

Monitoring Russia Serbia Relations Project

Seventh Report

Serbian – Russian cooperation in the field of culture and religion

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INTRODUCTION

The International and Security Affairs Centre – ISAC Fund devoted its first 2010 Monitoring of Russia-Serbian Relations Project publication – report, to the cooperation in the field of culture and religion. It is ISAC Fund's wish to contribute to the proclaimed 2010 Year of Spiritual Culture of Russia in Serbia by underlining the importance of these particular fields of cooperation between the two countries.

If we consider our historical experience, the cooperation in the fields of culture and religion between Russia and Serbia precedes political cooperation. Serbs managed to keep their identity during the long Ottoman rule primary because of the support of Russian rulers, elites and monks to Serbian ecclesiastical and spiritual elites. Moreover, due to the firm support of Serbian rulers and elites, numerous Russian refugees found a sanctuary in Serbia after the October Revolution. They contributed immensely to the development of Serbia.

Cultural cooperation is, or at least it should be, one of the key fields of cooperation among states. It improves closeness between states and peoples, but also boosts development of personal contacts between both individuals and institutions. Such contacts are of great importance because they contribute to the creation of a realistic image about the "other people". In the long run, it helps to strip of myths the image of "the other" and to remove extremes of "love" and "hate" from the social and political life. These extremes marked Russia Serbia relations throughout the past centuries.

Serbian and Russian peoples are close. The emigration waves of Serbs to Russia in XVIII century and of Russians to Serbia after the October Revolution resulted in the fairly quick assimilation of immigrants into the dominant population. This example empirically shows the level of closeness of these two peoples. Such closeness was often a building block of the political "agenda" between Serbia and Russia both in past and today. It transcended the political sphere and contributed to establishing a tradition of good political relations, spreading further to the spheres of economic and social cooperation. However, this closeness gained in the past mythical proportions more than once. In the eyes of Serbian political elites, Russia was often perceived as "mother" and "guardian", always willing to defend interests of Serbia, despite those of its own. The result was disappointment in Russia after such naïve views failed to materialize. The dissatisfaction went further to accusing Russia for being selfish and protecting its own interests exclusively, without regard for Serbian interests. It is crucial to recognize this thin line between closeness and sympathies of these two peoples and practical political interests of both Serbia and Russia. Furthermore, Serbian as well as Russian political elites should prevent any mechanical transfer of above mentioned closeness onto the state level, largely because both are multiethnic countries with significant number of national minorities.

With the following four texts ISAC Fund strives again to help shaping realistic image of Russia in Serbia. Texts written by distinguished historians, theologians and sociologists are covering cooperation in the fields of culture

and in the field of religion. Their main aim is to identify those areas where cooperation between the two countries could be possibly improved. Furthermore, all four texts aim to present current state of affairs in these areas in a realistic and academic manner, while some even construct guidelines how to improve it in the future.

It is possible to emphasize few crucial points that could potentially help political elites to formulate policies of cooperation in the fields of culture and religion. Goran Miloradović explained in his text how cultural cooperation between Belgrade and Moscow followed their political relations throughout whole XX century. It remains still obscure that cultural cooperation was also closely tied to changes of political systems. These great historical turns, especially the ones after the World War II and the Cold War, lead us to the conclusion that Serbian Russian relations were often driven to extremes in the past. Miroslav Jovanović outlined that it is not possible to force Russia Serbia cultural cooperation from “above”, as some kind of political project and acceptable pattern of cultural cooperation for political elites. Cultural cooperation is much more dependent on the process of Globalization and global cultural market itself, as well as the practical conditions for the “export” of the cultures of both countries. On the other hand, Bogdan Lubardić advocates one consistent and methodical state’s effort to help better mutual understanding and cooperation. He proposed some concrete guidelines for enhanced exchange of ideas, knowledge and philosophical experience in order to overcome the differences, previously identified by the author. Finally, Mirko Blagojević proposed how to evaluate the level of religiosity of both peoples. Both Serbian and Russian religiosity development tendencies were always one of the key factors of identity and self-identification in respect to the “other”. Hence, their understanding is unavoidable if one wants to monitor current positions of Serbia and Russia, as well as positions of their dominant populations.

ISAC FUND

IN THE SHADOW OF GAS AND POLITICS: CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL CONTACTS, CONNECTIONS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN SERBIA AND RUSSIA

*Miroslav Jovanović, PhD**

When we speak today about both present and past Serbian-Russian relations, we usually give priority to politics. However, the history of mutual relations shows that other connections were equally important, such as cultural, artistic, spiritual, religious and ecclesiastical ties between these two peoples (we could also include scientific connections, but it would require too much specific detail in a general overview such as this).

It is possible to trace these connections back to the middle ages and the first contacts of the Serbian ruler Stefan Nemanja with Russian monks. One popular example that is often mentioned is the encounter of his son Rastko Nemanjić (St. Sava) with a Russian monk from Mount Athos, who helped him to hide from his father's men in the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon and later to become a monk himself. We should also mention the almost forgotten Serbian Monk Lazarus, who designed the first clock in the Kremlin at the beginning of XV century. The first influences of South Slavs on Russian culture and literature date from the XV century. Russian material and cultural contributions to the Serbian Church and its monasteries were initiated at the beginning of the XVI century. These contributions were brought back by various Serbian monks and priests during numerous visits to Russia up until the end of the XVIII century. During the XIX century, contributions from the Russian Tsars for cultural and educational needs were most important to the Serbs under the Habsburg Empire. Equally important were mutual connections and contacts during the early 20s of the last century, when numerous Russian refugees came to the then Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, where they found sanctuary from the prosecutions in their own country. Their cultural, artistic, scientific and spiritual influence was very noticeable among the Serbian and Yugoslavian elite of the time. Finally, mutual contacts, connections and influences have remained strong to this day through the activity of famous artists such as Milorad Pavić, Konstantin Kostjukov, Nikita Mihalkov and Emir Kusturica.

The numerous contacts, influences, cooperation and spiritual exchanges between these two peoples have been varied and rich and have created a specific, recognisable space of cultural and spiritual encounter, exchange and mutual cooperation. This space is visible in both countries, though less in Russia than in Serbia it is, nevertheless, important.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon that even significant and fruitful aspects of cultural exchange are being simplified or glorified, negated or even rejected in public discourse. Thus, this kind of treatment reduces the whole

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content to shallow black and white symbols, suitable to use in day-to-day political struggle.

For this reason we can observe a curious phenomenon: in politics and political relations, we can say that very few experts truly understand the modern politics of Russian/Serbian relations and are able to interpret it correctly. On the other hand, there are too many who “have an opinion” founded on only a basic understanding or even no real knowledge about the modern political situation, mutual relations and history. These would be experts are usually ready and willing to publicly interpret these relations and consequently promoting their opinion. Experts with essential knowledge of the economics (or, more precisely, energetics) of Serbian-Russian relations are even fewer, yet they are reluctant to express their opinion publicly. Therefore, they leave the platform free for intellectuals, “experts on everything”, who have an “opinion” on every issue, including the problem of Serbian – Russian economic and energetic cooperation. On the other hand, as far as the area of culture and spirituality is concerned, we can say that there are numerous experts with a deep understanding of cultural and spiritual exchange, mutual knowledge and affirmation. Unlike the previous group, they are not mere passive observers and users, but active participants in the above-mentioned processes. In previous decades these experts accomplished a lot in terms of establishing and maintaining contacts, in the mutual affirmation of cultural and spiritual values, but also on the broader promotion of the cultural and spiritual values of their own country abroad. Compounding the paradox, these real experts very rarely have the opportunity to speak in public about contemporary Serbian-Russian relations, or even about the problems they encounter during their work, and moreover, they cannot count on any systematic institutional support.

Another particular phenomenon characterises Serbian-Russian spiritual and cultural connections. We can quite often hear simplified statements in public, usually charged with a specific type of emotional rhetoric: that Serbian-Russian ties are no longer at on the traditional historic wavelength; that interest in the Russian language among Serbian children and their parents is dramatically declining; that additional efforts have to be made so that these two peoples can “learn more” about each other; that mutual promotion of our cultural achievements are needed etc. Consequently, the overall impression is that these mutual cultural and spiritual contacts and exchange are insufficient and not visible. Hence, additional efforts are needed to expand and deepen these ties, and moreover, to strengthen or (re)establish contact.

If we were to accept the impression conveyed by the media today, we might think that relations, contacts and mutual perceptions are weak and underdeveloped (in any case insufficient, considering the rich history of mutual contacts and cooperation, and the high achievements of Russian, but also Serbian culture).

However, the basis of this simplified black and white *impression* of insufficient Serbian-Russian cultural and spiritual ties, contacts, cultural interaction and cooperation is often not clear. Does it come as a consequence

of inherited traditional, emotional perception of mutual connections and contacts (personalized in Russophilia and Serbophilia - if it is even possible to speak about something like that in a Russian environment)? Is it possible that the phenomenon we are speaking about is simply a feeling of political proximity deeply rooted in the collective mentality, built during the XX century on very different and diffuse foundations (these foundations are explained in a stereotyped manner, as political ties between two states during World War I or political and ideological empathy between the ruling regimes during the Cold War). Finally, is the phenomenon that we are speaking about just a reflection of contemporary political projections about allies and enemies, about “us” and “them”, about “east” and “west”, about spiritual and religious affinity, kinship etc.

Or it is about the realistic projection of contemporary opportunities, cultural needs and future development in both cultural environments?

The above-mentioned dilemmas are even more visible considering the fact that contemporary Serbia and Russia live in the age of political, economic and cultural globalisation, the dilemma is further strengthened by the real contents and perspectives of contemporary Serbian-Russian spiritual and cultural cooperation.

Let us try to examine some of the issues and offer a few possible interpretations.

THE FIELD OF CULTURE

If we want to rationalise the reality in which we live, to substantially understand it - not interpret it emotionally following the simplified discourse of daily political symbols – if we want to achieve a deeper analysis and to contextualise contemporary cultural relations and connections, perception of Russian culture in a Serbian context and vice versa, we need to consider a few facts. Firstly, it is necessary to correctly distinguish between the possible meanings of terms such as culture, cultural cooperation, exchange, perception etc. Understanding contemporary Serbian-Russian cultural relations and cooperation depends on the meaning we give to these terms.

Is this general perception of culture to be understood as *high culture* (*elite culture*) or are we referring to much broader field that includes *mass culture* as well as *elite culture*? Moreover, is this a context in which cultural contact is reduced exclusively to the perception of *elite culture*, or is it a much wider understanding of culture – defined as a network of meanings which determines a society and bringing together all its facets, such as production, growth, context, interiorisation, etc. Finally, is it only about the perception of culture in cultural institutions of so-called “high culture”, or is it about the presence of Russian culture in the Serbian media and public (and vice versa)?

It is necessary to have a clear and balanced understanding of all the terms above, to de-contextualise considerations on contemporary Serbian-Russian relations from a discourse based purely on impressions.

Furthermore, anyone following the efforts to promote Russian culture in Serbia (and vice versa) has to have seen how connections do exist, and that they are indeed not weak but, on the contrary, extremely rich in content. To the eye of the careful, keen and objective beholder, it is more than obvious that if we analyse Serbian-Russian cultural exchanges within *elite cultures*, it is difficult to find ground for dissatisfaction regarding the character and quality of such relations and cooperation, indeed it is quite the opposite.

Without a doubt, we can conclude that contemporary Russian cultural production is present and quite visible in Serbia. We can give few obvious examples leading to this conclusion. In the last few years and even decades Serbian readers have had the opportunity to become acquainted, through translations, with almost all the most important contemporary Russian writers: Victor Pelievin, Lyudmila Ulicka, Boris Akunin, Victor Erofeiev, Vladimir Sorokin etc. At the same time, Russian classics such as Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Bulghakov, Chekhov, Pushkin and others are constantly present on Serbian cultural scene with continuous reprints of their works. There are numerous translations available of other important writers such as Konstantin Leontiev, Nina Berberova, Gait Gazdanov, Sergey Dovlatov, Venedikt Jerofeiev and others. Entire series of works by distinguished Russian thinkers' from the so-called Russian "silver age" have been published: Berdyaev, Solovyev, Danilevski, Trubecki, Tihomirov, Frank, Uspenski, Visheslavchev and Fyodorov etc. On the other hand, the Serbian public has also had the opportunity to see the most important Russian achievements in cinema: Nikita Mihalkov, Aleksey Balabanov, Karen Shahnazarov, Stanislav Govoruhin and others. Moreover, Serbian audiences have had occasion to attend performances by some of the most distinguished virtuosos and conductors from the Russian musical tradition, to see the best ballet stars of the Bolshoi Theatre, to hear famous Russian choirs etc. Finally, they have had the chance to see some of the finest Russian TV series, such as "Moscow Saga" or "Favoritka", as well as number of episodes of contemporary Russian documentaries under the name of "Criminal Russia" etc.

The conclusion that it is hard to express dissatisfaction when we speak about the presence of elite Russian culture in Serbia is confirmed already through this simple quantitative analysis. Based on a few simple indicators (calculated on an *ad hoc* basis, for the needs of this paper) it would be easy to demonstrate that the position and perception of Russian elite culture in contemporary Serbia is in no way inferior or discriminated against when compared to other major world cultures.

For example, an analyses of the total editorial output in Serbia in 2009 shows that of 23,034 monographs published, 4,697 (20 percent) were books translated from one of the major world languages¹. Among these, most were

¹ The analysis was based on data from the National Library of Serbia, located on COBISS browser. Data (excluding periodicals) are not given in absolute, but relative values - because of the browser's character and because of input and presentation. Since these data cannot be selected to give comprehensive information, but only to be used as an illustration of the previous conclusions, the survey results can be used only as basic references.

originally written in English (USA, UK, and Australia, but also from other countries) – 1,741 (37 percent), while translations of the books written in other languages are much fewer: French 335 (7.1 percent), Russian 237 (5 percent), Italian 205 (4.4 percent), German 192 (4.1 percent) and Spanish 82 (1.7 percent). Books written in other languages were translated in percentages that do not exceed 1 percent, for example Japanese 30 (0.6 percent), Hungarian 29, Norwegian 23 (0.5 percent), Romanian 14, Chinese 9 (0.2 percent), etc.

Furthermore, if we analyze the programme of the Belgrade Philharmonia in 2009/2010 season, it is easy to notice that out of 26 visiting conductors, three (12 percent) are from Russia (or the ex-USSR). Out of 30 guest soloists during the same season, 7 (23 percent) are from Russia or from the area of former USSR.

At the same time, analysis of the programme of the last two Belgrade international film festivals – FEST (2009, 2010) shows that Russian cinema was not at all discriminated against nor neglected. Out of the 132 films on the programme, 85 were national productions and 47 were co-productions by two or more countries. Among the national productions, films from the USA were the most numerous, as could have been predicted though far below what might have been expected. In second place were films from France, a total 8 (9 percent), and in third place Russia - 6 films (7 percent). In other words, Russians were represented with the same number of works as the host country, Serbia (6). Then followed South Korea with 5, Italy with 4, Austria with 4, India with 4, Japan with 3, Croatia with 3, and Ukraine, Greece, Brazil, Iran, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Poland, Mexico, Albania, Armenia and Georgia all with 1 film each.

As a curiosity, it is worth mentioning that one of the readers published for the first grade of primary school in Serbia by one of the authorised publishers (Kreativni Centar) includes texts by 31 authors, 26 originally written in Serbian and 5 translated. These texts are the basis on which Serbian children form their first notions of Serbian Language and Literature. Of the above-mentioned 5 text by foreign authors, one was by the Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, while the other four were written by Russian writers: Leo Tolstoy, Vladimir Suteev, Corney Chuckovski and Semion Kogan (in other words around 80 percent of all foreign language authors, or 13 percent of the total number of authors in the textbook).

Bearing this data in mind, it is a hard to defend the thesis that the presence, perception and promotion of Russian cultural values are insignificant, decreasing or marginalized in Serbia. Moreover, if we take into account that over the past 14 years, thanks to the enthusiastic work of the Paunkovic Brothers, a journal specialising in Russian literature and culture called "*Russian Almanac*" is being published regularly in Serbia. There is also the example of a small publishing house named "Logos", run by Vladimir Medenica, which has a rather impressive production of some of the most important authors and thinkers of Russian culture of the XIX and XX centuries. Numerous publicly financed institutions have an ongoing fruitful cooperation

with Russian cultural endeavours and institutions, such as Jugoslovenska kinoteka (Yugoslav Film Archive) as well as some theatres. In that context we should also mention the website Rastko (Project Rastko-Russia)² and the newly-established, luxury, magazine “Rusija danas” (Russia today).

Certainly, the illustrative analysis above is centred primarily on exterior, more formal, quantitative framework of the issue in question. A more comprehensive, content-oriented analysis would, without doubt, broaden the analytical framework and opportunity for understanding and interpreting the issue as a whole. However, it would be unlikely to change the conclusions regarding the general trends in the presence and perception of Russian *high culture* in Serbia.

On the other side of the imagined line of exchange – when we discuss the presence, perception and promotion of Serbian cultural values in the Russian cultural environment, we have to conclude that Serbian culture is much less present in contemporary Russia than vice versa. However, that is only logical due to the difference in size between two countries and the sheer quantity of cultural output. Nevertheless, it is easy to conclude that in contemporary Russian culture the most distinguished works of Serbian elite culture are present and widely exposed, above all the works of the Serbian writer Milorad Pavić and film-maker Emir Kusturica.

However, the situation is very different if we analyse the promotion of Russian high culture in the Serbian media, in another words, the presentation of the production and content of Russian mass culture in Serbia’s media and Serbian mass culture, and vice versa. The average Serbian consumer of mass culture has never heard of any of today's Russian music stars, such as Filip Kirkorov, Angelika Varum, Timatie, Zemfira, Dime Bilan and others. Likewise, in earlier times they did not know anything about famous Russian music stars, like Ala Pugatchova or Josif Kobzon, or about the “bards” Visocki, Okujava, Gali; and others. Serbian youth in their time did not know anything about famous Russian rock groups and performers like *Aquarium*, *Nautilus Pompilus*, *Alice*, *DDT*, *Alexaneder Baslachov*, *Nolia*, *Grazdanskaya Oborona*, *Janka Diagilieva*, *Instrukcie po vizhivaniu* and others. If we observe from this point of view, we would have to conclude that the presence of Russian culture in Serbia is barely visible (if at all), whereas Serbian culture in Russia practically does not exist (except the “distinguished” tradition, urban legends about the famous, almost mythical tours of Serbian stars like Djordje Marijanovic, Radmila Karaklajic, *Sedmorica mladih* and others in the USSR during 60s and 70s of the XX century).

It is precisely this aspect of the everyday perception of cultural contents in the hyper-reality of the mass media, overran by popular culture and its numerous and varied subculture derivatives, that creates the *impression* of an insufficient presence of Russian culture in Serbia (in some analysis discrimination is even mentioned).

² <http://www.rastko.rs/rastko-ru/>

Furthermore, this image of an insufficient presence of Russian culture in Serbia is close to or even matches the data available, even with simple *ad hoc* analysis of television programming. However, the analysis of TV as the key space of mass culture presentation and perception, that is films and TV series (telenovelas, “soap operas”) as basic forms of presentation and reception of mass culture, could be disputed as simplified approach, if we consider the growing importance of the Internet as the space for presentation and exchange of mass culture content. But such an analysis provides us with the most suitable parameters for the interpretation of the whole phenomenon, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the television programme (especially considering members of the middle-aged and older generation) is the dominant medium of mass culture contents. Secondly, if we consider the range of characteristics of television as a medium, it is possible to look at it as the most suitable mean of conveyance for certain cultural codes, as an array of semantic meanings which determine one social and cultural model.

Television programmes in particular – though we could agree with Anthony Giddens that “television is a continuous flow, but the television programme is a ‘mess’”- represents a network of meanings, which are transferred and promoted, a space for the dissemination, adoption and layering of cultural codes and patterns. And what does this space look like?

For the purpose of this paper, we have analyzed the programmes available on one cable television provider in Belgrade (SBB) offering a total of 75 channels. We randomly took one regular working day for a 24-hour analysis, Thursday, March 11, 2010³. The analysis focused on the programmes broadcast on 32 TV channels which were showing films and TV series in the Serbian language (out of which 29 television channels could actually be analyzed⁴). The remaining 43 channels have different content – they either broadcast a mix of programmes exclusively in foreign languages (4) in German, French, Spanish and Italian – which makes them almost inaccessible to an average Serbian viewer; or they represent exclusively informative channels (4) or else their profile is mono-thematic: sport (9), music (5), travel and wildlife (3), documentary (8), children (7), fashion and jet-set(2) or advertising (1). Therefore, analyzing mass culture production in the Serbian mass media (bearing in mind films and TV series), we came to the

³ The focus of analysis was on film and TV series production exclusively, just their first broadcast during the day, and not their reruns, mostly at night and in the early morning, which is almost a rule in all television channels. Children's channels and animated films were not covered in the analysis, although they were significant, simply because information about them is rarely available (a certain number of TV channels do not have their own internet sites, while a vast amount of TV programmes does not give even basic data about programmes to be broadcast, neither on their web sites nor in the print media – original name of the film, name of the director, production country etc.). The programme scheme of music channels was impossible to analyse in real time, and in programme outlines there are no precise data about the content of broadcast music. Fashion and jet set channels were not analyzed precisely for the same reasons. However, the contents of exactly these channels (animated films, popular music, fashion and “VIP world”) represent most of the patterns for the spreading and transmission of certain cultural codes characteristic for global mass culture.

⁴ In three mentioned cases (one is Art TV) programmes could not be analyzed at all, because no precise data about the programme scheme is available in any form, on television itself, the print media or the Internet.

following: on 11th March 2010 Serbian viewers had an opportunity to watch 47 different films (without reruns) or more or less 70 hours of films on 32 analyzed channels. Among the films that were broadcast on that date, 39 were of modern or older American productions (83 percent), four were domestic (older SFRY and newer Serbian productions), two British, one Chinese and one Italian. On the same date 102 episodes of different TV series were broadcast, which totalled (without reruns) an additional 68 hours of broadcast. Of this number 60 were made in the USA (59 percent), 14 were Latin American – Mexican, Columbian etc. (14 percent), seven British (7 percent), five domestic – SFRY/Serbia (5 percent), five Croatian -although one of these was broadcast at the same time on two or three channels (5 percent), three Italian and three Australian, two Spanish and one Turkish, one German and one Chinese. To have the overall picture about the character of the programming, we should add that remaining programme-time was filled with large amount of animated films (minimum 40 episodes – without reruns – mostly American and Asian productions), a number of different reality shows (mainly designed according to the adopted Western models and patterns, then live and recorded broadcasts of sport events (at least football 15 matches, five basketball, three hockey, ten auto mobile races, etc.) and an enormous amount of popular music videos and shows about the world of fashion and the jet-set. Consequently, in such a hyper-realistic programming framework there was no air space for Russian films or TV series.

Therefore, on March 11, 2010, out of 768 hours of broadcast programmes on 32 channels (out of 1700 hours, on 75 television channels over 24 hours) – almost 300 hours of programming were basically promoting/spreading one, more or less unified cultural code of mass culture – the American one, with sub-cultural substrates embodied in Latin-American and Asian “soap operas”.

What conclusions can be drawn from the facts above?

In the first place, when we speak about the sphere of mass culture, it is completely understandable that we cannot expect any radical change. Simply we must bear in mind that we live in the era of globalisation, in the era of Coca-Colisation (as it was colourfully defined by Reinhold Wagnleitner⁵), Holliwoodisation..., of total cultural space and social life. That we live in age of strong and unachievable mass storage “from the bottom up” of all kinds of information (T.H.Eriksen⁶), as well as hitherto unseen content of mass culture in the history of mankind. In a 24 hour period modern man is confronted with more information than people from VIII or IX century saw in their entire lifetimes. We live in an era in which “art is just a prelude to cocktail and PR” as it was superbly defined by A. Bartoshevic. In such global hyper-reality of mass media, the content of American mass culture holds absolute supremacy, and for one simple reason – we are speaking about the products of world’s largest mass culture *industry* (literally). An *Industry* that is impossible to

⁵ R.Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria After the Second World War*, North Carolina, 1994.

⁶ Tomas Hiland Eriksen, *Tiranija trenutka: Brzo i sporo vreme u informacionom društvu*, Beograd, 2003.

oppose in quantity by any other production of mass culture (Asian, Latin American, Chinese or Indian). Simply said, no other culture in the world, except the American industry of mass culture, has capacity to produce such a quantity of films to fill the daily schedule of a cable TV provider in Serbia with an average of 70 hours of film programme over 24 hours all through the year. At such a rhythm the yearly Russian film production would be “drained dry” in less than seven days.

Bearing all the above in mind, it is clear why none of the great Russian block-busters of recent years such as *9 rota (9 рота)*, *Stilyag (Стиляги)*, *Obitaemi Ostrov (Обитаемый остров)*, *Admiral (Адмирал)*, *Odnokalsniki (Однокалссники)* and others, or ever growing number of Russian telenovelas, which usually last a few seasons, for example *Brigada (Бригада)*, *Koldovskaya Lybov (Колдовская любовь)*, *Soldat (Солдаты)*, *Ne Rodis Lrasivoi (Не родись красивой)*, *Moja prekrasnaya nyanya (Моя прекрасная няня)*, *Schastlivie Vmeste (Счастливые вместе)*, *Tamyanin Den (Татьянин день)*, *Spalnyi Raion (Спальный район)*, *Margosha (Маргоша)*, *Sled Salamandri (След Саламандры)* and others, do not have any real possibility of breaking through on Serbian media space, in the face of competition with American, and even Latin-American telenovelas. A separate question arises if we consider the content of these films and telenovelas, which are almost exclusively made for Russian and Post-Soviet viewer (although replicating some of the patterns of their American models to a certain extent), as such they are preserving a closed cultural pattern, quite distant from Serbian mass media consumers. An example of the importance of an open cultural code can be seen in the children's animated series *Smeshtariki (Смешаруки)*, written in a sufficiently universal language as to be widely accepted among the younger population in Serbia. Hence, it opens another different dimension of the problem.

In a similar context, we should examine how Serbian mass culture cannot find its place in Russian media space. However, the Serbian production is significantly smaller than the Russian, thus it is in much less advantageous position on the mass culture “market” in comparison to the offer of more developed mass culture industries. When we discuss the content of the Serbian production it is even more appropriate to say that it is closed within its own separate cultural code, which can be almost exclusively assimilated among the Serbian public, and occasionally in the ex-Yugoslavian context. This cultural code is heavily characterized by a dominant quasi-rural self-reception of Serbian mass culture and society, often “proud” of turbo-folk and quasi-rural contents (Trumpet festival in Gucha, and numerous TV series about village and rural mentality: *the Dollars are coming (Стужу долари)*, *the Village is burning and granny brushes her hair (Село гори а баба се чешља)*, *My cousin from the village (Мој рођак са села)*, *White boat (Бела лађа)* and others) – the key “cultural export brands” of Serbia. That could be understandable if that export referred exclusively to the ex-Yugoslav area, and rarely to the Balkans as a whole – but it is hard to imagine any possibility of some wider, European or world perception of such contents.

Within the scenario above, “longing” for a greater presence of Russian culture within the space of Serbian mass culture, and vice versa, is almost passé. Of course, it is possible to argue about the good and bad sides of Globalisation and Coca-Colisation (doubtless, we would all agree about their bad sides), but we cannot stop them or reverse them. They are simply the reality in which the present generations live, and the framework in which future generations will probably live. Their rejection, refusal and condemnation will certainly not help us to understand them; it is by understanding of processes of Globalisation that we will come up with the frameworks and realistic prospects for present and future Serbian-Russian spiritual and cultural cooperation.

We should also consider the decreased/increased interest in studying the Russian language in Serbia under a similar point of view. Simply, interest in learning languages decreases, when contacts between two states and economies become weaker, and such contacts have been significantly less intense during the transition period, when compared to socialist period. Simply, when (and if) there are more Russians in Serbia and if Russians were to have an interest (economic, for tourism or personal reasons – for example, if Serbia allowed Russians to buy real estate), naturally studying Russian would become more attractive. Without such an impulse dramatic improvements can hardly be expected.

Finally, when we discuss the *high culture*, *elite culture* - it cannot be said that the situation is bad, indeed we could even say it is satisfactory. Nevertheless it would be difficult to evaluate if the whole potential of Serbian-Russian cultural exchange has already been exhausted. What is obvious, even through a simple analysis, is that the greater part of existing exchange (and the preservation of such contacts) has been carried out with little or no institutional support. It seems like the institutions, which are supposed to deal with these matters, do not show any significant interest to establish, maintain and foster cultural ties and contacts. It is a logical conclusion that this is precisely the area of Serbian-Russian relations that can be boosted to increase and deepen mutual cultural cooperation.

THE SPIRITUAL AREA

Matters of spiritual, religious and ecclesiastical relations between Serbia and Russia are interrelated, depending on complex issues of Serbian-Russian cultural cooperation and exchange.

The Spiritual ties between the Russian and Serbian people also have a long history - indeed, these were the first of important Serbian-Russian contacts. Spiritual contacts began already in middle ages, and became closer and more frequent between XVI and the end of “long” XIX century. Although during XX century spiritual connections between these two peoples and two churches passed through difficult times (mostly because of the nature of the authoritarian and atheistic regimes in both Serbia (SFRY) and Russia), contact was still intense and rich in mutual cooperation and influences. The period in between the two World Wars was probably the richest, due to a fact

that the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was one of the main destinations for Russian refugees. The Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia was active on the territory of the Kingdom in that period, with the approval and support of the Serbian Orthodox Church. That was a period of intense close contacts between Russian and Serbian priests, monks, spiritual leaders and believers (just by way of example, the influence of Russian monks and nuns was of immense importance for rebirth of female monasteries and nunneries within the church).

However, when we discuss present day relations, we should bear in mind firstly their complexity, and the complexity of the symbolic of mutual ties between the two Orthodox peoples and the two Orthodox sister churches. Of course, in these relations, and even more in their symbolism, tradition plays an influential role, nevertheless, tradition is not the only aspect at play in contemporary ties and relations.

The issues of spirituality and religiosity, which were pivotal questions in both countries after the breakdown of the two communist regimes, at the beginning of the 1990s, are still relevant today. The same issues do not just deal with the position of the churches within society (the Serbian Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church) and their mutual relations, though mutual relations constitute one important, and maybe the key aspect of their mutual relations in an institutional sense, we should not deny the importance (within the general context of the spiritual relations between the two peoples) of the issues of religiosity, faith, pilgrimage and common self-reception in faith of the population as important parts of identity in both societies.

Naturally, there is always the risk of emotional and simplified approaches to these complex connections. Such approaches usually include the danger of evolving rather mystical interpretations, sometimes over-mystification. In that sense, notions such as belonging to the "same faith" and the "same tribe" are transformed (in one metaphysical dimension) into conclusions of uniformity of faith, religiosity and spirituality. The next step is to draw conclusions on such a simplified basis, such as the remark of Deacon Andrej Savostishki: "[Europe] is dead. Europe is material paradise and spiritual hell (...) Europe made its choice, Europe does not follow the Lord or go towards the Lord, it lives without God, and Serbia is with God(...)"⁷ ...

In such cases it is good to mention one very colourful comparison of the two religious practices. In 1928 Zinaida Hipius wrote the following sentence (based on experience of mutual contact): "Serbian Orthodox Christianity is not exactly identical to the Russian one. Higher or lower, better or worse – that is another issue, but not the same: it is livelier, more people-oriented, and simpler and, what is the most important: it is more joyful".⁸ Therefore, when we speak of perception of contemporary Serbian-Russian spiritual ties, we can say that they too are characterized with almost

⁷ "PORT ARTURSKA IKONA MAJKE BOŽIJE U SRBIJI" (http://www.manastir-lepavina.org/novosti/index.php/weblog/detaljnije/port_arturska_ikona_majke_boije_u_srbiji/)

⁸ Z. N. Gippius (З.Н.Гиппиус), "Письмо о Югославии", in: *За Свободу*, Warsaw, (А САНУ, 14386, 2541.)

identical circle of questions, dilemmas, problems and general trends which imply in the analysis of the contemporary cultural relations.

Hence, it is evident that ties, contacts, overlapping and cooperation exist without doubt, and are very rich and complex, for example church connections, the wide scope of the Russian church in Belgrade (Serbia), and Serbian one in Moscow (Russia); moreover, numerous future Serbian priests and theologians attend Russian spiritual seminars and academies; Serbian believers travel on pilgrimages to Russia, but also Russian monks and believers visit Serbian shrines and holy places, such as pilgrimage tours “S, C Вятки“) (which have been organized since 2006 with the blessing of the Archbishop of Vyat and Slobodski Hrisanif¹⁰); and finally, the Russian Federation has provided material support for the reconstruction of Serbian churches and spiritual shrines in Kosovo and Metohija¹¹.

However, when we speak of the general perception of spiritual cooperation, we must conclude that it only vaguely (or indeed not at all) participates in the hyper-reality of the mass media culture, as is the case of high culture. As a consequence, the whole area of spirituality, as well as culture itself, is left to exist on the margins of public discourse (including almost all efforts at deepening, expanding and maintaining of a high level of contact, cooperation and interconnectivity).

Lastly, it is also possible to raise the issue of institutional support to the spiritual dimension, but certainly in different manner – since the church itself as an institution covers and solves the major scope of important questions.

⁹ For example, one such pilgrimage and tour of sacred shrines and holy places in Russia by Backa Eparchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church should be organized in May 2010 and it should last 12 days. This tour should include the following: May 9: Moscow (visit to Trinity-Sergey Lavra. Worship of the holy remains of St. Sergey of Radoniezsh; May 10: Murom-Diveyev. Visit of the Holy Trinity and Blagoveshensky monasteries and the temple of St. Nikolay. Arrival to Serafimo-Divievsky monastery. Worship of the holy remains of St. Serafim Sarovski and the miraculous icon of Umilenie; May 11: Diveyev-Vladimir-Moscow. Visit of the Uspen Sabor (with the particles of holy remains of St. Alexander Nevsky, the holy remains of St. Prince Andrei Bogolyubski, the miraculous icon Vladimirska, Bogolyubska, fresco by Andrei Rubliov). Monasteries of Svyato-Uspenski Kneginin, Svyato-Bogolyubov. Temple of the Shroud on Nerla etc.

(more info at: <http://www.eparhija-backa.rs/putovanja/svetinje-rusije-0>)

¹⁰ Compare: „Паломничество в Сербию“

(http://www.rusk.ru/analitika/2009/12/17/palomничество_v_serbiyu/); „Паломничество в Сербию и Черногорию“ (<http://www.svyatky.ru/vpechatleniya/vpp2/>);

¹¹ The project was defined during 2008, when, the then Russian president Vladimir Putin, expressed the will to contribute 2 million dollars and various other kinds of technical and expert help to restore and protect Serbian spiritual holy places and shrines in Kosovo – Pec Patriarchy, Gracanica monastery, Visoki Decani monastery, Bogoridica Ljeviska monastery]. (<http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/DrupercentC5percentA1tvo/465371/Rusija+obnavlja+a+srpske+svetinje+na+Kosmetu>;http://www.rtv.co.rs/sr_lat/drustvo/rusija-obnavlja-svetinje-na-kosovu_60096.html), as well as: <http://zabelezi.com/category/Vesti/rusija-obnavlja-srpske-svetinje-na-kosmetu/>)

Finally, it is possible to draw one final general conclusion regarding cultural and spiritual (as well as scientific) Serbian-Russian ties, contacts, mutual influences and interconnectivity. Connections and contacts without any doubt do exist. They are characterized by relatively rich exchange as well as numerous and different contents. However, the reality and results of that cultural and spiritual (or scientific) exchange, cooperation and interconnectivity are, almost by rule, hardly visible in the public discourse/space of the hyper-reality of mass media culture. In that hyper-reality, dominated by products of industrialized mass culture, there is not much (if any) room for the presentation of diverse contents. Furthermore, the nature of that hyper-real space of mass media culture is such that any political issue, standpoint or gesture, as well as any implemented or even announced economic project, would overshadow any cultural, spiritual or scientific effort (regardless of its real importance and value).

**RUSSIAN / SOVIET CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN SERBIA / YUGOSLAVIA
IN THE XX AND XXI CENTURY**

*Goran Miloradovic, PhD**

This short analysis of the Russian influence in Yugoslavia / Serbia has been developed on the starting premise that the sphere of culture is closely related to the spheres of politics and ideology. Moreover, the importance of research into cultural relations arises from the inter-related nature of these spheres: cultural relations can be an indicator of the relationship between states and peoples, since they are determined by political needs and ideological models. Three indicators will be used in this article to draft Russian-Serbian relations: the viewing of Soviet / Russian films in Yugoslavia / Serbia, the translation of Russian literature into the Serbian language, and the learning of the Russian language in Yugoslavia / Serbia. Particular emphasis will be placed on today's situation.

The first question that should be raised is whether it is possible at all to talk about Russian – Serbian cultural relations in the twentieth century, i.e. between 1918 and 1991.¹² During this period, two countries, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, existed in parallel, and their international roles hardly overlapped with the previous and the later roles of Russia and Serbia. Since cultural cooperation is connected to political relations and is conditioned by them, it is important to note that the politics and ideology of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia were different from the politics and ideology of Russia and Serbia. On the one hand, Russian-Serbian cultural relations can be traced back to a more distant past, even as far back as the sixteenth century, and were practically uninterrupted up until the end of the First World War. On the other hand, their cultural relations represent a completely new phenomenon and can be mapped out only through the last two decades.¹³

Yugoslavia was formed at the Paris Peace Conference with the blessing of the Allied Powers. Its role was to prevent a revision of the post-war European order and to be an obstacle to the possible extension of the Soviet state and its ideology to the West. It is a substantially different principle from the role that Serbia had, as a friend, and, occasionally, intimate of the Russian Empire.

The First World War and the Great October Socialist Revolution brought about the interruption of cultural cooperation between the newly formed state of Yugoslavia and Soviet Russia. Relations that had existed until the two events were transferred to representatives of Russian emigration,

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¹² This time-frame can be considered as an encircled whole in historical science, defined by the term "short twentieth century", which has become customary, and does not overlap with the calendar twentieth century.

¹³ For the beginning of this cooperation, see: *Moskva-Srbija, Beograd-Russia: dokumenta i materijali* [Moscow-Serbia, Belgrade-Russia: Documents and Materials], Volume I, *Drustvene politicke veze* [Social and Political Connections], (group of authors), Belgrade/Moscow, 2009.

since Yugoslav authorities could not reconcile with the newly established order in Soviet Russia. Russian emigrants were the repositories of traditional relations. This can be seen in the fact that Russian writers, painters and architects, who found their refuge in Yugoslavia, were mostly focused on traditional artistic trends, while only in the sphere of theatre were artists inclined towards modern currents.¹⁴ The behaviour of the Yugoslav government and, in particular, the Serbian political elite, towards Russian refugees, is indicative of huge differences between the values, and even the culture of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

While Russian emigration enriched cultural activities, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia viewed cultural exchange with the Soviet Union as a potential channel for enemy propaganda, thus actively inhibited and controlled any such cultural exchange. Alongside ideological contrasts with the Soviet authorities, this approach arose from the international political function of Yugoslavia as a part of the “French system” of European security.

The first signs of softening in censorship appeared in the mid thirties. With the first appearance of Soviet cinema in Yugoslavia, all ideological messages were censored. The attitude towards Soviet film had changed due to the rise of the Nazi threat in Europe. Eight Soviet films were purchased for the 1934/35 season, while the censor approved six¹⁵. Seven films were purchased for the 1935/36 season, all without any political contents.¹⁶ Even the Soviets were helpful in this matter, since they were almost exclusively producing entertaining films without any propaganda.¹⁷ The last film distributed was a comedy entitled *Volga-Volga* (Grigori Alexandrov, 1938) in September 1940.¹⁸ This took place just after diplomatic relations with the USSR were urgently resumed, due to the deterioration of the international situation, and in particular the fall of France in May 1940.¹⁹

¹⁴ Jovanovic, Miroslav, *Ruska emigracija na Balkanu 1920–1940* [Russian Emigration to the Balkans 1920 - 1940], Belgrade 2006, pp. 409–442.

¹⁵ Škrabalo, Ivo, *101 godina filma u Hrvatskoj 1896 –1997: Pregled povijesti hrvatske kinematografije* [101 Years of Cinema in Croatia 1896 – 1997: Review of the History of Croatian Cinematography], Zagreb 1998, p. 101; Mikac, Marijan, “Ruski filmovi kod nas” [Russian Films in Our Home], in: *Hoba Evropa* [New Europe], vol. XXVIII, No. 3, March 1935, pp. 88–89; Ostojic, Stevo *Rat, revolucija, ekran* [War, Revolution, Screen], Zagreb, 1977, p. 12.

¹⁶ Ostojic, Stevo, *Rat, revolucija, ekran* [War, Revolution, Screen], Zagreb, 1977, pp. 13–14.

¹⁷ Mikac, Marijan “Novi ruski filmovi” [New Russian Films], in: *Nova Evropa* [New Europe], vol. XXVIII, No. 8, August 1935, pp. 267. During the first Five Year Plan, when the country was afflicted by hunger (1932–33) and systematic preparations for the period of terror were ongoing, after the murder of Kirov (1934), the Soviet film industry attempted to reduce social disappointment and hide the real situation in the country by focusing on either apocalyptic or cheerful topics. Geller, Mikhail; Nekrich, Alexander, *Utopija na vlasti. Istorija Sovjetskog Saveza* [Utopia in Power: the History of the Soviet Union], Podgorica, 2000, pp. 243, 247–249.

¹⁸ See: *Dnevnik Online*, February 2, 2002, <http://www.dnevnik.co.yu/arhiva/02-09-2002/Strane/servisi.htm>, (September 29, 2008).

¹⁹ Yugoslavia had started to change its attitude towards the USSR even earlier. See the book, finished in May 1940 and published by Nolit: Dragovic, Vuk, *SSSR: Savez Sovjetskih Socijalistickih Republika* [USSR. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics], Belgrade, 1940.

A group of Yugoslav intellectuals tried to establish the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union in the mid 1940s. They thought that the social climate was suitable for the improvement of relations with the USSR. The initiator was Dr Ivan Ribar from the Democratic Party. However, this proposal was rejected by the Yugoslav authorities. The growing trend of cultural cooperation was then completely abandoned in 1941, when Yugoslavia was occupied by Central Powers, while the Soviet Union was attacked and partially occupied.

Nevertheless, cooperation between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union was re-established even before the end of the Second World War. The first concert of Red Army musicians was organized in liberated Belgrade in October 1944 at the National Theatre. Numerous visits of Soviet artists and intellectuals to Yugoslavia were organised and similarly Yugoslav visits to the USSR. The Society for Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with the USSR was established in Belgrade on January 14, 1945. Its 59 founders included many famous intellectuals, communists and Russophiles.²⁰ The Society, with more than 80 local committees, gathered a membership of over 15.000 and published a glossy journal called Yugoslavia - USSR.²¹ However, the activities of the Society were reduced to zero in the spring of 1949, due to the conflict between Yugoslavia and the USSR in 1948.

The reason for this twist in fate lay in the fact that socialist Yugoslavia had the same international-political function after the Second World War as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had had between the two Wars. Although the new order in the rebuilt country was Stalinist, Yugoslavia became a barrier to the expansion of Soviet influence in the West and a catalyst of dissatisfaction in Eastern Europe. The attractive picture of successful socialism with higher living standard that Yugoslavia offered, threatened the loyalty of the members of the socialist lager. Culture became the main channel of Yugoslav influence on other socialist states.

Film is not only a very popular and suggestive media, but also a valid indicator of political influence. Soviet films had a 62 percent share of the repertoire in Yugoslav cinemas in 1945, just over a half in the period between 1946 and 1950, while in 1951 they were completely eliminated due to the conflict with the USSR. They appeared once again in 1955, but only as a marginal part of the film program (2.32 percent), while Hollywood and Western

²⁰ Among the founders, the most famous were: Antun Augustincic, Isidora Sekulic, Rasa Plaovic, Rados Novakovic, Lojze Dolinar, Dr. Ivan Ribar, Dr. Sinisa Stankovic, Sreten Stojanovic, Dr. Pavle Savic, Milovan Djilas, Rodoljub Colakovic, Radovan Zogovic, Marko Ristic, Bozidar Malaric, Dr. Vladislav Ribnikar, Djuro Salaj, Oskar Danon, Rato Dugonjic, Boris Ziherl, Bane Andreev, Jara Ribnikar, Mosa Pijade and Leposava Nesc – Pijade. GARF Fond R-5283 (BOKC), оп. 17, д. 530, л. 15. [*Государственный архив Российской Федерации* / State Archives of the Russian Federation]. Copies of the Minutes from the founders' meeting and Guidelines of the defined at the meeting of the Action Committee on February 1, 1945, confirmed by the Commission of Interiors of the the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ), Act n. 212/45, February 10, 1945.

²¹ "Rad Društva za kulturnu saradnju Jugoslavije sa SSSR" [Work of the Society for Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with the USSR], in: *Jugoslavia – SSSR* [Yugoslavia - USSR], December 14, 1946, p. 39 (from the Report of the Society's first assembly meeting).

European productions were dominant. However, alongside improving political relations, Soviet film also gradually recovered and constituted 14 percent of the film repertoire in Yugoslavia in 1964.²²

Table 1: Share of the film repertoire in Yugoslavia

Year	Total	Soviet Films	%	Yugoslav Films	%	American Films	%
1945	150	93	62.00	-	-	7	4.66
1955	734	17	2.32	55	7.50	291	39.65
1964	1015	142	14.00	152	14.98	205	20.20

As elsewhere, with the advent of television in the mid-sixties, the importance of film started to decline in Yugoslavia, thus the recovery of Soviet cinematography on the Yugoslav market is relative.

The presence of Russian film has been marginal in the Serbian film repertoire at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. An analysis of the titles available on the best supplied networks of video clubs in Belgrade and Serbia (**Zabac**, 7.200 titles; **Moro**, 6.300 titles; **Lav**, 10.800 titles) reveals a very limited repertoire of less than two dozen Soviet/Russian films all together, including co-productions. Moreover, no one video club stocked all the titles in question: **Zabac** only 10; **Moro** - 13 and **Lav** -16.

These films can be divided into three categories, according to the time of production:

- ✧ Soviet production from 1950s and 1960s;
- ✧ Russian production from 1990 - 1999; and
- ✧ Russian production after 2000.

Why the number of Russian/Soviet films is so low and why only these titles are available can be understood through a structural analysis of the films in question.

For the most part these Soviet films are adaptations of classics from Russian literature. In total, there are six such titles:

- **Anna Karenina** and **War and Peace** by Leo Tolstoy;
- **The Idiot**, **the Brothers Karamazov** and **Crime and Punishment** by Fyodor Dostoyevsky;
- And **Quiet Flows the Don**, by Mikhail Sholokhov.

The reason behind the interest in these films lies in the fact that the literature on which they are based is part of the required reading in secondary

²² *Jugoslavija 1945–1964. Statistički pregled* [Statistical Review], Belgrade, 1965, p. 328.

schools in Serbia. It has become a tendency among young people in Serbia to watch these Soviet films instead of reading the book on which they are based, due to the considerable length of the novels and a diminishing reading culture among Serbian youth. Moreover, these films offer a very consistent and linear interpretation of novels' contents, contrary to American adaptations of the same titles.

Although the film *Aleksa Dundic* from 1958 does not fall into the category above, it is nevertheless relevant as it is a co-production with Yugoslavia in which many Serbian actors played and included contents partially connected to the Serbian history.²³

Finally, three films from the same period can be found on the video market due to their unquestionable quality which has stood the test of time: *Rublev*, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* and *Repentance*.

Films from the nineties are a case apart, since they were almost exclusively co-productions between Russia and one or more European states. Three films were made by Nikita Mikhalkov (*Urga – Close to Eden*, *Burnt by the Sun* and *The Barber of Siberia*), and one by Régis Wargnier (*East-West*). The only exception is *The Brother* (Aleksei Balabanov, 1997), which anticipated a certain change in direction compared to the previous decade.

Alongside political will, rich production and advertising are key factors influencing film audience, particularly when the public is used to Hollywood standards, as is the case in Serbia. As a consequence, American cinema, which was present on the Yugoslav market at 4.66 percent in 1945, 39.65 percent in 1955 and 20.20 percent in 1964²⁴, has increased to around 80 percent at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This situation is similar to the period between the two World Wars, when American film almost completely dominated Yugoslav cinemas.

A few Russian films from the beginning of the twenty-first century confirm that they can find their public in Serbia, when higher production quality is achieved and better advertising organized. They are: *Brother 2*, *Night Watch*, *Day Watch*, *The Return*, and *Mongol*.

Table2: **Soviet/Russian films in video clubs in Serbia**

	Film Title	Director	Production	Year
1.	<i>Aleksa Dundic</i>	Leonid Lukov	USSR, Yugoslavia	1958
2.	<i>The Idiot</i>	Ivan Pyryev	USSR	1958
3.	<i>And Quiet Flows the Don 1 - 3</i>	Sergei Gerasimov	USSR	1958
4.	<i>Anna Karenina 1–2</i>	Alexander Zarhi	USSR	1967

²³ The second Soviet – Yugoslav co-production was a film: *In the Mountains of Yugoslavia* (Abram Room, 1946).

²⁴ Yugoslavia 1945–1964. *Statistički pregled*, [Statistical Review], Belgrade 1965, p. 328.

Table2 (continued from previous page): **Soviet/Russian films in video clubs in Serbia**

	Film Title	Director	Production	Year
5.	<i>War and Peace</i> 1–4 (only the first of three parts available)	Sergei Bondarchuk	USSR	1968
6.	<i>Crime and Punishment</i> 1–2	Lev Kulidzhanov	USSR	1969
7.	<i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> 1–3	Ivan Pyryev	USSR	1969
8.	<i>Rublev</i> 1–2	Andrei Tarkovsky	USSR	1969
9.	<i>Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears</i>	Vladimir Menshov	USSR	1979
10.	<i>Repentance</i>	Tengiz Abuladze	USSR	1984
11.	<i>Urga</i>	Nikita Mikhalkov	Russia, France	1992
12.	<i>Burnt by the Sun</i>	Nikita Mikhalkov	Russia, France	1994
13.	<i>The Barber of Siberia</i>	Nikita Mikhalkov	Russia, France, Italy, the Czech Republic	1999
14.	<i>East – West</i>	Régis Wargnier	France, Russia, Bulgaria, Spain, Ukraine	1999
15.	<i>Brother</i>	Aleksei Balabanov	Russia	1997
16.	<i>Brother 2</i>	Aleksei Balabanov	Russia, USA	2000
17.	<i>The Return</i>	Andrey Zvyagintsev	Russia	2003
18.	<i>Night Watch</i>	Timur Bekmambetov	Russia	2004
19.	<i>Shadowboxing</i>	Aleksey Sidorov	Russia	2005
20.	<i>Day Watch</i>	Timur Bekmambetov	Russia	2006
21.	<i>Mongol</i>	Sergei Bodrov Senior	Russia, German, Kazakhstan, Mongolia	2007

The second indicator of Russian cultural influence in Serbia is translated literature. Based on an analysis of translations from five major European languages into the Serbian language during the nineties and after 2000, available through the Cooperative Online Bibliographic System and Services (COBISS)²⁵, the following observation can be made:

Table 3: **Translating Frequency (Incidence) from the five most widely spoken European languages into the Serbian language**

Language	1990/1999	2000/2009	+	%
Italian	709	1728	1019	143.72
English	9440	17126	7686	81.42
French	2412	3500	1088	45.11
German	2039	2519	480	23.54
Russian	2573	2908	335	13.02

²⁵ This is an active data base in which information is accurately updated, thus the listed data is continuously changing and should be read bearing this fact in mind.

During the last decade of the twentieth century (1990–1999) there were 926 titles translated from Russian listed in the catalogue of the National Library of Serbia.²⁶ Two particularly numerous and clearly defined parts can be identified:

- Belletristic - 380 titles or 41 percent;
- Theology, Mystic Literature, Conservative philosophy, Church literature - 112 titles or 12.10 percent

Table 4: Belletristic titles published during the nineties

	Author	Number of Titles	Number of Copies Printed
1.	Fyodor Dostoyevsky	51	1.000–10.000
2.	Alexander Pushkin	23	1.000–15.000 <i>(The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish)</i>
3.	Nikolai Gogol	16	500–5.000
4.	Leo Tolstoy	14	500–5.000
5.	Anton Chekov	10	1.000–3.000
6.	Mikhail Sholokhov	8	2.500–5.000
7.	Mihail Bulgakov	7	1.000–1.500 <i>(5 X The Master and Margarita)</i>
8.	Sergej Jesenjin	7	500–6.000
9.	Vladimir Nabokov	7	1.000
10.	Daniil Kharms	7	500–5.000
11.	Marina Tsvetaeva	7	500–3.000
12.	Alexander Belyayev	6	10.000–20.000 <i>(5 X The Star KETs)</i>
13.	Eduard Limanov	6	2.000
14.	Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn	5	500–2.000

Two scientists came close to the authors from above, according to number of titles translated into Serbian:

15.	Pavel Rovinski (ethnographer)	7	Unknown number of copies
16.	Lev Vygotsky (psychologist)	6	1.500

Table 5: Theology, Mystic Literature, Conservative philosophy, Church literature published during the nineties

	Author	Number of Titles	Number of Copies Printed
1.	Nikolai Bergiaev	22	500–1.000
2.	Mikhail Epstein	7	1.000
3.	Pavel Florensky	6	500–2.500
4.	Vladimir Solovjov	6	300–500

²⁶ Reprints of previously published translations have also been taken into consideration. All bibliographic units have been counted, from multi-volume monographs to individual short texts published in journals. Data in the catalog of the National Library of Serbia is also regularly updated.

Table 5 (continued from previous page): **Theology, Mystic Literature, Conservative philosophy, Church literature published during the nineties**

	Author	Number of Titles	Number of Copies Printed
5.	Sergei Bulgakov	5	300–700
6.	Nikolai Fyodorov	3	500–600
7.	Georgi Florovski	1	1.000

Such contents are published often in *Istocnik*, a journal for faith and culture.

There were 2,176 titles translated from the Russian language in the catalogue of the National Library of Serbia during the first decade of the twenty-first century.²⁷ The two previously defined groups are clearly present again, and both have substantially increased:

- Belletristic – by 1.070 titles or 49.20 percent;
- Theology, Mystic Literature, Conservative philosophy and Church Literature – by 516 titles or 23.71 percent.

Table 6: **Belletristic published after 2000**

	Author	Number of Titles	Number of Copies Printed
1.	Fyodor Dostoyevsky	98	500–1000 (<i>The Eternal Husband, The Brothers Karamazov</i> – 50.000)
2.	Leo Tolstoy	45	500–5.000 (<i>Anna Karenina</i> – 130.000)
3.	Alexander Pushkin	40	500–5.000 (<i>The Tale of Tsar Saltan</i> –15.000)
4.	Anton Chekov	37	500–2.000
5.	Nikolai Gogol	32	500–1.000 (<i>Dead Souls</i> – 50.000)
6.	Alexander Genis	27	1.000
7.	Sergej Jesenjin	25	500–2.000
8.	Boris Akunin (Grigory Chkhartishvili)	22	1000–2.000 (4 X <i>Azazel</i>)
9.	Mihail Bulgakov	19	500–1.000
10.	Mikhail Sholokhov	18	1000–7.000 (only <i>And Quiet Flows the Don</i>)
11.	Victor Pelevin	15	700–1.000
12.	Ludmila Ulitskaya	12	500–2.000 (<i>Women's Lies</i> , translated into Serbian as <i>Transparent Stories</i> – 15.000!)
13.	Vladimir Suteev	12	2.000 (12 X Fairytales and illustrations)

²⁷ Reprints of previous translations have been also taken into consideration. All bibliographic units have been counted, from multi-volume monographs to individual poems printed in journals.

Table 6 (continued from previous page): **Belletristic published after 2000**

	Author	Number of Titles	Number of Copies Printed
14.	Joseph Brodsky	11	500 (mostly in journals)
15.	Boris Pasternak	11	1.000–5.000 (<i>Doctor Zhivago</i> – 35.000)
16.	Ivan Bunjin	10	1.000–8.000
17.	Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn	10	1000–3.000
18.	Daniil Kharms	9	500–1.000
19.	Alexander Zinoviev	9	500–1.000
20.	Nina Berberova	8	2.000
21.	Ivan Turgenev	7	1.000–2.000
22.	Chyngyz Aitmatov	7	500
23.	Nikolay Afanasyev	7	1.000
24.	Gaito Gazdanov	7	1.000
25.	Vladimir Nabokov	7	500–1.000
26.	Vladimir Voinovich	6	1.000
27.	Vladimir Sorokin	6	500–1.000
28.	Yuri Polyakov	5	500–1.000
29.	Valentin Cernih	1	500–1.000 <i>Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears</i> (1980) 7 editions in 4 years 2006-2009

Table 7: **Theology, Mystic Literature, Conservative philosophy, Church literature published after 2000**

	Author	Number of Titles	Number of Copies Printed
1.	Nikolai Bergiaev	23	500–1.000
2.	Ignatius Brjancaninov	12	500
3.	Teofan Zavoratul	10	500–2.000
4.	St. John of Kronstadt	10	500
5.	Vladimir Solovjov	9	500–1.000
6.	Pavel Florensky	8	500–1.000
7.	George Florovsky	8	500–1.000
8.	Alexander Schmemmann	8	500–3.000
9.	Boris Visoslavcev	7	500
10.	George Gurdjieff	7	500–1.000
11.	Sergei Bulgakov	5	500
12.	Archbishop Averkey	5	500–1.000

Literature from the field of alternative medicine is a new phenomenon:

13.	Gennady Malakhov Quack, TV compère	37	500
14.	Alternative Medicine	24	500–1.000
15.	Bio-energy	17	500–1.000

Chess literature experienced a renaissance after 2000: 66 titles were printed, compared to a symbolic presence during the nineties.

It is worth mentioning that the Literary society *Pismo* ("Letter") from Zemun has been publishing a specialized journal entitled *Russian Almanac* with translations of selected extracts from Russian contemporary literature. Fourteen issues were published over a period of 19 years (Zorislav Paunovic, editor-in-chief). Most of the Russian authors published were appearing in the Serbian language for the first time. Thanks to the *Russian Almanac*, a great number of Russian writers and intellectuals have become available to Serbian readers, including: Dovlatov, Pelevin, Dobicin, Baskirceva, Vaclav Nizhinsky, Gazdanov, Daniil Andreyev, Arseny Tarkovsky, Solzenicyn, Averincev, and, from the older generation, Konstantin Leontiev, Leonid Andreyev, Vasily Rozanov, Alexei Losev, Mikhail Bakunin and many others. The list includes more than one hundred of most distinguished Russian authors, including the celebrated Russian rock-poetry by Egor Letov and Roman Neumoev, rare content made available to Serbian readers.

The third indicator of the Soviet / Russian influence in Yugoslavia / Serbia in the twentieth century is the study of the Russian language. The Russian language became the obligatory foreign language in Serbian primary and secondary schools after 1946. However, this was abrogated after the conflict with the USSR in 1948. It was then reintroduced in schools a few years later, but its popularity suddenly decreased and by the mid-fifties it was "severely dwindling".²⁸

According to one Soviet analysis, the Russian language, during the first years after the war, was taught in all secondary schools and universities in Yugoslavia, sometimes as the first foreign language, sometimes as the second, but also as the only contemporary foreign language. However, at the university level, it was evident that for "[...] one lecturer [...] there were between 150 and 200 students. It is obvious that the importance of teaching the Russian language has been reduced to zero. Particularly during 1948 – 1949, university authorities attempted to make the teaching of the Russian language difficult at universities, using different manoeuvres. [...] Three-quarters of secondary school teachers in Belgrade gymnasiums attended only short courses in the Russian language and often know less than their students. It is not rare to see a student of Russian origin who reads, translates and interprets in classes on the teacher's request. Lecturers of such a category [...] write examples on the board in some fantastic Russian-Serbian language [...]"²⁹ This was not only an issue in schools. Some

²⁸ "Učenje ruskog jezika – nekad i sad" [Learning of the Russian Language – Earlier and Now], RTV, Wednesday, December 10, 2008. [Naslovi.net](http://www.naslovi.net) <http://www.naslovi.net/2008-12-10/rtv/ucenje-ruskog-jezika-nekad-i-sad/951860> Interview with the President of the Serbian Slavic Society, prof. dr. Bogoljub Stankovic; Beta, "Raste interesovanje za učenje ruskog jezika u Srbiji" [Increase in Interest for Learning the Russian Language in Serbia], in: Blic, October 13, 2008, <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/60777/Raste-interesovanje-za-ucenje-ruskog-jezika-u-Srbiji>. Interview with Jelena Ginic, the Secretary of the Serbian Slavic Society.

²⁹ GARF [Государственный архив Российской Федерации / State Archives of the Russian Federation]. ГАРФ, Ф5283, Оп.17, Д.556, л. 75. *Постановка народного образования в*

texts in a less fantastic “Serbian-Russian” were “translated” from the Russian language and printed in the journal *Yugoslavia – USSR*, the organ of the Society for Cultural Cooperation of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union.³⁰ It is therefore obvious that mass participation in learning the Russian language, under such circumstances, could not leave a deeper trace in culture, although such an educational policy was enforced by the authorities.

The change in the international position of the country at the beginning of the fifties redirected the orientation in learning foreign languages. Until the beginning of the seventies, in 70–80 percent of Belgrade schools, parents were choosing English as the foreign language first and foremost, neglecting Russian, German and French. One attentive and well informed observer remarked that “[...] the absolute dominance of English is equivalent to the earlier absolute supremacy of Russian. In both cases, the regime's absolute dependence on one or the other political (ideological) system was obvious, through economic, cultural and other sources [...]”.³¹ Whether Russian or English, both policies on teaching foreign languages were one-sided and were the direct consequence of a state decision and the reflection of its international position. Informal resistance towards the Russian language after the war was led by the old, pre-war cadre in the field of education, who, by doing so, were expressing their specific attitudes toward communist ideology, while mass acceptance of the English language demonstrated the attitude of the population in general, born into socialism – two poles representing two ideologies.

Nevertheless, the Russian language became popular again at the beginning of seventies due to the development of the Soviet science and technology. During that time the matriculation exam for the Russian language at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade was taken by 300 candidates annually. At the end of nineties and the beginning of the twentieth century, the candidates were reduced to less than two dozen (15 times less!), and the actual number would be increased in September only thanks to those who failed to find a place in other foreign language departments. In 2008, for the first time in more than a decade, interest in the Russian language at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade was such that the number of applications (106) was almost double the number of places available at the course (59). However, Russian is still rarely taught at private schools and institutes for foreign languages. According to the data from the Serbian Slavic Society, around 15 percent of the population in Serbia uses Russian up to the certain level, but they belong mostly to older generations.³²

Югославији (Справка), April 20, 1949, No. 1. This is a detailed analysis of the overall educational system in Yugoslavia on 46 tightly typed pages.

³⁰ For example, it was possible to find a translation roughly equivalent to the following: “Hybrid fruits were produced by T. A. Gorschkova crossed with apples and pears” and similar absurdities. See: “Novi radovi micurinaca”, in: *Yugoslavia – USSR*, No. 1, November 1945, pp. 44.

³¹ Krstic, Dragan, *Психолошке белешке 1974–1975* [Psychological Notes 1974 - 1975], Belgrade, 1992, pp. 368–369. Krstic was a member of the state commission responsible for introducing foreign languages in primary schools and had insight into statistical data, the behavior of the regime's representatives and parents' attitudes.

³² “Učenje ruskog jezika – nekad i sad” [Learning the Russian Language – In the past and Now], RTV, Wednesday, December 10, 2008. *Naslovi.net*

Many teachers of the Russian language lost their posts after 2000, but during the last two years some teachers have returned to their classrooms, bringing the number of active Russian language teachers and professors to around 500 in 2008, compared to around 2,000 in the seventies and eighties.³³

Conclusion

Russian/Soviet cultural influence in Serbia during the twentieth century was closely related to events on the international political scene, and particularly to mutual relations between the two states. Generally speaking, relations between Russia and Serbia have been better than the relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

The periods of increased Soviet cultural influence in Yugoslavia were short-lasting, politically conditioned, and without any deep or long term effects. Soviet influence during the era of socialist Yugoslavia could be defined as belonging to the sphere of modern myth rather than fact. Western influences, the US first and foremost, were dominant in Yugoslavia.

Alongside a political influence, the sphere of cultural relations was also determined by ideology. Both extremes of Russian/Soviet cultural influence in Serbia/Yugoslavia, the most and least enthusiastic, were primarily conditioned by the political moment and ideological needs.

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia's severing of ties with the Soviet Russia after the First World War, including cultural relations, was an expression of an ideological non-acceptance of communism.

The sudden massive increase of Soviet influence after the Second World War was a consequence of a change in the ideological model in Yugoslavia, while the interruption of that influence came as a consequence of a Yugoslav political turn towards the West at the beginning of fifties.

The disappearance of the socialist federations, the USSR and Yugoslavia, also brought a change of ideology in Russia and Serbia, i.e. reverting to traditional values, conservatism and religiosity. As a consequence we can speak about a return of cultural cooperation, or of Russian cultural influence in Serbia.

<http://www.naslovi.net/2008-12-10/rtv/ucenje-ruskog-jezika-nekad-i-sad/951860> Interview with the President of the Serbian Slavic Society, prof. Dr. Bogoljub Stankovic; Beta, "Raste interesovanje za ucenje ruskog jezika u Srbiji" [Increase in Interest for Learning the Russian Language in Serbia], in: Blic, October 13, 2008, <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/60777/Raste-interesovanje-za-ucenje-ruskog-jezika-u-Srbiji>. Interview with Jelena Ginic, the Secretary of the Serbian Slavic Society.

³³ "Učenje ruskog jezika – nekad i sad" [Learning of the Russian Language – In the past and Now], RTV, Wednesday, December 10, 2008. *Naslovi.net* <http://www.naslovi.net/2008-12-10/rtv/ucenje-ruskog-jezika-nekad-i-sad/951860> Interview with the President of the Serbian Slavic Society, prof. Dr. Bogoljub Stankovic; Beta, "Raste interesovanje za ucenje ruskog jezika u Srbiji" [Increase in Interest in Learning the Russian Language in Serbia], in: Blic, October 13, 2008, <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/60777/Raste-interesovanje-za-ucenje-ruskog-jezika-u-Srbiji>. Interview with Jelena Ginic, the Secretary of the Serbian Slavic Society.

**RUSSIAN / SOVIET CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN SERBIA / YUGOSLAVIA
(THE RELIGIOUS PENDULUM)**

*Mirko Blagojević, PhD**

Although there are many doubts regarding the phenomenon of religion and religiosity, their importance cannot be questioned, since they emerge as complex, changeable, and controversial constructs, but also stable spiritual and social categories. Sociology is predominantly interested in the social aspects of religion and religiosity, not only how the evolution of human religious consciousness influences the society in which humanity lives, but also how society influences religion, the church and human religiosity. When the relationship between society and the state, on one side, and the church and religion, on the other, is observed over a long period, then their relationship could be defined as a motion of sorts, a religious pendulum, with its sinusoid curve. In both orthodoxies, the Serbian and the Russian, this curve is perceivable. In this context, the conventional, Orthodox religiosity and human bonds with Orthodoxy in Serbia and Russia, during the twentieth century, can be analyzed within the perspectives of a few different, general socio-political frameworks. The social position and the social and spiritual influence of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church, within their traditional religious-confessional spaces have not only been ambiguous, but also diametrically polar. In this regard, the general religious situation was not unambiguous and immutable, but also diametrically different, and can be analyzed on its essential surface, and with inherent abstractions, through two ideal-type models. One is stimulating, and positively and systematically values human religiosity and the Serbian and Russian Orthodox Churches, implying their privileged social positions, respect and great national and cultural importance. However, the other approach had a strong dissuasive influence on human religiosity and the Orthodox church, deteriorating their social position, spiritual influence and national importance, putting them on the margin of social life, without any real possibilities of addressing their, hitherto unproblematic public implications.

The religious situation in Serbia up until the end of the First World War, and in Russia during the imperial period, can be considered as the initial period, or one position of the religious, Orthodox pendulum. During this period, both religion and the church were considered affirmative, and religious values were an integral part of commonly accepted social values. The church was closely related to the state, whether the nature of this relationship was agreement, cooperation and mutual support (harmony), or service to the state and the fulfilment of many social functions (such as: education, marriage, etc.). Although human religiosity in that period, primarily in Russian, was certainly not exclusively Orthodox, but also pagan and sectarian, in the formal sense it was an absolute, which says a lot about the overall social and

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spiritual climate of the pre-revolutionary phase of Russian society. Although there are no doubts that formal, statistical criteria about confessional membership do not provide a real picture about the religiosity of the population, state and social reasons undoubtedly had a strong influence on an unproblematic, pro-religious and pro-orthodox consensus in both Russian and Serbian society.

A shock-wave of ideas, destabilizing the religious pendulum from its solid believer-foundation occurred in Russia with the October Revolution in 1917 and in Serbia after the end of the Second World War. A new religious reality, directly opposite the earlier one, was established in the Yugoslav socialist state and in the anti-religious Bolshevik Soviet state, in which the cultural hegemony of scientific atheism reigned. Rarely does the pendulum of religious ideas switch to the opposite position with preordained consequences on Orthodox religiosity and its social importance. That specific example of Orthodoxy implied a continuous low index of religious expression among the population, a paling impression of dogmatic beliefs, a dissolving dogma of the faith, an intermittent sporadic practice of the Orthodox rite, visible erosion of conventional religious behavior and marginalization of the importance of religion and the church itself.

At the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties of the last century, the spiritual pendulum, following a "second shock-wave of ideas", evidently swung back in Serbia and Russia, from declared atheism back to declared faith. The believer structure has been gradually consolidated during this process of restructuring ideas, thus a new, relatively stable believer structure, with its own specific features, was consolidated during the first decade of the new century. Although the euphoric feelings of Russian citizens at the beginning of the nineties and their great expectations from the Russian Orthodox Church in solving a mass of social problems, from moral complexities through to family, spiritual and social issues, later waned, the common Orthodox consensus in Russian society has not been questioned to date. All empirical surveys over last twenty years have shown that the majority of respondents agree that Orthodoxy is of huge social importance and deserves great respect. Orthodoxy and the Church have a great symbolic importance to the people, proportionally much greater than its effective capacity to solve the concrete problems of contemporary Russian society. Unlike the other social institutions, Orthodoxy and the Church are not uncertain, temporary, changeable and contentious, but 'everlasting', secure and unquestionable. Thus, only the Russian Orthodox Church has the social and spiritual capital to unite and homogenize the economically and politically disunited Russian society. The Serbian Orthodox Church, appearing on the post-socialists public scene, a socially and culturally conflict-ridden arena, fulfills a number of specific social functions: it provides the Serbian community with a particular identity and integrates individuals into a collective; on a religious and national level, it mobilizes people as a collective, which, in conflict situations, is opposed to other collectives. If the overall culture of one community is disadvantaged in such a conflict, religion and the church represent a resource of the community's own resilience and a guarantor and defender of its culture and tradition. When an individual and his/her emotions

are put under close scrutiny, religion has a psychological-emotional and compensational function.

Although in the professional, sociological and, generally, in the religious community, the term *revitalization of religion* or even *religious renaissance* has become common usage, referring to the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties of the last century, such a revitalization has its inner limits in Russia and Serbia. It is important to realize that progressing from a general level of thinking about religion and the church, expressed in undivided sympathies, towards deeper levels of religiosity and human bonds with religion and the church, it becomes evident that the revitalization of religiosity and religious institutions are not such an unproblematic phenomena. The empirical surveys, previously mentioned, did not only show a strong confessional, pro-orthodox consensus, declared religiosity, belief in God, but also syncretism of ideas, amorphous religious consciousness, selective belief in the dogmatic principles of Christianity and confusion regarding appropriate, practical religious behavior, i.e. ecclesiastical devoutness, among a population of declared believers. Although many Orthodox theologians speak about their believers as honest, they still consider them as lukewarm churchgoers whose faith needs to be nourished. From the point of view of Orthodoxy, the process of ecclesiastical re-appropriation is a difficult task awaiting the Church and its ecclesiastically and religiously non-socialized congregation that wishes to become Orthodox. These new Christians are on their "Christian path", which is non-problematic, easy and straight-forward by definition for a small number of believers, while for the majority it is long, winding, thorny and unpredictable.

Two views of the revitalization of religion and religiosity in Serbia and Russia

There are two theoretical frameworks for the interpretation of the return and revitalization of religion in Serbia and Russia. The first defines religion as a public institution and implies a logic of mutual support among religious and non-religious factors, while the second implies a logic of independent, inherent religious renewal, from the core of religion and the church itself as God's institution and the individual's spiritual need for piety and might be defined as 'terminal faith' (Lebedev, 2005). There is a common consensus among professionals regarding the first framework and its obvious manifestations and its validity cannot be questioned. This framework identifies the process of revitalization, and develops arguments based on facts about religions and churches as public institutions and their specific social functions in life patterns and a global society over the last twenty years. It can be defined as the *return of religions* (in the spheres of public life, politics and education). However, this process was much more powerful than a mere *return* (of people) *to religions*, thus causing sociology to formulate, probably too hastily, a theory on the return of religions. If the return to religion is a reality in these societies, several questions regarding the reasons behind this return stem from this fact: were these motives primarily of a religious nature or just a desire for social promotion through religion and the church, now recognized as an affirmative and desirable cultural model? (Cvitković, 2009:15–23). Unfortunately, there have been no systematic and representative empirical

surveys on this topic; nonetheless, such research ought to start from the premise that the reasons why the population returns to religions and churches are neither uniform nor unchanging. Moreover, one should start from the assumption that mass religiosity is certainly connected to co-called *cultural religiosity* (Filatov, Lunkin, 2005), which implies confessionality and religious self-declaration, thus seeing church religiosity and piousness in such a context as minor phenomena in these societies. When we talk about the revitalization of religion and religiosity in Serbia between the end of the eighties and nowadays, the character of this religion and religiosity can be primarily recognized, throughout the Balkans, in terms of collective religiosity within the context of the existence of historical faiths throughout the centuries, and not in terms of de-institutionalization and individual religiosity, where an individual and his/her inner religious needs are central and satisfiable through personal choice and decisions taken on a free and rich market of religious ideas and practices. Having observed the key aspects of religious revitalization on the post-Yugoslav territory during the nineties, as re-traditionalisation, re-totalisation, re-collectivization and renewed spiritual re-rooting, we can conclude that these authors are right (Vrcan, 1999). From the main features described above, some authors believe that such a renewal should not be defined as a believers' conversion and eschatological mind-shift, but simply an all-embracing, socially and politically omnipresent expression of religiosity (Jeleč, 2008; Velmar-Janković, 2009).

In the process of identifying the religious changes in Serbia and Russia, unraveling the dilemma of the return of religion or the return to religion is certainly very important. However, such dilemmas do not represent an obstacle in drawing a conclusion that the revitalization of religion in different extents and intensities is present in both levels of its "renewal": the fact that the socio-political dimension in this process is dominant does not mean that rigid religious renewal did not happen at all. This process did come about and is ongoing now, but it is not a mass phenomenon.

How Many Orthodox Believers are there today? – Three Approaches

Russian sociology and religiology in the last twenty years have produced considerable empirical evidence on the religiosity of the population in both the Russian Federation in general, but also in its federal units or geographic areas. Moreover, analyses related to the criteria of religiosity, thus Orthodox religiosity in particular, are available. However, there is no general agreement on the theoretical questions and the interpretation of research results. The question of the criteria of religiosity is certainly not only a general sociological or scientific matter, but also a practical-political question and a church issue, since it also provides an answer on the importance of spiritual and socio-political capital, the proclaimed domain of confessional organizations, and is also related to the identification of the general social, even spiritual and legal aspects of a given confession. In this regard, for example, the Russian Orthodox Church, according to the opinion of some clerics, politicians and journalists, should be formally granted the status of privileged Russian confession (which it already has, informally), because of its historical importance for Russia and Russians, i.e. Orthodoxy is the religion of

Russians, and the Russians are the dominant population in the country (80 percent).³⁴ The socio-political implications of numbering believers are based on two different general conceptions and methodological positions on the criteria for defining (Orthodox) religiosity. The sociologist Sergei Lebedev summarily names these two groups of researchers as the representatives of a *classical*, and a *post-classical* concept or approach to the issues in question. Distinguished sociologists and researchers of religious phenomena of repute belong to both groups: Furman, Lunkin, Filatov, Voroncova and Mitrohin to the first, while Česnokova, Sinelina, Pejкова and Naletova, to the second (more in Lebedev, 2006).

The first group of researchers ascertains that the criteria of religiosity should undoubtedly include some practical confirmation of a specific cultural religiosity among the population. Thus, it is not sufficient for the person-believer to proclaim him/herself as such, nor for a particular confessional community, this subjective position needs to be confirmed in life by objective doing, or, in other words, by regular cult and ritual practice. This means that we cannot come to exact figures on believers without parameters that include regular visits to church, presence at the liturgy, participation in the Eucharistic rite, fasting and other ritual acts of piety. Without respecting all the parameters above, the defined number of believers is only fiction and without any real content, and believers defined in such a way are imaginary believers.

In this context, a general comment on the limited range, superficiality and formality of the religious renaissance in Russia, and a devaluation of the notion of believer, was handed down by Furman, Kaariainen, Filatov, Dubin and others, and was based on empirical data on a very limited part of the population of believers, who can be recognized, by their dogmatic beliefs and religious behavior, as true, serious or traditional believers, who really live their faith in their lives and whom the domestic sociology of religion most commonly call devout activists. Furman and Kaariainen shed some light on this problem by creating the index of the "traditional believer", based on data from the Russian-Finnish surveys, carried out in 1996 (Kaariainen, Furman, 1997:38 and further). This group of traditional believers was comprised of respondents who answered positively to a series of questions related to dogmatic identification and actual religious behavior. When applying such a methodology, which is not severely "strict", according to the authors themselves, there were only 4 percent of such respondents in the sample, while this number increased to 8.8 percent in 2005. According to this

³⁴ In this regard, the opinion of Kirill I, the former Archbishop, later Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, now the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, is paradigmatic. At a press conference in 2002, on the occasion of an international festival of TV and radio programs of the Orthodox station "Radonjež", he pointed out: "We are obliged to forget the term multi-confessional country, which brings only disagreements. Russia – it is an Orthodox country with national and religious minorities. All statistical surveys, carried out in our country, show a perfectly clear picture: the existence of religious minorities and an absolute Orthodox minority. . . . These speculations on multi-confessionality should come to an end, once for all. If we have 4 to 5 percent of Muslims (and that's what the statistics say), then this is not multi-confessionality, but a majority. If there is less than 1 percent of non-orthodox Christians – they are then a minority; that minority should not be discriminated against is another issue" (Сколько верующих, 2004).

methodology, the post-Soviet traditional believer does not differ substantially from the Soviet one. It is a group of believers, which is not only predominantly female, but also decidedly “old”, with the lowest level of education, and predominantly rural (Furman, Kaariainen, 2006:59-65; similar data also at: Petrova, 2004).

However, this methodology, which identifies real Orthodox believers, was seriously analyzed and questioned in Russian sociological literature. The issue was raised whether a real number of Orthodox believers (up to 6 percent of respondents) was defined correctly, and whether this number can be correctly defined at all. Should respondents, who identify themselves as Orthodox, be included in the group of believers if their knowledge of Orthodox dogma is weak and they rarely participate in Orthodox rituals? As we can see, Furman does not include them in the group of real Orthodox believers. In a context in which there is also a symbolic number of “real” atheists, according to this author, in post-soviet society “religion does not win over atheism in Russia, but both of them, religion and atheism, deviate before a rising tide of value freedom and eclectic ideas”. Sinelina has questioned (Sinelina, 2001; 2005) the basic conclusions of a series of empirical researches (Cesnokova, 2005; 2005a). She has defined three groups, based on the criteria used in empirical surveys to define respondents’ religious views: the criteria related to familiarity with church dogma, prayers and the Bible; the criteria such as belief in magic, sorcery, astrology, spiritualism, reincarnation and, finally, criteria related to the current rituals of religious practice, such as attending church and receiving communion.

According to Sinelina, the following question should be raised: how many real believers would there have been in pre-revolutionary Russia if the definition was not based on the formal-legal criteria of belonging to this or that confession based on birth, or baptism, or another appropriate ritual from non-Christian religions or the criteria of self-identification, but on the criteria of familiarity with the Christian dogma and belief in Christian dogma, such as ideas about God, life after the death, the resurrection of the dead, paradise, hell, familiarity with the Bible and Orthodox prayers. It is obvious that, in this case, the number of Orthodox believers would be very low. According to this author, there is evidence of a great rural population at the end of the nineteenth century with completely pagan ideas about God, which did not prevent them from identifying themselves as Orthodox believers, nor the Russian Orthodox Church from treating them as its believers. Lack of familiarity with the dogmatic assumptions of one’s own religion, thus, the absence of belief (Russian villagers were, practically all illiterate, and the Bible itself was translated completely into the Russian language only in 1875) did not mean that they were not real Orthodox believers. Their belief was not an intellectual, sophisticated belief, but the “simple” belief of the people, and that was the essence of Russian Orthodoxy. Consequently, the Bible did not exist for illiterate peasants, thus the church ritual and a few prayers that were orally passed from one generation to another, were the unique common denominator between an individual and the church. Without going into an already complex and un-solved problem – whether the truth of the faith (God) comes with reason or belief (will) – the author only questions the issue of the

cognitive part of belief as the key element in defining religiosity, defining also another two necessary moments in understanding the problem of the dissolution of dogmatic content in faith and religious syncretism. The first moment is related to the complexity and high spirituality of Christian dogma, where behind each dogma there is not only the high intellectual capacity of those who wrote them, but also centuries of disputes, divisions, wars, the disintegration of states and many human causalities. The second moment is related to the absence of an organized religious upbringing among the youth of the Soviet Union over a period of decades – the absence of catechism, and therefore, according to Sinelina, it is no surprise that modern Russian believers have difficulties in understanding Christian dogmas, such as: the identity of God, the Holy Trinity, The resurrection of Christ, the immortality of the soul, the Last Judgment etc.

Understanding religious syncretism and pagan poly-demonism, expressed by a majority of respondents and typical among a great number of believers, is considered inappropriate by the author as a fact by which to question declared conventional religiosity. She does completely agree that religious eclecticism exists, and lists evidence from surveys, showing that believing in conjure, sorcery, the evil eye, spiritualism, astrology, telepathy, reincarnation is on exactly the same level, sometimes even on a higher level, especially among younger generations, than dogmatic beliefs in God, paradise and hell. Such a religious eclecticism is not only characteristic of Russian Orthodoxy, it is extended throughout the annals of human history, in widespread belief in primitive magic, side by side with belief in the dogmatic ideas of monotheistic religion, thus showing how superstition hotly pursues Christianity. There is no doubt that medieval Russian peasants were superstitious, together with being devout Orthodox believers. There is evidence in Russian literature which shows that the Russian courtiers had their fortunes read even after being baptized. Furthermore, the medieval Christians undoubtedly believed in sorcery, charms and soothsayers. The Catholic Church was fighting with the fire and brimstone of the inquisition against these phenomena. Based on the above mentioned factors, the author is convinced that people who define themselves as Orthodox believers should be comprised in the group of Orthodox believers, especially in the context in which Russian modern Orthodox believers are not in any already completed state of unproblematic conventional religiosity, but in a complex process of spiritual self-improvement and ecclesiastical re-appropriation (Cesnokova, 2005).

For this group of researchers, the crucial criterion in defining religiosity is *self-identification of an individual*, a human who is aware of belonging to a certain confessional group. “According to my understanding, the self-identification of a respondent is the key in approaching Russian religiosity. The status of Orthodoxy as the national religion allows the stress to be put, not only on respondent’s personal beliefs, but also on their closeness to national culture and the collective consciousness of the people. This is exactly Rižov’s approach when underlining that the determining criterion for belonging to the Orthodox church is not regularity in attending religious service, but the

ritual of baptism” (Naletova, 2004).³⁵ In addition, these authors do not discuss much about religiosity, but introduce the notion of the *ecclesiastical re-appropriation* of people, which is not some discrete greatness, or fixed momentary state, as religiosity is defined by the first group of authors, but a process, an evolution whereon a person embarks at a certain moment, growing closer more or less, in time, to ideal obligations that ought to be fulfilled by a real, deeply ecclesiastically re-appropriated, a true (Orthodox) believer.

The third approach in defining the criteria of (Orthodox) religiosity is expounded by Lebedev (Lebedev, 2006), as a synthesis *sui generis* of the previous two approaches. According to this author, the positive element in the first approach is its insistence on the complexity of such criteria and its demand for confirmation of the respondent's subjective self-religious evaluation with facts of an objective nature based on actual behavior. The weak part of this methodological position lies in the great number of filters, presented in formal canonical demands, put before believers, and moreover, the calculation of their final number. Following this logic, a very small group of pious believers can be identified among the people, who fulfill all the commandments of their religion and the church, live a very devout life which is substantially different from the secular life of the great majority of others.

The weakness of the second methodological position lies in its specific one-sidedness and the monolithic character of the criteria of religiosity. If the self-evaluation of religiosity is an imperative for religiosity or belonging to any confession, it certainly is not a sufficient condition, thus, it should undoubtedly be complemented with other parameters and arguments. The positive aspects of this approach can be seen, according to the author, in connecting a scientific approach with an introspective one in defining the criteria of religiosity.

³⁵ This position, in which self-identification is a sufficient criterion for defining Orthodox religiosity, received a lot of criticism in Russian literature. On that matter, Olga Kvirkvelia (Kvirkvelia, 2003) sharply criticizes the basic postulate of Yulia Sinelina that no-one can be defined as non-Orthodox if he/she defines himself/herself as such. Kvirkvelia underlines the absurdity of such a position with the examples that we could not consider someone tone-deaf, if he/she considers himself/herself musical, alien, Napoleon, etc. Since the sociologist is obliged to be non-biased and objective in research, then surveys should include questions that would correct and complement each other. In this regard, the criterion of religious-confessional self-identification should not be rejected, but complemented with other parameters: this subjective picture should be expanded with facts on what a respondent understands in the term Orthodox believer, and what the reasons are for defining himself/herself as a such. Then, these facts should be compared with the official position of the Orthodox Church. The critical observations of Kvirkvelia did not go without the criticism either. Although Yuri Rizov agrees in some aspects with Kvirkvelia, he presents a few critical observations related to her article: people faith, or mass religiosity, cannot provide an “objective picture” about religion, but official faith; in her observations on the dogmatic postures of the faith, Kvirkvelia does not mention baptism at all as a crucial criterion for confessional belonging. According to him, Orthodoxy is not limited to the official position of the religious hierarchy, council of a church and synod, but *sensus populi* should be taken into consideration, the public opinion of the people, regardless of the fact that a respondent “often does not believe in dogmas or has difficulties in giving an answer in a survey” (Rizov, 2003).

Lebedev's contribution to the discussion on the criteria of religiosity is not only in simply providing a synthesis of the presented approaches, but in raising the whole discussion onto a higher and broader theoretical level. He starts from the premise that religiosity is a human spiritual, cultural and social state, an inseparable unity of these elements, one naturally leading to the other. When examining contemporary religiosity, as a criteria, the cultural element is the most important for the sociologist, since the spiritual element remains elusive for the sociological approach and research methods, while the social element is not affirmed to such an extent as to be sociologically elaborated. If the cultural element of religiosity is the starting point, then it needs to be viewed within the context of the secularization of society, an ever present factor of modern contemporary societies. The downside of such a process is the appearance of a secular cultural pattern, thus connecting it today with the problem of religion and religiosity or religious culture. Starting from Sorokin's definition of culture, Lebedev stresses three important characteristics: totality, self-organization and self-referentiality. The first, positivistic approach in defining the criteria of religiosity (Furman, Filatov and others) neglects the self-organization of religious culture and approaches it from the position of secularist one-sidedness, while the other, the phenomenological approach, (Cesnokova, Sinelina and others) neglects the totality of researched culture, giving the contours of religiosity a superficial and self-explanatory character.

Based on the two concepts of the criteria of religiosity, Lebedev defines the third as a systemic-dynamic approach, which is closer to the second than to the first position described above. In accordance with the definition of the culture of modern society as an essentially secular culture, the constituents of which are practically, by socialization, all members of society, religious culture exists on the margins of modern society and in a sphere of collective unconsciousness and tradition. Unlike a secular culture, religious culture is not a matter of general institutionalized socialization; it is not interiorized from childhood and is a matter of the persona choice of a believer. In contemporary society, a person of a religious culture can in no way avoid secular culture. In that regard, religiosity can be defined as confessional enculturation, the cultural space of a certain religion and the progressive "deconstruction" of its semantic package. The notion of ecclesiastical re-appropriation, brought into the analysis by the authors of the second methodological approach, represents a real practice of ecclesiastical devoutness in religious culture. While the first group of authors uses the notions of religiosity and ecclesiastical devoutness as synonyms, Lebedev distinguishes the following difference: religiosity is a discrete greatness, which means it either exists or does not, while ecclesiastical re-appropriation (or ecclesiastical devoutness as a process) is a continuous greatness with a wide diapason of quantitative and qualitative manifestations. Thus, religiosity is a vital imperative, but not a sufficient condition of ecclesiastical devoutness.

According to Lebedev, the criteria of religiosity should be defined according to the principle of mutual complementarity of subjective and objective characteristics. At the heart of this criterion, as its quintessence, instead of the notion of ecclesiastical devoutness (the "phenomenologist"

approach), focus should be put on human value orientation, more precisely on the merit of *religious faith*. Religious faith, as a value, sense and life goal, is a *universal indicator*, which marks the differentiation between religious and non-religious persons.³⁶ When discussing the religious self-identification of respondents, the orientation of the second group of researches on religious faith as a value is merely hypothesized, but not elaborated theoretically. However, self-identification does not automatically imply the existence of religious faith, thus cannot be an independent parameter (Rubicon) of faith. Religious-confessional self-identification does not always have a terminal character as a condition which the criteria of religiosity has to fulfill, but can have instrumental value. Finally, Lebedev argues that the criteria of (Orthodox) religiosity should be defined by three important criteria, as necessary and sufficient conditions of religiosity: (1) Religious faith is a life meaning for a believer; (2) It is concretized through positive religious and (3) Confessional self-identification (Lebedev, 2006).

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³⁶ “Of course, there are no precise criteria of religiosity. Human *religious sentiments* might be considered as absolute criteria for religiosity, but, unfortunately, this cannot be confirmed. Thus, the only way to define human religiosity is based on human creation, the way one behaves and acts towards other people” (Voroncov, 2008).

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SERBIAN-RUSSIAN CULTURAL RELATIONS IN PHILOSOPHY – ORIENTATION ATTEMPT

*Bogdan Lubardić, PhD**

„I might be wrong but concerning philosophy Russia represents only repetition, fantastic warps and serious deformations of European thought. Even³⁷ in the last twenty years, in the Bolshevik period, Russia has not given one book, one page capable of truly illuminating one philosophical problem. What I happened to read in translation from newer Russian writers, be they theoreticians or historians, was merely a banal application of Marxist formulae. Russia did have artists of genius like Tolstoy. In the end, it was not me who observed the deep and serious fissure cut out and left behind in the Russian mind through a deficit of logical-scholastic education – from which European culture drew all of its great benefits“ (Benedetto Croce³⁸).

„The particularity of Russian philosophy, which is so indifferent towards ordinary ‘school philosophy’, is very often the reason for a careless relation towards her. In contemporary times, however, that nonchalant relation has retreated. For today, more than ever, what the world requires is one thing *needful*³⁹, which has always comprised the life of Russian philosophy“ (Vasily V. Zenkovsky, 1922⁴⁰).

In the following text we offer a reflexion of cultural relations between Serbia and Russia, in view of the way they refract through theoretical culture of philosophy. The history of Russian and Serbian culture, or, the history of relations towards our historical relations, including thinking about those

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³⁷ It is clear that Croce directs his attack at Soviet Marxism. The cutting edge of his critical point of view, however, runs through Russian philosophy as such. Out of the statement given by Croce, as a moment implied, it also follows that the range of his criticism encompasses the religious and philosophical thinkers of the Russian ‘Silver age’ (Серебряный век), namely doctrines that include ideas of ‘all-unity’, ‘God-Manhood’, ‘Sabornicity’, ‘Sophiology’, ‘Ungrundology’, ‘Groundlessness’ etc), not only extravagant Leninists and their epigons.

³⁸ Bogdan Radica, *Agony of Europe*, Belgrade 1940 = Богдан Радица, *Агонија Европе*, СКЦ, Београд ³1995 (1940), 174-175 — in Serbian Cyrillic. The conversation between Radica and Croce took place during the third decade of last century, within the context of Tomáš G. Masaryk’s reception of the ‘Russian idea’. Radica asks Croce whether he still holds the same standpoint in relation to Russian philosophy as voiced ‘twenty years ago’. The two erudites are most probably thematizing the following works by Masaryk: idem, *Slavjanofilism I. S. Kirejevského*, 1889; idem, *Zaklady marxismu filosoficke a sociologicke*, 1898; idem, *Rusko a Evropa (The Spirit of Russia)* 1919. The Italian translation of the study *Rusko a Evropa* appeared in Rome in 1925.

³⁹ Allusion to the verse of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament: ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful (hrea hē enós)...’ (Lk 10, 41-42).

⁴⁰ At the Orthodox Faculty of Theology of Belgrade University archpriest Vasily Zenkovsky taught psychology and pedagogy and then history of philosophy in the period from 1920. to 1923. He was a prolific writer at the time: publishing, for instance, in the magazine *Christian life* then edited by blessed Fr Justin Popovic (e.g. idem, ‘The Return to Religious Ethics’, *Christian life* 10-11 [1924] 420-429; 466-473). Whilst in Belgrade he published *The Psychology of the Child* (1923); previously in Zagreb he published another important work: *Russian Thinkers and Europe* (1922) = Василије В. Зенковски, *Руски мислиоци и Европа*, translation: Марија и Брана Марковић, ЦИД, Подгорица 1995, 14 [in Serbian Cyrillic] = Василий В. Зенковский, *Русские мыслители и Европа*, Париж ²1955 (second enlarged edition [in Russian Cyrillic]). See also in English: idem, *Russian Thinkers in Europe*, Michigan 1953.

relations, we leave in the background (as implied moments [which have to be presupposed due to limited exposition space]). Our goal is envisaged with another and different intention in mind. That is to say, the goal is seen as condensed articulation of main reasons for which this relation, as far as philosophy is concerned, appears as a problem for us – ‘today’. However, our exposition is *no more* than a proposal for commencing a long overdue debate on the subject. For this reason we opt for a structural cross-section of the problem (keeping the diachronical cross-section in reserve). We shall expound a (1) *description* of state of affairs, then a (2) *diagnosis* of the problem and, finally, offer a (3) *prescriptive* proposals for overcoming the ailing state of Serbian-Russian affairs (when the philosophical aspect is at stake).

1. Let us take philosophy to be a universal form of critical self-consciousness. Hence, if philosophy is taken as a ‘paradigm’ of universal possibilities of self-reflected discourse, then one may procure a useful framework for all-encompassing observation of the problem of *Serbian-Russian relations* (in and through philosophy, of course). Being a conceptual expression of mediation of the universal and particular (on the level of concretization of interests, goals and problems of cultures) – the ‘paradigm’ of philosophy, *inter alia*, may be utilised as a very indicative framework for *manifesting* characteristics of the Serbian-Russian ‘relation’. The main problem, however, is not a purely ‘theoretical’ question: viz. the relation of universal and particular (local) in philosophy ‘in itself’. We have something else in mind: namely, when *Serbian-Russian* cultural relations are in question, the problem in the *philosophical* sense appears through the following *paradox*. Let us take a look (at the price of oppositional generalisation): on one hand, the fact of self-specific (*samobitni*) origins in Slavic culture and Orthodox spirituality (which are denied by no one as such) are recognised as *pivotal points* for deducing and stabilizing identity⁴¹ (from personal to national and general cultural identity), whilst, on the other hand, precisely those origin points (and their transmission structures) are not only brought into question but *negated* (ignored by certain influential groups, to say the least) – when philosophy and philosophers are concerned.

The aforementioned *tendency* surely is a paradoxical one. It has certain strength and no short tradition in Serbian theoretical thought (Russians themselves are not spared of such processes either [an eminent Russian philosopher, Mikhail Maslin, spoke recently of the paradox of ‘expulsion of Russian philosophers from Russian philosophy⁴²]). In other words, the

⁴¹ Next to the *reflexive* meaning of the concept of identity (deduced through reflecting conditions of possibility of consciousness about particularity and irreducibility of the personal self) – as unseparable, we also add the *narrative* meaning of the concept of identity, which we take as ‘the story about who we are’. As the aforementioned thinker Maslin stated: ‘We may also add that the Russian idea is in many ways tied to the questions of the Russian people about themselves: who are we as such, where do we come from and whereto are we going?’, v. Mikhail A. Maslin, *On the Unity of Russian Philosophy*, St Petersburg 2006 = Михаил А. Маслин, *О единстве русской философии*, из цикла: Семинары по русской философии, Русская христианская гуманитарная академия, Санкт-Петербург 28.04.2006 — in Russian Cyrillic (= DVD видео формат + <http://www.rchgi.spb.ru/seminars/seminar.htm>).

⁴² Mikhail A. Maslin, *op. cit.*

paradox is contained in the fact that both sides: supporters of affirmation and supporters of 'negation' (or 'nominal' acknowledgement) of those pivotal points of 'origin', both ('have to') *refer* to it equally. However, the prevailing ways of *referring* are established either through neo-romantic rhetoric (mythologization), or resistance to those self-specific pivotal points through another type of rhetoric (through neo-enlightenment critique of the 'lazy [Orthodox] East', which is itself parasitic on myth: *mythos* of enlightening humanity through reason from 'the West').

In a word, the problem is not only in the dispute itself, but also in the way (mode) of dispute. Let us generalise the aspect of extreme tendencies: the problem is contained in the fact that the argument unfolds through *ideologised* discourses under the sign of 'mythologisation' which, to aggravate the problem further, mostly pass (or trespass) below or outside the level of *institutional* or instituted⁴³ responsible (self)reflexion. This means that the results and viewpoints of both 'parties' are in advance condemned to modest success or, rather, to failure. This is what we propose to call the '**state of affairs**', or a *conditio relationis serbica et russica in philosophia* (or, more accurately, still outside – ad extra – philosophy [if it is to include disciplined and regular reflexion on the Serbian-Russian relation: a philosophical relation too, which legitimately may aspire to include the particularity of *Slavic* and *Orthodox* points of identity origin as non-discardable sources of meaning – meaning with philosophical potential and relevance]).

The aforementioned propositions and suggestions may be illustrated by means of the following examples: again under signs of a paradox of sorts.

First, since the foundation of the Serbian philosophical society in 1898⁴⁴ (1938) until the present, that is for 112 (72) years, the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University has not managed to found a Chair for *Russian* or *Slavic* philosophy (or at least a subject in domain of facultative-optional teaching [not to mention a subject for Serbian philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy at Moscow State University, let us add not without a note of self-irony]). However, such is the case within the ex-Yugoslav and, of course, Serbian⁴⁵ theoretical-cultural area as a whole. If we repeat our thesis that it is 'generally' taken as undisputable that the Serbian national (spiritual, cultural, social... etc) corpus, similarly to the Russian one, draws origin roots from the

⁴³ By distinguishing the 'institutional' and 'instituted' we refer to the fact that there is no institutionally posited regular and official dialogue on these problems, *although* there is 'permission' – more accurately, there is no serious hinderance – to discuss these matters *from time to time* through certain institutions (our gathering being one such case, for instance). The question is, then, whether this is intended: guided indifference, or, simply, a cumulative negative effect due to years and years of neglect of the matter?

⁴⁴ That occurred just one year after the publication of the seminal study: Vladimir Solovyev, *Justification of the Good*, St Petersburg 1897 = Владимир С. Соловьев, *Оправдание добра*, СПб. 1897 (Москва 21899) — in Russian Cyrillic.

⁴⁵ We know of one exception only. Namely, the obligatory subject *Slavic philosophy* – taught at the Faculty of Philosophy of Nikšić University (Montenegro): introduced at the end of the 90-ties of last century (on initiative by Bogoljub Šijaković, the other professors and lecturers being Nikola Milošević, Radomir Đorđević and Radoje Golović). But this only proves that 'nulla regula sine exceptione'.

Orthodox-Slavic areal (Orthodoxy taken to have immanently integrated classical *Greek* culture⁴⁶), and if we reiterate that Russian culture (to put it lightly) is *significant* (one of its prominent currents establishing itself by recurring not only to Greece but to Byzantium as well⁴⁷), *then* such a state 'at home' is indicative of a bizarre as much as unfavourable situation. This situation is explainable. However, it needs to be *overcome*.

Of course, the first step should be rising the problem-matter to *self-consciousness* and then *orientation* through updated contemporary thematization⁴⁸ of meaning and importance of that Orthodox-Slav 'layer' too of our inherited legacy – including integrative capacities and aspects of its ideas and ideals (let us indicate towards one exemplary instance: namely, that would ask for a new thematisation of the [kerygmatic] culture of expressing messages on the all-value of meaningful and deified Man in Christ as given through historical experience and theoretical language of Orthodox spirituality (the Greek layers notwithstanding, of course): in our case Slavic-Serbian and Slavic-Russian Orthodoxy – to mention only the primary value of *theosis* (deifying life in Christ), the prime value at least of Russian religious philosophy, which overdetermines its axiological field).

Second, this by no means implies that there is 'no' reception of Russian (or Russian Orthodox) philosophy into Serbian cultural surroundings (nor does this imply that only its Christian form has been received) – to the contrary. But the reception process transpires, so to speak, at the *margin* inscribed by force of conscious-unconscious *indifference* of certain scientific-cultural institutions. Let us clarify our point. We take the term 'margin' to mean not only neglected (or 'rejected') passionate amateurs – 'marginals'. Rather, we take it to mean an interiorized neglect: namely, the *marginalisation of expert work* on Russian-Serbian philosophical culture-relations *within institutions themselves*, where work transpires either in patchy fashion or through projects of relatively isolated groups, or, rather – individuals. This is then a marginalisation moment of those institutions *themselves* (establishments otherwise called to conduct that kind of reflexion as well) – a marginalisation *from within themselves*. *That* is the margin we are primarily speaking of. It is not analogous to the image of a Don Quichottean enthusiast but, rather, it is alike to the tolerated subject (the individual 'from' the institution and-or the institution 'itself') – a subject analogous to grey zones of disordered interregni of transitional society in general.

This explains, let us add en passant, why the medium of expressing the 'margin' (*margo* in both meanings of the term: extra-institutional and quasi-institutional) is primarily posited as paper presentation or isolated public lecture et cetera, however, *not* as regular symposia of academics or

⁴⁶ Demetrios J. Constantelos, *The Greeks: Their Heritage and Its Value Today*, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusetts 2006, 25f, 83f, 109f.

⁴⁷ As is it suggestively appears through readings of disparate authors such as K. N. Leontiev (1831-1891), G. Florovsky (1893-1979), S. Averincev (1937-2004) or S. Horuzhy (*1941) and many others.

⁴⁸ A conference discussion of these questions, as envisaged in our gathering, is precisely a small step forward in the needed and favourable direction.

conferences of scientific teams of experts and the like. Simultaneously and to the contrary, and strangely enough, *such a* margin is not modest in strength, and its production results are not modest either. Moreover, Serbian reception of Russian philosophy transcends limits of locality. In other words, in certain intellectual respects and instances it displays respectable levels of achievement⁴⁹ (especially so if we acknowledge factors of unfavourable starting positions and detrimental conditions for work on reception and re-reception of Russian philosophical thought currents, and if we bear in mind the circumstance of Anglo-Saxon language dominance which ipso facto shuts-out texts written in the Serbian 'vernacular').

Hence, our margins are not of 'marginal' scope of achievement (Moreover, in a sense, they have the power of *delegitimizing* Potemkinian 'dabbling' in Russian thought [there and where such installations appear as non-authentic and non-founded]). Let us refer briefly to the head of the Chair for Russian philosophy of Moscow State University (MGU), Professor Mikhail Maslin (*1947). His judgement is that '*Everything** that is essential in Russian philosophy of the Silver epoch⁵⁰ Serbian culture has managed to take over in translation (only a few works remain...)'⁵¹. The context of Maslin's statement, furthermore, grounds its interpretation. The word uttered by the Russian scholar was given in light of the fact that the publishing house of Vladimir Medenica (*1953) has so far made available in print over 120 books from the field of Russian culture, particularly from the more specialised area of Russian religious philosophy. As we have indicated, our judgement rests not only on the criterion of quantity. That is to say, one should also take into account certain promising theoretical-reflexive accomplishments of (re)reception of Russian philosophy in the contemporary cycle of Serbian culture. The project of Medenica, i.e. the programme Logos – Ortodos, of course, is not the only item to be displayed, no matter how exemplary it truly is. We have room only for the briefest mention of all theoreticians that have (despite marginalisation in the defined sense) managed in three cycles of reception (1920-1940; 1945-1975; 1980-2010), through translation, studies and organisation of

⁴⁹ It is unnecessary to here enumerate and list all successful projects and all persons... Nevertheless, we shall mention multianual endeavor of Nikola Milošević, Vladimir Medenica, Radomir Đorđević, Bogoljub Šijaković, Ilija Marić, Milan Subotić and others on *scientific* stabilization of this domestically neglected and rather mistreated field of spirit: the field of self-reflexion of Byzantine Orthodox-Slavic *foundations* and sources of Serbian or Serbian-Russian philosophy. For further reading: Bogdan Lubardić, 'Serbian Religious Philosophy: Persons, Ideas, Currents', in B. Šijaković (ed.), *Serbian Theology in the XX Century – research problems and results*, Orthodox Faculty of Theology, Belgrade 2009, 7-56 = Богдан Лубардић, „Српска религијска философија у XX веку: главни токови, личности, идеје“, у Б. Шијаковић (уред.), *Српска теологија у двадесетом веку – истраживачки проблеми и резултати*, том 4, ПБФ БУ, Београд 2009, 7-56 — in Serbian Cyrillic.

⁵⁰ This is an era of awakening of philosophy for religious and spiritual-symbolic experience. The era itself encompasses the period, stricto sensu, from the 1890-ties to 1920/30-ties of last century (including post-periods of recycling ideas and models of that Renaissance epitomized in the 'Silver' turn of Russian thought: countering semi-positivism and revolutionary socialist radicalism of the majority of Russian intelligentsia).

⁵¹ Statement taken from our personal conversation with professor Maslin during his visit to Serbia last year. For a more general account see: Vladimir Medenica, 'Encyclopedia of Russian Philosophy', *Pravoslavje* 1024 (15.04.2009) 33 = in Serbian Cyrillic Владимир Меденица, „Енциклопедија руске философије“, *Православље* 1024 (15.04.2009) 33.

meetings, to work on maintenance and development of Russian-Serbian philosophical relations: from Dušan Stojanović (1895-1949) via blessed Justin of Ćelije (1894-1979)⁵² to Nikola Milošević (1929-2007) (let us, nevertheless, mention three prominent figures).

The paradox at this point, let us reiterate, is the *non-institutional* or *quasi-institutional* –‘grey’ status of Serbian-Russian ideas, projects and contents — in fact: people of institutional importance precisely.

2. What are the ‘**reasons and causes**’ for this? We shall select only three out of many reasons and causes of the state of affairs described.

A. The first reason is to be seen in the *ambivalent* relationship forged by Serbian culture in its *widest* (spiritual, cultural, social and political-economic) sense towards the East vis-à-vis West polarisation. As a cultured historical nation we have so far, generally speaking, failed to integrate this polarisation itself – or liminal divide – in a satisfactory way, namely, transforming it in the sense of a *positive synthetic and mediational value* and/or *direction pointer* for Serbian cultural development. Instead of being ‘East to the West and West to the East’⁵³ (as is given by the motto) we have non-critically ‘aligned’ ourselves in commonsensical disjunctive ways: either for one party (Serbian westernizers) or for the other (Serbian neo-and-quasi-slavophiles) – to our own impairment of tragic proportions, as witnessed by modern and recent history. It is for this reason that the demand for thinking-through and, possibly, realising this ‘ideal’ – but *critically*, is in order today still (also in order is the possibility to *discard* this demand-ideal, but that too is to be executed through insistence on pro et contra thinking, so as to avoid short-cutting the mediation process...).

Speaking in more concrete terms, and turning ‘inwardly’ further, we might add that the ambivalent relation towards the East – West polarisation is, in fact, a mirror reflection of an ambivalent relation towards the question of our own cultural identity in the widest sense of the term. Bearing this in mind we propose that the theme of gatherings such as ours⁵⁴ should exceptionlessly be enlarged (even as precondition) to accommodate the question of *Serbian-Serbian* relations in culture. And the situation not rarely is such that the Serbian-Serbian culture-space is being turned into a facade of wishful mirror perceptions, or deceptions (namely: our intra-Serbian culture-space is being either devastated by projects of suspect worth, or simultaneously hyper-

⁵² Bogdan Lubardić, *Justin of Ćelije and Russia: Ways of Reception of Russian Philosophy and Theology*, Beseda, Novi Sad 2009, 211 pp = Богдан Лубардић, *Јустин Ћелијски и Русија: путеви рецепције руске философије и теологије*, [библиотека Савремено богословље, књига 15] Беседа, Нови Сад 2009, 211 сс

⁵³ Bringing to consciousness the possibility to *inscribe our own* spiritual-historical *experience* (through such mediation) – making it simultaneously useful, instigative and meaningful for others – might be concordant to what was intended, or should be intended, by the syntagm (or floskule) ‘above East and West’ (D. Mitrinović, N. Velimirović, M. N. Đurić and a pleiad of others following that trace...).

⁵⁴ The author refers to the ISAC fund sponsored gathering ‘In Shadow of Gas and Politics: Serbian-Russian Cooperation in the domain of Culture and Religion’ (held March 31st, 2010 in Belgrade’s Media Center).

compartmentalised into self-contained elitist groups) *rather than* grounded in *essential* dialogue of *all* consciousnesses and consciences – ones with the others: *face to face*, despite different spiritual, theoretical or ideological perspectives respectively.

The point is that (philosophical) ‘relationality’ towards the (Greek)Orthodox, Slavic and Russian side of the ‘equation’ of our identity should no longer be established ‘wildly’ – in quasi-institutional and marginal mode – *nor* showed over to the Faculty of Theology, or elsewhere, and then taken for granted, for that is simply not sufficient nor proper methodologically (although the resistance of the margin, let us bear in mind, is necessary and systemically undeletable), nor should it be established ‘violently’ – through majorisation and then repression of one group at expense of the other (as our 20th century aptly displays). Simply, such (un)doing must end and disappear.

B. The second reason follows from the first (inasmuch as we limit ourselves to the ‘grand narrative’ on the relationship of Serbia and Russia in philosophy). The first reason, then, we name as ambivalence due to the challenge (rather, temptation) of almost disjunctive polarization ex Oriente *contra* ex Occident (polarization geopolitical as much as geopoetical: and ‘geophilosophical’, if you will). The second reason we name as *ideologization*. We take ideologization to cover traumas of discontinued or, more precisely, violently severed dialogue procedures between the two formations of (inter)nationally posited establishments of philosophy: Serbian and Russian. We have mentioned cycles of (re)reception of Russian philosophy. Now we may widen our perspective by stating that each cycle of reception was overburdened by socio-political violence which, moreover, spilled over into the theoretical domain (and it is safe to say that this was a feed-back mechanism, in fact). *Simultaneously*, the Russian-Serbian philosophical dialogue, let us remember, *continually* (from the very beginning) remains outside institutions which per definitionem are to serve such a communicative-dialogical purpose: in a word, it remains extra universitatis (if and when it is placed ‘within’ or allowed ‘inside’, then, as we said, it is in a ‘grey’ or ‘tolerated’ status).

Let us, then, view the following disregarded fact. Namely, the reception of Russian philosophy as a *form of dialogue of Serbia and Russia*: as possibility even of a *SerboRussian form of philosophy* (if we acknowledge that is only a matter of time before Russia receives our reception of Russian philosophy) – that and such reception precisely, therefore, is disappearing — apart from rhizomically penetrating the public sphere through people and works of the alternative (by fate or by verdict marginalized through and into grey zones of institutions, or through and into subcultural ‘resourcefulness’).

We are saying the following: if we scrutinize the self-understanding of *established* Serbian philosophical thought about the great yet ‘clumsy’ brother from the East, the relation towards philosophy of Russia or philosophy from Russia (apart from atypical experts and works) is ‘allowed’ to transpire *outside* its distrustful gaze (which is, let us note in passing, identical to the quoted attitude expounded by Croce).

The ways of such (non)reception may be projected as follows: (1) reception of 'white' philosophy (i.e. Russian religious-philosophical emigration in Kingdom of Yugoslavia) and simultaneous reception of 'red' philosophy (subversive activity of Russian radical intelligentsia from the plane of socialist philosophy); (2) 'break-down' of 'white' philosophy (then persecution leading to attempts of whipping out remnants of such thought, imprisonment being the price of resistance) and triumph of 'red' philosophy; (3) establishing the Soviet modality of Marxism (characteristically through Leninist-Stalinist DIAMAT and HISTMAT) and *directed indifference* towards every other form of philosophy, including forms of Russian philosophy anterior to Soviet Marxism; (4) abandonment of reception of *Soviet* type Marxism in name of the 'other' Marx and beginning of the revisionist phase inaugurated through the *praxis*⁵⁵ turn of Yugoslav philosophy (breaking of relations with Soviet-Russian philosophy, however, did not lead to rehabilitation of traditional Russian philosophy [nor to a renewal of the Serbian dialogue with that thought], to the contrary, that trace was 'overknitted' for the second time: that was, therefore, a *potentialising* – not an overcoming – of the first abandonment or first severing of relations); (5) end of 'praxis' Marxism through its dissolution in the semi-chaos (or, let us say, 'melting-pot') of the post-modern turning of the situation of philosophy.

That ending is the beginning of the situation within which we (still) find ourselves *presently*, and which is also being described. The post-modern situation introduced two main actors onto the *official* scene of philosophy in Serbia⁵⁶: on one side, continental European philosophy (namely, French post-structuralism and the Frankfurt critique-theory of society, with additives of hermeneutics and phenomenology) and, on the other side, philosophy of the 'islands', i.e. philosophy of Britain and North America (the so called analytical-logical philosophy, ordinary language philosophy, and the like). On the third side, for one has to take into account those 'defeated', bridges were left for (ex-and-crypto) Marxists to use in order to crossover, via the praxis model, and thus reach the next (second, third) generation or phase of the Frankfurt philosophical school (which itself forged inner synapses with the praxis school⁵⁷) and by that token themselves enter into post-modern times (saving 'face' in and by that process⁵⁸). This process, in fact, no matter how tentatively, posited bridges between two main orientations of philosophy in Serbia (i.e. ex-Yugoslavia and FRY). However, these were not bridges of equality in strength of orientation (and result) nor paths established in virtue of theoretical cooperation (besides, the analytical current – towards the end of the 90-ties – almost 'devoured' the continental current). More importantly,

⁵⁵ Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth, and Dissolution*, translation: P. S. Falla, Oxford University Press, New York 1978 = Lešek Kolakovski, *Glavni tokovi marksizma I-III*, vol, 3, translation: R. Tubić, BIGZ, Beograd 1985, 535-540 — in latinic Serbian.

⁵⁶ Our expert public is still *debating* the conditions of *possibility* (or impossibility) of *Serbian* philosophy in distinction to reception of 'universal philosophy' ('as such') into Serbian cultural and historical horizons.

⁵⁷ Let us mark one vivid example, namely, the engagement of Jürgen Habermas (1968, 1973) in the Korčula seminars of the 'praxis' group and his endorsement of their philosophy of humanistic Socialism (1963-1975).

⁵⁸ An example of such transformation or evolution is given by a post-structurally and deconstructively informed philosophy of left humanism of later Miladin Životić (1930-1997)

having our topic in mind, these passages were (and still are), in fact, ‘flyovers’ wrought through consensus of all three sides (analytical, continental and post-praxis groups), amongst other things, on continuing the – generally speaking – *prowestern*⁵⁹ culture politic of philosophy (such a culture politic, for us, is not problematic as such, but it is so if exclusively such: namely, if it is a mode posited through an aprioristic exclusion of dialogue with our own self-specific [samobitnosni] eastern aspects, if not points of origin). Nevertheless, such a situation, say in the last 15 years, seems to be changing for the better (for the time being, still, without more serious systemic frames and adequate strategies of exploration programmes and projects).

In the case at hand this means Russian philosophy is *still* treated as follows: either as a lag of the East itself in respect to the West, or as a relict of exotic religious and imperial (Russ. samoderzhavie) past – Russian religious philosophy in particular⁶⁰. In that sense, Russian philosophy is read as the discourse of and from the *right* (which she is not, certainly not only ‘that’: not even in cases where she is nominally of ‘right’ provenance, for instance in works of Ivan Ilyin [1883-1954], for she is always of a *spiritual-personalistic* brand (and, inasmuch, irreducible to the plane of politicisation, although this prevents us not from deconstructive alertness); and it is known that *religious* philosophy, for instance the thought of Lev Shestov [1866-1938], has inspired even the Russian revolutionary left [I. G. Lezhnev, V. A. Bazarov et alii]).

Such approaches reduce the *spiritual* information of Russian (and Serbian) philosophy as such, reducing it away into socio-political registers of ‘left’ counter ‘right’. That is analogous to primacy of the socio-political in philosophy. However, the price payed is the omittance of deeper reflexions which could *synthesize spirituality as a possible ideal-type value for the effort of philosophy*. The price, therefore, is not thinking-through the Russian idea in its integral and dynamic fullness⁶¹ — Orthodox Christianity notwithstanding (which might transitively hold for the sought-for ‘Serbian idea’). As professor Maslin said, answering the question of identity and character of the *Russian idea*⁶²: ‘The Russian idea – is a religious philosophem, it is not a geometrical theorem which is set to prove something: hence, it is a specific genre with a

⁵⁹ Although pro-western culture politics of Serbian philosophy included (and do include) critical consciousness of deconstruction of *westerncentric eurocentrism*, that and such deconstructive self-awareness did not by same token seriously pose the question of systemic and systematic rehabilitation of suppressed and underrated ‘traces’ – *roots!* – of *our* Orthodox-Slavic Byzantine and Neo-Byzantine philosophical East as origin points – apart from cases of exemplary and indicative exceptions, as we said

⁶⁰ In its Marxist-Leninist form it has since drawn little interest, apart from expert archivist idiosyncracics.

⁶¹ For the inauguration of the idea itself – the idea of Russia in world history – see Vladimir Solovyev, *Russian Idea*, Moscow 1888 = Владимир С. Соловьев, „Русская идея“ (1888) = printed in the magazine Вопросы философии и психологии (Москва 1909), that is in the collection Путь (Москва 1911) — in Russian Cyrillic.

⁶² Maslin bears in mind the *philosophical*, that is *historiosophic* horizon of grounding the Russian idea, continuing in the footsteps of Solovyev, then Berdyaev, Solzhenicyn (and others), namely in the pathways made by the following work: Nikolai Berdyaev, *The Russian Idea*, Paris 1946 = Николай Бердяев, *Русская идея*, YMCA-Press, Париж 1946, or Alexander Solzhenicyn, *Russia under Avalanche* = Александр Солженицын, *Россия в обвале*, Москва 1998 — in Russian Cyrillic.

history of its own' — then, referring to Ilyin, he adds the following words of Ilyin: 'The growth of the Russian idea is the growth of Russia itself'⁶³. In that sense the aforementioned disregard (or suspension) of Russian-Serbian dialogue in philosophy – dialogue on possibilities of creatively projecting self-specific originary ideas and ideals viewed spiritually – acquires an appearance of couched but implemented consensus of the liberal and social left in philosophy to leave things as they are – *to accept the status quo* in relation to disregarding the spiritual layer of culture identity (where philosophically thematized spirituality is made redundant a priori since it is viewed as para-philosophical discourse of the right), let alone in regard to displacing Serbian-Russian origins in Slavic-Byzantine and Greek-Byzantine *Orthodoxy*.

As we see, the status quo takes us back to the period of the 20-ties and beginning of the 30-ties of last century, that is, to the locus of *trauma*. Namely, it takes us to the *principle and first question of the whole matter itself*: what is and who is Russia to us, and *what are we to her* – particularly in respect to our spiritual common ground. By the same token we are led to the following question as well: are we possible without the tutoring intervention or such influence of westerncentric history of philosophy (and such philosophy of history [Athens → Rome, 'then' → Tübingen → Paris → London...]) under the sign of reducing the past and future of an integral Europe and Euro-Asia to the 'West'.

In a word: are we possible in philosophy *without* this externally generated *representation* (without *such* externality) which is (not without mono-directional epigonical acceptance) 'forced' upon us – or educationally implemented into us – as our own *self-representation*!? (at the price of, for instance, liquidating the effects and accomplishments of a millennial⁶⁴ ascent of our own self-specific culture in terms of Byzantine and Neo-Byzantine synthesis). Or, to put it bluntly (selecting an aspect prone to irritate the politically correct sensibility): are we possible as a *communion* (Slav. *sabor*) of self-aware brothers-sisters – if yes, then, in what sense, and, how are we – tapping in to that potential – today to continue fertilising our capacities, seeking promising orientations of our social and intellectual being – or, is such a reality and-or possibility irrevocably bygone, *if* it was ever there in the first place?

[Let us clarify: in referring to communion(ality) as *sabor*, we have not in mind the ideology of 'saborization' in terms of mono-dimensional Neo-Slavophilism. Something other is at stake. — Let us illustrate. The epoch-making event of communal gathering of citizens of Serbia (not only Serbian

⁶³ Mikhail Maslin, op. cit.

⁶⁴ Hegel conceived of Byzantium as a millennial death-throw of the civilisation and culture of Rome. He did not seriously ask himself, however, *how* it was possible for this 'death-throw' (or, rather, this magnificent 'endurance' in culture) to be so millennially *vital*. The shocking 'illiteracy' of an (over)influential Hegel – in relation to mis-understanding the non-omittable value of Byzantine *Greek East* for the West itself – for instance, may be gleaned indirectly through the following masterful studies (to indicate only the tip of an iceberg): Klaus Oehler, 'Die Kontinuität in der Philosophie der Griechen bis zum Untergang des byzantinischen Reiches' – and – idem, 'Renaissancehumanismus und byzantinisches Mittelalter', in K. Oehler, *Aufsätze zur Geschichte des griechischen Denkens*, C. H. Beck, München 1969, 15-37, 328-335.

citizens) – all of them in number and count – around the image and work of blessedly reposed Patriarch of Serbia Pavle (1914-2009) – beyond and without any sort of politicizing or party dimension or motive, whatsoever, manifested the materialisation not only of ‘need for’ communion (sabornicity) but, also, exposed the being itself of otherwise deeply displaced (omitted, repressed, forgotten) yet vital communionality of the sabornic type – as essential expression of fundamental togetherness of people *under the precondition of realised holiness*⁶⁵ (taken as the all-value of societies informed by Christianity, Serbian society notwithstanding). In that sense we indicate towards the ‘communionality’ = ‘sabornic’ dimension of our relations – towards this dimension as essential substrate, and potential (a dimension rarely noticed due to politicological or politicizing views on society: views dictated by agenda’s of everydayness, and buried by it)].

Coming back to the context of our philosophical circumstances (or lack of such) it could be demonstrated that contemporary Russian philosophy, both ‘neo-western’ and ‘neo-Russian’, in the least, does have achievements wholly legitimate, competitive and relevant for the current philosophical debate in general (however, we cannot further open this perspective due to our primary goal).

In this sense we speak of successive (not necessarily irreversible) disappearing (‘aphanasis’ of sorts) of Russian philosophical ideas from the established scene of Serbian philosophy (or, even of rooting-out of such ideas, in guise of couched consensus to never allow it to reach that ‘scenic’ place). We also speak of its paradoxical yet resilient rhizomic subsistence on margins of institutions (or instituted [established] and institutionalized [establishmental] margins) – however, not on margins of life.

In brief: the picture is not simple. It is not as if one type of relation towards *philosophia russica* was replaced by ‘another’, as rook and king in chess rouquade: namely, anti-Russian thought has not simply replaced pro-Russian thought, for Russian philosophical thought has always already been ‘disappearing’ in our (philosophical) institutions, particularly so through the triumph of Soviet Marxism and then through a victory *over this Marxism*. But on the level of the ‘margin’ (for we are forced to use this awkward term), note the paradox, Russian (traditional) philosophy, it seems, has been rejuvenating

⁶⁵ Let us expand this point: through this event the Serbian people conducted a ‘legitimation’ of *communionality* (sabornicity) – *under condition* that the cardinal value is verified sacrifice for the other purified from all fallen interest. That is to say, only such – authentic – persons, as *events*, may provoke manifestations of meta-partisan, meta-particularistic, meta-populistic but also meta-ideological self-projections of the Serbian people. In that sense, the Serbian Orthodox Church was ‘legitimised’ and ‘criticised’ *simultaneously* (although the term legitimacy is to be used only conditionally in this instance, for the Church is not constituted through procedures of civic legitimisation in the political sense). Therefore, our Church was ‘legitimised’ through the message that only *such* a person and *such* communionality (sabornic [social] by virtue of purity and sacrifice for the other) may truly gather ‘all’ individuals of the social-political community in(to) that ecclesial-communional sense. Through the same message, furthermore, the Church was potentially ‘delegitimized’ (namely, in case that bearers of ecclesial responsibility fail or keep failing to accomplish *such* a way of sacrificial identity in Christ). Finally, it was perceivable that bellow or through the political body of the Serbian people, or despite it, run *communional* currents of sociality or, better, *sabornic togetherness*.

itself, reaching the contemporary situation in image of its (unconsidered) proposals – a situation which is both open and uncertain..., nevertheless attuned to life (at least in terms of everpresent cascading otherness, and novelty, in relation to our closed and local state of consciousness).

Apart from many things, such a situation is the result of 'inability' (or simply lack of practical wisdom in politics of life) to maintain a minimum set of premises for control and critique of one ideology 'about' Russian philosophy (anti-Russian tendency) counter the other (pro-Russian tendency), and vice versa — note: in institutional manner (i.e. via systemic and methodologically disciplined stabilisations of critical conceptuality, adequate social practice following suit). If this were to be accomplished, reception of Russian philosophy – purged from ideology and rhetoric – would become philosophical. More precisely, such an approach would consolidate its philosophical status and complementary scientific-critical modalities. Under the expression 'minimum set of premises' we presuppose the following: namely, rising to philosophical awareness the viewpoint that *dialogue* with Russian philosophy represents *one of the fundamental* (if not constitutive) moments in dialogue of self-aware Serbian philosophy (or Philosophy of Serbs) with 'itself' – *if* it is not completely to trivialise or ignore the side of its Orthodox-Slavic origins: *if* Serbian (philosophical) culture is not to complacently abide in epigonic as much as occidentopetal fate (again, let us reiterate, we argue not against the West but against non-critical westernisation as main stream tendency – in the name of *integral* Greek-European culture).

That is to say, such a dialogue with *itself* through *others* (such a dialogical string as moment) is not an 'option' but 'condition of possibility' of founded and fundamental nurture and upbringing of one's own identity in philosophical culture. On pre-condition, of course, that we resist the idea that the medium of philosophy is totally immune ('pure') to *history of experience* — experience of concrete human beings philosophically thinking in particular history and particular language – together (dare we say 'communally' [saborno]).

C. Next to ambivalence produced by the work of East – West polarisation, also next to ideologisation of discontinuity (discontinuity through ideologisation notwithstanding), we introduce our third reason. We name it by means of (and as) the phenomenon of globalisation. This extremely complex and multi-layered process (culturally and politico-economically strung out from internetaphysicised markets of ideas to the idea of global condition as condition of a world reduced to a 'super-market' mediating influence, money and power) we determine more closely through two interconnected challenges which, as such, indicate towards its spiritual-cultural side. The first is the challenge of universally pandemic *detraditionalisation* of ways of formulating and appropriating identity (which is somehow, and nevertheless, sought in representations 'about' tradition – origin). The second challenge is the crisis of identity itself – as such. However, let us add another perspective. Both challenges transpire under the sign of a global 'return' of religion and spirituality in the post-secular phase not only of ideology but of philosophy

itself⁶⁶: running under a strong inscription of discourse of *otherness and difference* (let us emphasize: this crisis appears not through rejection of traditional identity but precisely through unsuccessful and problematic attempts of reinterpretation and reintegration of traditional reference points of identity, in our case [over]determined by the philosophical question about the place and role of the O/other: other as God and God as communal other adjacent to me, or 'other of the other'..., let us say).

As we see, the chain of reasons and causes thus closes (into) a circle. This circle is 'closed' in terms of the starting problem gaining in complexity. However, precisely for those reasons that *circulus* is potentially openable (under condition of appropriate thought and action).

In a word: here and now, from perspective of the contemporary spiritual situation of our age, speaking from our analysis of the case, the question of reflected and official Serbian-Russian dialogue in philosophy is not to be a question of intentions for things to 'be' better (one way or another), for it is rather, or simultaneously, a *question of incapacity to pose that question as such* – due to impact pressure of post-Yugoslav culture-trauma, on one hand, and trauma of acceleration of agendas of meta-nationally set globalisation, on the other. *It is in such fashion* (systemically-and-structurally: not by subjective examination of intent) that we wish to understand the following: namely, the fact that, for instance, the promotion of the most important ever compendium of history of philosophy in Russia – promotion of the *Encyclopaedia of Russian Philosophy* (Moscow 2007 [Belgrade 2009⁶⁷]), despite attempts to make encounters possible – was attended by *no one*⁶⁸ from the Serbian philosophical establishment. More precisely: no one managed to *officially* acknowledge, receive or by one word note its presence (including oversight of possibilities to meet four pre-eminent Russian philosophers of the order of current and *official* (sic) mediators of its meanings and tasks⁶⁹. This is just one, although nutshell-type example of non-rational or wholly irrational spending of precious historical time and human resources of our big (in will for

⁶⁶ The meaning of the syntagm 'post-secular philosophy' is aptly articulated by Blond: „In fact, all ontical statements on reality and proper description are not even incorrect: they are simply weak' (since the secular gaze, by fixation of the ontical, liquidates its deeper and more meaningful groundings). Phillip Blond (ed.), *Post-Secular Philosophy: Between Philosophy and Theology*, Routledge, London 1998.

⁶⁷ At the same time this was the European premiere of the translation of this Russian book into one of the non-Russian languages. Vide: Mikhail Maslin (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Russian Philosophy*, Belgrade 2009, 1010 pp = Михаил Маслин (гл. ред.), *Энциклопедија руске философије*, Логос – Укрониа, Београд 2009, 1010 сс = исти, *Русская философия: Энциклопедия*, Алгоритм, Москва 2007 — in Serbian, that is Russian Cyrillic.

⁶⁸ It is possible this was a mere 'play of circumstance' (most probably so). But this precisely goes to prove our point. Of course, this 'nulled' number does not include several colleagues who accompanied our Russians, however, through different types of forums during their stay in Serbia (April 2009) — reception at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, or outside Belgrade: gymnasium in Ruma, monastery of Ćelije (Valjevo), parochial communities, of-the-shelf panels and the like. To be honest, and for the record, the lectures of professor Sergey Horuzhy given in 2002 at the Institute for Philosophy of the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University, were appropriately publicized and well attended, at the time.

⁶⁹ M. A. Maslin, P. P. Aprishko, P. V. Kalitin, A. Gatcheva = M. A. Маслин, П. П. Апришко, П. В. Калитин, А. Гачева

deed) small (in realisation) possibly Serbian-Russian philosophical culture environment – simultaneously a postponement of commencement of new encounters.

This is where we have to pause, not only for reason of limited space, but for reflecting possibilities of '**prescriptions**', or remedies for problems described and diagnosed in relation to our circumstances when Russian philosophers, *as our others*⁷⁰, are at hand, or stake.

3. It is not needful to repeat or emphasize the possibilities and means of theoretical remedies for the predicament described, for they are already implied in what has been said. Therefore we offer only several propositions from the plane of concrete executive-organisational forms of possible treatment of the condition which is not hale and hearty.

First: both the Russian and Serbian state, together, should – because they can – use appropriate mechanisms to procure and offer *material help* aimed at supporting projects of dialogising the Serbo-Russian cultural relationship (the philosophical form notwithstanding). Priority must be given to stable and long term modalities of realising such programmes.

Second: in this sense, for *example*, ways should be sought for making the Russian hall in Belgrade become more than a congenial yet sporadic 'host' to enthusiasts of Russian-Serbian dialogue in philosophy, but, more than that, to become promoter of *stipends or financial and marketing services* in function of upgrading such activities; or, instigating the Russian cultural attaché to mediate the work of Russian and Serbian experts in terms of helping scientists to make proper contacts in efficient ways, also opening paths to reach adequate and authentic information on possibilities offered by the Russian state (major commerce corporations and scientific-explorative formations included) – dedicated to the aforementioned relation (of course, this is already being done, but one has the impression that matters can be directed more directly and enterprisingly, certainly when the more philosophical cultural-national space is in question).

Third: we should try to found an all-encompassing *institute for Serbian-Russian studies* in Belgrade, and this pioneering venture should be backed by both sides reservelessly. This can be viewed within the context of a (so far unvoiced) proposal to accommodate a haven for Serbian reception of Slavic and-or Russian philosophical culture *inside* already *existent institutions*, primarily the University itself (needless to say, we are not referring to the Chair for Russian studies at the Faculty of Philology). Although full freedom for work on Russian thought is secured at the Institute for Philosophy, we still hold that installing a *facultative subject course* in foundations of Russian (or Slavic) philosophy is not impossible yet much needed (if we wish to continue connecting history of philosophy with self-specific self-understanding of philosophy of history). We should make sure that our Russian colleagues are

⁷⁰ As coined by Door Liesbeth Koetsier in her dissertation *Nous autres, Russes. Traces littéraires de l'émigration russe dans la NRF 1920-1940*, Faculteit der Letteren, Universiteit Utrecht 2006.

instigated to make analogous steps: for instance, on the level of inter-faculty and inter-institute contracted forms of *scientific exchange* and cooperation.

Such cooperation could yield significant possibilities for mutual exchange of ideas and knowledge, and corresponding experiences in *thinking*. Not of lesser importance, such cooperation would allow the possibility of projects aimed at *philosophically* thematizing our *common* problems, inside an orientation which would refrain from deleting the Serbian-Russian synthesis through a discourse of calculated disregard (under the sign of surplus in strength), nor would it overlook this synthesis due to lack of knowledge concerning its creative and critical potential. Taking such a path might help us not only to avoid the West 'counter' East or red 'counter' white polarisation, the accompanying reflex of ideologisation⁷¹ notwithstanding. It would perhaps be a 'third' way: a way mediating red and white through the colour of firmament blue — blue as symbol of openness and breath in which all evil sink into depths, where all oppositives are reworked into cooperative *differences* — after all, it could be analogous to a flag: the Serbian and Russian *tricolore*. It could be a way of new 'communionality' (Slav. *sabornost*), not necessarily the way of new 'dialectics'.

⁷¹ A helpful insight into ways of overcoming the ideological divide between warring West and East, albeit on the plane of Christian spiritual theory, is given in the 'EastWestern' synthesis proposal of Gorazd Kocijančič, *Between East and West. Four Contributions to Ecstatics*, Ljubljana 2004 = *Med Vzhodom in Zahodom. Štirje prispevki k ekstatiki*, KUD Logos, Ljubljana 2004 — in Slovenian.

