ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE 1

Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas. University of Santiago de Compostela.

Some notes towards a transnational approach to the history of national movements (19th-20th centuries)

The lecture will address the possibilities and limits of a transnational history of national movements in the modern period, encompassing Europe and its interactions with the Americas and other continents between 1848 and the beginning of the 21st century.

After a theory-oriented introduction, the lecture intends to deal with the following issues: a) the ideological and cultural transfers among European and non-European national movements, and the mechanisms of appropriation of external models by national activists; b) the existence of 'waves' of nationalism and/or national self-determination, from the Wilsonian moment to the 'anti-colonial wave' of the 1960s, and the 'inner enlargement' of the EU; and c) why is it relevant to bring the transnational perspective in the study of nationalism.

To endorse these points, several examples belonging to different areas of Europe will be analysed.

SESSION 1. Irredentism and Periphery
Chaired by Paolo Perri

Alfonso Iglesias Amorín. University of Santiago de Compostela.

Sub-state nationalisms in Spain and the Rif War (1909-1927)

Spain was a neutral country during the First World War, so it was not directly affected by the largest military conflict ever seen before. However, in the first third of the 20th century the country was at war most of the time. The colonial conflict in Morocco, known as the Rif War, started in 1909 and lasted until 1927. The long war was a great challenge for the Spanish Army, which received severe setbacks before managing to control its area of influence. Among these defeats, the "Annual Disaster" in the Summer of 1921 stands out. Around 10,000 Spanish soldiers were killed, making it the worst European colonial disaster in Africa. Thanks to this victory, the Riffians, led by Abd El-Krim, established their own State, the Rif Republic, which made the situation very complicated for Spain in a territory situated within the borders of its Protectorate since 1912.

This conflict is a key element in Spanish 20th-century history. It was one of the triggers for Miguel Primo de Rivera's coup in 1923, it favoured the rise of the military elite that revolted against the Second Republic in 1936, and was since 1909 one of the main arguments in the protests of a growing labour movement, who used popular discontent for propaganda purposes.

The war was also closely linked to Spanish nationalism. Patriotism was very intense, participating in the military exaltation of a conflict that increased "nation consumption". However, various elements disfavoured the strengthening of Spanish nationalism, as both the military disasters and the continuous "blood tax" made the war unpopular and undermined warlike patriotism. In this context, sub-state nationalisms, which were at a key moment of growth and consolidation, found a favourable context for creating distances to the centre as they exploited the link with the war to discredit Spanish nationalism.

Positions ranged from moderates, comprising those who opposed the conflict and showed anti-war feelings, to extremely radical (especially among Basque and Catalan nationalists, and much less in Galicia) amongst supporters of the Riffian cause. As considering themselves as enemies of Spain, the Riffians were seen as allies, sharing similar independence goals. It did, however, not prevent other manifestations of sub-state nationalism, such as in Catalonia, that favoured Spanish colonialism as it benefited their economic interests.

This paper will analyse how the Rif War, especially in the aftermath of the Versailles Treaty and the new claims on colonial peripheries, influenced Catalan, Basque and Galician nationalisms, at an absolute key moment in their development. It will show how they used war to mobilize people against the prevailing Spanish nationalism. The warmongering, colonialist, anti-war and anti-colonial discourses of these nationalisms will be analysed. The positions of the main political parties and leaders will be discussed. In short, it will seek to assess the impact that this long and important war had on the different Spanish national identities in the first third of the 20th century.

Marco Stolfo. University of Udine.

Battlefield, outpost or oasis of peace? Identities, self-government and nationalism(s) in Friuli between 1919 and 1939

In 1973 the Italian essayist Sergio Salvi published a book (*Le nazioni proibite: Guida a dieci colonie interne dell'Europa occidentale*) on peripherical and sub-state nationalisms in Western Europe. The author focused on ten examples of "forbidden nations", situated in Spain, France, the United Kingdom and Italy. One of them is Friuli: a region in the Northeast of Italy, near the border with Austria and Slovenia. Its specific cultural and linguistic identity lead to repeated claims on self-government and self-determination during the last century. The roots and the perspectives of those claims are the references to the "Friulian nation".

Friulian (linguistic, cultural and political) nationalism is a minority nationalism which came to the surface during the early twentieth century, and most and for all during and after WWI. It is not the only nationalism concerning Friuli. Within the region, also notions of the Italian nationalism were vivid as they already had appeared during the nineteenth century and became more forceful after the annexation, in 1866, of Central and Western Friuli to the Kingdom of Italy. Also nationalism of the Slovenian minority has to be taken into account. It concerns only parts of Eastern Friuli and is more or less connected to its evolution in Slovenia.

Italian nationalism developed further after WWI as it tried to suppress and assimilate cultural and linguistic Friulian and Slovenian identities. In the post-war period, Italian nationalism became more vindictive, as it applied rethorics relating to the outcomes of the war (Friuli was one of the battlefields) in order to realize the completion of the Italian independence process. Italian nationalists invoked concepts like the "liberation" of the "unredeemed lands", being the regions of the Habsburg Empire claimed by the Kingdom of Italy, including the Eastern Friuli, or that of the "mutilated victory" after the 1919 Saint Germain De Laye Treaty and contributed to the rise of Fascism.

During the Interbellum, Friulian cultural and linguistic identity was exploited and manipulated by Italian nationalists. Myths like that of the "little homeland" were created, defining Friuli as an outpost of the one and only Italian Homeland, and a region inhabited by "persistent, honest, hard-working and ready-to-fight-and-die-for Italy" population. During that period, Friulian cultural and linguistic identity was at the root of diverging visions and claims. It gave rise to "the dream of a Friulian Republic" in socialist newspapers and magazines, and to the idea of an autonomous Friuli that was depicted as an "oasis of peace" amidst imperialist nationalism (a view developed by Achille Tellini), whilst the idea of "Friulian nation" gained "scientific" recognition (from a Marxist point of view) by the Slovene Communists in the nineteen thirties. Those experiences and approaches will be recovered and developed at the end onf WWII and during the second part of the XX century.

Deona Cali. Aleksander Moisiu Univerity.

The Albanian minority question in the League of Nations

The paper addresses the policies of the League of Nations vis-a-vis the minority question in Albania during the years 1921-1924. It intends to analyse the effectiveness of the League of Nations in its commitment to defend the minority issue in the case of Albania, focusing especially on the Albanian minority in Greece.

After the First World War, the victorious states signed treaties with their allies, as well as with newly created states, regulating the protection of minorities. As the League of Nations was engaged in the protection of minorities, the peace treaties signed with the defeated states, included chapters on the issue within their borders. Treaties of that kind were signed with Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey. Albania started addressing the issue shortly after its admission in December 1920 to the League of Nations. Since Albania was the only country without defined national borders to be accepted in the League of Nations, its treatment of the minority issue deserves special attention. This paper focusses on the dealings of both the Albanian government and the league of Nations with Albanian minorities in surrounding countries, and especially in Greece.

On October 2nd, 1921, the Albanian representative Fan Noli signed a declaration in favour of the protection of minorities in Albania. The stipulations were to be considered basic laws of the country, implying that no law, article, rule or official action could overrule the first article of the declaration. The Albanian government declared to protect the lives and secure the freedom of all its inhabitants without distinction of nationality, race or religion. In order to secure the implementation of the declaration, all articles had to be put into effect for the signing states to be admitted to the League of Nations.

Research for this paper is based on letters and memos sent to the League of Nations. To assess the effectiveness of the League of Nations in asserting the rights the Albanian minority, I examine the complaints and memos sent by the Albanian Government and Albanian immigration societies such as the Pan Albanian Federation called "Vatra", the Romanian-Albanian society and the Istanbul-Albanian society. Also complaints and memos sent by Greece, assessing the effectiveness of the League's policies will be analysed. As such, it will add to our knowledge of the role of the League of Nations in minorities' question in small countries like Albania.

SESSION 2. Irredentism and minorities debated
Chaired by Joep Leerssen

Sébastien Carney. Université de Bretagne Occidentale.

"Peuples et Frontières" (Peoples and borders), a Europeanist journal against the Europe of the Treaties (1936-1939)

From 1919 onward, some voices in Brittany claimed the right of the Breton people to self-government. Grouped around the newspaper Breiz Atao, a team of young activists pretended to lead Brittany to autonomy within the framework of a federal Europe, or even to independence, which would have required a redrawing of borders. Very quickly the Europe of the Treaties was criticized, in a logic of rapprochement with other regional nationalisms, and with Germany where some nationals stirred up regional claims.

This Breton and European activism is best illustrated in the Bulletin des minorités nationales en France, created in 1936 by Olier Mordrel. Quickly renamed as Peuples et Frontières (Peoples and Borders), this monthly magazine was mainly led by Yann Fouéré, whose network extended to central Europe. This paper is geared to the peoples and borders dealt with in in this magazine. My paper will try to show in what context Peuples et Frontières appeared, who the main actors were and what its discourse aimed at.

Jelle Krol, Tresoar, Leeuwarden.

Four Minority Language Writers in the Aftermath of World War I

In my paper I will present a synthesis of my study *Minority Language Writers in the aftermath of World War One: A Case Study of Four European Authors*, published with Palgrave Macmillan in the series 'Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities' in 2020/2021. As a unique comparative study of four minority language literatures, Frisian, Welsh, Scots and Breton, the project offers an analysis of the work of four vanguard writers whose aim was to create distinctive literary fields for their languages in an era when self-determination was promised to national minorities. The birth of new states after the First World War ignited hope in the hearts of various minority language writers that their 'peripheral' regions and languages might also gain autonomy and status. These hopes blossomed when, in January 1918, the United States president Woodrow Wilson produced his plan for a peace treaty, known as the 'Fourteen Points', and the victors agreed to comply with some of his objectives to enable minority cultures to become self-governing. However, in those states that had not been defeated the Principal Allied and Associated Power States in the League of Nations seemed determined to have the minority cultures ultimately assimilate into the nation at large and they increasingly ignored minority treaties. Furthermore, even as new borders were emerging to define new nations, there was another contrary movement taking place: the spread of international socialism which sought to cross barriers.

Trends in literature reflected these developments. The creation of autonomous 'small nations' intensified feelings of nationalism in young European vanguard writers who steered attention towards literatures in minority languages. The decision to write in a minority language was, and frequently still is, a statement of cultural politics.

I will refer the audience to Pascale Casanova's perspective that writing in minority languages by authors from late nineteenth or early twentieth century emergent nations should be regarded as 'littératures combatives'. Following the analysis of seminal texts by Frisian author Douwe Kalma, Welsh playwright Saunders Lewis, Scots poet Hugh MacDiarmid and Breton writer Roparz Hemon, the strategies adopted by the four writers are examined and compared. I will compare Pascale Casanova's 'Irish Paradigm' with the 'Reculer pour mieux sauter' pattern, which in my analysis, can be discerned in the work of all four. I will argue that all four authors had to make the inevitable step backwards into the past to enable them to make the leap forward, and discuss the problems resulting from this oscillation between traditionalism and modernism.

Joana-I Duyster-Borredà. University of Copenhagen.

Debating Diversity, Minorities and Small Nationhood. Catalan Nationalism in the Interwar Years, 1914-1936.

'The big states will fall in order to give way to the redeeming idea of the liberty of the oppressed people.'[1]

The First World War was one of the most transformative events in the history of nationalism as well as for 'inter-national' political and cultural cooperation. Regionalists, ethnic minorities and public intellectuals used various international organisations as an arena to further their political and cultural agendas.[2] For the Catalan case, Núñez Seixas and others have shown how the First World War led to an increase in new possibilities for political engagement.[3]

After the First World War and Wilson's Fourteen Points, the restructuring of Europe which many nationalists had prophesied seemed to fulfil itself. In a petition for a Statute of Autonomy, some Catalan deputies described November 1918 as an historic moment pointing to the realisation of their philosophy of history and the ideal of 'small states': 'this solemn moment of universal history, which throughout the world is witnessing the triumph of the principle of the collective right of peoples'.[4]

The story of self-determination and liberation, however, soon became more complicated which also found its way in the discussions of diversity, minority protection and small and multinational states in the press and classrooms in Catalonia. How did Catalans of different nationalist or regionalist colour react to the new minorities that were created through the new borders after the First World War? How did they re-evaluate concepts such as diversity and the problems of new minorities that arose from such new state creations?

This paper examines the teaching notes from the personal archives of geography and history teachers as well as the Catalan press coverage of the irredentist minorities and their evolution in the inter-war period from 1914-1936.[5] The paper starts already prior to the end of the First World War to examine changes as well as continuities in the evolution of the understanding and attitudes towards the concepts of diversity, minority protection and small states in Catalonia. It also examines the importance of other political ideologies within that equation and their relation to questions of Catalan nationhood.

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[1] Arxiu Nacional Catalunya, AFH, Sole i Pla, 276-3.6-4.3, Sig. 03.04.13.04.02.

[2] See, for example, Sabine Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongress 1925 bis 1938*: *Nationale Minderheiten zwischen Lobbyistentum und Großmachtinteressen,* Materialien und Studien zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, (Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2000).

[3] For an analysis of Catalan diplomatic efforts in international bodies, see Xosé Manuel Núñez Seixas, *Internacionalitzant el nacionalisme: El Catalanisme polític i la qüestió de les minories nacionals a europa(1914-1936)*, (València: Editorial Afers Universitat de València, 2010), pp. 31-113; Joan Esculies and VytautasPetronis, "Self-proclaimed diplomats: Catalan–Lithuanian cooperation during WWI," *Nationalities Papers* (2015): pp. 1–17.

[4] Cited in E. Allison Peers, *Catalonia infelix* (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 168.

[5] The paper analyses La Veu de Catalunya (1914-1936), La Publicidad (1914-1936), EL Poble Català (1914-1919), La Esquella de la Torratxa (1914-1936), La Vanguardia (1914-1925).

Miguel Cabo Villaverde. University of Santiago de Compostela.

Farming the Nation: Agrarian parties and national question in interwar Europe

Agrarian parties played a key-role in many European countries during the Interwar period, particularly in Scandinavia and Central and Eastern Europe. Although quite heterogenous in almost every aspect, they shared enough traits to be able to found a Prague-based "Green International" or "International Agrarian Bureau" (1921-1938).

Although their ideological foundations lacked the depth and coherence of other political families such as the liberal or socialist ones, they had to elaborate lengthy on the topics of nationalism and nation-building. The writings of leaders and thinkers such as Milan Hodža, Antonín Švehla or Alexandr Stamboliski and the Bulletin of the IAB provide enough material to discuss their views on the matter.

It was not merely a theoretical question, because agrarian parties were constantly confronted with the national question, either as minority-based parties within multi-ethnic countries (for example the HSS in Croatia), or as mainstream parties bent on redefining the national identity of their countries according to their (rural) values (for example the Bulgarian Agrarian Union or the Parti Agraire et Paysan Français). Another source of contradiction was their vision of the countryfolk as the purest expression of the national identity, which often made them hard to distinguish from strictly-speaking nationalist parties, together with their support of regional federations aiming at a European confederation.

KEYNOTE 2

Francesca Zantedeschi. Vossius Center for the History of Humanities and Sciences.

Reframing Europe: Languages and nations in interwar period

Il demeure que la langue est le premier, le plus clair et le plus efficace des caractères par lesquels se distingue une nation (Meillet, 1918)

The French linguist Antoine Meillet used these words to explain the national relevance of the language in the chapter "Langue et nation" of his book Les langues dans l'Europe nouvelle (1918). Between 1918-1919, Meillet was a member of the Comité d'études, which had been created in France in 1917 to further French bellicose objectives during the First World War, thus contributing to the content of the treaties that were signed at the end of the war and the evolution of Europe in the interwar period.

Meillet's statement conveys an assumption that was pretty common at the time (although not shared by everyone), and which was the result of the evolution of the conception of nation that had been taking place since the nineteenth century. According to this conception of nation, the peoples, despite the continuously changing administrative borders between states, were above all separated by cultural factors, particularly linguistic ones. In this sense, the vernacular language became a fundamental element in defining the original character of a people. Even though this correlation was problematic and not strictly indispensable – there exist languages without nations and nations without specific languages – language became one of the main elements for identifying the nation. As such, it proved to be a major element in mobilising national groups around it, namely in multinational empires – as the rise of independence movements during and after WW1 showed. The complexity of the relationship between language and nation surfaced also during the drafting of the treaties at the Paris Peace conference in relation to the question of 'reframing' Europe according to a 'natural and scientific solution' (Moret, 2011). Language was then invoked as a 'natural' criterion for drawing the boundaries of the new territories. Similarly, in the interwar period, the complex entanglement of language and nation proved to be the harbinger of numerous problems that would lead to the outbreak of the Second World War.

In this paper, I will present how the issue 'language and nation' was addressed by certain linguists and scholars in the immediate post-war period, in order to analyse the questions they raised and the solutions they proposed.

SESSION 3. Diversity and repression
Chaired by Ludger Mees

Raul Carstocea. University of Leicester.

The Turning of the Tide – Jewish Emancipation and Anti-Semitism in Romania, 1918-1923

My paper addresses the changing pattern of anti-Semitism in Romania after the First World War, focusing particularly on the years 1918-1923, which demarcate a period that is pivotal for understanding the history of the Jewish communities in the country, as well as interwar Romanian anti-Semitism. Where pre-war Romania, as several authors have noted, was notorious for being, perhaps along with the Russian Empire, "the most anti-Semitic country in Europe" (Arendt, 1963: 172; Mendelsohn, 1987: 174), the end of the First World War would witness on the one hand an improvement in the legal status of the Jews in the country, and on the other a radicalisation of anti- Semitism. The latter, which prior to the war was primarily elite-driven and limited to the level of political rhetoric accompanying the official policy of legal discrimination of the Romanian state, would become a mass phenomenon during the interwar period. Moreover, despite a radicalisation that entailed both a significant increase in the number and gravity of cases of organised violence and a much more virulent discourse with an "eliminationist drive" (Kallis 2009), this form of anti-Semitism also became increasingly mainstream in Romanian society towards the end of the 1930s.

In my paper, I argue that this change in the character and intensity of Romanian anti-Semitism was to a significant extent prompted by a security dilemma faced by the post-war, significantly enlarged Romanian state. Thus, while both the territory and population of Romania doubled, the percentage of national minorities within its expanded borders increased fourfold, rendering Greater Romania, as the post-war state came to be known, much more ethnically diverse than the pre-war Old Kingdom, which, with over 92% ethnic Romanians counted in the census of 1899, had been remarkably homogenous for the area of Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, most of these new minorities within its borders (and especially Hungarians in Transylvania) harboured irredentist aspirations, which dovetailed with the revisionist claims of Greater Romania's disgruntled neighbours. The perceived threat of socialist revolution, which had both an external (due to the claims of both the Soviet Union and, briefly, the Hungarian Soviet Republic, on provinces newly acquired by Romania) and an internal (due to socialist agitation within the country) dimension further rendered this security dilemma especially salient. While neither of these had much to do with the Jews, I argue that they were eventually fashioned into a proxy that could stand for all these fears confronting the nationalising Romanian elites, with the advantage of being an issue that was at once more familiar (due to the prewar tradition of anti-Semitism) and more manageable (than taking on powerful neighbours and their protected kin minorities).

Various tenuous connections were made linking Jews to the country's security threats. Beginning with the first stipulation of Jewish emancipation, ironically perhaps imposed by Germany, in the Treaty of Bucharest (7 May 1918) that had been tantamount to a complete capitulation of Romania to the Central Powers, a 'stab-in-the-back' myth emerged, despite the massive participation of Jewish soldiers in the Romanian army, all the more impressive considering that the vast majority of Jews in pre-war Romania were deprived of

citizenship. In the context of the Russian Civil War, the generalised fear of Bolshevism led the Romanian government to the mistaken association of Jewish refugees entering the country – fleeing the doubly lethal combination of the effects of War Communism on their traditional occupations and the pogroms committed by the White Armies – with subversive communist agents purposely dispatched by the Soviet Union to destabilise Romania. The fact that, as elsewhere (Riga 2008), Jews and other ethnic minorities were prominent within the socialist organisations in Romania itself, seemed to lend further credence to such conspiracy theories. The famed Hungarian patriotism of Jews in Transleithania after the Ausgleich of 1867 was read in terms of their loyalty to a revisionist (and, for a time, enemy) state, and thus as potentially treasonous, as was their integration with the former imperial elites in the newly-acquired provinces, German-speaking in Bukovina, Russian in Bessarabia. In short, while previously perceived as a tolerated religious group, and as perennial helpless victims, in the wake of the Paris Peace Conference and the consequent 'ethnicising' of Europe, Jews were suddenly a national group, and a 'dangerous' one at that. As I argue in my paper, this situation provides the background both for Romania's intense resistance to signing the Minority Treaties at the Paris Peace Conference and for the heated debates surrounding the voting of the 1923 Constitution, which formally sanctioned the emancipation of the Jews, rendering Romania the last country in Europe to emancipate its Jewish population.

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Florian Grafl. Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich.

'¡Visca Catalunya Lliure!' Regionalist Battles on the Ramblas in the Immediate Aftermath of WWI

"As it was expected, last night the demonstrations on the Ramblas and the Plaza de Cataluña continued. At 8 pm, the Ramblas offered an impressive sight. A huge crowd of people had gathered on this central avenue and made use of its absolute legitimate right to claim the independence of Catalonia. The police, who at the same time had already occupied the Plaza de Cataluña, the Ramblas and the streets nearby, were armed with sabres. They took action against the protesters, and dissolved the demonstration. The action of the police was as unexpected as brutal. [...] In total, nine persons were arrested. The numerous injured persons were cared for in the pharmacies nearby."

This report by the republican newspaper "El Diluvio" from December 14th, 1918 shows the high intensity of the fights between the Catalanists and the police in the Ramblas of Barcelona in the months after the end of the First World War. The victory of the Allied Forces had been celebrated with great enthusiasm in Catalonia on November 11th. The Catalans expected that the rearrangement of Europe after the defeat of the Central Powers would make it possible that Catalonia, as other regions in Europe, now could become an independent state. These hopes were further nourished by the concept of the self-determination of smaller nations by the American president Woodrow Wilson for whom celebrations were held in Catalonia and places and streets named after him. However, at the end, the application for more autonomy brought in by the Mancomunitat, the local Catalan parliament, was refused on December 12, 1918. Neither did the Allies intervene in favour of the Catalans, as they had hoped for. The euphoria of the first days after the end of the war now turned into frustration and most of the Catalan delegates withdraw from the parliament in Madrid. After the political negotiations had finally come to a dead end, the demands for Catalan independence were taken to the streets. As a result, in December 1918 and January 1919 the fights in the Ramblas between Catalanists on the one side and police officers as well as Spanish nationalists on the other side frequently ended up in violent clashes as the one described introductorily.

By focusing on the regionalist battles in the streets of Barcelona in the aftermath of World War I, this paper analyses acts of collective violence resulting from the Catalan regionalism in the Interwar period. In doing so, it highlights an aspect of Catalan nationalism that so far has been rather neglected by historiography.

Andrea Carteny. Sapienza University of Rome.

The Greater Romania and the Hungarian question: the Szeklers of Transylvania

The Transylvanian question is one of the most important issues that remained in Eastern Europe as aftermath of the Great War. Being originally a Romanian issue before WW I, an opposite approach followed after the Trianon Treaty as Hungary raised the question again but now from its own point of view. This paper aims to outline the Transylvanian question by focussing on the Szekler issue in the aftermath of WWI.

The core of the ethno-cultural struggle between Hungarians and Romanians can be situated in the origins and belonging of the Szeklers: a Hungarian speaking minority living in the East of Transylvania. Studies from the nineteen twenties define the Szeklers, while taking their specific community tradition and heritage as a point of departure, as originally Romanian. The Szeklers regions, as well as other Transylvanian ones, played an important role in the colonization policy of the Bucharest government as it tried to settle Romanians from other regions in Szekler' territories. Tensions Budapest and Bucharest lasted until the summer of 1940, when the 2nd Vienna diktat resulted into the splitting up of Transylvania and definitely attributed the territories of the Szeklers to Hungary. In this paper this issue, which caused prolonged tensions between the Romanian and Hungarian governments, will be linked to the contemporary debate on the continued or disrupted presence of neo-Latin/Romanian populations in Transylvania.

SESSION 4. Minorities and diplomacy
Chaired by Xosé Manoel Núñez Seixas

Jörg Hackmann. University of Szczecin / Greifswald.

The dilemma of dual loyalty. Werner Hasselblatt and the rise and failure of Baltic German minority politics in the inter-war period

Baltic German minority politics during the inter-war period has gained significant scholarly attention since the 1990s, when the Estonian concept of cultural autonomy was rediscovered as a strategy for solving post 1989 minority conflicts as well as addressing issues of multiculturality. Besides, the biography of Paul Schiemann from Latvia provided a positive image of liberal, non-nationalist minority politics and a counter-narrative against völkisch irredentism.

The resettlement of the Baltic Germans in 1939, coordinated by Himmler, however, did not only reveal that Baltic minority politics had finally failed. It also raised the question of responsibility: Was it only due to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, or should one hold also the nationalisms of the new titular nations accountable or "obstructionism instead of adaptation" (L. Lundin) among the Baltic Germans in Estonia and Latvia?

In order to discuss these issues, first the prospects of post-war minority protection have to be addressed. The Estonian proclamation of independence in February 1918 included the acknowledgement of minority rights, and Estonia and Latvia gave guarantees of minority projection to the League of Nations in 1923. And finally, the Estonian law on cultural autonomy of national minorities of 1925 has received much international praise. The political process, however, also revealed reluctance to practically implement minority protection. Second, the issue of objection among the Baltic Germans has to be addressed. Here, the Janus-faced character of Werner Hasselblatt's minority politics is crucial. Whereas he was the leading politician among the Baltic German minority to implement and promote the law in Estonia and also a prominent figure in the Congress of European Nationalities, he clearly pursued another agenda of coordinating politics regarding German minorities with Berlin, even before becoming legal advisor to the German minorities in Berlin in 1931.

This paper does not intend to reiterate these facts, but to identify the fault lines and tilting points on the one hand between loyalty and obstructive strategies among the Baltic German minorities in Estonia and Latvia, and on the other hand between majority nationalism and constructive minority politics among Estonian and Latvian politicians. Aspects that have to be considered in this connection comprise: first a path-dependency of national conflict that goes back to the pre-1914 period; second a mentality among Baltic Germans of not forming a "minor" but a culturally hegemonic group in the region; and third, the impact of the post-1918 land reforms on Baltic German loyalty. With regard to the titular nations, the limits of minority politics have to be addressed. This leads to the question, under which circumstances was there a chance for constructive minority politics. The minorities' support for the völkisch movements in the 1930s indicate that minority protection did not come under pressure only from authoritarian rule, but also from inside the Baltic Germans, when it clashed with previously dominating Baltic regionalism. Against this background the problem to be addressed in this paper is a broader one: Was there a chance to avoid the tilting moment and if so, what would have been the preconditions?

Laurena Kalaja. Polis University.

Legal guarantees of the League of Nations in the protection of minorities in Albania

This papers aims to clarify the 'Legal Reasons and Political, Economic and Social Conditions' that led to the unilateral Declaration on the Protection of Minorities between the Albanian State and the League of Nations during the Post-World War I period. As such the paper will offer explanations for the League of Nations' refusal to enter into a bilateral contract or agreement with Albania, whilst it did with other states.

In order to understand the League's position in this matter, the legal value of this document needs to be assessed. Also, domestic economic, political and social conditions in Albania and their interdependence will be taken into account, as the country was in those respects under developed, unstable and disadvantaged. Also its international legal position was weak. Against that background, the protection of minority rights in view of granting equal treatment before the law, was an urgent issue that required resolution at an international level.

The body created to re-establish international peace and stability, was the League of Nations, whose task was to protect the minorities in the countries in which they lived. The means to this, was guaranteeing respect for civil and political rights as well as equal cultural rights equally for the whole of the population. The signing of an unilateral declaration regulating such issues by both the Albanian state and the Great Powers was placed under the legal supervision of the League of Nations as it was treated as an obligation under international law. No amendment could be made to its text without the approval of the majority of the Assembly. The norms of international law were embodied in these post-World War I documents and I intend to study their applicability as well as their effectiveness in resolving minority issues in post-war Albania.

The methodology used is empirical, analytical and comparative. The comparative methodology helps to gain insight in the various components of the *Unilateral Declaration on the Protection of Minorities* as opposed to the legal aspects of other bilateral contracts and agreements. In this way, the effectiveness of the provisions is taken into consideration as is the realisation of both the League's and the national government's mission to protect minorities within Albania and their linguistic, ethnic or religious rights. The documents on which this study is based are provided by the Albanian Central State Archives, Geneva Archives, London Archives and foreign and domestic literature.

Lucila Mallart. Pompeu Fabra University.

Proto-diplomacy across the Mediterranean: the Catalan participation in the first congresses of Byzantine Studies in South-Eastern Europe during the interwar period

In the interwar period, Catalan nationalists sought to participate actively in post- World War I political forums in order to inscribe Catalonia in discussions on national minorities.

Figures like Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer (1888-1961) or Joan Estelrich (1896- 1958) unsuccessfully fought to have their claims heard at organisations such as the League of Nations. This has been considered a form of proto–diplomacy (Núñez- Seixas 2010). This paper will explore the ways in which other Catalan politicians and intellectuals, such as Josep Puig i Cadafalch (1867-1956) and Antoni Rubió i Lluch (1856-1937) engaged in forms of proto-diplomacy in the same period, in the context of the Byzantine Studies congresses that were organised in South-Eastern Europe between 1924 and 1930.

This engagement is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, it shows that territorial entities with conflicting agendas (separatist, in the case of Catalonia; agglutinating, in the case of Romania) could build narratives that reciprocally reinforced each other's nationalist objectives. Secondly, it alters the conventional narrative according to which Josep Puig i Cadafalch, former president of the Catalan Mancomunitat (1917-1923) retired from politics after General Primo de Rivera's coup d'état, and devoted himself to merely academic practices (e.g. Balcells 2013). Instead, his participation in those congresses should be framed in the both implicit and explicit political character of those meetings (Maufroy 2010). Finally, the approach of this paper highlights the eminently transnational character of the spaces in which those nationalist narratives and claims where discussed and negotiated (Alcalde 2018).

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