**The Concept of Tradition in post-WW2 German Christian and Liberal Conservatism**

***Call for Papers***

**Date**: 5-6th October, 2023.

**Venue**: University of Public Sevice, Budapest

**Organiser**: Ferenc Hörcher (representing the University of Public Service in cooperation with the Institute of Philosophy, both in Budapest)

This **conference aims** to reconstruct a network of thinkers in post-WW2 Germany, who shared some of their basic assumptions concerning philosophy and politics. They belonged to two different generations:

1. generation

**Hans-Georg Gadamer** (1900-2002),

**Joachim Ritter** (1903-1974), and

**Joseph Pieper** (1904-1997)

2. generation

**Joseph Ratzinger**  (1927-2022)

**Robert Spaemann** (1927-2018),

**Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde** (1930-2019)

There were three decades between them, so that the younger generation only awakened after the war. All of them grew up in close proximity to Christianity, and all of them felt fascinated by philosophy. In this they were still partly under the spell of the giants of the earlier generation, namely that of Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. Except for Böckenförde, none of them got directly engaged in secular politics, yet all of them actively participated in the intellectual regeneration of Germany after the Second World War. They were all dedicated to the idea of either a liberal-conservative or a Christian-conservative political regime, which found its constitutional format in the newly framed *Grundgesetz*.

The conference takes a single concept in its focus: tradition. The urgency of the concept of tradition lies in the fact that post-WW2 Germany needed to start over many things in its socio-cultural realm. Because culture is upstream from politics, the main aim of the conference is to reflevt upon the ways these people contributed to find firm grounds on which to re-establish the intellectual-spiritual pillars of the new society. One of their main achievements was the redefinition of tradition. In spite of their differences, the six thinkers all participated in saving what merited to be saved from the heritage of the past, while accommodating it to the new requirements of the age.

It is also important to note that members of this group had a rather specific understanding of the German past: they did not want to deny their inheritance, but were keen to transform the political climate. As mentioned, the two major trends among our authors was either liberal or Christian conservatism. In those days these trends of political thought could coexist side-by-side peacefully. Importantly, the international community supported these values, as the best safeguards that a radical right- or left-wing alternative direction would not take hold of political life in post-WW2 Germany. Arguably, this theme is still pertinent today, as social integration is challenged from a number of directions, and - as the Böckenförde-paradox warns us - there is a renewed need to find common values and widely shared practices that provide public support and cohesion.

Participants of our conference will include philosophers, theologians and lawyers. Their papers will in important ways reconsider post-WW2 German intellectual life.

**Topics** to address in a paper can include the following or similar ones:

 1. The problem of continuity and discontinuity in the processes of tradition

 2. Is there a new Catholic hermeneutics of tradition after Vatican II?

 3. Is there a common European tradition?

 4. Philosophy as a custodian of tradition

 5. Tradition and the traditions (Yves Congar)

 6. A changeless tradition amid political changes?

**Participants** will include members of a spontaneous research group of Hungarian scholars, including philosophers, a lawyer and a theologian. (Balázs Arató, Levente Balogh, Tibor Görföl, Ferenc Hörcher, Csaba Olay, Péter András Varga)

**Prof. Richard Bourke** will give a **keynote address**. He is professor of the history of political thought at Cambridge University.

If you intend to participate, please send a title, abstract, your name and affiliation to the following address: [ripg@uni-nke.hu](mailto:ripg@uni-nke.hu) by the deadline of 30. June.

Prof. Ferenc Hörcher

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Institute of Philosophy