



The author was born in Frankfurt a.m., Germany. He has studied history, philology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and theology at the University of Frankfurt, the University of Mainz, the University of Munster and the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. Siebert created and is a specialist in the *critical theory of religion* or *dialectical religiology*. The author has taught, lectured and published widely in Western and Eastern Europe, the United States, and Canada, and Japan. He is professor of religion and society, and director of the Center for Humanistic Future Studies at Western Michigan University, and director of the international course on the "Future of Religion" in the IUC Dubrovnik, Croatia, and director of the international course on "Religion in Civil Society" in Yalta, Crimea, Ukraine. His previous major work is the three-volume *Manifesto of the Critical Theory of Society and Religion: The Wholly Other. Liberation, Happiness, and the Rescue of the Hopeless*. Leiden: Brill, Publishers. *The Critical Theory of Religion: Frankfurt School and From Critical Theory to Political Theology: Personal Autonomy and Universal Solidarity*

For the past 40 years, scholars from all continents have met for the International Course: "The Future of Religion" at the Inter-University Centre [IUC], Dubrovnik, Croatia. This book is part of the historical 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for this course. It is devoted to all resource persons and participants who have contributed through the years.

The book describes how the course came about and has convened every year since 1977, even during the Yugoslav War up to the present. It sums up most of our discourses of the past forty years. We traced the evolution from the original traditional, relative union of the sacred and profane, through their modern disunion and antagonism, to their possible future reunion. We were also concerned with the dialectic of the modern enlightenment. The attempt to free people from their fears and to make them masters of their fate only too often turned over into more fear and dependency, rationality turned into irrationality, integration into disintegration. We did not shy away from the dialectic of religion. Only too often the religion of truth allowed itself to be used and abused as the ideology of slaveholders, feudal lords and bourgeois owners. The religion of love helped to promote crusades, witch-hunts, heresy trials, and civil and international wars. However, we concentrated on the positive humanistic aspects of religion. We tried to translate the humanistic semantic materials and potentials into the secular discourse of the expert cultures and even into the praxis of the everyday life world, as well as into the activities of the economic and political subsystems of modern action systems. We followed the insight that there could be no peace among the nations without peace among the world religions; there could no peace among the religions without dialogue among them; and that there could be no dialogue among the religions without fundamental research in them. We tried to help overcome the theory-praxis discrepancy in the world religions as well as in the secular enlightenment movements. We came to the conclusion that religion as well as enlightenment are still open projects to be reconciled and to be rescued into the future.

**Michael R. Ott** is a recently retired Associate Professor of Sociology, who the past 14 years taught courses on the Sociology of Religion, the Critical Theory of Society and Religion, Neoliberal/Neoconservative Globalization and its Critique, Contemporary Sociological Theory, and Christianity at Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan. He is also an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, who prior to entering the university as a professor served 3 churches as their pastor for over 25 years. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1975 and earned his PhD in Sociology from Western Michigan University in 1998. He has written articles and book chapters on the Critical Theory of Society and Religion that have been published in the United States, France, England, and Crimea, and has published three books: *Max Horkheimer's Critical Theory of Religion: The Meaning of Religion in the Struggle for Human Emancipation* [University Press of America, 2001], and two edited books: *The Future of Religion: Toward a Reconciled Society* [Brill, 2007; Haymarket Press 2009] and *The Dialectics of the Religious and the Secular: Studies on the Future of Religion* [Brill, 2014; Haymarket Press 2015]. He is a Co-Director of the course on The Future of Religion, held annually for the past 40 years at the Inter-University Center, Dubrovnik, Croatia.



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CREATOR, EXODUS, SON OF MAN AND KINGDOM**

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**Rudolf J. Siebert  
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*Professor Rudolf and Margaret Siebert - Co-Creators of the Future of Religion Course -  
seated on top of Mt. Srd overlooking Dubrovnik*

Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo Michigan, 2016

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