

THE MYTH OF HOMOGENEITY WORKSHOP

27–28 February 2020

The Graduate Institute, chemin Eugène-Rigot 2, 1202 Geneva

**SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONALISM  
AND HOMOGENEITY IN EUROPE  
BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

THE  
GRADUATE  
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INTERNATIONAL  
HISTORY

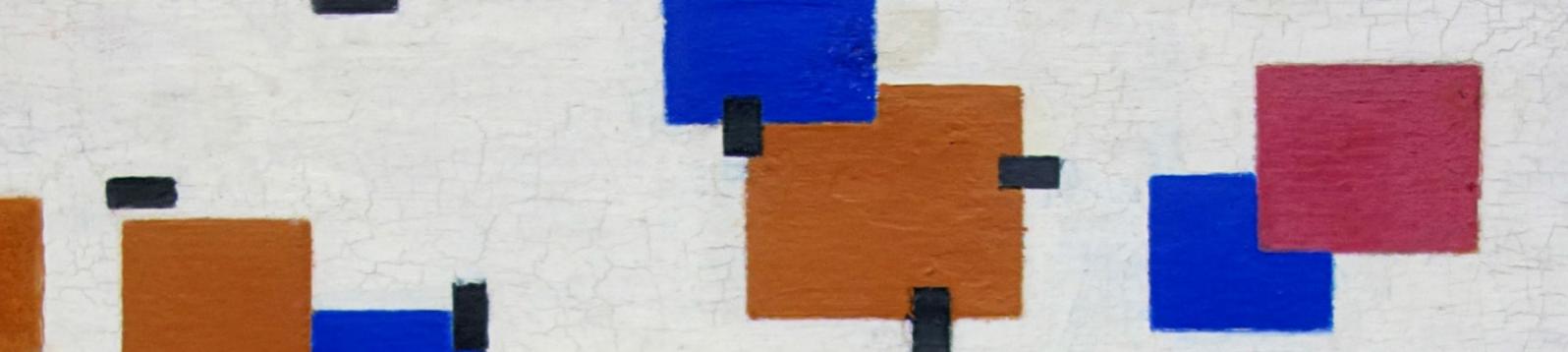
THE  
GRADUATE  
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GENEVA

ALBERT  
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SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

  
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SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONALISM AND HOMOGENEITY  
IN EUROPE BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2020

→ Room S8

**10:00 – 10:15 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

**Davide Rodogno**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Christine Lutringer**, Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Emmanuel Dalle Mulle**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**10:15 – 12:15 MINORITIES IN THE TRANSITION FROM EMPIRE TO NATION-STATE**

Chair: **Christine Lutringer**, Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Till Van Rahden**, Université de Montréal

*Minority and Majority as Asymmetrical Concepts: The Perils of Democratic Equality and Fantasies of National Purity*

**Pieter Judson**, European University Institute

*National Indifference and National Self-Determination in Habsburg Central Europe 1914-1923*

**Alvin Jackson**, University of Edinburgh

*The United Kingdom State and its National Communities, c.1850-1921*

Discussant: **Davide Rodogno**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

12:15 – 13:30 Lunch break

**13:30 – 15:00 COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE**

Chair: **Andre Liebich**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Janine-Marie Calic**, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

*The Yugoslav Nation and its Minorities in the Interwar Period*

**Chris R. Davis**, Lone Star College–Kingwood

*A Case Study in Heterogeneity: The Moldavian Csangos between Romania and Hungary*

Discussant: **Bojan Aleksov**, University College London

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

**15:30 – 17:00 COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

Chair: **Mona Bieling**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Marina Germane**, Universität Wien

*A 'Melancholy Enterprise'? Revisiting German and Jewish Minorities' Cooperation in Interwar Europe*

**Kathryn Ciancia**, University of Wisconsin-Madison

*Eastern Poland and the Question of Interwar Global Sovereignty*

Discussant: **Andre Liebich**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

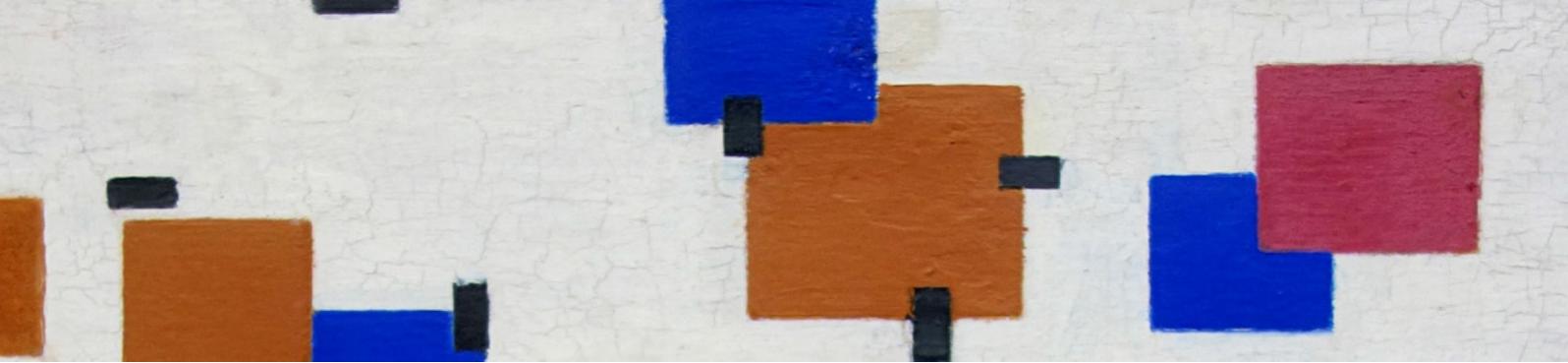
→ AUDITORIUM A1B

**18:15 – 19:45 PUBLIC LECTURE**

**Eric Weitz**, City College of New York

*A World Divided: The Global Struggle for Human Rights in the Age of Nation-States*

20:15 Workshop dinner by invitation



SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONALISM AND HOMOGENEITY  
IN EUROPE BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

FRIDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2020

→ ROOM S5

**09:15 – 10:45 COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES: WESTERN EUROPE**

Chair: **Davide Rodogno**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Emmanuel Dalle Mulle, Mona Bieling**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

*Sovereignty and Homogeneity: A History of Majority-Minority Relations in Interwar Western Europe*

**Volker Prott**, Aston University, Birmingham

*Assessing the 'Paris System': Self-Determination and Ethnic Violence in Alsace-Lorraine and Asia Minor, 1919–1923*

Discussant: **Eric Storm**, Leiden University

10:45 – 11:00 Coffee Break

**11:00 – 12:30 INTERNATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

Chair: **Emmanuel Dalle Mulle**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**David J. Smith**, University of Glasgow

*The 1920s European Nationalities Congress and its Conception of Statehood and Minority Rights*

**Xosé M. Núñez Seixas**, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela

*Internationalist Patriots? Minority Nationalists, Ethnonational Activists, Transnational Networks and the Global Interwar Stage, 1918-1939*

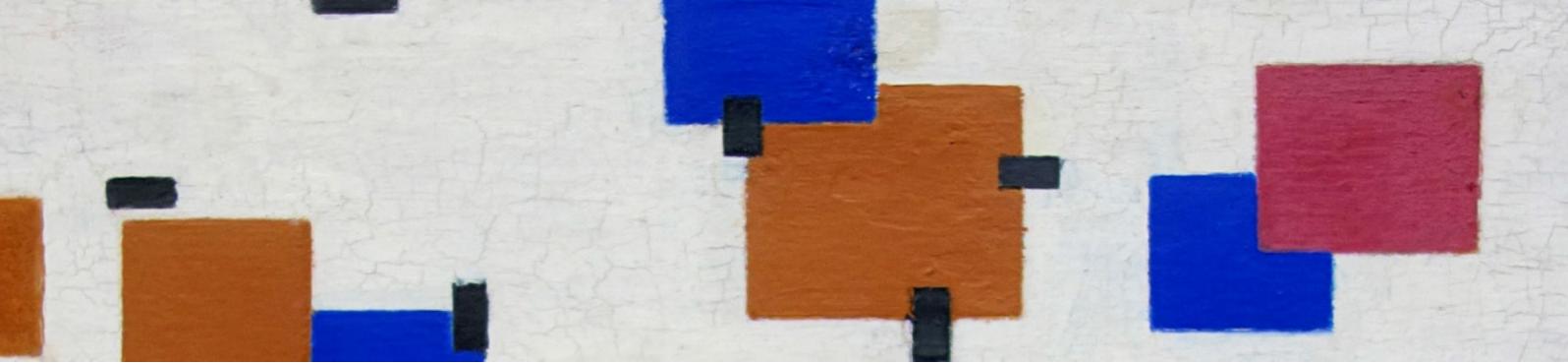
Discussant: **Sandrine Kott**, University of Geneva

**12:30 – 13:00 CONCLUSIONS**

**Davide Rodogno**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Emmanuel Dalle Mulle**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva

**Mona Bieling**, the Graduate Institute, Geneva



## ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

### MARIE-JANINE CALIC

#### The Yugoslav Nation and its Minorities in the Interwar Period

The first Yugoslav state emerged in 1918 as the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Yugoslavia from 1929 onward). Before that, there had never been a political entity called Yugoslavia (Southern Slavia). This paper deals with the question of how intellectuals, artists, and politicians imagined the Yugoslav nation and how these imaginations changed over time. Precisely which peoples and groups belonged to the Yugoslav nation, which at the time consisted of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs only? What role would the historical, cultural, and religious characteristics of other South Slavic groups (like Bosnian Muslims and Macedonians) play within this nation? And, what role for up to twenty non-Slavic minorities? The idea of a Southslavic “melting pot” corresponded with both Western and regional assumptions that ethnic minorities should (and would over time naturally) be assimilated into the state nation. Against this background, minority protection as provided by the League of Nation was considered merely as a temporary requirement. Yet, there was a broad range of perception, treatment and status of different minorities, as was the case with the attitude and behaviour towards the nation-state by members of the nationalities (or minorities).

**Marie-Janine Calic** is a Professor of East and South East European History at the University of Munich. Apart from her permanent employment she worked and consulted for the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe in Brussels, UNPROFOR-Headquarters in Zagreb, and the ICTY in the Hague. Her recent publications include: *The Great Cauldron. A History of Southeast Europe* (2019); and *A History of Yugoslavia* (2019). She is a regular commentator on Balkan affairs for the media.

### KATHRYN CIANCIA

#### Eastern Poland and the Question of Interwar Global Sovereignty

This paper explores how the central questions of interwar sovereignty—which national groups had the right to rule others, and on what basis—took shape in Volhynia, a contested province in interwar eastern Poland. Rather than offering a top-down study of ‘majority-minority relations,’ it traces how locally based Polish state and semi-state actors, including border guards, national activists, health officials, and female charity workers, sought to prove that the Polish state could, indeed should, administer an area inhabited by a predominantly Ukrainian-speaking population. In challenging

the ideas of Ukrainian self-determination, these men and women drew on broader global ideas that tied sovereignty to the civilizational ‘readiness’ of particular national groups.

**Kathryn Ciancia** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She received her BA from Oxford University, her MA from University College-London, and her PhD from Stanford University. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Modern History* and *Slavic Review*. Her forthcoming book, an exploration of internal ‘civilizing missions’ in the interwar eastern borderland province of Volhynia, will be published by Oxford University Press in 2020.

### EMMANUEL DALLE MULLE, MONA BIELING

#### Sovereignty and Homogeneity: A History of Majority-Minority Relations in Interwar Western Europe

The immediate post-WWI period was a key moment of transition for democracy in Europe. While self-determination became one of the main principles of political legitimacy in international relations, several countries introduced universal male suffrage or lowered property requirements attached to voting rights, thus enfranchising large swathes of the population and entering the age of mass politics. The peace treaties negotiated at Versailles also imposed a system of protection of racial, religious and linguistic minorities on the countries arising from the dissolution of the Eastern empires that included an unprecedented international guarantee of minority rights entrusted to the League of Nations. Although in such a context of national democratisation majority-minority relations acquired an unprecedented relevance throughout the continent, the current international history literature on the subject is excessively focused on Eastern Europe and the minority system of the League of Nations. Building on the cases of Belgium, Italy and Spain, this contribution aims to amend such imbalance by providing a comparative perspective on inter-group relations in Western Europe during the two World Wars. The paper makes two major arguments. First, Western European countries did not necessarily treat their minorities better than the Eastern European ones (which, at the time, were considered not sufficiently mature to deal with cultural difference without international supervision). Second, national assimilation was a common goal of government institutions in all our three case studies and, although liberal regimes were certainly more willing to accommodate cultural difference than authoritarian ones, even a liberal democracy like Belgium displayed in-built tendencies to further a certain degree of cultural and linguistic assimilation at the expense of local minorities.

**Emmanuel Dalle Mulle** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. He previously worked at the Catholic University of Leuven and the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona), and held visiting researcher positions at the London School of Economics, Boston University and the Vrije Universiteit Brussels. Specialised in nationalism and ethnic politics, his research interests include Western European nationalist parties, welfare nationalism, minority-majority relations and separatism.

**Mona Bieling** is a doctoral student at the department of International History at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva. Her PhD research looks at Mandate Palestine (1917-1948) and examines how land development changed the power relations between the different human actors involved. Mona holds a BA in Language and Culture Studies from the University of Utrecht and an MA in International History from the Graduate Institute. She has spent semesters abroad at the University of Haifa, Israel, as well as at the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

#### R. CHRIS DAVIS

##### **A Case Study in Heterogeneity: The Moldavian Csangos between Romania and Hungary**

In recent years, scholarship on identity and population policies in East Central Europe has proliferated, including analyses on how the sciences facilitated the mapping, categorizing, registering, and inscribing the putative identities of the region's diverse populations dating back to the late-nineteenth century. Under explored, however, are the ways in which minorities themselves appropriated the languages of especially the sociological and biomedical sciences in order to obscure the state's synoptic views over marginalized populations. In the process, some minorities created legitimating new views about themselves and their neighbors. Using the case study of the demographically, ethnographically, and nationally "enigmatic" Csango community from the Moldavian region of Eastern Romania, this paper builds on the author's recent book by examining minority responses to the state- and majority-imposed homogenization projects that bolstered "myths of homogeneity" in post-WWI Romania and Hungary. As part of a broader competition for the resources and energies of popular mobilization, the various ethnographic, sociological, biopolitical, and even religious projects discussed in this paper informed one another and offered new ways within which populations could be analyzed, represented, and understood, and moreover became modalities in which minorities could be integrated or else excluded. Yet some minorities made creative use of these same disciplinary languages and discourses as a means of self-empowerment, advancing their quest for social justice and minority rights while broadening the parameters of national and ethnic belonging. Keenly aware of their minority status within newly created nation states undergoing a period

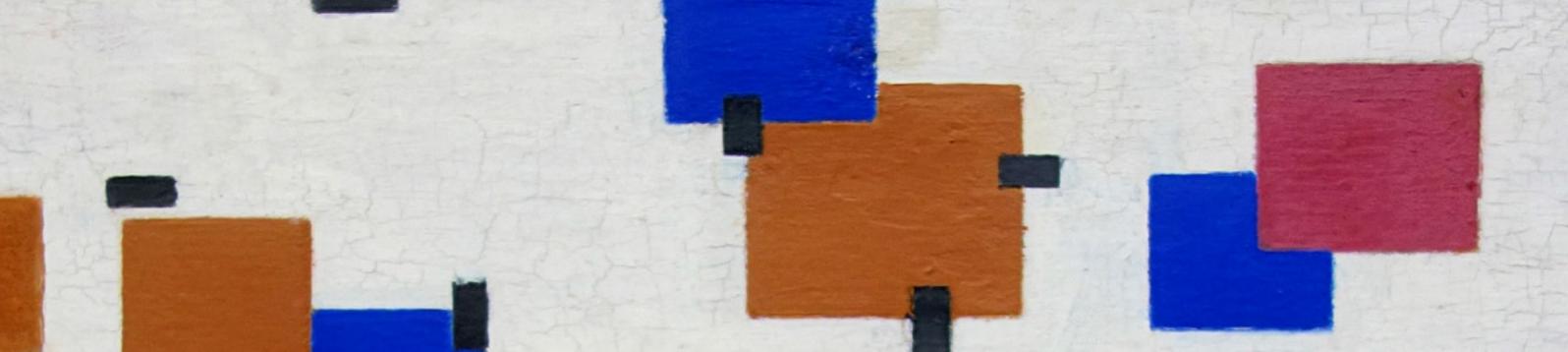
of "national" consolidation, and forced to reckon with the ambiguity of nationalized forms of modernity, minorities such as the Csangos generated powerful new asymmetries and potent counter-discourses that aided resistance to state-imposed, coercive population policies.

**R. Chris Davis** is an Associate Professor of History at Lone Star College–Kingwood, where he is founder and coordinator of the LSC Center for Local & Oral History. He teaches US, European, and World History, as well as oral history and film studies. Chris researches and writes on minorities and religion in twentieth century east-central Europe. Currently, he serves as a book-reviews editor for *H-Romania* and as a board member for the Society for Romanian Studies. He recently published his first book, *Hungarian Religion, Romanian Blood: A Minority's Struggle for National Belonging, 1920–1945* (Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2019).

#### MARINA GERMANE

##### **A 'Melancholy Enterprise'? Revisiting German and Jewish Minorities' Cooperation in Interwar Europe**

The German and Jewish minorities formed the two biggest factions at the Congress of European Nationalities (ENC, est. 1925), as well as spearheading minority rights movement in their respective home countries. Their shared commitment to the idea of non-territorial cultural autonomy (NTA), which they saw as a possible solution to the minority question in Central and Eastern Europe, underpinned the ENC's lobbying efforts at the League of Nations. In 1933, this transnational minority collaboration came to an abrupt end when the ENC failed to meet the Jewish faction's demand to issue a statement explicitly condemning the anti-Jewish policies of the Reich. After the Jewish delegates left the Congress in protest, it was gradually taken over by the Sudeten Germans already firmly under the sway of Nazism. Although the ENC continued to meet until 1938, its democratic period was effectively over. This paper traces the short-lived cooperation between these two minorities from their origins in Eastern Europe – on the examples of interwar Poland, Romania and Latvia – to its culmination at the ENC in Geneva during the 1920s, and then to its demise during the ENC Bern Congress of 1933. It follows the individual paths of six minority politicians that took them from their respective home countries, where they were actively pursuing minority rights at both municipal and parliamentary levels, to the international arena, where they formed a multi-ethnic transnational alliance. By exploring their social and educational backgrounds, political affiliations, and ideological stances, as well as comparing domestic political environments they operated in, the paper contemplates the initial preconditions for successful interethnic minority cooperation. Set against a wider historical background, the paper highlights both similarities and differences in the situation both minorities found themselves in after World War One, as well as



## ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

comparing their respective strategies and tactics – paying special attention to NTA as a shared platform – deployed in order to achieve the rights guaranteed to them by the Peace Treaties in practice. By examining the internal dynamics of the ENC, as well as external facilitating factors and constraints, such as the policies of the League of Nations, on which the ENC was modelled, the politics of nation-states, and the overall fragility of international environment during the interwar period, the paper aims to explore the limits of minorities' cooperation in the world predicated on territorial sovereignty.

**Marina Germane** is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Vienna. Her research interests include European political history of the 19-20th centuries (with a particular focus on the interwar period), nationalism and identity, minority rights, non-territorial cultural autonomy, and transnationalism. She is currently working on a research project about transnational minority activism during the 20th century. Her most recent article (with David J Smith and Martyn Housden) "‘Forgotten Europeans’: transnational minority activism in the age of European integration" appeared in *Nations and Nationalism* in 2019.

### ALVIN JACKSON

#### **The United Kingdom State and its National Communities, c.1850-1921**

This paper looks at the various central institutions of the supposedly unitary United Kingdom state. It examines their complex relationship with the 'minority' national communities (Irish, Scots, Welsh) across the Kingdom in the period from the mid-19th century through to (what might be described as) the dissolution of the first United Kingdom in 1921. Several overarching themes are explored. One of the key features of the unions of the United Kingdom was relative flexibility. But, while flexibility implied the capacity to respond effectively to regional difference, it also suggested the possibility of an incremental creep towards greater centralisation and 'homogeneity'. The preeminent binding identity of the United Kingdom – Britishness – is also considered in terms of its limitations as well as its taxonomy. Was Britishness 'a national identity' or a nationalism – or a form of overarching dynastic identity, similar to Habsburgtreue? 'Britishness' certainly had some of the characteristics of each of these – but it could not fully embrace a variety of minority communities across the United Kingdom. The detailed agenda of the workshop is also addressed. 'Was cultural homogeneity required by the United Kingdom state to have its citizens identify with an overarching political community'? The suggestion here is that in many ways the British union state – in contrast to its constituent 'minority' nations – was a remarkably under-imagined institution. Like Austria-Hungary, however, there were sets of key institutions which served to bind the polity together. Were there, therefore, 'patterns of homogenisation within minority groups'? In all of

the nations within the 'British Isles' there was clear (though greatly varied) evidence of the impact of the central cultural embrace of the union state, and indeed the related nationalisms may be seen (in part) as responses to the tightening of this embrace in the late 19th century. 'How did ordinary people negotiate their identities with state institutions?' There is some evidence which points to the kind of contingent or situational negotiation of identities which others have identified within the supposedly nationalised communities of the Habsburg empire. The paper concludes by looking at the impact of the war upon the relationship between the 'homogenising' union state and its constituent nations. Here, once again, there are some analogies between the United Kingdom and other (continental) European multi-national polities, in terms (for example) of the relegation of minority questions in wartime. Like its defeated continental enemies, the United Kingdom, too, experienced a fragmentation, continuing conflict, and eventually gave birth to successor polities.

**Alvin Jackson** is Sir Richard Lodge Professor of History at the University of Edinburgh: he is an honorary Member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Member of the Academia Europaea. His books include *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707-2007* (OUP: 2012/13) and his edited *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (OUP: 2014/17). He was recently awarded a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship to develop his comparative work on multi-national union states.

### PIETER JUDSON

#### **National Indifference and National Self-Determination in Habsburg Central Europe 1914-1923**

The paper examines the relationship between ideas of national self-determination and democratic practice in the context of Habsburg Central Europe during and immediately after the First World War. Who exactly was imagined to be the democratic subject when it came to concepts and practices of national self-determination? How did people on the ground relate to or make political claims based on ideas about nationhood and democracy?

Using the concept of 'national indifference' the paper explores the ways that contemporaries understood the role of nationhood and its particular meanings to their lives, excavating from below, so to speak, what local populations believed, wanted, and imagined for themselves, at the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy. National indifference does not suggest ignorance of nationhood or even that nationhood is unimportant. Rather, it implies that nationhood is important to people only in particular ways and in particular situations. Its centrality to people's goals is not sustainable over time. What matters, what needs to be investigated, are those situations that can produce powerful feelings of nationalism.

I will argue that 1) national self-determination did not contradict the concept of empire or many institutions of the Habsburg Monarchy; 2) that the revolutions at the end of the war were not nationalist ones; 3) that nationalists' assertion of a necessary link between self-determination and democracy guaranteed the creation of unhappy majorities and minorities; 4) that minorities and majorities resulted from the ways in which post-war regimes invoked laws and traditions about nationhood that stemmed from specific Habsburg practices; 5) finally, that by rejecting the Habsburg state and its legacies in rhetorical terms, the new states had to assert that sustained stability required national homogeneity. From both the perspectives of popular legitimacy and survival, national homogeneity became a long-term goal to be accomplished one way or another.

**Pieter M. Judson** currently holds the chair in 19th- and 20th century history at the European University Institute in Florence. He is the author of works on empire, nationalism, national indifference, liberalism, and gender in Habsburg Central Europe. His most recent book, *The Habsburg Empire. A New History* (Harvard 2016) is being translated into eleven languages.

**XOSÉ M. NÚÑEZ SEIXAS**

**Internationalist Patriots? Minority Nationalists, Ethnonational Activists, Transnational Networks and the Global Interwar Stage, 1918-1939**

European ethno-nationalist activists in the interwar period also engaged themselves on the global arena. While some of them relied on their own diasporic networks and waited for a geo-strategic chance, others established transnational agitation platforms of the 'oppressed peoples'. However, it proved difficult to reconcile the demands stemming from divergent national claims, such as those of autonomist factions versus pro-independence groups, or those of national minorities seeking reintegration into their motherland as opposed to groups seeking independence. The paper will explore the relationship between minority nationalist exiles and transnationalism, by focusing on three issues: 1) the emergence and evolution of 'international alliances' of minority activists in interwar Europe; 2) the ideological transfers between ethno-nationalist activists and transnational networks that claimed to represent diverse segments of European public opinion (from radical liberals to pacifist activists and communists, but also fascists); and, 3) the emergence of a transnational nationality theory that aimed at deconstructing the nation-state, which to some extent heralded what in the post-1945 period would be called as the 'Europe of the free peoples'.

**Xosé M. Núñez Seixas** (Ph.D. EUI Florence) is a Full Professor of Modern History at the University of Santiago de Compostela; he has also taught at LMU Munich. He has

published widely on the comparative history of nationalist movements and national and regional identities. Last books include *Die bewegte Nation: Der spanische Nationalgedanke, 1808-2019* (Hamburg 2019) and (coedited with E. Storm), *Regionalism and Modern Europe. Identity Constructions and Movements from 1890 to the Present Day* (London 2018).

**VOLKER PROTT**

**Assessing the 'Paris System': Self-Determination and Ethnic Violence in Alsace-Lorraine and Asia Minor, 1919–1923**

In 1919, it was a long journey from the late Ottoman city of Smyrna, today's Izmir, to Strasbourg, the capital of the hitherto German and now French region of Alsace. While Strasbourg was located in the heart of 'Western' Europe, Smyrna lay in the 'East'. Yet following the First World War, both cities were seized by a similar dynamic of national self-determination and ethnic violence that had been set in motion by the Paris Peace Conference. In both cases, preliminary decisions at Paris were followed by the attempts of states, regional authorities, and local people to use or propagate ethnic violence to strengthen and legitimise territorial claims.

This paper compares Asia Minor and Alsace-Lorraine to assess the 'Paris system' (Eric Weitz)—a new international order that tied state sovereignty to a vaguely-defined national legitimacy of the state. Both regions saw mass ethnic violence and attempts of ethnic homogenisation after the end of the war, although to a different degree and with opposite outcomes. In the case of Alsace-Lorraine, the French state was able to halt the escalation of violence and stabilise the region and the border after the Treaty of Versailles. In Asia Minor, ethnic violence degenerated into large-scale massacres and full-blown war between Greece and Turkish national forces, ending with the defeat of Greece, the exodus of most Christians from Asia Minor, and the reversal of the Treaty of Sèvres.

The paper discusses several variables that determined the course of the two conflicts: state power, degree of international commitment, nature and strength of local political identities, and adequacy of preliminary territorial decisions. It concludes by encouraging debate whether it is possible and useful to develop a wider framework of comparison for European and possibly non-European regions affected by the 'Paris system'.

**Volker Prott** is Lecturer in Modern History at Aston University in Birmingham, UK. His fields of interest include the history of nationalism and borders, ethnic violence, and humanitarian politics in the twentieth century. His first monograph, *The Politics of Self-determination: Remaking Territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917–1923*, was published with OUP in 2016. Prott is currently working on foreign interventions in the Cold War, focussing on the Congo Crisis in the 1960s and the Indo-Pakistani conflict (1947–50 and 1971). The project explores the conflicted rise of transnational politics

before the 'boom' of foreign interventions since the 1990s.

**DAVID SMITH**

**The 1920s European Nationalities Congress and its Conception of Statehood and Minority Rights**

The post-World War I minorities treaties and the associated minority protection system of the League of Nations had as their goal the regulation of inter-ethnic conflicts and the consolidation of the successor states arising out of the peace settlements. The founders of the European Nationalities Congress (estd. in Geneva 1925) were committed to the same end, and initially invested great hopes in the League as a multilateral instrument for ensuring peace and stability in Europe. Yet, whereas the League system was predicated on protecting the individual rights of persons belonging to minorities, ENC leaders insisted that it should provide for collective rights according to the principle of national cultural (non-territorial) autonomy (NCA). For the ENC, a lasting solution to the 'nationalities question' lay in the empowerment (both national and transnational) of minorities as democratic actors, as opposed simply to their 'protection' by states. In 1931, in response to sustained ENC lobbying, the League Minority Secretariat produced an evaluation of the NCA model, but found no compelling evidence of its wider applicability beyond the Republic of Estonia where it was adopted during the 1920s. The exchange of views between the two parties during this period nicely illustrates currents of democratic thought within the original ENC which were highly innovative and, in many respects, years ahead of their time. Yet, they also cast light on the shortcomings of ENC as a transnational actor purporting to speak on behalf of all of Europe's diverse minority communities, as well as the broader structural factors that fuelled ENC's transformation from an autonomous coalition of minorities to an instrument of Nazi German foreign policy after 1933.

**David Smith** is Professor and Alec Nove Chair in Russian and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow. He has written extensively on issues of ethnopolitics, minority activism and conflict regulation in Central and Eastern Europe, both historic and contemporary. His book *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation-State* (2012, with John Hiden) examined the relationship between the European Nationalities Congress and the League of Nations. More recently, he co-authored (with Marina Germane and Martyn Housden) the article "Forgotten Europeans: transnational minority activism in the age of European integration" (*Nations and Nationalism*, 2018).

**TILL VAN RAHDEN**

**Minority and Majority as Asymmetrical Concepts: The Perils of Democratic Equality and Fantasies of National Purity**

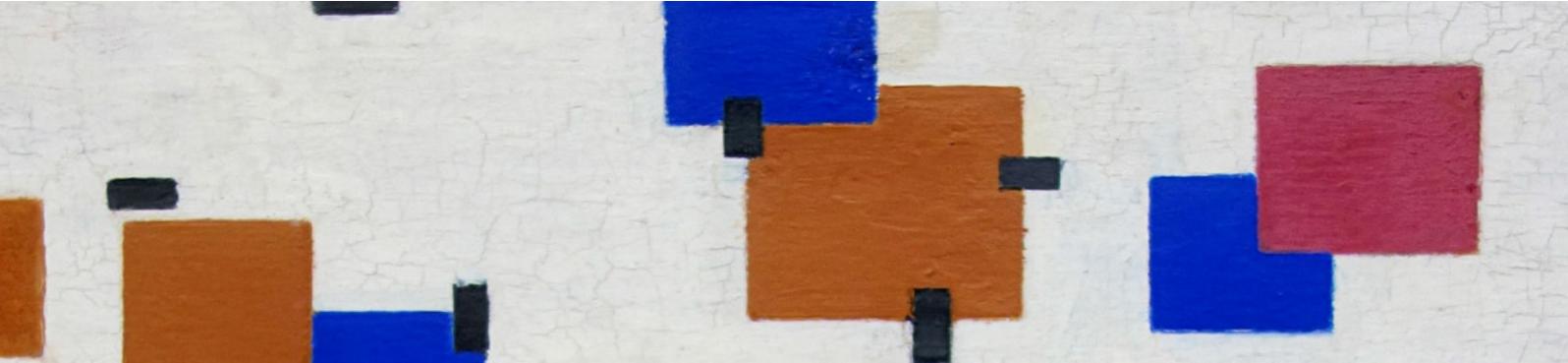
In recent years, scholars in the humanities have helped us to understand how many of the terms that we use to negotiate the tension between equality and difference, between the universal and the particular are 'essentially contested concepts.' In contrast, the conceptual couple of majority/minority seems to transcend the polemics in controversies over equality and difference. Against this background, it is surprising to note that there is no study of the conceptual history of the term 'minority' let alone the twin concepts of 'majority' and 'minority.' As a point of departure, scholars may start by exploring questions historians should have begun to study long ago, namely when, where and why it became seemingly self-evident to neatly compartmentalize societies and their history into a majority and minorities. The idea of a dichotomy between majority and minority as a short hand to describe relations between ethnic or religious groups is fairly recent, in fact it did not exist before 1919 when in the wake of World War I and the collapse of the Empires in continental Europe the idea of democracy and the idea of the homogeneous nation-state triumphed simultaneously.

**Till van Rahden** is Professor of German and European Studies at the Université de Montréal. He specializes in European history since the Enlightenment and is interested in the tension between the elusive promise of democratic equality and the recurrent presence of differences and moral conflicts. He recently published *Demokratie: Eine gefährdete Lebensform* (Frankfurt/New York, 2019). His dissertation received the 'Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History' and was published as *Jews and other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925* (Madison, 2008). He held research fellowships at the 'Leibniz Institute for European History', Mainz, the 'Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften', Bad Homburg, and the 'Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen', Vienna. He is a visiting fellow at the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy of the Graduate Institute, Geneva.

**ERIC D. WEITZ**

**A World Divided: The Global Struggle for Human Rights in the Age of Nation-States**

Once dominated by vast empires, the world is now divided into close to 200 independent countries with laws and constitutions proclaiming human rights—a transformation that suggests that nation-states and human rights are inextricably entwined. Through vivid histories drawn from virtually every continent, *A World Divided* describes how, since the eighteenth century, nationalists have struggled to establish their own states that grant human rights to some people. At the same time, they have excluded others through forced assimilation, ethnic cleansing, or even genocide. From Greek rebels, American settlers, and Brazilian abolitionists in the nineteenth century to anticolonial Africans and Zionists in the twentieth, nationalists



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have confronted the question: Who has the 'right to have rights?' *A World Divided* tells these stories in accounts focusing on people who were at the center of events. And it shows that rights are dynamic. Proclaimed originally for propertied white men, rights were quickly demanded by others, including black slaves, women, and American Indians. *A World Divided* also explains the origins of many of today's crises, from the existence of more than 70 million refugees and migrants to the growth of right-wing nationalism. The book argues that only the continual advance of international human rights will move us beyond the quandary of a world divided between rights-bearing citizens and those deprived of rights. In this book presentation, Weitz will focus on three of the nine case studies that constitute the book, including the creation of minorities, Armenians and Jews in particular. He will argue that minority recognition is always double-edged. While promoted by human rights and minority activists as the path to citizenship and full equality, recognition can also be the source of discrimination and violent attacks.

**Eric D. Weitz** is Distinguished Professor of History at City College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Trained in modern German and European history, Weitz also works in international and global history. His most recent books are, *A World Divided: The Global Struggle for Human Rights in the Age of Nation-States* (2019) and *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (2007, 2018), both with Princeton University Press. He also edits a book series for Princeton, Human Rights and Crimes against Humanity, and lectures widely in public and academic settings on the history of human rights and genocides and on Weimar Germany.