

2021-2022 Annelise Thimme Article Prize Laudatio

Dominique Kirchner Reill, Ivan Jeličić and Francesca Rolandi, “Redefining Citizenship after Empire: The Rights to Welfare, to Work, and to Remain in a Post-Habsburg World,” *Journal of Modern History* 94 (2022): 326–62.

It is our great pleasure to award the Annelise Thimme Article prize for 2021-2022 to Dominique Kirchner Reill, Ivan Jeličić, and Francesca Rolandi for their superb study of citizenship, law, ethnicity, and belonging in the former Hapsburg Empire after the First World War: “Redefining Citizenship after Empire: The Rights to Welfare, to Work, and to Remain in a Post-Habsburg World,” published in 2022, volume 94, of the *Journal of Modern History*. The authors examine the role and legacy of “pertinency” for citizenship in the smaller states that emerged from the dismantled Austro-Hungarian Empire. Pertinency, an imperial-era legal principle that underpinned a “network system for basic welfare responsibilities,” was, they argue, “rebranded as the cornerstone of stable citizenship” at the Paris Peace Conference, with disastrous results. Where pertinency had once operated as a tool of inclusion in the Empire, it was now instrumentalized to identify and expel outsiders, increasingly defined as ethnic minorities, political opponents, and the impoverished, thereby reshaping and further weakening the already weak Central European states of the interwar period. The article is an important intervention into the study of post-WWI citizenship regimes, notably the failure of a “liberal vision of rights-based citizenship,” and helps explain the rise of “exclusionary, racist, violent minority politics everywhere (in Central Europe) before Hitler.”.

The authors deftly explore the complexities of the imperial system while drawing attention to ways, exceptional and unexceptional, that the disintegrating Empire operated on local lives. They demonstrate too pertinency’s significance for the development of the maritime port Fiume as a global economic powerhouse of the late nineteenth century. People with capital—a business, ships, or an appropriate occupation (doctor, lawyer)—found pertinency simple to achieve, but “non-pertinents” could also join in civic life and pay taxes, albeit without political influence. Between 1918-1920, however, the city was remade due to the magnitude of the social crisis (lack of food and basic services, as well as the loss of imperial resources that had held the social welfare system together), along with the arrival of Italian nationalists determined to “Italianize” the city in preparation for annexation to Italy. Prewar, sixty-six percent of Hungarian Fiume had been “non-pertinent” (supported by other municipalities) and seventy percent of this population were not even Hungarian citizens. Many did not know that they did not enjoy the legal status to become citizens of Fiume or the surrounding area after the Paris Peace Conference. Moreover, for socio-economic or ethnic reasons they were often not welcome in their pertinent homes. Fiume, struggling under the burden of providing for the population, resorted to expelling the poverty-stricken (who, with nowhere else to go, soon returned but with many fewer rights) as well as business owners of Balkan heritage (who left permanently,

taking their capital with them). Paradoxically, the authors write, this postwar expulsion “made the city poorer, but not...wholly Italian.”

We particularly appreciated the clear and concise explication of a fascinating and under-explored aspect of the end of Empire in Central Europe. The article engages a rich body of Central European scholarship as well as a diverse set of archival materials. In examining the diplomatic, legal, imperial and municipal treatments of a fundamental principle shaping the imperial order, the authors force us to think much more deeply about the contemporary notions and mechanisms of belonging and national and regional identities; the expectations and promises of national self-determination and the liberal vision of individual rights-based citizenship; and the legacy of western diplomacy in laying the groundwork for internecine battles, once simplistically defined as “age-old.”

The committee also awarded honorable mention to

Claudia Kreklau, “The Gender Anxiety of Otto von Bismarck, 1866–1898,” *German History* 40 (2022): 171–96.

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