



Ideas and Identities

A Festschrift
for Andre Liebich



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Ideas and Identities: Theory and Practice in the 20th Century and Beyond

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To mark the retirement of International History and Politics Professor Andre Liebich in mid-2013, the Department of International History of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) hosted a conference in his honour. The scientific colloquium “Ideas and Identities,” held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 3 May 2013, sought to explore the bounds of one scholar’s influence. The participants, drawn exclusively from the pool of Professor Liebich’s formal doctoral students, showed that those with a common knowledge base can and do expand their intellectual horizons broadly.

The two guiding threads directing the colloquium (now furnishing the title of this volume) summarized the main themes of Andre Liebich’s intellectual output to date. “Ideas” was indicative of his varied early interests. Curiosity about Hegel and in Socialism matured into a doctoral dissertation on August Cieszkowski.¹ Questions of exile politics led to a study on the first Russian emigration, which was soon centred to

1 “My interest in Cieszkowski came out of my interest in Hegel and in early socialism. The former interest was awakened by Raymond Polin, a visiting professor at Harvard from Paris, who had a seminar on Hegel. Through him, I came to Alexandre Kojève’s gloss on Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and I was completely enraptured. I learned about Cieszkowski from another visitor at Harvard, Miguel Abensour, who taught a seminar on the Utopian Socialists. Abensour thought that since Cieszkowski wrote his messianic theology in Polish, his Hegelian philosophy in German, and his social thought in French, I could deal with him properly.” Email of Andre Liebich to the editors, 27 January 2014. His work on Cieszkowski resulted in two key works: Andre Liebich, *Between Ideology and Utopia: The Politics and Philosophy of August Cieszkowski*, *Sovietica* 39 (D. Reidel: Dordrecht, 1979), and the *Selected Writings of August Cieszkowski*, edited and translated with an introductory essay by Andre Liebich, published in the series *Studies in the History and Theory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979; republished in 2010).

focus on the Mensheviks.² More general interests in the reach of “ideas” led to his authorship of the celebrated (authoritative) textbook on *Le libéralisme classique*.³ “Identities” was taken to broadly define his interests once he attained Geneva in 1989: work on nations, nationalisms, and citizenship, whether academic or policy-oriented.⁴ Andre Liebich and his students conceive of and study ideas with specific historical contexts in mind. They work on the ways ideas emerged, blossomed, and existed in specific intellectual, political, local, national, regional, and international contexts. They examine the discrepancy(ies) between the apparent perfection of ideas when elaborated by intellectuals, academics, philosophers, thinkers, or politicians, and their clash with reality. “Identities” examined in these volume intertwine with “ideas.” “Identities” are wrapped around “ideas”; they are an intelligible analytical category that allows contributors to go beyond the confined space of a single individual, beyond citizen(s) living in a single nation. “Identities” are permeable spaces; spaces of co-existence of conflicts and tensions, and of construction. “Identities” change; they evolve over time, with several intended and un-intended consequences explored in the chapters of this volume. One of the threads of the book, and one of the many lessons Andre Liebich’s work taught us is about the inter-penetration and ever-changing relation of politics with history a *conditio sine qua non* to study “ideas” and “identities.” It is on the relation of

2 “My interest in Mensheviks was an outcome of my interest in the possibilities of exile politics. Sometime around 1980, I intended to write a history of the first Russian emigration, the one that followed the Revolution of 1917, a seminal event in the history of the 20th century. The Mensheviks, with their nuanced understanding of Marxism and their agonized debates on the course that the Soviet Union was taking, caught my attention and, even more, my sympathy. Moreover, my research on the Mensheviks put me in touch with the most marvelous people, veteran socialists from all countries, including some who called themselves ‘American Mensheviks.’” Email of Andre Liebich to the editors, 27 January 2014. His work on the Mensheviks was notably published as Andre Liebich, *From the Other Shore: Russian Social Democracy after 1921* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), which received the Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History in 1995.

3 Andre Liebich *Le libéralisme classique* (Quebec: PUQ, 1985).

4 A selection: Andre Liebich and Daniel Warner with Jasna Dragovic, *Citizenship, East and West* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1995); Andre Liebich, *Les Minorités nationales en Europe centrale et orientale* (Geneva: Georg, 1997); Andre Liebich and Basil Germond, eds., *Construire l’Europe* (Paris: PUF, 2008).