pravoslavlie, 15 September 2004, related to the Constitution and the new Law on Freedom of Religious Confession.

for desecularisation. This is no longer the same problem. Clericalization is possible as a defined state in society, but desecularisation means a process that is reversible in every possible way – such a change to the long-ago secularly structured society is simply not possible and hardly anyone would take it seriously. This explains the "halt" of civilization in modern Serbia and certain other countries of the East. In research done at European universities, the topic is given a clear title: Again the East - Between a Break With the Past, Regression and Change in the Direction of Integration - The Case of Serbia, ARSER Montpellier University, February 2005. Here, the "case of Serbia" is explained well. Serbia here and now figures "in the third group of countries" together with Georgia, the Ukraine and perhaps Romania. This halt in the process of integration is the result of the attempt to apply the conservative model, which is impossible in the long run because societal processes are irreversible by nature. Even though the principles for regulating the relations between church and state are known, we currently have the recognizable attempt of the SOC to arbitrate in everything. The separation of church and state that was confirmed by the Constitution has become so relativised in the atmosphere of imposed clericalization that it has reached the shores of a gross error or utopia – desecularization.

* * *

Tn the two centuries since the great revolution in France, a "model" Lambda has been formed that is based on the secular, but in the Orthodox East – this was noticed long ago – "Constantine's Era" is still in place: the Christian church does not have the strength to accept the burden of freedom that the modern society imposes on it and it remains connected to the state by its umbilical cord. J. Habermas explains this model in the

following way, "Our conception of, among other things, human and civil rights, which equally apply to all members of the religious community, can be guaranteed only by the power of the secular state." This principle was applied also in the EU Constitution, thus ensuring the church complete freedom in finding its place in society, far from the pressures of the state. This remarkable "medieval clericalism in the Balkans" is something quite different. With it, there is no step forward towards the processes of modernization. It is easy to note that Habermas did not consider the situation when the state does not exist in the legal sense, when something is being built on the basis of long-dead paradigms of the days of yore and when the return to the past is seen as a "solution". Closed communities experience the moment of modernization as the beginning of their end. "Escaping into the past" can be compared to the situation when a personality in a conflict, traumatized and frustrated, "escapes into illness".



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n ecently, the headscarf debate has become quite a hot subject in Turkey and around Europe. Various forums, symposiums and projects focus on the question of Muslim women's veiling. However, few are aware that there are crucial differences between how the question of the headscarf is treated in Turkey (or in other countries where Muslims are in majority) and how it is treated in European countries which leads us to think about the subject on a different basis. The main difference in the headscarf debate between these two groups of (not only) geographically separated countries is the fact that Muslim communities are immigrants in Europe.

Pirst, I will explain the debate in Turkey. Mostly, Turks are perhaps faced with the Islamic image of Turkey around Europe due to the question of the headscarf ban in the country. Abroad, Turkey always has the image of a Muslim country. For a European, it is usually hard to understand the debate in Turkey. In fact, according to its constitution, Turkey is a secular country; in addition, the majority of people are Muslims. According to recent surveys, approximately 62% of women all around Turkey cover their heads with a scarf (TESEV report on "Religion, Society and Politics in Changing Turkey": 2006, 53). However, the headscarf is forbidden at university campuses and their social facilities (not only for students or staff but also for visitors). The ban is applied at state offices, such as hospitals, courts, schools and other offices, in this case for staff only. Although there are some exceptions to this situation, for example, a few universities admit visitors wearing a scarf, such a strict and systematic headscarf ban has been applied by the state since 1998.

The process prior to 1998 is important to explain the actual conse-L quences of the ban in Turkey. Since the 1960's, the headscarf has been a popular subject of political struggles and has been considered a juridical case. If we ask what happened during the 1960's, the answer gives us a good point. In 1966, it was for the first time that a student at the faculty of theology demanded to wear the headscarf at the university. She faced great opposition and then another girl attending a medical school followed her and demanded the same. Wearing the headscarf, especially outside the home, was a common tendency among women of Muslim but also non-Muslim communities. Wearing a scarf was not a new or marginal practice for women, but it was new at the universities.

Tere, we need to point out the founding pillars of the new Turkish Republic because, in the first stage, the new Republic did not simply remove the image of veiled women, it also ascribed certain roles to them; they could be our grandmothers, house keepers, villagers, housewives, etc. Those women were stigmatised and excluded from the bourgeois public sphere as such. The founding symbol of a woman comrade of the new state was created against that image: a woman without the headscarf. The first political symbol of the Turkish Republic was such a woman.

uring the first years of the new state, the founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk realised certain reforms in order to shape a modern, secular and contemporary society of Turks. The first reforms mostly concerned the lifestyles and customs of society; some basic symbols of the old Ottoman Empire were westernised. The three basics were alphabet,

measurements and scales and, finally, male and female clothing. By changing the symbols and people's lifestyles, a modern and secular project was applied to the country. A new role model for a woman of the new country was shaped in this process. She was dressed absolutely without the headscarf, but not in sexually attractive clothes, rather as a mother, mother of the nation, well-educated, brightened by the light of modern science. Although she was a symbol of modern Turkey, she was expected to hold her traditional role in society. The headscarf is a crucial founding symbol for the role model of a Turkish woman. The Turkish modernization project has a highly symbolic representation, as it is clear in the case of women's attire. When an educated woman demands to wear the headscarf and does not give up, it symbolizes the failure of the project. That is the main reason that the headscarf has become a problem after the 1960's. Before, it was not a problem even though perhaps 80-90% of women in Turkey covered their heads. However, if they demand to have access to higher education and to share in the privileged positions of elites, it becomes a problem.

The Turkish modernization project installed a woman without the L headscarf as the symbol of modern Turkey as opposed to a woman wearing the headscarf. The headscarf always became problematic when any woman decided to struggle to wear it. It became an open question after the 1960's, and a systematic ban was applied by the 1997 "postmodern" coup d'état. There is no concrete statistics on the ban, but more than 1,000 students are currently in Vienna, acquiring their education. Thousands of women were expelled from their jobs and schools because

of their headscarfs. The author of this essay is one of those who was faced with the ban at school. I was in my second year at the university. Many universities applied the ban immediately in 1998, but the university I attended was a semi-private one, so they just hid their students away from state inspections as much as they could. Finally, a journalist took a photo of one of the students wearing the headscarf at our university and wrote in his column that "there are women wearing headscarfs in that university." After this article was published, our university had to apply the ban immediately. I had a semester break, we protested classes, but we knew that nothing would happen since it was the result of the 1997 coup d'état and the army forces were behind the application of the ban.

To regulation, law or code was changed in 1997 to enforce the ban. The only change was in the interpretations of the judges. There is an open article in the constitution reflecting "the freedom of clothing at Turkish universities." After the coup d'état, judges decided that the freedom of clothing did not cover the headscarf. Although according to the same constitution, education, health care and shelter are the basic needs of human beings. Nobody could enforce the ban unless there was an openly written article about it in the constitution. There is no open sentence banning the headscarf. Contrary to this legal insurance, thousands of women were expelled from their jobs after having worked, for 10 or even 20 years, at the same positions in public offices and schools. In addition to them, thousands of students were expelled from their schools. Some of them created various "solutions", such as wearing a wig, a hat, etc., instead of their scarfs. However, some universities and state

offices imposed a ban on wearing a hat or a wig used for "ideological reasons". Few women had a chance to go abroad to complete their education. Several courts decided that the ban was not acceptable according to the constitution, but they were immediately demoted or transferred to a worse position in another city. Since people saw what happened to those judges, cases before the national courts were lost.

Onsequently, in Turkey, there is a deep class struggle behind the debate on the Islamic headscarf. During the fast urbanization period in Turkey in the 1950's, there was an immigration flow from the rural areas to the big cities, and these immigrants demanded that their children also have an opportunity of acquiring higher education. At first, these families were doorkeepers, cleaners, and labourers in the cities. When their children coming from rural areas came to the doors of universities, it created new problems. The elites were aware that the demand for university education was a demand to share in some of their privileges. That kind of a class shift would be acceptable when they imitated the lifestyles and religious beliefs of the ideal citizens of Turkey. In this sense, according to the Republican elite, the headscarf is a stigma of backwardness and it violates the horizon of the Turkish modernization project. We cannot see any prints of a personal/religious choice to wear the headscarf or not.

Turkish people have experienced the way of Republican reforms for ■ 85 years; it is clear that Turkey's mode of secularism is quite different to European examples. According to a secular, laic democracy, the state must not be dominated by any single religious or philosophical

ideology. However, it ensures protection to all kinds of ideologies in society; it ensures its citizens the freedom of religion and belief. When we examine the Turkish mode of laicism, we see that there exists a ministry of religion that represents Sunni Islam. There are some schools training Imams for mosques, but the one school providing education for priests is closed; there is another big debate on this. A Muslim woman wearing the headscarf cannot be a state officer; she cannot represent the state as she is, but a non-Muslim cannot represent the state and cannot be a state officer either. There is a form of the "ideal citizen" who is Turkish. secular, Sunni Muslim. The distance between a citizen and that ideal form explains how acceptable we could be to the state and how we can become 'good' citizens. The headscarf debate is not totally separated from the given picture.

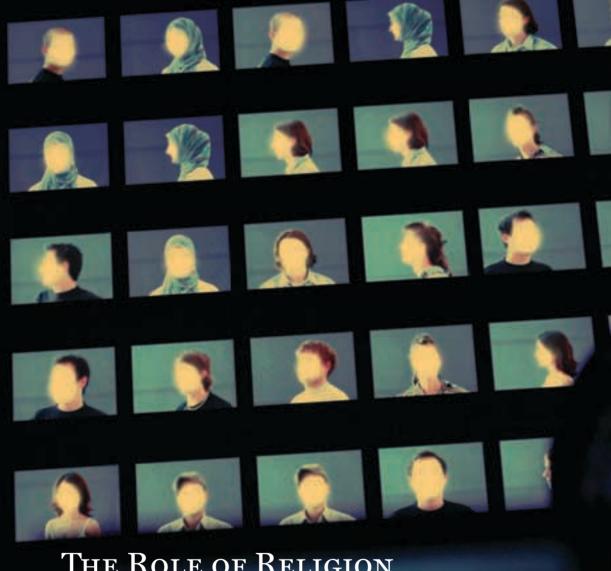
owever, European countries need to evaluate the question of Muslim women's attire in view of them being immigrants. A Muslim woman in Europe is marked not only by her religious identity but by her immigrant identity as well. Being an immigrant in a European country already includes various other problems. It breeds prejudices against the "other." A woman behind a veil is a blurred agent to a European. In addition to this, it consists of historical conflicts, recent applications, colonial fantasies and modern discourses. As an example of these, some European countries (Germany, France) try to limit the usage of the headscarf by claming that those women are under pressure. Instead of producing solutions to remove the pressures on women, the authorities come to the conclusion of limiting or banning the headscarf. The European story of the headscarf debate is not the subject of this text and needs a detailed examination. Brief facts on the issue are given to explain the different basis of the debate in Turkey and around Europe.

▲ lthough we cannot simply ignore the class struggle behind the headscarf debate in Europe (especially in France), the headscarf's immigrant notion is crucial to understanding the prejudices and the struggle around Europe. Contrary to the European prejudices regarding the headscarf, in Turkey, we could mostly talk about the complexes related to it: the complexes coming from the founding ideology and the state modernization project. The debate is much more connected to the class struggle and the complexes developed by the founders of the state.

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THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN IDENTITY FORMATION AND SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE BALKANS

Zorica Kuburić

hen speaking about the state of Serbia which has still to define its borders, which has changed its name, territory, population and its structure in the sense of national and religious belonging, due to conflicts and wars, I notice that religious identity has became a very important matter. The memory of historical conflicts between religious traditions in the Balkans revives negative and frightening images of other religions. In the context of Balkan nations and religions, this religious other bears the name of one of the monotheistic religions, which, when in the position of majority on a small piece of territory, want to literally or symbolically preserve or extend this territory in the constant, age-long tensions. On the other hand, in the role of the religious other bowing to the same God, foreign religions are found which come with missionary potential. In the effort to preserve one's own religion, for fear of believers being tricked and led astray, various methods are often used which sustain the negative image and create fear. The word "sect" has been frequently misused, particularly in the media. It has been linked to crime and social and individual pathological behaviour, thus leading to violence against members of various religious communities.

The mediators of knowledge about one's own religion and other reli-▲ gions are an important factor in forming a stand on other churches and religious communities. However, contemporary ways of life have enabled communication at an unforeseeable scale and the possibility of every individual forming their own understanding of others, directly. Thus, presenting wrong and tendentious testimonies of others has become dangerous also for the presenter. In the past, it was less important what religious representatives thought of each other because they rarely had an opportunity to communicate, unlike today, where they meet both

in the real and the virtual world. Encounters with other religions take place also by way of knowing the holy scriptures of every religion. However, empirical research is crucial for scientists in the field or religion, for it provides the possibility to objectively view the attitudes concerning religion. In this study, we wish to present part of the results of an empirical research which shows that religious belonging is an important factor in the homogenisation and, at the same time, the differentiation of society. Tumerous are the changes that have happened in our experiential reality. The courses of change in certain fields are debatable, but what is obvious and recognizable almost at first glance are the changes in the area of religious issues. Religion is no longer marginal, it has become one of the central fields of interest. Furthermore, it was the instigator and the bearer of the educational system reform. From the banished religious education to the obligatory or optional courses in schools under the name of religious teaching, which - with alternative courses - becomes the ideological support of a transitional society. One of the dilemmas that have appeared is how to treat the pluralism of religious ideas and how to balance all the differences that produce relativism in the creation of identity (Kuburić, Moe, 2006). The question is whether to support dialogue and tolerance or leave everything as it is, on the path

bserving reality in social sciences is not an easy task. However, it is best realised by conducting empirical research on a big enough sample and I think that the contribution of the science of religion to the system of beliefs and ideas is that it creates the mirror effect. The image provided by empirical research enables scientists an insight, helping

of decreasing religious tolerance and mutual trust and closing into religiously homogenous societies. (Kuburić; 2002; 2004; 2006; 2007).

them form an objective picture of a social phenomenon while, on the other hand, it gives the believers and religious leaders an opportunity to see their own path compared to the set religious norms, which come from the believers' obligations, consisting of the obligations towards God, towards oneself, towards others and the community in general and towards created nature.

Tf the believers are to fulfil their obligations and test their own moral-Lity, it is necessary that they be free. Is it better to fulfil one's religious duties in a religiously homogenous environment without any alternatives or in a heterogeneous environment in which believers rely more on themselves than on the community enabling religious behaviour? Is this possible also in an environment where the majority is different? This dilemma has taken hold of the irrational being of the Balkan nations and has started the process of homogenisation in the domain of religious belonging. Religious differences have been drawn into political agitation and this has been manifested through the changes in the educational system, which is fundamental for the future of social development.

PLURALISM OF BELIEF, RELIGIOUS TRUTH AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Pluralism of belief and religious practice in the Balkans represents an interesting field of research. The process of returning to religiosity is not developing at the same rate on the whole territory nor in all aspects of religious practice. The first to return was the need for a confessional declaration and then for formally accepting the customs. When

considering religious practice, we can notice that it is not very frequently present. From the research results, we can conclude that declarative religious practice is present and that religious belonging is more part of the national identity than personal religiousness. The largest research - conducted in 2007 - from which I draw my conclusions, is the research conducted by Gallup Europe. The question that I especially want to draw attention to in this study is the question of the image of God that the Balkan nations have. The research includes eight countries and regions: Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The research was conducted in 228 towns and villages and the number of subjects was 9,464, of which 4,379 were male (46. 3%) and 5,085 were female (53. 7%). This research consists of 875 variables. From this abundance of material, I will show just a few parts that are significant and indicate the differences that exist among those questioned.

The image of God who loves and punishes

The most interesting question connected to the process of identity I formation is: What is God like? The notions of God are presented on a scale; at one end of this scale, there is a God filled with love, a God who loves and is helpful, at the other end of the continuum, is a God who punishes, who is strict and angry. More than any other aspect of religion, the image of God influences the understanding of religious messages, the method of salvation and the formation of one's lifestyle. The image of God is formed in the process of a child's upbringing. The nature of one's early experience with one's parents in the formation of the image of God

and the understanding of Power is a crucial factor in religious experience even in adulthood (Kuburić, 1998). Regardless of what the believers are like (I refer here to the quality of religion) and regardless of their confession, the essence of the relationship with God and the typical upbringing of children in this region are obvious and noticeable.

When we cross-reference the variables of gender and the attitude towards God, we get the following results:

STATEMENTS CLOSE TO MY BELIEFS ABOUT GOD	Male	FEMALE	ALL
1. I do not doubt the existence of God	2,511	3,273	5,784
2. I believe in God but with some doubt	473	557	1,030
3. Sometimes I believe in God	264	272	536
4. I believe in some higher force	280	321	601
5. I do not believe in anything outside the physical world	179	138	317
6. I have no opinion on the subject	353	261	614
7. I do not know	193	179	372
8. No answer	126	84	210
Total	4,379	5,085	9,464

Men and women and their confidence in faith are shown in the table. This is certainly not a matter of a drastic difference but of the dominant style that prevails. However, the regularity is stable and typical, indicating that the models are deeply rooted. The belief in God is typical of a woman. Her doubts are smaller. Should we look for cause and effect relations or just the connections? Maybe the secret lies in the fact that men understand God more as the one who punishes. The characteristics of God as seen by women are described more in terms such as: God is full of love, God forgives, acts as a parent. The being in whom one can have absolute confidence, not due to power, strictness and the possibility of punishment, but because of love and the capability of protection and salvation.

Tnterestingly, the notion of God closest to the understanding of God Las love is most present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, followed by Montenegro, Croatia and Macedonia, Serbia being at the bottom of the list of those who see God as good. In Kosovo, Albania and Bulgaria there dominates the idea of a strict, punishing and angry God. This is why I believe that the degree of religiosity in these countries is different and lower in quantity and quality.

Tbelieve that the differences between Bosnian and Albanian Muslims **⊥** in the interpretation of God come from the different contexts of life and different influences and that the dominant Christian origin and Christian environment of the Bosnian Muslims contributed to the differences at the cultural level. A God who loves attracts more people to the place of worship. Those who see God as loving believe in God more. Those who see God as strict and punishing do not believe in Him.

One's own religion as the only truth

y cross-referencing religious belonging and the certainty as to the Dauthenticity of one's own religion, we got the results which indicate that, as a religion, Islam has the most believers who believe that it is the only authentic religion, with 41% of those questioned strongly believing that it is so. 28% believe that Islam is an authentic religion among other

authentic religions, such as the religions of the Book, and only 10% did not answer or were not sure how to answer this question. Catholicism is in the second place according to the strength of confidence in the authenticity and power, with 30% of those questioned exhibiting absolute trust. 24% of Orthodox and 23% of Protestant believers are convinced in the authenticity of their religion. However, among Protestants, 44% believe that their religion is just one of the ways to think about the possible truth.

	ABSOLUTE AUTHENTICITY	AUTHENTIC BUT NOT THE ONLY ONE	One among many	NOT SURE AND DOES NOT HAVE AN ANSWER
CATHOLICS	30%	33%	24%	13%
Orthodox	24%	30%	24%	22%
PROTESTANTS	23%	22%	44%	11%
Muslims	41%	28%	11%	20%

How do religious minorities live in the Balkans?

Tiewing the Balkans as a specific region, it is noticeable that religious belonging varies from country to country and that it is also manifested in religious minorities and their position in society. It is always down to the majority religion and its contribution to ensure that the mutual relationships between religious communities develop in a tolerant way.

ccording to the results of this research, we find that, in contrast to The surrounding countries, Serbia is recognized as the best place for

religious minorities to live in. In a comparative analysis, almost 80% of the subjects said that Serbia is a good place for religious minorities. There are those who believe that it is not a good place for religious minorities, but only 14%. Looking at the results of other surrounding countries and regions, we can notice that Bosnia and Herzegovina is recognized as a good place by 53% of those questioned. However, 32% of those questioned consider it not to be a good place for religious minorities and that is the greatest percent to appear, indicating lower religious tolerance. There is no difference by age or gender, indicating that those questioned have very similar opinions. There are differences in religious tolerance being more present in cities than rural areas.

Young people and the feeling of security with other religions

hat a region should be like for young people to feel safe is the question we tried to answer by the following statement in the questionnaire: "One can feel safe only living in an environment where the majority shares their religion."

Taghat is of great interest to us is the relationship between this assertion and other variables in the questionnaire because it could help us to come to an understanding of the relations towards our own social living space and the relation towards other and different beliefs. I used correlation as a statistical method and the results showed that there is a statistically significant correlation between this statement and a large number of other variables.

Dy calculating the correlations between the answer to this question and other variables, we get statistically significant correlations with

¹ The goal of the research conducted on the population of high school students, in April 2001, was to determine the type of religiosity that is predominant among the population of adolescents, their relations towards others and the connections between different variables of religiosity with the variables of the system of values. The subjects in this research came from the following cities: Novi Sad, Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica, Zemun, Beograd and Kruševac. Students from the first to the fourth grade of high school were questioned.

the following variables: nationally homogenous - mixed families; orientation towards money; orientation towards humanness; orientation towards religious belonging and faith in God; place of growing up (city – village); the importance of national and religious belonging; the degree of religiousness and the feeling of being accepted by others who do not share the same beliefs.

The correlation between the variables of gender and the tenden-L cies towards religiously homogenous environment shows that a religiously homogenous environment is more important to men than to women (the correlation 0.316; statistically significant at the level of 0.01). Here, it is important to notice that men are less accepted as believers within their environment if they are of a different confession than women in the same position (-0.253). When analysing the variable of gender against other variables, it is important to mention that there are positive correlations with the variable of the trust in God (0.212), which indicates that, in the value system of men, it is more important to gain trust in God than it is in the value system of women and that this is connected to the importance of religion in the formation of identity.

▲ ccording to the results of this research, there is a positive connec-Ltion between the desire to live in a religiously homogenous environment, which comes from the statement that a person can feel secure if living surrounded mainly by those of the same confession, and the orientation towards religion. However, those who consider it very important in life to acquire the trust in God agree more with this statement (0.292). The other positive correlation is the one with the variable of identity. Those who consider belonging to their own people very important agree more with the statement about the significance of a religiously

homogenous environment (correlation 0.218). Those who consider their confession as a very important part of their identity agree more with this statement (0.389). The believers that accept everything their religion teaches tend to believe that a person is safer living in a homogenous environment (0.335).

conclusion which can be drawn from these results is that adoles-Cents from religiously and nationally homogenous families tend to agree more with the statement that a person is safer in a homogenous environment. These adolescents also want to develop a greater trust in God, which means that they will also tend to live in a religiously homogenous family and social environment. The opposite of this orientation towards people, nation and religion is, in this case, represented by those oriented towards money. They disagree with the statement about a homogenous environment (-0.185). Adolescents whose goal in life is to show love towards other people also disagree with the statement about homogenous society (-0.151). Love as a universal value is not limited to the members of one's own confession and people of one's own nation. According to this, the orientation towards universal categories, such as the quality (essentials) of life, material security and humaneness towards all people and the need for actively demonstrating love, is connected to the readiness to live with others.

The second correlation between the need for a religiously homog-L enous environment and the type of settlement an individual was brought up in shows that those brought up in rural settlements are more inclined to a homogenous environment and are more afraid of a religiously mixed environment (-0.260). Those who are of a different confession than the majority in the community they live in and have problems due to not being accepted also disagree with the statement about the safety of a homogenous environment. Those believers who have experienced being accepted by others who have different beliefs feel safe in mixed environments and consequently disagree with this statement that a person can feel safe only living in an environment where the majority is of their own confession.

Cuccess in school is a variable that is also connected to the statement of a more secure religiously homogenous environment (0.161, significant at the level of 0.05). The results show that more successful students are more open to differences, that is, the students with lower grades tend to be confined to the same confession.

Those who have friends of other confessions agree less with the state-▲ ment that a person can only feel safe living in an environment consisting mostly of the followers of one's own religion (-0.265). Naturally, those who have friends of other confessions and those who live in religiously mixed families have experience of living with others, either as a matter of personal choice or the given circumstances, which is a factor that influences the attitudes of an open relationship towards others and towards a religiously heterogeneous environment. This can be seen as an advantage that has a vast possibility for personal growth or it can be seen as a threat and danger for the preservation of personal identity and even territory.

we to the fact that the majority of students in the sample are of the Orthodox confession, as is the population itself, the question that could be asked is: Does the Orthodox Church and its relationship towards others affect their decisions or is it a matter of major and minor confessions? It is important to conduct comparative research in other

countries about the relations between majorities and minorities on the subject of religious belonging.

Religious pluralism and social distancing

The question of social distancing in empirical research is of a hypothetical nature; therefore, the discussion on this subject needs to be carried out on two levels. The first level concerns the question of accepting various groups in various roles and the stands of those questioned on whether they would accept a significant other, a member of some other religion, to be their spouse, the president of a country or a teacher, boss, neighbour. However, this same question can be analysed by examining general data - how many of those questioned have already accepted those of other religions and joined them in matrimony or friendship.²

3% of non-believers in our sample have stated that it does not mat-Oter to them which confession their marriage partner belongs to. Regardless of the confession, the number of those to whom this was irrelevant was the same. Therefore, we are talking here about an overwhelming similar attitude.

▲ nother interesting thing about relationships is the difference be-Atween the attitude of Orthodoxs and Catholics towards atheists. Regarding the question on marriage, 31% of Orthodox members and 26% of Catholics are ready to marry an atheist. The fact that atheism was closer to Orthodox believers is known from history, but here it is confirmed that it is also a part of personal life (choice) and not only a political trend. The attitude of Orthodoxs and Catholics towards atheism can also be seen in the question inquiring about the preferred confession

² The research on religious distancing among adolescents in Serbia was conducted by the CEIR - Center for EmpiricalResearch of Religion (Joksimovic Kuburic, 2002). The research of the attitudes of the citizens of Vojvodina was conducted on a sample of over 1,600 people. The Department of Sociology at the Philosophical Faculty in Novi Sad conducted the research in 2003; 2005; 2006, which was already elaborated in other studies (Kuburic Stojkovic, 2004; Kuburic, 2006). From the abundance of material, I have taken the results which have not been published yet and which show how close and how far apart we are from each other.

of the president of the country. The answer shows that 27% of Orthodox believers do not want an atheist for the president of the country whereas 44% of Catholics are of the same opinion. Once more, it is confirmed that Catholics distance themselves from atheists more than Orthodox believers.

There are many questions that suggest and open new possibilities ▲ for an analysis and understanding of the relations of acceptance and rejection in this research. Based on the principles of taking samples, in view of the impossibility of conducting research on the entire population, I will, as a final comment, mention the relationship towards Muslims and the national belonging of those who have declared to have neighbourly relations with them. Slight variations are present and thus Muslims in Vojvodina are accepted as neighbours by 38% of Croatians; 30% of Hungarians; 25% of Serbs; 25% of Montenegrins and 25% of Yugoslavs. On the other hand, they are rejected by 34% of Montenegrins; 23% of Serbs; 11% of Yugoslavs; 9% of Croatians and 6% of Hungarians. Others are indifferent. Due to the small number of those questioned in the sample, other nationalities in Vojvodina did not enter the data processing.

The question that remains unresolved by this research is: is the rela-L tionship between the majority religious community and the minority ones actually the essence of the distancing between them or is it a matter of the type of religiosity which, more or less, supports an exclusivist relation in which, irrespective of the context, they are always distanced from others. The answer to this question could be found by a comparative study. My assumption is that the Orthodoxs, in the countries in which they represent the minority part of the population, distance themselves less from other believers. The message of the dominant religion is the message of monopoly in the environment where it wants to feel at home. However, the question posed here is one of hospitality.

Conclusion

The role of religion in the identity formation of an individual as well as a nation is undoubtedly very significant. Often, the knowledge of one's own religion is part of the socialization process which happens within the family system. The role of the church and the state contributes to the formation of national identity as well as one's personality. It forms the knowledge of oneself and one's self-concept which relates to others at an individual and a group level.

The essence of religious influence is in the notion of God that every ■ religion, within its theological discourse, forms in the consciousness of its believers. In this research, we have come to realize that forming a positive image of God, a God who loves and forgives, who is merciful and good, makes religion attractive. The opposite, intimidating with God, forming a notion of God who punishes and judges, opens the door to atheism and empties the faith itself, which can lead to disbelief.

The image of other religions has been formed through the centuries **L** and is passed from generation to generation in two of its aspects - the actual events on the territory where the individual members of different religious communities live and the historical concept which is always deciphered in the context of a certain time and place. The changes in the territory of the Balkans have left a taste of constant conflicts, migrations, divisions and mutual distancing and suspicions. Besides this,

one can notice a kind of dual relation, theoretical and practical, which more or less, depending on the tradition of the nation, is of an open or concealed nature. The conflicts between the domestic population and the invading mighty conquerors have always had a symbolic recognition in religious belonging so that the talk of other religions cannot be entirely separated from the ethnical and national characteristics. The problem of religious and national minorities is also an area where power and its nature can be recognized.

The positive shift in mutual relationships could be achieved by dem-▲ onstrating a readiness to award rights to minorities which are demanded for one's own minority in the neighbouring countries. The same problem emerges in the relationship of different religions with the request for reciprocity. However, due to the difference in the value systems on which various religions are founded and the different levels of modernization they are undergoing, they, partly due to national and political differences and partly based on decisions of value, influence the dynamics of the relationships in the process of acceptance and rejection.

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Have you attended a place of worship or religious service within the last seven days?

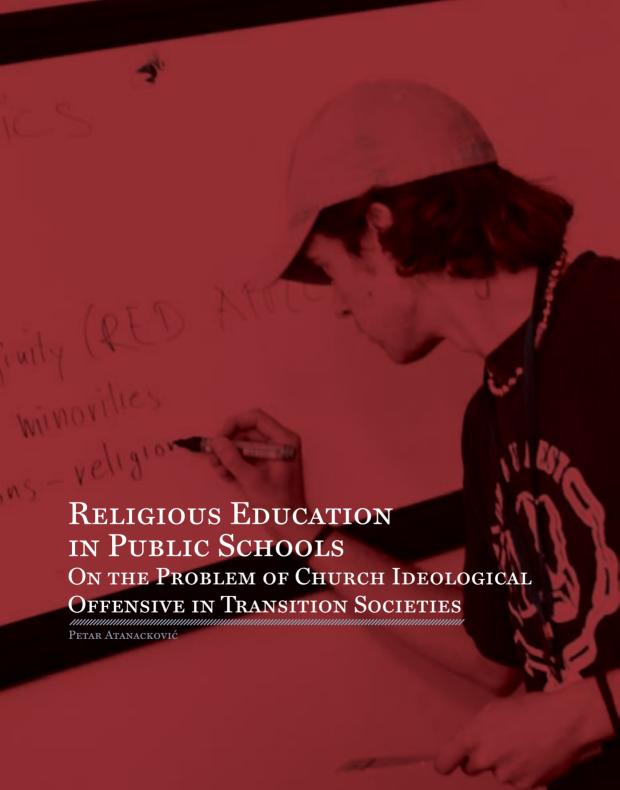
	Yes	No	DK	REFUSED	TOTAL
SERBIA	566	974	8	8	1556
Montenegro	221	593	12	8	834
MACEDONIA	568	464	6	4	1042
Albania	235	726	11	9	981
Kosovo	350	674	17	5	1046
BIH	809	1164	18	11	2002
Bulgaria	156	824	19	4	1003
CROATIA	347	647	1	5	1000
Total	3252	6066	92	54	9464

	EVERY DAY, AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK	A FEW TIMES A MONTH, ONCE A MONTH	On religious Holidays only	LESS OFTEN, NEVER
Bulgaria	7	12	-40	-42
Montenegro	13	14	-38	-35
Albania	11	16	-32	-41
SERBIA	13	16	-39	-32
BIH - Sarajevo, Cazin, North Fed.	21	17	-26	-35
Kosovo	20	20	-24	-36
BIH - WEST RS, EAST RS	14	28	-34	-24
MACEDONIA	24	21	-34	-21
CROATIA	21	29	-24	-26
BIH - HERZE- GOVINA	40	20	-12	-28



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The ideas of civil society and political state represent two of the most **L** important ideological products of the *Age of Revolution* – the entire consequent, post-revolutionary history is dedicated to their implementation, but it is also marked with their frequent negation and with some attempts at overcoming them. The realisation of those ideas occurs through the process of political emancipation, through which the state becomes totally separated from all the particular interests of society because society is a chaos of arbitrariness, with many opposing interests – and constitutes itself as something universal above them. In other words, the influence of any of the private interests (those particular interests in the area of civil society) on the functions of a political state automatically leads to the degradation of the state since the possibility of this is a very clear manifestation of the unfinished character of the state, which therefore loses its political meaning.

The relationship between state and religion is the same as the rela-L tionship between state (as a public sphere) and any other particularity of civil society (as an area of private interests): with the transfer of religion from the public to the private area, an individual becomes politically emancipated from religion; this transfer is possible only if the state becomes politically emancipated and that can happen only if the state does not accept any religion as a state principle. So "the political emancipation of the Jew, the Christian, or the religious man generally" represent "the emancipation of the state from Judaism, from Christianity, from religion in general" and the state can emancipate itself from religion only "by emancipating itself from state religion, that is, by recognizing no religion and recognizing itself simply as the state". With the transfer of religion from the public (state) area to the private area (civil society), political emancipation is finished – so, it has to be clear that,

1 Karl Marx, Zur Judenfrage, in: K. Marx, F. Engels, Early works, Zagreb, 1985, p. 61.

through this process, religion is not abolished as a phenomenon; in the first place, because there is no such ambition in this process².

Then we take into consideration all that we have said, we can point out that an important moment of political emancipation is the separation between public (state) schools and religious education. So, the presence of religious education in the public school system is precisely the manifestation of an unfinished political emancipation. There are some societies in which political emancipation is not yet finished, but that is because those societies are basically progressive, i.e., they are trying to follow the paths of History. There is a clear awareness of these defects – so, sooner or later, there will be practical action to finish the unfinished emancipation. On the other hand, in some other "not so progressive" (basically, not progressive at all, or even contra-progressive) societies with the same problem, there is no awareness of this problem - even more, there is a clear presence of a certain fake self-satisfaction with the situation in society, even self-conceit about it. In this case, it is very obviously correct that "by the little which now satisfies the Spirit, we can measure the extent of its loss"3.

▲ t this point, we have to analyse two illustrative examples from history: on the one side, there is a society with lots of deficiencies but with an awareness about this, a society progressing step by step to overcome them. On the other side, there is a society in which we can see an essential epochal civilization clash with world history⁴ in everyday practice. We are talking about two societies, the French and the Serbian, which are formally part of the same civilization, but, between them, there are differences as big and deep as an abyss.

² Ibid., p. 65-66.

³ G. W. F. Hegel, Phänomenologie des Geistes, Zagreb, 1987, p. 8.

⁴ Miloš Perović, The Critique of Clericalisation of Serbia: analysis of Church/Modern State relationship, The Critique of Clericalisation of Serbia, Novi Sad, 2007, p. 74.

The civil society and the political state in France had been built over ▲ a period of more than 100 years because most of the results of the 1789-1794 Revolution had been cancelled only a decade after it. The relationship between church and state was settled by the agreement with the Papal States in 1801: by this arrangement, Catholicism was not defined as the state religion, but as the "religion of the majority of the population in France" and this definition was followed by the restitution of expropriated Church property. At the same time, Catholic priests were again included in the public school system. So, Napoleon's government, although basically not interested in religious matters, set the foundations for the strengthening of the Church and its influence on French society⁵. The 1801 agreement was very often criticized during the next 75 years. During the last quarter of the 19th century, the government brought certain measures against this contract: in 1882, religious education was forbidden on school grounds, in 1884, the parliament made divorce legal, in 1886, religious education was forbidden in all public schools⁶. This process culminated in 1905 when the state abolished the 1801 agreement - with this act, the separation between state and church was completed7.

The 100th anniversary of the completion of this process was marked with the renewal of this problem in a similar controversy. It was the conflict based on the presence of various religious symbols and pieces of clothing with religious meanings in public schools in France. There was a lot of pressure on the French state, but the state managed to solve this problem in the only possible way - forbidding all religious symbols in public schools. It did not succumb to various blackmails and accusations connected to the so-called violation of civil rights - it simply demonstrated its seriousness and its political character. In this case, the French

⁵ Franklin L. Ford, Europe 1780-1830, Belgrade, 2005, p. 204-207. 6 J. M. Roberts, Europe 1880-1945, Belgrade, 2002, p. 171. 7 Ibid., p. 178.

state pointed to an important principle: common (general) interests are always above particular interests, so religion can only be a personal question of the citizens and therefore there is no place for religion in public schools.

n the other hand, the situation in Serbia is completely different: civilization lag is obvious everywhere, also in the (un)realisation of the ideas of the French Revolution. The entire 19th century and the major part of the 20th century was spent mostly on efforts to solve certain insignificant problems, from dynastical conflicts to pointless political struggles; at the same time, all the attempts at a radical solution of the civilization lag problem was condemned or disrupted or openly sabotaged. The consequence of this historical experience was the creation of a very specific (and very primitive) political culture, in which mediocrity represents the ideal and wasting time plays the role of a favourite pastime, equally for the political elite and for the "masses" (because we cannot really speak about citizens at that stage).

↑ fter 1945, there were attempts to overcome this civilization gap, Awith state initiative to "speed up" historical progress. In "socialist" Yugoslavia, the government organized an industrial revolution, political emancipation, etc., with which it was basically establishing civil society, although the political system was a clear negation of civil society (because a socialist, i.e., communist, society can exist only by overcoming the political state and civil society). But it was only one of the many paradoxes in Yugoslav society of that time. Also, "socialist" Yugoslavia was a secular society: church and state were separated in every way and the status of all religious communities was regulated in the same way, i.e., without any regard to history and tradition of these religious communities or the number of their believers. So, at that time, there was no religious education in public schools. But, the situation started to change sometime at the end of the 1980's - the change of climate was connected to the weakening of the dominant ideology and the crisis of Yugoslav society.

The collapse of a bipolar ideological system, which was dominant in **1** the world until the end of the eighties, resulted in the appearance of an ideological gap in Eastern Europe – the filling of this gap was just a matter of time and there was a large number of pretenders to this job. The substitutes for the communist ideology were chosen from the entire ideological spectrum, from copy-pasting western liberal models to different reactionary ideologies, based on nationalism, chauvinism and racism. In that sense, the rise in the influence of religious organisations in some societies (the Catholic Church in Poland and Croatia, all three major religious organizations in Bosnia, etc.) was very obvious, so we can conclude that religious organisations were the most successful in filling the ideological gap, which appeared after 1989.

↑ fter 1989 in Serbia, communist ideology gave way to a new ideol-Aogy, which was a real postmodern mixture, but based mostly on national mythology and local-imperialist practice, also containing some elements of nazi ideology (for example, the thesis about the so-called national living space, i.e., the Lebensraum). The collapse of Serbia's war policy during the 1990's led to the repetition of an identity crisis, similar to the one from the end of the 1980's. As in the case of Polish society ten years earlier, on the verge of the new millennium, the ideological gap in Serbia was filled by the dominant religious organisation, the Serbian Orthodox Church. But, there was one difference: the Catholic Church in Poland was satisfied with a minimal conservative correction of system reforms (with the introduction of religious education into public schools, etc.) and it maintains its influence on society without directly

interfering in political life. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church in Serbia appears before the society with a maximal programme, clearly underlining its wish to transform Serbian society into some kind of an Orthodox Iran and to take the leading political role in it. It is possible that the Catholic Church in Poland had similar ambitions, but the policy of the Polish state definitely made these ambitions impossible; the policy of the Serbian state, on the other hand, is in harmony with Church ambitions. With this kind of practice, with accepting external principles, the Serbian state has clearly shown its unfinished nature and it is clearly no longer what it thinks it is – and that is a political state.

From the late 1980's on, we can follow the phenomenon of the rise in the influence of the Church on Serbian society and even more on the state when the Church assumed an important role in the renewal of nationalism and imperialism as the dominant moods in society. By manipulation with national and religious feelings of the largest nation in former Yugoslavia, the Serbian Orthodox Church participated in an attempt to implement the Serbian nationalistic programme; the consequences of this attempt are visible on almost the entire area of former Yugoslavia and will not be eliminated in the next few decades. But, during the 1990's, there was no intimate collaboration between church and state - the church was very interested in this collaboration because it wanted to take the role of a state ideological apparatus, i.e., it wanted to become something like the Central Committee of the Communist Party. However, the opportunity for a closer collaboration between state and church came about after the change of government (the so-called revolution) in 2000.

The new government in Serbia tried to strengthen the process of de-■ secularisation, which started during the 1990's, and institutionalised

it because it desperately needed replacements for the exhausted ideological solutions. The point was to find a new factor of social integration in Serbia⁸, which would be the new basis for a Serbian national identity and for the integration of all Serbs - in Serbia and in other countries. Because of that, the opinions of the Orthodox Church are present in the public in various ways, especially because Church officials want to impose themselves as a kind of arbitrators in every important social issue. However, ambition has no limitations, and they do not stop only with the influence on society – their real ambition is to influence state politics and the political elite does not oppose this ambition, even more - it is willing to collaborate. Because of this relationship, typical government practice includes the organization of meetings between state and church officials whenever there is opportunity for this. On the other hand, there are some other examples of church influencing the state: the presence of church/theological vocabulary in state laws, introduction of new taxes benefiting only the Orthodox Church and, finally, there is also church influence on foreign policy (an example of this can be the appearance of the so-called state & church foreign delegations, the transformation of the problem of inter-church relations in Macedonia into inter-state problem or the consultations between church and state officials about political strategy in the case of Kosovo and so on).

ne of the first political moves of the Serbian state after 2000 was the "big comeback" of religious education to public schools, which was followed by the decision to include the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in the University of Belgrade. At first, religious education and its opponent (civic education) were present in the first year of primary school and the first year of high school, but a year later they became part of all the 11 of the 12 grades in the school system. The decision to introduce re-

8 Zoran Petakov, The Diary of Church Insults 2000-2006. From De-Secularization to Clericalization, The Critique of Clericalisation of Serbia, p. 77.

ligious education into public schools was announced on 4 August 2001, without any analysis or public discussion about it. So, in this act, we can search for political motives since, with it, the government of Zoran Djindjić wanted to minimize the dissatisfaction of the Church regarding the extradition of Serbia's former president Slobodan Milosević to the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague 9. And so one politically motivated Machiavellian move (from a formally liberal, pro-European government) symbolized the beginning of an institutionalisation of the de-secularisation process in Serbian society.

H

There have been more than six years since the introduction of reli-■ gious education into public schools in Serbia, so some of the results can be seen, although, for some time, there was no serious research on this topic. It was not because of the lack of will on the part of researchers, it was mostly because of the resistance of the state and the church, which made systematic researches impossible. Namely, the state denied the possibility for potential researches to get acquainted with the school programme of religious education, pedagogical methods for its realisation and even information about the percentage of pupils who choose to attend religious education 10. The only well-known fact is that religious education in public schools is more like Orthodox, Catholic or Islamic theology than religious culture or history of religion. But, from time to time, the public could find out more, with the incidents connected to religious education, mostly in connection with "alternative educational methods" used by non-qualified religious teachers. The case of an Orthodox priest from the eastern part of Serbia who "educated" his pupils

⁹ Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁰ In the meantime, certain information became public: according to two separate researches by B. Bjelajac and S. Gredelj, 36.2 or 39 per cent of pupils attend religious education. But those two are independent researches - on the other hand, after six years, the Ministry of Education still does not want to publish official information about the percentage and about the results (effects) of the implementation of religious education in public schools - in: Bojan Aleksov, Religious Education in Serbia, Religion, State & Society, Vol. 32, No. 4, December 2004, p. 352.

about the Holy Trinity with the help of a fire-poker is only the last case in the series¹¹.

The first question connected to any research of religious education in ■ public schools concerns the practical influence of religious education on pupils. Does religious education have a positive influence on pupils, do they become more intellectually and spiritually developed and in what way does confessional religious education influence the social integration of youth in the nationally and religiously mixed areas? Although the church presumes to have a monopoly on the spiritual development of humans, the activities of the church - we can reduce them to frightening confused believers with eternal damnation of hell - cannot be recognized as a positive influence on human spiritual life. So, a positive influence of religious education on pupils is completely impossible because it does not influence the intellectual or the so-called moral development of youth - even the opposite, the influence of religious education can be described as really negative since the basics of religious education are contrary to a critical way of thinking as the basis of an educational system, i.e., because through religious education pupils learn how to believe and not how to think. With the affirmation of a dogmatic way of thinking through religious education, mostly through the development of a tendency for non-critical following, the church plays a crucial role in the process of developing a submissive character of pupils. With the development of a servant mentality, the result will be a production of individuals incapable of living in a democratic society because this type represents a mass-psychology needed for the foundation of dictatorships and fascist regimes¹².

ast but not least, the question is about the influence of religious education on the decreasing of religious and ethnical distance between

11 Žaračem do veronauke (With poker to religious education), "Dnevnik", Novi Sad, 21 March 2007, p. 8. 12 Wilhelm Reich, Die sexuelle Revolution. Zur charakterlichen Selbststeuerung des Menschen, Zagreb, 1985, p. 110.

the inhabitants of multi-religious and multi-ethnical areas, as in the region of Vojvodina. This is especially important if we consider the history of Southeast Europe in the last 20 years. A research conducted by the Centre for Development of Civil Society from Zrenjanin gives us a lot of material about this topic. Research results clearly state that the introduction of religious education into public schools has become a new source of problems for religious minorities in religiously mixed areas because they find it inconvenient to apply for official religious education in schools (such is the case of the Islamic community in Vojvodina). The main reason for this is their wish to avoid making this issue a matter of public debate because they have had a lot of bad experience in the 1990's, during the Balkan wars. Something similar can be seen in the case of Slovakian Evangelic Church in areas where Slovaks represent a minor part of the population: a certain percent of Slovakian children have avoided the decision to sign up for religious education because they do not want to declare themselves publicly¹³. A special case are the members of small religious communities that do not belong to the so-called "seven traditional churches" (there are around 40 such communities in Vojvodina) and are therefore not allowed to have their own religious education in public schools. So, they are openly discriminated against by state law. Because of this, the children of small religious communities choose to attend civic education and they, therefore, arouse great mistrust among other children¹⁴. Put differently, in view of the plan of developing tolerance and other values of civil society, six years after the introduction of religious education into public schools, the results are simply very negative.

The quick and partially confusing introduction of religious education **** into public schools as well as the political background of that pro-

13 Influence of religious education on development of democratic processes in Vojvodina, CDCS, Zrenianin, p. 2.

14 Ibid., pp. 3-4.

cess is what official representatives of minor religious groups find especially problematic - some officials of the Catholic Church think that it is already clear that the introduction of religious education will not have any positive results. Even more, same officials are afraid that religious education will follow the example of Marxism as a school subject in every aspect. Therefore, they suggest a complete change of the current concept: in their opinion, confessional religious education should be moved from public schools back to the churches and religious communities and, instead of this, only a subject on the history of religion should remain in public schools¹⁵. It is a very reasonable suggestion, but it seems that the authors of this proposal are forgetting the ideological meaning and importance of religious education in public schools, especially for the Serbian Orthodox Church, which insisted most on this, but it is also of great importance for the political elite.

Tith the introduction of theology into public schools, the state was working in the interests of the Serbian Orthodox Church (which is the dominant religious organisation) and its political plans, which became transparent and public in 2000: in a public address, Church officials asked that the state in a way declares Orthodox religion as state religion because then "our state would be verified as an Orthodox state" 16. With the introduction of religious education into public schools, the state made a big step towards an ideological unification of the members of the dominant nation, with an obvious plan to find a new factor of social integration. So, it was obvious from the beginning, and practice only confirmed this, that the purpose of religious education was not introducing pupils to religious culture or the history of religion and it was also not planned for religious education to have a positive influence on the values and tolerance of civil society. The introduction of religious educa-

¹⁵ Bojan Aleksov, Religious Education in Serbia, p. 346-347. 16 Zoran Petakov, The diary of Church insults 2000-2006. From desecularization to clericalization, p. 79.

tion into the system of public education was a result of political decisions and it was ideologically motivated.

The introduction of religious education, planned as an important L contribution to the process of national "awakening" and the fixing of national awareness among the dominant nation in Serbia, cannot have a positive influence on the decreasing of ethnical and religious distance in society, i.e., on the increase of social integration in nationally mixed areas (except if we understand the term "social integration" as violent assimilation). Quite the opposite, the only result of religious education can be an increase in religious and ethnical distance, especially because the germs of division are planted already among school children.

o, the function of religious education in public schools is mostly ideological, which is logical, in view of the ideological role of religion and religious organisations in class society - their function basically consists of the reproduction of the dominant ideology which is very important for the further existence of class society¹⁷. In the process of reproducing the dominant ideological model of class society, the key role belongs to the transformation of human psychological structure and if this transformation wants to be successful, it needs to assume the form of a systematic repression, to be practiced through all possible institutional and noninstitutional forms, during the entire life of every individual. This is why the ideological repression of children is most important and sexual education represents an important part of it. This conclusion is confirmed also by a thesis of Wilhelm Reich, who discovered that "the history of ideology-making teaches us that all social systems use conscious or unconscious influence on children of all ages... so that they can be fixed in the human structure" and if we follow the historical development of ideology and its practice to fix itself in children's minds, then we can find

17 Petar Atanacković, From Psychopathology to Political programs: Clerical Offensive on the Treshold of 21st century, The Critique of Clericalisation of Serbia, p. 67.

that "in the midst of its influence, is sexual education of children" 18.

Through a negative influence on children's sexuality – in other words, ▲ with a sexual repression of children (forbidding masturbation and sexual games with other children) - there is a clear influence on the transformation of their character, through which they become reserved, distanced and afraid. With this kind of a transformation, children become more afraid and humble before authority, more introvert, and after all, that is a basis for the development of neurosis. On this type of a platform, children develop more intensive connections with parents (instead of independence) and, finally, they develop religious tendencies¹⁹. This is why religious education is important: the teaching about the existence of higher intelligence, problematic by itself, contains an especially problematic moment concerning the presence of the same higher intelligence, God or whatever, at every moment and in every aspect of our lives, a presence from which nothing can be hidden. The intention of this thesis is to make children afraid, for them to develop an a priori fear of sin because it sends hidden, but at the same time clear messages that "sinful" actions will not be unnoticed and so will not go unpunished. In other words, in the first few years of primary school, religious education supports the educational measures of parents since parental prohibitions aimed at stopping the sexual games of children would not be efficient if they were not supported by the claim that there is a God who can see everything, so children should behave "decently" even in the absence of parents²⁰. Namely, children connect the power of a given order with the real presence of the person who gave that order – if the person is absent, there is no action, i.e., no execution of the order, and the result of this absence of execution is only a temporary sense of unpleasantness²¹. So, we can conclude that religious feelings in children are devel-

¹⁸ Wilhelm Reich, Die sexuelle Revolution, p. 282.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 282-283.

²⁰ Wilhelm Reich, Massenpsychologie des faschismus, Zagreb, 1999, p. 129.

²¹ Jean Piaget, Psychology of children, Sr. Karlovci - Novi Sad, 1990, p. 134.

oped mostly through the development of a fear of masturbation, i.e., a fear of sexuality in general. On the other hand, since the belief in some higher intelligence and the fear of it can be described as energetic sexual help (assistance), which only changed its goal and content, it seems that religious feeling is equal to sexual feeling, only with a different psychological content²².

▲ n image of higher intelligence contains an objective picture of a personal consciousness or an interior affective image of a father/parent, which becomes a source of a feeling of duty, model of forcing, feeling of remorse, sometimes even self-punishment²³. So we can say that the development of faith in a higher intelligence plays the key-role in the socalled moral education, mostly through the development of obedience. So, the conclusion can be that the foundation and development of this kind of a faith does not represent a purpose in itself – it really represents the tools used for the purpose of the foundation of faith in an abstract authority in general. That is proved later in life, in everyday practice, through the demand for showing obedience to the authority of the Party, the State, the Nation, the Führer, etc.

There is also another aspect of the presence of religious education in **L** public schools that we can recognise as very problematic, mostly for the children at the beginning of the process of their education. Namely, religious education induces a series of phobias in children – and not only the already mentioned fear of sexuality - so, now, parents and school psychologists face, for the first time, new types of phobias and nightmares, mostly connected to religious contents and provoked by regularly attending religious education classes. The essence of this phenomenon is connected to a child's incapability of understanding the content of religious education, which is to be expected, in view of the intellectual capabilities of children at the ages of 7 or 8. At this age, children are going through a phase of the so-called concrete (descriptive) way of thinking, which is connected to immediately present things and so they cannot be capable of understanding abstract notions or formulating and testing hypotheses and conclusions²⁴. When they are 11 or 12 years old and only with a developed distinction between content and form, are children capable of judging propositions in which they do not believe or do not believe, yet²⁵. Until then, all stories about temptations, Christian martyrs, apocalypse, hell and sinners from the Bible are not understood the way they should be (in a symbolic way), but are adopted literary, with all the overemphasized details, which is typical of children. This can result in nightmares and various phobias, which can seriously damage their psychological health and, in the end, even instigate neurosis. In view of this, we can conclude that religious education in public schools in Serbia can have/has a destructive influence on children.

The development of religious feelings in children and religious educa-L tion through which those feelings are developed are clearly ideologically marked because of their intention to transform human psychological structure. The purpose of this is to fix the dominant ideological model within their structure, which represents precisely the way of a system's ideological reproduction. According to this, we can clearly understand the role of religious education within the school system, which can, in short, be described as a generator of increasing ideological repression of children. This is very important in the circumstances when other parts of the ideological machine of class society have problems in maintaining regular functioning (and that is precisely the case in Serbia).

The development of religious feelings plays an important role in the ▲ mentioned process because of their close connection to the ideology

24 Ana Pešikan Avramović, Do children need history, Belgrade, p. 44. 25 Jean Piaget, Psychology of children, p. 142.

of nationalism, i.e., because the religious and national feelings and attitudes represent basic mass-psychological elements of nationalism. In view of this, we can conclude that Christian education presents one of the most important predecessors to fascist ideology in specific conditions, i.e., when there is an economical crisis that leads to mass-movement²⁶. Because of the role of religious propaganda in the preparation of the terrain for a fascist movement in the time of crisis, the research of fascist ideology cannot be separated from the research of the psychological influence of religion²⁷.

TX7e can conclude that the introduction of religious education into the public school system in societies like the Serbian - in view of the essential lag of society, the war experiences from the 1990's and a low level of tolerance as the result of everything mentioned – can have a totally negative, maybe even catastrophic influence on the future development of society. Of course, considering the basic fact that the future of Serbia lies in the family of modern European democratic societies and not in feudalism or theocracy. With Orthodox theology in the public school system, we are on the "right historical path" only if the last two are the real political ideals of the elite of Serbian society.

Towever, the construction of a feudal, Christian, Orthodox state – \blacksquare and that is the ideal of the political elite as it seems – is simply mission impossible. The so-called Christian state is simply a *non-state*: it represents a Christian denial of the state - never a state realisation of Christianity²⁸. But, even if we know that the final result of everything will be a defeat of feudal Reaction, the society will feel the consequences of this, let us say, retarded choice of the state and the political elite and it will suffer from them for years, maybe even decades.

²⁶ Wilhelm Reich, Massenpsychologie des faschismus, p. 121.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 109.

²⁸ Karl Marx, Zur Judenfrage, in: K. Marx, F. Engels, Early works, p. 67.

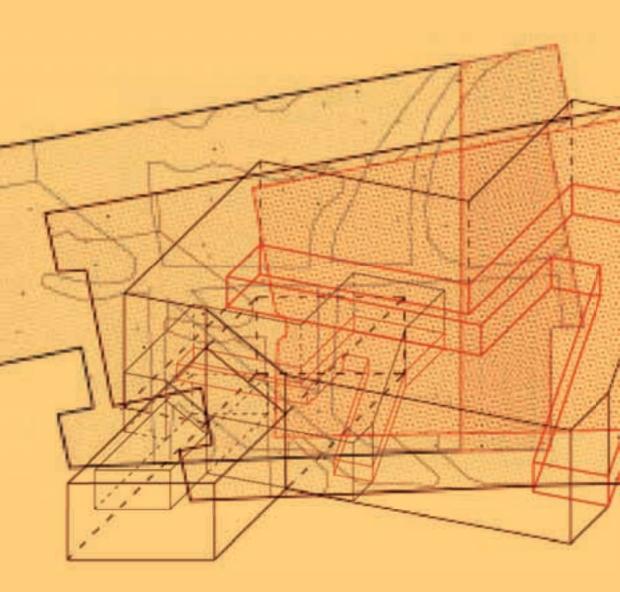
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God is Back in Town

BORIS BUDEN

ne of the most striking effects of the so-called post-communist transition, the one very often visible to the naked eye, is its impact on urban space. We can regard these transformations as a sort of visual translation of many of the social and political phenomena of the postcommunist condition. They make visible the ideological mutation that a society has gone through after the fall of communism and thus reveal the new hegemonies that have been established ever since. Moreover, they confront us with the impasses of our traditional understanding of urban space, of its social meanings and its normative dimensions. The implications of these changes are very often so drastic, that they put into question the fundamental values of modern society or even the very idea of society as such.

T et us take as an example the phenomenon of religious renaissance 4that has so clearly marked the process of post-communist transition. It is well known that, during the communist period in the societies of Eastern Europe, religious beliefs were exposed to the most radical forms of modernist secularisation. God was almost completely banned from public space and confined either to the sphere of individual and familiar privacy or to the restricted areas of institutionalised worship, to the churches and places of pilgrimage. Priests were often persecuted or at least heavily restricted in performing the service, etc. One can simply say that God, too, was a victim of communist totalitarianism. So, no wonder that the collapse of communism was warmly welcomed by religious believers and churches of all sorts. However, the return of the liberated God has become a phenomenon in itself, disclosing many new and unexpected features of the new historical condition we call postcommunism. One and probably the most visible aspect of this phenomenon is articulated through the language of urban spatiality.

▲ group of architects from Croatia called *platforma 9.81* has, for years, been analysing the changes in urban space having taken place during the process of the so-called transition to democracy. A particular part of their research named Crkva d.o.o. (Church Ltd.)¹ is dedicated to the role that the Croatian Catholic Church has played in this new urban development. The architects from platforma 9.81 focused on the situation in Split, a city on the Croatian Adriatic coast, where the Church, together with the political representatives of the city, including the city planners, realised the project called "The Spiritual Ring of the City of Split".

The starting point of the project and its major motivation is, of course, **L** the event we call democratic revolution that happened in Croatia in 1990. The Croatian Catholic Church, which helped the nationalistic movement led by Franjo Tudjman overthrow the communist regime, has presented itself as both the leading force of democratisation and, retroactively, as the main victim of the communist past. As a consequence, it has also claimed both the right to exert influence not only on the political life in the country but also on all the spheres of social life, such as education, public morality and the media, as well as the compensations for the loses it had suffered under the communist rule.

A particular element of this compensation claim was the demand for the permission to build new sacral buildings. Naturally, the Church was given this permission without any problems and the result was the already mentioned project "The Spiritual Ring of the City of Split", a plan to build 16 new church buildings, mostly in the new suburbs around the centre of the city. The realisation of the project started in 1993 and is today almost completed.

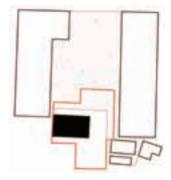
¹ The whole research project is called Superprivate.

hat essentially characterises this building campaign according to the critical analysis of *platforma 9.81* is that the new buildings have not created any sort of a new urbanity. Quite on the contrary, they instead parasitize on the already existent public space. Moreover, they often expand at the expense of this public space. Precisely this occupation of the public space, that is to say, its destruction, appears in the analysis of platforma 9.81 as an expansion of what this group of critical architects understands as private space and what it labels after one of the major features of the post-communist transition as "privatisation". Their critique suggests that the whole building campaign of the Croatian Catholic Church in Split, which has been publicly legitimised as a remedy for the suppression of religious beliefs under the communist rule, has in fact regressive effects. It rolls back the former achievements of modern urban development that had been realised under - or to put it in terms of today's hegemonic ideology, despite – the communist rule. This necessarily implies that the process of post-communist transition has an ambiguous character and must be reconsidered in terms of its regressive tendencies. It cannot be simply identified with a progressive linear development from totalitarianism to liberal democracy, as it is usually the case. This important insight into the very nature of the historical condition we call post-communism is probably the major result of the critical analysis of the platforma 9.81 architects. However, the key element of their analysis that has made this insight possible is the difference between "private" and "public" or, rather, a – historically, politically and theoretically - specific understanding of this difference. In short, we are not only supposed to take this difference as clearly comprehensible but are also supposed to identify with its implicit normativity: "public"

is, at least in the case of urban space, better than "private". Why? Because it is more "social", presumably. In fact, both this "clarity" and the presupposed valuation of the private/public divide is a consequence of the specific architectural perspective used in the analysis that cannot but merge social normativity and a living or urban space. By the same token, social normativity becomes clearly visible in this perspective.

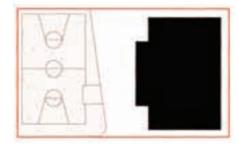
LET US TAKE LOOK AT A FEW DIAGRAMS FROM THE ANALYSIS.

1. An interpolation in the centre of the city, a monastery being reconstructed within an already defined urban space. The building has expanded at the cost of the square.



MONASTERY IN Dobri Square

Another example: A new church built directly in the vicinity of the Kaufland shopping mall. In Split, people call this church "Our Lady of Kaufland". The parking space was taken from the already existent basketball playground.



RAVNE NJIVE - "OUR LADY OF KAUFLAND" - PARISH CHURCH - DIAGRAM.

The visualization of these urban – and socio-political – transformations is based on three elements: two types of space, an original public space and an ecclesiastical space that, in the given relation - mutually exclusive opposition, actually denotes private space; the third element is the line of expansion of this ecclesiastical/private space.



ORIGINAL PUBLIC SPACE



CHURCH

LINE OF EXPANSION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

2. One form of post-communist privatisation is the so-called property return. An originally private property, which had been nationalised, that is to say, appropriated by the communist state after 1945, has now - after the collapse of the communist rule – been returned to its primal owners. This has also happened to part of the church property. The next diagram shows an example of this phenomenon: The Bishop's Palace in the centre of the city with a large park nearby before and after the property return.

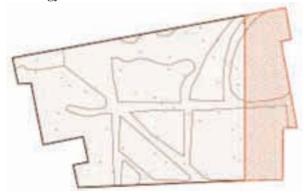
During the socialist period, the building was host to a few faculties of the University of Split, the city library and the Arts Academy.



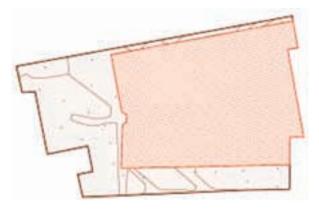
After the return, the whole building was occupied by the Church and is now used for its offices, representative spaces and guest accommodation.



The property return enabled the Church to expand its facilities and to annex a large part of the park, which, before the collapse of communism, was used by the surrounding schools and faculties: a primary school, a high school, Nautical High School, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Education, Faculty of Chemical Technology - only a relatively small part was used by the Seminary and the Catholic Faculty of Theology.



After the return, the largest part of the playground – now fenced – belongs exclusively to the Seminary and the Catholic Faculty of Theology and is used at the rate of 40 seminarists per 10,000 square meters.



Here, again, the visualisation relies on the difference between two different types of spaces:



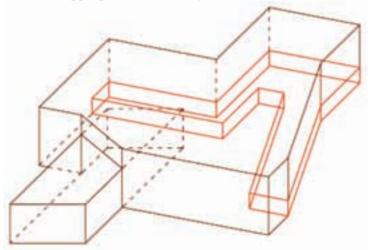
SPACES USED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

SPACES USED EXCLUSIVELY BY THE CHURCH

The first is explicitly defined as "public". The other that now exclusively belongs to the Church is implicitly ascribed to the "private sphere". Although not mentioned here, the line of the expansion of ecclesiastical ("private") space is again clearly visible.

3. Another interesting phenomenon of this development is a peculiar mixture of ecclesiastical and secular, commercial facilities or, more precisely, the merging of the space of religious belief with business space, in short, with the market. Namely, the Church has incorporated commercial activities into its own property.

Here is the example of the Franciscan monastery of Our Lady of Health and the shopping mall "Monastery":



Tere, the visualisation of the transformation operates with two types L of spaces, an ecclesiastical, which we are supposed to think of as "private", and the space comprising retail facilities within the church complex. The relation between these two spaces is different from the cases mentioned above. Here, the ecclesiastical space does not expand at the expense of public space. On the contrary, a space of commercial activities, which is after all a space of private business (but, as a shopping mall, also a form of public space), occupies the space of religious belief. Here, the red line actually represents the line of expansion of private business, in other words, of capitalist economy.

In fact, owing to its properties, annual income and investments, the LCroatian Catholic Church has recently become one of the leading entrepreneurs in the country. Already at the end of 2005, it was ranked among five of the richest business groups in Croatia. This phenomenon has also become increasingly visible in urban space. The authors of the mentioned analysis, the platforma 9.81architects, argue that the basic interface of the church as an institution with city life is acquiring an increasingly more commercial character.

This phenomenon must be seen against the real background of what lacksquare we call the post-communist religious renaissance. In fact, during the time of nationalistic euphoria in the early nineties, the actual number of practicing believers was heavily overestimated. In Croatia, only 20% of those who have been baptized or who have declared themselves Catholics are practicing believers. Actually, the number of believers has not changed radically due to the fall of communism. According to the 1985 census, 80.7% of the population in Split were Roman Catholics. The last census shows that their share does not exceed 87.8%. The result is that, in the end, the new churches were left empty or unfinished.

▲ fter having realised this, church authorities started building Churches that were, from the very beginning, planned and designed to include commercial or business facilities or to be rented for such activities.

This simply means that even the Church itself does not envisage the **L** existence of an authentic and exclusive space of belief. In short, even professional believers no longer believe in a pure belief. This is probably the most important feature of the reawakened religious belief in postcommunism - it reappears only in its hybridised form, that is to say,

merged with other spheres and contents of social life.

That has actually caused the rise of – to use it as an example here - the Catholic Church in Croatia was not its claim to authentic belief, but rather its claim of being the most authentic representative of a particular cultural identity. This is what has made the Church politically so powerful and influential. Under the label of Spiritual Renaissance something it claimed was necessary after 40 years of the communist, that is, atheist and materialist rule - it actually offered a renaissance of the so-called traditional values and features, however, all condensed in an alleged essence of the national identity. The Church offered itself as the only guard of this essence.

This became obvious in the justification of the project of the Spiritual **I** ring in Split, that is, in the reason why Split suddenly needed 16 new churches. I quote: "spiritual identity is a precondition to vitality and a stimulating impulse to all the social values". (Werte brauchen Gott) It tells us that even the institution of religious belief, the Church, does not mention the belief itself as a reason for building new sacral objects. They talk about identity and values and this is what belief is about and not perhaps the inner power, the deepness of religious belief itself or its existential meaning, the inner experience of transcendence, etc.

D ut it is precisely this fact that, today, makes the classical critique of Dreligion based on the claim of secularisation very difficult if not impossible. The best example of the crisis of such a critique is the one presented here, with the Platforma 9.81 analysis. It is almost entirely based on a clear differentiation between two spheres of social life, public and ecclesiastical, where the latter is implicitly identified with the private. In fact, the public/private distinction is the major tool of this critique of religion. The problem is that this critique is not radical enough. If the Church is a business group, a capitalist entrepreneur, it should be also judged as such. One should not judge the Church by its sacral cover.



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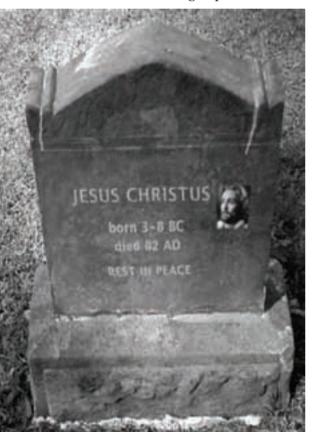
TOO REAL (TO BE TRUE)
THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF
POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

Zoran Terzič

1.PROFANATION

ow do we understand the religious today? With religious I do not refer directly to religions but to the examination of the idea of religions and belief, which is analogous to the distinction between the political and politics (Mouffe) or the ontological and the ontic (Heidegger). The examination of **religion** may be fundamental to believers, but the examination of the religious is fundamental whether you are a believer or not. This means, in other words, that everybody may turn out to be a fundamentalist if you know how to ask the right questions. How do you ask the right questions?

FIGURE 2



eligious groups do not accept any Prandom forms of divine embodiments outside their belief system and, arguably, they are even afraid to prove God's earthly existence. A scientific proof that God exists would be the end of all religions. The problem here is that a proof is too real, too profane and therefore it cannot be true, religiously.

Tn his biography, Louis Buñuel tells a **⊥** story about an alternative history of Christianity. In this novel, Jesus does not die on the cross, but manages to flee. Later, he becomes a highly respected priest and an acclaimed intellectual.

Jesus dies as a famous and very old wise man, and as the story goes, after 200 years, he is completely forgotten...

The story sounds absurd because it is too real. Imagine a commemorative gravestone for an earthly Jesus with the cross missing. The representative of all humans on earth loses his axiomatic denotation and dies just for himself like everybody else. This is not religious, it is human in a profane sense. However, religion needs drama and paradoxes and any alternative symbolic operation (in this case, a de-representation) that plays with its "texture" (ideas, symbols, etc.) threatens its very logic. The following profane example should make this point clear.

2. SUPER-GOD

n 18 September 2007, a US state senator from Nebraska filed an official lawsuit against God. Senator Chambers' aim behind this was to criticize the legal practice in the US, which is notorious for allowing too many frivolous lawsuits. However, the project has been publicly ridiculed from the start. For example, a certain photograph circulated in the media that showed Chambers coincidentally in front of a big fan, but deliberately depicting the white-bearded senator as a "saint" or divine impersonator (see photo).

FIGURE 3



This media polemics aside, it is interesting to follow the argument **** and the public perception of this event. Chambers argued that it was God who was solely responsible for worldwide disasters and conflicts. The phrase "act of God" (in German: Höhere Gewalt) is a standard legal term in the US and if it is legally an act of God that hurricanes or wars destroy entire populations, then it is legitimate to sue the perpetrator. Chambers' action therefore seeks "a permanent injunction ordering [God] to cease harmful activities and the making of terroristic threats." **T** any commentators instantly exclaimed, of course, that it is totally **LV** absurd that God is judged by the criteria of law, despite some sections of the law being based on the acts of God. But let us look more thoroughly into the matter. It is remarkable that, in particular, those religious liberals who claim it is absurd to sue God do not find it absurd to accept that the same God that cannot be sued is embodied in a cracker during Catholic liturgy. Are there two measures of absurdity? Obviously, it is deemed more absurd to sue God than to eat God because it accords to a specific established belief system. And that means, simply, that religious beliefs enable collectively what would individually be defined as idiosyncratic, criminal, insane, artistic or absurd. For example, vaginal mutilation on little girls is as criminal as it is absurd, but if you happen to be a member of a North African village community, the same act is considered a cultural or religious ritual. There exist different standards of cultural or religious tolerance and, typically, tolerance is not admitted within the borders of a belief system, but it is propagated to function between divergent belief systems. There is no way, for example, that one of the current official antipopes, such as Peter II of the Palmarian Catholic Church, will ever be recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as a pope

1 http://www.religionnewsblog.com/19382/ernie-chambers

next to the pope. But if this antipope happened to found a new religion, the Roman Catholic Church would - in the light of religious tolerance instantly recognize him as a church leader, etc.

The point I am aiming at is that there may always be a position that L challenges or transcends the ultimate authority of grand meaning (pope, God, nation, culture), that there is always a boss beyond the boss, a God beyond God. And this is a truly profane and atheist position. To be atheist means to be able to think beyond the ultimate limit without necessarily resorting to a metaphysical deity. Analogously, in Chambers' case, God is subjected to judgement and sanction and the profane district court is to take over the role of a Super-God.

FIGURE 4



That interests me here is the underlying semantic structure: Super-God stands for a profane authority that transcends not only human but also divine existence (Fig.: In this visual theorem, I dved God's hair black to express profanity). From the perspective of Super-God, human history is an entirely atheist history.

vidently, the history of atheism shows that this profane authority Lamay be the **primal father** as Freud puts it, a **primal tribe** as Nietzsche puts it, a representation of utopian hope as Bloch puts it or the circumstances of the means of production as Marx puts it. For Ernst Bloch, the notion of God simply represented a utopian hope; it is a signifier for a future development that can be hoped for but that cannot be known. Bloch says, everywhere where there is hope, there is religion, too. Bloch is not a theist, but he is religious, he steals God from monotheism and replaces its signifier with utopian hope. The Marxian approach focuses on the illusionist aspect of religion that distracts from the material underlying structure of historical/dialectical progress ("Opium of the masses.").

nother major atheist approach stems from Sigmund Freud: Here, • God represents the primal father, a figure that points to the circumstances of the distant past. In The Future of an Illusion (1927), Freud describes religion as an illusionary convention that is to fulfil the "oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind" (Ch. VI). Freud links religions to civilisational progress, which – according to him – explains some (at least the Judaeo-Christian) anthropomorphic characteristics of the divine and its powerful influence on society.

"The primal father was the original image of God, the model on which later generations have shaped the figure of God. [...] This concurrent influence of past and present must give religion a truly incomparable wealth of power."(Ch.VII)

Freud's approach matches Friedrich Nietzsche's earlier genealogical study of morality, albeit Freud is more speculative and schematic than Nietzsche. Nietzsche's idea is based on a primal hegemonic tribe ("blonde beasts") that conquers land, settles and sets up a material and symbolic structure for future generations. His thesis is that this primal tribe is glorified by future generations until glorification turns into divination, until warriors, heroes or founders are celebrated as Gods.

↑ theist approaches such as Bloch's, Freud's, Marx' or Nietzsche's Adwell on the premise that religious belief causes a temporal alienation of the human condition (Marx' term for this phenomenon was "Naturwüchsigkeit"). One is either captured by a glorious past or imprisoned by one's own expectations and hopes. And this temporal ontology is perceived as "natural" and "normal". The problem is that while I hope or while I remember, I am distracted from the profane now. Marx compared this distraction to the use of opium. The paradox of this religious "drug" is that it causes temporal alienation and, at the same time, promises to solve it, particularly by the promise of salvation.

Tn Indian Vedanta mysticism, this alienation is addressed by the uni-Lty of Atman (soul) and Brahman (origin of the world), in Samkhya Yoga, by the absolute retreat into one's soul, and in the Buddhist tradition (Mahayana and Zen Buddhism), temporal alienation is approached through the alienation of time itself.

However, in the Christian, Islamic or Hindu form salvation lies beyond earthly life, whereas Zen-Buddhist mysticism addresses the here and now. Remember that, when he experienced his revelation, Buddha reached Nirvana, but returned back to life, back to the Now. This is why, in my definition, Zen is not really a religion – on the contrary. This figure of back-to-life is a sort of a formula for the profane as Agamben described it. And this is how I see Super-God. This real God behind the religious God is a profane authority and we recognize it only once we have challenged it, once we challenge its underlying temporal structure - once we challenge its time and make it "our" time. Think of the Book of Job, which could - in that regard - be read as the founding document of atheism, where the unfortunate Job challenges and judges God and denies the divine meaning of his circumstances (Job has been called the first dissident in history).

D ut you can find another analogy to this temporal challenge or the Dtranscendence of the ultimate authority also in gangster films where, at the end of the movie, the plot misleads the audience into thinking that the hero has finally caught the big mafia boss. It turns out, however, that the real boss, the real power behind all activities is someone else. This may turn out to be the hero's best friend, a mad scientist, a high-ranking politician, a coincident (scientific experiment creates a monster) or, as in Alan Parker's "Angel Heart" (1987), the protagonist (played by Mickey Rourke) himself.

rom a Nietzschean perspective, this means that it is not enough to kill God because - as in the case of the film hero - suddenly it turns out that religion is steered by other entirely profane forces and that what we had killed was a God that no believer has ever believed in (this notion touches upon Wittgenstein's fideist idea that a believer's God and the God that an atheist rebukes are not identical. If a believer believed in the same God that an atheist disapproves of, he/she would turn into an atheist and, vice versa, if an atheist were to be confronted with a God that a believer believes in, he/she would turn into a believer, as well).

The trap for some current atheists is, on the one hand, that they tend **L** to misread the materialist core of religion and, on the other hand, that they unconsciously pervert their own position by first idealizing and then rebuking a religious dogma that they falsely think is at the core of religion. And this is the point where the so-called New Atheists (such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hutchins, Sam Harris and Daniel Dennett) fail. They intend to attack the logic of belief itself. But they do so from a vulgar materialist point of view and thus come to inconclusive or metaphysical claims about a scientific reality that they have allegedly pretended to defend. Dawkins and his colleagues - regardless of how just their cause is - have thus been compared to atheist representatives of medieval inquisition. A more honest - or less polemical - form of materialist atheism would, instead, insist on the inexplicability and irrationality of the existence of God - if not in its totality, then at least in regard to certain metaphysical claims that are neither backed by science nor anything else. Scientific excellence consists in the ability to bypass the epistemological traps that one's own concepts tend to create.

T nstead, the New Atheists idealize religion in order to be able to attack Lit from the front, but they overlook the materialist and essentially atheist core of it. What does this mean? Take the ultimate Christian example of crucifixion. As Slavoj Žižek put it in a recent lecture:

"What dies on the cross is not an earthly representative of a transcendence, what dies on the cross is God [himself] as this transcendent master of the universe...What dies is the idea of God as the ultimate guarantee of meaning."2

The abandoned Jesus or the abandoned Job is thus a symbol of an **L** abandoned humankind that is referred to its crude materiality. There is a structural lack of belief in this very concept of religion.

conversation from the film "The Believer" (2001) - based on a true story – between an Orthodox Jewish prodigy turned Neo-Nazi and his girlfriend makes this point very clear. They talk about God and the logic of Judaism and the protagonist says: "Judaism is not really about belief. It is not about believing things. It is about doing things." Now, "doing things" describes nothing but the socio-political impact or the foundation of what we call belief systems. In this regard, belief is politics – if we look at the reasons and consequences of the religious rather than misleadingly focusing on religions as such. Although, in the above sentence, Judaism alone is addressed, I am convinced that it can be referred to many, if not all, religions. It is important to extract the religious from any claims about specific religions in order to understand the inner logic of their variability.

3. GOD STATISTICS

Thave introduced all of this to point out that, on an ontological level, Lathere is always a surplus of explanations that one comes across once certain issues in regard to theoretical debates have come to a close (art

2 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9S3vvPe9IM

after the end of art, history after the end of history, God after the end of God, etc.). Just to remind you that, in 1844, Karl Marx concluded that the critique of religion had been accomplished. However, we observe today that nothing has been accomplished and that religious references appear to dominate public discourse.

Tt is officially estimated that less than 15% of the worldwide popula-Lation identify with secular or non-theist views, whereas over 50% are associated to Islam or Christianity.3

There is a clear majority of Abrahamic adherents. To give a nation state example, about 90% of all US citizens believe in God, of which about 80% claim to be of Christian faith. The political aspect of this consists in the fact that about 68% of Americans would not vote for an atheist presidential candidate, which explains the current candidates' devotion to religious themes.

enerally, though, there seems to be a tendency of people defin-Jing their religious affiliation in an ethnic sense. Although 90% of Americans define themselves as believers, surveys show that only 68% claim that "religious faith is important to [them]". This means that the traditional connotation of religion has changed and that a growing number of people use religion for the sake of symbolic or political identity (think of the Balkans). Accordingly, the British Humanist Association finds that, in the 2001 census, 7 out of 10 people in the UK ticked the 'Christian' box, but, with church attendance now below 7% and less than 30% of marriages taking place in church, this figure was more about cultural identity than religious belief.6

The traditional connotation of religion has changed and this change ▲ (that also relates to the "post-communist" era after 1989) fits new

³ http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9394911/Worldwide-Adherents-of-All-Religions-by-Six-Continental-Areas-Mid-2002.

⁴ http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9394912/Religious-Adherents-in-the-United-States-of-America-AD-1900-2000 - According to www.pewresearch.org (2007), 25% of all Americans want to live in a Christian nation state without the separation of church and state. However, people tend to define their religious affiliation not in a religious but in an ethnic sense. If 90% of Americans define themselves as believers, but at the same time surveys show that, in 2001, only 68% claimed that "religious faith is important to me" (dropping from 87% in 1997), then it means that a growing number of people use

political strategies, as well. Politics learned to adopt religious themes. Think of the recent election campaigns in the Ukraine, in Russia or the USA, where religion was closely connected to the political strategies of most parties - not to speak of the theist regimes in Iran, Saudi-Arabia, the Emirates, Yemen, etc.⁷

lthough one can observe an increased political influence of religion in Eastern Europe or in the so-called "Islamic World", this mixture of religion and politics is not typical post-socialist curiosity or Islamic fundamentalism. Just recently, I learned of a case from rural Bavaria where, in the 2002 election, a catholic priest urged his community to vote against the Red-Green government and thus give absolution to the German nation and its theist ideals.

4. GOD POLITICS

hat is the logic behind this structural change of religious influence in the political arena? What is its broader historical perspective? How did the role of the religious change? Did it change? I currently see three ways in which the religious exerts influence on politics and I claim that this scheme also implies a sufficient historical explanation.

(1) Deontological regime

("Thou shalt...", "Vater Staat", Leviathan)

(2) Transformative regime

("false atheism", secularisation without profanation)

(3) Regime of tolerance

("tolerant fundamentalists", "Love your neighbour.")

religion for the sake of symbolic identity (See: www.religioustolerance.org).

5 http://www.religioustolerance.org/relcomp.htm

6 http://www.humanism.org.uk/site/cms/newsarticleview.asp?article=2288

The first form is the traditional authoritarian and patriarchal influ-L ence that we know enigmatically from the Ten Commandments. A patriarchal figure tells you what you ought to do or what you are not to do. This primal father protects you if you obey and punishes you if you do not. All your actions in the real world are somehow influenced and intimidated by this primal commandment. I call this the deontological regime.

The **second** form of religious influence is a transplant of religious **L** attitude or content into the political arena in the sense in which, for example, Carl Schmitt analysed it by claiming that former religious subjects become subjects of modern politics. So, for example, in Turkey today, you have secular nationalists and you have nationalist Islamists. However, both accord with (para)religious belief systems: an atheistic nationalist is a religious person although they do not believe in God. I call this a transformative regime because it secularises the form, but keeps the power structure - the content of power - intact.

The third form of religious influence is the paradigm of tolerance and fundamentalists". In Western societies, this group makes up the absolute majority of believers (ethnic religion/religion of ethnicity). Their paradigm of tolerance opposes the authoritarian approach. They fiercely oppose every religious notion that violates human rights or gender equality, etc. Instead, they pick out from the Koran and the Bible, etc., what is compatible with liberal democracy, propagate these good notions as the real belief and stick to their pure form of religion. This pure liberal and even leftist religion is peaceful, tolerant, anti-neoliberal, etc., and the best part of it is: it cannot be criticized. If you criticize it, you simultane-

7 All-Ukrainian Hromada party held a vigil at the statue of Virgin Mary with a prayer ceremony led by priests. Our Ukraine - People's Self-Defense sponsored a park dedication for the popular late Pope John Paul II. Politicians like Yuliya Tymoshenko called on Ukrainians to "pray for Ukraine" and her party's website showed a slogan that appears on US paper money: "In God we trust". Similarly, the US presidential campaign of Barack Obama presented itself with an appeal to the voter's belief ("I'm asking you to believe." and "Change we can believe in.").

ously criticize liberal democracy or solidarity as such. This religious approach attaches itself to the liberal dogma as if religion and democracy were natural historical partners. I call this the regime of tolerance.

ll three regimes describe certain aspects of what I define as "the reli $oldsymbol{ au}$ gious" or as "God Politics". I claim that the religious (differing from the role of actual religions) is something that is or has been untouched by the process of secularisation. You can read this list historically:

- (1) Since Jean Bodin, the patriarchal family has provided a blueprint for traditional monarchy, which is also founded on religious grounds: Father as king/patriarch and family members as the populous/believers, under the omnipotence of the earthly/divine emperor – the believer/ citizen as an obedient servant.
- (2) Since the French Revolution, the religious God has been transformed into the secular Nation God; it is not the primal father but the primal historical subject in the Hegelian sense that perpetuates a "political" religion, whose cult still keeps shaping the national landscape of the contemporary world (e.g., the belief in the primordiality and teleology of one's "own" nation state, one's "own" culture, etc.).
- (3) And finally, in our era of consensual ("Western type") democracies, the transformative spirit of the religious represents the ideology of tolerance (with its merchandising of global awareness, multiculturality, ecology, etc.). It kills the patriarchal God and replaces it with a democratic God that harms nobody and "adjusts" smoothly to the lifestyle of everybody. Instead of acknowledging the profane turn in any critique of the

divine (such as the God lawsuit above), the liberal believers create vet another unapproachable sphere that is cleansed of fundamentalists, extremists, etc., and that represents the "real" belief, "real" God, "real" nation, "real" civil society, etc. (the real nation is a patriot's dream of a nation cleansed of nationalists, proponents of the real belief cleanse their religion of fundamentalists and so on). And this ideology of cleanliness taps perfectly into the mainstream corpus of the so-called Third Way post-politics (Mouffe), the all-inclusive politics. I claim, however, that this supposedly tolerant position is a fundamentalist one.

5. CONCLUSION

T gave an outline of how the influence of belief systems on societal sys-Ltems "functions" and how it might have developed. My explanation implies that an urge to believe is intrinsic to society (albeit not in an essentialist sense) and that this urge is channelled according to historical and political circumstances. If the clergy loses its traditional political role due to secularisation, the religious takes over other spheres. In the 19th century, the nation became the bearer of the religious and, in the 21st century, the paradigm of tolerance (shared univocally by politicians and by clerics) exercises what churches have exercised for centuries: support those within the paradigm and punish those outside it ("fundamentalists", "extremists", "radicals", etc.).

Historically, at any given time, a specific representation of belief is ■ sustained – according to the popular (albeit false) saying that "everybody needs something to believe in". Instead, I claim that belief is not intrinsic to humans (rather it is intrinsic to society), but that the historical influence of religions also influenced our interpretations of our past and thus of the condition humaine. People believe that they believe. We made ourselves believe that we need something to believe in, but we forgot that our notion of ourselves is artificial and historically contingent.

That follows is that to be an atheist it is not enough if you consider yourself a non-believer. The "enemy" is not just the clergy, but national ideology, cultural ideology and the ideology of mutual tolerance - in short, every notion that supports what some evolutionary anthropologists call "parochial altruism" (offer yourself for your group/nation/ culture/religion and sanction outsiders wherever you can). In a broader ethical perspective, the fiercest enemy is always yourself. To support the separation of church and state and other related political demands is noble, but never sufficient. You have to separate the religious from within (the state, the mind, history and society). There is no real secularisation without profanation, i.e., the permanent possibility that any ultimate authority can be transcended or challenged by subjecting it to the rules of public space (as in the case of the God lawsuit). The so-called New Atheists fail to recognize this because they ignore the paradoxes and the ambiguity of ideology. We should consider the following line from the film "The Believer": "God commands whether he exists or not."

This is probably the core of the religious. That is one to do? Perhaps there is no point in metaphorically $oldsymbol{V}$ or physically tearing down churches or the like, but rather in building "anti-churches".8 Think of this old anecdote about a stranded Jewish community on a deserted island. They are found after some years and asked why they have built two synagogues instead of one. One settler answers: "One synagogue is to pray in, the other one is never to step a foot in." That is tolerance set against itself or within oneself.

8 Negation made out of stone or out of - if you will - pixels. To give an example, I have initiated the "Church of non-believers" on the internet - www.unkirche.de, but there are many other "church" projects on the web that take alternative paths in regard to belief systems.

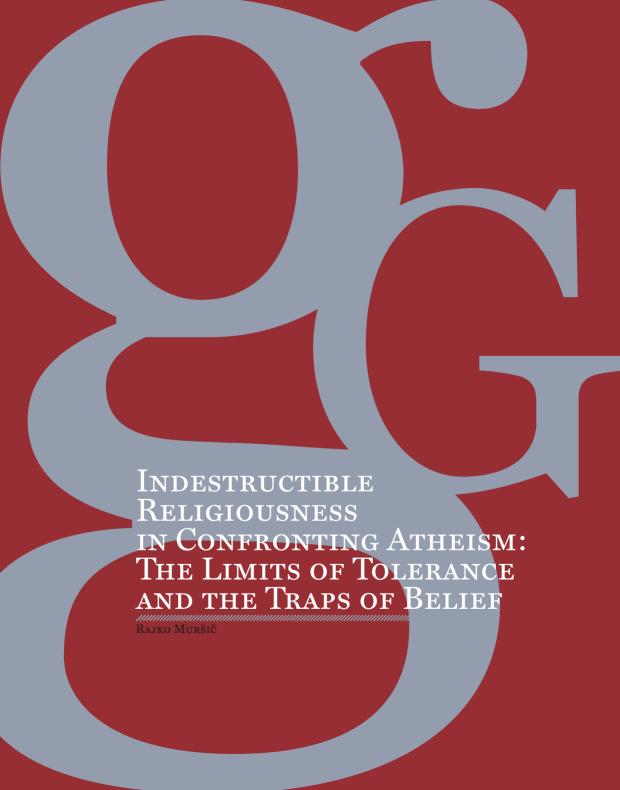
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Figure 3: Associated Press (http://i.usatoday.net/ news/ photos/2007/09/18/chambersx.jpg) FIGURES 1, 2, 4 by the author.



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In the 1970s, a century after Nietzsche famously declared that god Levas dead and at a time when it seemed that we had seen an end to premodern forms of religiousness, the famous French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan came to the conclusion that religion was eternal (see Lacan 2006). At that time, only the most fervent believers (of any religious orientation) claimed such things, while atheists lived in the belief that it was only a matter of time before all religions slowly died out by themselves.

Tmyself did not believe that, in my old age, I could live in a world in which it was no longer common to write the word god in small letters, for it was already a century ago that incisive minds declared that, for god with a capital letter, the last bell had tolled. The unstoppable technical development at the time gave the impression of the omnipotent power of the human mind that will sooner or later crack every problem it encounters.

The world enframing (if I use Heidegger's term *Ge-Stell* signifying L the totality of technical disclosure, interpellation, challenging and ordering as a historical-destinal essence of the world of technology) brought forth by reason, the enframing of the modern world as the last product of metaphysics, which simply discarded of the metaphysics itself, was most probably also the last act of European cultural domination. Namely, with the global spread of technology, the European spirit was left with nothing that could ensure its dominant position. On the contrary: with the self-establishment of intelligent technology in the near future, this developmental stage of world spirit will come to an end. But the story will continue since there are enough empty holes in the human spirit for it to open up again to religious comfort.

Then we speak of religiousness, we have to distinguish between belief, religious belief, faith and religion. Belief is any knowledge that we can regard as useful enough to be used in practice, but can be very far from certainty. Religious beliefs are beliefs that we usually do not verify by experience or empirical observation. Faith is a body of deeper religious beliefs that are coordinated enough to form a coherent system, whereas religion is a standardised faith system, in a ritual and dogmatic sense, framed by an institutional order. Belief is a foundation of human socialness, whereas religion is one of the possibilities of its completion.

ne cannot be certain of anything except tautologies in formal logic. This is why, in the most fundamental way, all we know or believe in, be it science or faith, is based on belief. Among the various systems of knowledge developed by human societies as deposits and intertwinements of beliefs, science and religion do not have an essentially different weight, at least in the epistemological sense (see Feyerabend 1999). Science and religion are furthest apart in their practical application and social effects.

ince all our knowledge, except the mathematico-logical, is founded on belief and not certainty, we are bound to agnosticism regarding the fundamental religious beliefs on the existence or non-existence of god. Neither with our understanding nor any other sense or epistemological tool can we ascertain with certainty god's existence or the lack thereof. Pascal argues that it is precisely because of this that it is worth wagering on believing in his existence since we can only gain by believing and we have nothing to lose. It was already Tertullian who, facing a developed Christianity, found that reason is of no use to him since it is only belief that can overcome its limitations. But the limitations of reason and the aporias of pure understanding conceal a very simple truth: to beings using symbolic communication, such as human speech, absolute certainty is not given.

Precisely because all people are first agnostics and then believers (and I not the other way round as it usually seems), the position of atheism is, in a general as well as the logical sense, entirely equal to opposite positions. In Ancient Greece, spiritual knowledge (gnosis) had a different meaning to opinion (doxa) and to knowledge in the sense of episteme, although all three concepts covered a wide field of knowledge. Gnosis is a special way of revealing and disclosing truth that is not questioned but is, as knowledge not given to all, distinguished from ignorance - agnosis. Unobjectionable belief manifested in the form of spiritual knowledge is therefore implicitly taken as the only rational alternative to agnostic ignorance.

Refuse of civilisation

ue to the initially inferior position of agnosticism, it is not surprising that certain fervent believers see in religious indifference and "general scepticism" that "denies every transcendental value" an unrestrained morality "without solid ethical norms in political, social and family life" (Rode 1997a: 90-91), whereas they take atheism to be "a horrific emotional deformation and a rational error "(92). How could it be otherwise when, even at a time when the Roman Catholic Church confirmed the justified autonomy of earthly realities, it was mentioned in the Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, published in 1968 by the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers in line with the efforts of Paul VI for a dialogue with non-believers, that the differences between atheists and believers are insurmountable when an atheist denies the very reality of god: "The atheism that perceives a human being as the exclusive measure of truth and values creates a precipice between believers and nonbelievers concerning the fundamental questions, such as the meaning of the world and life" (Rode 1997b: 111). At the time, the communist ideas of society not only without god but also without religion appeared as the greatest danger to an almost two-thousand-year-old institution.

▲ fter the fall of socialism, we changed numerous habits and reawak-Aened many seemingly forgotten ones. That we were now supposed to write god with a capital letter is not even the most important change we faced. In the 1990s, I, as an atheist, felt quite uneasy a few times because of the verbal attacks of the then Ljubljana Archbishop and Slovene Metropolitan - now Cardinal - Franc Rode, but consoled myself by joking on account of history first occurring as a tragedy and the second time as a farce. I did not imagine, then, that this uneasiness could develop into a feeling that, at the beginning of the 21st century, atheists can more and more feel as the refuse of civilisation.

There is the problem? Certainly not in the distress of a being that has literally conquered this world and now rules over it, but has, from the very beginning of self-awareness, been aware of its transience and has looked for solace in eternity. The main problem of religious belief is that it does not allow for tolerance. Yes, you read correctly: I mentioned belief, not an institutional religiosity, religious fanaticism, fundamentalism or religious mania. With tolerance, I do not mean any impossible conception of absolute tolerance but tolerance towards that difference that shakes a certain position in its very foundations.

peligious belief does not allow as equal and acceptable non-belief, be $oldsymbol{\Lambda}$ it a form of religious indifference or militant anti-religiousness. It also does not allow for the equality of other belief systems – believers can go only as far as patronizingly acknowledging that although other belief systems are worse, which time shall definitely tell (if not before, at the last judgement), they should be tolerated with pity. As mentioned, we do not refer, here, to the unconditional and absolute tolerance based on a principled permission of all other and different possibilities and aspects of belief, in addition to the views of those who are supposed to demonstrate tolerance. What we have in mind is a rationally limited tolerance through which at least a fundamental conception of coexistence can be established. Despite this, in cases of all or nothing ("believing" against "not believing"), genuine believers will have difficulty in avoiding the traps of being patronizing, thinking along the lines of: those poor "nonbelievers" do not know what they are giving up and into what perdition they are heading. The feeling of superiority is inscribed into the very roots of religiousness.

imited tolerance encountered in everyday situations, which Kant **△**would name pathological and are based on the principle that my freedom is limited by the freedom of the other, which means, of course, that we are all free but that some are somewhat freer than others, is what Marcuse named repressive tolerance (see Marcuse 1994) whose main aim is to sustain inequality. A model example of limited tolerance can be seen in Islam which is tolerant towards Jews and Christians but not towards pagans, whereas it does not permit unbelief or atheism at all. It is interesting that we could trace something similar in the stance of Cardinal Rode who consistently treated atheism as an inferior or inhuman position.

Three errors about RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The first wrong perception about the foundations of religious belief ▲ originates in the established but mistaken conviction that believing in god or at least in "higher forces" is one of the fundamental and universal characteristics of the human race. A logical consequence of this conviction is that those who do not believe are not equal human beings and that those who do not believe in the right "higher force" need to be saved, i.e., converted. The consequences of this fundamental error are known and obvious. Even if, on a large enough number of individual members of various communities, the ethnographic data do in a sense corroborate a certain degree of universality in the perceptions of, if not even belief in an afterlife and certain spiritual forces, including ancestors' spirits as well as the forces hidden in the universe and beyond it, this universality cannot hold for all cases, all places and all times. As soon as we find some religious indifference and cases of atheism, this story of "universality" ends.

n eligious indifference accompanies each and every institutionally Aorganised belief system and especially those that we understand as accomplished states in a development of a certain civilisation. Collective belief and standardised religion are the strongest tools in the hands of rulers, but religious indifference is its necessary accompaniment. And even if we can agree with Lacan that the human race will never be able to rid itself of religious conceptions since they are inscribed in the very foundations of symbolic order, this does not mean that belief is the measure of everything human that existed, exists and will exist. We

can today no longer assume a fundamental viewpoint that admits of no doubts, even though exiting the symbolic register that literally pushes us in this or that form of belief is most probably really not possible. But belief systems that are a necessary accompaniment to human symbolic communication do not lead to a universal religiousness typical of all human beings.

The other error regarding belief is the conviction that belief is an in-L timate personal matter of every individual that we must distinguish from institutionalised religion. In fact, belief does not concern individual quasi-philosophical speculations on the meaning of life and its finiteness even if it exceptionally appears in this way, but is a result of practical action and is, in this sense, expressly collective. Pascal's finding that it is completely irrelevant what you, as an individual, think about religious rites – it is important to participate in them and belief will follow of itself (Pascal 1986), needs to be understood literally: not only is belief a result of participating in a ritual - and thus of the bodily techniques - but is, in its essence, social. Belief concerns the entire way of life determined by commandments, prohibitions, recommendations as to what we are allowed to do and what not. Through ritual practices that lead to belief (and not the other way around as we like to mistakenly presuppose), communities are formed: belief is actually an internalised experience of others, it is a habitual exchange of knowledge and perceptions of past generations that have not vet been made conscious and hang as a nightmare over living people (see Marx 1979 and Bourdieu 1977).

The third error I would like to point out in this discussion concerns L the existence of evil "higher forces" that are supposed to dictate the evil deeds of people. Only because they are evil, can we use whatever means necessary against them. A recent example of this is the "axis of evil" that, after a few years, no longer comes off as Bush's metaphor coined in the hour of rage and frustration due to the destruction of the New York WTC, but as the word that became flesh. This transference of responsibility for evil – and, in the end, also good – is an exceptionally perfidious form of dehumanisation that is manifested not only in squaring it off with the "axes of evil" but in a permanent squaring off with everything that transcends a certain given cannon of behaviour and conviction. In the fight against absolute evil, literally all means are available, especially all-round amnesia. Since that is how it is, few still remember that, according to the Bible, it was the maker himself that created evil. At least on the basis of these three characteristics of belief, we could hardly agree that faith can importantly contribute to mutual respect and tolerance and that it can represent the foundation that could liberate us from the bonds of repressive tolerance. On the contrary, we have to agree with Marcuse that real liberation can only be reached through the complete fulfilment of the enlightenment programme based on the autonomous reflection of every individual on what is true and what not and what is right and what not. This is possible only if all possibilities are open. In other words: the emancipation of all who think differently will be realised - not merely in a historical sense when the sprouting of the first principles of tolerance was substantially manured by the prosecution of heretics – only through the liberation from believing itself.

Principles of everyday tolerance

Polerance towards different ways of life connected to religious beliefs **** is not a problem in everyday life, as the entire history of the human race has shown. Problems arise when the rules of everyday life are dictated by a single belief system that takes the place of the fundamental consensus in the constitution of a certain political community. Unfortunately, instead of a postmodern period of acknowledging the right to a difference, we have found ourselves in a situation when every religion is trying again not only to enter the public sphere – from which it never really departed, only in a few cases, it had to stand down from power but also to impose its world order on everyone, even those it does not concern. In everyday life, it is possible to find ways of coexisting, especially through pragmatically forgetting certain fundamental religious principles. But, in the practical sense, social relations dictated by various modes of belief are far from symmetrical. In some cases, tolerance is possible, in others, not. If, for example, a certain belief is based on the presupposition that there is absolute good on the one side and absolute evil on the other, then a certain believer will have difficulties in accepting tolerantly the individual that is sworn to believe in "absolute evil". How can any genuine believer in one god be tolerant to Satanists? And how is a non-believer supposed to be differently tolerant towards Satanists and, for example, Catholics? Is equidistance even possible for anyone except agnostics or the religiously indifferent? From this seemingly radical case, we could conclude that only non-believers can be equally tolerant towards other believers, whereas believers cannot be equally tolerant either towards other believers or towards non-believers. Luckily, practical action does not follow either perceptions or conceptions, but goes its own path.

In practical action concerning moral practices, individuals can come Leto an agreement in an essentially easier way than in belief systems. We can thus easily imagine that a Satanist as well as a believer and a non-believer will observe, in the same way, a few fundamental principles dictated by something we call our conscience. On the other hand, they will all break the norms in an equally effective way when it is either opportune or necessary. Believers and non-believers can, in general, easily agree with the list of the old and the "new" mortal sins that we were served in March 2008, even though there exist key differences in the details: as people and as members of the same or at least related societies, groups and communities, we have shared the same fundamental principles of coexistence for millennia. Even god shared by Jews, Christians and Muslims has his own "human" history.

 $\ \ \, \ \ \, \ \ \, \ \, \ \,$ n order to realise the pragmatic every day tolerance in the coexistence Lof different people, we have to release the valve that otherwise prevents communication and understanding, we have to release the space of communication, the space of dialogue. When litanies on "intercultural dialogue" are being imposed on us from all sides, we can justifiably be concerned that "dialogue" will get a bed reputation. This is why, in addition to the dialogues, we occasionally need to advocate also monologues. In short, the right of every individual to express what they think they have to express. This is not that difficult since it is precisely in speaking that the boundary between tolerance and intolerance is most eas-

ily blurred. There is a constant danger of propositional speech, through which we express opinions, turning into a raging of hate speech that can lead to violence. Despite this, precisely in the name of ensuring the most elementary possibilities of tolerant coexistence, we must advocate the freedom of expression together with all the dangers that can accompany it. If a society restricts the freedom of speech, the suppressed impulses of those who cannot speak will some day turn into a raging that will be far more dangerous than the raging of hate speech to which we can respond and take away its power with more convincing words.

▲ s opposed to the freedom of speech, tolerance cannot be radically Timperative or equally distributed among social positions. On the contrary: because we live in a society in which inequality is a rule and not an exception, we have to adjust tolerance to this inequality. We cannot be tolerant towards everyone in the same way. The suppressed and oppressed deserve not only more understanding and help but also more tolerance, whereas the oppressors and exploiters deserve substantially less tolerance, if any at all. Similarly, it is difficult to be equally tolerant to those believers who send all non-believers to eternal damnation as opposed to those who exhibit at least some understanding for the views of those who are radically different to them. The imperative of absolute tolerance is only an ideal. How can an individual be tolerant to the imposing of a certain belief against their will? By all means, tolerance has to be limited again and again. If today's Church expects one-sided tolerance and characterises all criticisms of its image as an attack against it, then it, of course, abuses tolerance for hegemony. Similarly as in the case

of latent social violence, the modern state founded on secular principles of tolerance had to take upon itself the violence of tolerance. In the same way as the society regulates physical violence, it also regulates spiritual violence. This means that a modern state has to integrate safety nets of equidistance, i.e., it has to invent such constitutive rules of coexistence so that no social group can acquire power over the whole social space, either in the physical or spiritual sense. In this sense, it is precisely atheism that represents that "belief" position that is not only worthy of a reflection on its limits of tolerance towards believers, but also deserves to be clearly and loudly defended.

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Tomislav Žigmanov

"God is the God of every person or of none at all!" Karl-Josef Kuschel

1. The mission at hand - ACTIVE PEACEMAKING

Today, more than ever, it is necessary (perhaps urgently needed, al-■ most absolutely necessary, if we observe things and facts from the perspective of recent events) to talk about the most numerous religions and to insist on an open and uncompromising dialogue. We are led to this by the following generally known fact: during all of human history, religion was, in its practice, often far from its own primary mission, which can be programmatically summarized as active *peacemaking*. Put differently, during their histories, religions have often existed either in self-isolation or in aggressive confrontation with others or against others, and rarely have they acted as peacemakers! This is also true of those religious paradigms that have most often come into contact here in Central Europe: thus, of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

ikewise, even today, after hundreds of years of negative experience, ⊿religion has often been used to quite the opposite end – it has been, and still is, reduced to a sort of disturbing or disruptive factor in the relationships between people, nations, cultures and states... In the Middle East, peace does not rule between Jews and Muslims, recently, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a brutal and bloodthirsty war literally raged between Christians and Muslims, the same was recently true also in Chechnya, and, among other things, of the conflict between Christians themselves in Croatia. Northern Ireland is a real paradigm of a lasting conflict between Christians of different denominations. The events of 11 September 2001 not only introduced even more misunderstanding, but – it seems - actually partially even re-opened the hatred between Christians and Muslims on a global scale, a hatred which neither of them contain within themselves and certainly do not propagate.

The German Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel finds the mod-**L** ern features of this "fight" between these religions in the following (non-religious) factors: "nationalism, hatred towards foreigners, religious fanaticism and exclusiveness." Moreover, this learned German claims that these factors have "attained the status of divinities and idols. have become the object of idolatry against which we must fight in the name of the true and living God." This seems somehow familiar and, in many ways, it also seems to be a matter of urgency for us here in Central Europe, does it not?

2. Human weakness - THE SOURCE OF THE MISSION'S BETRAYAL

That seems to be the crucial problem here? Of course, we are dealing with a sort of, indeed radical, betrayal of the true mission. In religious practice, the participants do not hold to the fundamental values of their religions nor to the principles and normative beliefs that have, and I think that everyone knows this, a powerful universal tone and a powerful humanistic character, such as, for example, an emphasis on love, peace, goodness and so on. The definite distortions occur because of human weaknesses, which are manifested in the following ways:

1 Kuschel, Karl-Josef. Spor oko Abrahama: što Židove, kršćane i muslimane dijeli – a što ih ujedinjuje (Sarajevo: Svjetlo riječi, 2000), p. 26.

in everyday life, universal ethical maxims are flippantly reduced to their peculiar meanings; one encounters the functional conception and understanding of the fundamental moral principles of religious paradigms, their practice is approached in an ultimately instrumental way and, here and there, actions based on those values are consciously suspended...

In this context, it is thus clear why the history of religious practice ■ sometimes displays the features of violent fanaticism, paralysing fatalism, irrational exclusivity, the establishment of the demand for absoluteness, the production of mutual aggressiveness and the rejection of one side by another... All of this creates conditions in which misunderstandings multiply among the followers of various religious paradigms: emphasis is placed on unimportant differences, historical troubles resurface, people fall into the trap of ethnocentrism and xenophobia. Yet, the common factor is that it is not the possible weaknesses of religious paradigms that are hidden in the background since the nature of those weaknesses is universal and absolutely inclusive, but that, at their core, there are, above and before all, as we have already said, human weaknesses. That is, human imperfection is the main reason behind all such radicalism, meaning that human *sinfulness* is the cause of all evil and thus of the evil done within religions and between them.

↑ nd yet, there is a marked lack of awareness of this when talking **A**about the thematic flaws and other imperfections in the relations between religions. Indeed, according to the religious view of the world, humans are fundamentally and primordially imperfect, flawed, inclined to sin. In other words, this significant anthropological feature in all these worldviews - the fact of the primary human sin, which is colourfully represented, for example, in Christianity, with the sin of the East – is often overlooked. And this feature should be constantly refreshed in the lives of believers, that is, it should constantly be brought before the mind, thus becoming a living truth, especially when one thinks of the dialogue and cooperative relationships with religious counterparts, in which it appears to be a necessary condition. Why is it so?

Example 1. Karl Jaspers: Because one who is in a state of sin and is aware of that sin loses the following character flaws: pride and arrogance. "Pride is broken ... arrogance becomes impossible," the German philosopher Karl Jaspers says in this context.² These character traits thus become impossible in light of an awareness of one's own sinfulness and they are replaced by *humility*. In other words, behind this standpoint there is the anthropological idea of human conceit, as one of the main localities or sources of sin in the Christian conception, and the idea of humility, the very opposite of conceit, as the locality of the sinless state of a human being. Here, one is arguing in favour of the idea that a human being's constant state of "conceited" pride, which is one of the features of close-mindedness and exclusivity towards other teachings and the comprehension of the Other as such, disappears if one is made aware of one's own sinfulness. It is in that very act, in calling upon one's own sinfulness, that we see the place which opens up the possibility of establishing a dialogue since one thus suspends one's own purity and the need for it, the need for the absoluteness of one's own truths, the correctness of one's own ideas...

Example 2. Miroslav Volf: Coming from quite another position and with other intentions regarding the problem of situating and giving

2 Karl Jaspers, Pitanje krivice (Beograd: FreeB92, 1999), p. 25.

a certain status to knowledge and thus of a dialogic relationship towards others based on the nature of that knowledge, there is the work *Provi*sional Security - the Unique Christ and the Challenges of the Modern Day by Croatian Protestant theologian Miroslav Volf.³ In this work, one finds the same conclusions. This work discusses the challenges of modern epistemology, its foundation on Descartes' famous principles and its definition of truth in terms of understanding Jesus' words that he is "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn.14:6) and what these words mean to the modern believer. In this, Volf takes the standpoint of "provisional security". His starting point is the following: "the only way that we can know whether and to what extent truth and goodness are with others" can be found in the judgement of "their point of view from my own standpoint in light of what we understand as true and good".4 And even though in religion Christ is given as the ultimate and absolute truth, still human cognition of him cannot be absolute cognition nor can it, as a result, contain the ultimate truth, so it consequently has a different relationship to the Other. As a solution, Volf thus offers a standpoint of the provisional validity of human beliefs. He says, "If we understand our viewpoint as being provisionally true, we will have to suppose that other viewpoints are possibly true. Because, if we do not have the right to accept absolutely that right and good are with us (even though we believe this to be the case), we do not have the right to say that the truth and good are not with others." In this, of course, is an implicit recommendation of a position of non-absolute exclusivity towards others and, due to the flaws in the values of our own beliefs, a much more tolerant and open relationship towards others.

³ Cf. Filozofska istraživanja, no. 49 (1993): 441-450.

⁴ Ibid., 448.

⁵ Ibid., 448.

3. On the ecumenical movement IN THE WORLD

any people in various religions and churches all over the world are aware of the abovementioned negative features of religious practice. Not just everyday people, but even their leaders! Finding fundamental fellowship in their own flaws, limitedness, faults, that is, in their own sinfulness, at the same time turning a blind eye to the insignificant differences among them, and with a consciousness of the essence of their own religious purpose and mission, they have been drawn into a variety of efforts to draw closer to one another, to engage in a dialogue and even in cooperative activities.

These efforts are usually called *ecumenical*. From an etymological **L** standpoint, the very concept "ecumene", originally – in classical Greek - signified all the inhabited earth. Thus, in and from this context, it indicates above all a consciousness that always reflects and considers one's own culture and religion in view of the fact that one is globally intertwined with other cultures and religions, basing its action on that. In doing so, one must proceed without a single hint of any sort of a hierarchical status among them. In other words, the ecumene thinks just or only about the responsibility of all people within one single and necessarily equal world community and must act in that way and in that way alone – "anyone who thinks ecumenically therefore thinks in terms of universal interrelatedness, thinks historically about humankind, responsibly about humankind."7

Tet, we will emphasize, here, the fact that such ecumenical efforts do **I** not exist among us. Indeed, in this region, except for a few sporadic,

6 Here, we are using the concept "ecumenical" in the broadest possible sense: the totality of that which is related to activities whose function is to establish dialogue and cooperation among all world religious communities in order to bring them together on a necessarily equal footing. 7 Karl-Josef Kuschel, ibid. p. 212.

some even merely cosmetic efforts here and there, there are no significant ecumenical efforts in developing a dialogue or a sort of drawing closer between the Christian denominations (the degree of distrust and rivalry is still too high!) and even less so between the three abovementioned religions whose common forefather was Abraham. This situation is probably the result of several factors: the emphasis on historical burdens in relationships, a rather marginal experience and a general testing of these religious paradigms, various frustrating elements caused by the small number of members, xenophobia as a result of that, the error of ethnocentrism as an expression of belatedness in nation building... All of these are at hand and, for ecumenism, one needs a critical view of one's own past, an avoidance of religious fanaticism, the development of a consensus on common values and an active readiness to stand up for the general good. This, unfortunately, is often missing here, or rather it cannot be brought about because of the existence and predominance of the factors mentioned above.

bove all, for inter-religious dialogue and cooperation, the above-Imentioned attribute of a religion's *self-critical standpoint* towards its own past, but also towards its present, is most necessary (for example, through openly admitting that in all religions there are believers who extol arrogance and conflict instead of cooperation and understanding, thus making all sorts of exclusivity evident). In other words, at the beginning of every ecumenical project, there must be a reflection on taking part in the blame for all the existing evil in the world by each religion individually and then a clear statement of intention to overcome that state.8 The latter can be achieved, according to Kuschel, only if those who believe, regardless of their religion, hold to the following necessary

8 Ibid., p. 339.

moral-ethical principles, which actually follow on from those very values: first, a commitment to a culture of non-violence and especially of respect for life, second, a commitment to a culture of solidarity and justice in the global economic order, third, a commitment to tolerance and life in truthfulness and *last* a commitment to a culture of *equal rights* and the partnership of men and women.⁹

n the other hand, in order for the ecumene to be established, it is necessary to invest effort in becoming familiar with and studying other religions. From this standpoint, there is clearly no theological agreement without comprehensive mutual knowledge and lasting mutual readiness for learning more. There is no ecumenical dialogue unless the existence of others is taken as a given and unless one stops looking at others only from one's own point of view. In other words, Kuschel says, "a theology is needed which allows people in religions to maintain their own truth statements in a reasonable way without excluding or satanizing other demands for truth."10 In fact, all of this becomes possible, as we have already said, if we are made aware of our own sinfulness, thus removing the element of immaculateness and the desire for absoluteness. It is indeed "an all-encompassing knowledge about one another, mutual respect, mutual responsibility and mutual cooperation. The fundamental theological prerequisite for this is that people in religions see one another as members of a single human family of whom God demands and seeks a special path towards him."11 (my emphasis)

A Concrete example: In the introduction to the Charta Oecumenica,12 it is stated explicitly in that sense that "we must not be satisfied with this situation...we intend to do our utmost to overcome the prob-

⁹ The measure for this was established in the declaration Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration, passed by the Parliament of World Religions on 4 September 1993 in Chicago. It was adopted by the representatives of most of the major religions. This declaration itself rests on the fact that in each of them, in spite of the possible differences in content, there are very similar ethical foundations, which in the form of demands bring before believers binding directives for concrete action.

¹⁰ Karl-Josef Kuschel, ibid., p. 221.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 217.

¹² A large number of Christian denominations adopted a minimum of mutual principles and the

lems and obstacles that still divide the churches". In the second part, which talks about the visible fellowship of the churches in Europe, the following claim is made: "we must reappraise together the history of the Christian churches, which has been marked by many beneficial experiences but also by schisms, hostilities and even armed conflicts. Human guilt, lack of love and the frequent abuse of faith and the church for political interests have severely damaged the credibility of the Christian witness. Ecumenism therefore begins for Christians with the renewal of our hearts and the willingness to repent and change our ways. The ecumenical movement has already helped to spread reconciliation." Towards the end, when speaking about the mutual responsibility of all religions in Europe, they follow with this: "Through the centuries Europe has developed a primarily Christian character in religious and cultural terms. However, Christians have failed to prevent suffering and destruction from being inflicted by Europeans, both within Europe and beyond. We confess our share of responsibility for this guilt and ask God and our fellow human beings for forgiveness. Our faith helps us to learn from the past, and to make our Christian faith and love for our neighbours a source of hope for morality and ethics, for education and culture, and for political and economic life, in Europe and throughout the world." A little later when discussing Judaism, they say: "We deplore and condemn all manifestations of anti-Semitism, all outbreaks of hatred and persecutions. We ask God for forgiveness for anti-Jewish attitudes among Christians, and we ask our Jewish sisters and brothers for reconciliation." About Islam they say: "Muslims have lived in Europe for centuries. In some European countries they constitute strong minorities. While there have been plenty of good contacts and neighbourly relations between

groundwork by which they must treat each other, aimed at increasing their sense of community. On 22 April 2001 in Strasbourg, they signed the so-called Charta Oecumenica. In the name of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE), this was done by the presiding president, Czech Cardinal Miroslav Vlk, while it was signed by Metripolitan Jeremie, in the name of the Conference of European Churches (CEC). With this Charter, these European churches committed to nurturing their fellowship that flourished among them in spite of everything. More can be read about this in my paper "On the Charta Oecumenica here and now", in: Religija & tolerancija (no. 1, Novi Sad 2004): 46-54.

Muslims and Christians, and this remains the case, there are still strong reservations and prejudices on both sides. These are rooted in painful experiences throughout history and in the recent past." The stand is taken for a commitment to meet Muslims with respect and to work together with them on mutual problems.

4. Outweighing the particular - THE MODERN STATE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Then the modern nation states were being created, which ran parallel to powerful secular overtones, the productive influences of religious factors on the events and developments in society had not completely ceased to exist. Thus, religious affiliation of societal members remained at the heart of all kinds of relations and discourse since a significant differentiation in society was carried out along the lines of religious affiliation. This was especially marked in those states that, at the end of the 20th century, departed from the anti-secular social project in the form of socialism. Indeed, they even found significant support for the construction of a new social project in the facts of various religious conceptions, which was the case also with Serbia. These conceptions were usually found in recalling and raising awareness about the historical religious heritage, through lending significance to religious institutional forms in modern political practice and, ultimately, in the implanting of religious values and principles into the programmes of political parties. In this way, actually, emphasis was again placed on the significance of religious dichotomies in society. Furthermore, this had an influence on

their concrete positioning in social dynamics and their taking up positions in political structures and the distribution of power in society.

↑ nd yet, these processes and phenomena belong only to the sphere of social *phenomenology*. Therefore, it seems important to ask what hides behind that phenomenology or what is the essence of a discourse about any form of existence of such social relations? Simply stated, we are talking about the relationship to the other: The focus in the process of social construction is on establishing the other, who significantly differs from me in some way. The possible relationships themselves that appear towards thusly constructed other are in fact multifarious. This then means that there legitimately exists not only the theoretical-receptive stand towards the other, but that the relation to the other is brought about in an essentially different way - above all, through the overall wealth in the pulsing of the practical aspects of human life.

The very possibility of there existing a sort of encounter with the oth-L er in the form of a collective subject lies in the fact that the conceptual models of identity formation of each socially determined being in modern society are often, if not exclusively, those of a group, so that otherness is also produced in an abstract form. In other words, the identity formation matrices in a social milieu, which are often multifarious, leave a powerful collective mark on their members (the so-called collective identity, in the form of language, religion, culture, gender...), but at the same time they enable a mediated existence of the other in an abstract form, one that certainly serves as a signifier for almost all the members of a certain group. Thus, for example, it is enough to know one of the collective indicators (nationality, religious affiliation...) for a person to appear as the already "familiar" other.13

13 Still, we are duty bound to mention the following: the other does not always seem to be who they really are, but only as they give themselves to us. Indeed, our standpoint is that the cognition of the others as they really are is, in fact, impossible. It is impossible not just because of the flawed character of our own cognitive powers (which would be the classic Kantian standpoint), but also because the other always contains an outer layer that is never quite transparent. In other words, it only seems that the other is significantly different - not in the complete certainty of the knowledge of all that is different, that is, of what that other really is, but because of the essential non-transparency of the other, so it is a matter of the validity of our conception of the other (which is therefore the classical hermeneutic standpoint), result-

That is equally significant is that, because there is a plurality of identity models, significant particular differences are established between people in these cases of socially determined identity constructions, enabling a variety of differentiations among members of society. It is essential that we keep this in mind since it has long been known that each individual particular culture (every religion being such) establishes a strict plausibility of its demands for a single, "its own" truth, which then through a unified production shapes its own world, not only the individual as such but whole communities. The existence of an individual human being in the active network of identity matrices in society sets the conditions for the acquisition of particular collective identity models of the members of that society. In addition, the productive social reality with such features also has the pretension to assimilate or (often in a more brutal way) exclude the other and the different that are found in the milieu.

Tn fact, the very process of establishing an identity matrix proceeds by Levay of a complex and varied socialization of the members of society, thus via the simple belonging of an individual to a given social matrix that is, from one's earliest childhood, adopted in various indirect ways. Such a person is then said to be somehow rooted in some form of particularity (national, religious, cultural...). And yet, we should also not overlook the abovementioned fact that the process of establishing a collective identity always develops in a concrete social milieu in which access to the very power of identity formation is varied and this sets the conditions for the creation of *inequality* in the process – the matrices of the majority that are adopted have an advantage over those of the minority.

ing in the relativisation of the differences and thus an open and well-intentioned approach to the other.

5. Towards a positive ACCEPTANCE OF THE OTHER - THE CASE OF CHRISTIANITY

The forms or ways of *encountering* the other, which can thus take on different forms in its own reality, can be multi-faceted. Thus, we are dealing with the cognitive-receptive and therefore varied domain of the practical. However, the tolerant real acceptance of the other is the most complex demand of all. At the same time, it speaks also of the most essential form of a relation towards the other. Indeed, the phrase "complex demand" indicates that the true acceptance of the other presupposes the deconstruction of all, and thus obviously "our", one-sidedness, which is an essential part of all particular identity matrices (national, religious, ethnic...). The essence of all one-sidedness is its exclusive tendency, which is primarily focused on that which is one's own. Of course, because of the nature of the other, the encounter with them - in the sense of accepting and allowing them to exist and being with them - does not occur only at the level of particular relationships between individuals, but also takes place at the level of the collective, in a concrete social atmosphere. This is then also much more complex and mediated since it dovetails into the power structure of a given society and is dominantly burdened by the standing production-ideological relations, but also by the existing weltanschauung paradigms that do not always have to be connected to the principles of Christian values, which is, as we all know, often precisely the case.

s a starting point in our interpretation, we shall take up the position that Christianity – as a paradigm of religion and faith – addresses every person on earth. This means, then, that Christianity, having experienced in its own historical development the problem of encountering and addressing the other, is familiar with the problem. We find this in texts that characterise the Old Testament Jews as foreigners, that is, as being captured in the position of the other. As an illustration of this, we can quote a passage from the Old Testament: "Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads" (Jer. 35:7).14 Of course, here, the focus is on a concrete form of a believer's earthly sojourn in a foreign land although the meaning of the "foreigner's" earthly stay was to change radically in the New Testament, in the sense that the entire particularity of human life on earth was to become ephemeral in every way - as a sojourn in an inappropriate place, that is, a human being on earth was to be in the position of a stranger. This is because, in the New Testament paradigm, the true home of the believer is connected to heaven, as confirmed by Paul's words, "But our citizenship is in heaven," (Phil. 3:20) or also, "And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth" (Heb. 11:13).

Towever, we are also interested in the question of the *nature* of Lathe relationship towards strangers. 15 The OT understanding can be summarized in the following statements: "Do not oppress an alien; you yourselves know how it feels to be aliens, because you were aliens in Egypt" (Ex. 23:9); then, "I love foreign gods, and I must go after them" (Jer. 2:25); "Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow" (Jer. 22:3); and "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against... those who...deprive aliens of justice" (Mal.

¹⁴ All Biblical quotes are taken from the NIV (on-line version); http://www.biblegateway.com/. 15 Cf. Alpara Losoncza, "Mogućnosti hrišćanske kulture," Habitus, no. 3-4 (2001). We should note that a large portion of our interpretive paradigm borrows heavily from his principles and this will be clearly indicated later in this paper.

3:5). Obviously, all the quoted examples indicate that a positive acceptance of foreigners is deeply rooted in Christianity, as far back as the OT. It can then be concluded that a positive and open "communication with a foreigner (and that in the light of salvation!) is a paradigmatic principle in Christianity."16

The abovementioned NT paradigm of the believers' heavenly home-■ land consequently results in the position "of the necessity of deconstructing the humans feeling at home in the world, deconstructing the deposited meaning that defines the process of taking action in the world."¹⁷ This greatly strengthens the teaching about the single father of all people and the idea of their primordial equality. Indeed, all forms of the worldly particular differences appear to be worthless in relation to, on the one hand, the principle of equality among people as *individuals*, the undifferentiated spiritual essence that all people possess,18 while, on the other hand, the existence of a single father (God) leads us to the understanding of the other as a brother, meaning that the community of people in Christianity is a brotherhood, regardless of their earthly particularities.

C) uch an understanding of the insignificance of worldly differences is even more powerfully affirmed by the Christian conception of salvation. The Christian paradigm of the teaching of salvation "indicates a specific all-encompassing inclusive structure (...) Jesus shows, literally, infinite interest in each person. The care he showed to everyone creates universal inclusion, which presupposes *compassionate* openness towards the uniqueness of each other person (...) The subjects of Jesus' attention were typically the displaced, that is, those who had found no rest, so "the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame" (Luke 14:21). In

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸For more about this, see my article "Filozofijska recepcija problema odnosa religioznosti i pojmova osoba i ličnost", Crkva u svijetu, no. 3 (2000): 301-315.

such an environment, one abstracts from all the experiential traits of a person, that is, from empirical differences, regardless of whether they have to do with professional status, economic position, ethnic affiliation or even gender - Paul's famous claim proves this undeniably ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"; Gal. 3:28). (...) If innovation in Christianity's approach is to be sought, it should actually be defined by this radical universal inclusiveness."19

byiously, you can see from this that Christianity does not recognize, in the slightest, any kind of exclusive one-sidedness towards the other who is different from me or us due to some particular characteristic. Moreover, faith in its Christian form, as we have seen, explicitly does not allow this. Faith only and primarily presupposes a relationship of love and solidarity with others, in everything and regarding everything, if we are on the path to understanding Christianity in the spirit of the New Testament. We just have to remember Jesus' instruction that we love everyone, even our enemies, as Matthew tells us (Mt. 5:44). As for the other model of relationships with others – that is, solidarity – we can say that the Christian nature of solidarity is such that it essentially stimulates the human believer to be in solidarity with all the members of the faithful community in everything, including pain, as attested by the words of the Apostle Paul according to which all are equal in faith, even in that. Thus, understanding the community of believers - metaphorically - as one body symbolised by Christ, Paul says that if even one part of the body suffers, then everyone suffers with it (I Cor. 12:26).20 This seems a bit absurd if one observes and understands it in view of exclusive forms of the particular and essentially worldly identity models and of the

20 Ibid.

established weltanschauung paradigms that exist today.

This, in many ways paradoxical, principle of "love and solidarity in L everything and regarding everything" with others, especially in the conceptual context of the dispersive and exclusive particular secular models, becomes completely "logical" and seems to be taken for granted if one accepts the very essence of Christian teaching, which must be one of the characteristics of those who believe. Then, it will be clearly seen that *love* is the most important relationship established towards the other in Christianity and that the task is to build that relationship towards others on an individual level. As it is generally known, the most important form of the imperative of Christian love is in Matthew's gospel, "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself!'" (Mt. 22: 37-39). In other words, Christian love, as the driving and singular proper form of relationships towards the other, can be summarized in the vision of the Christian ethical paradigm in the famous "Golden Rule" of Christian morality, which says, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Mt. 7:12). This consequently means a radical acceptance of the other – an equally active relationship towards the other as one builds towards oneself.

Tor, the fundamental feature of Christian love is that it is primarily understood and defined as a giving relationship and this is done "without the anticipation of a return gesture. In it, there are no elements of a mutual structure, rather the giving is defined as *unconditional* love, that is, the unconditional state of openness in terms of love."21 And it offers what others lack - one must feed the hungry, give water to the

21 Ibid.

thirsty, clothe the naked, take in the traveller, as the Biblical example suggests. In this way, actually, the meaning of Christian love is laid bare, as a relationship of serving and not dominating one another. Indeed, the meaning of Christian love is inspired by the statements "never enough", "always more" and "ever closer". In this sense, the words of St. Augustine apply, "Whoever says 'that's enough' once is doomed to failure". Therefore, Christian love is not emotional and static, rather it is active in seeking the true acceptance and good of the other.



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ISAAC'S SACRIFICE ILLUMINATED

(ON THE TOPIC OF DIVIDED GOD)

Aleksij Kobal

od has many faces. So many faces we cannot fit all of them into a Isingle positive image, even though we wish to do so. We see the most sincere of God's faces when we try to be intimate with Him and entrust ourselves to Him. We get to know a different face when we look at the exotic religions of our neighbours or when we watch the daily news, reporting on the bloody battles for one's own and the only true image of God. We familiarise ourselves with mercy and ruthlessness reflected on God's face during our hardships and pleads. We recognise the whole bizarreness of religious institutions, which manipulate with ignorance and the fear of afterlife. God's benevolence, described in many religious tomes, is a most eluding quality, which people resort to when they seek to find reasons for God's - at times - bizarre actions. We want Him to be responsible for the things that we should be responsible for ourselves. And nevertheless, regardless of all this, we face a strategic dilemma: should we throw away the promised heavenly holidays by being disobedient or shall we cowardly seek shelter in the luxurious labyrinths of church buildings.

Tt is difficult to choose the right way in the peculiar Tower of Babel that L we ended up in during the 20th and 21st centuries, after having succeeded in enviably increasing our own horizons and having witnessed the infinity of space. Even God had to adapt to new dimensions and redefine Himself. We now live in a world of multiple truths and we have renounced what was the only superior truth until now - God's truth.

What does this mean? Could all these new truths be various faces of God?

In this throng of civilisations, it is by all means useful to explain the Levorld in an abstract and empirical manner, up to a certain degree, regardless of how religious we are and which religion we belong to. If I think about God with European roots, I see a myriad of images and stories, making up a huge myth about God. We cannot spend a day without some image of God reaching us from somewhere, reminding us of our dialogue with God; and if there are no images, then our guilty conscience may easily remind us that we indulged more than God's teachings let us.

Tt is easier to behold the mystery of God through the material world Lasurrounding us and to feel unburdened awe at the exquisite beam of afternoon light, shining through our window and warming our soul. Is there anything godlike about it? Through history, artists frequently painted light as a substitute or an allegoric depiction of God's presence. All the nuances of light painted in the works of Caravaggio and Rembrandt express God's inspiration, transferred into concrete space. Therefore, light is the messenger, the bringer of God's messages, Hermes, miraculously impregnating Marv.

"Let there be light!" God said.

Tf we digress, for a moment, from the spiritual and enter the empiri-Lacal world of science, we see that, there, light is also an extraordinary phenomenon. With its unimaginable speed of 300,000 kilometres per second, it defines the present moment, here and now, ensuring the conditions for life, on the basis of which we try to comprehend this world and integrate it into a manageable scheme of our experience and conceptions. We know that the concept of reality fails as soon as we travel a few light years from Earth. We enter the realm of relativity.

But let us return to the spiritual nature of light. Let us focus on the familiar biblical story of Abraham and Isaac.

The constant testing of human attitude and unconditional devotion is also one of the faces of God. He commanded Abraham to father a child with a much younger Sarah, later Sarai. Abraham loved his son very much, perhaps even more than his God, so God presented him with a new trial, hard without comparison.

He should sacrifice his son Isaac to him. Of course, Abraham feels terrible, but his devotion to God finally makes him leave for the mountains with his son, where they are supposed to offer the customary lamb. However, the closer they get to the altar, the quieter Abraham becomes. He finds it hard to respond to Isaac's enquiries about how they are to sacrifice a lamb when there are none around. Araham does not respond and the tension mounts. The hardest moment arrives when the father looks into his son's eyes. His silence and his inexorable, grief-stricken gaze reveals his true intentions to Isaac. Isaac is shockingly calm; he knows what awaits him, but on the other hand he trusts his father - whatever happens, his father would not let him suffer. However, Abraham's soul is in hell, the battle with himself stays his hand reaching for the dagger. But the knife finally comes to light - Abraham in emotional agony - a stretched-out arm mercilessly plunges the knife into Isaac's heart. It is the end. Abraham collapses into the pool of blood next to his dead son and roars in desperation.

fter a few painfully long minutes, a strange light shines upon Abraham. An angel's voice speaks out: "Stop, Abraham! Do not harm your son, for I love him as much as I love you!"

That may be so, but it is too late, scientists would say if they presumed ▲ light travelled only as slowly as three metres per second. Quickly in our personal domain, but too slowly to save Isaac. Reality itself would probably dissolve if that were so. Or, perhaps, it would be radically different. Moments of direct perception and action would only take place in our immediate vicinity, inside a three-metre circle, while everything else would become an illusion of reality. Anything we saw further than three metres away would have already been long gone. Predators would chase their prev in vain. The food chain would be fatally distorted and reality as we know it would disappear, as probably would life itself, too.

Qure, sure, but this is only fiction. Of course, it is. However, it illus-Trates that light, in all of its scientific beauty, on the one hand, and in the role of God's messenger, on the other, only works in the immediate vicinity of Earth. Here, God can maintain His sense of perfection and only care about being constantly perfect, as Aristotle already expained. However, as soon as we imagine Isaac's story further in space and imagine God as the source of our own light, as that characteristic messenger, the mentioned scenario might take place - the light might get there too late.

D ut, perhaps, it is not so. Maybe God oversees the whole universe and Dalways calculates everything, so that it turns out just right. Well, if we are prepared to flatter Him by believing in such consistency, why then do we not overlook His inconsistencies? Despite the written moral codex He intended for people, He allows his institutional servants to be manipulated in a terrible manner. But, perhaps, we do not like a relative God. Of course, then He would not represent such flawless superiority, vouching for us and taking care of everything in our stead. He would simply be fallible and – as such – he could not be an ideal for His worshippers.

But what would we do without flaws?

There is also an interesting story about the race for time. Measuring L the cycles of celestial bodies, placing them in the context of Earth's coordinates and establishing an accurate calendar was one of the most difficult tasks in the long history of mankind. It was not until the reform of Pope Gregory XIII that mankind came closest to an accurate calendar; however, if Pope Gregory XIII saw how we today measure time with an atomic clock, which registers the oscillations of a radioactive element and which is so precise it discovers deviations in Earth's rotation around its axis, he would at least briefly ask himself about the perfect nature of God

\ od, who created a perfect world, is not actually precise. A clever Thuman invention proves his negligence. Time, which God is supposed to measure his universal kingdom with and which he uses to define the precise dimensions that mankind should adhere to, gets used for the opposite goal. With it, mankind measures its God; it ascertains His imprecision, discovers mathematical inconsistencies and thus unknowingly ascribes him a frailty characteristic of humans.

Or, to put it more simply:

Ts it not easier to recognise one's own human fragility in someone else? ▲ Do we not feel safer if we ascribe self-confidence and psychical stability to God, our partner or our teacher?

retainly. It is far easier to recognise all of our characteristics, wishes ✓and fears in others instead of identifying them within ourselves. It is far easier to take one's dirty laundry to the cleaner's and pay for the services than to wash it at home. It is much easier to recognise aspects of ourselves as sin and wash them away in church instead of having the courage to face them ourselves.

Why? What are we afraid of? The unknown, darkness, loneliness?

It is not possible to live without fear and a certain amount of ignorance, but, despite that, we can create a bearable context for our lives, which will not push us to the extremes. We would certainly feel better if we shared our fears with others instead of unloading them onto God, waiting for Him to deliver us from suffering.

od would probably also be upset if Isaac's story took place in the Imanner it was described in the above text. Perhaps, in His quandary, He would feel the need to confide in someone.

There is no sense in perfection or superiority; these are only con-Lealed human wishes responsible for the vast amounts of harm caused during all of human history in the name of the divine.

Ultimately, it is not important at all whether God exists or not. We can still recognise Him as light shining upon our existence or we may choose not to. What is important is that we learn how to cope with our fear of the unknown ourselves and how to enter the exciting and nevertheless divine areas of our undiscovered reality, carrying good intentions within us. God in human form is still more acceptable than the one above Him.



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ecrying the persistence of religious prejudice as a barrier to global peace and prosperity, the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith, the Universal House of Justice, in April 2002, addressed a message to the world's religious leaders, transmitting its appeal that they act decisively on the need to eradicate religious intolerance and fanaticism.

The message points out that religious prejudice persists, triggering ▲ a crisis that should compel religious leaders to make a "break with the past as decisive as those that opened the way for society to address equally corrosive prejudices of race, gender and nation."

Tith this statement, the Bahá'í community offers assistance in working for religious unity to which the interfaith movement has been aspiring. The message fits well into the Dived God project, as it questions the role of religious leaders in promoting tolerance and overcoming conflicts since these do not pertain to the domain of religions themselves, but are, due to their personal interests, created by those who are in position of authority in various religions.

The abovementioned statement is so powerful and insightful that we L have chosen to share here some of its parts instead of commenting on it. We hope the reader will agree with us.

To The World's Religious Leaders

The enduring legacy of the twentieth century is that it compelled the peoples of the world to begin seeing themselves as members of a single human race, and the earth as that race's common homeland. Despite the continuing conflict and violence that darken the horizon, prejudices that once seemed inherent in the nature of the human species are everywhere giving way. Down with them come barriers that long divided the family of man into a Babel of incoherent identities of cultural, ethnic or national origin. That so fundamental a change could occur in so brief a period — virtually overnight in the perspective of historical time — suggests the magnitude of the possibilities for the future.

Tragically, organized religion, whose very reason for being entails service to the cause of brotherhood and peace, behaves all too frequently as one of the most formidable obstacles in the path; to cite a particular painful fact, it has long lent its credibility to fanaticism. This poses a challenge for religious leadership.

The suggestion that all of the world's great religions are equally valid in nature and origin is stubbornly resisted by entrenched patterns of sectarian thought. So fundamental a reorientation religious leadership appears, for the most part, unable to undertake. Other segments of society embrace the implications of the oneness of humankind, not only as the inevitable next step in the advancement of civilization, but as the fulfilment of lesser identities of every kind that our race brings to this critical moment in our collective history. Yet, the greater part of organized religion stands paralysed at the threshold of the future, gripped in those very dogmas and claims of privileged access to truth that have been responsible for creating some of the most bitter conflicts dividing the earth's inhabitants.

The consequences, in terms of human well-being, have been ruinous. It is surely unnecessary to cite in detail the horrors being visited upon hapless populations today by outbursts of fanaticism that shame the name of religion. Nor is the phenomenon a recent one. To take only

one of many examples, Europe's sixteenth century wars of religion cost that continent the lives of some thirty percent of its entire population. One must wonder what has been the longer term harvest of the seeds planted in popular consciousness by the blind forces of sectarian dogmatism that inspired such conflicts.

To this accounting must be added a betrayal of the life of the mind which, more than any other factor, has robbed religion of the capacity it inherently possesses to play a decisive role in the shaping of world affairs. Locked into preoccupation with agendas that disperse and vitiate human energies, religious institutions have too often been the chief agents in discouraging exploration of reality and the exercise of those intellectual faculties that distinguish humankind. Denunciations of materialism or terrorism are of no real assistance in coping with the contemporary moral crisis if they do not begin by addressing candidly the failure of responsibility that has left believing masses exposed and vulnerable to these influences.

Such reflections, however painful, are less an indictment of organized religion than a reminder of the unique power it represents. Religion, as we are all aware, reaches to the roots of motivation. When it has been faithful to the spirit and example of the transcendent Figures who gave the world its great belief systems, it has awakened in whole populations capacities to love, to forgive, to create, to dare greatly, to overcome prejudice, to sacrifice for the common good and to discipline the impulses of animal instinct. Unquestionably, the seminal force in the civilizing of human nature has been the influence of the succession of these Manifestations of the Divine that extends back to the dawn of recorded history.

This same force, which operated with such effect in ages past, re-▲ mains an inextinguishable feature of human consciousness. Against all odds, and with little in the way of meaningful encouragement, it continues to sustain the struggle for survival of uncounted millions, and to raise up in all lands heroes and saints whose lives are the most persuasive vindication of the principles contained in the scriptures of their respective faiths. As the course of civilization demonstrates, religion is also capable of profoundly influencing the structure of social relationships. Indeed, it would be difficult to think of any fundamental advance in civilization that did not derive its moral thrust from this perennial source. Is it conceivable, then, that passage to the culminating stage in the millennia-long process of the organization of the planet can be accomplished in a spiritual vacuum? If the perverse ideologies let loose on our world during the century just past contributed nothing else, they demonstrated conclusively that the need cannot be met by alternatives that lie within the power of human invention.

The implications for today are summed up by Bahá'u'lláh, the Proph-L et-Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, in words written over a century ago and widely disseminated in the intervening decades:

There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of ▲ whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them, except a few which are the outcome of human perversity, were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose. Arise and, armed with the power of faith, shatter to pieces the gods of your

vain imaginings, the sowers of dissension amongst you. Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you.

Such an appeal does not call for abandonment of faith in the fundamental verities of any of the world's great belief systems. Far otherwise. Faith has its own imperative and is its own justification. What others believe — or do not believe — cannot be the authority in any individual conscience worthy of the name. What the above words do unequivocally urge is renunciation of all those claims to exclusivity or finality that, in winding their roots around the life of the spirit, have been the greatest single factor in suffocating impulses to unity and in promoting hatred and violence.

Tt is to this historic challenge that leaders of religion must respond if ▲ religious leadership is to have meaning in the global society emerging from the transformative experiences of the twentieth century. It is evident that growing numbers of people are coming to realize that the truth underlying all religions is in its essence one. This recognition arises not through a resolution of theological disputes, but as an intuitive awareness born from the ever widening experience of others and from a dawning acceptance of the oneness of the human family itself. Out of the welter of religious doctrines, rituals and legal codes inherited from vanished worlds, there is emerging a sense that spiritual life, like the oneness manifest in diverse nationalities, races and cultures, constitutes one unbounded reality equally accessible to everyone. In order for this diffuse and still tentative perception to consolidate itself and contribute effectively to the building of a peaceful world, it must have the wholehearted confirmation of those to whom, even at this late hour, masses of the earth's population look for guidance.

There are certainly wide differences among the world's major religious traditions with respect to social ordinances and forms of worship. Given the thousands of years during which successive revelations of the Divine have addressed the changing needs of a constantly evolving civilization, it could hardly be otherwise. Indeed, an inherent feature of the scriptures of most of the major faiths would appear to be the expression, in some form or other, of the principle of religion's evolutionary nature. What cannot be morally justified is the manipulation of cultural legacies that were intended to enrich spiritual experience, as a means to arouse prejudice and alienation. The primary task of the soul will always be to investigate reality, to live in accordance with the truths of which it becomes persuaded and to accord full respect to the efforts of others to do the same.

It may be objected that, if all the great religions are to be recognized as equally Divine in origin, the effect will be to encourage, or at least to facilitate, the conversion of numbers of people from one religion to another. Whether or not this is true, it is surely of peripheral importance when set against the opportunity that history has at last opened to those who are conscious of a world that transcends this terrestrial one — and against the responsibility that this awareness imposes. Each of the great faiths can adduce impressive and credible testimony to its efficacy in nurturing moral character. Similarly, no one could convincingly argue that doctrines attached to one particular belief system have been either more or less prolific in generating bigotry and superstition than those attached to any other. In an integrating world, it is natural that patterns of response and association will undergo a continuous process of shifting, and the role of institutions, of whatever kind, is surely to consider how

these developments can be managed in a way that promotes unity. The guarantee that the outcome will ultimately be sound — spiritually, morally and socially — lies in the abiding faith of the unconsulted masses of the earth's inhabitants that the universe is ruled not by human caprice, but by a loving and unfailing Providence.

Together with the crumbling of barriers separating peoples, our age is witnessing the dissolution of the once insuperable wall that the past assumed would forever separate the life of Heaven from the life of Earth. The scriptures of all religions have always taught the believer to see in service to others not only a moral duty, but an avenue for the soul's own approach to God. Today, the progressive restructuring of society gives this familiar teaching new dimensions of meaning. As the age-old promise of a world animated by principles of justice slowly takes on the character of a realistic goal, meeting the needs of the soul and those of society will increasingly be seen as reciprocal aspects of a mature spiritual life.

I freligious leadership is to rise to the challenge that this latter perception represents, such response must begin by acknowledging that religion and science are the two indispensable knowledge systems through which the potentialities of consciousness develop. Far from being in conflict with one another, these fundamental modes of the mind's exploration of reality are mutually dependent and have been most productive in those rare but happy periods of history when their complementary nature has been recognized and they have been able to work together. The insights and skills generated by scientific advance will have always to look to the guidance of spiritual and moral commitment to ensure their appropriate application; religious convictions, no matter how cherished

they may be, must submit, willingly and gratefully, to impartial testing by scientific methods.

T Te come finally to an issue that we approach with some diffidence as it touches most directly on conscience. Among the many temptations the world offers, the test that has, not surprisingly, preoccupied religious leaders is that of exercising power in matters of belief. No one who has dedicated long years to earnest meditation and study of the scriptures of one or another of the great religions requires any further reminder of the oft-repeated axiom regarding the potentiality of power to corrupt and to do so increasingly as such power grows. The unheralded inner victories won in this respect by unnumbered clerics all down the ages have no doubt been one of the chief sources of organized religion's creative strength and must rank as one of its highest distinctions. To the same degree, surrender to the lure of worldly power and advantage, on the part of other religious leaders, has cultivated a fertile breeding ground for cynicism, corruption and despair among all who observe it. The implications for the ability of religious leadership to fulfil its social responsibility at this point in history need no elaboration.

Because it is concerned with the ennobling of character and the harmonizing of relationships, religion has served throughout history as the ultimate authority in giving meaning to life. In every age, it has cultivated the good, reproved the wrong and held up, to the gaze of all those willing to see, a vision of potentialities as yet unrealised. From its counsels the rational soul has derived encouragement in overcoming limits imposed by the world and in fulfilling itself. As the name implies, religion has simultaneously been the chief force binding diverse peoples together in ever larger and more complex societies through which the

individual capacities thus released can find expression. The great advantage of the present age is the perspective that makes it possible for the entire human race to see this civilizing process as a single phenomenon, the ever-recurring encounters of our world with the world of God.

Inspired by this perspective, the Bahá'í community has been a vigorous promoter of interfaith activities from the time of their inception. Apart from cherished associations that these activities create, Bahá'ís see in the struggle of diverse religions to draw closer together a response to the Divine Will for a human race that is entering on its collective maturity. The members of our community will continue to assist in every way we can. We owe it to our partners in this common effort, however, to state clearly our conviction that interfaith discourse, if it is to contribute meaningfully to healing the ills that afflict a desperate humanity, must now address honestly and without further evasion the implications of the over-arching truth that called the movement into being: that God is one and that, beyond all diversity of cultural expression and human interpretation, religion is likewise one.

With every day that passes, danger grows that the rising fires of religious prejudice will ignite a worldwide conflagration the consequences of which are unthinkable. Such a danger the civil government, unaided, cannot overcome. Nor should we delude ourselves that appeals for mutual tolerance can alone hope to extinguish animosities that claim to possess Divine sanction. The crisis calls on religious leadership for a break with the past as decisive as those that opened the way for society to address equally corrosive prejudices of race, gender and nation. Whatever justification exists for exercising influence in matters of conscience lies in serving the well-being of humankind. At this greatest turning

point in the history of civilization, the demands of such service could not be more clear. "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable", Bahá'u'lláh urges, "unless and until its unity is firmly established."



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DIVIDED GOD



Preliminary Meetings and Exchanges

PRELIMINARY MEETINGS:

Istanbul, 12 – 14 January 2007 Berlin, 26 February – 1 March 2007 Ljubljana, 17 - 19 April 2007 Novi Sad, Mostar, 27 April – 3 May 2007 Berlin, 7 – 9 September 2007 Istanbul, 18 – 22 February 2008

EXCHANGES:

Mostar, 11 - 17 July 2007 Novi Sad, 17 - 23 July 2007 Ljubljana, 23 July – 5 August 2007 Berlin, 25 October – 4 November 2007 Istanbul, 10 - 16 April 2008

Lectures and Discussions

Mostar, July 2007:

PAVAROTTI CENTRE

Husein Oručević: About the Divided Cities in the Region With Special Emphasis on the City of Mostar Adem Kargo: History of Bosnia and Herzegovina Drago Pilsel: Political Theology - Theology of National

Anti-Myth (The Role of Religion in War and Post-War Period)

Drago Pilsel: Spirituality Lived Healthily: From Fascism to Anti-Fascism!

Novi Sad, July 2007:

BLACK HOUSE / CK 13

Mirko or ević: The Influence of the Orthodox Church in

Serbia.

Petar Atanacković: On the History of Vojvodina Dragan Prole: On the Multicultural History of Novi

Tomislav Žigmanov: Towards a Positive Acceptance of Religious Differences

Dr Zorica Kuburić: The Role of Religion in Identity Formation and Social Distancing in the Balkans Presentation of the REZ magazine: Željko Bodrožić and Tanja Matić

LJUBLJANA, JULY/AUGUST 2007:

DIC GALLERY AND KREATORIJ

Janus Pintarič: The History of Religion in Slovenia Zoran Jankovič: Discussion with the Participants Dr Rajko Muršič: Indestructible Religiousness in Confronting Atheism: The Limits of Tolerance and the Traps of Belief

Dr Zorica Kuburić: The Role of Religion in the Contemporary World and its Relation Towards Tolerance and Conflict Situations

BERLIN, OCTOBER 2007:

MÜNZSALON

Short lectures and discussion: Azra Akašamija, Boris Buden, Klaus Buchenau,

Zoran Terzić: True Believers? The Political Renaissance of Religion and Cultural Identity

ISTANBUL, APRIL 2007:

BILGI UNIVERSITY

Dr Kenan Çayır: Islamic Movements and Changing Identities in Turkey

Dr Ferhat Kentel: Wearing the Headscarf and the Turkish School System

Visits/Excursions

(In chronological order)

Serbian Orthodox Seminary, Sremski Karlovci, Serbia

Memorial Park Potočari, Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Pilgrims Place of the Apparition of the Virgin Mary – Medjugorje, Bosnia and Herzegovina Tekke – Historic Site of the Order of Dervishes, Blagaj, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Islamic Community, Ljubljana, Slovenia Christian Adventist Church Ljubljana, Slovenia Hare Krishna Community, Ljubljana, Slovenia Serbian Orthodox Church Ljubljana, Slovenia Sehtlik Mosque, Berlin, Germany

Jewish Community and the Old Synagogue (Jüdische Gemeinde), Berlin, Germany

Atheist Community (Freikirchliche Gemeinde), Berlin, Germany

Jewish Museum (Jüdisches Museum), Berlin, Germany

Slovenian Catholic Mission, Berlin, Germany Mevlana Mosque (Mevlana Moschee), Berlin, Germany

Bosniak Islamic Cultural Centre, Berlin, Germany

Alevi Religious Community/ ahkulu Sultan Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey

Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, Istanbul, Turkev

Religious Order of Dervishes / Mevlana Education and Cultural Association, Istanbul, Turkey Ljubljana, 25 - 29 June / Divided god Conference

Finished Video Productions:

- •Mr. Lady / Berlin, authors: Katarina Rešek, Arjana Rožac
- •Just Muslims? / Berlin, author: Meri Musa
- •Kelly Watch the Stars / Berlin, Istanbul, authors: Metin Özcakir, Özgür Kavim
- •ISTANBUL FLYING CARPET / Istanbul, actors: Kati, R.; Volkan, P.; Rado, J.; Bojan, M.; Borut, B.; Drago, P.

- •Bali Saygılı / Berlin, author: Volkan Pirinççi
- •Turk Pazari / Berlin, author: Volkan Pirincci
- •Red Apple / Yerevan, authors: Borut Bučinel, Bara Kolenc
- •Berlinear / Berlin, authors: Atej Tutta, Nik Rovan, Rado Jaušovec, Jernej ernalogar
- •CHILDREN OF DIVIDED SCHOOL / Mostar, authors: Katarina Rešek, Kristina Rešek, Maja Bertole
- •HAVING A BREAK WITH JOVAN / Novi Sad, author: Julia Wegenast
- •ISLAM IS COMING / Ljubljana, authors: Sandi Puce, Olgu Demir
- •5 MINUTES OF ATHEISM /Ljubljana, author: Nora Fingscheidt

Scarf / Mostar, authors: Ana Zirner, Sara Bungartz

- •THE FACT OF OLGU / Mostar, authors: Dikici Bugrahan, Benan Orhon
- •River Flows Slowly / Mostar, authors: Bogdan Janković, Radovan Jaušovec
- •Tolerance in sLOVEnia / Ljubljana, author: Volkan Pirincci
- •Interviews with Drago Pilsel / Mostar, authors: Atej Tutta, Bojan Matjašič
- •Interviews with Mirko Đjorđevic / Novi Sad, authors: Atej Tutta, Bojan Matjašič
- •Mondieu / Berlin, author: Elias Raum
- •MIND CIRCLES / Mostar, Ljubljana, authors: Elias Raum, Atej Tutta, Nik Rovan
- •Still Divided / Mostar, authors: Bogdan Janković, Radovana Jaušovec
- •ESCAPE / Novi Sad, authors: Bogdan Janković, Saša Srečković
- •In Face of History / Ljubljana, author: Andreas Leon Gejer
- Tale of a Very Small Rock / Ljubljana, authors: Blaž Bačar, Nejc Bahor
- •Babelia / Ljubljana, authors: Martin Capatinta, Lee Bomm
- •Na Gazimestanu / Berlin, author: Bogdan Janković
- •Final Debate in Ljubljana / Ljubljana,

author: Bojan Matjašič

•Dori - Slovenian Catholic Mission in Berlin / Berlin, authors: Bojan Matjašič, Katarina Rešek

•BALKAN BLUES / Mostar, Novi Sad, authors: Sandi Puce, Jasenko učurović

•MAKING OF DIVIDED GOD / Mostar, Novi Sad, Ljubljana, Berlin, authors: Maja Žiberna, Marko Cvejić, Tomaž Pavkovič, Cecile Horreau, Dženi Rostohar, Tom Gomizeli, Bojan Matjašič

•Srebrenica - Point Zero / Srebrenica, author: Atej Tutta

•Medjugorje / Medjugorje, author: Atej Tutta, Bojan Matjašič

•Being Far Away / Berlin, author: Volkan Pirincei

•THE SUN ON HER SCARF / Istanbul, author: Katarina Rešek

•ISTANBUL FRAGMENTS / Istanbul, authors: Bogdan Janković, Saša Srečković

•**ĐIGARICA** / Mostar, author: Bojan Matjašič, Borut Bučinel, Atej Tutta

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Mestna občina Ljubljana





PRODUCTION AND COORDINATION OF THE PROJECT:

KUD Pozitiv and Dijaški dom Ivana Cankarja (DIC), Ljubljana, Slovenia

CO - PRODUCTION:

Terra Film, Playground Production and Kuda Org, Novi Sad, Serbia Bilgi University Cultural Studies Programme and TOG - Community Istanbul, Turkey FilmArche and Mladi Most - Balkan Black Box, Berlin, Germany Mladi Most and Film klub Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

OTHERS PARTNERS:

Society of Allies of Soft Landing (DZMP), Krško, Slovenia Mladinski center Trbovlje, Slovenia Münzsalon and Bildungswerk der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin Kulturni centar Abraševič, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina Pavaroti, muzički centar Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina Vuneny, Music Band, Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Autonomous Province of Vojvodina - Department of Education and Culture, Novi Sad, Serbia

Swiss Cultural Programme, Serbia and Montenegro - Pro Helvetia Belgrade, Serbia

TOG - Community Volunteers, Istanbul, Turkey

MSS - Youth Council of Slovenia

MSL - Youth Council of Ljubljana

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SELECTED VIDEO PRODUCTIONS ON DVD:

MIND CIRCLES

Mostar, Novi Sad, Ljubljana, 2' 10"

Authors: Elias Raum, Atej Tutta, Nik Rovan Images change the world. Everything starts and ends in

the mind. Who can stop the fire?

CHILDREN OF DIVIDED SCHOOL

Mostar, 20' 50"

Authors: Katarina Rešek, Kristina Rešek, Maja

Bertole

A film about young people growing up in the post-war environment in Mostar. Our main question was: In what way was religion connected to the war that divided their city, their people, their school and, of course, their lives?

BALKAN BLUES

Mostar, Novi Sad, 10' 20"

Authors: Sandi Puce, Jasenko učurović

The recent Balkan wars marked the end of the last century and have changed the political picture of Europe. Today, they are often viewed as religious wars. Did religion really play such an important part in breaking up the atheistic community of former Yugoslav nations or is it just an excuse to explain and justify the war crimes that were committed?

THE RIVER SLOWLY FLOWS

Mostar, 10' 50"

Authors: Bogdan Janković & others

This is a story about a Serb who continued living in Mostar after the war. Everyone thinks he is a local fool. Are

theu right or not? You decide.

TOLERANCE IN SLOVENIA

Ljubljana, 10' 30"

Author: Volkan Pirincci

A research video that aims to provide a deeper understanding of Muslim life and the tolerance towards Muslims in Slovenia, a country that will take over EU Presidency in 2008. The author is a Muslim who has lived in Slovenia for 10 months and shares his perspectives on subjects such as the building of a mosque in the capital and certain basic Muslim needs

STILL DIVIDED

Mostar, 15' 10"

Authors: Bogdan Janković & others

Everyone was happy when the bridge in Mostar was completed. This bridge is important because it connects people. Is this the truth or just a convenience of life? You decide!

ESCAPE

Novi Sad, 9' 30"

Authors: Bogdan Janković, Saša Srećković

There is a church in an unusual place where individuals of all religions, together, find the only escape in God. This church is part of a prison and gives prisoners hope and an opportunity to get away from everyday life behind bars

BERLINEAR

Berlin, 1' 22"

Authors: Atej Tutta, Nik Rovan, Radovan Jaušovec Jernej ernalogar

This video is a dynamic collage of still photos and sounds recorded in Berlin.

DORI - SLOVENIAN CATHOLIC MISSION

Berlin, 17' 10"

Authors: Boian Matiašič, Katarina Rešek

A portrait of a Slovene Catholic priest who lives and works in Berlin, after having been transferred from Slovenia as a result of his liberal approach to pastoral service.

BABELIA

Ljubljana, 3' 40"

Author: Martin Capatinta, Lee Bomm

An abridged version of the film that provoked a polemical discussion questioning the freedom of speech and expression in social environments and art, the respect of religious values, the clash of 'civilizations', the fear of consequences, etc. The complete discussion is accessible via our website (see: Final debate in Ljubljana).

RED APPLE

Yerevan, 16' 10"

Authors: Borut Bučinel, Bara Kolenc

Red Apple is a film about Armenian society, strongly

bound to its unique Christianity. The main focus of the film is oriented towards the status of women, the manwoman relationship and sexuality, which are completely regulated by the rigorous social rules, customs and religious rites. The film was recorded with a mobile phone.

MR. LADY

Berlin, 17' 20"

Authors: Katarina Rešek, Arijana Rožac

We examined if Berlin, as the capital of homosexuals, really is as tolerant as it is said to be. In the film, we meet interesting people, discover hot topics and expose taboos.

JUST MUSLIMS?

Berlin, 10' 20" Author: Meri Musa

The film tries to compare the lives of Bosnian and Turkish Muslims in Berlin. What are their main concerns, problems and doubts? What has changed in the collective perception of Islam in Germany after September 11 and how does this affect their lives?

BEING FAR AWAY

Berlin, 11' 20'

Author: Volkan Pirincei

A short documentary on the "Reaction of Turks living far away in Berlin". The regret of being far away is presented in simple life stories. You can also see some extreme reactions by Berliner Turks to high-tension incidents happening in Turkey. In the demonstration scene, you can even see how full of anger and nationalistic reactions they are.

THE SUN ON HER SCARF

Istanbul, 11' 20"

Author: Katarina Rešek

"What is it like to be a female in Istanbul?" was one of our main questions, which led us to the topics of the headscarf, personal freedom, ideals, rules, etc. We met a lot of women who told us their stories, their point of view and their experience. Headscarfed or not, they all have something in common...

Making Of Divided God

Mostar, Novi Sad, Ljubljana, Berlin/

Authors: Maja Žiberna, Marko Cvejić, Tomaž Pavkovič. Cecile Horreau. Dženi Rostohar. Tom

Gomizelj, Bojan Matjašič

A documentary about the Divided God project. Produced by Luksuz produkcija, an official partner organization of KUD Pozitiv and DIC in the Divided God project.

ABOUT DIVIDED GOD DVD:

This DVD features a selection of films made in the video workshops of the Divided God project. During the youth exchanges in Mostar (10 – 17 July 2007), Novi Sad (17 – 23 July 2007), Ljubljana (23 July – 5 August 2007), Berlin (25 October – 4 November 2007) and Istanbul (10 – 26 April 2008), a total of 35 video productions were created. Ten more are currently still in the process of editing. These selected films represent the production made in each city.

The complete video production as well as the accompanying material from other segments of the project, such as lectures, discussions, texts, evaluations, photos, etc., can be accessed via the project web site.

The DVD was made for the Divided God Conference in Ljubljana, which took place between 26 and 28 June 2008. Together with the publication, it represents one of the two main products of the project. Ten short documentary films are currently still in the stage of postproduction. They will be finished in autumn 2008 when the project is to be publicly presented in the partner cities and other institutions and festivals that expressed an interest in the project.

Website: www.pozitiv.si/dividedgod E-mail: pozitiv@pozitiv.si

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ENGLISH SUBTITLES 4:3 FORMAT







