HT 2018: The Politics of Citizenship: Enemy Aliens, Citizenship Classification, and the Division of Societies in Twentieth-Century Germany, the Netherlands, and Europe

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Citizenship has long been explored by historians as a lens into larger social and political processes of self-definition. Particularly during the modern period, citizenship became a means for delineating characteristics of national belonging, for determining who might be included in a certain community and on the basis of which criteria. As such, citizenship developed a dual dynamic: on the one hand an inward-looking, cohesive force that granted rights and parameters for political participation, citizenship on the other hand simultaneously became a source of social cleavage, designed to demarcate boundaries and to exclude designated „others". The panel offered a compelling and original transnational overview of the dynamics of citizenship from World War II into the Cold War. Focusing on the functions and (re)definitions of citizenship in Germany and the Netherlands in particular, the panel explored how changing notions and practices of citizenship both reflected and created shifts in social boundaries along ethnic, religious, social, and ideological lines.

Across three insightful case studies, chronologically organized from World War II to the immediate postwar period to the Cold War, the speakers addressed similar questions. Besides examining citizenship as a window into shifting social relations, political programs, and definitions of belonging in the context of the nation-state, the panel also carefully situated the dynamics of citizenship on the individual and global scales. All three speakers thereby asked not only what effects the granting, revocation, or changing parameters of citizenship had on individuals' lives at various instances. Rather, they also traced how the states' very conceptualization and practices of citizenship depended on global competitions and diplomatic entanglements. Within these entanglements, the colonial context deserves particular attention. Indeed, as several papers showed, the implementation of supposedly clear German and Dutch citizenship categories often foundered in the wake of the complex realities of national, ethnic, and cultural „in-betweenness," both at home and abroad.

In the panel's first paper, KIM WÜNSCHMANN (Munich) investigated how concepts of citizenship and ethno-national belonging structured German and Dutch policies towards foreign civilians during World War II. Exploring in particular the treatment of „enemy aliens" in the German-occupied Netherlands and the Dutch colonies, Wünschmann illustrated how policies towards foreign civilians depended not merely on Germany's new radicalized notions of „racial" belonging, but on the diplomatic co-dependencies that Germany faced in securing a fair treatment of its captured citizens abroad. Soon after Germany's invasion of the Netherlands in May 1940, Dutch forces interned over 3,400 „enemy aliens" in its colonies of Surinam, the Netherlands Antilles, and the Dutch East Indies. These individuals were mostly German citizens (including German Jews), but also comprised foreign nationals (such as Polish and French citizens) suspected of sympathizing with Germany, as well as „Indo-German" individuals, some of whom had become naturalized Dutch citizens. In the German-occupied Netherlands, conversely, German forces implemented racial policies to arrest hundreds of „Indian hostages", that is Dutch-women and –men on leave from the colonies, most of whom were deported to the German concentration camps of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück. Such policies, Wünschmann suggested, tapped into larger ongoing struggles to redefine national and ethnic identities in an ideologized wartime setting, in which radicalized notions of belonging coexisted with concern for one's own citizens and a fear of a potential „fifth column."

Presenting the personal stories of vari-

ous individuals affected by these schemes, Wünschmann emphasized the importance of integrating a colonial dimension into the study of European citizenship policies. For as colonial contexts showed, sorting individuals according to national lines became especially difficult on the imperial scale, in which borders, social boundaries, and perceived ethnic categories were continuously traversed. Wünschmann finally proposed that scholars more systematically incorporate legal studies into historiographical accounts to explore the tensions between politics, laws, and practices of citizenship, and advocated for further critical studies into the particularities of citizenship in contexts of war.

The second paper by MARIEKE OPREL (Amsterdam) investigated the issue of the classification of German citizens as „enemy citizens" in the Netherlands after the Second World War. In particular, Oprel set out to show how this classification related to (and often conflicted with) lived experiences and drew attention to the inconsistency and arbitrariness of Dutch policies in practice. After the German invasion, German citizens in the Netherlands in general found themselves in an ambiguous Dutch-German „in-between" space. But by drawing on the example of a man who was regarded as a German citizen despite his Jewish heritage and therefore categorized as an „enemy subject" (*feindlicher Untertan*), Oprel highlighted how ambivalent efforts of categorization actually were. The end of the war, which was followed by a so-called procedure of de-enemization (*Entfeindung*), brought with it further complications and contradictions as the Dutch authorities adopted a moralistic approach and followed a friend/foe logic inherited from the war. To avoid dispossession, German citizens in the Netherlands had to prove that their behavior compared to that of „ordinary Dutch citizens" or even that they had demonstrated „active resistance." Ironically, this too was easier for Germans with Dutch partners than for Jews, who had often spent the war in hiding. As Oprel concluded, while citizenship is a positive category in theory, its rules also function as a mechanism of exclusion and its inherent link to subjective notions of loyalty and belonging poses a challenge to political and legal practice. Looking closely at the implementation of citizenship regulations in a specific context, as Oprel does in her research, sheds light on its shortcomings and raises wider questions.

The final paper in this section, by SEBASTIAN GEHRIG (London), focused on the question of who counted as a German during the Cold War, in light of legacies of defining Germanness along racial lines in the Third Reich and the so-called *Deutschlandpolitik* – the diplomatic struggle between the two German states, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, over representing German sovereignty and citizenship. Gehrig examined the link between foreign policy and access to citizenship and the resulting politicization of German citizenship conflicts, which turned people into political leverage. As he argued, principles adopted in the late 1940s, such as the policy of non-recognition of the GDR by the West, provided the background for later conflicts over citizenship. Indeed, the fact that West Germany continued to claim the right to represent Germans beyond its borders – including citizens of the GDR – throughout the period of the Cold War was a source of considerable diplomatic tension between the two countries. Gehrig linked this situation to the distinction between two different legal conceptions of citizenship: *Staatsbürgerschaft* and *Staatsangehörigkeit*. In the GDR, the authorities drew on a conception of citizenship based on the former term since 1967 and emphasized the rights of citizens and their participation in society as „active citizens" (*mündige Bürger*) adhering to socialist values. In West Germany, in turn, they drew on a conception of citizenship derived from the Citizenship Law of 1913 and based on an ethnic notion of belonging captured by the term *Staatsangehörigkeit* (lit. „belonging to the state"), enabling West Germany to lay claim to representing anyone who could demonstrate ethnic German ancestry.
Over time, this stance increasingly seemed at odds with political reality. Following a process of „normalization" in the relations between East and West, the GDR came to be perceived as the legitimate representative of GDR citizens both at home and abroad. In his conclusion, Gehrig stressed the tension between

an evolving society and static categories of legal and political practice as well as the resistance to cultural change in the legal sphere and regional administrations.

All three papers offered both thought-provoking case studies on the issue of citizenship and classification and successfully linked these to a wider reflection and discussion on the relationship between the individual and the state, as regulated and mediated by the category of citizenship. They also indicated how this issue can be studied by using a range of sources, from legislation to bureaucratic material to biographies. Last but not least, the presenters thereby drew attention to the entanglement, convergence, and competition of different discourses and terms – the legal, the political, and the social – for definitions of belonging and showed the very real consequences of categorization on the lives of individuals. Pertti Ahonen's paper on the situation of ethnic German refugees in the immediate postwar period in West Germany would have usefully linked the pre-1945 circumstances explored in Wünschmann's and Oprel's papers and the later Cold War period discussed by Gehrig. Yet the three papers, with their long-term and transnational perspectives, nevertheless worked well together, tracing a line through the century and across different spatial and cultural constellations, and giving inspiring insights into the evolution of conceptions of citizenship and belonging in Germany and the Netherlands across political turning points and generations.

Sektionsübersicht:

Section leaders: Sebastian Gehrig (London), Kim Wünschmann (Munich)

Kim Wünschmann (Munich): „Divided War Societies: German and Dutch policies towards enemy aliens in the Second World War"

Marieke Oprel (Amsterdam): „Enemy or Alien? Classifying German citizens in Dutch (De-)Enemisation Policies in the Aftermath of the Second World War"

Sebastian Gehrig (London): „What makes a Citizen? German Citizenship in Times of Ideological Division"

Discussion

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