
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN: THE PERSONIFICATION OF MAX WEBER'S 'SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM'

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Benjamin Franklin as mouthpiece of the 'Spirit of Capitalism'

Max Weber (1864-1920) introduced Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) in his book *Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism* (1905)¹ as an example, a provisional representation or *Veranschaulichung*,² in fact as a mouthpiece of the Spirit of Capitalism.³ Benjamin Franklin's *Necessary hints to these that would be rich* (1736) is, according to Weber, a document from the hand of this 'Spirit'.⁴

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¹ 'Spirit' of Capitalism is a provisional concept of Weber, an *'Idealtype'*. Therefore he puts the word mostly between quotation marks. It refers to a 'historical individual', a complex of relations in the historical reality that we take conceptually as a whole from the point of view of their cultural meaning: "Wenn überhaupt ein Objekt auffindbar ist, für welches der Verwendung jener Bezeichnung irgendein Sinn zukommen kann, so kann es nur rein 'historisches Individuum' sein, d.h. ein Komplex von Zusammenhängen in der geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit, die wir unter dem Gesichtspunkte ihrer Kulturbedeutung begrifflich zu einem Ganzen zusammenschließen.", PE, p. 39 („If any object can be found to which this term can be applied with any understandable meaning, it can only be an historical individual, i.e. a complex of elements associated in historical reality which we unite into a conceptual whole from the standpoint of their cultural significance." NB If available, the English translations are taken from: *Weberian Sociology of Religion Homepage*, http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber_texts.html)

² PE, p. 40, paragraph 2, Der "Geist" des Kapitalismus: "Soll gleichwohl eine Feststellung des Objektes, um dessen Analyse und historische Erklärung es sich handelt, erfolgen, so kann es sich also nicht um eine begriffliche Definition, sondern vorerst wenigstens nur um eine provisorische *Veranschaulichung* dessen handeln, was hier mit dem "Geist" des Kapitalismus gemeint ist". (Thus, if we try to determine the object, the analysis and historical explanation of which we are attempting, it cannot be in the form of a conceptual definition, but at least in the beginning only a provisional description of what is here meant by the spirit of capitalism.)

³ PE, p. 42, "Daß es ‚Geist des Kapitalismus‘ ist, der aus ihm in charakteristischer Weise redet, wird niemand bezweifeln, ..." („That it is the spirit of capitalism which here speaks in characteristic fashion, no one will doubt,...")

⁴ PE, p. 40, „Eine solche ist nun in der Tat zum Zwecke einer Verständigung über den Gegenstand der Untersuchung ununtbehrlich, und wir halten uns zum diesen Behufe an *ein Dokument jenes "Geistes"* (*cursi-*

For Weber, Benjamin Franklin in his books and autobiography represents not only an exemplary type of the ‘Spirit of Capitalism’, but in a sense also of the ‘Specter of Protestant Ethic’, a specter that continues to wander in a *secularized* state, free of any direct link to its original religious source.

The fact that his exemplary type of capitalist spirit — Benjamin Franklin — is free from any direct link with religion is crucial to the social historian and sociologist Max Weber: Benjamin Franklin represents a *secularized* every day ethic.¹ Weber used Benjamin Franklin as a tool: Franklin is an exemplary representation of what can not be defined beforehand in a single social philosophical concept or ‘*Begriff*’. Weber tries to grasp a historical complex of values or historical individual and he develops the method of the construction of *Ideal types* for this purpose.

In Weber’s book on the Protestant Ethic the *Ideal type* of the spirit of Capitalism is central. Weber explores the genesis and development of the specific type of modern Capitalism that is only found in the West. This Ideal type is personified or represented in an exemplary way in Benjamin Franklin. According to Weber, Franklin adheres to an everyday ethic of *innerwordly asceticism* that is still closely related to the Protestant religious roots that inspired it, but is already free from them. Benjamin Franklin propagates an ethical maxim that survived as a dominant social practice, even if its initial (religious) motivation has already long been forgotten.

Another important fact for Weber that influenced his choice of Benjamin Franklin as the personification of his Ideal type of the Spirit of Capitalism is, that Franklin’s specific expression of capitalist spirit took place before capitalist

vation *JvK*), welches das, worauf es hier zunächst ankommt, in nahezu klassischer Reinheit enthält und doch zugleich den Vorteil bietet, von *aller* direkten Beziehung zum Religiösen losgelöst, also — für unser Thema — „voraussetzungslos“ zu sein.” (For this purpose we turn to a document of that spirit which contains what we are looking for in almost classical purity, and at the same time has the advantage of being free from all direct relationship to religion, being thus, for our purposes, free of preconceptions.)

¹ Weber notes how Benjamin Franklin refers to the Calvinist belief and proverbs of his Father as the source of his ethics and ethical advice for daily life and business. The passage that Weber quotes from Franklin’s autobiography as an answer to the why question of his ethic (why should a man live as Franklin advises?) was a sermon the young Franklin heard again and again from his Calvinist Father: a bible quote from the proverbs of Solomon, chapter 22; verse 29 22:29 „Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings“ (Proverbs 22:29). In note 32, Weber mentions that Luther translated ‘skilled in his work’ at this spot as ‘standing proud in his shop or business’, (in seinem Geschäft) whereas he introduced for the same word in another place his new translation of *Beruf*. In this note Weber refers to his later note 53 where the Lutheran bible translation of *Beruf* is central that will play an important role in the development of what Weber calls Protestant Ethic.

social development was visible¹: a clear proof of the power of 'Spirit' as a causal factor in history.²

The limitations of the ideal typical construction

First, I became acquainted with Benjamin Franklin as Max Weber's representation or personification of the spirit of Capitalism. Weber would be the first to agree that this representation does not do full justice to Franklin's various practical and intellectual contributions to American culture, for example as one of the officially recognized founding fathers of the American nation, but also as a businessman, printer and publisher, and as an original inventor and scientist: Franklin invented even a musical instrument, the *armonica*.³

It was this universal appeal, this quality of being one of the father's of the myth of the American Dream, that made Benjamin Franklin into a valuable exemplification of the Capitalist spirit that Weber wanted to trace in his Protestant Ethic. The universal appeal of Franklin's advice in 'business ethics' is also underlined by the fact that many *bon mots* of which Franklin was the author became proverbs of the American language.⁴ The fact that Franklin's words became popular folk wisdom through extensive use seems a justification of Weber's use of Benjamin Franklin to construct his Ideal type of the Capitalist Spirit, and also demonstrates the logic of Weber's limitation in his research to Franklin's practical treatises on good trade practices.⁵ According to Weber, it is especially Franklin's advice to young businessman that is most permeated with

¹ PE, p. 46, „...dass jedenfalls ohne Zweifel im Geburtslande Benjamin Franklins (Massachusetts) der „kapitalistische Geist“ (in unserem hier angenommenen Sinn) vor der „kapitalistischen Entwicklung“ da war...“ (,...that in Benjamin Franklin's birthplace (Massachusetts) at least, the ‚capitalist spirit‘ (in the sense in which we are using it) was undoubtedly present before any ‚capitalist development‘ had taken place...)“ Of course, in the long critical controversy about Weber's Protestant Ethic, this ‚fact‘ is contested.

² PE, p. 77. “So könnte die nachfolgende Studie an ihrem freilich bescheidenen Teil vielleicht auch einen Beitrag bilden zur Veranschaulichung der Art, in der überhaupt die “Ideen” in der Geschichte wirksam werden.“ (The following study may thus perhaps in a modest way form a contribution to the understanding of the manner in which ideas become effective forces in history.)

³ According to the website of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin became famous in such diverse fields as science, technological inventions, statesman, printer (as a Russian would call it publicist), philosopher, musician and as an economist and entrepreneur.

⁴ Quotes from Franklin that became anonymous proverbs and that, according to Weber express the 'spirit' of capitalism: "The use of money is all the advantage there is in having it"; "He that is of the opinion money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money"; "A penny saved is a penny earned."

⁵ *Necessary hints to these that would be rich* (1736) and *Advice to a young tradesman* (1748), as well as Franklin's autobiography. [MW, PE I, p. 83, note 24]

what Weber called the ‘spirit of capitalism’,¹ but also that which became most influential.

Weber is conscious of the fact that his methodological construction of *Ideal types* in the science of history runs the risk of becoming a caricature and he carefully announces that his quotes do not do justice to the full genius of Franklin or even represent all aspects of ‘Capitalist spirit’.² A method is related to the question posed and the answer sought for, so no historical truth in this sense is claimed for this selective representation of Franklin as ‘Capitalist spirit’ in relation to Franklin as an historical person. On the other hand, with his representation of Benjamin Franklin as mouthpiece or personification of the spirit of Capitalism, Weber makes a strong psychological claim on its historical reality or plausibility.

Max Weber develops the ideal type as a necessary instrument for comparative historical research in order to clarify the complexity and dynamics of historical phenomena³: the ideal type should be constructed in such a way as to be almost identifiable with a real historical phenomenon. According to Weber, the ideal type in principle could be found in historical reality.⁴ Real historical phenomena or occurrences are measured according to their proximity or distance from this ideal typical representation. The ideal type is central in Weber’s method of sociological interpretation or ‘*verstehende Soziologie*’.

¹ “The way to wealth ... depends chiefly on two words, industry and frugality, that is, waste neither time nor money”.

² MW, PE, 42, Das es “Geist des Kapitalismus” ist, der aus ihm [Note JvK Benjamin Franklin] in charakteristischer Weise redet, wird niemand bezweifeln, so wenig etwa behauptet werden soll, dass nun alles was man unter diesem ‘Geist’ verstehen kann, darin erhalten sei.

³ In „Zwischenbetrachtung, Theorie der Stufen und Richtungen der religiösen Weltablehnung“, in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, 1920, 1:536-573, p. 536 and *Gesamtausgabe*, Abt. I, Band 19 *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen Konfuzianismus und Taoismus*, 1989, p. 479, „Die Konstruktion ermöglicht es, da, wo sich eine historische Erscheinung einem von diesen Sachverhalten in Einzelzügen oder Gesamtcharakter annähert, deren — sozusagen — typologischen Ort durch Ermittlung der Nähe oder des Abstandes vom theoretisch konstruierten Typus festzustellen. Insoweit ist die Konstruktion also lediglich ein technischer Behelf zur Erleichterung der Übersichtlichkeit und Terminologie“. (“Such constructions make it possible to determine the typological locus of a historical phenomenon. They enable us to see if, in particular traits or in their total character, the phenomena approximate one of our constructions: to determine the degree of approximation of the historical phenomenon to the theoretically constructed type. To this extent, the construction is merely a technical aid which facilitates a more lucid arrangement and terminology.”)

⁴ „Die einzelnen Wertspähren sind dabei, wie man leicht sieht, in einer rationalen Geschlossenheit herauspräpariert, wie sie in der Realität *selten* auftreten, aber allerdings: auftreten können und in historisch wichtiger Art aufgetreten *sind*“, *Zwischenbetrachtung*, p. 2 (As will readily be seen, the individual spheres of value are prepared with a rational consistency which is rarely found in reality. But they *can* appear thus in reality and in historically important ways, and they have.)

Weber's sociological method and goal

Weber's prime interest in his Protestant ethic is 'to clarify' the emergence of modern capitalism as the dominant social and economic organization in the West, and only in the West. For Weber the birth of western Capitalism was not (exclusively) related to *politics*, nor to *economy*, but to *religion* as an inspiring force for every day ethics. Religion, in putting psychological bonuses to specific actions or conduct of individuals, and in being a social phenomenon, can and does contribute to social change. Weber demonstrates this in the case of Protestant every day ethic and work ethos for the birth of the spirit of Capitalism that preceded the emergence of Capitalism as a social organization.

Weber is interested in the specific circumstances under which the special case of Western modern Capitalism could emerge. One of the most remarkable characteristics of this type of Capitalism was that it had developed only in North-West European and North American countries.¹ Which were the 'sufficient' or 'necessary' causal factors in this emergence? How did these 'work' and what kind of causality is at play? These are Weber's central questions. That Protestant ethic represents one of these historical causal factors is more or less Weber's point of departure in *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber's self chosen task is to show *how* Protestant Ethic and modern Capitalist spirit were related, not *that* they were related.²

Weber was puzzled by the question, why modern capitalism developed in Western Europe and North-America only and in the latter case originally and in its purest form. In these countries Protestant ethic had become the everyday mo-

¹ PE, p.9, Vorbemerkung: "welche Verkettung von Umständen hat dazu geführt, dass gerade auf dem Boden des Okzidents, und nur hier, Kulturerscheinungen auftraten, welche doch — wie wenigstens wir uns gern vorstellen — in einer Entwicklungsrichtung von universeller Bedeutung und Gültigkeit lagen." , also p. 15 (,...to what combination of circumstances the fact should be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have appeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having *universal* significance and value.")

² PE, p. 21 „...: der Bedingtheit der Entstehung einer Wirtschaftsgesinnung: des Ethos einer Wirtschaftsform, durch bestimmte religiöse Glaubensinhalte, und zwar an dem Beispiel der Zusammenhänge des modernen Wirtschaftsethos mit der rationalen Ethik des asketischen Protestantismus“. (the conditionality of the development of an economic ethos: of the ethos of a economic organization, through certain religious belief contents, and this with the example of the relations of modern economic ethos and the rational Ethic of ascetic Protestantism“, NB translation JvK) And PE, p. 77, „Sondern es soll nur festgestellt werden: ob und wieweit religiöse Einflüsse bei der qualitativen Prägung und quantitativen Expansion jenes Geistes über die Welt hin *mit*beteiligt gewesen sind und welche konkreten Seiten der auf kapitalistischer Basis ruhenden Kultur auf sie zurückgehen“. (On the contrary, we only wish to ascertain whether and to what extent religious forces have taken part in the qualitative formation and the quantitative expansion of that spirit over the world. Furthermore, what concrete aspects of our capitalistic culture can be traced to them?)

rality of a dominant group in society. Weber took care to show the power of 'society'-building of an ethic that in its essence proceeded from a rejection of this world and all its values and as such has an anti-social inspiration: Weber demonstrated that this Protestant *innerworldly* asceticism or methodic way of life is at the root of the modern rationalist capitalist spirit.

This *innerworldly* Protestant asceticism has similarities with the *outerworldly* asceticism of Catholic monastic communities in the middle ages, and of oriental religious groups. However, the most important difference with this monastic asceticism is the central value of *innerworldly* deeds and actions of every believer in the Glory of God in this world. *Outerworldly* asceticism concentrates on the retreat from this world into the enclosure of a monastic community or even into the solitary desert life of a hermit; *innerworldly* asceticism breaks out of the monastic walls and ventures into the everyday world.¹ The *rationalization* of everyday life ethics in this world, while keeping the other world in mind, was the result of the conceptualization of *Beruf* (Profession or Calling) of ascetic Protestantism.² It is Benjamin Franklin who, as a representative of this specific work or business ethic, is exactly characteristic of the modern capitalist 'Spirit'. This modern Capitalist spirit is, as Weber demonstrates, formed by ascetic Protestantism.

Benjamin Franklin and Russian history of philosophy

How does this story on Benjamin Franklin and Max Weber's portrayal of Benjamin Franklin as an exemplary type of Capitalist spirit relate to Russia? I propose to approach this question through the figure of Fr. Sergej Bulgakov (1871-1944) — an important and characteristic religious philosopher of the Russian Silver age.³

The theme of Benjamin Franklin and Russia was already made explicit in Prince Odoevskij's *Russian Nights* (1844): "Odoevskij rejected any way of living, any social or economic system, which encouraged individuals to calculate and pursue their own interests. The butt of his attack was moral and economic

¹ PE, p. 165, "Die Christliche Askese....schlug die Tür des Klosters hinter sich zu und unternahm es, gerade das weltliche Alltagsleben mit ihrer Methodik zu durchdrängen, es zu einem rationale Leben in der Welt und doch nicht von dieser Welt oder für diese Welt umzugestalten." (Christian asceticism ... slammed the door of the monastery behind it, and undertook to penetrate just that daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world, but neither of nor for this world.)

² Ibidem, see also note 5.

³ Evtuhov Catherine, *The Cross and the Sickle. Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy 1890-1920*, 1997. In this book, Evtuhov wrote the biography of a whole epoch into the biography of one person, Fr. Sergej Bulgakov.

Utilitarianism as it was flourishing in England and America in his day”... “Benjamin Franklin he rejected as a ‘philosopher-manufacturer’ and ‘the real Tartuffe of our age’. Such men were greedy egoists”¹.

Benjamin Franklin is thus also recognized in Russian philosophical history as an important historical figure and exemplary type. The Western individualistic moral attitude that Franklin represents, however, is fiercely attacked. In Russian literature, this Western type is counteracted by the literary hero Ilya Oblovov. Oblovov certainly represents an alternative moral and social ideal, as Lesley Chamberlain suggests, although this *typically* Russian exemplary type in no way seems capable of any *innerworldly* methodic or ascetic way of life. Oblovov is not the Russian ‘Spirit’ that could lead Russia into a non Benthamian and non utilitarian form of modern Capitalism².

My hypothesis is that Max Weber and Sergej Bulgakov were engaged in a mirror project. Sergej Bulgakov was engaged in the explanation of the fact that in Russia no ‘Capitalist spirit’ had (yet) developed. Bulgakov explored the possibilities that capitalist spirit would develop eventually from an Orthodox Ethic, if it would be the dominant every day ethic in Russia. Bulgakov developed a vision of Orthodox *innerworldly* asceticism that he calls spiritual fight or *podvižničestvo*.³ In Bulgakov’s thought Orthodox spiritual fight as every day ethic should counteract or offer an alternative to the threatening Socialist revolution. In line with Prince Odoevskij and his other fellow countrymen, Bulgakov reproached Benjamin Franklin and the spirit he represented for his individualism and utilitarianism. Orthodox Ethic should at least provide an alternative for these negative sides of the modern capitalist spirit.

¹ Lesley Chamberlain, *Motherland: a Philosophical History of Russia*, 2005, p. 98. Tartuffe as the hypocrite cleric who tries to get a merchant and his family under the power of his influence is the name of a satire of Molière. This kind of hypocrisy or *Heuchelei* is also mentioned by Weber as a characteristic of Benthamism or Utilitarianism.

² A Russian literary hero that can be called a ‘literary’ counterpart of Benjamin Franklin is Ilja Oblovov, the famous Russian fictional hero of Ivan Goncharov in his novel *Oblovov* (1858). According to Lesley Chamberlain *Oblovov* is an anti-*Bildungsroman* in all but name: “All its energies were harnessed to mocking the Hegelian mythos and refuting the logos behind it... It illustrated the fundamental Russian choice of non-selfhood as the basis of ideal community. It poked superior fun at the futility of individualistic competitiveness”. In the novel another type counters Ilya Oblovov, his friend Andrej Stolz, not surprisingly not a pure Russian as is signified in his name, but a Wolga-German, and typically a New Westernized and Businesslike Russian.

³ *Two Cities* (Dva Grada), “Heroism and Asceticism” or “Heroism and Spiritual Fight”.

Weber defends Benjamin Franklin from this accusation of utilitarianism¹. Whether Bulgakov accepted Weber's defense of Franklin or not, he soon found another adversary to accuse of utilitarianism and *Benthamism* in the person and theory of Marx. The twofold individuation that Protestant ethic caused, according to Weber, became nevertheless a central point in Bulgakov's criticism of the capitalist spirit that resulted from this Protestant ethic. This twofold individuation that Protestant spirit caused were the internalization of the religious law to an ethical maxim of daily life and the destabilization of (familial or clan based) social ties in favor of a more abstract universal social bond with undifferentiated others. The first individuation would be a requisite for Bulgakov's spiritual fight also, but the second is taken in a more negative light. It is especially the community building quality of the Orthodox Church that is highly valued by Bulgakov in the concept of '*sobornost*' or 'conciliarity'.²

Bulgakov on Marx' homo oeconomicus

Bulgakov gave an account of his conversion to Idealism in his collection of articles *From Marxism to Idealism*³ (1903). He published this book after his deception in Marxism as a scientific method. While Bulgakov was doing research for his dissertation 'Capitalism and Agriculture', he discovered that Marxist political economy had little to say about agriculture, the dominant social-economic activity in the Russia of his time.

Weber points to the pre-history of modern Capitalism and the 'irrational' roots of the rational capitalist socio-economic organization. Marx started his analysis from a historically developed Capitalism as a social system. Marx tries to find socio-economic laws of this Capitalist socio-economic system, e.g. the

¹ PE, p. 44, „... dass hier doch noch etwas anderes als seine Verbrämung rein egozentrischer Maximen vorliegt.“ (The circumstance that he ascribes his recognition of the utility of virtue to a divine revelation which was intended to lead him in the path of righteousness, shows that something more than mere garnishing for purely egocentric motives is involved.) and „Der Gelderwerb ist — sofern er in legaler Weise erfolgt — innerhalb der modernen Wirtschaftsordnung das Resultat und der Ausdruck der Tüchtigkeit im Beruf und diese Tüchtigkeit ist, wie nun unschwer zu erkennen ist, das wirkliche A und O der Moral Franklins...“ (The earning of money within the modern economic order is, so long as it is done legally, the result and the expression of virtue and proficiency in a calling; and this virtue and proficiency are, as it is now not difficult to see, the real Alpha and Omega of Franklin's ethic...)

² For a discussion on *sobornost* as ideal of society read e.g. Van der Zweerde Evert, 'Sobornost' als Gesellschaftsideal bei Vladimir Solov'ev und Pavel Florenskij', in: N. Franz, M. Hagemeister, F. Haney (Hrsg.), *Pavel Florenskij — Tradition und Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main &c: Peter Lang, 2001), pp. 225-246

³ Bulgakov Sergej, *Ot marksizma k idealizmu: sbornik statej* (1896-1903), The title of this collection of articles, became the slogan of an important intellectual and political movement — that of the return to Orthodoxy of Russian intellectual elite, the *intelligencia*.

relation of basis and superstructure, of which Weber shows the historical (and contingent and religious) sources.

According to Gordon Marshall, Weber's ideal type of capitalist 'spirit' or 'ethos' is in fact a representation of the concept of *homo oeconomicus* and the classical political economy of Adam Smith.¹ Bulgakov discussed precisely this concept of *homo oeconomicus* in his article "Heroism and spiritual fight" ("Geroizm i podvižničestvo"),² published in the same year as Weber's Protestant Ethic, in 1905. In this article as well as in his monograph *Philosophy of Economy* (1911), Bulgakov explicitly refers to Weber.

Bulgakov makes clear he wants to develop an opposite vision of man to this *homo oeconomicus*, as the generalized type of Adam Smith, Bentham, Marx and Western Capitalism. Bulgakov's social ideal is the idea of Orthodox spiritual fight that he construes in response to Weber's representation of Benjamin Franklin as the mouthpiece of a Spirit of Capitalism. In this idea of Orthodox spiritual fight, Bulgakov clearly used Weber's concepts of *innerworldly* asceticism. The importance of religion as a factor in historical change that Weber demonstrates in his *Protestant ethic* is the decisive element of Weber's new sociology for Bulgakov.

Bulgakov accepts as proven that which Weber takes great pains to make scientifically acceptable to his peers. Weber almost excuses himself for this discovery of the relevance of religion for the scientific research of social change and tries to develop a method to interpret this influence as a scientific fact. In his *Sociology of World Religions* Weber applied this new method of "verstehende Soziologie" that he announced and developed in the *Protestant Ethic*.³

Bulgakov applies Weber to tracing the fundamentals of Russian and Orthodox morality and daily ethics. Following Weber, Bulgakov locates the central concept of this morality in work ethos and monastic asceticism, as well as in the relation of the individual to his natural group and social position or place. In his search, Bulgakov is confronted with the absolute rejection of this world or the otherworldliness (*otščel'ničestvo*) of the Russian Orthodox Church and of Russian Orthodox religious practice. Neither the Orthodox Church hierarchy, nor Orthodox

¹ Gordon Marshall, *In search of the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1982, p. 22 "When we realize that Weber's apparently peculiar concept of 'the spirit of modern capitalism' and his quotations from Franklin, are simply another way of talking about *homo oeconomicus*..."

² "Geroizm i podvižničestvo" was translated as "Heroism and Asceticism" in the Canadian Slavonic Series, 1968, vol 2, n. 3 p. 291-310 and n. 4, p. 447-463 and in the collection of articles *Landmarks*, 1977. Bulgakov also published the article in his own collection of articles *Dva Grada* (1911/1971) or *Two Cities. A research into the Nature of Social Ideals*, which has not been translated in its entirety in English.

³ Weber wrote Protestant Ethic as the first part of his *Sociology of World Religions*, which consists of 3 parts. In the first part he develops his sociological method and applies it directly to Western Christianity. Eastern or Orthodox Christianity Weber did not treat separately. Sergej Bulgakov's project could be interpreted as applying Weber's method and theory to Russian Orthodoxy.

theology has ever claimed any practical relation to this world. No social theory or social theology existed in Russian Orthodoxy prior to the year 2000, when the Russian Orthodox Church published its *Basic Social Concept* on Internet.¹

In its capacity as the *representation* of the Body of Christ on this earth, the Church formulated its relation to the whole of worldly power as *symphony*, a two-headed leadership of the twofold world, the world of the soul of which the Church was the guardian, and the world of matter of which the State was the authority. In practice it was very often the head of the Russian state, the tsar, which dominated the head of the Church, the patriarch. Bulgakov reproached the Russian Orthodox Church that it left the power of the world totally to the tsar (a phenomenon known as *Caesaropapism*).

The opposite of Caesaropapism — *Papocaesarism* — also formed a temptation to the Orthodox Church during its history. As it was more widely represented than State administration in the Russian countryside, and had institutions in many village parishes of the predominantly rural Russian traditional society,² the Church potentially could mobilize a great worldly or political power. Bulgakov condemned both extremes in the relation of State and Church in respect to this world.

Even though Weber recognizes the motivational power of religion and gives it due credit as an historical factor in his *Sociology of World Religions*, he only departs from the historical changes and facts that he sees as generally accepted and has an exclusive orientation to their historical development. Weber does not make any value or truth judgments concerning the theological and religious concepts involved; he is only interested in their 'factual' effects. This of course is very different from Bulgakov's future and practice oriented, as well as consciously philosophical and religious point of view.

To formulate it in a different way, Weber can be said to stay within the boundaries of Western science, while Bulgakov transgresses the border of science and religion. Weber is a totally secular scientist who recognizes his own religious cultural roots, but is careful to separate them from his professional work. Bulgakov, on the other hand, tries to integrate them in his life as well as his work.

A logical conclusion would be that Weber was, and remained, a scholar (a historian and a sociologist) and that Bulgakov — but also Benjamin Franklin — were of a different category, or categories: statesmen, social theorists, politicians, inventors and priests or prophets. Perhaps it was the course of their lives

¹ *Osnovy social'noj koncepcii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Cerkvi* Basic Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, the complete text of the concept can be read in English and Russian on the official site of the ROC, <http://www.mospat.ru>

² This distribution of Church institutions however should also not be exaggerated as the presence of the Church in a certain area was dependant on the amount of souls that could provide for a parish priest and church maintenance.

that was much longer, and convoluted, that also contributed to the many-sidedness of both Bulgakov and Franklin? Or perhaps it was the spirit of Orthodoxy in the first and the spirit of Capitalism in the second that gave both their creative and exemplary working energy and work ethic?

This is exactly the 'spirit' that Weber tried to make manifest to us in the person of Benjamin Franklin. A 'spirit' that can move not only individual men, but can also move and characterize or mark a whole cultural or social epoch. This is a truly historical and social 'individual' that, according to Weber, can only be traced, reconstructed and demonstrated in the science of history by means of Ideal types.