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Navigations of National Belonging: Legal Reintegration after the Return of Alsace to France, 1918–39

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As the First World War neared its end in the autumn of 1918, the territory of Alsace-Lorraine was gripped by rumors that Germany's defeat would mean return to France.[1] The region had been under German rule since the 1871 settlement that ended the Franco-Prussian War, and return became the primary French war aim after the outbreak of conflict in 1914. During the war, both France and Germany had taken efforts to secure the support of the population, but when French troops marched into the region in November 1918, they were greeted by a sea of blue, white, and red. Upon their arrival in Strasbourg on November 8, the city was "en fête": tricolor banners and flags covered the cathedral, town hall, and former imperial palace, as well as shop windows, houses, and buttonholes.[2] These scenes were captured in the national French press, which heralded the return of the "lost provinces" after almost half a century of patiently awaiting their liberation by France. For French President Raymond Poincaré, the crowds that had turned out to welcome the troops offered ample evidence of a widespread desire to return to France.[3]

When the victorious powers arrived in Paris to discuss the parameters of the peace two months later, Alsace-Lorraine was not an issue on the agenda. France's claims to the region had been recognized as part of the armistice, and while Volker Prott has shown that transferring Alsace-Lorraine without consultation provoked a widespread sense of unease, such anxieties did not challenge the region's return to French rule.[4] Instead, discussion focused upon the other territories and populations of the imperial states which had dominated Central and Eastern Europe, and on this question, the notion of national self-determination became an underpinning principle of the negotiations. The Paris discussions, along with the peacemakers' efforts to build a new international order and the subsequent state-building initiatives of the successor nation-states have recently become the subject of renewed scholarly attention.[5] The focus of much of this work has been upon Central and Eastern Europe, where research has cast new light on the efforts of the post-imperial states to deal with heterogeneous national populations, and equally upon the implications of the conferences for international relations.[6]

Alsace began the war as part of central Europe; yet, its end triggered its return to the major Western European continental power. Its history in the following two decades is revealing of the ways in which heterogeneous populations and contested visions of sovereignty were not restricted to the "shatter zone" of the former imperial states. On the contrary, Alsace's return to France underlines that states *across* Europe grappled with the challenges posed by territorial shifts, the presence of minority populations, and a myriad of claims to sovereignty.[7]

A Clash of Expectations: The Recovery of the "Lost Provinces"

After Alsace's return to France, Alsatian politicians and representatives of civil society articulated their visions of the region's place within the French nation. These views were varied, and the extent of the differences came as a surprise to many in both Paris and the so-called lost provinces who had expected Alsace's return to be relatively straightforward. French authorities found that contrary to their expectations the Alsatian population did not resemble the caricatures of the *images d'Epinal*, frozen in time by the cult of Alsace which had presented them as patiently waiting for their liberation by France during the years of annexation.[8] Equally, large sections of the Alsatian population rapidly became disappointed with the return to France when the universalist and centralizing initiatives of the Third Republic appeared to leave little space for alternative visions of national belonging. At the heart of the resulting clash was the question of how to deal with difference, as return revealed a wide spectrum of understandings of belonging in both Alsace and the French interior.[9]

This was not the first time that France had been confronted with such questions. Upon its foundation in 1871, the Third Republic had faced populations who spoke regional languages and dialects, had varied cultural mores, and deep attachment to their localities.[10] In response, the Republic embarked upon policies including the dissemination of the French language, the construction of railways linking far-flung parts of French territory, and the introduction of compulsory schooling, national markets, and military service. According to Eugen Weber, these processes had the cumulative effect of spreading a sense of national belonging amongst France's regional populations, or to borrow Weber's phrase, of turning "peasants into Frenchmen."[11] Research since Weber has underlined that difference persisted in a variety of ways long after 1914, and important work by Caroline Ford, Peter Sahlins, and others has stressed the role that local populations played in forging their own place within the French nation, not least by filtering national values through local understandings.[12] In this view, the construction of the French nation-state was not completed from Paris outward, but rather through interaction between center and periphery.

The focus of much of this research on the creation of a sense of belonging in France has been on the period prior to the First World War, and research on the interwar period has paid greater attention to the challenge of maintaining an integral conception of law while preserving difference in Algeria and across France's colonies.[13] Yet the Alsatian case underlines that there was still work to be done in integrating minority populations within France's borders after 1918, as Alsace-Lorraine returned to a regime that had

changed in fundamental ways from the Second French Empire that it had left in 1871. Crucially, whereas the Second Empire had allowed space for regional particularity, the Third Republic had been built upon the principle of uniformity. The return of Alsace-Lorraine thus casts an alternative light on the tensions between particularity and universalism in twentieth-century France by revealing their dynamics *within* the boundaries of the French hexagon.

The world after the First World War was very different to the high point of nation-building at the end of the nineteenth century. The conflict had seen a growth of the state across Europe, as well as a hardening of national categories which frequently clashed with the ways in which people living across Europe saw themselves, as the chapters in this volume underline. The challenge for the French authorities was: which (if any) regional particularities could remain intact as French institutions and systems were introduced? The answers did not prove to be straightforward, and Alsatian and Lorrain political and cultural elites laid claim to visions of national belonging which challenged the universalist model of the French Third Republic. In turn, their articulations were challenged, nuanced, or in some cases, supported by politicians and civil servants in Paris. As a result, return became a protracted and multi-cornered struggle that provoked a renegotiation of what it meant to be French in the late Third Republic.

This chapter uses the case of Alsace's return to France to rethink the navigation of national belonging which resulted there and traces the reciprocal influence which Paris and periphery exercised upon one another. Its focus is upon Alsace, rather than on "Alsace-Lorraine." While Alsace-Lorraine was united in its experience of German rule, the paths of the two regions diverged after their return to France, and annexed Lorraine (which returned to France as the department of the Moselle) had a distinct experience of reintegration which demands a separate history.[14] In common with people across Central and Eastern Europe, the population of Alsace lived through the transfer from empire to nation-state. But their experience was nonetheless particular, as they transitioned from empire to an established (and celebrated) nation-state, or in terms of the First World War, from loser to winner. The Alsatian experience of transition was thus one of regime change and transfer of sovereignty. But it was also one of disappointment, and frustrated expectations on both sides. These frustrations were compounded as Alsatian difference was frequently viewed by civil servants and political elites in Paris not as "regional," but as "foreign." While the Alsatian population was deeply attached to its local dialect and cultural traditions, to the eyes and ears of civil servants and politicians from the French interior, these mores appeared to be suspiciously German. To make matters worse in terms of the resulting tensions, many of the French authorities assumed that such connections to Germany through language, culture, or family ties meant that the population of Alsace had an alternative nation, which threatened the very coherence of France as a nation-state.

Although French officials fretted about Alsatian ambivalence to the nation in their private correspondence, there was no official recognition of the population of Alsace as a minority on either the national or international stage. In one exchange at the League of Nations, the French representative Henry de Jouvenel batted off the proposal that the League's minority rights protections and standards should be applied to all member states with the retort that France "has no minorities."[15] In the absence

of this official acknowledgment, the process of navigating the position of the Alsatian population within France could not follow parallel processes in Central and Eastern Europe, where the League emerged as a space for discussion of questions of sovereignty and successor states experimented with the meaning of post-imperial statehood in concert.[16] While Alsatian elites made international and colonial comparisons and appeals for support, the process of reworking the boundaries of sovereignty in French Alsace was focused upon negotiations within France. What is more, outside the flash points of high tension provoked by the emergence of an autonomist movement, the problems of reintegrating Alsace remained outside the consciousness of much of the rest of the French population.[17] As a result, most of these negotiations took place within institutions and structures in Alsace. These discussions, as they took shape concerning the laws that framed the Alsatian population's place within France, are the focus of this chapter. As representatives of different sectors of Alsatian society responded to the introduction of the Third Republic's laws, the process is revealing of both their myriad of visions of national belonging, and the French state's efforts to deal with the difference that it confronted following the return of Alsace after the First World War.

The Challenges of Reintegrating the "Lost Province" of Alsace

When French troops entered the towns and villages of Alsace in November 1918, the cheering crowds that greeted them were famously described by French President Raymond Poincaré as evidence of the widespread desire to return to France. In reference to Ernest Renan's description of nationhood as a "daily plebiscite," he stated that the enthusiastic reception demonstrated that "the plebiscite [was] complete."[18] Scholarship on 1918 has revealed that the reality was more complex: Laird Boswell has argued that the reception of the French troops was more muted amongst Protestants and residents of the villages in the northeast part of the region bordering Germany, while Sebastian Döderlein's analysis of the postal control has revealed that much of the Alsatian population's dominant concern had to do with their material conditions rather than national status.[19] And, before the war was over, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour had already noted "that there was unlikely to be a clear majority" in the region which would vote in favor of returning to France.[20] Similar doubts were raised at the Berne conference of international Socialist parties held after the war in February 1919, when the Alsatian socialist Salomon Grumbach argued that the answer to the Alsatian situation was a plebiscite. This, he suggested, would settle the "Alsace-Lorraine question" once and for all.[21]

These debates took place within the landscape of broader discussions and plans for international political reorganization after the war. Like the proposals for Alsace's future, conversations over the nature of the peace had started before the war ended. Following the Revolution of 1917, Soviet Russia had announced that "every nation, large and small, should be given the right to determine the form of its state life."[22] In January 1918, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George had proclaimed that Britain and its Allies were fighting for a peace which was only possible if a "territorial

settlement … be secured, based on the right of self-determination."[23] And US President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points of January 1918 centered the principle of national self-determination as the basis of the new international order. In this way, the Paris Peace Conferences imbued an older set of ideas about national self-determination with "new energy and legitimacy," centering them in the new world order.[24]

Such references to self-determination were not applied to Alsace, however. In the October 1918 document which had noted the unlikeliness of a majority of Alsatians voting to return to France, Balfour rejected a plebiscite for that very reason.[25] During the negotiations at Paris, lively discussions followed French Premier Georges Clemenceau's proposal for the creation of a neutral buffer state in the German Rhineland, but the question of Alsace's future status received limited attention.[26] The French government presented support for Alsace's return as unanimous in order to justify the return to its international allies, while offering some recompense for France's wartime sacrifices to the French population. Yet from the moment the French troops crossed the Vosges mountain range into Alsace, it became clear that they were not in the region of the pre-1918 French national imagination. While the nineteenth-century cult of Alsace-Lorraine had presented the population as the epitome of Frenchness and awaiting their liberation from the German yoke, the troops found that most Alsatians did not speak French, and were linked to Germany through culture and family ties.[27] What is more, almost fifty years of annexation into German institutions and systems had left their mark on the region: its laws, administrative institutions, education system, railway network, cityscapes, and cultural traditions all stood apart from their French equivalents. This posed important questions about how to complete this return: how should the extrication from German institutions and systems take place, and what was necessary to make the region an integral part of the French nation-state?

Before the return was ratified at Versailles, France began work on making the region French. Many of these early measures were based on the proposals of the wartime Conférence d'Alsace-Lorraine when the Francophile Catholic priest Abbé Emile Wetterlé had recommended the removal of German influence as the best means of reintegrating Alsace. This proposal was seized by the French authorities to remove the German mark and replace it with the French franc, to sequester German companies, such as the potash mines, and to classify the population into A-D category citizens with identity cards issued based upon place of birth and parentage, and to expel German nationals.[28] During the period between the armistice of November 1918 and the ratification of the Peace Treaty in June 1919, Alsace and annexed Lorraine were provisionally placed under military occupation with overall control by the Premier and Minister of War.[29]

Before the return was ratified, the French authorities restricted themselves to policies deemed to be "essential" in order to avoid further change rendered necessary by the discussions at Versailles.[30] The word "essential" was of course highly subjective, and for France such so-called essential measures included the introduction of the French currency and removal of those who had been born in the German lands on the east of the Rhine (or whose place of birth was Alsace, but whose parents had been born in the territories that now constituted Weimar Germany), as well as those who had demonstrated suspect national loyalty to France.[31]

The French language was introduced, and the authorities made efforts to ensure that French replaced Alsatian dialect as the dominant language in Alsace. Schoolteachers were instructed to teach French through immersion, orders were published in French, street signs were translated, and cinemas began to show French films.[32] But, as problems emerged the authorities increasingly recognized the need for bilingualism. This included providing a translator for the *Cours d'Assise* and *Cabinets d'Instruction* to translate witness testimonies if necessary, and introducing an *arrêté* which allowed trials to be stopped and conducted in German or Alsatian if the parties were having trouble following the arguments.[33] All important documents, notably the *Bulletin officiel*, official correspondence and electoral posters were bilingual, and administrators generally conducted all of their correspondence with the local population in German.[34]

Initial French policy also included the creation of a temporary administrative structure, the General Commission of the Republic, in order to oversee reintegration and to replace the German regional administrator, the *Statthalter*. The Commission was headed by a General Commissioner, answerable first to the Minister of War and then to the Premier, who maintained close links with Paris through daily reports. Alsace-Lorraine was broken up into the three *départements* of the Bas-Rhin, the Haut-Rhin, and the Moselle, and each department received a Prefect who worked under the Commissioner.[35] From September 1920, a Consultative Council for Alsace and Lorraine, with councilors constituted of members of the departmental councils and Alsatian and Mosellan members of the National Assembly also tackled the reintegration problems. These administrative institutions set to work on the question of how to integrate Alsace, with its distinctive administrative structures, laws, and education system into France. But they were not alone in their efforts to shape reintegration. Further views were advanced by the region's political, cultural, and economic elites, as well as by their counterparts from elsewhere in France. These negotiations did not prove to be straightforward, and at their heart was the question of whether difference was permitted, and, if so, how would it be maintained? A principal area for discussion was law, which administrated daily life, framed the place of the Alsatian population within the French Republic, and created the spaces within which representatives of the Alsatian population attempted to navigate national belonging.

Defining and Redefining Alsatian Law after the Return to France

Upon its return to France in 1918, Alsace had a legislative patchwork composed of laws introduced by national French or local authorities before 1871, and by the German Imperial Government or its Alsatian administrators between 1871 and 1918. In the first weeks and months of French rule, an additional layer of this legal framework was added by *arrêtés* issued by the Civil Authorities for urgent issues such as the introduction of the franc, which could not wait until the conclusion of the discussions at Versailles. Once return had been ratified, further delays followed

the introduction of French laws as local officials hurried to accustom themselves to France's legal code.[36]

This layering of the law posed an important question for the new authorities in Alsace. The French Third Republic had been created upon the principle of universalism and uniformity, but Alsace was subject to laws that did not cover the rest of France. Was it possible for a region of France to have distinctive laws? What would be the implications of such a concession to particularity for the region and its population, and for the French nation? For many in Alsace, the key to understanding Alsatian laws lay in the region's historic ties to France. Having been a French region in the years between the Revolution of 1789 and its annexation into Germany in 1871, Alsatian elites argued that many of the laws in place after 1918 had their roots in Alsace's French past. In this view, such a shared history offered a means to reconcile difference after the region's return in 1918.

Many of these conversations took place in concert with discussions over the region's administrative institutions. Although the General Commission had been established in March 1919 as a temporary solution to reintegration, it staggered on throughout the 1920s.[37] In July 1924 Premier Raymond Poincaré announced plans to dissolve the Commission, but regional representatives and the General Commissioner made the case that some form of transitional body was necessary as multiple questions remained over the region's legislative framework. As a result, Poincaré's plans were shelved, but picked up again by his successor Edouard Herriot.

Herriot led the Centre-Left coalition which won power in 1924, and he charged newly elected Strasbourg Socialist Deputy Georges Weill with working on the region's reintegration. Weill authored a 1924 law which dissolved the General Commission and stipulated that regional administrative sections that had not been transferred to their respective ministries by 1925 were to be passed to a General Directorate, based in Paris. In the event, a number of important policies maintained their Strasbourg base, including those dealing with churches and education. The Directorate became a replacement for the Commission, and like the Commission, it was intended to be a temporary solution. But despite a brief suppression in 1935–6, the Directorate remained in place in 1939 when the Second World War broke out.[38] With the gradual trickling of administrative structures to Paris, Alsatian elites attempted to maintain authority over regional affairs and to redefine sovereignty as stemming from ever-evolving practices of legislation.

The French authorities had assumed that legal reintegration would parallel processes adopted concerning citizenship or currency, and that the introduction of French laws and systems would be accompanied with the removal of their German equivalents. This worked in some areas, and the French penal code was introduced without major opposition in November 1919.[39] But in other areas of law, this approach was met with immediate resistance from the population in Alsace, and it soon became clear that a straightforward replacement of one legal system with another would not be possible. There were two main reasons for this. First, some German laws had no equivalent in the French legal system. This was the case for the legislation covering the postal service or pharmacists, where the laws in place in Alsace were more expansive and covered areas neglected by the French laws.[40] In this case, should the French law be

introduced even though it left legal gaps over areas which had previously been subject to legislation? In such situations keeping the German laws in place served the pragmatic purpose of allowing for continuity of legislation. Second, and more controversially, there were elements of German legislation which appeared to be more advantageous to the population than the equivalent French law.[41] This was the case, local politicians argued, for social security, company law, property rights, and municipal laws.[42]

In an effort to bring some form of legislative order, when the Conservative Bloc National won power in 1919, it established commissions to examine penal, civil, commercial law, and civil procedure. These commissions made the decision to retain those laws which had no equivalent in the French statute, in addition to maintaining those which were likely to become part of French law anyway. Their decision to permit the retention of laws without equivalent posed further questions: if German law was allowed to stay in situations where it had no French equivalent, such as those regarding the post office or pharmacists, did that create a precedent for the retention of other regional laws? And if these laws were permitted to stay in force in Alsace, should they be restricted to the recovered region or applied to the rest of France? Further discussions were needed, and the government set a ten-year limit for the introduction of all French laws and legal instruments into Alsace.

In those cases where local law was deemed to be preferable to French law, supporters of its retention were faced with the question of how to present this situation to the French interior. While Alsatian supporters of retaining law described existing legislation as "local," many of these laws had been introduced by the German Empire and were consequently viewed with suspicion as "foreign" by the French authorities. This foreignness was rendered even more suspect through their connection to Germany, and when combined with fears over Alsatian ambivalence to the French nation, such attachment to what appeared to be "German" law served to create concerns, which were compounded by French fears about the threat that Germany posed to national security.[43]

Proponents of the retention of Alsatian laws attempted to assuage such fears by arguing that legislation in Alsace was Alsatian, not German, or in other words not foreign but *French*.[44] By these means, they attempted to remove it from national suspicion and treat it as compatible with French systems. In order to present existing legislation as Alsatian rather than German, supporters of retaining local laws went to great efforts to stress their laws' French roots by demonstrating that they dated from earlier periods of French rule over Alsace. For example, politicians from across Alsace came together to demand the retention of the municipal law of 1895, which legislated for the power and autonomy granted to communes and communal government. The mayors of Alsace's three largest towns, Strasbourg, Colmar, and Mulhouse, stressed its advantages over the equivalent French legislation, most notably in granting communes far greater autonomy, particularly over their finances.[45] They argued that it offered a range of advantages, including allowing the Prefect more authority over communal budgets, and according communes the opportunity to participate in the local economy by creating and running municipal companies, which presented the chance to generate extra income. Such initiatives would be impossible if French law was introduced, they stressed.[46] The mayors succeeded in articulating the advantages of Alsatian communal

law to their counterparts across France and were able to secure the support of a number of mayors and municipal officials from the French interior in their efforts to retain their municipal legislation and to see it introduced across France.[47]

In this campaign, as he made arguments for the retention of Alsatian municipal law, Socialist Mayor of Strasbourg Jacques Peirotes argued that the local law in Alsace in 1918 had been introduced when the region opted to become French in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution of 1789. He explained that it was then reversed by Napoleon, but reintroduced "on the initiative of the local population" after 1871.[48] That it shared inspiration with French municipal law could be seen in the similarities between the two, while, Peirotes pointed out, it was entirely different to the equivalent legislation in the other states of Germany.[49] Similar arguments (albeit from a different historical link) were developed by the departmental council of the Bas-Rhin, which stressed that Alsatian local law was based "on French communal administration and the law of … 1837," rather than on any German initiative.[50]

In her study of Fiume after 1918, Dominique Reill has argued that while Fiumans may have desired an Italian future, they did not simply reject all Hungarian law in order to embrace it. Instead, they studied their options and selected the best of both to create a piecemeal marriage of the two, and, in so doing they cemented a culture of local self-determination.[51] In a similar fashion, Alsatians attempted to retain elements of existing law, and many of these efforts were not incompatible with a future within France. On the contrary, the fact that the law dated from the period of German rule was less important than its earlier origins in French history. This relabeling served the purpose of attempting to preserve these laws within a political context that was reluctant to allow the integration of any German systems and instruments. In this way, Alsatian elites offered a vision of sovereignty rooted in the region's past as a province of France as a means of accommodating difference after its return in 1918.

Competing Visions of Law and Sovereignty

The next point of contention regarding the reintegration of Alsatian legal systems into France was that of which laws should be introduced, which replaced and which, if any, should be allowed to remain. Of course, the answers to these questions depended on one's political standpoint. Making his case in 1922, Socialist Georges Weill argued that "the recovered provinces must not be deprived of the moral and political advantages of the fundamental laws of the Republic, in particular the secular laws, which clearly characterize the regime." But, he continued, in those areas which were not central to Frenchness, such as social insurance or municipal law, it should be possible to maintain local law until they could be extended to the rest of France.[52] For Weill the secular laws were fundamental to French identity because of the separation of church and state across France in 1905. This law was one of the most important elements of legislation introduced by the early Third Republic. Its introduction followed years of debate and controversies surrounding the role of the Catholic Church within France and set the tone for the subsequent years of the regime.[53] It was also part of the negotiation of the accommodation between regional and national identities; in her study of the

department of the Finistère, for example, Caroline Ford showed how the local Catholic Party played an important role in the creation of a sense of French identity which was filtered through local values and understandings.

Weill's wish for the extension of separation appeared to be granted in 1924 when the center-left coalition led by Edouard Herriot won power. New Premier Herriot announced his government's intention to introduce "the whole of the republican legislation into Alsace and Lorraine" and specified that this would include the secular laws.[54] This declaration provoked spontaneous protests and demonstrations across the three departments. In the summer of 1924, 50,000 people participated in a demonstration over the issue in Strasbourg.[55] In Parliament, Mosellan deputy Robert Schumann stated:

> In the name of 21 of the 24 Alsatian and Lorrain deputies … we were painfully shocked by the government's declaration, in that it proposes the introduction of the whole of the religious and educational legislation into the recovered departments. The governments which have taken power since 1918 have all reaffirmed the promises made during the War in the name of the French nation. We cannot watch the government outline a program that is in total contradiction with the programs on which seven eighths of the deputies of the affected departments were elected. Carrying out such a program would not only be contrary to … democratic principles …, but would also create serious problems in our region, for which we would take no responsibility.[56]

Schumann's opposition was echoed by departmental and municipal councils across the recovered departments, and by representatives of the region's Catholic and Protestant communities.[57] When Herriot announced that the abrogation of the Concordat would also mean the end of religious education, Catholic politicians, the clergy, and the population responded with a protest petition which collected 375,000 signatures, and protest resolutions were issued by the Catholic *Union Populaire Républicaine* and by municipal councils and Catholic Associations across Alsace.[58] At stake in these protests was the question of Alsatian traditions and culture, which, the protestors argued, would be lost if secularity was introduced.

Others adopted a different stance and offered an alternative vision of Alsatian culture which was compatible with the introduction of the secular legislation.[59] The 1924 General Assembly of the Protestant Federation of France offered proposals for how separation might be introduced into the three recovered departments.[60] Socialist Mayor of Strasbourg Jacques Peirotes sought to stress the existence of non-Catholic political cultures by arguing that Alsatian tradition, customs, and beliefs were not dependent on the Concordat, and that separation would not have a negative effect on regional culture.[61] It thus got to the heart of how to define what was quintessentially French on the one hand, and the space for Alsatian particularities within such a definition on the other. Both sides staked their claims for belonging based upon sharply contrasting views of what constituted France's essential cultures.

The supporters of separation were drowned out by the region's Catholic clergy, press, and politicians. Faced with continuing opposition Herriot announced that the

Concordat would remain in place. He resigned four months later in April 1925, and his successors proved reluctant to carry through the plans. The introduction of the secular laws was simply not a priority for the governments of the interwar years, which were more preoccupied with the introduction of the French language, and with maintaining popular opinion within the region. As a result, the Concordat remained in place in Alsace and the Moselle, within a universalist Republic which had separated Church and State in 1905.

In this sense, the case of Alsace stands apart from other examples covered in this volume where religion became a marker of nationality.[62] In the case of Alsace, the issue of religious denomination was not the central issue. Rather it was the question of secularity that proved contentious, as the political became national. France's official version of citizenship was based on the idea of "civic" belonging. According to this model, over and above ethnic criteria, participation in the national community was rooted in the desire to be French. This meant that how Frenchness was to be fashioned, through laws and other legal instruments which regulated belonging, appeared to be up for debate and Alsatians seized upon the question of secularity as one that was fundamental to the shaping of their place within the French national community. As a result, it proved to be especially controversial. For the government in Paris, the range of views in Alsace made decision-making challenging. Ultimately, the scale of the protests left them unprepared to risk further escalation of the movement which might provide an example to other regions seeking greater autonomy and could eventually undermine the coherence of the French nation-state.

In leaving the Concordat in place in Alsace and the Moselle, the French authorities avoided an escalation of Alsatian protest and ensured that such protest did not spread to other regions. But the failure to introduce separation created a sense of persistent difference, one which was compounded by distinct linguistic and cultural traditions. Laird Boswell's study of the reception of the Alsatian and Mosellans evacuated to the Limousin in anticipation of a German invasion in September 1939 highlights both the hosts' confusion at hearing the refugees speak a Germanic dialect and the animosity at the creation of schools which offered religious instruction.[63] Part of the problem was that such difference came as a surprise to the population of the Limousin. The loss of Alsace had formed part of a nationalist cult, and return had been presented as justification for the sacrifices of the First World War. As a result, it was difficult for the authorities to admit to either the extent of Alsatian difference, or the problems that they had encountered in reintegrating the recovered departments after 1918. Consequently, such problems (and the resulting difference) remained beyond the consciousness of much of the population of the French interior.

Throughout the interwar years, those local elites engaged in discussions over law accepted the return to France but staked their own visions of Alsace within it. Not everyone had the same view on this issue; for some, such as Robert Schumann, there needed to be space within French law for Alsatian distinctiveness, while for others Alsace would be the trigger for widespread change at the center. At the root of their arguments were distinct ideas of belonging, shaped by historical experience, regional attachment, and political worldviews. Meanwhile, the French authorities attempted the difficult balancing act of integrating the Alsatian population into the French national

community, whilst avoiding any major upset that could destabilize popular opinion in the region. As demands for Alsatian *Heimatrechte* (homeland rights) proliferated in the 1920s, the government feared that the forced imposition of laws may lead to overt expressions of desire for autonomy from France, or even return to Germany. And they were keen to avoid such demands at all costs.

Unitary Law and the Third Republic

As the controversies over the Concordat suggested, a major issue was the question of *how* local law could be retained. Was it possible to be French and have distinct laws? Arguments for the retention of any regional particularities within the universalist French Republic were met with resistance because the Republic had been founded on the principle of universalism, which left little (if any) space for regional particularities. While much of this resistance came from Parisian academics, lawyers, and politicians, it also came from Alsatians.[64] For Strasbourg Socialist Deputy Georges Weill, it was not possible to maintain a separate legislature in Alsace, as this countered the "principle of unity, which, for centuries, had been the basis of [French] politics."[65] The result of doing so was that it left the population of Alsace languishing "on the edge of French life … in isolation."[66]

What is more, opponents of local law argued that granting concessions to the retention of local law in Alsace risked becoming a precedent, and they were keen to ensure the introduction of the French legal system and avoid the risk of another region demanding separate legislation. In response to such concerns, supporters of a counterproposal put forth the idea not only to keep local law intact in Alsace, but to introduce Alsatian law across France. This argument that the return of Alsace presented an opportunity for widespread national legislative reform was one that was taken up at various moments throughout the years after the region's return. For the Mulhousian politician, Jean Martin, Alsace's border position left the population particularly well placed to make comparisons with neighboring states, and they should be at the forefront of the wholesale reform that the return of Alsace needed to trigger.[67]

This was the position of Strasbourg Socialist Georges Well, whose 1924 proposed law on the reintegration of Alsace stated that in cases where German legislation was superior to its French equivalent, the government should modify the French legislation, as it would be "senseless to sacrifice progress already realized on a local level, and which will soon be acquired by France as a whole."[68] And, just as the inclusion of Alsace within the Republic's universalist legal framework had been proposed at both center and periphery, so too did the idea that there were cases where Alsatian law was superior. The view that Alsace represented a potential model for the rest of France was set out by Alexandre Millerand, the first *Commissaire Général* of the region and subsequent President of the Republic, who took a particular interest in the region's welfare laws.[69] With his support, the Bismarckian social insurance system which remained in Alsace after 1918 influenced parliamentary discussions over the extension of the system of medical and old-age insurance from the recovered departments to the rest of France.[70] And, in 1928 French legislators approved a German-style obligatory

social insurance law over the objections of employers, who opposed any sort of state-mandated social welfare. In other areas, such as family support, it was the French system that was introduced into the recovered departments with the 1939 *Code de la Famille*. This swept away the former employer-led payments in Alsace and the Moselle and replaced them with a state scheme which rewarded large families at the expense of their smaller counterparts in a reflection of fears about depopulation and the growing pro-natalist movement.[71]

As had been the case with the laws of separation, no firm decision was reached over the wider introduction of Alsatian laws across France. The debates and discussions that the issue provoked were brought to a rapid and abrupt end by the outbreak of War in 1939. The following year, the invasion of France led to Alsace's de facto annexation into the Third Reich, and the introduction of an entire new set of laws and legal instruments as part of the Nazi regime. At the end of the War, Alsace returned to France and the dominant regional narrative was one of victimhood, as Alsatian representatives described the population as having been abandoned by France.[72] That Alsatians were victims of their circumstances was summed up in the label "*malgré nous*" (in spite of ourselves), used to describe those Alsatians who were forcibly conscripted into the German armed forces.

The Alsatian population's presentation of its victimhood clashed with the experiences of citizens from elsewhere in France who had been victims of Nazi violence and persecution in different ways. This triggered the ignition of tensions between Alsace and regions in the French interior, most notably when Alsatians had been participants in Nazi violence, albeit in many cases after coercion to join the German army or Waffen SS.[73] In an effort to avoid any threat to national coherence, the French authorities focused upon the issue of language and ensuring that French replaced Alsatian dialect as the dominant language in the region. The introduction of the laws of separation was quietly abandoned, and, in 1951 it was decided that local law would remain in place in Alsace without a time limit.[74] As a result, Alsace was left with its own separate legal instruments, many of which remain in place today.

Navigations of National Belonging

Today, the persistence of legal recognition of difference in Alsace remains. Good Friday, a bank holiday introduced under the German Empire, is celebrated throughout the region but not in the rest of France. It is possible to study theology at Alsatian universities, and to display religious insignia in the departments' classrooms, while the French Interior Ministry pays salaries to priests, pastors, and rabbis as civil servants. Such particularities are not, however, the result of a conscious decision to permit difference. Instead, they followed indecision and protests in response to proposals to introduce French law across the years after Alsace's 1918 return to France, and the interwar context left the French authorities unable to risk destabilizing national coherence by pushing through with reform. In light of these difficulties, the first interwar government set a limit of ten years for the introduction of all French laws into Alsace and the Moselle. But, by 1934, this goal was still far from reach and a subsequent

law was passed in December 1934 prolonging the period of integration to 1945. In 1939, the Second World War intervened, and in the aftermath of Alsace's second annexation into Germany and return to France, regional legislative particularities were permitted to avoid the risk of destabilizing national cohesion as France attempted to rebuild and reshape French national identity after the conflict.

While this chapter has focused upon process rather than outcome, this situation is nonetheless revealing of the effects of the multiple visions of law which were staked in Alsace after the First World War, and of the ways in which Alsatians attempted to anchor sovereignty in their legal distinctiveness. Alsatians had long negotiated a multi-legal system—a world of "layered sovereignty" as scholars of international relations have described it.[75] As they attempted to pick and choose from the patchwork of laws that remained in 1918, they cited historical roots and visions of what they viewed as fundamentally French, as well as fundamentally Alsatian. And, as they engaged with the question of whether it was possible for a region of universalist Republican France to maintain a separate legislative structure, or whether the return of Alsace represented an opportunity for widespread national reform, Alsatian elites challenged dominant ideas about heterogeneity and sovereignty in France.

The process of the renegotiation of laws and legal instruments after the return of Alsace thus shows that France was prepared to listen to appeals for minority status if the failure to grant them threatened national cohesion. However, the lack of a final decision on many issues is indicative of just how challenging these questions were. After all, they remain in place today only because the Second World War interrupted the process of negotiation, not because the French authorities decided to make permanent exceptions. What is more, such tolerance of difference was not extended to other peripheral or marginalized communities within France. Therefore, while the case of Alsace's attempts to navigate national belonging after its return to France in 1918 reveals that there was space for particularism in French universalism, it equally demonstrates that this space was both limited and context specific.

Notes

1 Schoolteacher Philippe Husser, who lived in the southern Alsatian city of Mulhouse, noted in the summer of 1918 that the price of wine had gone up, leading to increased speculation that return to France was imminent. See Philippe Husser, *Un Instituteur Alsacien. Entre France et Allemagne: Le Journal de Philippe Hussuer, 1914–1951* (Strasbourg: La Nueé Bleue/Paris: Hachette, 1989), 115.

2 *L'Excelsior*, November 27, 1918; *Le Petit Parisien*, November 27, 1918.

3 *Le Temps*, December 10, 1918. On return more broadly, see Alison Carrol, *The Return of Alsace to France, 1918–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

4 See Volker Prott's chapter in this volume, and also Volker Prott, *The Politics of Self-determination: Remaking Territories and National Identities in Europe, 1917–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 69–72.

5 Peter Becker and Natasha Wheatley, eds., *Remaking Central Europe. The League of Nations and the Former Habsburg Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Marcus M. Payk and Roberta Pergher, eds., *Beyond Versailles: Sovereignty,*

Legitimacy, and the Formation of New Polities After the Great War (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019); Eric Weitz, "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, no. 5 (2019): 1313–43; Natasha Wheatley, "Central Europe as Ground Zero of the New International Order," *Slavic Review* 78, no. 4 (2019): 900–11; Norman Ingram and Carl Bouchard, eds., *Beyond the Great War. Making Peace in a Disordered World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022); Robert Gerwarth, "The Sky beyond Versailles: The Paris Peace Treaties in Recent Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* 93, no. 4 (2021): 896–930; Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, eds., *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918* (New York: Berghahn, 2019).

6 Dominique Kirchner Reill, *The Fiume Crisis. Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020). See also the Nepostrans project led by Gabor Egry, https://1918local.eu/ (accessed June 28, 2022).

7 For an alternative experience in Western Europe, see Brian Hughes' chapter in this volume, which traces the experience of loyalists in Southern Ireland and the strategies by which they maintained their existing loyalties while adapting to life in the Republic.

8 On the cult of Alsace see Laurence Turetti, *Quand la France pleurait Alsace-Lorraine. Les "provinces perdues" aux sources du patriotisme républicain* (Strasbourg: La Nueé Bleue, 2008) and Karine Varley's chapter, "The Lost Provinces," in Varley, *Under the Shadow of Defeat. The French War of 1870–71 in French Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

9 Carrol, *Return of Alsace*.

10 Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

11 Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.

12 Caroline Ford, *Creating the Nation in Provincial France: Religion and Political Identity in Brittany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries. The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989); Sharif Gemie, *Brittany 1750–1950: The Invisible Nation* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007).

13 Judith Surkis, *Sex, Law and Sovereignty in French Algeria, 1830–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism between the Wars* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

14 For the divergent history of annexed Lorraine, see Carolyn Grohmann, "Problems of Reintegrating Annexed Lorraine into France, 1918–1925" (PhD thesis, University of Stirling, 2000); Louisa Zanoun, "Interwar Politics in a French Border Region: The Moselle in the Period of the Popular Front, 1934–1938" (PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), 2009).

15 C. A. Macartney, *National States and National Minorities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), 482.

16 Leonard V. Smith, *Sovereignty at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Payk and Pergher, *Beyond Versailles*.

17 Philip Charles Farwell Bankwitz, *Alsatian Autonomist Leaders, 1919–47* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1978); Samuel Huston Goodfellow, *Between the Swastika and the Cross of Lorraine: Fascisms in Interwar Alsace* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999).

18 David Stevenson, "French War Aims and the American Challenge, 1914–1918," *The Historical Journal* 22, no. 4 (1979): 877–94, 884.
19 Laird Boswell, "From Liberation to Purge Trials in the 'Mythic Provinces': Recasting French Identities in Alsace and Lorraine, 1918–1920," *French Historical Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 129–62; Sebastian Döderlein, "Not so Republican After All? The Ambiguous End of the Great War in Alsace-Lorraine, 1918–1919," in *Beyond the Great War*, ed. Ingram and Bouchard.
20 The National Archives (hereafter TNA) CAB/24/70 Note by Arthur Balfour, October 18, 1918.
21 "Berne Conferees Vote for Alsace Plebiscite," *The New York Times*, February 9, 1919. On proposals for neutrality, see *Archives Departémentales du Bas-Rhin* (hereafter ADBR) 121AL 207, Commissaire Générale de la République to Garde des Sceaux, Strasbourg, January 1923. See also Christian Baechler, "La question de la neutralité de l'Alsace-Lorraine à la fin de la Première Guerre Mondiale et pendant le Congres de Paix (1917–1929)," *Revue d'Alsace* 114 (1988): 185–208; François G. Dreyfus, *La vie politique en Alsace, 1919–1936* (Paris: Les Presses de Sciences Po, 1969), 32.
22 Vladimir Lenin, "Decree on Peace, 26 October 1917," in *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1918: Documents and Materials*, ed. James Bunyan and Harold Henry (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961).
23 David Lloyd George, "British War Aims, 5 January 1918," in *English Historical Documents, 1906–1939*, ed. J. H. Bettey (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).
24 Marcus M. Payk and Roberta Pergher, "Introduction," in *Beyond Versailles*, ed. Payk and Pergher, 1.
25 TNA, CAB/24/70 Note by Arthur Balfour, October 18, 1918.
26 Prott, *Politics of Self-Determination*, 69–72.
27 Just 6.1 percent of the Haut-Rhin population and only 3.8 percent of Bas-Rhiners spoke French as their first language. Christopher J. Fischer, *Alsace to the Alsatians? Visions and Divisions of Alsatian Regionalism, 1870–1939* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), 135. On the other hand, 93 percent of the Haut-Rhin and 95.8 percent of the Bas-Rhin population were able to speak dialect in 1910. The number of Bas-Rhiners that spoke only French increased from 26,365 to 60,465 (or 3.9 percent to 9.9 percent) and in the Haut-Rhin the total increased from 31,760 to 53,351 (or 6.3 percent to 11.6 percent) by 1931, and the number that spoke French as their habitual language increased in the Bas-Rhin from 4.1 percent to 20.2 percent and in the Haut-Rhin from 6.5 percent to 22.5 percent. According to the 1910 census, 93 percent of the Haut-Rhin and 95.8 percent of the Bas-Rhin population spoke dialect as their first language. See Marcel Koch, "Les Mouvements de la Population," in *L'Alsace depuis son retour à la France, 3 Vols*, vol. 1, ed. Comité alsacien d'études et d'informations (Strasbourg: Comité alsacien d'études et d'informations, 1932), 345–6. French use varied by generation, gender, class, religion, and locality. On the use of French amongst different sections of the population, see Carrol, *Return of Alsace* (especially Chapter 5). On the gendered dimensions of language, see Elizabeth Vlossak, *Marianne or Germania? The Nationalisation of Women in Alsace 1870–1946* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
28 A cards were issued to those born in Alsace to French or Alsatian parents, B cards to those born in Alsace-Lorraine with only one French or Alsatian parent, C cards were issued to foreign subjects of non-enemy states such as Italy, and D cards were given to all those who were born in enemy countries, or to two parents from enemy countries. As these "enemy countries" included Germany alongside Austria, Hungary, Turkey,

and Bulgaria, a large proportion of the population of Alsace received them. As many as 513,800 D cards were issued, alongside 1,082,650 A cards, 183,500 B cards and 55,050 C cards. This process is covered in Volker Prott's chapter in this volume, in addition to David Allen Harvey "Lost Children or Enemy Aliens? Classifying the Population of Alsace after the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, no. 4 (1999): 552–84; Carolyn Grohmann, "From Lothringen to Lorraine: Expulsion and Voluntary Repatriation," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 16, no. 3 (2005): 571–87, 576; Irmgard Grünewald, *Die Elsass-Lothringer im Reich, 1918–1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984), 29; Tara Zahra, "'The 'Minority Problem' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands," *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 2 (2008): 141–4.

29 ADBR, 121AL 204, Projet de loi relatif au régime transitoire de l'Alsace et de la Lorraine. Exposé des motifs, 1919.

30 ADBR, 121AL 204, Commissaire Général de la République to Président du Conseil, Strasbourg, April 7, 1919.

31 For more details on these expulsions, see Volker Prott's chapter in this volume.

32 See Carrol, *The Return of Alsace*, 144–59.

33 ADBR 286D 46. Président du Tribunal de Première Instance (Carré de Malberg) et le Procurer de la République (Corbière) près les Tribunal de Première Instance to Préfet de Bas Rhin, Strasbourg, November 3, 1930.

34 ADBR 286D 46. Sous-préfet de Sélestat (Bastier) to Préfet du Bas Rhin, October 29, 1925; Sous-préfet de Saverne (Peyromaure-Debord) to Préfet du Bas Rhin, October 30, 1925; Sous-préfet d'Erstein (Hoerter) to Préfet du Bas Rhin, October 27, 1925; Sous-préfet Chathonet of Wissembourg to Préfet du Bas Rhin, October 23, 1925; President du Conseil (Poincaré) to Préfet du Bas Rhin, July 16, 1927; Sous-préfet of Haguenau (Le Hoc) to Préfet du Bas Rhin, October 29, 1925; President du Conseil (Poincaré) to Préfet du Bas Rhin, July 16, 1927.

35 ADBR, 121AL 205, Questionnaire No. 2 de M. le Président de la Commission d'Alsace et Lorraine du Sénat.

36 ADBR 286D 44, Mayor of Schiltigheim to Préfet du Bas-Rhin, March 30, 1922.

37 *Archives Municipales de la Ville et Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg* (hereafter AMVCUS) 113Z 29, Jean Kuntzingen to abbé Muller, Strasbourg, June 6, 1921.

38 When it was reconstituted in 1936, Alsatian deputies proposed that it be based in Strasbourg. This was refused by the government, and by the Mosellan senator Stuhl, who stated that the Moselle did not wish to return to the days of dependency upon Strasbourg. Gustave Mary, "L'évolution politique depuis 1932," in *L'Alsace depuis son retour à la France. Premier supplément: Vie politique administrative et sociale; Vie intellectuelle; artistique et spirituelle; Vie économique*, ed. Comité alsacien d'études et d'informations (Strasbourg: Comité alsacien d'études et d'informations, 1937), 28.

39 F. Pfersdorff, "Le Droit Penal et l'Organisation Penitentiaire," in *L'Alsace depuis son retour* à *la France*, vol. 1, ed. Comité alsacien d'études et d'informations, 117.

40 ADBR 121AL 207, Directeur Régional des Postes et des Télégraphes to Commissaire Général de la République, Strasbourg, November 29, 1922; *Journal Officiel*, Séance du May 25, 1925, 2331.

41 ADBR 121AL 207, Note to the Secrétaire Général, Strasbourg, September 27, 1922.

42 AMVCUS 125Z 52, Discours de Jacques Peirotes; ADBR 121AL 207, Commissaire Général de la République to Garde des Sceaux, Strasbourg, January 1923.

43 Conan Fischer, *A Vision of Europe: Franco-German Relations during the Great Depression, 1929–1932* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Peter Jackson,

Beyond the Balance of Power. France and the Politics of National Security in the Era of the First World War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Michael E. Nolan, *The Inverted Mirror. Mythologizing the Enemy in France and Germany, 1898–1914* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2005). On perceived Alsatian ambivalence to France, see Alison Carrol, "Paths to Frenchness. National Indifference and the Return of Alsace to France, 1919–1939," in *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism in Modern Europe*, ed. Maarten van Ginderachter and Jon Fox (London: Routledge, 2019).

44 *Archives Nationales* (hereafter AN) 470AP/44, Journal officiel du 2 octobre 1919. Chambre des députés 1ère séance du 1 October 1919.

45 AMVCUS 204MW 16, Jacques Peirotes to Mayors of Alsace and Lorraine, Strasbourg, November 20, 1922; ADBR 121AL 740, Resolution of Mayors of large communes of Alsace and Lorraine, Strasbourg, July 21, 1923.

46 AMVCUS 125Z 38 (nd) Exposé: "La Loi Municipale d'Alsace-Lorraine du 6 June 1895."

47 In 1920, the Eleventh Congress of Mayors of France adopted a resolution demanding that the departments of Alsace and the Moselle should retain their law, and that the French law should be modified to bring it closer to the Alsatian Law. See AMVCUS, 204 MW 16, Strasbourg, November 23, 1922, Speech by Jacques Peirotes to assembled mayors of Alsace-Lorraine.

48 AMVCUS 125Z 32, Discours de Jacques Peirotes, nd; AMVCUS 125Z 38 (nd) Exposé: "La Loi Municipale d'Alsace-Lorraine du 6.6. 1895" historique, grandes et petites communes- composition et fonctionnement des conseils municipaux, la municipalité, les employés municipaux, l'autonomie communale, le budget communal, l'activité économique des communes, conclusion.

49 AMVCUS 125Z 38 (nd) Exposé: "La Loi Municipale d'Alsace-Lorraine du 6 June. 1895."

50 ADBR 121AL 740, Conseil Général du Bas-Rhin, Session de Septembre 1921. Extrait du procès verbal des délibérations, Séance du 23 septembre 1921.

51 Reill, *The Fiume Crisis*, 126.

52 AN AJ30 173 Session of the Conseil Consultatif of October 2, 1922.

53 Othon Guerlac, "The Separation of Church and State in France," *Political Science Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1908): 259–96.

54 *Le Temps*, June 22, 1924.

55 Christian Baechler, "Espoirs et désillusions," in *Histoire de Strasbourg*, ed. Georges Livet and Francis Rapp (Toulouse and Strasbourg: Les Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace, 1987), 411. The Commissaire Générale wrote that agitation was livelier and more widespread in Alsace than in the Moselle: AN AJ30 207, Commissaire Général de la République to the Président du Conseil, Strasbourg, July 11, 1924.

56 Cited in Pierre Zind, *Elsass-Lothringen Alsace Lorraine, une nation interdite, 1870–1940* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), 224.

57 The *Elsässer Kurier* of June 19 and the *Elsässer* of June 20 demanded a referendum on the educational question in Alsace.

58 ADBR 98AL 661, Resolution of the Ligue Catholique de Thann, Thann March 24, 1926; 1927 Ligue des Catholiques d'Alsace pamphlet entitled "Pour Dieu et pour la France." According to the *Elsässer*, by September 1924, 509 of 946 communes in Alsace had protested against the proposed introduction of separation. *Elsässer*, September 27, 1924; Jean-François Kovar, "Religion et Éducation: De la concorde à

la discorde," in *Chroniques d'Alsace au Champs, à l'Usine, au Messti 1918–1939*, ed. Bernard Vogler (Strasbourg: Editeur G4j, 2004), 46–9, 51.

59 AMVCUS 125Z 18, Rapport fait au nom de la commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi portent réorganisation du régime administratif des départements 68, 67, et 57 par Georges Weill; ADBR, 121AL 856, Commissaire Spéciale. Rapport, Strasbourg, January 13, 1923. Report on a meeting of Ligue des Droits de l'Homme held at Strasbourg, January 12, 1923; AN AJ30 173, Session of the Conseil Consultatif of October 2, 1922; ADBR, 286D 328 *Die Freie Presse,* July 5, 1924.

60 ADBR 121AL 95, Commissaire Spécial to Préfet du Bas-Rhin, October 27, 1924; *Le Journal d'Alsace et de Lorraine*, October 24, 1924; for the government's response see AN AJ30 207 Commissaire Général de la République to Président du Conseil, Strasbourg July 11, 1924.

61 AMVCUS 125Z 37, A14. May 20, 1927, Proposition de loi.

62 See in particular Brian Hughes', Olga Linkiewicz's and Volker Prott's chapters in this volume.

63 Laird Boswell, "Franco-Alsatian Conflict and the Crisis of National Sentiment during the Phoney War," *The Journal of Modern History* 71, no. 3 (1999): 552–84.

64 ADBR 121AL 207, Introduction des Lois Françaises en France. Conférence faite le 1er mai 1922 par M. Albert Chéron; Marcel Nast, *Le Malaise Alsacien-Lorrain* (Paris: G. Crès, 1920), 49.

65 ADBR 121AL 204, Projet de Loi par Georges Weill. Rapport fait au nom de la Commission d'Alsace-Lorraine, chargée d'examiner le projet de loi portant réorganisation du régime administratif des départements du Haut Rhin, du Bas Rhin et de la Moselle par M. Georges Weill. No. 965, annexe au procès verbal de la 2e séance du 26 décembre 1924.

66 ADBR 286D 336. Programme for the legislative elections of May 11, 1924, SFIO, Fédération of Bas Rhin.

67 Archives Municipales de Mulhouse (hereafter AMM) Fonds Jean Martin 40TT 8, *La Revue d'Alsace et de Lorraine*, no. 33, September 1921.

68 AMVCUS Fonds Jacques Peirotes 125Z 18, Rapport fait au nom de la commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi portent réorganisation du régime administratif des départements 68, 67, et 57 par Georges Weill.

69 AN 470AP/44, Fonds Millerand, Discours prononcé à la Première Assemblée de l'Office général des assurances sociales, le 5 mai 1919; Alexandre Millerand, *Le retour de l'Alsace-Lorraine à la France* (Paris: Bibliotheque Charpentier, 1923), 70.

70 Paul V. Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State. The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

71 Paul V. Dutton, "French versus German approaches to Family Welfare in Lorraine, 1918–1940," *French History* 13, no. 4 (1999): 439–63.

72 Thomas Williams, "Remaking the Franco-German Borderlands: Historical Claims and Commemorative Practices in the Upper Rhine, 1940–49" (Unpublished DPhil. dissertation, University of Oxford, 2010).

73 This clash of ideas of victimhood was most evident in the 1953 Bordeaux Trial of the perpetrators of the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane. Of the twenty-one men brought to trial, fourteen were from Alsace and the Moselle, and thirteen of this number had been conscripted by force into the Waffen SS. The guilty verdicts delivered to the men were followed by an amnesty in the name of national reconciliation. See Sarah Farmer, *Martyred Village. Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Frédéric Mégret, "The Bordeaux

Trial," in *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials*, ed. Kevin Heller and Gerry Simpson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

74 H. Patrick Glenn, "The Local Law of Alsace-Lorraine: A Half Century of Survival," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (1974): 769–90.

75 Lauren A. Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).