

Notices – Informations – Mitteilungen

Report of the Third Richie International Conference ‘The two Europes’ at the Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa, Naples, SUM-Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane, 14-15 December 2007

On December 14th and 15th 2007 the third RICHIE¹ conference ‘The Two Europes’ took place in Naples at the University Suor Orsola Benincasa and the SUM-Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane, under the patronage of the Municipality of Naples, the representation of the European Commission in Italy and the Italian ministry of Youth Policies. Under the expert guidance of Piero Craveri (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa) and Antonio Varsori (Università degli Studi di Padova), and the other members of the scientific committee, the conference organised by Michele Affinito, Guia Migani and Christian Wenkel brought together around 25 young researchers from 12 countries.²

While European integration history has often been approached from a perspective that emphasises a common European heritage, the theme of the conference ‘The Two Europe’s’ gave the opportunity to explore the numerous dichotomies that have also determined European history in the 20th century. In the four sessions four different dichotomies were emphasised.

In the beautiful and inspiring surroundings of the Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa Karl Christian Lammers (Københavns Universitet) opened the first session on continuity and changes in the 19th and 20th centuries. This theme was dealt with primarily in an East-West context. It started with a paper by Natalia Burlinova (Moscow State University) on relations between Europe and Russia, exploring the question of whether Russia was and is part of Europe. Her presentation led to a lively debate about the nature of Russian democracy and the path from communism to a free society.

The two following papers dealt with Western reactions to crises in Eastern Europe. Valentine Lomellini’s (IMT Alti Studi Lucca) paper explored the relationship between the Italian Left and the ruling classes and opposition leaders in Eastern Europe around the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the Polish crisis of 1981. A comparison of French and German reactions to the Polish crisis was the subject of the paper by Karolina Pietras (Paris IV). Traditionally the French people have been portrayed as more sympathetic to Solidarnosc than the Germans. Pietras showed however that the image of a Franco-German contrast was largely a construct of the French press anxious to deflect attention from the passive attitude of the French government.

1. Réseau International de jeunes Chercheurs en Histoire de l’Intégration Européenne.

2. For the full programme please see <http://www.europe-richie.org/Naples2007/index-en.html>.

Maria Coros (Paris IV) presented a paper on the image of the West in Rumanian school textbooks under the Ceausescu regime. In her paper she drew attention to the contradiction between the regime's official anti-West discourse and the impossibility of that same regime to propose an alternative model for society, thus forcing it to rely for models on the system it criticised. In the last paper in this session Christian Domnitz (Universität Frankfurt-Oder) examined rupture and continuity in Central European ideas about Europe. Looking at the framings of Europe that persisted after 1989, Domnitz found that the national view of Europe predominant in Central Europe could be traced back to instrumentalisations of Europe by both the opposition and the communist elite. In the discussion Jürgen Elvert (Universität zu Köln) continued the debate about Central Europe, the Third Europe.

The second session, 'Europe as a dream. Europe as a reality', presided over by Maurice Vaïsse (Sciences Po Paris) resumed the theme of Europe and the nation. In his paper 'L'Europe est ailleurs: la double altérité du Projet Européen face à l'Etat-Nation', Carol Bergami (Paris I/Universität Freiburg) explored the relationship between the European project and the national reality. Morgane Le Boulay (Paris Dauphine/Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) examined the dichotomy between the unity and the plurality of Europe with respect to the historical profession in France and Germany in the 1990s. Le Boulay found an inherent contradiction in the historical profession between its political function regarding Europe and the research done on Europe. Given that this topic directly affected many present at the conference, a lively discussion ensued in which questions were raised regarding what was meant by 'historians' and about periodisation. The next paper also dealt with a distinct group. Mauve Carbonell (Institut pour l'histoire de l'aluminium Gennevilliers) examined the background of the first members of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community. While before and during WWII they were often on opposing sides of the political spectrum, the end of the war saw them all in Luxemburg, where all of the members of the High Authority became 'Europeans'.

The three remaining papers in the second session all addressed Spain. Maria Elena Cavallaro (IMT Altì Studi Lucca) argued that the aim of Spanish foreign policy in the immediate post-Franco era was to gain international legitimacy, joining the EEC was an important step in this process. Matthieu Trouvé (Université Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux), building on the previous paper, examined the perceived European enthusiasm of the Spaniards (1975-2005). Studying public opinion, Trouvé came to the conclusion that while a comparatively high enthusiasm persisted, the Spanish public at the same time passed from enthusiasm for Europe to banalisation of Europe. The last paper of Friday was by Thomas Derungs (Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg). He argued that, given the Cold War context, the prospect of a southward enlargement supported the concept of Europe as a 'civilian superpower', portraying enlargement as the export of liberal democracy. During the discussion that followed this second session the distinction between the European ideal and the ideal of European integration was discussed.

The role of the European project in facilitating change on the national plane was furthered explored.

After an interesting and sociable dinner on Friday night, the third session on Saturday morning dealt with the notions of a political and an economic Europe. Wolfgang Krieger (Universität Marburg) presided over this session, where most papers explored the concept of dichotomy.

Matthieu Osmont (Sciences Po Paris/Université d'Artois) dealt with these notions by examining the competition between the Direction des Affaires Politiques and the Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières at the Quai d'Orsay. After having presented the diverging backgrounds of the members of each Direction, he noted that despite their rivalry, they cooperated against competition by other departments. Emmanuel Mourlon-Druol (European University Institute Florence) analysed perceived and real dichotomies between the monetary and institutional initiatives taken by France in 1974. While the European Unit of Account and the European Council seemed to confirm the traditional dichotomy, in reality they were more complementary than contradictory. It was within the initiatives that the real dichotomies existed.

The paper by Marloes Beers (Université Cergy-Pontoise), also dealt with a dichotomy, that between small and large States. She examined the role of small states regarding political bargaining, where political or economic weight is not available to them as a policy instrument. Gabriele d'Ottavio (Università di Bologna) examined the dichotomy between economic and political integration in Germany during the negotiations for the Treaties of Rome and the Treaty of Maastricht. D'Ottavio showed that Germany was most active where economic and political considerations were combined. The next paper also addressed Germany, but compared it to Italy. Whereas this is a common comparison, Federico Niglia (LUISS Guido Carli Roma) argued that the relationship between Italy and Germany was rather characterised by ambiguity and mistrust, with the Italians feeling that Germany was a danger to their national interest. The last paper, by Giuseppe Mancini (SUM Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane), addressed the visions of Europe by Enrico Mattei, the chairman of ENI (Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi). Often depicted as an ultranationalist, Europe was a priority for Mattei. Following these presentations Eric Bussière (Paris IV) discussed the links between politics and economics in a comprehensive way. During the debate, the question of the role of small states was repeatedly addressed.

The fourth session, 'Europe as a power, Europe as a tool of power', saw ample discussion of the Anglo-Saxon powers. Jenny Raflik (Université Cergy-Pontoise) started the session with an exploration of the French attitude toward Europeanism and Atlanticism during the Cold War, showing that the two could not be disassociated. A similar question but with regard to Britain under the Heath government was addressed by Giulia Bentivoglio (Università del Salento, Lecce). She argued that the attempt to simultaneously juggle two visions of Europe, European and Atlantic, failed. They were however used to strengthen the power of

the EEC, while considering the EEC as a tool of power to regain international prestige.

Mauro Elli (Università degli Studi di Milano) examined the British attitude regarding the EEC energy policy on the eve of the oil crisis. Attempts by the British with their North Sea oil to reassert themselves in Europe through a common energy policy, met with little success. Lucia Coppolaro (Universitat Pompeu Fabra Barcelona) examined the relation between the EEC and the US around the accession of the socialist countries to GATT (1959-1973). While the EEC supported their application on political grounds, they refused any trade concessions, despite strong US pressure. In the following discussion Jean-Marie Palayret (European University Institute Florence) pointed out that whereas the image of GATT is very rigid, Coppolaro showed that the rigid rules could be overcome for political reasons. The first example of this flexibility was the acceptance in 1958 of the Treaty of Rome.

In her paper, Aniko Macher (Sciences Po Paris) examined Western cultural cooperation during the Cold War. By looking at informal meetings on East-West cultural relations, she analysed the relation between politics and cultural propaganda. The last paper of the conference was by Sara Banchi (SUM Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane). By studying the Second Development Decade (1970s) from the perspective of the UN, she opened up a new panorama of relations between the Europeans themselves, with the US and with the 'South'. In his discussion Johnny Laursen (Aarhus Universitet) addressed the increased importance of the transatlantic dimension and he discussed the methodological problems historians encounter when trying to determine causality in a transnational context.

In his final conclusions Varsori summed up some of the themes recurring throughout the conference, such as the year 1973; the Transatlantic relationship; and the various dichotomies discussed: East-West, North-South, Europe-state, economic-political, small-big. As these themes show, the third RICHIE conference, while covering a very wide range of topics and uncovering many dichotomies, managed to find a lot of common ground and brought together both young researchers and professors from all over Europe for very fruitful discussions.

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