

International workshop within the framework of the bilateral research project of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

## Post nubila Phoebus!



Research Centre for  
the Humanities  
**Institute of Philosophy**



### *Orientalism versus War against the West Dichotomous Identity-generating Narratives in the Hungarian and Polish Thought*

Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy – Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Date: Monday, 28 March, 2022, 10h (CET)

Venue: Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy

4 Tóth Kálmán street, Budapest, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, lecture room B.7.16

You can join to our hybrid event by clicking on the link below, as well:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3612246778?pwd=dXRHZ0I3YWw5bjA0elpSS3pYQzgrZz09>

#### **Programme**

10.00

*Opening Words* (Béla Mester, project leader on the Hungarian side)

1<sup>st</sup> section: Variations of the Modernity

(Chair: Béla Mester)

10.10

**Andrzej Gniazdowski** (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences)

*The Polish Sonderweg to Modernity?*

10.30

**Gábor Kovács** (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

*Snobs and Peasants – Third-way-ism and the Idea of Alternative Modernisation in the Thought of László Németh in the Interwar Period*

10.50

**Rafał Smoczyński** (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences)

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

*Good Moral Panics and Orientalism among Polish Migrants in the Brexit Context*

11.10

*Discussion*

11.30

*Coffee Break*

2<sup>nd</sup> section: Artistic Aspects

(Chair: Gábor Kovács)

11.45

**Urszula Idziak** (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

*"Wittgenstein was Romantic about Russia"*

*Orientalism at War*

12.05

**Ferenc Hörcher** (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

*Evelyn Waugh versus Churchill – the Case of the British Support of Tito in the Third Book of The Sword of Honour (1961)*

12.25

**Borbála Jász** (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

*Nationality and Internationality in the Architecture of Central and Eastern Europe*

12.45

*Discussion*

13.05

*Lunch Break*

3<sup>rd</sup> section: Historical Models

(Chair: Rafał Smoczyński)

14.00

**Tomasz Zarycki** (The University of Warsaw)

*Polish Model of Citizenship – Historical Origins and Contemporary Particularities*

14.20

**Béla Mester** (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

*Political Theory without Sovereignty – a Hungarian Version of the Modernity*

14.40

*Discussion*

15.00

*Coffee Break*

4<sup>th</sup> section: Aspects of History of Philosophy

(Chair: Gábor Kovács)

15.20

**Gábor Gágó** (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

*Leibniz on Eastern Europe in the European Balance of Powers*

15.40

**Péter András Varga** (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

*József Somogyi (1898–1948) as Participant and Historian of Early Phenomenology*

*A Case Study in Central and Eastern European Appropriation of Cutting-Edge Western Philosophy*

16.00

**László Gergely Szücs** (Budapest City Archives)

*Ágnes Heller's Philosophy of History in the Mirror of its Habermasian Criticism*

16.20

*Discussion*

16.40

*Concluding Remarks* (Rafał Smoczyński, project leader on the Polish side)

## Summaries

GÁBOR GÁNGÓ (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

### *Leibniz on Eastern Europe in Europe's Balance of Power*

The paper gives account on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's political theory and praxis concerning Eastern Europe. Leibniz adopted the doctrine of balance of powers as a desirable model for European politics, developed by the German *Reichspublizistik* from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century as a possible remedy of the danger of French expansion on Imperial territories. Accordingly, his East-Central European politics was nothing else than Imperial politics along the Eastern borders of the Empire. This perspective remained unchanged from his treatise on the royal election in Poland in 1669 to the 1716 campaign of Prince Eugene of Savoy on the southern confines of Hungary.

The significance of Eastern Europe underwent a substantial change in Leibniz's time. Before the end of the Turkish wars, Leibniz considered Poland and Hungary as a buffer zone between the Empire, the Turkish Empire and Russia. He considered it, as his *Specimen* on the Polish royal election shows, as a borderline territory between civilised nations and Barbarians. After the victorious re-conquest, Hungary became part of the Habsburg Empire while Poland lost considerably its significance due to the emergence of Russia. With the Polish-Saxon personal union, a German state won influence over Poland while the Habsburgs hold firmly the re-conquered and pacified Hungary. In this new European balance system; Turkey and Russia became accepted diplomatic and military partners of European powers. Leibniz shaped and documented this historical process in its complexity.

ANDRZEJ GNIAZDOWSKI (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences)

### *The Polish Sonderweg to Modernity?*

One of the most important factors of the contemporary Polish constitutional crisis is considered to be the absence of the local liberal tradition. If the conservative historical narration assumes the pioneering nature of the Polish political institutions in European history of securing the freedom, the Polish liberals and the historians of ideas point out, that liberalism strictly speaking is an outcome of the strong bourgeoisie, the spirit of entrepreneurship and the capitalist development, that is all of that what was absent in Poland. The aim of the paper is to discuss the chances of overcoming the constitutional crisis in Poland by reaching the intellectual consensus with regard to the question of the possible, Polish liberal identity. The starting point of this discussion is the thesis of the historian of ideas Andrzej Walicki about the Polish noble republicanism as an "embryonic" form of the modern idea of political, and not just ethничal national identity. With critical reference to this thesis, the paper analyses the legitimacy of the idea of the so to say Polish *Sonderweg* to the liberal modernity that is implied by it.

FERENC HÖRCHER (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

### *Evelyn Waugh versus Churchill – the Representation of the British Support of Tito in The Sword of Honour (1961)*

Evelyn Waugh's novel trilogy, *The Sword of Honour*, written during the Cold War (1952–1961) was meant to provide a general account of British participation in World War II. Its writer, a widely read author of the age, was himself a traditionalist Conservative, who, however, was an ardent critic of Churchill. He had a rather pessimistic view of the British participation on the Balkan, in particular of the change of British support, in favour of Tito's partisans, in the final stage of the fight. The hero of the magnum opus is Guy Crouchback, the late son of a well-established Catholic family. He confronts absurd experiences in the army, comparable to those of the author. In the third book he arrives to Croatia, where he is in an almost open conflict with the political line led by the British army. His great effort is to defend a small group of Jewish refugees, who are apparently not important for any of the allied forces. The novel allows us to look into the depth of the war, and its fatal consequences for Central and Eastern Europe, from the perspective of a Catholic critic of British geopolitics in the region.

URSZULA IDZIAK (Jagiellonian University, Kraków)

**“Wittgenstein was Romantic about Russia”**

*Orientalism at War*

One is sometimes confronted with the peculiarity of the Western European Russophile attitudes these days. Wittgenstein's attention to Russian literature would not be of any major significance, however, this had developed into a fascination of Bolshevik Russia lasting at least 15 years. This fascination led to a trip to Russia in 1935 organized by Ivan Maiski, the red ambassador at the court of Saint James (using the title of his memoirs). Was Wittgenstein one of these “*bien pensant*” writers and journalists, liberal teachers and academics, radical aristocrats and businessmen who flocked to the Soviet Union [...] convinced that their own societies were stuck in the past?” (using John Gray's words) – probably and sadly, yes. But on the other hand, Wittgenstein had a wartime experience, and during the First World War, the enemy for him was Russia.

In the Eastern front trenches he discovered Tolstoy's religious writings, and later in his life time he advised to read Tolstoy's late novel, *Hadjı Murat*, always in the context of war. That is why I consider *Hadjı Murat* as a clue to this orientalism that haunted Wittgenstein. It gives a deeper and paradoxical reason for this „romantic” and naive attitude towards the Russian Empire no matter which mask was in use to hide its ruthless imperialism.

BORBÁLA JÁSZ (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

***Nationality and Internationality in the Architecture of Central and Eastern Europe***

Architecture, as a moral issue and as a public matter with its style and form language, has always been a significant platform for the transmission of values. These values have been diverse, but in governmental buildings the symbolisation of political position, power, and security was also an important consideration. Architecture always expresses people's desired or real belonging (or distancing). In architecture the national form language is important in preserving the identity of the community. At the same time, from the second half of the 19th century until nowadays, international and regional influences have alternated in Central and Eastern Europe. In this presentation I will first present some of the current issues of contemporary Polish and Hungarian architecture. Then I explore regional differences in construction attitudes. Finally, I mention the professional and public relevance of the relationship between contemporary architecture and the heritage of the past (e.g., the presence or absence of skylines).

GÁBOR KOVÁCS (Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

***Snobs and Peasants – Third-way-ism and the Idea of Alternative Modernisation in the Thought of László Németh in the Interwar Period***

László Németh (1901–1975), the writer and ideologue, was an emblematic figure of the inter-war Hungarian populist movement. In the 20s he established a one man journal named *Tanú* (Eyewitness) of which he was the author, editor and publisher in one person. This journal had a great influence on the contemporary Hungarian intellectuals. His culture criticism was inspired by Ortega y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher on the one hand and the German neoconservative Tat-circle, on the other hand. The conception of Németh László can be characterized as an amalgamation of an elite theory, a culture-centred programme of national regeneration and cultural criticism. Németh was a typical third road thinker; capitalism and bolshevism both were for him the outmoded relics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His option was an interesting utopia mixing earth-bound human existence with a high-cultured elitist way of life; it can be realized in small communities devoted to horticulture and high culture at the same time; the *homo oeconomicus* will be replaced by the *homo aesthetico-culturalis*. Németh, in his theory, connected the ideas of alternative modernization and alternative urbanization with a special historical philosophy embedded in a national characterology constructed on the basis of a selective reading of the history of Hungarian literature.

BÉLA MESTER (Institute of Philosophy, Research Centre for the Humanities)  
***Political Theory without Sovereignty – a Hungarian Version of the Modernity***

A historical speciality of the Hungarian political theory that the rise of the political theory in its strict meaning in the time of the late Renaissance and early modernity is the beginning of the lost, or, at least, reduced independence of the Hungarian Kingdom, as well, after the catastrophic defeat at the battle field of Mohács, against the Ottoman Empire in 1526. However, all the new trends of the European political thinking appeared in Hungary, in synchrony with their Western investigation, they were transformed in a way under conditions of the Hungarian political situation. The central and continuous element of this special Hungarian interpretation of the political thinking and the modern concept of the political community, or, *body politic* is an *affinity to the juridical fictions*. In my contribution I will offer several historical examples of this fictional strategy: (1) Hungarian early modern Protestant interpretation of the ‘higher powers’ in the Scriptures (Rom 13, 1). Its core is the separation from the person of the *ruler* from the *rule* as social institution. (2) Hungarian Protestant interpretation of the Christian concept of *adiaphora*. Its core is creating a secularised realm of politics in the doctrine of the liberty for making political alliance with the Turks, against Christian entities, with a good Christian consciousness, under conditions of a state of (national and political) emergency. (3) Hungarian Protestant interpretation of the Calvinist theory of resistance in the anti-Hapsburg civil wars on Scriptural background (Hungarian leaders as ‘judges of Israel’, or, as ‘Hungarian Jephthah’). (4) The usage of the mediaeval concept of ‘the Holy Crown of St. Stephan’ for the distinction of the *person* and *position* of the king. Its core is that the *body politic* is *incarnated* in the Holy Crown (the members of the political community are ‘the parts of the Holy Crown’). (5) An important consequence of this fictional thinking in political theory an affinity to making concepts about Hungary’s special situation and role between West and East. This topic, rooted in the mediaeval chronicles and their revivals in the Hungarian Reform Era (1825–1848) became a dominant theory before the WWI, and in the interwar period. Its latest invers example is the theory of Béla Hamvas about the ‘five genius’ of the Hungarians. Its core is that the five historical region of Hungary represent in them almost the whole of the spirit of East, South, West and North Europe.

RAFAŁ SMOCZYŃSKI (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences)  
***Good Moral Panics and Orientalism among Polish Migrants in the Brexit Context***

This paper analyzes Polish migrant discourses which emerged in post-Brexit Britain. The presentation will demonstrate how some self-appointed ‘entrepreneurial’ migrants openly rejected victim-centred narratives logic and employed shaming narratives towards their ‘vulnerable’ compatriots. The latter were portrayed as irresponsible individuals who failed to manage Brexit-related risks, therefore increasing their vulnerability, which may result in downward mobility and unemployment issues among other harms. Conversely, ‘prudent’ Polish migrants employed self-interpellating discourses which identified them as entrepreneurial subjects managing risks through improving their professional skills and assimilating with the local British community. The analysed antagonistic narratives within the Polish community itself, besides having been informed by neoliberal imageries of an entrepreneurial ideal citizen who avoids harm (related to employment insecurities), have also drawn on a local Polish citizenship interpretative framework of reality internalised during the socialisation period in Poland and ‘exported’ with migrants to Britain. Both imageries coexisted and reinforced each other in their interpellation capabilities. The latter interpretative framework of social reality underpinned by a deep-seated post-feudal lord/boor binary differentiating ‘civilised’ individuals (educated and community-minded responsible members of an intelligentsia) from ‘non-civilised’ individuals (poorly educated and not taking part in civil life) has been shaping the modern Polish citizenship model since the late 19th century onwards.

LÁSZLÓ GERGELY SZÜCS (Budapest City Archives)

### **Ágnes Heller's Philosophy of History in the Mirror of its Habermasian Criticism**

The Hungarian philosopher Ágnes Heller was one of the most influential disciples of György Lukács. Jürgen Habermas wrote a long necrology about her in the columns of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 2019. The eulogy *honours the memory* of the Hungarian Philosopher. At the same time, it draws a picture about the critical theorist of the Eastern Bloc in the 60s-70s. Habermas states in his works that since the second world war very important changes have occurred in German and western universities and in the philosophical thinking as well. On the one hand, German social thinkers have become sceptical against the possibility of a unified historical progress. On the other hand, the approaches of pragmatism and the communication-centred philosophy have become an important part of the western thinking increasingly. After these changes, the belief in the possibility of a unified and unquestioned philosophical or scientific knowledge has been seriously eroded. From this very perspective it seems to be exciting that Heller's and her fellows' do not share the "belief that scientific knowledge is always fallible". I do not believe, however, that Habermas would have labelled the leading critical thinkers of the "Eastern Bloc" simply as "overdue" or "old-fashioned". He argues that the "unbroken philosophical self-confidence" rooted in the philosophical socialization based on the classical (German) tradition helped them survive as sovereign intellectuals in confrontation with the oppressive power of the existing socialism. In my presentation I give an outline of Ágnes Heller's lecture given in Korčula in 1965. Through the lens of this analysis I propose a criticism against Habermas' view outlined in the introduction. I argue that beside the narrative of the German classical philosophy of history, there appeared a need for the creation of a multipolar critical theory in the Eastern Bloc as well.

PÉTER ANDRÁS VARGA (Institute of Philosophy, Research Centre for the Humanities)

***József Somogyi (1898-1948) as Participant and Historian of Early Phenomenology***

*A Case Study in Central and Eastern European Appropriation of Cutting-Edge Western Philosophy*

“Historical and critical analysis of phenomenology. The plan of the book, accompanied by an elaborated sample chapter, is to be sent to the office of the general secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences by December 31, 1922. The best entrant will be commissioned to write the book. Only a fully finished work of independent merit will be eligible for the prize.” What renders this prize call worth our scholarly attention today is not the promised renumeration of 2 000 inflation-struck Hungarian korona, but rather the sheer fact that a scientific body in the early 1920s announced a prize competition on phenomenology, let alone the *history* of phenomenology.

My presentation is dedicated to the case study of the less known Hungarian philosopher József Somogyi (1898-1948) who won the above prize essay competition in 1923 and had his book *A fenomenológia történeti és kritikai vizsgálata (Historical and Critical Analysis of Phenomenology)* published in Budapest three years later. In order to properly assess the significance of Somogyi’s attempt at historically appropriating the cutting-edge phenomenological philosophy in the 1920s – of which he had first-hand knowledge not least due to his studies at Edmund Husserl in Freiburg in 1924 – I also reconstruct the contemporaneous German external public perception of the Phenomenological Movement (as contrasted to our modern present-centred hagiographic history).

Somogyi obtained his university teaching qualification (*habilitation*) in the same year his book was published. Yet, due to a combination of unfortunate circumstances, he failed to develop a significant scholarly career on his own: In 1928-1929, he was defeated against Baron Béla von Brandenstein (1901-1989) who ranked before Somogyi in the final faculty proposal for the so-called third (practical) chair of philosophy at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Budapest and secured the appointment in July 1929. In 1937, Brandenstein proposed bestowing Somogyi a titular professorship at the university (maybe as a consolation prize); and, when Brandenstein was forced to exile Hungary due to his perceived involvement in the *ancient régime*, Somogyi became the deputy for his vacated chair. In late 1947, the competition for filling Brandenstein’s abandoned chair heated up, while the influential réémigré Marxist philosopher Georg Lukács (1885-1971) campaigned fervently in favour of the orthodox Marxist Béla Fogarasi, the future powerful figure of official Hungarian philosophy (1891-1959), who was then, however, ranked only after Somogyi. Then, shortly after 9am on January 24, 1948, Somogyi was fatally hit by the tram in the suburb of Szeged while on his way to the market to buy milk “in order to feed his large family.” Thus, *nolens volens*, Somogyi’s career exemplified the – more often than not unrealized counterfactual – perspectives of being a humanities scholar in Eastern Europe during the tormented twentieth century.

TOMASZ ZARYCKI (The University of Warsaw)

***Polish Model of Citizenship***

*Historical origins and contemporary particularities*

Citizenship is usually seen as a product of modern nation-states, or of other political entities which possess institutional infrastructures and political systems capable of producing a coherent framework that defines the relationship between that system and its members. In this presentation, I show that an early system of modern citizenship was created in the absence of a formal state, notably by the cultural elite of a stateless nation. The Polish case illustrates that elite may become a dominant class in the given society only later, and institutionalizes that early citizenship system within the framework of a newly founded state. As a result of the legacy of the emergence of citizenship predating the restoration of statehood, the contemporary Polish citizenship model is influenced by a strong and largely overlooked cultural component that emerged at the turn of the 19th century. Despite the dramatic political and economic changes in the decades which have passed since its emergence, this cultural frame, which was institutionalized during the interwar period, still defines the key features of the Polish citizenship model.