

**Invitation of Papers for the
Ninth International Course on**

*Religion and Civil Society:
Geopolitical Dimension of the Globalized Cultural
Environment*

**In Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine,
October 4-8, 2010**

By Course Directors:

Rudolf J. Siebert, Professor of Religion and Society

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Simferopol, Ukraine
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Dear Friend:

We are writing this letter to you, in order to invite you wholeheartedly to our ninth international course on “***Religion and Civil Society: Geopolitical Dimension of the Globalized Cultural Environment*** to take place in Yalta, Ukraine, from October 4-8, 2010.. It is a sister course to our international Dubrovnik course on the *Future of Religion*. Our new theme in Yalta is certainly of highest actuality in the present world-historical transition from Modernity to Post-Modernity: particularly during the global financial catastrophe of 2008./2009/2010..The following few thoughts and ideas may help us to stimulate and give guidance to our discourse, and may inspire our papers.

Globalization

In the perspective of the critical theory of religion, the contemporary, international development , that goes by the name of *globalization* , refers to the continued systematic expansion of civil society and of the capitalist productive relations and forces of production of the so-called First World, or of the G 20, or of the *primary* countries, into the Third World or into the *peripheral* countries of the world. For neo-conservatives and neo-liberals the stated rationale and purpose of this economically driven globalization process is, to integrate all countries into a global economy, through which they and their citizens can improve their quality of life and participate in the development of prosperity, democracy, and peace. This is to be accomplished through such international bodies as the World Trade Organization [WTO], the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and their Structural Adjustment Programs [SAP's], so-called trans-national corporations, and the policies of trade liberalization, deregulation, privatization, the growth of stable financial institutions, debt relief for poor

countries, etc.. Neo-liberals equate globalization with the free movement of capital and the increasing domination of national economies by global financial markets and multinational corporations. This development has also been called the *globalization from above*, the *new economy*, *neo-liberalism* or the globalization of corporate capitalism, which is being marketed and also enforced as being *inevitable*. In view of the dialectical religiology, this inevitability, however, is an ideological, i.e. false consciousness producing, rationale for the extremely ominous, greedy, and cruel consequences of this globalization from above. The driving spirit of this top-down, neo-liberal concept and its world-wide development: has been expressed in the neo-liberal statement *The poor complain, they always do, but that's just idle chatter. Our system brings rewards to all, at least to all who matter. Those who matter* in this globalizing system are the same one's who have *mattered* throughout the 500 year development of the capitalist system itself: the capitalist ruling class. It is this international corporate class, who, in the universal notion of globalization, strategically utilizes not only the economic but also the political, and military, and even the cultural and religious systems of the nations to achieve their particular business interests.

Corporate Ruling Class

In the perspective of the critical religiology, the neo-liberal globalization of this capitalist class's corporate pursuit of the maximization of their profit and power is based quite parasitically on the systematic exploitation of the international debt, suffering and need of former colonized, Third World countries, their workers as well as their natural resources. For their very survival, debt-ridden and poverty-stricken Third World countries are forced to go to the World Bank and IMF to request a short-term loan in order for the country to remain solvent. However, to receive such a loan, these countries must submit to the IMF's Structural Adjustment Programs, which ravage the national economy through its privatization, the liberalization of its capital/investment market, the cutting of expenditures on non-profitable social welfare programs, and the increase in prices and taxation. What is, therefore, being globalized systematically is not only the surplus value, profit., and greed driven interests of the international corporate ruling class, but also its exploitive corollary of human and environmental domination, suffering,

hopelessness, destruction and death. This *globalization from above* has also been correctly called *the race to the bottom* for the so-called peripheral Third World countries as well as for the workers and their families throughout the world. The globalization from above has changed the culture of corporations even in advanced capitalist countries, e.g. France in such a way, that the solidarity among colleagues is broken, and they become competitors and predators for and against each other and drive each other into always higher numbers of suicide. This corporate capitalist globalization from above, however, has also spawned the world-wide protest and resistance to it in terms of a *globalization from below*, which has taken the form of massive world-wide street protests during the meetings of the WTO, the G-8, and G - 20 First World politicians and financial ministers. The current scare word *globalization*, seemingly unavoidable in any public statement, points not to an end of politics, but rather to its escape from the categories of the national state and of the United Nations, and even from the schema defining, what is *political* and *non-political* action. Economics triumphs over politics including all political philosophy or theology, For whatever the referent of the new globalization rhetoric (economy, markets, job competition, production, goods and services, financial flows information, lifestyles, religion, etc.), the political consequences of the stage-managed economic globalization risk stand out in sharp relief. They have come to a climax in the global capitalist financial crisis, which brought capitalism to the brink of total disaster in 2008 and 2009, and which could be forestalled for the time being only by a world - wide intervention of states and politicians into civil society, the economy, and the market,

Critical Religion

In the perspective of the dialectical religiology, the greed - driven globalization affects also necessarily and unavoidable all the living world religions and their personal and social morality. We define critical religion as the longing for the wholly Other than the horror and terror of nature and history: for perfect justice, for unconditional love, and as the hope that the murderer shall not triumph over the innocent victim, at least not ultimately. Non-critical, traditional religion may have an affirmative attitude toward the globalization from above and may try to console the victims and keep them from rebelling. Critical religion, however, which understands itself in terms of such longing and hope for the entirely Other, sides with the poor

classes and their protest against global injustice, and not with the rich classes, who produce it through their unlimited greed in the globalization process. Critical religion does not consider with the rich and powerful classes the complaints of the oppressed and exploited classes as just idle chatter. For the critical religion all people matter and deserve just rewards. Critical religion does not allow itself to be utilized strategically by the corporate ruling classes to justify ideologically their particular economic and political interests in the process of the globalization of antagonistic civil society. For the critical religiology, at the beginning of Christianity, there was once a poor man and the rich people tortured and murdered him, and they have never stopped doing so. According to this poor man, who threw the capitalists out of the second temple in Jerusalem, no rich man can enter the kingdom of God; nobody can serve two masters, God and capital; poor Lazarus went to the bosom of Abraham and the rich man ended up in Gehenna – hell. In the view of the critical theory of religion, one can not speak about liberalism, socialism, fascism, or the World Wars, Auschwitz and Treblinka, Dresden and Hamburg, Sevastopol and Stalingrad , Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Vietnam, Afghanistan , and Iraq..Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, without speaking about capitalism as the private appropriation of collective labor. There will be no peace among nations without peace among the world religions. There will be no peace among the world religions without their discourse with each other. There will be no discourse among the world religions without their knowledge of each other's interpretation of reality and orientation of action. Finally, there will be no just and peaceful globalization from below, without the world religions transforming themselves into critical religions on the basis of a global ethos promoting the transformation of the commodity exchange society beyond the market - and central-administrative economy toward not only a formal political but also a material economic democracy.

Our discourse shall include the following topics:

- Religion, ethnicity and geopolitics: new factors of forming the global world;
- Religious fundamentalism and paradoxes of the globalized cultural environment;

- Inter-confessional communications and international relations in the conditions of world financial crisis;
- Relations of Islam and Christianity in the context of regional, national, and international security;
- Mass media as a resource of geopolitical competition;
- Religious and ethnic identity as a subjects of manipulative technologies
- Clash of civilizations: myth or reality?
- Tolerance and hate: ethics and psychological aspects
- Religion and social capital: interaction parameters
- Social networks as factor of designing of the civil society
- State-church relationships in the civil society: the concept of *serving to the people*
- Religion and sustainable development: ethno-environmental dimension of everyday life
- Linguistic aspects of intercultural communications
- Religion and education in a search for a dialogue and harmony
- The dialogue of religion and science in the 21st century .

Other topics can be included.

The round table of the experts on *Islam and Problems of Security in the Black-Sea-Caspian Region* will take place at the time of our international course, not in Yalta, but in Sevastopol.

Our main languages of communication will be English, Russian, and Ukrainian.

Information

Our ninth international course in Yalta is sponsored by the V.I. Vernadskiy Tavrida National University in Simferopol, Ukraine; by Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, Michigan USA; by the Crimean Department of the Conflict Resolution Association of the Ukraine; by the Network of Cultural Exchange and Inter-Ethnic Trust; by the Technical University of Sevastopol, Ukraine; by the Internet Access Teaching Program (JATP) in

Sevastopol; The registration fee is 50 Euros to be paid at arrival. Resource persons and participants from America and Europe need no longer a visa in order to enter the Ukraine. Most of us will stay in Hotel Bristol in Yalta. Please, make your own travel and hotel reservations. For further information concerning times, meeting place, schedule, hotel reservations, air and bus connections, etc., please contact Professor Tatjana Senyushkina, Email – tsenyushkina@yandex.ru or Professor Rudolf J. Siebert, E-Mail – rsieb3@aol.com – Website – <http://rudolfjsiebert.org/>. We hope very much to see you in Yalta, October 4-8,2010..

Best wishes,

Yours truly,

Dr. Rudolf Siebert,

**Professor, Comparative Religion Department, Western Michigan University (USA), Head of “ Center for Humanistic Future Studies”, Director of the annual international course on the “The Future of Religion” in the Inter-University Center “Dubrovnik”, Croatia, 630 Piccadilly Rd., Kalamazzo, Michigan 49006, USA,
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E-mail: tsenyushkina@yandex.ru,
http://www.crimea.edu/tnu/person_page/senyushkina/index.htm**

Specific Travel Information

The international course and discourse takes place in the Livadia area of the City of Yalta, which is a picturesque historical place in the Crimea, and which is situated at the Black Sea in the south of the Ukraine, from October 4-8, 2010. The registration fee is 50 EUR

for professors, and 25 EUR for students.

Organizers provide: the workshop materials, coffee-breaks, a banquet with concert of orthodox singers. Guided tours of the Palace-Park Area of the South Crimean Coast (Livadia Palace of the last Russian Tzar Nicolay II in Yalta, Voroncov Palace in Alupka, Russian Tzar Alexander the Third Palace in Massandra), and also to the famous Nikitskiy Botanic Garden and to the world-wide famous for its perfect vines Massandra Vine Production will be offered to the Workshop participants.

Traveling and accommodation are paid by the resource persons and participants. The organizers would be happy to offer any informational help to the resource persons and participants from abroad concerning the logistics and management of their trip. Please, contact us by e-mail to: tseyushkina@yandex.ru

The resource persons and participants from USA and from EU don't need a Ukrainian visa
Deadline for applications is October 1,2010. Deadline for the papers for publication is October 20, 2010.

The applications and the papers may be sent either by e-mail, or by regular mail:

E-mail: tseyushkina@yandex.ru

Regular mail: Tatyna Senyushkina, mail box 65, City of Sevastopol, Crimea, Ukraine, 99043

Following the workshop, the accepted papers are going to be published. Times New Roman, 14, interval 1,5. Volume of papers: thesis up to 5 pages, articles up to 12 pages
Accommodation: Hotel "Bristol", Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine. From 72 USD to 276 USD per room per night. Prices include: ACCOMMODATION WITH BREAKFAST, 10 Roosevelt St., Yalta, Crimea 98600, Ukraine Reservation: +38-0654 271606, fax +38 0654 271609 –E-mail: reserve@hotel-bristol.com.ua; http:// www.hotel-bristol.com.ua

If you wish to receive information about other possibilities for accommodation in hotels of Yalta, please contact with Dr.Tatiana Senyushkina, tseyushkina@yandex.ru

You can find more information about our international course on the web-site of the NETWORK OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND INTERETHNIC TRUST (Ukraine)

<http://www.nce.ua.iatp.net>

Application Form

Name of the Participant _____

Topic of the Presentation _____

Scientific degree/Student involvement

Affiliation _____

Position _____

Contact phone ## (please, indicate the area code):

office: _____ alternative: _____

E-mail: _____

Fax: _____

Regular mail address to send the printed Workshop Materials

Participation (indicate): personal distance

Signature (if sent by regular mail) _____ Date of filling the application

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