

Conference

Religion, Violence, Ideology



Ljubljana, October 15th 2015

Faculty of Theology
University of Ljubljana

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Mednarodna konferenca *Religija, nasilje, ideologija* je del aktivnosti v okviru temeljnega raziskovalnega projekta J6 – 6851 *Religija kot dejavnik etičnosti in medkulturnega dialoga*, ki ga financira Javna agencija za raziskovalno dejavnost RS.

PROGRAM

9:00 – Opening words:

Janez Juhant, Wolfgang Palaver, Dietmar Regensburger, Bojan Žalec

Panel 1 (*chair: Vojko Strahovnik*)

9:15-9:35 Janez Juhant: From religious observance to ideological pressure and back to the sound policy of cooperation

9:35-9:55 Bojan Žalec: Extreme Islamism from the point of view of Totalitarianism and Fundamentalism

9:55-10:15 Nadja Furlan Štante: “Power over” – Hierarchical domination: stem cells of violence

Discussion

Break

Panel 2 (*chair: Bojan Žalec*)

11:00-11:20 Branko Klun: Metaphysics, Violence, and Postmodern Democracy

11:20-11:40 Sandra Lehmann: Overcoming the Will-to-Power: On John Milbank’s Discussion of Ontological Violence

11:40-12:00 Mario Wintersteiger: Mythology's Beneficial Poison. Reflections on Georges Bataille's Anthropology of Myth and Violence

Discussion

Lunch break

Panel 3 (*chair: Nadja Furlan Štante*)

13:30-13:50 Rok Svetlič: *Syllabus Errorum* and Communist Hypothesis

13:50-14:10 Vojko Strahovnik: Religious Commitment, Divine Command, Rationality and Moral Dialogue: Some Reflections on Objectivity of Morality

Discussion

Break

Panel 4 (*chair: Dietmar Regensburger*)

14:45-15:05 Laszlo Balogh: Gott im Grundgesetz – Eine politische Theologiesierung des Grundgesetzes?

15:05-15:25 Josef Giefing: Die idealistische Position als Basis der politischen Eschatologie bei Otto Bauer

Discussion

15:45-17:15 Panel discussion: Religionspolitologisches Forum

ABSTRACTS

László Levente Balogh

University of Debrecen, Hungary

Gott im Grundgesetz – Eine politische Theologiesierung des Grundgesetzes?

Die Präambel des neuen ungarischen Grundgesetzes spricht eine Sprache der politischen Theologie, die auf eine im Namen der Nation stehende politische Religiosität verweist. Dies bildet ein Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Politik und Religion, das aber auch ein Zeichen des wiederverstärkten Nationalismus in Ungarn ist. Ich versuche in meinem Vortrag diese Entwicklung durch den Text und die Modalitäten der Verfassungsgebung zu schildern.

Nadja Furlan Štante

University of Primorska, Slovenia

“Power over”, Hierarchical domination: stem cells of violence

Paper understands the hierarchical supremacy and the battle for the (pre) power in terms of “power over” and domination between the genders as the key or stem cell of gender-based violence. Negative gender stereotypes and prejudices are understood as promoters and preservers of hierarchical supremacy and of the battle for the (pre) power between the genders. Using the methodology of hermeneutic key of feminist theology attempts to warn of the danger and harmfulness of negative gender stereotypes and prejudices and the link between them and gender-based violence, including physical (sexual violence). With the help of quick and short insight into the headlines which are understood as flashy taboos of contemporary Slovenian society, paper briefly analyses the situation in Slovenian socio-religious sphere. At the end, the ideal of logic of love against the logic of domination is presented.

Key words: violence, religion, gender, hierarchical supremacy, sexual violence.

Josef Giefing

University of Vienna, Austria

Die idealistische Position als Basis der politischen Eschatologie bei Otto Bauer

Der Vortrag möchte folgende Hypothese zur Diskussion stellen: Vorausgesetzt es gibt in der philosophischen Tradition des deutschen Idealismus zwei verschieden

idealistische Standpunkte, die sich nicht gegenseitig aufheben lassen, und weiter vorausgesetzt, dass dieses beiden Standpunkte sich in der politischen Eschatologie des "kleinen" Otto Bauer wiederfinden lassen, dann lassen sich über die politische Eschatologie des "kleinen" Otto Bauer zwei voneinander unterschiedene ethische Universalansätze verstehen, die in der Philosophie eine gewisse Aktualität beanspruchen können.

Der Vortrag wird also zunächst versuchen zwei verschiedene Interpretationen des "deutschen Idealismus" im Ausgang von Kant und in Absetzung zu Fichte und Hegel zu präsentieren.

In einem nächsten Schritt wird er versuchen diese Modelle bei Otto Bauer zu finden und sie dort als zwei Möglichkeiten eschatologischer Bewegungen zu identifizieren.

In einem dritten Schritt soll gezeigt werden, dass diese Bewegungen zwei ethische Positionen der Nachkriegszeit implizieren, und zwar jene von D. Davidson und von E. Lévinas.

Über diese beiden Positionen ließe sich in Form eines Ausblickes das in der Nachkriegszeit vorherrschende philosophische Paradigma zumindest in ethischer Hinsicht spiegeln, nämlich die Differenz von "kontinentaler" und "analytischer" Philosophie.

Janez Juhant

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

From religious observance to ideological pressure and back to the sound policy of cooperation

The political life in the countries of the Middle Europe was very much influenced by the religious observance. The fulfilment of religious duties was the constitutive part of the functioning of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, which was a Catholic one. The political absolutism had a steady counterpoint: a religious authoritative control as there were in the Middle Ages two hierarchies: worldly and celestial. The liberal tension questioned this firmly established order. According to the new liberal tendencies the politics should be freed from all religious and Church's influence. But the world political development went in the direction of concentrating the whole political power in political entities and persons, which culminated in totalitarian systems. They grew out all classic human, cultural and ethical grounds; the un-values (laying, stealing, keeling) were the ground of their political performance. This is the case also in the so called Islamic totalitarian tendencies of the Islamic State and other quasi-political forms of modern terrorism. The grounds of their power are not religious but quasi-political, derived from modern totalitarian residues. How can religions contribute to a sound political development and who are the bearers of this political order? The proper question is not whether to mention or not to mention God in the

constitution of EU but rather who is ready to implement Christian or other religious values in the daily political praxis. What about the Eucharistic community?

Key words: religion, politics, liberalism, totalitarianism, violence, religious freedom, Eucharistic community.

Branko Klun

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Metaphysics, Violence, and Postmodern Democracy

Following in the footsteps of Heidegger, both Derrida's deconstruction and Vattimo's weak thought identify metaphysics with violence and consider it to be one of the main threats to democratic society. However, is this widespread thesis about the inner connection between metaphysics and violence tenable? Must a democratic society deconstruct or weaken every strong claim to truth in order to make the peaceful coexistence of its members a possibility? This paper seeks to challenge the established interpretation of metaphysics as violent, and to propose an alternative understanding of metaphysics within the broader horizon of human existence. It also intends to question Vattimo's notion of a postmodern hermeneutic democracy, one in which his weak thought brings about a strong synthesis between Christianity and hermeneutic communism.

Key words: metaphysics, violence, postmodern democracy, Christianity, weak thought.

Sandra Lehmann

Catholic Private University Linz, Austria

Overcoming the Will-to-Power: On John Milbank's Discussion of Ontological Violence

The intention to establish a counter-perspective to the Nietzscheanism prevailing in the major developments in postmodern philosophy forms is one of the prime concerns of John Milbank's radical orthodox theological project. In fact, the overcoming of a theoretical alignment for which, ultimately, the purely differential, empty factuality of power is the main character of being is Milbank's key to open the road out of neo-liberal economic totalitarianism and towards a society that is based upon solidarity with its most vulnerable members.

In the first part of my lecture, I will set out what seem to me the most important ontological aspects of Milbank's project, namely, first, the primacy of an analogical concept of being over an univocal one; second, the re-evaluation of the relation of faith and reason in order to overcome the ultimately nihilist character of pure reason; third, a concept of difference that is organized by the participation of all beings in the transcendent Good and, thus, challenges the postmodern abysmal concepts of difference.

In the second part of my lecture, I will add my own concept of “metaphysical movement” to Milbank’s discourse. One may regard this as a methodological attempt at describing the specific dynamics of philosophical thought, its way to break with the violence of both finitude and contingency in order to answer what in time is beyond time. In close proximity to Milbank’s intentions, I hold that a truly free and just society is only possible in being in accordance with this dynamics.

Key words: Milbank, orthodox theology, ontology, primacy of analogical concept of being over an univocal one, faith and reason, postmodern concepts of difference.

Vojko Strahovnik

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Religious Commitment, Divine Command, Rationality and Moral Dialogue: Some Reflections on Objectivity of Morality

The paper deals with the theme of the link between religion and ethics, focusing specifically on divine command theory of moral obligation. In the first part it defines a moderate divine command theory and investigates its position within the field of moral theory. It rejects some traditional objections to it and points to its compatibility with other theoretical and normative views. It also situates it within the debate on religious commitment and rationality. In the second part these more general concerns are related to issues regarding objectivity of morality, intercultural dialogue, disagreement, fundamentalism, foundations of moral dialogue, the role of religion in the public sphere and the obstacles and tensions, which appear in the mentioned domains.

Key words: religious commitment, divine command, rationality, fundamentalism, tolerance, dialogue.

Rok Svetlič

University of Primorska, Slovenia

***Syllabus Errorum* and Communist Hypothesis**

In its final paragraphs Kant’s Rechtslehre stresses out the duty of all duties: it must be no war! If the most fundamental principles of UNO should be formulated in one sentence, this imperative could be quoted. The commitment to peace is present on all levels of this organization, its detailed significance for the life of an individual, however, is explicated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). In the preamble the foundation of this document on the experience of the Second World War is explicitly confirmed. Despite of numerous emancipatory successes, radical political philosophy still remains reserved to the concept of human rights. A. Badiou describes it by pejorative expressions, regarding them as

the culture of death. His work *Ethics* is kind of modern version of *Syllabus Errorum*, dedicated to democracy and human rights.

Although it may appear that Badiou follows Marxian criticism on human rights, explicated in the text *On Jewish Question*, there is a significant difference. It is not about the inappropriate account on human emancipation, Badiou attacks in the first place the rejection of violence, the commitment to pacifism. Without violence the communist hypothesis, in his eyes, is dead. It will be demonstrated that radical political philosophy is tangled into the same mistake as Catholicism before the second Vatican Council was. Its shift is the most illustrative in a different attitude toward human rights. The thesis will be defended that the Marxian political philosophy can get relevant in democratic cultural environments only if it carries out its “Second Vatican Council”.

Key words: human rights; Marx; Badiou, violence; communist hypothesis; pacifism; radical political philosophy.

Mario Wintersteiger

University of Salzburg, Austria

Mythology's Beneficial Poison. Reflections on Georges Bataille's Anthropology of Myth and Violence

The new nationalisms and fundamentalisms of our postmodern times confront us with a recurrence of myth and violence. When being faced with these phenomena, mainstream political philosophy is still surprisingly helpless – mainly due to the influence of ‘politically correct’ taboos and a lack of anthropological knowledge. Willing to really face unpleasant sides of what one might call human nature, our reflections focus on the writings of the French philosopher and mythologist Georges Bataille. His works on the sacred, on emotions, myths and violence confront us with human abysses, but his insights also provide some drops of beneficial poison for political philosophy: First, his analysis of the psychology behind fascism's appeal to the masses uncovers the primary role of people's needs for the sublime and the mythical; this leads to an interpretation of totalitarian ideology as a catastrophic return of the tabooed, i.e. as a fatal movement that filled the vacuum that was overlooked by many moderns. Second, his meditations on a certain fascination with violence seem to imply that it cannot be altogether abolished and therefore has to be deflected rationally if one wants to avoid its uncontrolled outbreak. From both of Bataille's theses one has to come to the conclusion that it is dangerous to misjudge the power of the myth. Since it cannot be wholly banned, we have to think about other ways to protect us from its most toxic and violent forms. Following Bataille's arguments and drawing from Michel Maffesoli's sociology of the Dionysian, our reflections indicate that small, controlled doses of mythology can have the effect of a beneficial poison that immunises people against the more dangerous myths.

Keywords: anthropology, political philosophy, Georges Bataille, mythology, violence.

Bojan Žalec

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Extreme Islamism from the point of view of Totalitarianism and Fundamentalism

The structure of the paper is the following: in the first part the author explains why the research of extreme Islamism from the aspect of totalitarianism is important. Then he explains the main terms and the main characteristics of the phenomena that these terms denote: radical Islamism, totalitarianism and fundamentalism. Under the first term he places certain leaders, theorists and their doctrines respectively (for instance Qutb, Wahhab, Zawahiri, Faraj, bin Laden), and certain movements, groups or organizations (like Al Qaeda, ISIS etc.). In the third part it is explained in which sense the mentioned ideologies and groups can be called totalitarian and fundamentalist, and what form of totalitarianism they exemplify. In the concluding part the author infers some contentions and ideas respectively about the probable future development and actions of the mentioned radical Islamist groups, and he points to the proper attitude we should cultivate towards them.

Key words: Extreme Islamism, totalitarianism, fundamentalism, offensive jihad, religious ideology and terror, enmity and adherence to the sources of Islam.

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Program committee/Programski odbor

Professor Janez Juhant; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology
Assoc. Professor Bojan Žalec; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology
Ass. Professor Dietmar Regensburger, Universitaet Innsbruck, Institut für
Systematische Theologie

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Assoc. Professor Bojan Žalec; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology
Assist. Professor Vojko Strahovnik; University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Theology

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