

ARTICLE

# Home-rule versus non-territorial autonomy? Western European national movements and their views on the minority question, 1919–1939

Xosé M. Núñez Seixas 

History Department, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

## Correspondence

Xosé M. Núñez Seixas, Modern History, Universidade Santiago de Compostela, Praza da Universidade 1, Santiago de Compostela 15782, A Coruña, Spain.

Email: [xosem1.nunez@usc.gal](mailto:xosem1.nunez@usc.gal)

## Abstract

The leading elites of the ethnonationalist movements that developed in the aftermath of World War I in Western Europe usually refused to see their nations and territories as ‘national minorities’. In their view, they were stateless nations or nationalities. However, in the aftermath of World War I, the prior international discussion on the nationality principle was increasingly replaced with the notion of ‘minority rights’, enhanced by the implementation of the Minorities Treaties by the League of Nations. Thus, the term ‘national minority’ emerged as a label that permitted ethnonationalist activist to present their claims on the international stage. This became evident in the participation of some Western European national movements in the activities of some transnational non-governmental organisations, such as the Congress of European Nationalities (1925–1939). However, the general programme advocated by the most influential leaders of East-Central ethnic minorities, based on the extension of the personal principle and the implementation of non-territorial autonomy all over Europe, was hard to accept for ethnonationalist elites from Western Europe, which were interested in territorial home-rule and believed

A first version of this paper was presented to the panel *Through the Prism of the European Nationalities Congress (1925–1938). Nation-States, Minorities, and the League of Nations*, 25 ASN Annual World Convention, 5–8 May 2021.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is not used for commercial purposes. © 2022 The Author. *Nations and Nationalism* published by Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism and John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

that their homelands did not fit in the category of ‘minority’. This article explores the modalities and limits of that cultural and political dialogue.

#### KEYWORDS

cultural autonomy, interwar Europe, National Identity & Foreign Policy, national minority, national movements

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The still all-too prevalent understanding of a ‘civic’ West and an ‘ethnic’ East, derived from Hans Kohn's influential study on nationalism (Kohn, 1944), has been subject to increasing criticism since the 1990s. Nationalism studies have underlined that both concepts of the nation, liberal and ethnocultural, ‘polis’ and ‘ethnos’, actually ran parallel in both parts of the European continent from the late nineteenth century. Moreover, it has been argued that most national movements are cut across by ethnic and civic ideological elements. In fact, both currents cut across almost all national movements in Europe, before and after World War I. The prevailing tendency in nationalism studies considers civic and ethnic nationalism as kinds of ideal types, or theoretical extremes in a continuum, which can be used as analytical tools, but not as an accurate reflection of the complexity displayed by nationalist ideologies, movements and representations (Berger & Storm, 2019; Özkirimli, 2005; Zimmer, 2003).

As will be displayed in this article, the confrontation of ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ variants of the concept of nation in the aftermath of World War I was embedded in the new international debate on minority rights, humanitarian intervention and nationality rights (Weitz, 2009). The emergence of the Minority Treaties, as well as their implementation, also created a new international stage where national demands from all parts of Europe, as well as from the colonial empires, were presented and confronted. Within the framework of this transnational debate, some minority activists and ethnic entrepreneurs from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds attempted at defending minority and nationality rights from an innovative angle, which aimed at a new internationalism (Smith & Hiden, 2012). However, these attempts could not prevent the minority question from being instrumentalised by competing states and being subsumed into the main confrontation between fascism and antifascism, communism and anticommunism. While the relevance of the minority issue for the development of the national question in East-Central Europe has been generally accepted, the entanglements of those debates on the parallel development of the nationality question in Western Europe have barely been addressed by historical research. Still, a comparative and transnational look at these debates bridges some new perspectives on how ‘East’ and ‘West’ nationality issues were intertwined, how ideological transfers took place in both ways and what were the limits of that entanglement.

The leading elites of the variegated ethnonationalist movements that emerged or developed in the aftermath of World War I in Southern and Western Europe usually refused to see their nations and territories as ‘national minorities’. In their view, they were stateless nations or nationalities, whose main characteristics were not comparable to these of German settlements in Transylvania or Russian minorities in Estonia. Instead, they had identified before 1914 with national movements such as the Czechs or the Lithuanians. Certainly, some Western ethnonationalists oscillated between their upholding of being a distinct nationality and the aim to join a neighbouring nation-state regarded as culturally close. This was the way in which Flemish nationalists often looked at the Netherlands and Galicians looked at Portugal. However, the fact was that Basque, Catalan or Breton nationalists saw their homelands as unique entities, which were not a part of an existing ethnic majority in another kin-state. Moreover, they did not regard their territories as heterogeneous settlement areas but interpreted the acculturation of some sectors of their populations (such as the upper and middle classes) as the result of the nation-building policy carried out by the nation-state to which they belonged.

During the Great War, several ethnonational movements in Western Europe experienced the impact of the spread of the nationality principle, the Wilsonian wave since 1918 and the example offered by Irish, Czechs, Poles and Baltic nationalists for achieving statehood. In some cases, the leading elites of these groups radicalised their previously regionalist tenets and adopted the new vocabulary of national self-determination. Thus, the ideological transition from regionalism to ethnonationalism took place in Corsica, Wales, Frisia and Galicia between 1915 and 1919. Ethnoterritorial activists went on to regard their homelands as fully fledged nations, which deserved sooner or later to become fully sovereign. In some other cases, the impact of the Great War and the spread of national self-determination contributed to the radicalisation and updating of the political programmes of some factions of the national movements, as happened in the Basque Country, Brittany, Flanders and Catalonia. As the Catalan Antoni Rovira i Virgili stated in 1915, the international strategy developed by Czech nationalists during the Great War demonstrated the necessity for every national movement to implement a paradiplomacy of its own.<sup>1</sup> For some months, as a side effect of the 'Wilsonian moment' (Manela, 2007), the ruling elites of these movements expected that the national re-structuring of the European continent that was brought about by the dissolution of the multi-ethnic empires would also create an 'opportunity window' to achieve, at least, some form of political and cultural recognition (Núñez Seixas, 2020; Zantedeschi, 2020).

However, the emergence of the successor states in East-Central Europe between 1918 and 1919, as well as the consolidation of new multi-ethnic polities in East-Central Europe, also meant the progressive abandonment of the self-determination rhetoric, as well as its steady replacement with a new principle: the protection of ethnic, cultural and religious minorities (Dyroff, 2020; Prott, 2016). In some ways, the emergence of the 'minority question' in the early 1920s as a transnational field of theoretical debate was regarded as an adaptation to the new geopolitical environment of the main terms of the prior discussion about the nationality principle and national self-determination. The new political vocabulary that was now available for internationalising unsatisfied national claims was that of the protection of minorities. Since 1919, the League of Nations (LoN) steadily implemented a system of protection of minorities under its guarantee, through the imposition of Minority Treaties on the successor states of East-Central Europe, plus old-established countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey or Greece.<sup>2</sup>

There were some attempts at setting up international alliances of so-called 'oppressed peoples' from Europe and the colonial peripheries, from the League of Oppressed Peoples sketched out by the proto-Fascist leader Gabriele D'Annunzio in 1919 to the committees led by the pro-Polish Swiss journalist René Claparède (Farinelli & Forti, 2020). Nevertheless, they all were short-lived, lacked an overarching political guideline for a transnational solution of the nationality problem and were mostly inspired by an opportunistic strategy: that of searching for allies against the 'oppressor' state(s). After the Paris Peace Conference (January–June 1919), approaching the corridors of the LoN in Geneva with some prospects of success by minority activists could only be performed through a re-framing of their political vocabulary. The variegated proposals for an extension of the Minority Treaties to all member states of the LoN, and the recurrent debates that took place in Geneva between 1922 and 1934 concerning the broadening of the rights guaranteed by the treaties, as well as about the reform of the procedure of protection, created some expectations among Western European nationality leaders. Many of them concluded that if they wanted to promote their claims on the international stage, they had to present themselves as ethnic minorities still uncovered by the Treaties. Thus, they opted for joining those transnational networks that pressed for the reform of the international system of protection of minorities. The list included the International Federation of League of Nations Societies (*Union Internationale des Associations pour la Société des Nations*, UIA) and the International Law Association, as well as the Congress of European Nationalities (CEN), founded in Geneva in 1925, as a joint endeavour of Zionist leaders such as Jacob Robinson and Leo Motzkin, German minority leaders such as the Baltic Germans Ewald Ammende and Paul Schiemann, Slavic and Magyar minority leaders and exiled Catalanists.<sup>3</sup>

The CEN attempted to consolidate itself as the main mediator between the European ethnic minorities and state diplomatic corps. It gradually came under the influence of the *völkisch*-oriented leaders of German minorities, while liberal leaders left the organisation or were marginalised. This unstable alliance suffered from several fractures, yet developed a theoretical model for solving the nationality question in interwar Europe. This model was built on the

doctrines of non-territorial autonomy inherited from Austrian social-democracy, the experiences of the Estonian law of cultural autonomy that was implemented in 1925, the self-governing tradition of Jewish communities in East-Central Europe and the corporatist autonomy of German minorities in the same area. However, the CEN leadership could not evade the growing rift between pro-democratic, antifascist factions and pro-authoritarian nationalists throughout the 1930s. Some factions of the German minorities' leadership had developed a democratic-oriented, antifascist theory of national belonging that was permeated by a radical belief in European unity and clear rejection of National-Socialism and antisemitism.<sup>4</sup>

Adapting to the new vocabulary of minority rights was not an easy task. In fact, the definition of what a minority 'of race, language, or religion' was, as recognised by the LofN and stated in the Minority Treaties, was far from any recognition of 'nationalities' as such, or of ethnic, religious or cultural groups as communities and subjects of collective rights. The minority protection system was based upon the principle of individual rights: Only those individuals who had a religion, language and 'race' that was different to the majority of their fellow citizens in the states where they lived were entitled to protection. They deserved not to be discriminated and enjoy full citizenship, in exchange of full loyalty to the State. However, the LofN did not officially intervene in the politics of recognition of collective rights implemented within the borders of sovereign nation-states (Riga & Kennedy, 2009).

On the contrary, (ethno)nationalist doctrines in Western Europe appealed to collective rights and defined their nationalities or nations as subject of sovereignty, based upon a combination of ethnic and civic tenets. They all coincided in imagining their homelands as territorial entities, based on the existence of homogeneous ethnocultural groups. Moreover, before the late 1920s, there was no deep reflection in Western Europe on the principle of non-territorial autonomy, based on the personal principle and the individual adscription to a 'national group' in cultural terms, with a few exceptions, such as Flanders and, to a lesser extent, Catalonia, where the tenets advocated by Austrian thinkers Otto Bauer and Karl Renner had found some reception in social-democratic milieus (Rodés, 1978; Schmidt, 2014).

## 2 | IBERIAN ECHOES OF THE MINORITY DEBATE (1919–1938)

Owing to the participation of some Catalanist parties and groups in the foundation and development of the CEN since 1925, some efforts were undertaken within the Catalan movement to discuss non-territorial autonomy. In fact, in 1921–1922, several authors put forward the convenient strategy of defining Catalonia as a 'minority' in the terms recognised by the LofN. Some town councillors at Barcelona City Hall also proposed that the municipality issue a declaration proclaiming Catalonia's right to be protected by the Minority Treaties. Their view was that, since Spain was a founding member state of the LofN, it should be eager to grant its own linguistic minorities at home the same rights it was upholding in Geneva for other minorities all over Europe. This issue caused some public debate in Madrid and Barcelona. Spanish conservatives and liberals found it senseless to talk about 'national minorities' within the Spanish territory, as no discriminatory laws existed that curtailed the individual rights of those citizens belonging to a region. Moreover, they occasionally referred to Sephardic Jews in the Balkans and Turkey as possible 'Spanish minorities' that could become subjects of protection by their home States. On the other hand, some Barcelona newspapers discussed the issue at length and finally concluded that Catalonia was in no way a national minority but a nationality. However, they also admitted that playing with the term 'minority' abroad constituted a pragmatic strategy for upholding Catalonia's rights on the international scene.<sup>5</sup>

Further west, the main theoretician of emerging Galician nationalism in the 1920s, Vicente Risco, also dismissed any similarity of Galicia with the minorities protected by the LofN. According to him, the founding principle of the Treaties, the respect for individual rights, was different in nature from what he considered to be the main basis of Galician claims, that of collective rights. While nations were 'organic entities', minorities were just 'groups of individuals'.<sup>6</sup> This was also the reason why Basque nationalists in the 1920s were also quite reluctant to wear the label of 'national minority'. The radical factions of the movement, which finally split from the mainstream *Comunión*

*Nacionalista Vasca* (Basque Nationalist Communion) in 1921, were fascinated by the example offered by Irish revolutionary nationalists since the Easter Rising of April 1916 and aimed at following a similar path (Núñez Seixas 2019, pp. 121–154).

## 2.1 | Learning from others? Catalanism and the CEN (1925–1931)

The situation dramatically changed from September 1923 onwards. When General Miguel Primo de Rivera seized power and imposed a military dictatorship that was to endure for 7 years, nationalist claims on the periphery were banned, although some degree of tolerance towards cultural diversity still existed. The main parties of the Catalan movement went for cultural activism. This coexisted with a more radical strategy of opposition, which was undertaken by several groups in exile. Some factions, also inspired by the Irish, attempted to stir up an armed insurrection against the dictatorship, resulting in the failed ‘invasion’ of Catalan territory carried out from France by some dozens of activists led by Francesc Macià in 1926. On the contrary, the moderate Catalanist factions followed an alternative strategy. They promoted some activities in exile and attempted to win the sympathy of international public opinion. Thus, they issued a weekly journal in Paris, *Le Courier Catalan*, and searched for allies within the spectrum of liberal and left-wing public opinion in Western Europe. Moreover, exiled Catalanists also sent a joint petition on behalf of the ‘Catalan minority’ to the LofN, in order to gain audibility on the international stage. Although the request followed the same path that previous petitions emanating from ethnic groups uncovered by the Treaties (such as the French-speaking Canadians and Flemings), it also provoked some debate within the LofN Secretariat as to whether the League should completely dismiss such claims for formal reasons. These kinds of gestures also helped to keep the international discussion on whether the generalisation of the Minority Treaties should apply to all LofN member states going until the early 1930s.<sup>7</sup>

The Catalan moderate parties' strategy also included establishing links with other minority activists and ethnic entrepreneurs abroad and trying to influence the officials and delegates of the LofN. Catalan activists relied on some previous ties already established since 1912 with Jewish, and ethnic German representatives, and met some new actors at international platforms such as the UIA. This was the place where Joan Estelrich, an aide of the influential Catalan politician and billionaire Francesc Cambó, met people like the German leader from Estonia Ewald Ammende, as well as the Slovene deputy from Italy in exile, Josip Vilfan. Estelrich had founded in 1919 the network *Expansió Catalana* with the aim of fostering Catalonia's presence in international platforms and launching press campaigns in foreign newspapers (Estelrich, 1920). The modest network of agitators and informal mediators sustained by Estelrich made it possible to establish some links with the organisations that stood behind the constitution of the CEN, from the Paris-based *Comité des Délégations Juives* to the *Verband der Deutschen Minderheiten* (*Alliance of German Minorities*, VDM). Partly owing to Cambó's personal resources, the Catalanists were in a position to make a substantial contribution to the CEN's expenses. Until the early 1930s, they provided 15% of the CEN's budget. However, not all German and Slavic representatives agreed on the Catalans' presence. German diplomats also disliked the Catalan participation, as they thought that they might create some problems with Spanish diplomacy. However, unlike substate nationalists from the French periphery, Catalans were tolerated and maintained a very active presence within the CEN until the 1930s (Núñez Seixas 2010, pp. 136–194).

From the beginning, the Catalan delegations to the CEN's annual conferences were made of representatives of almost all political factions. Francesc Maspons i Anglès, a well-respected lawyer who had been very active in the defence of Catalan customary law, was elected as vice president of the CEN. Maspons got involved in the international activities of minority organisations and took the chance to reflect on what his East-Central European counterparts said and wrote. In some of his books between 1927 and 1930, Francesc Maspons developed his own view of minority rights, which in some respects coincided with the liberal views expressed by Paul Schiemann.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Catalan newspapers and journals echoed the theoretical discussions on cultural and personal autonomy that developed on the international stage. The Estonian Law on Cultural Autonomy (1925) was translated and commented,

and Joan Estelrich also reflected on the minority debates that took place in Geneva, as well as on the statements made by the LofN movement. The CEN's theoretical statements, also under the influence of the Catalan representatives, insisted upon the reform of the procedure for the protection of minorities and the extension of the Minority Treaties to all member states of the LofN. Catalanists were particularly interested in this latter point as a way of forcing Spain to treat its 'minorities' accordingly. They also dwelled on the reinforcement of the role of the International Court of Justice within the procedure.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, alongside some Ukrainian representatives and Germans from Romania, the Catalanists advocated for territorial self-government wherever homogeneous nationalities and ethnic groups existed. However, the Catalan leaders also admitted that cultural autonomy was an inspiring experience. Joan Estelrich wrote in 1929 that the proposals for the global solution of the minority problem advanced by the CEN heralded what could be the path for Europe to follow in the future: that of making the 'rule of law' prevail over violence, forced assimilation and those obsolete views of cultural homogeneity linked to the classic concept of the nation-state. Minority rights should be enforced, but the nationality principle should also be incorporated in the founding principles of the LofN. Although Estelrich saw cultural autonomy as an appropriate transnational formula for settling the minority problem, he repeatedly sustained that 'compact nationalities' should also be entitled to enjoy full territorial autonomy.<sup>10</sup> Catalanist participation at the CEN did not imply giving up the claim to self-determination in the long term. For this reason, Maspons and Estelrich paid special attention to the different home-rule status of Trans-Carpathian Ruthenians, the Transylvanian Saxons and the Memel's status.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.2 | Territorial home-rule returns (1931–1937)

Once the Spanish Second Republic was proclaimed in April 1931, the political conditions in domestic politics drastically changed. This also had an effect on the Catalanist international paradiplomacy. Estelrich's party, the conservative Catalan League (*Lliga*), was no longer at the head of the Catalan movement and was now replaced with the left-wing *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (Catalonia's Republican Left, ERC), now led by Francesc Macià, the charismatic leader who while in exile had refused to join the Catalanist delegations in Geneva, which he regarded as a waste of time. The ERC was a conglomerate of radical nationalists, Catalanist Republicans and federal Republicans; the party became hegemonic in Catalan politics and established an alliance with Spanish Republicans to endorse the new political regime, obtaining in exchange the 'restoration' of Catalan self-government. However, ERC leaders showed little sympathy towards the minority issue. They considered Catalonia to be a homogeneous nationality that would join a multinational republic, which had to deal with its own Castilian-speaking minorities. Furthermore, some of the main thinkers close to ERC regarded 'Spanish' immigrants as the real minority to be protected in Catalonia with similar measures to those granted by the Minority Treaties. In his view, in Catalonia, there was no 'Eastern' problem of ethnic coexistence among ethnic groups, and therefore, cultural autonomy was not regarded as an appropriate solution (Rovira i Virgili, 1977, pp. 11–12). This was a similar view to that held by some Basque nationalist leaders who attended the Minority Congresses. According to a report sent back by two of them in 1935, the Basques had to learn from the experience of the Sudeten Germans in order to avoid something similar to Konrad Henlein's party (*Sudetendeutsche Partei*) emerging in the future to represent the interest of 'Spanish' immigrants in the Basque provinces (Ugalde Zubiri, 1996, pp. 506–508). The Basques regarded themselves in the Czech mirror as the ethnic majority that aimed at nationalise its territory.

Moreover, Francesc Maspons i Anglès, the vice-president of the CEN, had radicalised his Catalan nationalist views during the early 1930s. In fact, he became one of the main leaders of the tiny *Partit Nacionalista Català*, which combined a pro-independence stance with social conservatism. Maspons also developed in 1931/1932 a political campaign as emerging legal adviser of the new regional government (the *Generalitat*) and opted for a status of territorial self-government for Catalonia, which had to adopt the form of a 'free state' similar to the Irish one, in order to set up a bilateral association with the Spanish Republic. There was no trace in his writings now of non-territorial

autonomy, and he opted instead for those European models of home-rule, such as Danzig, Memel and the German councils of Transylvania, which seemed to endorse the legitimacy of territorial self-government (Maspons i Anglasesell, 1932a, 1932b). Nevertheless, Maspons was not electorally successful and was also unable to unite all Catalanist parties in endorsing a memorandum to denounce Catalonia's subjugation to the new 'Republican centralism' in Spain after November 1933, to be presented before the LofN. Times had changed.<sup>12</sup>

The different settlements of the minority issue and the solutions implemented to manage ethnoterritorial diversity in East-Central Europe were regarded through purely Iberian lenses. However, the opposite also occurred. 'Western' ethnonational diversity was often framed in Central European terms by leaders such as Ammende and by theoreticians acquainted with the minority issue such as the German Karl Braunias and the younger Austrian professor of Law Theodor Veiter. They all regarded with interest the new Home-Rule statutes approved by referendum in Catalonia (August 1931), the Basque Country (October 1933) and Galicia (June 1936). Furthermore, they saw these laws as examples of what they labelled as 'national autonomy', which was meant to be a new step beyond cultural autonomy, as they endorsed territorial self-government embodied with legislative powers. These examples also seemed to confirm that the integrity of the *Volk*, of the ethnocultural nation, took precedence over the personal principle.<sup>13</sup> The reports written by Ewald Ammende after his trips to Spain and Portugal in 1931 and 1933 also confirmed that he continued to see Iberian nationalities through an 'Eastern' prism. He therefore concluded that the Galician movement, which was weaker than its Catalan and Basque counterparts, had some more chances of success in the mid-term due to the proximity of the Galician language and *Volkstum* to the Portuguese ethnic core. Therefore, Galicians could rely on external support, as they were in practice a Portuguese national minority within the Spanish state.<sup>14</sup>

Iberian participation in the CEN decreased as of 1932/1932. On the one hand, in the new democratic conditions granted by the Spanish Republic, Cambó and Estelrich found participation of their party at the Congress meaningless. Estelrich focused on the promotion of international cooperation, as well as on his task as member of the Interparliamentary Union. He prioritised taking part at the General Assembly of the LofN as member of the delegation of the Spanish Republic and saw Spain's new liberal stance towards the minority question as a victory of his former agitation strategy on the international stage (Estelrich, 1932, 1934). Shortly before his death, Ewald Ammende bitterly blamed him in a letter dated in 1935 for forgetting about his former friends in the CEN.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, from 1932, only tiny parties and marginal pro-independence leaders, such as Josep M. Batista i Roca (who hardly represented the Catalan nationalist mainstream), showed interest in participating at the CEN. Regardless of the theoretical discussions in Geneva, these fringe factions of the Catalan movement were only motivated by the necessity to attain international audibility. The *Galeuzca* alliance, established in 1933 between some Catalanist parties, the mainstream Galician nationalist party founded in 1931, the *Partido Galeuista*, and the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), aimed to press the Spanish government on the implementation of a new territorial structure, based on multinational federalism. They also planned to use the CEN as a broader platform for international propaganda. However, in September 1933, very few Iberian delegates attended the 9th Conference of the CEN in Bern, although they included for the first time a Galician representative. A deep split between Jewish and German minorities took place, meaning in practice the integration of the CEN within the network of minority organisations controlled by the Nazi state. Nevertheless, Iberian delegates seemed to ignore what was really going on in Bern (Ugalde Zubiri, 1996, pp. 501–506).

Only after the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 did Catalanist and Basque delegations attempt to use the CEN again as an international platform for giving audibility to their cause. However, they followed different paths. Some Catalanist delegates at the Minority Congress of September 1936 attempted to explore via pro-Nazi Baltic-German leaders, such as Werner Hasselblatt, the possibilities of reaching a separate peace agreement with the Third Reich. This would mean granting some kind of self-government to Catalonia, as they considered the fight between Spanish 'Reds' and 'Fascists' to be a non-Catalan affair. On the contrary, Basque delegates attempted to use the Minority Congress held in London in 1937 just in the opposite way, as a stage to denounce Fascist aggression against the Basque people and the German bombardment of Guernica. Baltic-German leaders who had

detached themselves from any collaboration with the Nazis, such as Paul Schiemann, expressed their open solidarity with the Basques (Núñez Seixas 2010, pp. 237–248).

### 3 | FRENCH ECHOES OF THE MINORITY QUESTION (1919–1940)

A recurrent theoretical legacy in Western European thought for accommodating internal diversity was federalism, combined with Proudhon's and Mazzini's principles. According to this, the only solution for achieving a definitive solution for the nationality issue was establishing a European federation. Its founding members were supposed to be the existing nation-states, but in the revolutionary Romantic tradition since Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Young Italy, there also were some appeals to the nationality principle: Only 'true' nations should become the federative units of a new Europe. Moreover, emerging regionalist movements since the 1870s also advocated federalism as the most appropriate formula for accommodating ethnonational diversity and reconciling unity of the state and recognition of ethnocultural inner diversity. The Catalan movement, as well as the Occitan *Félibrige* and the Flemish movement, was a good example of this. According to the Occitan writer Frédéric Mistral, inner federalism was the previous step to international federalism, sometimes via intermediate stages, such as an Iberian or a Latin federation (Wright, 2003).

Some regionalist groupings that had split from Jean-Charles Brun's *Fédération Régionaliste Française*, such as the *Société Proudhon*, outlined in 1919/1920 a rearrangement of Europe based on a federation of 'authentic' nations beyond the existing state borders, a programme also advocated by international organisations such as the Union des Nationalités in 1917–1919. They simply interpreted the Wilsonian moment as the most awaited opportunity window for applying the nationality principle everywhere and making self-determination work, in a federative sense. The *félibrige* member François Jean-Desthieux, as well as the Breton writer Charles Le Goffic, advocated for a new Europe based on the *petites patries* (Jean-Desthieux, 1918). A subsequent split within the French regionalist camp took place between traditionalist-oriented regionalists and 'dissident' federalists, whose best expression was Eugène Poitevin. While French regionalists attempted unsuccessfully to press the successive French governments to implement decentralisation from above, peripheral federalists from Brittany and Occitania attempted to make ethnonationalist claims and federalism compatible (Guiomar, 1970).

French liberal and humanitarian internationalists also embraced the claims of European national minorities during the 1920s, so long as they did not involve any threats to the territorial integrity of France. Platforms could be found with links to the political factions of the French liberal left, such as the short-lived journal *Le Cri des Peuples* (May 1928–April 1929), edited by Bernard Lecache. This Jewish lawyer of Communist leanings was committed to defending the rights of the Jewish minorities in East-Central Europe. Its programme being a mixture of revolutionary rhetoric and petty-bourgeois non-conformism, probably financed by German diplomacy and the Komintern, the mouthpiece *Le Cri des Peuples* proclaimed its aim of providing a 'platform of solidarity' for the 'national, philosophic and religious minorities' around the globe. However, this did not necessarily mean that the journal embraced the nationality principle.<sup>16</sup>

*Le Cri des Peuples* also took great interest in the evolution of the minority question in the LofN. A variety of minority leaders wrote articles in this journal, including Maspons, Werner Hasselblatt and Schiemann, the Hungarians Géza Szüllö (a deputy in the Czechoslovak parliament) and Elémer Jakabffy, director of the transnational minority journal *Glásul Minoritatilor* based in Lugoj. During the second half of 1928, *Le Cri des Peuples* increasingly reflected the claims put forward by the European minorities' movement. The journal had some echo among liberal internationalists, French Socialist and Radical-Socialist party factions, antifascist and nationalist exile committees. There was room for everyone under the banner of 'oppressed peoples' but no original reflection on the nationality principle and the minority issue (Núñez Seixas, 2016).

However, the real link between the federalist tradition and the pro-European concepts of ethnonational movements in France was bridged by the federalist grouping around the *Foyer d'Études Fédéralistes*, which was led by

Eugène Poitevin since 1919. This group issued the modest journal *Le Fédéraliste* (1921–1938), as well as the short-lived organ *Les Patries de France* (1936). These mouthpieces were on the same fringe as some revolutionary syndicalist groups and maintained close ties with the leaders of the Occitan, French-Basque and Breton movements. Poitevin advocated for a federal restructuring of France on the basis of its true ‘nationalities’, which in a next stage should join a European federation of states and nationalities, where the collective rights of national and ethnic groups should find accurate recognition. The LofN should constitute a first step towards achieving that federation. This also entailed that territorial self-government, to be implemented for purportedly compact or ‘ethnically homogeneous’ nationalities, should be articulated from below as a form of sharing power with other ethnic groups and nations. They were all defined in ethnic and linguistic terms, regardless of their variegated levels of social support. This also meant that the ethnic nation took clear precedence over the civic definition of what a nationality was, and no minority rights were taken into consideration (Guiomar, 1970; Larronde 1994, pp. 188–189).

### 3.1 | Imitating the CEN in the West?

The Breton journal *Breiz Atao*, which became from 1919 the main mouthpiece of the second stage of the Breton national movement, paid great attention to foreign examples but particularly focused on the ‘Celtic sister’: Ireland. This went alongside the proposals for establishing links to national movements in Western Europe. The first attempts closely followed the steps taken by Ammende and Schiemann. In early 1925, the journalist Morvan Marchal launched the proposal to establish an International Committee of National Minorities that entailed the Flemish, Corsican, Scottish, Welsh and Basque movements, as an alternative Internationale of oppressed peoples that should act as a ‘true syndicate of the poor nations, of annihilated, subjugated peoples’.<sup>17</sup> Some months later, Marchal refined his proposal: An Entente of ‘oppressed nationalities’ should advocate for a free federation of ‘true’ European nationalities, beyond the existing borders of nation-states.<sup>18</sup> This trend grew stronger when the left-leaning federalist Maurice Duhamel joined the group 1 year later (Déniel 1976, p. 75).

The repressive measures undertaken by French authorities against Alsatian autonomists in 1926, who had promoted popular protests against the secularisation laws imposed by the Paris government, led nationality leaders to explore some models of joint cooperation. This was accentuated by the trial of some leaders of the Autonomist Party of Alsace and Lorraine (*Elsaß-Lothringisch Autonomisten Partei*, ELAP) in May 1928. However, the real stimulus came from the East. The Alsatians had already been contacted by Ammende in 1925 for joining the CEN, but they were not invited to adhere to it, due to the pressure exerted by the German Foreign Office. Breton autonomists attended the minority congresses as observers from 1926 onwards.<sup>19</sup> In both cases, the CEN’s leadership expressed its reluctance to incorporate ‘national groups’ whose national consciousness was considered as dubious or whose level of ‘national organisation’ was not deemed sufficient. The ‘national minorities’ within France were also discarded for purely strategic reasons: The CEN planned to open an office in Paris, and this prevented the organisation from having partners that would provoke a hostile reaction in French public opinion.<sup>20</sup>

After the party conference of the *Parti Autonomiste Breton* (PAB), which was attended by Alsatian, Flemish, Corsican, Welsh and Scottish representatives, the Central Committee of National Minorities in France (*Comité Central des Minorités Nationales de France*, CCMNF) was set up in September 1927. Apart from the PAB, its founding members were the Corsican Autonomist Party and the Alsatian ELAP. Flemish nationalists, and the federalist thinker Eugène Poitevin, also attended the event. In its founding manifesto, the CCMNF referred to federalism as a transnational solution for the nationality question in Europe:

Our doctrine rests upon the right of peoples to decide by themselves, as well as on international federalism. Modern states founded on force [...] should be opposed by a federation of peoples, where each nationality will be able to determine its own political statues and develop its culture according to its own traditions and trends. The economic unity of that federation will be granted by the remotion of customs and the development of free trade. This will bring peoples two essential goods: freedom and peace.<sup>21</sup>

However, neither Occitans nor the weak Catalan and Basque nationalist groupings from France adhered to the Committee, which was sustained by its hyperactive Breton promoters, and by the political strength of Alsatian autonomists displayed at the 1928 legislative elections. The French Police suspected that money from Berlin sustained the Committee's activity. In fact, there is some evidence that the German revisionist league *Deutscher Schutzbund* was behind this initiative (Kettenacker 1973, p. 25).

The CCMNF aimed at becoming the broker between the 'national minorities' of France and the rest of European nationalities. In 1928, Duhamel and the Alsatian leader Camille Dahlet were sent to the 4th CEN in Geneva. They were admitted as observers but not as members. Despite the increasing interest displayed by some ethnic German leaders and intellectuals for the evolution of Breton nationalism, and particularly for the Alsatian home-rule movement (simply regarded as one more ethnic German party), the German Foreign Office was not strategically interested in stirring up a French reaction that endangered Berlin government's strategy of attaining peaceful revision of borders in East-Central Europe. Therefore, German diplomacy pressed the CEN leaders to ignore Breton and Alsatian claims.<sup>22</sup> The formal request in 1929 to join the Congress by the Alsatian Autonomist Party was rejected by Ammende and Vilfan, who openly referred to reasons of strategic convenience.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the Flemish nationalist deputy Ward Hermans, as well as a Walloon representative, also attended the 6th CEN and demanded the admission of the 'Walloon and Flemish ethnic groups' in the organisation. Their request was also ignored. Although ethnic German journals also looked sympathetically upon Breton and Flemish nationalists, who were seen as ethnically 'akin', diplomatic interests took precedence over ideological affinities.<sup>24</sup>

Despite its failure in joining the CEN, the French Committee kept to its own political path. However, its chances of success were reduced, particularly after the fast political decline of the Alsatian autonomy movement in the early 1930s. More astonishing was the lack of real political and ideological interaction with the CEN's tenets. The Breton PAB, led by Duhamel, developed no proposals on non-territorial autonomy. This was a formula for accommodating ethnocultural diversity that, in the case of Brittany, would be of some interest, as the region was characterised by the coexistence of three languages and blurred ethnic demarcations. Instead, Duhamel insisted on seeing Western European homelands as intrinsically homogeneous and substantially different from East European national minorities. In his view, Brittany would be a founding unit of a forthcoming European federation, based upon 'true national communities' grouped around 'ethnic, linguistic and cultural affinities', as the second Party conference of the PAB proclaimed in August 1928 (Déniel 1976, p. 81). In his 1929 book, *La question bretonne dans son cadre européen*, Duhamel used the term 'national minority' as an equivalent to 'nationality' and explicitly referred to the Minority Treaties as a legitimate basis for claiming the transnational recognition of nationality rights: 'A federal Europe will partially break up present states, according to the limits of true national communities' (Duhamel 1978, p. 35). In his view, minority rights had to be understood as a further expression of the 'reawakening of nationalities' that had taken place since World War I. Although the LofN was regarded as an 'adulteration' of Woodrow Wilson's legacy, it could function as a cornerstone for a future federation of nationalities and states. Similar tenets were advocated from its foundation in 1922 by the first nationalist group in Corsica, the *Partitu Corsu d'Azione*, afterwards renamed as *Partitu Corsu Autonomista* (Yvia-Croce, 1979, p. 302; Leca, 1994).

Duhamel's federalist stance gave rise to frequent theoretical disputes with the increasingly pro-independence faction of the PAB. The hardliners supported Pan-Celticism, as well as insurrectional strategies. Shortly afterwards, there was a split in the movement (Carney 2015, pp. 189–220). On the one hand, the *Parti Nationaliste Breton* (PNB) advocated authoritarian ethnic nationalism with Pan-Celtic contents. On the other, the federalist faction leaned towards the left and was re-named *Ligue Fédéraliste de Bretagne* (LFB). Paralysed by these quarrels, the CCMNF entered a period of lethargy between 1929 and 1932, when the LFB issued a new appeal for joint cooperation between Bretons, Occitans and Corsicans. However, this attempt at a resurrection of the Committee was damned to failure, due to the political weakness of the LFB. Alsatian autonomists now displayed little enthusiasm for European federalism and were rather inclined towards the *völkisch* faction that gained terrain among ethnic German parties in East-Central Europe. Since 1933, the bulk of the Breton movement entered a process of increasing fascistisation. However, Duhamel's design of a European federation based on 'true nationalities' persisted through the 1930s

among some groups of left-wing Occitan nationalists, who were also close to Republican Catalan nationalists. Eugène Poitevin's federalist group was extremely belligerent towards the Breton PNB and those Corsican autonomists who felt attracted by Fascist Italy.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, the post-1945 concept of the 'Europe of the free peoples' or the 'Europe des ethnies', later advocated by Western European ethnonationalist parties, traces back its origins to the Poitevin group, as well as to some concepts advanced by Denis de Rougemont and other pro-European thinkers (Smith et al., 2019). Moreover, some 'dissident' federalists sincerely believed that no substantial difference existed between the East-Central and the Western nationality question in Europe. As a consequence of the development of the nationality principle, every nation and/or purportedly 'compact' ethnic group should be entitled to achieve a form of territorial self-government, compatible with European federalism. The minority problem in East-Central Europe was simply subject to the same explanatory principle. Thus, one of the most vindictive theoretical writings of the Occitan movement during the 1930s was entitled *Occitanie, minorité française* (Larrieres, 1933). Its main argument was requesting that the French state implements at home what it required from other states covered by the Minority Treaties. Louis le Fur, a conservative Law Professor and expert on federalism, also advocated in 1937 for a recognition of Brittany as a 'minority' similar to those covered by the Treaties:

If, after the Great War, the recognition of special rights to national minorities in all new States was imperative [...], should not that same feeling of justice and require from all States that imposed that requisite on others, that they too recognise those rights within their territories? (le Fur, 1937, p. 3).

The tenets put forward by the LofN and the guiding principles of the Minority Treaties were also reproduced by emerging Corsican nationalists. Nevertheless, some relevant nuances were avoided: In their view, the Treaties were a simple but adulterated continuation from the Woodrow Wilson's ideas of national self-determination. Alsatian autonomists also used to refer to the principles of minority protection, as they saw themselves as a real national minority that had been affected by border readjustments (Gras, 1977; Yvia-Croce 1979, pp. 328–232).

For other national movements in Western Europe, the system of protection of minorities, as the nationality principle in the recent past, acted as a legitimisation strategy that enabled them to express their claims in an internationally recognised political vocabulary. This was the case with Flemish nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s. The German *völkisch* journals, such as *Deutsche Arbeit*, displayed a certain interest for the Flemish movement and also had evident affinities to pan-neerlandism and the idea of *Groot-Nederland*, which certainly resembled their own concept of Greater Germany. However, not all Flemish nationalist intellectuals shared this view. The leading ethnologist Gustaaf Schamelhout often referred in his writings to the difference between 'homogeneous' nationalities from the West and 'national heterogeneity' in the East (Schamelhout 1939, p. 36). Moreover, the linguistic situation in Wales, which had partially inspired the views of LofN officials who managed the procedure of minority protection, also deserved some attention by the CEN and the main mouthpieces of the European minorities. Thus, the Liberal MP in Westminster, F. Llewellyn-Jones, participated as an observer at the 5th Congress of Nationalities held in 1929, while ethnic German journals often published reports on Wales and Scotland.<sup>26</sup> However, the Welsh Nationalist Party founded in 1925, whose promoters were characterised by their strong interest in developing a specifically 'Welsh outlook' of world affairs, displayed little interest in the development of the minority question in East-Central Europe (Davies 1983, pp. 106–108; Diekmann, 1998, p. 249; Wyn-Jones, 2009).

### 3.2 | The East/West split: Some thoughts from Brittany

Only the pro-Fascist faction of Breton nationalism seemed to look at the CEN's example with some interest during the 1930s. However, Breton radical nationalists re-framed its meaning and interpreted it as a mostly *völkisch* endeavour, based on the concept of the ethnic nation. From 1937, Breton radical nationalists attempted at transforming the

CCMNF into an embryo of a Congress of Western European Nationalities. As an organ of European projection of the CCMNF, they published the journal *Peuples et Frontières* since 1937. The new mouthpiece was directly inspired by PNB leaders who were close to Nazi tenets and was financed by German money, channelled through the German political scientist and promoter of the Celtic Studies in the Third Reich, Gerhard von Tevenar (Mordrel, 1973, p. 208; Carney, 2021). The new journal aimed at becoming a similar organ to the mouthpiece of ethnic German minorities *Nation und Staat*. However, in the late 1930s, *Peuples et Frontières* criticised bitterly the CEN, 'an assembly of technicians, who seem to discuss about abstract issues', which would be closer to an 'Archaeology conference than to a real congress of minority peoples'.<sup>27</sup> Different problems, according to the editors, required different solutions:

We just accepted with great restraints the term national minority, whose essentially juridic nature was moreover deprived of any dynamic character. Although that definition could be applied for the Baltic Germans, or the Transylvanian Saxons, scattered among foreign populations, it does not suit the Breton people, the Flemish people or the Basque people, who shape true nations, capable of becoming independent States.

Accordingly, a transnational alliance of Western European nationalities should follow another path, because linguistic and ethnic borders in that area of the continent were for their most part 'very clear'. A re-structuring of Western Europe should simply rely on the general application of the principle of national self-determination.<sup>28</sup> This also implied upholding territorial revisionism in East-Central Europes. The journal maintained some links with Hungarian revisionist exiles, such as the *Bureau Central des Minorités* founded in Geneva by the former leader and deputy of the Magyar minority of Transylvania Gustave de Köver, whose mouthpiece often reproduced contributions by Breton and Flemish nationalists.<sup>29</sup>

The promoters of the journal embraced Pan-European federalism in theory, but contrary to Duhamel and Poitevin, they never regarded that design as the only transnational solution to the nationality problem.<sup>30</sup> Thus, territorial irredentism and national reunification under the umbrella of the nationality principle were also endorsed as the organ's reaction towards the *Anschluss* of Austria and the subsequent partition of Czechoslovakia through Nazi Germany displayed.<sup>31</sup> The Breton pro-Fascist leader Olier Mordrel classified European nationalities into diverse categories. He came to the conclusion that the problems experienced by national minorities were very different in nature from those that affected what he called 'minority nationalities'. Moreover, the achievement of the ultimate political goals of national movements required a general solution for Europe as a whole that was far from cultural autonomy. That definitive formula was to be attained through a 'revolution in the political institutions' of Europe, which resulted in a 'new concept of the relationship between State and nationality', as well as 'between the State and economic life', and 'between nationality and the individual'. In short, the journal upheld a vaguely defined reaccommodation of national diversity under the shadow of the Nazi New Order.<sup>32</sup> In April 1939, *Peuples et Frontières* cynically expected Nazi Germany to respect Bohemia's right to home-rule after its definitive annexation by the Third Reich. This would be an example to follow for the Western democracies that denied self-government to their own nationalities.<sup>33</sup>

Fifteen months later, Breton radical nationalists welcomed the German occupiers in France and actively collaborated with them. However, they did not attain their objectives, as their demands were largely ignored by the new rulers. The pro-Nazi engagement of *Peuples et Frontières* put a full stop to the contradictory dialogue between the solutions imagined by the CEN and other platforms for the minority problem in East-Central Europe and those national movements in Western Europe that remained attached to national self-determination and federalism as ultimate goals. Some Western European minority nationalists were convinced that their national thought was modern, liberal and tolerant, while ethnic coexistence beyond the river Rhine was characterised by ethno-tribal conflict, pogroms and violent assimilation. However, their limited reception of formulas such as cultural and non-territorial autonomy, the personality principle and the 'a-national' state performed by some of the CEN leaders also displayed that, in fact, at least some factions of the national minorities' leadership in the East-Central region of Europe were far more liberal than purportedly upholders of civic nationalism in Western Europe, who in the end remained attached to the Herderian concept of the nation as an homogeneous ethnocultural entity. This is a further example of how questionable is the outlined dichotomy of Hans Kohn, himself a former activist of the Comité des

Délégations Juives in Paris in 1919/1920, which contributed to the emergence of the notion of 'minority rights' (Liebich, 2006). In both parts of the continent, ethnic and civic variants of nationalism coexisted, either harmonically or in a conflictive way.

## ORCID

Xosé M. Núñez Seixas  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6951-366X>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See A. Rovira i Virgili, 'Necessitat de que tot nacionalisme tingui una política internacional', *Revista Aynal*, 1915 (Martínez Fiol, 1988, pp. 79–85). Also, Núñez Seixas (2018).
- <sup>2</sup> The literature on the emergence of the Minority Treaties, as well as on their evolution, is huge. For recent and persuasive interpretations, see Fink (2006), Riga and Kennedy (2009) and Cârstocea (2020). For a positive reappraisal of the system of protection of minorities implemented by the League of Nations, which questions its dominant image as a 'failure', see Hilpold (2013).
- <sup>3</sup> See Gorman (2010), Dyroff (2013), Núñez Seixas (2016), Stuurman (2017) and Núñez Seixas and Smith (2022, forthcoming).
- <sup>4</sup> On the origins and evolution of the CEN, see Núñez Seixas (2001, pp. 216–447) and Housden (2014, pp. 139–68), as well as an exhaustive description in Bamberger-Stemmann (2000). On Ammende's protagonist role, see Housden (2000, 2014).
- <sup>5</sup> See, for example, A. Rovira i Virgili, 'Catalunya i la proposició aprovada a Ginebra', *La Publicitat*, 19 September 1922; id., 'Les minories "nacionals". Una aclaració', *La Publicitat*, 25 September 1922; 'Les minories nacionals i les minories anti-nacionals', *La Veu de Catalunya*, 5 October 1922; 'La Societat de Nacions i el dret de les minories', *La Publicitat*, 25 October 1922; 'Els drets de Catalunya', *La Publicitat*, 27 October 1922. For Spanish reactions, see L. de Zulueta, 'Urge reformar la Constitució. España podría verse recusada', *La Libertad*, 12 October 1922, and A. Marsillach, 'Cartas catalanas. En el congreso de Varsovia', *El Imparcial*, 31 July 1925.
- <sup>6</sup> V. Risco, book review of J. Estelrich, *La qüestió de les minories nacionals* (1929), in *Nós*, 15 October 1929.
- <sup>7</sup> Massó i Llorenç (1924); Perucho (1930, pp. 215–49); J. Pla, 'Minories nacionals i Societat de Nacions', *Revista de Catalunya*, 3 (1924): 274–81; League of Nations Archives, Geneva, 41/R.1639/5953. See also Núñez Seixas (2010, pp. 121–128).
- <sup>8</sup> See Maspons i Anglès (1927, 1929, 1930a); F. Soldevila, 'Els Congressos minoritaris', *Revista de Catalunya*, December 1927 and January 1928. On Schiemann's views, see Hiden (2004).
- <sup>9</sup> See Maspons i Anglès (1930a); Maspons i Anglès to Josip Vilfan, Barcelona, 4 May 1929, and typed memorandum, 30 April 1929 (Bundesarchiv Koblenz-Vilfan Papers [BK-VP]).
- <sup>10</sup> Extensively on this, see Estelrich (1929, 1931, pp. 64–65, 77–78).
- <sup>11</sup> See Maspons i Anglès (1930b); Maspons i Anglès's speech at the 8th Congress of European Nationalities: *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas. Wien, 29. Juni bis 1. Juli 1932* (Viena/Leipzig: Braumüller, 1933), 114–15, as well as 'Discours de M. le Dr. Maspons i Anglès au Congrès des Nationalités', *Glasul Minoritatilor*, IV:10 (1926).
- <sup>12</sup> 'Interessants manifestacions del Sr. Maspons i Anglès', *Nosaltres Sols!*, 11 March 1933.
- <sup>13</sup> See K. Braunias, 'Die nationale Autonomie in Spanien', *Nation und Staat*, May 1931; Veiter (1938).
- <sup>14</sup> Memorandum by Ewald Ammende, *Spanien als Faktor der europäischen Nationalitätenpolitik. Barcelona-Madrid-Bilbao. Reisebericht Oktober 1931*, PAAA, R.60529; letters of Ammende to German embassy in Madrid, Barcelona, 27.10.1931, and Vienna, 10.1.1932 (PAAA, Akten Deutsche Botschaft Madrid, 470-Bd.1). See also Núñez Seixas (1991).
- <sup>15</sup> Ewald Ammende to Joan Estelrich, Vienna, 23.8.1935 (Estelrich Papers, National Library of Catalonia).
- <sup>16</sup> G. Renard, 'Pourquoi et dans quelle mesure nous défendrons les minorités', *Le Cri des Peuples*, May 1928.
- <sup>17</sup> M. Marchal, 'Pour une politique internationale des minorités', *Breiz Atao*, March 1925.
- <sup>18</sup> M. Marchal, 'La paix', *Breiz Atao*, 78 (June 1925).
- <sup>19</sup> See, for example, the report by the German consulate in Geneva, 1 September 1928 (PAAA, R.60469).
- <sup>20</sup> See Junghann (1931, pp. 47–48): Josip Vilfan to an unknown Breton nationalist, Trieste, 29 October 1927 (BK-VP).
- <sup>21</sup> *Manifeste du C.C.M.N.F.*, quoted by Déniel (1976, p. 92). See also Mordrel (1973, p. 129) and Duhamel (1928).

- <sup>22</sup> See, for example, E. Singer, 'Die Bretonen als Volkstum einst und jetzt', *Nation und Staat*, May 1934.
- <sup>23</sup> Ewald Ammende to Josip Vilfan, Vienna, 9.2.1929 (BK-VP).
- <sup>24</sup> Report from German consulate, Geneva, 10.9.1930 (PAAA R.60528).
- <sup>25</sup> E. Berth, 'Totalitarisme ou Fédéralisme' *Le Fédéraliste*, 2: 41, 1937, and 3:42, 1937.
- <sup>26</sup> See for example H. Fiebiger, 'Entwicklung und gegenwärtiger Stand der Sprachenfrage in Wales', in O. Junghann and M.-H. Boehm (eds.), *Ethnopolitischer Almanach. Ein Führer durch die europäische Nationalitätenbewegung*, Vienna/Leipzig: Braumüller, 1931.
- <sup>27</sup> G. Kerberiu, 'Pour une action commune des minorités', *Peuples et Frontières*, April 1938.
- <sup>28</sup> Y. Douget, "Notre programme", *Peuples et Frontières*, 1 January 1937.
- <sup>29</sup> See for example 'Minorités en France', *Minorité-La Voix des Peuples*, May–June 1935.
- <sup>30</sup> 'Pour un rassemblement des mouvements minoritaires de France', *Peuples et Frontières*, 15 March 1938.
- <sup>31</sup> 'Fin d'année', *Peuples et Frontières*, 15 December 1938.
- <sup>32</sup> O.M., 'Essai d'un classement des minorités', *Peuples et Frontières*, 15 March 1938. The English supplement of the journal also used the term 'national minority' C. R. Malley, 'What are West-European Minorities?', *Peuples et Frontières*, 15 January 1939.
- <sup>33</sup> J. Cam, 'Du pire peut parfois sortir le meilleur', *Peuples et Frontières*, 15 April 1939.

## REFERENCES

- Bamberger-Stemmann, S. (2000). *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938. Nationale Minderheiten zwischen Lobbyistentum und Großinteressen*. Herder Institut.
- Berger, S., & Storm, E. (Eds.) (2019). *Writing the History of nationalism*. Bloomsbury. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350064348>
- Carney, S. (2015). *Breiz Atao! Mordrel, Delaporte, Lainé, Fouéré: Une mystique nationale (1901–1948)*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes. <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pur.88168>
- Carney, S. (2021). *Peuples et Frontières: A Europeanist journal against the Europe of the treaties (1926–1939)*. *Studies on National Movements*, 7.
- Cârstocea, R. (2020). Historicising the normative boundaries of diversity: The minority treaties of 1919 in a *longue Durée* perspective. *Studies on National Movements*, 5.
- Davies, H. D. (1983). *The Welsh Nationalist Party 1925–1945: A Call for Nationhood*. Univ. of Wales Press.
- Déniel, A. (1976). *Le mouvement breton, 1919–1945*. Maspéro.
- Diekmann, K. (1998). *Die nationalistische Bewegung in Wales*. Schöningh.
- Duhamel, M. (1928). *Le Fédéralisme international et le réveil des nationalités. Suivi d'un extrait des Statuts du Comité Central des Minorités Nationales de France* (Éditions du P.A.B ed.).
- Duhamel, M. (1978). *La question bretonne dans son cadre européen* (Vol. 1929). Nature et Bretagne.
- Dyroff, S. (2013). Avant-Garde or supplement? Advisory bodies of transnational associations as alternatives to the leagues minority protection system, 1919–1939. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 24, 192–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2013.789767>
- Dyroff, S. (2020). From nationalities to minorities? The transnational debate on the minority protection system of the League of Nations, and its predecessors. In X. M. Núñez Seixas (Ed.), *The First World War and the nationality question in Europe: Global impact and local dynamics*. Brill.
- Estelrich, J. (1920). *Per la valoració internacional de Catalunya (conferència donada el 15 de març de 1920 a l'Associació Catalana de Valls)*. Biblioteca Catalana.
- Estelrich, J. (1929). *La qüestió de les minories nacionals i les vies del Dret*. Catalònia.
- Estelrich, J. (1931). *De la Dictadura a la República*. Catalònia.
- Estelrich, J. (1932). *L'autonomia en perill*. Catalònia.
- Estelrich, J. (1934). *Fénix o l'esperit de Renaixença*. BCAA.
- Farinelli, M., & Forti, S. (2020). Irredentas y centauros de Fiume. Del congreso de Roma a las propuestas de D'Annunzio. In E. Ucelay-Da Cal, X. M. Núñez Seixas, & A. González Vilalta (Eds.), *Patrias diversas, ¿misma lucha? Alianzas transnacionalistas en el mundo de entreguerras (1912–1939)* (Vol. 2020). Bellaterra.
- Fink, C. (2006). Defending the rights of others. In *The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938*. Cambridge UP.

- Gorman, D. (2010). Ecumenical internationalism: Willoughby Dickinson, the league of nations and the world Alliance for promoting international friendship through the churches. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 45, 51–73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009409348020>
- Gras, S. (1977). La presse française et l'autonomisme alsacien en 1926. In C. Gras & C. Livet (Eds.), *Régions et régionalisme en France, du XVIIIème siècle à nos jours*. PUF.
- Guiomar, J.-Y. (1970). Régionalisme, fédéralisme et minorités nationales en France entre 1919 et 1939. *Le Mouvement Social*, 70, 89–108. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3807260>
- Hidden, J. (2004). *Defender of Minorities. Paul Schiemann, 1876–1944*. Hurst.
- Hilpold, P. (2013). The league of nations and the protection of minorities. Rediscovering a great experiment. *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law*, 17, 87–112. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18757413-90000081>
- Housden, M. (2000). Ewald Ammende and the Organization of National Minorities in interwar Europe. *German History*, 18, 439–460. <https://doi.org/10.1191/026635500701526642>
- Housden, M. (2014). *On Their Own Behalf. Ewald Ammende, Europes National Minorities and the Campaign for Cultural Autonomy 1920–1936*. Brill. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401211475>
- Jean-Desthieux, F. (1918). *L' évolution régionaliste. Du Félibrige au fédéralisme*. Ed. Bossard.
- Junghann, O. (1931). *Die nationale Minderheit*. Zentralverlag.
- Kettenacker, L. (1973). *Nationalsozialistische Volkstumspolitik in Elsaß*. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt.
- Kohn, H. (1944). *The idea of nationalism. A study in its origins and background*. The Macmillan Company.
- Larrières, M. (1933). *L'Occitanie, minorité française*. Occitania Ed.
- Larronde, J.-C. (1994). *El movimiento eskualerista (1932–1937)*. Fundación Sabino Arana.
- le Fur, L. (1937). *Les Droits et les Devoirs de la France vis-à-vis de la Bretagne*. Bleun Brug.
- Leca, A. (1994). A Muvra ou le procès de la France par les autonomistes corses (1920–1939). In *L'Europe entre deux températures politiques: idéal d'unité et particularismes régionaux*. Presses Univ. d'Aix-Marseille.
- Liebich, A. (2006). Searching for the perfect nation: The itinerary of Hans Kohn (1891–1971). *Nations and Nationalism*, 12(4), 579–596. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2006.00259.x>
- Manela, E. (2007). *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Oxford UP.
- Martínez Fiol, D. (Ed.) (1988). *El catalanisme i la Gran Guerra. Antologia*. La Magrana/Diputació de Barcelona.
- Maspons i Anglasesell, F. (1927). *Els Drets de ciutadania i la Societat de Nacions*. Gràfics Navas.
- Maspons i Anglasesell, F. (1929). *Tornant de Ginebra. Impressions sobre la crisi de les llibertats nacionals*. Catalònia.
- Maspons i Anglasesell, F. (1930a). *Punt de vista català sobre el procediment de protecció de les minories nacionals*. Catalònia.
- Maspons i Anglasesell, F. (1930b). *Projecte de Constitució de l'Estat Espanyol*. Impr. La Renaixença.
- Maspons i Anglasesell, F. (1932a). *La Generalitat de Catalunya i la República espanyola*. Occitània.
- Maspons i Anglasesell, F. (1932b). *Catalunya Estat. Text taquígràfic de la dissertació pública celebrada a "La Falç" el dia 23 de Març de 1932*.
- Massó i Llorenç, M. (1924). *El Dret de les Minories. A la Societat de Nacions. Apel·lació a favor de Catalunya*.
- Mordrel, O. (1973). *Breiz Atao ou histoire et actualité du nationalisme breton*. A. Moureau.
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (1991). Galicia no espello europeo. As relacións internacionais do nacionalismo galego, 1916–1936. *A Trabe de Ouro*, 8, 507–520.
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2001). *Entre Ginebra y Berlín. La cuestión de las minorías nacionales y la política internacional en Europa, 1914–1939*. Akal.
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2010). *Internacionalitzant el nacionalisme. El catalanisme polític i la qüestió de les minories nacionals a Europa (1914–1936)*. Afers/Universitat de València.
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2016). Unholy alliances? Nationalist exiles, minorities and antifascism in interwar Europe. *Contemporary European History*, 25, 4, 597–617. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777316000370>
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2018). Catalonia and the "War of Nations": Catalan Nationalism and the First World War. *Journal of Modern European History*, 16(3), 379–398. <https://doi.org/10.17104/1611-8944-2018-3-379>
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2019). *Patriotas transnacionales. Ensayos sobre nacionalismos y transferencias culturales en la Europa del siglo XX*. Cátedra.
- Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2020). Wilson's unexpected friends: The transnational impact of the First World War on Western European Nationalist Movements. In X. M. Núñez Seixas (Ed.), *The First World War and the nationality question in Europe: Global impact and local dynamics*. Brill.
- Núñez Seixas, X. M., & Smith, D. J. (2022). Internationalist Patriots? Minority nationalists, ethnic minorities and the global interwar stage, 1918–1939. In E. D. Mülle, M. Bieling, & D. Rodogno (Eds.), *Sovereignty, Nationalism, and the Quest for Homogeneity in Interwar Europe*. Bloomsbury. forthcoming
- Özkirimli, U. (2005). *Contemporary Debates on Nationalism: A Critical Engagement*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-06147-8>

- Perucho, A. (1930). *Catalunya sota la Dictadura*. Proa.
- Prott, V. (2016). The Politics of Self-Determination. In *Remaking territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917–1923*. Oxford UP. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198777847.001.0001>
- Riga, L., & Kennedy, J. (2009). Tolerant majorities, loyal minorities and “ethnic reversals”: Constructing minority rights at Versailles 1919. *Nations and Nationalism*, 15(3), 461–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2009.00382.x>
- Rodés, J. M. (1978). Socialdemocràcia catalana i qüestió nacional (1910–1934). *Recerques*, 7, 125–143.
- Rovira i Virgili, A. (1977). *Catalunya i la República* (Vol. 1931). Undarius.
- Schamelhout, G. (1939). *Ethnische vraagstukken en verzamelde toespraken*. Schamelhout-Huldecomité.
- Schmidt, T. M. (2014). *Sprachnationale Konflikte, Staatsreformdiskurs und Sozialdemokratie. Ein Vergleich zwischen den böhmischen Ländern und Belgien 1894–1938*. PhD Dissertation. Ludwig-Maximilians Universität Munich.
- Smith, D. J., Germane, M., & Housden, M. (2019). “Forgotten Europeans”: Transnational minority activism in the age of European integration. *Nations and Nationalism*, 25(2), 523–543. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12401>
- Smith, D. J., & Hiden, J. (2012). *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation-State. National Cultural Autonomy Revisited*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203118320>
- Stuurman, S. (2017). *The Invention of Humanity. Equality and Cultural Difference in World History*. Harvard UP. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674977501>
- Ugalde Zubiri, A. (1996). *La acción exterior del nacionalismo vasco (1890–1939): Historia, pensamiento y relaciones internacionales*. IVAP.
- Weiter, T. (1938). *Nationale Autonomie. Rechtslehre und Verwirklichung im positiven Recht*. Braumüller.
- Weitz, E. D. (2009). From the Vienna to the Paris system: International politics and the entangled histories of human rights, forced deportations, and civilizing missions. *The American Historical Review*, 113(5), 1313–1343. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.113.5.1313>
- Wright, J. (2003). *The regionalist movement in France 1890–1914. Jean Charles-Brun and French political thought*. Oxford UP. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199264889.001.0001>
- Wyn-Jones, R. (2009). From utopia to reality: Plaid Cymru and Europe. *Nations and Nationalism*, 15(1), 129–147. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2009.00368.x>
- Yvia-Croce, H. (1979). *Vingt années de corsisme (1920–1939). Chronique corse de l'entre-deux-guerres*. Ed. Myrnos et Méditerranée.
- Zantedeschi, F. (2020). Micro-nationalisms in Western Europe in the wake of the First World War. In X. M. Núñez Seixas (Ed.), *The First World War and the nationality question in Europe: Global impact and local dynamics* (pp. 145–169). Brill.
- Zimmer, O. (2003). Boundary mechanisms and symbolic resources: Towards a process-oriented approach to national identity. *Nations and Nationalism*, 9(2), 173–193. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8219.00081>

**How to cite this article:** Núñez Seixas, X. M. (2022). Home-rule versus non-territorial autonomy? Western European national movements and their views on the minority question, 1919–1939. *Nations and Nationalism*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12847>