

General Staff was named Conrad von Hötzendorf, not Hotzendorff. The Kremsierer Constitution of 1848 never was 'introduced' and therefore couldn't be 'revoked by Franz Joseph' (p. 47), as it was a draft constitution only, and the Rabbi, writer, and deputy to the *Reichsrat*, Joseph Samuel Bloch, was no Social Democrat (p. 103).

Pieter Judson and others have demonstrated in the last decade that Cisleithania, the western part of Austria-Hungary, was an example of modern state-building not directly linked to nation-building. Koźuchowski points out (p. 177) that '[i]n the spring of 1914 Austria-Hungary was still remarkably modern in many aspects. It had excellent railways, universities, cafés, newspapers, theatres, hospitals, museums, operas, airplanes, submarines, battleships, avant-garde artists, Marxists, the first psychoanalyst, and the second metro line in Europe. Only after the dissolution of the monarchy did it turn out that Austria-Hungary had been anachronistic.' The book under review gives a fine survey of the formation of the hegemonic discourse on Austria-Hungary in the interwar period and its various versions in different genres.

Thomas Winkelbauer
University of Vienna
thomas.winkelbauer@univie.ac.at

Alan Ryan: *The Making of Modern Liberalism*

Princeton and Oxford 2012: Princeton University Press, 670pp.

At the onset of the political and economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, many believed that liberalism as always found its strength in its ability to act as the enemy of tradition and the speaker for modernity. The unfolding of events in the region in the early 1990s demonstrated that the liberal idea participated in socialism's final defeat by exposing its economic irra-

tionality, its political despotism, and its immense social and intellectual conservatism. Thereafter, in countries with no prior history of political democracy and market economy, liberalism became the harbinger of a new modern state and society to be built without any delay. This seemingly final victory provided liberalism with a unique historical opportunity, wherein it finally possessed all the rights and duties to influence the course of transformation in the new polities and economies of Central and Eastern Europe.

The striking collapse of Marxist regimes worldwide, as Ryan writes, was a notable success of the liberal project (p. 42). In Ryan's words, since Marxist governments drew their legitimacy from the supposed superiority of Marxian socialism over its liberal alternatives, the wholesale failure of Marxist regimes in all possible respects—their failure as economic systems, their inability to secure political loyalties of their subjects, their failure to secure the human rights of the citizenry, and so on—in effect amounted to a practical demonstration that liberalism of some kind had won (p. 42). The collapse of communism and the transition to political democracy and market economy in new Europe have been the triumph for liberalism in the very broadest sense—that is, liberalism that stresses human rights, economic opportunity, and the values of the open society, rather than one with narrower party-political attachments (p. 41). This depiction of the breadth of liberalism is the most laudable impact of Ryan's book.

Despite liberalism's broad appeal, liberalisation has faced mounting challenges in the new Europe of the 21st century. It is true that the liberal way of thinking has achieved universal acceptance to a degree hitherto unknown in the history of Central and Eastern Europe, but liberalism could not maintain consensus on its virtues. The very believers of liberalism ignored the fact that the process of liberalisation challenges the foundations of societies unready for

change and inhibits its very progress when it disengages the 'liberalised' from this process. The proponent of liberalisation, stimulated by the belief that capitalism and liberal democracy complement each other, prompted an aggressive economic transformation towards a competitive market economy, ignoring the welfare state. This aggressive element brought the end of liberalism with narrower party attachments most clearly in contexts such as Hungary [Korkut 2012]. Yet, can we say that liberalism in the broadest sense is also under threat in other places? Given Ryan's engaging account of the diverse streams of liberalism in his book, it would be fallacious to suggest a straightforward response to this question. Nonetheless, we have all the reason to suggest that the failure of liberalization is due to the failure of the liberal elite to grasp the whole extent of liberalism. That is why we need to grasp the full extent of liberalism as an issue that Ryan raises in this timely book.

It may be that at the end of the 20th century, capitalist economy and political democracy seemed to have won the global struggle at the level of ideas, but this did not result in convincing people of the virtues of liberalism fully. The liberal politicians simply concentrated on far-fetched economic goals imbued with neo-liberal ideas and at their best only embedded the ideals of political liberalism in the process of achieving these goals. That was why starting with the end of 1970s, liberal politics tailored a straightjacket for societies with its "there is no alternative" propaganda and branded those who fail to appreciate the virtues of liberalism (material prosperity, social peace, negative liberty, equality of opportunity, and political competition) as irrational heretics. Liberals have sometimes tried to define liberalism in such a way that only the very deluded or the very wicked could fail to be liberals. At the height of the Cold War, it was easy to present the alternatives as liberal democracy on the one hand, and assorted forms of

one-party totalitarianism on the other' (p. 22). While this rhetoric excluded those who disagreed with liberal reasoning, it could not eliminate discontent or opposition toward the liberalisation process. Despite the individual advantages that the virtues of liberalism generated, collective benefits did not ensue as expected.

There was, however, much to be gained from liberalism. Ryan goes into detail noting not only human rights, toleration, liberty for all, but also patriotism and morality—even if the foes of liberalism have accused the liberals for their lack of tact and consideration for these issues. Would the liberal politicians be better equipped if they were aware of Mill's opinion on what ways of life best suit human beings (p. 322) when faced with the conservative criticism that liberalism was anti-traditional? For Mill, as Ryan argues, 'there is no unitary answer to what ways of life best suit human beings, because human nature varies a good deal from one person to another and therefore yields diverse answers – though these are answers that have a common form, since they will be answers about what conduces to the long-term well-being of the people in question' (p. 322).

Nevertheless, very often socially progressive liberalism aspiring for the well-being of individuals in reality resonated as elitist. Capitalist economic liberalism appeared corrupt. Equally, liberalism has been criticised for its lack of interest in political participation and the development of an active citizenry. One republican complaint is that liberalism is unable to offer a coherent story about how liberal goals are to be secured, while the other is that liberalism in action tends to turn individuals in on themselves, encourages them to quit the public stage and concentrate on domestic and economic goals (p. 41). However, we can rightfully claim that in politics we have encountered an ill-understood liberalism propagated by both its proponents and opponents. What makes Ryan's book timely is its full capacity to demonstrate the mani-

festations of liberalism in various fields beyond its economic expressions.

The ill-understood liberalism inflicted a blow to liberal politics and policies at the end of the 2000s. In East Central Europe this blow came from the conservative right, and in the West it has been the populist political parties that critically attacked liberalism. All in all, an anti-liberal turn put the achievements of democracy in peril. The final demise of liberal economic goals after the global crisis of 2008 may also put the achievements of the political liberalisation of the 20th century in peril if it appears that less liberal democratic countries can weather the economic storm better.

Ryan's book argues that there is a place for optimism for the true believers of the virtues of liberalism. Ryan is convincing insofar as he shows that liberalism possesses the depth of engagement with humanity's problems to stand against its foes. Ryan's conceptualisation of liberalism cherishes a community viable for the sake of the liberty, entitles the community with the role of allowing the self-development of the individuals composing that community (p. 105). He responds to the common complaint against liberalism that it undervalues the role of community. The book also asks whether liberalism has or even can have a liberal theory of society. The answer is plainly that it can and indeed it does. In fact, one might argue that it is only because liberals are so impressed by the ways in which society moulds and shapes the lives of its members that liberals are so eager to ensure that society does not also cramp and distort those lives (p. 37).

Ryan also reminds us that 'Hobbes does not argue for something close to *laissez-faire* in some economic areas: the sovereign ought to define property rights as clearly as possible ... refrain from unpredictable or sudden alterations in the rules, and avoid sudden and unpredictable taxes' (p. 199). Ryan suggests that there is no reason to think that Hobbes' argument is a

positive argument for capitalism: 'Hobbes does not admire ... most employers, who, he thinks, are interested in driving people to work at the lowest possible wages. Moreover, he is explicit about the need to create some sort of welfare arrangements for those who are too old or ill to work' (p. 199).

Reconsidering the limits of governance involved in liberalism could generate trust in the process of liberalisation. The liberal view that the individual is, by natural right or something tantamount to it, sovereign over himself, his talents, and his property is at once the basis of limited government, the rule of law, individual economy, and a capitalist economy (p. 34). Ryan states that 'modern adherents of classical liberalism often ground their defence of minimal government on what they take to be a minimal moral basis. Minimal government may be justified by the prosperity that economies deliver when they are not interfered with by governments; this argument has been current from Adam Smith's Welfare of Nations defence of "the simple system of natural liberty" (Smith [1775] 1976: 687, cited on p. 24) down to Hayek's in our own time. In liberalism, minimal government is provided by pointing to the nastiness of governmental coercion and to the contrast between the negative effects of mere brute force and prohibition compared with the benign effects of uncoerced cooperation. No classical liberal denies the need for law; coercive law represses force and fraud, and the non-coercive civil law allows people to make contracts and engage in any kind of economic activity. Still, every classical liberal holds that all the forces that make for imagination, invention, and growth come from the voluntary sector (p. 24).

Perhaps implicitly, this is what Ryan aims to achieve. The breadth of this book is simply impressive both conceptually and practically. Its content is organised under different parts such as liberty and security; liberty and progress; liberalism in America and work, ownership, freedom and self-re-

alisation. With respect to these subjects, Ryan untiringly examines Hobbes on individualism and human nature; Mill on utilitarianism and bureaucracy; Isaiah Berlin on political culture and liberal theory; Locke on the dictatorship of bourgeoisie, and last but not the least Hegel on work, ownership, and citizenship. Alongside, he engages with the most notable other interpreters of liberalism such as R. M. Hare, C. B. Macpherson, and John Gray, in an attempt to dislocate any misunderstandings of liberalism that the interpretations of their works may have caused.

Furthermore, to study liberalism in the American context, Ryan visits the work of Alexis de Tocqueville, John Rawls, and even John Dewey to depict the development of liberal ideas in relation to modernism, pragmatism, social identity, and even American education. And Ryan is equally at home in depicting the Russian thinkers such as Isaiah Berlin (pp. 395–407). In fact, Ryan depicts a whole new approach to studying liberal thinkers' works while not becoming wholly psycho-historical. He contextualises Mill in the British Empire and Berlin in Russia. The book is simply mesmerising in its content, fecundity and argumentation. It easily grasps the reader's attention with stark comments and elaborations as to how to conceptualise the time and manner in which liberal ideas emerged and sprouted.

Still, there is a question that arises out of Ryan's work and that is how to reconcile classical and modern liberalism. In fact, Ryan notes that the fear that modern liberalism is inimical to the spirit of classical liberalism and will, in practice, threaten the latter's gains rests on two things. The first is the thought that modern liberalism is ideologically overcommitted (p. 25). Ryan refers to 'Mill's version of man as a progressive being in this respect, with its demand that everyone should constantly re-think his or her opinions on every conceivable subject, is one with a minority appeal' (p. 25–26). He points out that 'to

found one's politics on a view of human nature that most people find implausible is to found one's politics on quicksand. There is no need to appeal to such a vision of human nature to support classical liberalism' (p. 26). Second, modern liberalism makes everyone an unrealizable promise of a degree of personal fulfilment that the welfare state cannot deliver, and that its efforts to deliver it will inevitably lead to frustration. People resent being forced to part with their hard-earned income to provide the resources that supply jobs, education, and the various social services that modern liberalism employs to create its conception of individual freedom for other people. The hostility that this creates between more and less favoured groups of citizens is wholly at odds with what modern liberals desire (p. 26).

There is thus a grave risk of disillusionment with liberalism in general, as Ryan forewarns. This book is a laudable effort to understand the most recent political and economic turmoil that affects those states, which the existing literature depicted as the beacon of liberalisation. The book helps us to grasp the intriguing process of how liberalisation, alienation, and elitism relate to each other in politics. The practice of the liberal thinker 'telling the hard truth' fostered elitism. The positivist and materialist liberal economy that rigidly believed in formal advancement and in material and financial welfare as pivotal elements of development failed. *The Making of Liberalism* helps us understand the troubles that modern liberalism inflicted on liberalism as such.

Umut Korkut
Glasgow Caledonian University
umut.korkut@gcu.ac.uk

References

- Korkut, U. 2012. *Liberalization Challenges in Hungary: Elitism, Progressivism, and Populism*. New York: Palgrave/Europe in Transition.
- Smith, A. (1775) 1976. *The Wealth of Nations*. London: Penguin.