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Selected Images

Half a Century of Activity at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik

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Half a Century of Activity at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik

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Abstract

This paper presents ‘selected images’ of the exceptionally rich and diverse activity of the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik throughout half a century of its existence, as well as institutional power of its academic mission of expanding international dialogues, conceived and founded in the visionary mind of Academician Ivan Supek in the 1970s. The paper highlights some of the programmes whose longevity has significantly contributed to the recognition of the IUC in the global scientific community.

Key words: Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik, scientific dialogues, Philosophy of Science, Academician Ivan Supek, cultural identity, Dubrovnik

1. Half a century of the IUC from a personal perspective

This text is dedicated to the fiftieth anniversary of the IUC Dubrovnik.¹ Anniversaries usually entail ‘images of time’ and wisdom of longevity. On such occasions, we look back on past events and the rhythm of time they reflect, searching for reasons and meaning, causes and consequences of everything that came before and everything that is. In this mirror of time, the Inter-University Centre reflects all the reasons for its existence since the moment it was founded in Dubrovnik in the 1970s, based on the visionary idea of Academician Ivan Supek, then Rector of the University of Zagreb. And each anniversary in the five eventful decades confirmed the meaning and strength of its institutional mission and the idea it was founded upon – expanding scientific dialogue between Croatia and the world.

This paper is a contribution, a keepsake for the ‘album of time’ that was put together by numerous participants in IUC’s meetings, conferences and symposia, inspired by Dubrovnik’s energy and aesthetic. The Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik also made its contribution with its programme, broadcast from its headquarters in Villa Dubravka, in the near vicinity of the impressive historical building of Dubrovnik School of Education, built in 1901, which became the home of the IUC since its founding. Many participants and leaders of international conferences and symposia were featured in the programme of Radio Dubrovnik, which they would reach walking down Dante Alighieri Street, one of the shortest in Dubrovnik, with a view of the nearby garden promenade that led them to the entrance of the Art Nouveau villa that was home to Radio Dubrovnik.² These meetings over the years inspired this text, which is mostly composed of memories of conversations in the radio programme *Plavi razgovori* [Blue Conversations], saved from oblivion and time. As an introductory note to provide the context and motive for this personal contribution to the Centre’s anniversary, I have to mention that I have followed the activities and changes of the Inter-University Centre for the Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik for full three decades (1992–2022), from which I have singled out some of the ‘selected images’.

Before we set out to ‘hear’ the transcribed fragments of studio recordings of conversations with the participants of IUC conferences from the archive of Radio Dubrovnik, I should outline the time and the circumstances of creating the IUC and its reflections in the historical mirror of humanist tradition of the city chosen as its *genius loci*. In understanding the inherited power of the ‘chosen’ location, Lovro Kunčević’s thought comes to mind about Dubrovnik as a city which was ‘in a way resilient to history’ throughout its long existence due to surprisingly long-lasting social and political structures.³

¹ This paper is an expanded version of the paper published on the occasion of the IUC’s anniversary in *Časopis za književnost i znanost Dubrovnik* under the title »Odabrane slike polustoljetnoga postojanja (uz 50. obljetnicu Inter-Univerzitetskoga centra Dubrovnik).« *Dubrovnik* 3/4 (2022): 103–127.

² In this short walk to Villa Dubravka they were often accompanied by the late Dube Kapetanić and Srećko Kržić, to whom I am forever grateful for their friendship and cooperation in the long years of our working together on *Plavi razgovori*, a programme that has been broadcast on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik since 1992.

³ Lovro Kunčević, *Vrijeme harmonije. O razlozima društvene i političke stabilnosti Dubrovačke Republike*. Zagreb, Dubrovnik: Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku, 2020: 133.

2. The merits of the founding ideas

Academician Supek increased the strength of Dubrovnik's tradition by adding the contemporary historical role that universities introduced to development of societies. 'The university family was preparing a better world, a world of human understanding and peace,' he wrote, explaining the undertaking of establishing the Centre in 1971. By that time, the Croatian University had already transferred some of its postgraduate studies in literature, history and economy to Dubrovnik, while the international seminar 'University Today' was held in Dubrovnik from the mid-1960s, gathering participants from numerous university centres. All this required a new step towards establishing an international institution for advanced studies with the aim of developing collaboration in scientific research and teaching.⁴ The idea of Dubrovnik as an inter-university centre with a new institutional concept and organisation was described by Dr Eugen Pusić with a phrase 'science as a global undertaking', alluding to the virtually unlimited possibilities of such act in the context of the 1970s.⁵ *The building in which the Inter-University Centre is located was granted for use by the University of Zagreb in 1970.* That year the University established the University Centre of Postgraduate Studies in it and the Inter-University Centre a year later. In this period began 'the most fruitful teaching and international activity of the University of Zagreb geographically displaced from its primary location, and it has been carried out until today, with only a short interruption when the building was burned down and almost completely destroyed on 6 December 1991.'⁶

Purpose and mission

The IUC's founding period and the role of the then Rector Ivan Supek, who was forcibly removed from public life in the aftermath of 1971, was summarised by its Director General, Prof. Krunoslav Pisk, in the monograph *Sveučilište u Zagrebu 350 godina 1669.–2019.*: 'At the meeting of the International Association of Universities in Montreal in 1970, Rector Supek suggested the establishment of the Inter-University Centre of Postgraduate Studies in Dubrovnik, which would later become known in its abbreviated form, IUC (Inter-University Centre). In this candidacy, Dubrovnik was presented as a centuries-old meeting place where many different paths intersect in times of war and peace, whose location and tradition, but also former Yugoslavia's international position in the Cold War at the time, enabled it to gather scholars from political East and West. The purpose of the Inter-University Centre from the very beginning was, therefore, to develop specific international collaboration and build rapport and understanding. However, throughout the years, its original purpose was often expanded and diversified to

⁴ Ivan Supek, »Interuniverzitetski centar humanističkih i društvenih znanosti u Dubrovniku (IUCHSS).«, in: *Interuniverzitetski centar humanističkih i društvenih znanosti u Dubrovniku (IUCHSS)*. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1971: 1–2.

⁵ Eugen Pusić, »Znanost kao svjetski pothvat.«, in: *Interuniverzitetski centar humanističkih i društvenih znanosti u Dubrovniku (IUCHSS)*. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1971: 5.

⁶ Mirjana Polić Bobić and Vlasta Brunsko, »Poslijediplomsko središte Dubrovnik Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.« *Hrvatska revija* 4 (2019), available at <https://www.matica.hr/hr/605/poslijediplomsko-srediste-dubrovnik-sveucilista-u-zagrebu-30256/> (accessed in April 2022).

accommodate the requirements of the development of different disciplines, international visibility and collaboration between domestic and foreign scholars.’⁷

In a letter sent by the University of Zagreb to other universities on 17 September 1971 with the aim of establishing the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik, Rector Supek informed the academic community of the result of the meeting of the representatives of higher education institutions and inter-university organisations held in Dubrovnik on 26 and 30 August that year. It was pointed out, among other things, that the IUC project offers a possibility of gathering researchers and scientists from all over the world in a city of unique ambiance and historical atmosphere. The University of Zagreb was to provide the buildings and administrative staff, while high academic standard and quality ‘in accordance with the requirements of the International Association of Universities’ was considered key to the success of the Centre.⁸ The founding meeting was held in Dubrovnik with the participation of a significant number of universities and university communities. Invitations were sent to representatives of UNESCO, the UN and other international organisations, and it was expected that the universities will naturally establish connections with their governments. The Centre in Dubrovnik was open to everyone who wanted to study history, modern society and art in the broadest sense, on condition that the Centre maintained ‘extraordinary level of excellence’. Supek wrote that ‘university collaboration will help every country improve its well-being and culture, but also strengthen the universal spirit and friendship as a pledge for a united, peace-oriented and rich world.’⁹ The Centre’s mission was ‘to promote dialogue, mutual understanding and contribute to creating a culture of peace.’¹⁰

The way of working

In the 1970s, the first Director General of the Inter-University Centre, Dr Johan Galtung, wrote that scientific meetings at the Centre were planned from the end of October to mid-December, with a break during the Christmas and New Year holidays, after which the participants resumed their work in mid-January. Spring sessions took place from the end of February or the beginning of March, with the requirement that the courses, symposia and seminars are kept short, but content-intensive, with the aim to reach to the core of the selected topics. Dr Galtung clearly emphasised the interdisciplinary, even transdisciplinarity of international (or even transnational) scientific focuses, the confrontation of different views, the academic level of discussions and pluralism of opinion. The centre reflected the mission that Dr Galtung described with the phrase ‘IUC as an intellectual free port’.¹¹ The results of the meetings held at the Centre were regularly published in reputable journals. The Centre’s library was being formed at the time. In general, the vitality of the Centre was supposed to serve as an example of a triple role: firstly,

⁷ Mirjana Polić Bobić and Vlasta Brunsko, »Poslijediplomsko središte Dubrovnik Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.« *Hrvatska revija* 4 (2019), available at <https://www.matica.hr/hr/605/poslijediplomsko-srediste-dubrovnik-sveucilista-u-zagrebu-30256/>.

⁸ »Pismo Sveučilišta u Zagrebu upućeno drugim sveučilištima u vezi osnivanja Interuniverzitetskog centra u Dubrovniku.«, in: *Interuniverzitetski centar humanističkih i društvenih znanosti u Dubrovniku (IUCHSS)*. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1971: 14–15.

⁹ Ivan Supek, »Interuniverzitetski centar humanističkih i društvenih znanosti u Dubrovniku (IUCHSS)«. 3–4.

¹⁰ Berta Dragičević, »Godine preživljavanja i oživljavanja. Interuniverzitetski centar Dubrovnik.« *Dubrovački horizonti* 36 (1996): 120.

¹¹ Quoted from the paper written by Dr Johan Galtung, the Centre’s Director General, in 1974. The paper is kept in the IUC archive.

the IUC was conceived as ‘an education centre that mediates the development of new topics and enables education’, secondly, its role was to stratify and expand the horizons of ethical and practical thinking through interdisciplinarity, and thirdly, to build bridges between the East and the West, ‘mediate mutual understanding, even reconciliation of academic communities (marked by war trauma of Balkan societies)’, whereby ‘it earned a position of trust with its independent position and open dialogue’, even in turbulent times.¹²

The first two decades

One of the first international centres in Europe, the Inter-University Centre was founded in 1972 by thirty academic institutions from all over the world. It was primarily focused on research areas that did not require ‘infrastructure’, i.e. laboratories and equipment that could not be made available in Dubrovnik. Initial plans for inter-university postgraduate programmes (planned in 1972/73) included literature, local government, art, history and archaeology.¹³ This initiative was inspired by the vision and conviction of the physicist, humanist and author, Academician Ivan Supek, that ‘the establishment of international centres for exchange of knowledge, scientific experience and research is not necessary only for the natural sciences, but also for the (until then nationally oriented) humanities and social sciences.’¹⁴ One of the first courses in 1974 began with a lecture by Dr Werner Heisenberg, and the lecturers included Nobel Prize winners: Hannes Alfvén, David Baltimore, Edmond Fisher, Linus Pauling and Joseph Rotblatt. The IUC was visited by scholars such as Sir Alfred Ayer, Richard Bernstein, Jacques Derrida and many others, including Johan Galtung, the first Director General of the Centre. During the Yugoslav era, the Centre managed to preserve its independence ‘by dealing wisely with all sides’. This was achieved thanks to the efforts of Dr Nasrollah S. Fatemi (Fairleigh Dickinson University, NJ), Chair of the Executive Committee 1972–1988, Dr Peter Fischer-Appelt¹⁵ (University of Hamburg), member of the Executive Committee 1974–1981, Dr Siegfried Korninger (University of Vienna), Director General of the Centre 1977–1987, Dr Rikard Lang (University of Zagreb), Deputy General Director 1978–1983, Ørjar Øyen¹⁶ (University of Bergen), President of the IUC Council 1972–1981, and Dr Eugen Pusić (University of Zagreb), member of the Executive Committee 1972–1979’.¹⁷

In the first two decades, the Centre organised over 600 international specialist courses and 300 conferences with over 35,000 participants with a wide range of topics from the fields of humanities and social and natural sciences.¹⁸ Since its establishment in 1972, the Inter-University Centre has been inscribed in the cultural map not only of Dubrovnik and Croatia, but also of

¹² Quoted from the paper by Dr Peter Fischer-Appelt, Honorary Member of the IUC, written in 2007 for the quarterly *Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst* in Bonn on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the IUC. The paper is kept in the IUC archive.

¹³ Eugen Pusić, »Znanost kao svjetski pothvat.«: 6.

¹⁴ Quote from the paper by Dr Peter Fischer-Appelt, written in 2007 on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the IUC. The paper is kept in the IUC archive.

¹⁵ Dr Peter Fischer-Appelt later served as the Chair of the IUC Council (1981–1998), which consisted of 200 member-universities.

¹⁶ Dr Ørjar Øyen also served as the Director General of the IUC from 1987 to 1996.

¹⁷ Data from Dr Peter Fischer-Appelt’s paper from 2007.

¹⁸ B. Dragičević, »Godine preživljavanja i oživljavanja. Interuniverzitetski centar Dubrovnik.«: 121.

Europe and the world, visible and recognisable by the identification code granted to it by Rector Supek many years ago.

3. Imprints of the IUC in ‘Dubrovnik time’ – Selected memories

Berta Dragičević memories from the early days, war and beyond

As a long-time Executive Secretary Berta Dragičević, even in the dramatic war years when she was an associate in office Mayor Poljanić’s, and Academician Supek’s close associate, collected her memories of her ‘time at the IUC’ in the book *Fragments of Memories* in 2009. She recounted the Centre’s formative period and her meetings with selected protagonists of that time, including Academicians Eugen Pusić and Ivan Supek.¹⁹ She wove her entire career into the Centre’s ‘long duration’ and left a distinctive and deep imprint of her personality and professional dedication to everything the Centre still represents in the scientific community. Here is what she said at the promotion of the book *Fragments of Memories of Life and Work at Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik 1971–2007* about the essential cultural venue of contemporary Dubrovnik that connected the East and the West in a unique way:

‘My journey at the IUC started on 1 October 1971. Most of all, I remember the obsessive idea about the importance of the IUC, promoted and built by Academician Supek during his lifetime. His vision was extremely important; he made it come true and continually contributed to the idea and the vitality of the IUC – in times of war and peace, in the post-war period and in different political circumstances, which did not necessarily entail support. It was not always simple or easy, but the persistence and power of Supek’s idea was immeasurable! His strong personality, charisma, national and international reputation and his numerous friends and acquaintances at the world’s leading universities most certainly contributed to this. So many eminent scholars could hardly wait to come to Dubrovnik at his invitation! For Academician Supek, giving up on the idea and engagement was something unheard of. Even in the hardest times of war, in the days of siege of Dubrovnik, Academician Supek never withdrew his support to Dubrovnik and the IUC, which is witnessed by his arrival in the wounded Dubrovnik after the heaviest attacks on 6 December 1991, when the IUC building burned down and there were many victims and burned palaces in the city’s historic centre. I remember how he gathered a group of academicians and arrived by ship from Rijeka; he also entered the IUC building, demolished, with walls destroyed and charred by the fire... he walked the hallways and the halls and encouraged us.²⁰ Only three days after the devastating attack, 9 December, Dr Katleen Wilkes and I sent a letter to colleagues and friends of the IUC around the world, informing them about the evil which had turned the Centre into a pile of ashes.²¹ In these dramatic days of war horrors, as a sign of perseverance and support,

¹⁹ *Fragments of Memories of Life and Work at Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik 1971–2007* (eds. Berta Dragičević and Ørjar Øyen). Dubrovnik: Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik, 2009.

²⁰ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2009.

²¹ *Glas iz Dubrovnika/The voice from Dubrovnik*, *Glasnik Ureda Konvoja Libertas* br. 40 (17. 12. 1991.)/*Convoy Libertas Herald* No. 40 (17. 12. 1991). All copies of the *Convoy Libertas Herald*, which were distributed for free

Academician Supek organised the conference on revitalisation of Dubrovnik with elaborate recovery strategy in the building of the music school, and made one of his many appeals for preservation and continuation of the Centre's activity.

I don't even have to mention that at that time very few people visited Dubrovnik, and Academician Supek was one of them! Not only that – not many people back then had the courage and vision to reshape the demolished building into a place of renewed prosperity, motivated by the motto 'Never give up! Keep on going!' We must bear in mind that, among his many different obligations and interests, philosophy, humanities, theatre, literature and numerous other engagements, the idea of the centre in Dubrovnik was immensely important to Academician Supek! He believed that Dubrovnik, as the city with its historical traditions, deserves such a centre and that, all things considered, it should not give up the idea of the 'spiritual component' granted to it by the IUC.²² At that time, Supek's vision of the university programme already implied the area from the Centre's building to Villa Skočibuha on Boninovo.²³ This idea of unified university programmes in the fields of humanities and social and natural sciences was revived in 1998, when Academician Ivan Supek was made an honorary citizen of Dubrovnik. Several years later, the University of Dubrovnik was founded in the former hospital building, just as Academician Supek envisioned. We have to keep in mind that, thanks to his vision of society and the world, humanists, philosophers and scientists always gathered around him, and together they imagined a world free from war, plight and killing. Supek's 'eternal idea' was reflected in the need for dialogue, tolerance and respect for diversity. He believed that there was a centuries-old tradition in Dubrovnik that gave shelter and life to this kind of worldview.'²⁴

Academician Supek (then President of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts) gave his unconditional support to the idea of survival of the Centre again in 1993, when he visited the Centre's restored building. I still keep a piece of scorched paper in a white paper envelope with an inscription *EX LIBRIS. IUC LIBRARY*, which was given as a gift to the guests at the celebration of the reopening of the restored building, as a warning reminder of the destruction of Dubrovnik, but also of the IUC's library (where nearly 30,000 books were destroyed in fire). After the traumatic ravages of war, a small publication was printed with photographs of the

in the Convoy's office in Stradun, were published together in 1994 (without pagination). See: *Glas iz Dubrovnika/The voice from Dubrovnik*, ed. Alojzije Prosoli. Zagreb: Sveta glazba, 1994.

²² Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2009.

²³ According to the Proposal of Spatial Plan of the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik, the preliminary study of the Centre's architecture was proposed by the architects V. Bedenko and M. Bošnjak, at the time assistants at the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb. The former hospital complex (today the University of Dubrovnik) was intended to house the library and the cabinets, the present-day Home for the Elderly, two larger residential buildings and the Girls Boarding House intended to accommodate professors and students, the DTO Partizan building (Villa Crijević Pucić) was intended for the social centre of the future university campus, while the School of Education building was to host lecture halls and classrooms. The former Municipal Court building beneath Gradac Park was intended for auxiliary services, and the Centre's new administration building, reception building and a large lecture hall were planned to be built between the library building and residential buildings. For more detail, see: »Prijedlog prostornog razmjesta Interuniverzitetskog centra u Dubrovniku.«, in: *Interuniverzitetski centar humanističkih i društvenih znanosti u Dubrovniku (IUCHSS)*. Zagreb: Sveučilište u Zagrebu, 1971: 20–22.

²⁴ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2009.

building bombed and burned on 6 December 1991, along with its entire inventory. By the time of that dramatic event, the Centre's academic network already consisted of 240 member-universities from around forty countries from all continents,²⁵ which closely followed the Serbian-Montenegrin aggression against Croatia and Dubrovnik in shock. The printed publication with documentary photographs by Damil Kalogjera was accompanied by a printed text in English:

IUC. We are determined that the IUC will rise again, and for that we shall need all your support. The Mayor of the city and other authorities here, share that determination. For we had a dream in 1971: the project of uniting the world in Dubrovnik. This dream is now in ashes, not metaphorically but literally. We now have to start dreaming again; now we have the potential of 240 member-institutes, we trust that we will have as many of you as possible sharing this dream. Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik. Croatia.

Resilience, continuation and reconstruction

The government of the Republic of Croatia invested considerable funds in restoration of the building as part of the post-war reconstruction of the heavily damaged Dubrovnik and wider Dubrovnik area. The restoration of the building owned by the University of Zagreb in which the Centre was located meant more than just physical renewal – it brought hope of survival of everything that the Centre had given Dubrovnik, Croatia and the international university and academic community in the previous twenty years.

In her paper *Godine preživljavanja i oživljavanja Interuniverzitetskog centra*, Berta Dragičević pointed out that even after the Centre's building was destroyed, its activity never stopped, on the contrary – since the spring of 1992, the Centre's programmes were held at Hotel Argentina and Luka Sorkočević Art School, while Matica hrvatska Dubrovnik gave the Centre its palace on Stradun to be used by the Secretariat. At the same time, in the spring of 1992, the University started the restoration of the building with the help of the Croatian Government. In the period from the spring of 1992 to the summer of 1995, forty-nine meetings were held outside Dubrovnik (in other Croatian cities, Budapest, Amsterdam, Trieste, Bled and elsewhere), but also in the Centre; despite the circumstances, forty-eight programmes were held with around a thousand participants. During that period the British philosopher and university professor Kathleen Vaughan Wilkes was a driving force for the continuation, reconstruction and post-war blossoming of the IUC. The memories of her are highlighted in a separate working paper. As early as 1996, a series of interesting public lectures was organised for the people of Dubrovnik: 'Science at the End of the 20th Century' by Dr Krunoslav Pisk, 'Historical Meditations' by Academician Ivan Supek, 'Maritime Borders of the Republic of Croatia' by Dr Vladimir Đuro Degan, and 'Advanced Information Technologies and the Development of Dubrovnik Area' by Dr Enver Šehović, who created an application a year earlier which enabled the IUC to go online and present its work and Dubrovnik's heritage in the virtual world.

In this period of multiple challenges, the Centre's General Director, Professor Ørjar Øyen of the University of Bergen, preserved and maintained the continuity of the Centre together with

²⁵ B. Dragičević, »Godine preživljavanja i oživljavanja. Interuniverzitetski centar Dubrovnik.«: 120–121.

his associates from all over the world; he also showed his dedication with numerous appeals and letters during the war. In the spring of 1996, a session of the Centre's Council was held in Dubrovnik, with participation of representatives from around thirty universities from fifteen countries (Europe and America), where a new leadership was elected for a four-year period. Professor Hylke Tromp of the University of Groningen was elected Director General, and Academician Ivo Šlaus of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts and Professor Gwyn Prins of the University of Oxford were elected Deputy Directors. The Chair of the Council was Dr Peter Fischer-Appelt of the University of Hamburg, and the Vice Chair was Professor Henrik Birnbaum of the University of California Los Angeles.²⁶

4. Scientific horizons of Philosophy of Science

One of the IUC's formative programmes, launched by Academician Supek in the 1970s, was the international conference *Philosophy of Science*, with one of the world's most renowned scientists and philosophers, the founder of quantum theory and Supek's professor, the German physicist Werner Karl Heisenberg, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1932, as guest lecturer. As Professor Zvonimir Šikić of the University of Zagreb, participant in the programme since his student days, revealed, Academician Supek maintained his dedication to *Philosophy of Science* in later decades of his life:

'When Academician Supek was no longer able to come to Dubrovnik, every year after the course Philosophy of Science I went to see him and give him 'scientific news', because he considered Philosophy of Science his baby, figuratively speaking, until the end of his life. The breadth of his interests and that incredible scientific curiosity always left me speechless! He was interested in both science and people! In fact, I first met Academician Supek in Dubrovnik at the Philosophy of Science course, even though we collaborated later at his Institute for the Philosophy of Science and Peace in Zagreb. My first visits to the IUC were to attend the Philosophy of Science course as a student, which I continued to do until the 1980s. I continued in the 1990s at the invitation of Dr Kathy Wilkes, who invited me because she wanted to organise an international course during the war. She literally told me "I am definitely coming, and I think you should come too!" And everything was clear; I came and participated in this, in many ways, unforgettable course in the time of war. Since then, I started coming regularly to Dubrovnik, which for me and my colleagues is a 'meeting place' of global scientific thought par excellence! It is fascinating when I remember all the internationally renowned scholars I met there, had conversations with and made acquaintances and friends with. This is a value that goes beyond words. Because, let's not forget that this was the time before the Internet, correspondence by email and sending scholarly papers at the speed have today in the digital era and globalised world, when every scientific contact was made via postal service. My senior colleagues and professors told me how they sat for hours in libraries across Europe and copied references from the papers they needed by hand

²⁶ B. Dragičević, »Godine preživljavanja i oživljavanja. Interuniverzitetski centar Dubrovnik.«: 121–123.

*because, except for three copies of journals, which they were not allowed to take outside, they did not have anything else in the library. We are talking about the time when not even photocopiers were available. After many hours spent in libraries, they would study those papers at home. In such circumstances, the IUC was a place of meetings, face to face conversations, discussions and incredible opportunities! The possibilities of tête à tête conversations are simply fantastic! Today it is truly wonderful to be a scientist! And, I will say this as a metaphor, also to be tête à tête with the city we keep coming back to.*²⁷

Although in 2013 he launched the international conference Logic and Application with the aim of affirming scientific thought about theory and application of the traditional discipline (known from antiquity) to which the computer age has added new epistemic dimensions, Professor Šikić has remained faithful to the course *Philosophy of Science*.

5. IUC programmes as mirrors of time

At the two-day 40th anniversary conference in 2012, around eighty participants, members of academic and scientific associations and institutions from Europe and other parts of the world discussed the future of the IUC in the international university community, its role in contemporary society, new challenges and development strategy in a globalised world. It was pointed out that in four decades, nearly 2,000 international seminars and conferences were organised in the Centre with around 70,000 participants from more than 70 countries.

Victim Protection

'The importance of the IUC as a meeting place and a place of dialogue is even more visible. The vitality of this institution is also reflected in its continuity, not only of its programmes but also participants, who eventually often become course directors, gathering new generations. This internal potential is strong in this institution. This is a place where new ideas are created. After all, victimology is written with a capital letter here, because it is one of its longest-running programmes!' Dr Zvonimir Šeparović said back then.²⁸

Looking back on the period in which he, alongside Dr Gerd Ferdinand Kirchhoff from Germany and Dr Paul Friday from the USA, worked on establishing victimology, and eventually became the president of the World Society of Victimology, Professor Šeparović pointed out more than once that 'the science of victim protection in Croatia was established in the 1980s, and Dubrovnik and the Inter-University Centre in particular played an important role in international context as an important meeting place for scholars and victimologists from Europe and the world'.²⁹ In the 1980s, victimology was recognised as a scientific discipline, and the wars and terrorism in the following decades intensified its scientific perspectives and considerations about victims.

²⁷ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2013.

²⁸ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2012.

²⁹ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2009.

All aspects of human suffering, abuse of power and violations of human rights were discussed at the conferences that have been held at the IUC since 1984, with a two-year break during the war. The issues were analysed from different perspectives at professional conferences, such as the *International Conference on Minority Rights* held at the IUC in the late 1980s, organised by the World and Yugoslav Society of Victimology.³⁰ Dubrovnik remained the world centre of victimology, where international conferences on current global victimology issues were held. The first draft of the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power was created in Dubrovnik in 1995. The victimological aspect of the destroyed stone fabric of the city as a victim of war aggression drew special attention of the participants, especially since it was the stone fabric of Dubrovnik's historic urban matrix, protected by UNESCO.

Humanities

Looking back at half a century of the Centre's activities, it should be mentioned that humanities played an important role in its formative years, outlined here by Professor Božena Vranješ Šoljan in the IUC's anniversary year, when she received the Mirjana Gross Award for her book *Dalmacija: stoljeće povijesnih i demografskih mijena 1815.–1918:*

*'The fiftieth anniversary of the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik evokes memories of the beginnings of my career and participation in the academic course led by Professor Mirjana Gross in Dubrovnik in February 1976. In the early years of the Inter-University Centre, before the establishment of postgraduate studies in Culture of the Adriatic (1979), Professor Gross recognised Dubrovnik as an important international research centre where students would study the history of the connection between the eastern Adriatic and the Mediterranean and its historical heritage, which has remained one of the defining factors of our existence. At the beginning of 1976, she organised and led a two-week course on the economic history of the eastern Adriatic, its structures and cycles of prosperity and stagnation, for a few students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb and a group of students from central European universities. Through her numerous international contacts, Professor Gross managed to bring some of the best Croatian and European scientists as lecturers in the course, such as the Hungarian historians Iván Berend and György Ránky, the economist Zvonimir Jelinović and others. I remember that young and talented historians Harald Heppner, Rüdiger Mali, Karl Kaser and Walter Lukan, later professors at the universities in Vienna, Graz and Ljubljana, participated in the course as postgraduate students. I remember very well the exceptional lectures on various topics, discussions and socialising.'*³¹

Social Work

In the half century of affirmation of scientific dialogues between Croatia and the world, we should also mention the Summer School of Social Work Theory and Practice, which has left a significant mark on the IUC programme with its longevity. The school was initiated in early 1987 by Dr Burt Galaway and Dr Dada Maglajlić of the Bemidji State University Minnesota.

³⁰ Anamarija Paljetak, »Kronika.«, in: *Dubrovnik* 3-4/32 (1989): 243.

³¹ Kindly responding to my request, Professor Božena Vranješ Šoljan shared her memories of her friendship with Professor Mirjana Gross in the formative years of the IUC.

They wanted to launch a new programme to promote social work at the IUC, not only as a traditional form of care, but also as a professional, century-old discipline. They decided to establish ‘a place of dialogue’ for the exchange of experiences between East and West, North and South, and connect countries with a tradition of social work theory and practice with those that did not have such practice. Although the first course was supposed to be held in 1989, at the suggestion of Dr Vera Mehta, then Secretary General of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), it was postponed to 1990. The participants critically discussed the current models, development and future of social care, spiritual, ethical, humanistic and cultural values required in the periods of political, social-economic and ecological crises in all parts of the world, with a special emphasis on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant documents.³²

The longtime director, university professor Dada Maglajlić emphasised how the school institutionally recognised the importance of social work, which was recognised as a new academic discipline in previous decades.

Social Care and Spirituality

The meetings in Dubrovnik contributed to the affirmation of social work in international scientific and professional circles, although the IUC offered several programmes related to the field of social care from the very beginning.³³ Meetings with Dr Maglajlić were always incredibly inspiring because her view of the world brought to our conversations the breadth of her spirit and of the atmosphere in Bemidji, also known as ‘the First City on the Mississippi’. She spoke very passionately about the necessity of respect, tolerance and ‘spirituality’ in every sense, often referring to the importance of understanding historical complexity of that area, Native American land, from whose culture and extraordinary heritage a lot can be learned from the perspective of emic research and experience of community.³⁴ She spoke about a fascinating meeting with Prof. Arun Gandhi of the Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, who visited Bemidji State University (part of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities) in 1996. That meeting promoted the need to advocate peace and nonviolence in university circles and among students. It also brought an invitation to the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik, where international conference *Spirituality and Social Work* was to be held the following year. At the invitation of Prof. Maglajlić, Prof. Arun Gandhi and his wife Sunanda visited Dubrovnik and the Inter-University Centre. On that occasion, Prof. Gandhi gave a lecture entitled ‘Our Time and Mahatma Gandhi’s Philosophy of Nonviolence’.³⁵

³² Dada M. Maglajlić, »Teorija i praksa socijalnog rada.«, *Revija za socijalnu politiku* 1/1 (1994): 95-96.

³³ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 1999.

³⁴ Located on a lakeshore in the forests of northern Minnesota, Bemidji State University pays tribute to the ‘sacred land’ of the indigenous communities, the Ojibwe and the Dakota, since it is located ‘on land and on water’ of their former and present homeland. To honour indigenous peoples, ‘spiritual and physical caretakers’ of the land, who were violently deprived of their land, Bemidji State University published the statement by which it ‘honours the indigenous land where campus rests’ on its website in 2021.

Available at: https://www-bemidjistate-edu.translate.goog/news/2021/11/05/bemidji-state-university-honors-the-indigenous-land-where-campus-rests/?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=hr&_x_tr_hl=hr&_x_tr_pto=sc (accessed in April 2022).

³⁵ Jelena Obradović Mojaš, »Harmonija je princip života.«, *Obzor* (5.7.1997): 51.

During his first visit to Dubrovnik, Prof. Gandhi was thrilled after a walk around the historic centre:

'Dubrovnik is a city of great history, and the past is especially valuable in our lives. For this reason, when you are surrounded with so much history, like this fantastic architecture within the city walls, you are constantly immersed in a wonderful feeling of comfort. I admit I was impressed by so many beautiful women on the streets of Dubrovnik. You know I am originally from India, a country where the past is very dominant. We are used to coexisting with it because we feel like a part of it. I miss that in the United States.'

Prof. Gandhi gave the impression of an unusually calm man with almost contemplative rhythm of speaking. He also looked back on his childhood with his grandfather Mahatma (Mohandas Karamchand) Gandhi, Indian peacemaker, politician and national leader:

'When I was a boy, my grandfather often told me that, when I grow up, I must spread the seeds of his idea of peace and nonviolence around the world – wherever I go. He would say: "Some seeds will bear fruit, some will not." My wife and I continue that work. I do not consider the fact that I am Gandhi's grandson a burden in any sense, I do not see this legacy as a "separate" obligation. My grandfather has many descendants and we all live peaceful family lives. My social engagement is somewhat more visible because I am a university professor, but even this form of "spiritual legacy" is a part of the family heritage passed on to me by my parents. My father, the second son of Mahatma Gandhi, was personally very involved and dedicated to the idea of nonviolence his entire life. I had the opportunity to grow up in the circumstances of comparative experiences of everything I am talking about publicly today. Understanding this life philosophy and trying to make it a way of life of people is the essence of the essential, with constant avoiding of minor and major conflicts. Understanding between people leads to understanding between nations. That is why I believe that we must first understand what spirituality means! Religions teach us about love, loyalty, mutual existence... If we adhered to religious, that is, spiritual principles, we would apply one of the essential notions of the philosophy of nonviolence. My grandfather dedicated a significant part of his work to the research of world religions and incorporated a selected part from each into "his philosophy". He always said that nonviolence always begins within us. This tells us that we can feel it through four basic principles: respect, understanding, appreciation and acceptance. This should be applied on a personal level, but also on people around us. This is how we bridge our differences and move towards harmony and peace between people!'³⁶

At that time, Prof. Arun Gandhi worked on projects of raising funds for the poor, and three years prior to his visit to the IUC and Dubrovnik, he published a book *World without Violence: Can Gandhi's Vision Become Reality?* With an unbearable weight of the Russian aggression

³⁶ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 1997.

against Ukraine, the time we live in compels us to ask the same question.³⁷ It seems that the reflections of the conversation with Prof. Arun Gandhi are still equally powerful and, sadly, as relevant as in 1997, when we met in the programme *Plavi razgovori* in the studio of Radio Dubrovnik in Villa Dubravka.

The Inter-University Centre, this precious cultural constant of Dubrovnik and Croatia, is also recognised as a relevant place for scientific meetings by the participants of a series of *International Conferences on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas*, organised in Dubrovnik by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. ‘The Dubrovnik conferences, which have already become a tradition, truly acknowledge their continuity because the series always provides insight into what is happening in the field worldwide. In this sense, they reflect the “state of the profession”,’ said Dr Mislav Ježić at the *Sixth International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas* in 2011.

‘But the actual step forward compared to our previous meetings is the fact that computer processing of large texts, which have by now taken a lot of time and effort from the philologists, is increasingly applied. Electronic processing enables a faster and easier way to scientific results. The enthusiasm of a young generation of Indologists who come to our conferences at the Centre from all over the world certainly contributes to this. I also have to commend the Croatian participants, who have excellent command of modern programming techniques and computer text processing. You can only imagine the significance of such processing, for example, of the Mahabharata, with its one hundred and fifty thousand verses. Something that would take nearly half a century, now you can get as a form of data in an astonishingly short time. Of course, you cannot scientifically process it and interpret it in an astonishingly short time! But this can enable even better and more reliable critical editions and translations in the future. Of course, we have to keep in mind another important aspect – from the cultural point of view, the texts we deal with are not only some of the most important texts from the Indian tradition, but some of them were also the most influential texts in the history of mankind! Apart from the Bible, the Ramayana was until recently the most translated book in the world. This is just one example. We are dealing here with works without which one cannot understand the cultural heritage of humanity. Therefore, computer processing primarily serves scientific knowledge, while “disseminating these texts”, that is, their reception in the cultural environment is a cultural mission that also stands before Indology. In this sense, I must point out that this year we had the opportunity to hear a typical Indian presentation, which very vividly showed the reception of the Ramayana in India. It has

³⁷ This paper was written in April and May 2022. Regarding Russian aggression against Ukraine, the IUC Executive Committee released several statements in which they condemned the armed aggression and expressed solidarity with the Ukrainian people, in line with their institutional values. *IUC Executive Committee is Reaffirming the statement from 27 February regarding armed aggression against Ukraine. Deeply concerned by the continued armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, reminding of the international responsibility to protect civilians, condemning commission of all atrocity crimes, and requesting accountability for them, the IUC Executive Committee expresses its solidarity with the Ukrainian people and invites Ukrainian academic institutions to join the IUC, waiving their membership fees during the armed conflict. Dubrovnik, 6 May 2022.*

Available at: <https://iuc.hr/news/iuc-executive-committee-is-reaffirming-the-statement-regarding-armed-aggression-against-ukraine>

*shown very impressively how important it is today to also understand the nature of reception, i.e. the cultural role of these texts in their original environment and elsewhere. From one field research we have also learned about the reception of Sanskrit in Indian villages! From the cultural point of view, these aspects are infinitely interesting.*³⁸

Vedic Studies

In its distinctive urban chronology, the Centre also became a home to international conferences on Vedic studies. A recent gathering of experts on the Vedas, India's oldest sacred texts, was the Seventh International Vedic Conference, held in August 2019. This programme was initiated by Prof. Michael Witzel of Harvard University, who organised the International Vedic Workshop in 1989, inviting the leading Vedic scholars from all over the world. The next conference was held at the University of Kyoto, to which the Croatian Indologist and Vedic scholar, Academician Mislav Ježić, was invited. The third conference was held at the University of Leiden, the fourth at the University of Austin, Texas, and the fifth at the Centre of Eurasian and Afroasiatic Studies in Bucharest. The sixth conference was exceptional because it was held in Kerala, India, at the centre of a living traditional Vedic scholarship, where a circle of the most learned Brahmans continues the 3,000-year-old tradition of memorising Vedic texts. Experts from all over the world had the opportunity to experience a living tradition of the texts they study. They also saw the schools where young children begin to learn the Vedas in addition to regular schooling. On this occasion, the participants of the conference suggested to the invited keynote speaker, Professor Mislav Ježić, that the next conference be held in Croatia. Thus, the Seventh International Vedic Conference was held at the Inter-University Centre in Dubrovnik in 2019, with participation of eminent scholars, including the foremost authorities in the field such as Prof. Michael Witzel of Harvard University, Prof. Hartmut Scharfe of the University of California, Los Angeles, Prof. Shrikant Bahulkar of the renowned Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune, India, and Prof. Toshifumi Goto from Japan, somewhat younger professors from Sorbonne, George Pinault and Jan Houben, Prof. Elisabeth Tucker of Oxford University and many others. They discussed research of all major groups of Vedic texts, but also in the fields of archaeology, history, material culture, religion, rituals and literature, Vedic language and linguistics. The discoveries of traces of the lost Vedic grammatical tradition in the texts of the later major Indian grammarians were presented, as well as research of historical reversals in transferring Vedic literacy in Kashmir and elsewhere. Insights were shared on the detailed research of intertextual relations between different Vedas and individual texts during oral transmission in the second and first millennium BCE and mythical Vedic notions and knowledge about natural elements and movement of celestial bodies, for reading of which the key is yet to be found.

Health and the Summer Stroke School

Another Summer School marked the Centre's programme with its longevity – the international postgraduate course Summer Stroke School – Healthy Lifestyle and Prevention of Stroke, an important gathering of eminent Croatian and international experts where all relevant risks that lead to stroke are presented and discussed. According to the course founder, Academician Vida

³⁸ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2011.

Demarin of the University of Zagreb and University Hospital Centre ‘Sestre Milosrdnice’ in Zagreb, new findings on stroke epidemiology, prevention, diagnostics, therapy and rehabilitation are shared in seminars, workshops and discussions. In recent years, the course has been included in the programme of continuous medical training of the School of Medicine, University of Zagreb. Considering the tremendous importance of this international scientific and education project, as part of the 30th anniversary of Summer Stroke School in 2019, a monograph was presented to the professional and general public at the IUC. The Summer Stroke School anniversary celebration was co-organised by the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts Department of Medical Sciences, School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Croatian Stroke Society and International Institute for Brain Health with the support of World Stroke Organisation (WSO), European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and European Academy of Neurology (EAN). Alongside Academician Vida Demarin, the directors were Prof. Roman Haberl from Munich, Prof. Kurt Niederkorn from Graz, Prof. David Russell from Oslo and Assistant Professor Hrvoje Budinčević from Zagreb.³⁹

Responding to Change

The Centre’s programmes have always corresponded to current changes and events in science. As part of the project of research of motor skills in shaping mental phenomena, a programme was launched at the Centre in 2000 that gathered Croatian and international philosophers and neuroscientists at the international conference The Hand – An Organ of the Mind in 2009. The leader and organiser of the conference, Prof. Zdravko Radman of the Institute of Philosophy in Zagreb pointed out on this occasion, in the programme *Plavi razgovori*, that ‘the human hand is the centre of attention, an organ unique in nature, which has built a world of culture unique to humans in an authentic way. As opposed to the long dominance of the rationalist paradigm which perceives us exclusively as thinking beings, whose actions are determined and controlled by reason, this project deals with the role and significance of motor skills in shaping mental phenomena. Croatian and international participants were focused on movement as the primary way we exist in the world, from which higher cognitive functions, such as language, developed. Therefore, the skill and art of the hand is not only a matter of mechanics, it is a way our mind is shaped.’⁴⁰

Scholars in the field of bioethics also discussed controversial issues at the Centre, especially the issue of laboratory research in the first decade of the 21st century. One of the International Conferences on Human Rights and Medicine was held in 2010 in collaboration with the Andrija Štampar School of Public Health. It was an opportunity to present the ethics programme of the UNESCO Division of Science and Technology and promote and apply bioethics in general. The Centre thus became a meeting place for experts who systematically emphasised the necessity of critical approach to the application of bioethical principles. This was in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights from 2005, which established the mission in scientific and educational circles of educating new generations of experts in teaching ethics at universities and institutions worldwide, thus making ethics a formative segment of

³⁹ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2019.

⁴⁰ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2009.

education programmes in different disciplines outside medicine sciences. One of the programme participants who critically approached and affirmed human rights is Prof. Nenad Hlača of the Faculty of Law, University of Rijeka, who was coming to Dubrovnik even in the post-war years, when the IUC programmes were held on other locations in Dubrovnik (hotels) during the restoration of the Centre's building after the war. Dr Hlača was one of those participants who experienced coming to Dubrovnik very emotionally, at the same time building a personal relationship with Dubrovnik through professional cooperation in the Centre's programmes.

The city and the centre

Prof. Ognjen Čaldarović of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, also built a special relationship with Dubrovnik through his scientific work. In truth, Prof. Čaldarović inherited his love for the city from his grandfather Vladimir Čaldarović, who decided to spend the last decade of his life in Dubrovnik, researching its past. During his visits to his grandfather as a child, he absorbed the 'images of the City', not even realising to what extent this 'imprint of place' influenced his later choice of profession. He investigated the urban changes of the city behind the walls from the perspective of sociology, emphasizing that life of the city should not be exclusively linked to its monuments, and that Dubrovnik should constantly strive towards quality of living in the 'stone matrix' of its architectural heritage. He participated in the preparation of studies in urban sociology, warning that 'aggressive penetration of capital, commercialisation and excessive tourism in Dubrovnik adapted to short-term visits from cruise ships impair the "receiving capacity of visitors" and endanger the "natural phenomenon of Dubrovnik, for which it was included in the UNESCO list".'⁴¹ His annual visits to Dubrovnik and the Centre as part of the original sociology course that started in 1986, but also numerous later scientific dialogues that he affirmed among sociologists of Europe and the world in the seminar *In Search of Social Justice*, yielded, among other things, very 'insider' reflections on the changes brought upon Dubrovnik by decades of tourism development. Conversations with Prof. Čaldarović always revealed something new about Dubrovnik, and at the same time pointed to the internal connection between the Centre and its city. Unfortunately, Dr Čaldarović passed away in the summer of 2022, the Centre's anniversary year. We should also recall the thoughts of Dr Eugen Pusić on the synergy between Dubrovnik and the Centre from the 1970s, in which the goal of the Centre and its activities was to infuse the city with the 'character of a cultural centre', and 'not allow excessive tourism to turn Dubrovnik from a city into a place for sleeping and pastime'.⁴²

The physiognomy of Dubrovnik, especially its historic urban matrix, was thus constantly in the focus of sociology beyond scientific meetings in the Centre. And not only of sociology, but also art history! I will only mention Historic City as a Museum Object, the professional conference on Dubrovnik held at the IUC in 1989 under the leadership of Dr Ivo Maroević of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, and Dr Martin Segger of University of Victoria, Canada, with around twenty participants from all over the world.⁴³ In general, it should be pointed out that the IUC was constantly reflected in the 'long duration' of

⁴¹ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2017.

⁴² Eugen Pusić, *Znanost kao svjetski pothvat*: 5.

⁴³ Anamarija Paljetak, *Kronika*, in: *Dubrovnik 3-4/32* (1989): 241.

Dubrovnik's humanistic thought. It is also worth mentioning that the Centre also participated in the celebration of the 400th anniversary of birth of Dživo Gundulić, a symposium that took place for several days in Zagreb and Dubrovnik. The last day of the symposium was held in the Inter-University Centre, and the guests were greeted by Prof. Zvonimir Šeparović, then Rector of the University of Zagreb.⁴⁴

Future of Religion

At the end of April 2011, the international conference *Politics, Art, Religion* held at the Centre marked the 35th anniversary of the *Future of Religion*, one of IUC's oldest seminars. The participants recalled the rich past with regularly held conferences that went on even in the hardest war years during the siege of Dubrovnik. The conference was held in Hotel Argentina instead of the building of the Centre, which was at the time heavily damaged. One of the long-time directors, Prof. Mislav Kukoč of the University of Split, said that at the Centre 'scientists and theorists of religion from different countries and all continents discussed the phenomenon of religion in an interdisciplinary manner from different cultural and worldview perspectives in an equal and tolerant dialogue.'⁴⁵ In discussions about the wide scope of problems of the future of religion they touched upon the relationship between religion and science, history and political values, bioethics and globalisation, post-communism and Orthodox Church in Ukraine. That year Prof. Rudolf Siebert of the Western Michigan University, the founder of this programme, presented his book about the evolution of religious consciousness and its religious, moral, aesthetic and political aspects. This was only an episode from the long friendship between Prof. Siebert and the Centre, to which he was personally invited long ago by Academician Supek. During one of his scientific expeditions to the USA in 1974, Supek visited Western Michigan University, where he met Dr Siebert and invited him to Dubrovnik to participate in *Philosophy of Science* and *Marxism and Phenomenology*. After the congresses, Supek and Dr Branko Bošnjak offered Dr Siebert to create a new programme. One of the Centre's longest-running programmes, *Future of Religion*, was born from this idea.⁴⁶

6. Instead of conclusion

Scrolling through this 'imagined album', I have singled out only a few 'images of time', since there are countless protagonists, as well as topics, occasions and reasons for their meetings. And the scroll of memories could be unwrapped even further because half a century of the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik is truly a considerable achievement. This period suggests that considerable personal efforts and careers, enthusiasm and belief in science and future were invested in this institution to enable it to exist and be what it is. Since its founding, the Centre has been a meeting place for scholars from Europe and other continents, and its projects that promoted freedom of thought helped establish many connections and ongoing collaborations. So,

⁴⁴ Anamarija Paljetak, *Kronika*, in: *Dubrovnik 3-4/32* (1989): 243.

⁴⁵ Excerpt from the programme *Plavi razgovori* aired on Croatian Radio – Radio Dubrovnik in 2011.

⁴⁶ Rudolf J. Siebert, »Memories of Friends in my Life with the Inter-University Center.«, in: *Fragments of Memories of Life and Work at Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik 1971–2007* (eds. Berta Dragičević and Ørjar Øyen): 121.

the historical *libertas*, ‘password and symbol of Dubrovnik’ found its embodiment in contemporary Dubrovnik. Perhaps this is a good time to remind everyone of the conclusion made by Dr Fischer-Appelt, who metaphorically recognised the wisdom of Dubrovnik’s diplomatic dialogues and the establishment of consulates in the past in the networking of university institutions, with which the Centre, like a beacon under the auspices of the scientific community, illuminated Croatia’s path towards the European Union.⁴⁷ With all the changes of the social-political context throughout the long five decades of its existence, the Centre, in a way, proved to be ‘resilient to history’. In the end, as I paraphrase this Kunčević’s thought from the beginning of this text,⁴⁸ I will add in a (really) distant reflection and with a distance from its original meaning, that the IUC has truly inherited the reflection of the ancient trace which was introduced to historiography by Braudel’s idea of layers of history based on a three-tiered view of historical time (made of geographic determinism, ‘social time’ and history of events).⁴⁹

As it celebrates the 50th anniversary of its fruitful activity, the challenges of time never stop, and the IUC’s perspectives open new horizons. Under the leadership of the Executive Secretary Nada Bruer Ljubišić, the Centre continues to be one of the symbols of contemporary Dubrovnik as a university city. Its faithful friends around the world see it as a kind of *locus amoenus* and, inspired by the uniqueness of spring and autumn sessions imbued with creativity and vigour of the spirit, always come back to it, referring in every return to the preciousness of the continuity of scientific thought which led to the founding of the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik in the 1970s. The semi-centennial anniversary of the IUC is its pledge for the future.

⁴⁷ Quoted from the paper by Peter Fischer-Appelt from 2007.

⁴⁸ See note No. 3.

⁴⁹ Stjepan Ćosić, »Fernand Braudel. *Sredozemlje i sredozemni svijet u doba Filipa II*. Svezak I, prijevod: Đurđa Šinko Depierris. Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1997., 692 str.; svezak II, prijevod: Mirna Cvitan Černelić i Jagoda Milinković. Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 1998., 686 str.«, in: *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 37 (1999): 356.