

Jaci Eisenberg and Davide Rodogno, eds. *Ideas and Identities: A Festschrift for Andre Liebich*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2014. 269 pp. Illustration. Notes on Contributors. Tabula Gratulatoria. Paper.

Andre Liebich began his academic career in Canada. He was a member of the Canadian Association of Slavists, and some of us knew him at that time as a fellow Sovietologist. In 1989, however, he moved to Geneva, Switzerland, where he became Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International Development Studies. On his retirement in 2013, a group of his doctoral students held a colloquium in his honour, the result of which constitutes the volume under review.

The thirteen contributions to this *Festschrift* (as indicated by its title) concentrate on the two major themes of Andre Liebich's scholarship. They deal with an extraordinarily wide range of subjects spanning the history of the last one hundred years. This is such a diverse collection that, were it not for the theme "Ideas and Identities," the volume would not otherwise be cohesive.

Like most of the other contributors, Dominic Eggel is associated with the Graduate Institute. His opening piece reviews the history of the history of ideas, which he frankly characterizes as being "in a state of disarray" (26). This article would be a useful read for graduate students just starting out and contemplating work in this area, as it warns of the numerous pitfalls while offering some hope of revival.

Sabina Donati's article focuses on an arcane bit of history—the Italian (sic) concession in Tientsin, China, in 1902-22. She explains how China's foreign residents possessed rights under the European laws and conventions of the time, while the huge Chinese majority had none. In 1918, Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war of Italian extraction were introduced into this bizarre colonial situation; they, understandably, had little feeling for Italy, as its government at that point regarded them as irridentists. Many of them did not want to be redeemed. Indeed, this entire context was, at the beginning of the last century, a very curious case, of contorted citizenship, identity, and rights issues.

The difficult history of international refugee policy is presented by Francesca Piana. Her analysis emphasizes how the policy legacy of the League of Nations provided the underpinnings for the development of a similar policy by the United Nations (UN). If anything, the refugee problem has become more intractable today than it was in those earlier times.

Özcan Yilmaz's article somewhat dashed this reviewer's hopes for useful background information about the current Kurdish dilemma. Yilmaz explains how the Kurdish National Movement in Turkey conformed to Miroslav Hroch's model of national revival. The story leaves off, however, at

“the beginning of the armed struggle by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) in 1984” (120); this is the first, and only, mention of this important organization. Thus this account does little to help explain the lead-up to current events in Syria and Iraq, as Yilmaz, admittedly, aimed only to study the formation of the Kurdish movement, not its present-day predicament.

Mario Apostolov gets it altogether wrong by attempting to address and answer two different questions in the same essay: first, whether the changes expected with the collapse of communism and the USSR materialized; and second, who was responsible for those changes. The result is an unfocused piece of writing that is more commentary than research.

The volume’s only quantitative study is offered by Anna Mkhoyan, who examines the voting patterns of former Soviet states in the UN General Assembly (UNGA). She takes a look at four sessions, between 1997 and 2013, when 228 resolutions were passed. Her findings are that the votes of former Soviet and Eastern European communist states were split, with one group supporting Russia and the other—the EU and USA. Some evolution over time is noted. The results, like the UNGA debates, are not very surprising. One problematic feature of the author’s methodology is that she uses France as a stand-in for the EU, supposedly in contrast to Russia, although France has a history of pro-Russian foreign policy.

A useful source of background information on the current situation in Ukraine is Oksana Myslovska’s examination of the so-called myths and realities associated with ethnicity, language, and identity. Based, in part, on a comprehensive survey conducted in 2013, she contrasts the evolved nature of Ukrainian society with the constrictive notions of nation, language, and nationality still being applied by Ukraine’s government. What is needed, she says, is for the “myths about group cohesiveness and group rights” (192), or what we might call the prevailing nation-building strategies, to be dismantled. This will be a difficult and complicated process. “In the meantime, Ukraine will have to live with ambiguity and constant conflict” (192).

Jasna Dragović-Soso relates how myths about Serbian victimhood delayed the Serbian parliament’s half-hearted apology for the massacre at Srebrenica until March 2010, fifteen years after the tragedy. While the European Union’s influence is generally thought to have been decisive, in actual fact its impact was limited. The resulting declaration was a compromise shaped more by domestic politics than by external actors.

A common sentiment in the Balkans, writes Lana Srzic, is that neither the EU nor EU membership is akin to achieving nirvana. Srzic also finds that the discourse of “Europeanization,” with its emphasis on democratization at the expense of economics, has produced more scepticism in Croatia and

Serbia, as well as a resurgence of populism and nationalism, especially since 2008.

An outlier in this Eurocentric collection is the piece by Anne-Sophie Bentz on Indian scholarship pertaining to nations and nationalism. Its rather convoluted argument centres on the way that three prominent living scholars on the subcontinent have been grappling with the conundrum of whether to accept or reject: Western thought generally; and, specifically, theories of nationalism as they might apply to the Indian situation. They find themselves in the paradoxical situation of using “Marxism and French Theory” (250) to critique Western theories, as they try to come up with “new ways of thinking about nation and nationalism” (250). The results of this article are inconclusive.

Rounding out the volume is a succinct concluding article by Andre Liebich himself on the unhappy relationship between history and political science. As he points out, the divergence between these two disciplines was not helped by the cataclysmic collapse of communism. Not only did political scientists not anticipate this event, but the discipline itself has failed to undergo reform in response to it. “Whereas history has emphasized narrative, single events, contingency, and multicausality, political science has favoured theory-based, monocausal and parsimonious explanations” (259-60). Liebich concludes with the thought that political science could become relevant if it would recognize the limitations of theoretical constructions and account for human motivations, change, context, and contingency. In his view, historians also shoulder some responsibility for this painful divorce of the two disciplines. His thoughtful essay and the volume itself—a worthy tribute to this distinguished academic—could well be recommended reading for graduate courses.

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