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Nationalists who feared the nation: Adriatic multi-nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste and Venice

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Germans for World War II (whether war can be modeled on economic and demographic factors or whether one must really consider ethnic ideologies and how these interactions work in modern states); on how Germans characterized Soviet Russia as “a Jewish conspiracy”; on how to deal with historical trauma; on personal choice under different conditions; on how the *shtetl* and Jewish communities are best defined as subjects of study; and on whether ideological symbols like Stalin’s 1936 constitution did influence behaviors or embed concepts of “rights” and justice despite the contradictions of actual behaviors. It’s nice to have these works as case studies. But what we really need from these authors, from Yale Press, and from history and the social sciences are the “serious questions” and serious cultural, historical, and social science modeling that offers the “serious answers” and “[more satisfying] explanations” that both authors clearly recognize we seriously need.

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Nationalists who feared the nation: Adriatic multi-nationalism in Habsburg Dalmatia, Trieste and Venice, by Dominique Kirchner Reill, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2012, 313 pp., US\$65.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0804774468

In *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation*, Dominique Kirchner Reill seeks to “recover the forgotten realities and lost possibilities of nationalism” (13) by questioning the commonly held scholarly understanding of nationalism as a concept intended to enforce homogeneity and eliminate, through a variety of means, diversity. To demonstrate that the mono-national states that emerged throughout Europe do not necessarily constitute a logical and inevitable outcome of nationalist ideology, Reill focuses on six individuals from Venice, Trieste and Dalmatia – Niccolò Tommaseo, Pacifico Valussi, Francesco Dall’Ongaro, Medo Pucić, Ivan August Kaznačić, Stipan Ivičević – who, in spite of their commitment to and belief in nationalism, sought to preserve the cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of the Adriatic seaboard and its population, not to homogenize it. Reill’s meticulous analysis of these individuals’ correspondence with each other, their other writings and even their drawings allows her volume to successfully argue that each of them gradually came to embrace an ideology she calls “Adriatic multi-nationalism.” In doing so, Reill rescues her protagonists from the exclusivist national ideologies whose advocates ignored the complexity and tolerance of these men’s nationalism and retro-actively appropriated each of the six individuals as predecessors of their respective Italian, Slavic or Croatian mono-national causes.

While Reill postulates that the Adriatic multi-nationalists, all of them born during or shortly after the Napoleonic wars, embraced nationalism as an ideology that could end the deprivation of the post-war period and usher in a period of social order and cooperation, what is remarkable about the volume is her discovery of the manner in which these individuals reconciled their commitment to nationalism with their apprehensions about its destructive capacity. Conscious of the devastation that political conflict brought to the previous generation and aware of the turmoil that nationalism had caused in northern and western Europe, Reill's protagonists remained keenly aware that nationalism could easily turn violent and disrupt trade. Preferring moderate reforms to sudden change, they articulated a vision in which nations would avoid the path of national antagonisms and conflict by developing mutually and thus retaining peace and ensuring economic prosperity.

Reill's discussion of the manner in which Adriatic nationalism spread, became modified, and ultimately declined, is as compelling as her elucidation of its genesis. The three Slavic nationalists from Dalmatia, Reill explains, did not come into contact with Adriatic nationalism out of an honest belief in it; they remained committed to a Slavic nationalism hostile towards Italians and began collaborating with Tommaseo's circle because they believed it would give them more exposure and new audiences for their Slavic nationalism. Before the end of the 1840s, however, all three had become genuine believers. Reill's section on the Dalmatians' conversion allows her to make a related point demonstrating the fluidity of identity in Dalmatia. The most interesting example, perhaps, comes from her section on Medo Pucić. Born Count Orsato de Pozza, Pucić, with encouragement from his family, adopted a Slavic identity, became a follower of Vuk Karadžić and, in the margins of his notebooks, practiced the Cyrillic alphabet and drew pictures of sword-wielding Serbian knights riding to liberate Dalmatia from her foreign tormentors. By 1848, Pucić, like the other two Dalmatians in Reill's volume, conceded that the Slavs needed to develop in conjunction with other nations. Despite his Slavic nationalism, he would later reject calls from Zagreb to work on joining Dalmatia to Croatia-Slavonia. His complex identity further reinforces Reill's overall critique of oversimplified linear national histories.

Though the volume's conclusions about nationalism have wider implications for Europe that go beyond just the Adriatic Region, the importance of the 1848–1849 revolutions to the fate of Adriatic multi-nationalism make *Nationalists Who Feared the Nation* a truly European history and allow the author to briefly engage the debate regarding the degree to which the revolutions 1848–1849 constituted a process of Europeanization. The section on 1848 traces the transformation and gradual decline of Adriatic multi-nationalism. Chapter 5, "1848: A Rupture in Experience," describes the differing experiences that the populations of Venice, Trieste and Dalmatia underwent during the turmoil and includes an excellent section on the "fabrication of the Croatian foot soldier," detailing the Venetian characterization of all invading Hapsburg soldiers as bloodthirsty Croats destroying Venice on Vienna's behalf – a section that foreshadows the challenges that Adriatic multi-nationalists had to face as xenophobic nationalists began laying claims to and fighting others for control over different Hapsburg territories. As Reill explains, Adriatic multi-nationalists had to modify their visions in the aftermath of 1848–1849. Some, like Tommaseo and Valussi, remained overwhelmingly loyal to their original visions while others, like Dall'Ongaro, jettisoned multi-nationalism and became Italian chauvinists. In Dalmatia, a form of multi-nationalism persisted but it no longer entertained broader European or even regional Adriatic ambitions, and focused only on how it could help Dalmatia.

By showing how Adriatic multi-nationalism turned inward in Dalmatia, Reill effectively shows how Pucić, Kaznačić and Ivičević modified their previous beliefs to fit new circumstances. However, by stating that “most Dalmatians turned their multi-nationalist ideas inward,” and that “most Dalmatians, in one way or another, ended up equating multi-nationalism with Dalmatian, not Adriatic, regionalism,” (217) Reill may be perceived as over-generalizing and imposing the views of Pucić, Kaznačić and Ivičević and other members of the Dalmatian intellectual elite on parts of Dalmatian society that may have not felt that way, and on wide segments of the Dalmatian population that remained, at that point, entirely unininvolved in politics.

The last two paragraphs of the volume briefly address the possible implications that the legacy of Adriatic multi-nationalism may have for current developments in the European Union. While some may dispute her claim that nineteenth century activists employed the same arguments coming from the European Union today, her point that no single path towards structuring communities is predetermined shows that she has remained objective and refrained from idealizing the Adriatic multi-nationalists and presenting their visions as more “natural,” even if they appear in her work as significantly more admirable than the xenophobic nationalists whose mono-national visions ultimately prevailed.

Overall, Reill has achieved her initial aim. Her book has recovered the lost voices of Adriatic multi-nationalists who proposed alternative and less violent paths towards nationhood, thus rescuing them from the embrace of oversimplified nationalist narratives in which they figure as some of the first fighters for mono-national causes.

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The German minority in interwar Poland, by Winson Chu, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 322 pp., US\$90.00, ISBN 978-1107008304

Winson Chu's *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* is a welcome contribution to the literature on German minority and border politics in the interwar period. The virtues of this book include its lucid writing, its deeply researched archival basis (including both German and Polish sources), and its careful analysis. Chu makes the argument that the German minority in Poland was never unified. Indeed, he claims that the very rhetoric of German nationalism often contributed to the fracturing as much as the coherence of the German minority, where splits based on pre-World War I citizenship continued to play a role throughout the interwar period. Chu's book fits well with a growing body of work that examines the complexities and contradictions of nationalist organizing in the interwar period.

Chu's first chapter examines German nationalism within Germany after World War I, particularly insofar as it relates to Poland. Chu insists that various forms of post-war German nationalism – from territorial revisionism to irredentism to a völkisch emphasis on ethnicity must be disaggregated from each other. He does a fine job explaining how these ideologies differ as ideal types. However, given that these various ideological strands often blended into one another, even in the course of a single speech, it is