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Transnational Reconstructions of Liberalism in Europe after 1945. Copenhagen: Niklas Olsen, CEMES, Centre for Modern European Studies, Copenhagen University; Hagen Schulz-Forberg, Aarhus University, 19.10.2012-20.10.2012.

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Transnational Reconstructions of Liberalism in Europe after 1945

As stated in the conference description the history of neoliberalism as a political and economic ideology in Europe after 1945 was explored. The conference analysed the processes in which liberalism was reconstructed in Europe in the postwar decades and discussed the relations between the liberal networks, discourses and rationalities that were established back then and liberalism today. The focus of investigation was primarily on Britain, Germany and France, but other countries from Northern and South-Eastern Europe, such as Denmark and Hungary, were also considered. The conference was opened by HAGEN SCHULZ-FORBERG (Aarhus) and NIKLAS OLSEN (Copenhagen), who shortly summarised aims and objectives of the conference.

In his keynote JAN-WERNER MÜLLER (Princeton) first engaged with the question why it was so difficult to avow the term "liberal" in post-war Western Europe; second he dealt with the relation between liberal languages and institutions and third he looked into the concept of Cold War liberalism and where the boundaries are placed between this kind of liberalism and neoliberalism. The difficulty with liberal languages after WWII was the relativism they displayed relating to the ideological chaos present. Müller explained that Cold War liberalism, whose heyday was in the 1950s, is based on multi-value pluralism and is characterised by its militant non-militancy in fighting the ideological battle in the Cold War. This basically refers to what Müller in another paper has called negative liberalism, "a variety of what Judith Shklar called 'liberalism of fear' - which put the imperative to avoid cruelty and atrocity first". Taking value pluralism as their point of departure, Cold War liberals believed that the "prudential management of value conflicts [...] was best entrusted to cultivated bureaucratic elites". Jan-Werner Müller, Fear and Freedom. On 'Cold War Liberalism'. available at: http://www.princeton.edu/jmueller/ColdWarLiberalism-JWMueller-2006.pdf [accessed 3 November 2012] The possible difference between Cold War liberalism and neoliberalism according to Müller lies in their approach to politics. While Cold War liberalism displays a political doctrine, neoliberalism is in one sense a-political since it offers a one and for all fixed solution ensuring fully protected liberty. For Cold War liberals liberty is not a fixed concept, it is endangered but expanding. Isaiah Berlin, one representative of Cold War liberalism Müller leaned on in his talk, had mentioned an uneasy equilibrium that is constantly threatened. Referring to Colin Crouch's recent *The Strange Non-death of Neoliberalism* Coling Crouch, The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism, Cambridge 2011. , Müller gave three possible explanations for this: an idealistic one, a materialistic one and a systemic one. In the discussion following Müller's talk the meaningfulness of a typology that differentiates between neoliberalism and social liberalism was criticised. Also, the handling of democracy was discussed - while Cold War liberals show an instrumental relationship to democracy, neoliberals endorsed democracy differently.

DIETER PLEHWE (Berlin) offered a variety of visual images portraying neoliberal networks in Western Europe after 1945. He also commented on the role of certain Americans, repercussions of neoliberal networks in America and mentioned specific Japanese actors within the neoliberal field. Plehwe stated that neoliberal networks can be perceived as a comprehensive transnational discourse community and thus a transnational discourse coalition approach is valid. At the centre of his attention stood the Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS), a transnational think tank founded in Switzerland in 1947 under the leadership of Friedrich von Hayek, which marked the post-war institutionalization of the neoliberal network. In 1991 the MPS had 500 members (starting with 39), some of them were Latin American, two of these were

to become presidents. The involvement of US-Americans started rather late and they were influenced by their readings of European authors. Plehwe discussed the popularity of Friedrich August von Hayek, born in Austria-Hungary in 1899 and member of the so-called Austrian School, and Milton Friedman, a US American economist born in 1912, in the US. These two were prominent representatives of neoliberalism and both received the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, but as Plehwe explained it was the intensive coverage of journalists that made sure to popularize them. Within the MPS the role of right-wing immigrants from Germany and Austria is not to be underestimated; they revived American conservatism, which spilled over to American neoliberalism. In his final remarks, Plehwe analysed that many people, such as certain Japanese actors, are not known of and they remain in the shadow of prominent representatives of neoliberal circles such as Hayek or Ludwig van Mises. Other aspects that have so far not received enough attention are for example feminism and neoliberalism. Following Plehwe's presentation, some interesting aspects were discussed such as the distorted claim of (an all-time) American hegemony within neoliberal networks. FERENC LACZÓ pointed out that these networks were for a long time placed in the first world limiting their transnational scope. Another point of discussion was the relation between neoliberalism and democracy, which makes it possible to distinguish the liberalism left or right question. Some perceive democracy as a danger of a majority of the wrong side, a 'dictatorship of the masses', so to say. Plehwe, who engages with and tries to collect a variety of think tanks, mentioned a few other examples apart from the MPS such as the Atlas Economic Research Network, the Stockholm Network and the New Direction Foundation Network.

Hagen Schulz-Forberg gave a talk about the effort at rejuvenating liberalism in the 1930s. In his research he follows a two-fold approach, firstly he views economic thought as a genre and thus uses a conceptual genre approach; secondly he is interested in the transnational connections of the various relevant actors and institutions and thus maintains a network based approach. Viewing liberalism as a concept Schulz-Forberg investigates its meaning. In his talk he pointed to the self-critique of liberalism in the 1920s and 1930s which encompassed two main points, bashing socialist planning and bolshevism on the one hand and a critique against their own past, mainly a detachment from society and from the notion of the social, on the other. The latter critique aimed at rejuvenating liberal thinking. When looking at economic thought, Schulz-Forberg is interested in its main objective namely a proposal of how a stable economy and a successful society look like and how this proposal is reasoned and argued for. He also pointed to a strong element of temporalisation present in economic thought. The transnational connections within the liberal network are visible when for example looking at the Walter Lippmann Colloquium that was held in August 1938 in Paris. Schulz-Forberg perceived the participants as normative actors and pointed out the multi-lingual character of the colloquium. Long discourses were held dealing with the origins and meanings of the word liberalism. Above all it was discussed how to call the rejuvenated liberalism and the term neoliberalism was embraced, partly because it served the purpose of not signifying whether or not those using the term are standing left or right politically. The goal at *Rejuvenating Liberalism*, according to Schulz-Forberg included the acknowledgement that neoliberalism signified similar semantics in more than one language. Neoliberalism has never been a neatly defined concept, maybe exactly because of its transnational and multi-lingual genesis, he contended. After the Second World War and through the 1960s to the 1980s the concept's meanings became more monetarist and market-radical, however. Schulz-Forberg furthermore engaged with Alexander Rüstow's concept of *Neuliberalismus* and the role of the state in neoliberal thought. In the following discussion the role and influence of Carl Schmitt on Hayek and Alfred Müller-Armack was debated. Furthermore Dieter Plehwe mentioned his high expectations regarding the output of a research focusing on the linguistic aspect in the field of neoliberalism. Antonio Masala completed the engagement with the origins of the term (neo) liberalism by giving an overview of the problem of its definition going back to John Locke.

Niklas Olsen engaged with Christian Gandil and Scandinavian contributions to European Neoliberalism from the mid 1940s to 1970 and addressed aspects such as Christian Gandil's ways to the neoliberal movement and the constructing and running of neoliberal think tanks. In his paper *A Second Hand Dealer in Ideas* compiled for the conference, Olsen elaborates on the content of Gandil's economic thinking and evaluates it, In terms of economic thought, Gandil embraced a positive attitude towards the free market and a negative view on the state. Similar to his patterns of thought in the 1930s, the Hayekian liberalism he embraced after 1945 was embedded in a dichotomist, linear and irreversible notion of historical development as an eternal struggle between opposed forces leading to decay and destruction or a perfect world. While criticising socialism and

collectivism for being steeped in utopian ideas of history and politics, Gandil and his fellow liberals worked with a highly philosophical and utopian understanding of history themselves, Olsen explained. The presentation was followed by a lively debate.

In his talk FABIO MASINI (Rome) covered Luigi Einaudi and Italian Liberalism from 1940 to 1960. He placed the question of Einaudi's contribution at the beginning of his speech and identified three main steps. The first time period dates back to 1897 until the end of WWI; it was during this time that the young Einaudi wrote articles on federalism, one of them published in *La Stampa* in which Einaudi commented on the situation in Cyprus where a majority vote was adopted rather than an unanimity vote. He advocated for a federal constitutional model, in which democratic choices should be made on a supranational level. The 1920s and 1930s present the second time period in Einaudi's life. It was then that he became friends with Ludwig van Mises and Hayek, who advocated for a different form of federalism; an instrumental federalism in which economics should be taken out of politics and rather dealt with in a supranational structure. Einaudi was fascinated by this idea. Another influence on Einaudi in 1937 on the question of federalism was Lionel Robbins who critiqued classical liberalism of being anarchic and advocated for strong institutions to guarantee a free market. Only on the supranational level there should prevail the paradigm of laissez-faire rather than control. The third period in Einaudi's life spans from 1943 until his death in 1961, in which he advocated for a supranational federal order based on constitutionalism, which was coined constitutional federalism. In his concluding remarks, Masini points out that it was Hayek, Milton Friedman and James Buchanan who won the (ideological) scuffle; Einaudi was a strong defender of neoliberalism, but after he passed away everything of this sort disappeared in Italy. In the adjacent discussion the question was raised whether Einaudi operated independently and Masini pointed out that there was an international side to his undertakings and a liberal party within Italy in the 1950s and 1960s.

BEN JACKSON (Oxford) proceeded in two stages: he examined the critical role played by the IEA (Institute of Economic Affairs, a free-market think tank founded in 1955) and later by its allies in mobilising two crucial resources for the dissemination of neoliberal ideas: financial support from the business community and the patronage and scholarly output of sympathetic intellectuals. Second, he illustrated how these resources were used to shape elite opinion in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. Here, he focused in particular on the links between the IEA, the British media and the Thatcherite fraction of the Conservative Party." In his talk, Jackson mentioned Keith Joseph, who in 1974 founded a sister institute to the IEA, namely the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS). Joseph displayed a monetarist analysis of British politics. Jackson explained that " he popularised the neoliberal message in his speeches, namely the notion that most of the failures the economy are due not to failings of the market, but to government interference with the market.

Furthermore, Jackson also dealt with the relationship between neoliberalism and conservative politics, mainly Thatcherism. By the mid-1970s neoliberalism provided authoritative warrant for public expenditure cuts and established that the state should not be held responsible for unemployment, he exclaimed. What neoliberals could not accept was that the Thatcher government never attempted reforming the National Health Service. As Jackson convincingly showed, the IEA was skilful at disseminating their neoliberal message to political and media audiences not just through a high number of publications but organising media-friendly meetings with prominent (neo-)liberals such as Friedman and Hayek in the UK. In the subsequent discussion the national standing of think tanks within the UK was of interest. Finally, Jackson pointed out that the legacy and reading of the late 1970s within the conservative party is to think of it as a golden period with ground-breaking reformers; Thatcherism is viewed as changing the UK strongly in a liberal way. Jackson also informed the participants of the conference of his new book that he edited together with Robert Saunders entitled Making Thatcher's Britain. Ben Jackson / Robert Saunders (eds.), Making Thatchers Britain, Cambridge 2012.

ANTONIO MASALA (Lucca) dealt with the rebirth of classical liberalism after WWII. For Masala liberalism solves specific problems in political thought, namely the problem of social order. Liberalism presents the solution of political problems, namely to have good human kind, with economic means. Masala shortly referred to the natural law debate before engaging with classical liberalism; he stated that this strand of liberalism was not interested in the problem of ethics. The original idea of liberalism led to a laissez-faire paradigm, which ultimately led to forms of totalitarianism, which was basically perceived as the cause of degeneration of Western civilization; this ghost was still present after WWII. Without values, Masala argues, the mechanism of the invisible hand cannot work as an explanation of economic order. He advocates looking at a different foundation of this mechanism in values. The problem of ethics within classical

liberalism is related to morality - what is moral/good has good consequences for society. The problem of social utility plays a role in this context as well as the problem of justice, specifically the importance of impartiality. Masala pointed out that there is a contraposition between the idea of a good society and the idea of an impartial society. He furthermore suggested that there are different justifications for certain social orders, what is irrevocable for classical liberals is the idea of freedom of people to pursue their interest and to interact; this principle of freedom should not be touched. Masala suggested looking at the problem of property (to one's ideas and one's body) to solve the problem of social order. In the discussion following Masala's talk the role of coercion used by a political power to ensure freedom was discussed. Furthermore Masala pointed to the concept of dignity that became relevant in the postwar constitution. The problem of collective choices was also shortly debated. Masala's input widened the perspective of the conference to include political philosophy in a historical dimension when engaging with the concept of liberalism.

JEAN SOLCHANY (Lyon) presentation on Wilhelm Röpke identified the latter as a key actor of transnational neoliberalism after WW II. Solchany covered three aspects in his presentation; first, Röpke's neoliberalism as a reaction to the economic crisis, which he also perceived as a crisis of modernity and civilization; second, Röpke's role in the neoliberal network from the 1930s until the 1950s; third, a view on Röpke situated in a larger context of neoliberalism. In his writings about the economic crisis, Röpke's willingness to move towards mainstream economics becomes visible. In his work *Die Gesellschaftskrise der Gegenwart* he actually writes less about the economic crisis, but deals with the crisis in general. The prominent theme in this work is Röpke's new paradigm to fight collectivism of different forms. Röpke's neoliberalism carries a pessimistic mood that pervaded many countries in the 1930s. During the war Röpke was stationed in Switzerland, where he was in contact with thinkers from all over Europe. As Solchany put it, Röpke was the right man at the right time. The 1930s to the 1950s are characterized by a liberal re-awakening. Hayek and Röpke issued an international periodical, the Occident, stressing an urgent necessity to gather intellectual forces. Well-integrated in various networks stretching to France, Italy and the US, Röpke can be seen as an example of humanist post- war Germany; he knew everyone important in liberal circles in Germany.In the 1960s Röpke's influence decreased and it was during this time that a conflict within the MPS between Hayek and Albert Hunold led to Röpke, Hunold and Alexander Rüstow, among others, leaving the MPS. Putting Röpke in a wider neoliberal context, Solchany points out that he was not just a German ordo-liberal but saw the general necessity to build a strong, non-partisan state. There are significant differences between Anglo-Saxon liberalism and continental liberalism, however. Even with a prominent protagonist like Hayek a slight changing in his positions can be observed; the Hayek of 1944 was not the same as the Hayek of 1988, at the end of WWII even Hayek was in favour of state intervention. During the 1950s a trend towards a more radical strand of liberalism could be observed, Röpke himself moved toward conservatism during this time. At the end of his talk Solchany firmly stated that what united neoliberalism was stronger than what divided it. In the discussion right after Solchany's speech Röpke's conservatism was looked at in more detail, his efficiency in publishing was mentioned just as his role in bringing the neoliberal message to the US. Solchany managed to give a wide and thorough picture of one of the prominent actors within neoliberalism.

In his talk FERENC LACZÓ (Jena) presented Hungarian Liberalism after 1945, especially dealing with the relation between Catholic politics and liberalism in Hungary. Laczó showed that prior to WWI opposition to liberalism was one of the defining features of Catholic parties, right after 1945 Christian democratic organizations emerged and could occupy the political centre. They were more left-leaning and market-friendly and distancing themselves from anti-modernist and authoritarian trends made room for more liberal commitments. Laczó described the network of Christian Democrats, their regional and supranational attachments as well as their exceptionally developed transnational connections. This made Christian Democrats crucial agents in the early phase of Europeanization. In 1945, an internal struggle erupted between reformist and conservative Catholic politicians, the conservative wing being led by József Pálffy and the reformist party being led by chief secretary István Barankovics. The latter, as Laczó mentioned right at the beginning of his talk, wrote the introduction to Röpke's first Hungarian translation in 1943. With this statement Laczó directly linked his remarks to the previous presentation of Solchany. Laczó explained that Barankovics interpreted 1945 as a global liberal turn. Presenting the relation between Christian democratic parties and the Catholic Church, Laczó explained that Christian democratic political engagement was meant, among others, to safeguard the interests of the Catholic Church and guarantee the material, social and political preconditions of its futures successes. Hungarian Christian democrats in the early post-war years envisioned a polit-

ical regime enabling social justice, pursuing democratic transition and ensuring human rights. Due to a speedy and violent Sovietization the primary attempt turned out to be safeguarding the principles of liberalism. Shortly after WWII Christian democrats based their discourse first on Christian, afterwards on democratic and then on liberal political ideas. In the discussion subsequent to Laczó's talk,the fate of Hungarian liberals was mentioned, many of whom went to New York. Also, Laczó commented on the shifts in the debate after 1945; dignity and natural law were at the centre of attention, two aspects Antonio Masala talked about in his speech as well.

At the end of the conference the contributors commonly decided to initiate the publishing of a volume.

In general, the conference dealt with the issue of transnational (neo-)liberalism from a variety of angles, mainly due to the focus on different countries and organisations as well as their respective relevant actors. Though many presentations took their departure in a national point of view, the transnational character of liberalism after WWII was stressed and presented convincingly. Certain protagonists featured prominently in the presentations as well as the discussions among them Friedrich August von Hayek, Ludwig van Mises, Milton Friedman and Wilhelm Röpke. The conference was characterised by a highly concentrated and respectful atmosphere and gave room for a lot of discussion, which enabled the participants to engage in-depth with the various outlooks on liberalism. Papers were sent to all participants in advance, which also contributed to the well-informed and sophisticated character of the discussions.

Conference Program

Friday, 19 October

Introduction: Hagen Schulz-Forberg (Aarhus University) / Niklas Olsen (Copenhagen University)

Keynote: Jan-Werner Müller (Princeton University): The Place of Liberal Ideology and Politics in Post- World War II Europe

Discussion:

Dieter Plehwe (Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB)): Mapping Neoliberal Networks, Western Europe after 1945

Hagen Schulz-Forberg (University of Aarhus): Rejuvenating Liberalism: Economic Thought, Social Imagination and the Invention of Neoliberalism in the 1930s

Niklas Olsen (University of Copenhagen): Scandinavian Configurations of European neoliberalism, 1945-1970

Fabio Masini (University of Rome): Luigi Einaudi and Italian Liberalism, 1940-1960

Saturday, 20 October

Ben Jackson (Oxford University): Liberal Networks in Great Britain after 1945

Antonio Masala (IMT Advanced Studies, Lucca): The Rebirth of Classical Liberalism after WWII

Jean Solchany (Science Po, Lyon): Wilhelm Röpke as a key actor of transnational neoliberalism after WWII

Ferenc Laczó (Friedrich Schiller Universität, Jena): Between Transnational Reconstruction and Local Destruction: Hungarian Liberalism after 1945

Conclusion and perspectives: Hagen Schulz-Forberg (University of Aarhus) / Niklas Olsen (University of Copenhagen)

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