



CEU DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF HISTORY

The Doctoral Thesis in Comparative History

by

**Oskar Mulej**

on

“Interwar Perspectives on Liberalism in Central Europe: the Czech,  
Austrian and Slovene National Liberal Heirs, 1918-1934”

will be held on

**Friday, April 27, 2018, at 15:30**

in

**Nádor 9, Senate Room  
Central European University (CEU)  
Budapest—1051**

Examination Committee

Gábor Klaniczay – Chair (Department of Medieval Studies, CEU)

Maciej Janowski – supervisor (Department of History, CEU)

Balázs Trencsényi – CEU internal member (Department of History)

Henk te Velde – external member (Leiden University)

Gary Cohen – external reader (University of Minnesota)

**ABSTRACT**

*In which spheres, in which manners and to what extent did liberalism survive or even continue to develop in the interwar Czech, Austrian and Slovene contexts? How did it manifest itself?* Beginning from this general question, the dissertation concentrates on party politics as one of the possible perspectives for studying liberalism. It scrutinizes the political trajectories and ideological transformations of political parties in the interwar Czech lands, Austria and Slovene part of Yugoslavia, that are treated under the joint term “national liberal heirs.” The parties under scrutiny are the Czechoslovak National Democracy (*Československá národní demokracie*), the Austrian Greater German People's Party (*Grossdeutsche Volkspartei*) and the Slovene sections of the Yugoslav Democratic (*Jugoslovanska demokratska stranka*), Independent Democratic (*Samostojna demokratska stranka*) and Yugoslav National Parties (*Jugoslovanska nacionalna stranka*). These parties all inherited the national liberal tradition in terms of organization, social base, their rootedness in specific milieus and belonging to specific political “camps.” Their genealogically liberal background, however, did not necessarily imply commitment to the national liberal ideology of their predecessors or conscious identification with liberalism, which they often explicitly rejected.

The basic aim is setting up a common horizon for studying the discussed type of political party. Most importantly the dissertation discusses the degrees and types of nationalism espoused by the observed parties, their socio-economic views and paragons, their cultural politics and the relationships toward liberal democracy on one and alternative political models on the other side. By addressing these problems, it shows how national liberal party traditions continued moving along their pre-WWI trajectory that had been leading towards radicalization of the nationalist component at the expense of the liberal one. Lacking clear ideological fundamentals, facing disorientation, coupled by eroding social bases, the parties under scrutiny were furthermore particularly susceptible to flirtation with new ideological currents, some of them radically illiberal, and adoption of some of their discursive elements. Generally, they however remained within the frame of representative democratic order. The disorientation also reflected in the attempts to (re-)define their positions as nationalist, conservative or – as it was most often the case - vaguely defined “democratic” parties. In its concluding chapter the dissertation also tackles the various meanings associated with the term “liberalism” in political languages of the studied contexts, as these reflected in the contemporary debates. In this way it opens up further possible perspectives of studying liberalism beyond the narrow frame of party politics.

**CURRICULUM VITAE***Oskar Mulej***EDUCATION**

- 2011- 2017**     **Central European University, Budapest:** Doctoral studies in Comparative History of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe  
**Dissertation submitted in November 2017.**
- 2009-2010**     **Central European University, Budapest:** Master of Arts in Central European History and Master's Level Further Specialization Degree (*Szakirányú továbbképzési szakok*) in Comparative history of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe
- 2002 – 2009**     **University of Ljubljana:** University Graduate in History and Philosophy (*univerzitetni diplomirani filozof in zgodovinar*)

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

- 2013**     **Teaching Assistant (Course title: “Backwardness and Periphery in Europe 19<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries; Professor Maciej Janowski; CEU, Budapest)**
- 2011**     **Zlati kamen, project dedicated to studying and promoting local self-governance**
- 2005 - 2009**     **Contributing author for English language business magazines Slovenian Business Report and SEE Business**
- 2002 – 2003**     **Mladina d.d., newspaper publishing company – daily web news articles**

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

## PUBLIC LECTURES

**Departmental Research Seminar**, Budapest, January, 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018

Organizer: CEU Department of History

Lecture delivered: **“Ambiguities of Liberalism in the Interwar Central Europe’ – the Czech, the Austrian and the Slovene National Liberal Heirs, 1918-1934”**

**Seminar "Faces of Eastern Europe"**, Vienna, January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014

Organizer: Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, Vienna

Lecture delivered: **“Illiberal Liberals’: The National Liberal Heirs in Central Europe”**

**Přednáškový cyklus grantového projektu Edvard Beneš, Němci a Německo**, Prague, June 10<sup>th</sup> 2013

Organizer: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, Prague

Lecture delivered: **“(Post)liberalism and its place within the interwar Slovene political landscape”**

## CONFERENCES

**GRACEH 2015: Crisis and Solidarity in European History**, Vienna April 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2015

Organizer: Universität Wien

Paper presented: “Post liberal Politics in Czechoslovakia, Austria and Slovene Part of Yugoslavia and the Economic Crisis, 1930-1934”

**Third Annual Europe & the World International Graduate Conference**, Reims June 26<sup>th</sup>- 28<sup>th</sup> 2014

Organizers: Sciences Po Paris, Central European University Budapest, European University Institute Florence and Princeton University

Paper presented: “Czech, Austrian and Slovene (Post-)liberal Responses to the World Economic Crisis, 1929-1933“ (Discussant: Prof. Harold James, Princeton University)

**„Drogi odrębne, drogi wspólne... Problem specyfiki rozwoju naukowego i regionalnego w myśli politycznej Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w XIX i XX wieku”**, Warsaw, May 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2014

Organizer: Instytut Historii Tadeusza Manteuffla Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warsaw

Paper presented: „National Liberals and their Progeny : Central European Liberal Party Traditions 1867 -1918”

**A European Youth Revolt 1980/81? European Perspectives of Youth Protest and Social Movements**, Amsterdam, May 15-17<sup>th</sup> 2014

Organizers: Forschungsstelle für Zeitheschichte in Hamburg, Institut für Soziale Bewegungen Bochum, Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis Amsterdam

Paper presented: „Punk in Slovenia and Yugoslavia“

**Reflections on the Role of Ideas and Agency in Europe, Junior Visiting Fellows' Conference,** Vienna, December 11<sup>th</sup> 2013

Organizer: Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen, Vienna

Paper presented: “National Liberal Heirs of the Old Austria: Approaching the “Deviations” in Liberal Party Traditions, 1867-1918” (Discussant: Prof. Lothar Höbelt, University of Vienna)

**Politische Mobilisierung in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa,** Marburg, June 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 2013

Organizers: Herder-Institut für historische Ostmitteleuropaforschung – Institut der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft (Marburg); Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung (Regensburg)

Paper presented: “Mobilisierungsstrategien der Jugoslawischen Nationalpartei 1932-1935”

**Third Annual Cold War History Research Center International Student Conference at Corvinus University of Budapest,** Budapest, 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Organizer: Cold War History Research Center at Corvinus University of Budapest

Paper presented: “Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Slovenia 1945-50”

**GRACEH 2012: Transformation in European History, Preconditions – Processes – Perceptions,** Vienna, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Organizer: Universität Wien

Paper presented: “Late 19th and early 20th Century Transformations of Organized Liberalism in Central Europe”

## **GRANTS AND AWARDS**

**2016 (Sep-Dec) CEU Doctoral Research Support Grant**  
(European University Institute; Supervisor: Prof. Pieter M. Judson)

**2016 CEU Award for Advanced Doctoral Students**

**2015 (Sep – Nov) Fellowship Josefa Dobrovského**  
(Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, Prague)

**2014-2017 City of Ljubljana Scholarship for Talented Students**

**2014 (Nov) – 2015 (Feb) Scholarship of the Scholarship Foundation of the Republic of Austria**  
(Universität Wien, Institut für Geschichte; Project supervised by Prof. Dr. Lothar Höbelt)



**2013 (Nov) – 2014 (Feb) Junior Visiting Fellowship at IWM**  
(Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen (IWM), Vienna)

**2013 (May-Jun) CEU short-term research grant**  
(Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, Prague)

**2006 - 2007 Socrates/Erasmus exchange program**  
(Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

## LANGUAGES

**Slovene** - native fluency

**English** - good fluency (learned in school 1993 – 2002; daily use for both private and professional purposes)

**German** - good fluency (learned in school 1998 – 2002; attended a course in 2006, earning the official ZMP certificate (Goethe – Institut); attended online Uni-Deutsch course (GER B2 level) during summer 2006; successfully completed further courses on levels C1 and C2 at the HU-Berlin, 2006-2007; frequent use)

**Serbian/Croatian** – medium fluency (frequent use)

**Dutch** - beginner (attended a course at the university, 2004-2005; earned the official CNaVT PTIT beginner level certificate)

**Czech** - medium (reading, understanding)

**Hungarian** – beginner (completed two A-level courses during 2012/2013)

## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

### Theses

#### Diploma theses (University of Ljubljana)

*Slovenski »napredni« politični tabor ob začetku druge svetovne vojne: Nesoglasja ter poskusi povezovanj med strankami in skupinami v letih 1939-1942* (Slovene “Progressive” Political Camp at the Outset of the Second World War: Frictions and Unification Attempts between the Parties and Groups during the Years 1939-1942). Supervisor: Professor Bojan Balkovec. Ljubljana: O. Mulej, 2009.

*Politična filozofija F. A. von Hayeka: Kritična predstavitev s poudarkom na vprašanjih pravičnosti* (Political Philosophy of F. A. von Hayek: A Critical Introduction with an Emphasis on the Problems of Justice). Supervisor: Professor Igor Pribac. Ljubljana: O. Mulej, 2009.

#### MA thesis (Central European University)

*Vanishing National Liberal Traditions, Slovene “Progressive” Political Parties During the Interwar Period*. Supervisor: Professor Maciej Janowski. Budapest: O. Mulej, 2010.

### Articles in scholarly journals

“Toniemy w czerwonych buraczkach, zatykając dziury w żelaznej kurtynie”. Punkowa Lublana w późnych latach siedemdziesiątych i wczesnych osiemdziesiątych.” Michał Przeperski ed., *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, nr. 4 (2010): pp. 197-210.

“We Are Drowning in Red Beet, Patching Up the Holes in the Iron Curtain’: The Punk Subculture in Ljubljana in the Late 1970s and Early 1980s.” *East Central Europe*, Vol. 38, Nr. 2-3 (2011): pp. 373-389.

“Post-Liberalism’, Anti-Clericalism and Yugoslav Nationalism : Slovene progressive political camp in the interwar and contemporary Czech politics.” *Střed | Centre* 1/2014: pp. 65-93.

“National Liberals and their Progeny : Central European Liberal Party Traditions 1867 -1918.” *Acta Poloniae Historica* 111 (2015).

"Gospodarski in družbeni nazori v slovenskem naprednem taboru, 1930-35. I. del – velika gospodarska kriza. [Economic and Social Views in the Slovene Progressive Camp, 1930-35. Part I. - The Great Depression]" *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 56, no. 1 (2016): pp. 108-125.

"Gospodarski in družbeni nazori v slovenskem naprednem taboru, 1930-35. II. del – idejnozgodovinski vidiki. [Economic and Social Views within the Slovene Progressive Camp, 1930-35. Part II. - The Intellectual Historical Aspects]" *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino / Contributions to Contemporary History*, vol. 56, no. 2 (2016): pp. 40-58.

**Articles in collective volumes**

“Narodowi liberałowie I ich spuścizna. S dziejów ‘dewiacji’ środkowoeuropejskiej tradycji liberalnej 1867-1918” in *Specyfika rozwojowa dziejów Polski i Europy Środkowej. Analiza historyczna debat o wyjątkowości narodowej i regionalnej*. Warsaw: Instytut Historii PAN 2014.

“A Place Called Johnny Rotten Square: The Ljubljana Punk Scene and the Subversion of Socialist Yugoslavia,” in *A European Youth Revolt. European Perspectives on Youth Protest and Social Movements in the 1980s*. K. Andresen and B. van der Steen (eds.). London: Palgrave, 2016.

**Published conference papers**

“Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Slovenia 1945-50.” The materials for the Third Annual Cold War History Research Center International Student Conference at Corvinus University of Budapest (2012). Accessible at:

[http://www.coldwar.hu/html/en/conferences/Third\\_2012/Papers/Mulej\\_Organized%20Anticommunt-CWHRC\\_third\\_congress\\_2012.pdf](http://www.coldwar.hu/html/en/conferences/Third_2012/Papers/Mulej_Organized%20Anticommunt-CWHRC_third_congress_2012.pdf)

“National Liberal Heirs of the Old Austria: ‘Deviations’ in Liberal Party Traditions, 1867-1918.” In: *What Do Ideas Do?*, ed. A. Lisiak, N. Smolenski, Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows’ Conferences, Vol. 33. Accessible at:

<http://www.iwm.at/publications/5-junior-visiting-fellows-conferences/national-liberal-heirs-of-the-old-austria/>

“Armed Anti-Communist Resistance in Slovenia 1945-50.” The materials of the Third Annual Cold War History Research Center International Student Conference at Corvinus University of Budapest. Budapest: 2014. (printed version - forthcoming)