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National minorities as peace-builders?

How three Baltic Germans responded to the First World War

By

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Abstract

Many members of Europe's national minorities had particularly terrible experiences during the First World War. This article examines how three ethnic German minority activists from the Baltic region responded to those dreadful years by, subsequently, presenting themselves as peace campaigners promoting a novel model for multi-ethnic society. They promoted ideas such as the 'a-national state' and 'cultural autonomy' at both national and international levels, not least in the hope of influencing the League of Nations. To what extent should they be accepted as early peacebuilders?

Introduction

Although the German Empire was forged through the wars of unification in the mid- to late nineteenth century, at no time did the borders of the German state match those of the German nation. Some ethnic Germans living outside the German state existed in communities close to the Empire's borders (e.g. the Sudeten Germans) while others were more distant (e.g. living on Romanian and Hungarian territory, on the lands which became Estonia and Latvia, and in the Volga region too). In the wake of the First World War, the question of German minorities inhabiting lands that belonged to 'foreign' states became particularly emotive. The reasons were complicated, but not least reflected how the post-war settlement involved the creation of the Polish Corridor and the eventual absorption of Memel (today Klaipėda) by Lithuania. As a result of these two events, ethnic German citizens of the former German Empire were

forced into the position of national minorities in newly created states, all in the name of ‘self-determination’ for Poles and Lithuanians. To make the situation more difficult, the large Sudeten German community was allocated to the Czechoslovak state and the amalgamation of Germany and Austria was forbidden by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. So ‘self-determination’ appeared not to apply to Germans and it seemed as though dual standards were being exercised by the peacemakers of the day. In inter-war Europe, therefore, from the outset the existence of German minorities placed a ‘question mark’ over the developing political order.

The inevitable dissatisfactions arising from this situation became particularly serious in the years following Hitler’s appointment as Reich Chancellor. Reports by Sean Lester, the League of Nations High Commissioner in Danzig indicate how by 1935–36 the activities of the Nazi Party, and particularly its local leader, *Gauleiter* Albert Forster, were disrupting the government of the free city and hindering the creation of harmonious relations between it and Poland.¹ To cite another example, German diplomatic documents show how during a meeting between Hitler and Konrad Henlein (the ethnic German leader of the Sudeten German Party) which took place in spring 1938, strategies were discussed about how the latter might destabilise the Czechoslovak state.² Examples such as these, bolstered by Hermann Rauschning’s line that Hitler used German minorities to promote ‘universal unsettlement’, help explain a common willingness to view German minorities during the inter-war period as agents of Berlin’s interests in Central and Eastern Europe, and ultimately as Hitler’s pawns helping subvert the states in which they lived.³ Nonetheless, specialist literature increasingly is taking a more sophisticated approach. For instance, it is important to pay attention to how such minorities understood themselves and their place in new post-war societies. It is too simple to view them as unquestioning minions of Berlin, since they could always become active on their own behalf—and their interests did not have to be the same as those of Berlin.⁴

Likewise recent work has begun to show how attempts to export National Socialism failed to forge unity among Germans abroad. So, for example, German minorities in Poland remained riven with regional differences and very much interested in local loyalties.⁵

The purpose of this article is to follow the recent trend of providing more nuanced readings of the experiences of German minorities during the inter-war period. Discussion shifts attention away from the over-worked theme of German national minorities as threats to European stability and highlights how some of their number constituted a resource for peace. In so doing, the paper gives voice to ethnic German community leaders who, during the 1920s, participated in the construction of a new Central and Eastern Europe. What did their minority insight say about the theoretical possibilities for a peaceful society? What were their practical efforts to establish stable national polities and a sustainable system of international relations? What were their successes and at what point did their good intentions run aground? Can, in fact, some of their number even be considered early examples of peacebuilders?

As yet, such important questions have only been raised by a small English-language literature and, with this in mind, this article discusses the lives and thought of three significant, if rather different, individuals.⁶ Paul Schiemann (1876–1944), Werner Hasselblatt (1890–1958) and Ewald Ammende (1892–1936) were born in the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire and as such were Baltic Germans. During the inter-war period, the former inhabited and engaged constructively with the political system of the newly independent Latvian state, while the latter two—who in the end were rather more ambiguous morally than Schiemann—did the same in Estonia. All three also endeavoured to promote the rights of national minorities internationally, with Ammende in particular working tirelessly to establish, first, the Association of German Minorities in Europe (1922) and, subsequently, the European Congress of Nationalities (1925). The well-spring of motivation which moved these individuals is not hard to identify.

Their dedication to the cause of national minorities grew out of their personal status as the same and their profound experience of being ethnic Germans who had existed loyally in Tsarist Russia only to find their home state pitted in a total war from 1914 until 1917 against their co-national state (Germany). It bears emphasis that the Baltic German community had long served the Russian empire faithfully and with distinction (for instance, it had provided numerous eminent administrative, military and medical officials), but equally it had retained strong cultural links with the German heartland. Not least, in the early nineteenth century there had been a wave of well-educated migrants from Germany to the Baltic Provinces referred to as the '*Literaten*' (the term identified intellectual migrants). Regarding Baltic Germans already based in the area, traditionally they were educated not only in Riga or at Tartu University (then called Dorpat), but also at a German university such as Greifswald (attended by Schiemann) or Kiel (which awarded Ammende a doctorate). Moreover, Richard Wagner spent time in Riga as did J.G. Herder, who taught at the famous Cathedral School. Historically, therefore, Baltic Germans had grown up with mentalities shaped by service to the Russian Empire balanced by deep ties to German culture. Consequently the First World War challenged their identities fundamentally. Indeed, with the Front passing through the Baltic region and Baltic lands experiencing both German and Bolshevik occupation before the eventual creation of the independent Baltic States, it followed that Baltic Germans also came to understand how war and its consequences could pose particular threats to the integrity, welfare and security of national minorities.⁷ For example, Schiemann found himself acting as an officer in the Tsar's 12th Cavalry Division campaigning in the Austrian and Turkish theatres, while his elder brother fought for the German army.⁸ Hasselblatt was deported to Siberia by local Russian authorities fearful that ethnic German communities in sensitive military areas might become unreliable.⁹ Born into a trading family, initially Ammende acted on behalf of the Tsar as a resource organiser commissioned to keep the

Baltic Provinces functioning. German invasion and occupation, however, meant that later he had to fulfil the same role on behalf of the Kaiser. Bolshevik occupation led to the arrest of a grandfather.¹⁰

All three knew only too well, therefore, that in the event of war, national minorities could face disproportionate hardship. Reacting against this experience of the Baltic as a ‘war land’, they all—albeit to varying degrees and for varying time-spans—worked to turn Central and Eastern Europe into a ‘peace land’.¹¹ That is to say, they wanted to prevent any comparable conflict happening again, specifically by publicising ideas about how best to organise multi-ethnic society so that tensions between different national communities could be minimised and never provide a cause of persecution or, ultimately, war.

A note on method

Regarding the methodology standing behind this paper, research involved an exhaustive reading of both the published and unpublished works together with the correspondence of the three figures in question. Of course public sources often can be complicated to interpret, especially when they are written by individuals such as these who were promoting a distinct political agenda. They can reflect both honest motives (e.g. genuine concerns to analyse and solve established social problems) and strategic purposes (e.g. to influence policy-makers and funders). In these cases, however, the available unpublished sources offer little evidence to suggest that the arguments deployed in published work were subverted substantially by strategic considerations—at least during the 1920s.¹² To take an example: certainly private papers reflect Ammende’s wheeling and dealing to ensure his newspaper articles received exposure across Europe;¹³ but the practical matter of organising maximum publicity was not at odds with his commitment to the views being publicised. In fact, it was precisely because

of his commitment to the underlying ideas that he wanted to ensure the widest possible publicity for them.

Correspondingly, while issues to do with, say, the timing of the publication of essays sometimes reflected pragmatic factors (such as a desire to contribute to an emerging debate in the *Riigikogu* [Estonian parliament] or the Assembly of the League of Nations), such strategic considerations do not appear to have overwhelmed more fundamental ethical aims—again, at least during the 1920s. What the three wrote during this decade appears to speak of a basically honest intent to make the most of the freedoms and opportunities afforded by the democratic conditions of post-war Europe.¹⁴ Admittedly, later the twin factors of the failure of the League of Nations to improve significantly its management of national minority affairs following the Adatci report of June 1929 and, within Germany, the moral collapse which followed the death of Stresemann and accompanied the rise of National Socialism, led to a qualitatively different situation in which Ammende and Hasselblatt both made bad moral compromises; but the full story of these later events lies beyond the scope of a single short paper.¹⁵

The Baltic German heritage

The Baltic German community from which Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende were drawn had a very special place in history. Its members constituted a social élite which had enjoyed hegemony over the Baltic lands since the Teutonic knights arrived there in the twelfth century. These original invaders brought no agricultural workers with them but exercised dominion over the indigenous inhabitants. The social role of land ownership and the associated claim to nobility became a component part of the Baltic German heritage. Furthermore Baltic Germans proved remarkably adaptable, maintaining their social hegemony across the centuries regardless of which superior power held sway ultimately in

the region, whether Sweden or Russia. Under the Russian Empire, the Baltic German nobility was allowed to exercise what amounted to autonomous rule by its noble estates or *Ritterschaften* in the territories of Courland, Livonia and Estonia. Equally, however, the community moved with the times, some of its members becoming rich by exploiting the trade routes to the Russian interior running through the Baltic ports.

Perhaps the Baltic Provinces sounded like an idyll for their German inhabitants, but by the late nineteenth century their traditional way of life was being challenged by a Russian empire anxious to centralise and standardise. The trend led Tartu University's famous historian Carl Schirren to draft *The Livonian Answer to Juri Samarin* which, in 1869, called on the Baltic German community to stand fast in the face of mounting hardships. The ascendancy of Tsar Alexander III, however, was associated with an intensified drive for Russification. Tartu University was transformed from a German-language into a Russian-language institution, Russian language was introduced into all schools in the Baltic Provinces and the police system was Russified.¹⁶

But the position of Baltic Germans was threatened not only by St. Petersburg, there were local developments too. Freed from serfdom in 1820, thereafter ordinary Baltic people (i.e. especially ethnic Latvians and Estonians) enjoyed increasing numbers of schools and churches catering for them across the region. Estonian and Latvian newspapers were being published by the mid-1860s and song festivals found an enthusiastic reception.¹⁷ Gradual industrialisation caused an influx of people to urban areas, such that between 1867 and 1897 the proportion of Latvians in Riga grew from less than a quarter to over 40%, while the number of Estonians in Tallinn (then called Reval) increased from a little more than 50% to almost 90%. By 1904, Tallinn had elected an Estonian-Russian municipal council in preference to a German-dominated one.¹⁸ The pressures associated with concomitant social changes boiled over in 1905 when workers in the countryside (again predominantly Estonians

and Latvians) rebelled against the estate owners and pastors, the latter in particular being viewed as agents of empire. Some 200 estate houses and pastors' homes were destroyed and 82 Baltic Germans were killed before order was restored by a combination of brutal policing and promises of national freedom.¹⁹

Regardless of the First World War, therefore, the Baltic German community was facing pressure for far-reaching change, yet the eventual peace settlement of 1919 hastened the pace of events. Critical was 'self-determination' broadcast especially by US President Wilson and adopted as one of the foundational principles of the post-war world. As conceived at the time, self-determination led to the creation of a series of new 'nation states' to cater for the needs of formerly subject peoples claiming independence following the collapse of the Central and Eastern European empires. The new states, including Estonia and Latvia, were based on modern democratic constitutions. The switch to politics as a 'numbers game' expressed through popular elections led to the radical political marginalisation of former imperial élites such as the Baltic Germans who actually accounted for only a few percent of overall populations.²⁰ Social and economic marginalisation also occurred as a result of land reform procedures implemented by the new states which provided landowners with inadequate compensation and the confiscation, also by the state, of traditional community assets, such as those associated with the Baltic Guilds.

By the early 1920s, therefore, the Baltic German community was in crisis. Traditionally its members had regarded themselves as involved in a mission to help 'civilise' the peoples of 'the East', but the mission appeared to have been overtaken by events.²¹ It was hardly a surprise that at this point more than a few ethnic Germans decided to migrate to Germany. This was not, however, the only reaction.

Constructive responses to change

During the 1920s, Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende attempted to respond to the new post-war world order with creativity and positive work both appropriate to their membership of a once élite group and to the demands of a new order populated by democratic nation states, in which international relations were supposed to be conducted under the panoply of the League of Nations. Aware of their position as a numerical national minority, never forgetting how they and their communities had suffered during the war and aware that the League had a duty to protect national minorities in the new and expanded states of Central and Eastern Europe, they presented themselves as peace activists dedicated to the construction of a society which would never see a repetition of the First World War. With this aim in view, Schiemann wanted Europe's national minorities to help replace a dominant mood of war with one of peace, to promote the 'peaceful co-existence of nations' and to create societies likely to experience 'a healthy and lasting peace'.²² At a key celebratory event among Estonia's Baltic Germans, Hasselblatt identified the 'freedom' of national groups as a foundation for 'national peace'.²³ When speaking to the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, Ammende recognised that 'the problem of peace in Europe is indissolubly linked up with the problem of the minorities' question.'²⁴ In an essay, he proposed its 'solution... forms the heart of the problem of coexistence among the European nations and therefore of the preservation of European peace.'²⁵ Likewise, when Ammende organised the European Congress of Nationalities, giving a platform to very many European national minorities indeed (i.e. not just German ones), time and again speakers agreed that they were pacifists engaged with the pacification of Mankind who were seeking to discover the foundations of a truly peaceful society.²⁶

It bears emphasis that this language of peace fitted hand in glove with the new, hopeful mood associated with the construction of the League of Nations—a mood which expressed optimism about the creation of peaceful relations internationally and domestically

alike.²⁷ For members of the minorities themselves, it was a truism that peace required the successful accommodation of national minorities in the European societies of the day. For them, in fact, the origins of the First World War had lain in unresolved tensions surrounding minority nationalities in Europe's multi-ethnic empires. It was, for example, Austria-Hungary's inability to accommodate Serbian national aspirations that had provided the spark which set Europe alight. Furthermore, national minority activists believed their position found a resonance with the spirit of the age. Just as the Great Powers espoused national self-determination in the form of nation states designed for Estonians and Latvians, so they displayed at least a basic awareness of how the new structures were home to minority national groups. Consequently influential statesmen took a number of steps to provide international guarantees for them also.

Commitment to the welfare of minorities was reflected in the treaty concluded between the Allied Powers and Poland on 28 June 1919 which provided a model for future agreements demanded of the new and enlarged states of Central and Eastern Europe. It sought to guarantee equality and liberty for all citizens, as well as the capacity of some minorities (in this case especially Jewish ones) to manage extensively their own cultural institutions. Yet, by implication, post-war minority protection would always be imperfect, because not *all* states would be covered by it. For example, French statesmen maintained that since their country did not have any national minorities, such legislation was irrelevant, while British statesmen said a universal system of protection would be impracticable.

This work in progress was handed on to the Council of the League of Nations in February 1920.²⁸ Although the League was the obvious body to assume the duty of international protection for national minorities, it was completely unclear how it would be achieved. Certainly the organisation undertook the often arduous work of negotiating minority agreements with the generally reluctant new states of Central and Eastern Europe

(e.g. Latvia and Estonia which made declarations to the Council in July and September 1923 respectively), but it was unclear exactly what the Council of the League was supposed to do if minorities suffered serious injury. So the League chose to act in ways that were more political and diplomatic than legal. In other words, rather than invoke a legal procedure which would have placed an offending state in a courtroom's 'dock', it acted through fact-finding and negotiation to exert any available source of moral pressure against a wrong-doer. Given the considerable informality that surrounded how the Council and the Minorities Section of the League's Secretariat supervised and responded to minority rights, also that the League's minority protection system was revised several times across the 1920s, certainly this appeared an exciting area of international relations practice in which a great deal had still to be decided definitively.²⁹

In this context, Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende—along with other national minority spokesmen—attempted to influence both the international and national administration of minority issues. In so doing, they were promoting ideas and views important in the Baltic region in the hope of influencing Western European statesmen. As a result, they became something rare: members of national minorities attempting to influence national and international political processes which were dominated by statesmen and administrators drawn predominantly from majority national populations. As they worked, they displayed minds eager to look beyond the limits of the nation state. They publicised, for instance, that upwards of 36 million Europeans were living as national minorities,³⁰ likewise that the nation state model (as essentially a product of Western European political thought) could never accommodate the chaotic patterns of population distribution found across Central and Eastern Europe. Most certainly there (although actually in Western Europe too if you looked properly), it was utterly impossible to fashion contiguous and discrete states dedicated to housing just one nationality—at least not without undertaking an almighty programme of

population resettlement. So what were the ideas that moved these three minority activists in particular?

Paul Schiemann: thinker of the national minorities

Paul Schiemann was known as the main intellectual driving-force behind the national minority movement in the 1920s.³¹ His thinking was always intensely practical and he became a respected politician belonging to the Committee of German Balt Parties, representing his community's interests and liberal values in Latvia's Constituent Assembly and subsequently its *Saiema* (parliament). Schiemann supported the 'Law on the Schooling of Minorities in Latvia' which was approved in December 1919 and which specified, most importantly, that the state would provide primary schooling and mother-tongue instruction for every 30 children belonging to a national minority.³² Mother-tongue secondary schooling became possible too.

As he sought to make space for national minorities in Latvia's emerging nation state, Schiemann was motivated by a desire to promote a possible 'a-national state'. Fundamental here was the ability to separate cultural and political life. He believed that only once this was achieved would it be possible for every national group in a diverse population to participate equally in the state's political system. Most famously, in his essay 'National Community and State Community' published in 1927, he explained his position on nationality through analogy with religion.³³ Using an historical argument, Schiemann proposed that in the light of past persecutions of religious minorities in Europe, coupled with the Enlightenment's insistence on social tolerance, by the twentieth century the principle of religious freedom was both recognised and realised across the continent. The development was premised on the recognition of a fundamental division between church and state such that modern democracies were understood to be essentially a-religious, with their citizens at liberty to

worship according to their consciences. Schiemann believed this pattern of development offered a model for the treatment of nationality.

Although state-backed religious persecution had been consigned to history, Schiemann highlighted that this had not yet happened for nationality. So while he proposed the state should retain functions likely to promote the welfare of all its citizens (such as providing order and economic infrastructure), he thought it should withdraw from interfering in decisions concerning national culture for fear that such involvement necessarily would be biased towards the interests of majorities. He believed that like religion, national belonging was such a deeply-held personal issue that a unitary state should not try to influence or administer it for fear of the profound damage that might result. So while a 'state community' included everyone living within a state's borders, a 'national community' was different. It rested on an awareness of a common spirit or feeling among its members and belonging to it could only be based on an individual's honest choice.

For Schiemann, it was axiomatic that in the wake of the nationally-based carnage of the First World War, the management and indeed very concept of nationality had to be revised. Not least, the state as such should belong to no single national group; national identity should be based on personal choice not fear of persecution; and all national groups should be free to practice their cultures, in the process enriching social diversity.

Thinking like this was underpinned by a heterogeneous selection of sources. It used the work of Austro-Marxists Otto Bauer and Karl Renner as well as Jewish authors Simon Dubnow and Vladimir Medem. Equally, however, it fitted with the long tradition enjoyed by the Baltic German élites within Tsarist Russia of administering their corner of empire with substantial independence.

It is impossible, however, to complete a discussion of Schiemann without highlighting how his belief in personal freedom and liberalism led to outspoken opposition to National

Socialism. Notably, in 1932 he gave a speech to representatives of German national minorities from across Europe. They were gathered under the auspices of the Association of German Nationality Groups in Europe (formerly the Association of German Minorities in Europe; but the name was changed in 1928). Subsequently the speech was published as ‘The New Nationalist Wave’.³⁴ Here, Schiemann warned how, increasingly, peace-time was viewed as an opportunity to pursue war ‘by other means’ and feared that national communities were becoming seized with a will to annihilate outsiders. He denounced ‘priests coming from the West’ promulgating nationalism among young people in the Baltic region. Such rabble-rousing, he said, would put ethnic Germans in the East at risk of persecution by the wider populations amongst whom they lived.

Werner Hasselblatt and the project to achieve cultural autonomy

Werner Hasselblatt was different to Schiemann, so much so that—at an extreme—he has even been counted one of his ‘opponents’.³⁵ A decade younger than Schiemann, Hasselblatt was educated at Tartu University for a career in Law.³⁶ He was, perhaps, more of a technocrat than Schiemann, and certainly he was more traditionally conservative, being more inclined to accept society as an established hierarchy of organically-constructed ‘estates’. Past comparisons of Hasselblatt and Schiemann have highlighted that the former was always more sceptical about democracy, that he disliked the notion of ‘minority’ (since in German the word for ‘minority’, ‘*Minderheit*’, sounds like ‘of lesser value’, ‘*minderwertig*’). In this light, in fact, for Hasselblatt accepting the appellation ‘minority’ for ethnic Germans was a necessary evil. He had to do this in order for his community to benefit from the League’s minority protection system. As if this wasn’t enough, Hasselblatt also was at odds with Schiemann’s idea of the a-national state.³⁷

Like Schiemann, Werner Hasselblatt represented his Baltic German community as a parliamentary deputy, although in Estonia rather than Latvia. In 1923 he was elected to the *Riigikogu* (Estonian parliament) and subsequently became a key participant in the committees drafting and re-drafting that country's cultural autonomy law which finally received parliamentary approval in February 1925.³⁸ Cultural autonomy was designed by the members of the Estonian state to manage a multi-cultural society which comprised Estonians, Russians, Germans, Swedes and Jews.³⁹ Certainly Hasselblatt was not the only Estonian Baltic German to contribute to this process. For instance, he built on work achieved by August Spindler and Max Bock. In 1920, the former was a member of multi-ethnic delegation which lobbied the Estonian Prime Minister about cultural autonomy,⁴⁰ while the latter was a *Riigikogu* deputy who spoke up for cultural autonomy during early parliamentary debates.

The cultural autonomy project fitted well with the framework of the Estonian state.⁴¹ The constitution of June 1920 guaranteed the equal treatment of different nationalities, mother tongue education and the right of all Estonian citizens to choose their nationality. It also recognised the right of national minorities to establish autonomous organisations. Unsurprisingly, then, a number of significant Estonian politicians, not least Konstantin Päts (of the Agrarian Party) supported cultural autonomy consistently. In the end, however, the achievement of cultural autonomy also required compromise with some more sceptical Estonian politicians, including senior members of the People's Party Jüri Jaakson and Jan Tõnisson. In the end, the need to maintain a functioning democracy following a failed Communist putsch in Tallinn on 1 December 1924, together with the need to pass a parliamentary budget, created conditions conducive to the passage of cultural autonomy.

Estonia's system of cultural autonomy

Cultural autonomy was designed to permit national self-determination defined not by territory but by the will of individual persons. As such, it was particularly appropriate to a group like the Baltic Germans who were relatively small in number and who could be spread out thinly across a given area.⁴²

In its final form, the cultural autonomy law (full name ‘The Law on the Cultural Self-Administration of National Minorities’) empowered national groups with over 3,000 members to run their own educational and cultural affairs.⁴³ They were expected to set up a register of members of the given national group based on the free choice of individual citizens of the Estonian state. In other words, nationality was not to be determined by heredity or ‘race’, but involved the personal recognition of a *cultural* adherence to a given group. The members of the register were then empowered to hold elections to choose a national cultural council to organise the cultural life of its members. Most importantly, the cultural council was responsible for running the national group’s schools and, to this end, was empowered to raise taxes.

As soon as the law was passed, the Baltic German community began to organise under its auspices. Hasselblatt was a member of the delegation which, on 11 April 1925, informed the Estonian President of the community’s intention to enact autonomy. Within a few weeks, a community committee, led by Hasselblatt had begun to plan for the necessary elections. By 1 November the results were public and the cultural council met in the House of the Ancient Brotherhood of the Black Heads in Tallinn. 11,682 ethnic Germans had added their names to the register and 41 representatives had been elected to the central forum. When a special event was held at the Nicolai Church marking the commencement of cultural autonomy, Hasselblatt spoke about nationality and peace.⁴⁴

What exactly Hasselblatt and his community thought they were doing is, however, rather a matter for debate. One commentator, himself originally from the Baltic region, later

proposed that—in part at least—Hasselblatt hoped cultural autonomy would facilitate the maintenance of the Baltic German community's old corporatist traditions.⁴⁵ Certainly Hasselblatt's argument, deployed at the Nicolai Church, that autonomy would have to grow organically rather than mechanically was innately conservative. Baron von Stackelberg's words, delivered at an early meeting of the autonomous cultural council, were even more unambiguous:

'The construction of the law is democratic and it must be feared that it contains a concession to the mechanistic spirit of the age. Baltic Germandom has always rejected every kind of mechanistic form of organisation, since it has always created for itself an organic form of life. We should not allow ourselves to be forced to retreat to the standpoint of being a national minority in the sense that we renounce our historical worth in the region. We can and should never be evaluated according to our number. We should not forget that the decisive thing about a community is not its number, but its spirit.'⁴⁶

A quotation such as this underlines once again how difficult it was for people like Hasselblatt and Stackelberg to accept the status of 'minority'. Nonetheless, their work yielded benefits not just for their own community, but for others too. Notwithstanding the complexities associated with cultural autonomy among Estonia's ethnic Germans, in due course Estonia's Jews followed their lead and enacted their own system of cultural autonomy.

Ewald Ammende: an international perspective

Ewald Ammende was born to an affluent trading family based in Pärnu (then called Pernau). He died, however, in Beijing—a fact which highlights the international quality of his life. He was educated in Pärnu, Riga, Moscow, Cologne, Tübingen and Kiel.⁴⁷ During his doctoral research, Ammende travelled around Europe extensively, meeting representatives of ethnic German groups located across the continent before writing his dissertation about them. This interest in the fate of national minorities, and especially German ones, stayed with him throughout his life.

A friend of Hasselblatt, Ammende campaigned in support of Estonian cultural autonomy—in fact, he even helped persuade Hasselblatt to take up a career in politics in order to engage with the project in the *Riigikogu*;⁴⁸ but Ammende was particularly active promoting cultural autonomy internationally. Capitalising on contacts he had made while a student, together with Rudolf Brandsch (a member of Romania’s German community), Ammende organised the Association of German Minorities in Europe. Its founding programme highlighted aims of strengthening intra- and inter-state connections between ethnic German communities as well as of enhancing national consciousness rooted in any given homeland.⁴⁹ Naturally the Association held that the appropriate formulation and administration of minority rights was critical for Europe:

‘Minority protection legislation and the cultural autonomy of minorities... really are the only means to defeat the cancer in the body of our continent, namely national hatred—which causes ninety nine percent of the cases of oppression and violence towards national minorities.’

The document made plain both that the underpinning of German-language schools would be a critical part of their enterprise and that nothing should be done to infringe the terms of the post-war settlement (e.g. there was no question of the group campaigning for border revisions). Within this framework, Ammende and his associates promoted interest internationally in cultural autonomy (which they believed was enjoyed in practice by no single ethnic German group in the early 1920s).

Between 1923 and 1925, Ammende was active inside Estonia championing and acting as a ‘fixer’ for cultural autonomy. He was instrumental, for example, in helping create compromises and consensus between sceptical Estonian politicians (such as Jaakson and Tõnisson) and Baltic German proponents.⁵⁰ But Ammende was always a restless spirit, so once the necessary law was passed, he moved on to a fresh initiative, specifically re-engaging

with the international promotion of cultural autonomy. The initial documents framing the Association of German Minorities in Europe recognised that, by creating their own international organisation, ethnic Germans were forging a path which other national minorities might one day follow, and this issue became the focus of his life's work. Across the summer of 1925 he travelled the length and breadth of Europe once more, now meeting representatives of non-German minority groups and hunting out funding in order to construct a European Congress of Nationalities.⁵¹

The General Secretary

Despite lack of support from, for instance, the German Foreign Ministry (which led Ammende to begin liaising with the Hungarian government instead), the first European Congress of Nationalities convened in Geneva in October 1925 and Ammende was its General Secretary.⁵² This city was chosen because it was home to the League of Nations and hence it was hoped that debates held there would influence the organisation which was supervising the administration of minority rights. By scheduling the meeting for autumn, the aim was to put subtle pressure on the League's Assembly which met at this time too and which had an interest in national minority issues.

The European Congress of Nationalities was a tremendous, visionary achievement led by essentially a private individual. Ammende was—and those around him were—members of national minorities drawn from especially (although not exclusively) Central and Eastern Europe, for whom this project provided an opportunity to speak out and make themselves heard internationally. When it first met, the congress drew representatives from 27 groups of 10 nationalities located in 12 separate states.⁵³ Eventually it claimed to represent 27 million members of minorities located across Europe.⁵⁴ Speakers included Ukrainians, Poles, Russians, Germans, Jews, Catalans, Slovenes, Lithuanians, Danes, Basques: the list went on

and on. Even a Welshman, Frederick Llewellyn-Jones, who was Liberal MP for Bethesda, North Wales, addressed the congress.⁵⁵

The congress's basic demands included mother tongue education for minorities, the toleration of minority cultural organisations, security of private property for all (i.e. no expropriation of property belonging specifically to minorities), full access for minorities to the political and economic life of the state, the right to a native language press, the right to mother tongue religious services and the right to foster cultural links between any given minority and its core cultural group.⁵⁶ In effect, therefore, the organisation was attempting to promote the values and methods implicit in Estonia's cultural autonomy across the European space. In the process, it was clear about the need to adhere to the terms of the peace settlement such that, again, it would not discuss the possibility of border revision. Furthermore, in order to prevent discussions becoming ill-tempered and divisive, the congress was only supposed to address matters of principle rather than specific cases.

The main participants in the congress were dedicated to writing national minority affairs into every aspect of international relations. They were generally agreed that the First World War had been caused by tensions arising from unresolved minority issues. They argued that disarmament was impossible until reconciliation between nationality groups (including between majorities and minorities) was complete, since distrust and suspicion linked to nationality-based tensions prevented statesmen from destroying their weaponry.⁵⁷ Equally, full economic reconstruction could never be attained and economic weaknesses could never be resolved while antagonisms between national majorities and minorities distorted economic flows within and between states.⁵⁸ Discussing the idea of Pan-Europe which was developed, first, by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and, subsequently, by French statesman Aristide Briande, the congress proposed that it should not just reflect a structure of states, but also one of nationality organisations.⁵⁹

Consistently the congress promoted ideas of peace. There was, for instance, discussion of ‘moral disarmament’, or how best to conceptualise the problems of the day so that they no longer appeared threatening and conflict-ridden.⁶⁰ Also there were extensive discussions about the moral and legal condition of Europe as it impinged on national minorities.⁶¹

Central to many discussions, and a theme to which the congress returned repeatedly, was the League of Nations and its administration of the all-important minority rights. Hopeful of being heeded by the statesmen and officials staffing the mould-breaking institution, congress members developed a sophisticated critique of the organisation, including calls for the universalisation of national minority rights and the creation of a permanent commission for national minority affairs. Ammende was particularly active lobbying members of the League’s Minorities Section, such as Erik Colban who worked there until 1930.⁶² Also, in 1929, the congress drew up a memorandum advocating changes to the League’s procedures which they submitted to the committee which, at the time, was charged with reforming the minority protection system under the chairmanship of Japanese representative to the Council Mineichiro Adatci.⁶³ Unfortunately, the congress’s hopes proved vain and its proposals were overlooked. Indeed, generally-speaking, national minorities had precious little influence on the League which, to one congress representative’s mind, remained too much of a ‘League of States’ and too little a genuine ‘League of Nations’.⁶⁴ Certainly from time to time Ammende hoped that the League of Nations would absorb his organisation in order to develop it further as an authoritative forum for the treatment of national minority issues. Unfortunately, the League never overcame scepticism about the congress and its leaders. In the end, at least one of its officials questioned the appropriateness of cultural autonomy as a model for the regulation of minority affairs in Europe.⁶⁵ For example, it was doubted whether all members of national minorities would wish to register their membership on a nationality cataster (as

happened in Estonia) for fear that doing so could facilitate direct or indirect persecution. So, with his organisation's finances always insecure, eventually Ammende was forced to seek out another sponsor. In effect, this meant he had to look ever more towards the German Foreign Ministry—a fact which became more and more critical as the National Socialist movement approached political power in Berlin.

As the congress became subjected to pressures from Hitler and National Socialism, so the congress became increasingly discredited as an independent mouthpiece for national minorities. This was especially the case following the withdrawal of Jewish delegates from the 1933 congress on account of the managing committee's decision not to discuss specifically the persecution of Germany's Jews. In purely formal terms the decision was correct, since congress rules forbade discussion of specific cases; in moral terms, however, this was a clear abrogation of responsibility. Ammende's complicity in this collapse led Jewish deputies to condemn him unequivocally. In correspondence, Emil Margulies (from Czechoslovakia) denounced Ammende as 'a paid tool of the Hitler-Rosenberg policy' and declared 'I do not have trust in Dr. Ammende'.⁶⁶ His accusations of the creeping Nazification of the congress were repeated in at least some elements of the European press and were noted by the League of Nations' observer at the 1933 meeting.⁶⁷

Ammende's life's work was stuck in the worst of all possible impasses. Jewish delegates ripped into the General Secretary, while German ethnic groups experienced increasing penetration by German National Socialism. League of Nations officials grew increasingly sceptical about the honesty of the undertaking while money flowing from Berlin remained crucial to the organisation's continued functioning.⁶⁸ With the culmination of a lifetime of effort lying in tatters, Ammende drifted away from congress business and towards an interest in famine in Ukraine. To give the shift context, famine in Ukraine had already preoccupied him between 1922 and 1924 and, in the early 1930s, he publicised how the new

event was threatening German minorities in the region.⁶⁹ After 1933, this concern drew him towards funding associated with the Third Reich's anti-Comintern projects. Finally succumbing to long-standing health problems in 1936, he died in Beijing while on a world cruise financed by the German Foreign Ministry and during an excursion to Manchuria.

Nor was he the only one of the three Baltic Germans identified here to end up compromising with Hitler. Eventually Hasselblatt worked for the Reich Ministry of the Occupied Eastern Territories where he wrote at least some racially-attuned memoranda.⁷⁰ By contrast, Paul Schiemann (who was by far the most morally clear-sighted of the three) died in 1944 under virtual house arrest in Nazi occupied Riga. During the final phase of his life he had still managed to save a Jewish girl from the Holocaust.⁷¹

Conclusion

Hasselblatt and Ammende were complex figures. Both had Achilles heels: Hasselblatt by virtue of his susceptibility to traditional conservatism and Ammende on account of his need to find a sponsor willing to bankroll his ambitious projects. Furthermore there is no question that both these men, Paul Schiemann too for that matter, valued their German cultural background highly—regarding it as superior to other cultures.⁷² Even accepting these important shortcomings, however, when we focus on the work from the 1920s of Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende, we find something not yet destroyed by association with Nazism (and Schiemann, of course, never experienced that nadir anyway). In fact, during this earlier decade the priorities of national minority rights activists set them at odds with die-hard National Socialists. Alfred Rosenberg who styled himself a leading Nazi ideologist (and who had been born in Tallinn in 1893), accused them of ‘racial pollution’ and ‘spiritual murder’, because they accepted co-existence and inter-mingling with other nationalities.⁷³ In addition, Ammende in particular was horrified at how the German minority in South Tyrol was

persecuted by Mussolini's Italy, while Hitler regarded it as necessary compromise in order to ensure a working relationship between Nazism and Fascism.⁷⁴

Taking the corpus of work achieved by Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende during the 1920s, we find quite a sophisticated analysis of the state of Europe after the First World War and a minority-based agenda for peace more or less congruent—in theory at least—with the world order epitomised by the League of Nations. The three were very much responding to their reading of the First World War and the consequences of that event for national minorities. We find a proposal to devolve some state power (in effect, 'sovereignty') from the central authorities of the nation state to separate national cultural organisations. This process was supposed to make states more resilient (because it aimed to bind national minorities into the fabric of political organisation) and more peaceful (because it promised to remove inter-ethnic tensions). It removed the danger of *irredenta* (because there would be less incentive for minorities to become dissatisfied and create subversive links with a potentially hostile foreign state) and by the same token to lessen the danger of powerful neighbours being tempted to interfere in the affairs of a counter-part. Notwithstanding the at least partial origins of this minority thinking in the works of Austro-Marxists and Jews from the Russian Empire, it yielded strategies in many ways tailor-made to benefit small states by promising to enhance their internal coherence and external security vis-à-vis potentially much more powerful neighbours and other interested states with co-nationals inhabiting their territories.

Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende felt their proposals were particularly appropriate to the lands between Germany and Russia (the so-called '*Randstaaten*' or 'borderland states'). These states were multi-ethnic, often small and new or with significantly extended borders, consequently they were undergoing challenging processes of formation out of the ruins of old Empires while adjoining powerful neighbours (i.e. Germany and Bolshevik Russia) with significant interest in what was happening inside them. By promoting their

projects, the three felt their ideas would offer disproportionate benefit to all minorities (i.e. definitely not just German ones) which often lived in dangerous contested border areas, which might face the possibility of war against co-national forces (which could lead to them being branded potentially subversive elements as happened during the First World War), and which were vulnerable to persecution by numerical majorities.

In this light, taking the work achieved during the 1920s, we should refrain from being too sceptical about what the three achieved. It would be too simple, for instance, to accuse Ammende and Hasselblatt of being involved in essentially strategic propagandist projects motivated by German nationalist sentiment which always pointed towards the *revanche* of the 1930s. To allege that, would be to read history backwards. Just because Hasselblatt and Ammende ended up compromising with Nazism did not mean that this was pre-determined; it would also be to ignore the general benefits associated with their work. So when Estonia's ethnic Germans pioneered cultural autonomy, the country's Jews capitalised on the project too; when Ammende established the European Congress of Nationalities, he provided a platform not just for German minorities, but for many other national minorities too; and when Ammende lobbied the League of Nations, he did so in the knowledge that a more robust minority protection would benefit more communities than just ethnic German ones.

This does not mean there were never disputes between national minorities even in the 1920s. Of course there were. For example, in 1927 Polish minorities left the European Congress of Nationalities in a dispute over policies which were alleged to favour so-called 'strong' minorities over 'weak' ones. This was, however, a complicated story which could be explored in a paper in its own right. Not least the dispute showed how tensions between states (in this case Germany and Poland) could invade the sphere of minority rights, bringing division with them.⁷⁵

So when all is said and done, there is a case for maintaining that here we have members of German minorities in Europe attempting to become early peacebuilders. They did this by recognising the existence of national cultural difference between individuals, by trying to develop broadly progressive social models that would take this into account and by promoting their aims internationally. From 1929, however, with the failure of the League to reform its system of minority protection supplemented by the death of Stresemann and the consequent disappearance of his steadying hand in the field of German foreign policy, the international political environment began to shift. With Nazism increasing in significance after the 1930 *Reichstag* elections, disseminating its message with ever greater stridency and offering a kind of financial patronage, the position of Hasselblatt and Ammende as peacebuilders was subverted; but the full story of the decline and fall of specifically these two individuals is a matter for another day.⁷⁶ As for Paul Schiemann, following his ‘New Nationalist Wave’ speech, increasingly he was marginalised from ethnic German affairs.

The study of these three during the 1920s, therefore, becomes a regrettable tale of how a promising peaceful possibility in History ran into the sand and of a missed opportunity by the League of Nations to support creative approaches by independent actors to promote a peaceful solution to Europe’s minority issue. It is relevant to close this essay by observing that even some League statesmen recognised a degree of error here. In his memoirs, prominent British statesman and representative to the League Robert Cecil acknowledged that the League’s international ‘machinery’ for enforcing minority rights had required improvement.⁷⁷ So anyone who still questions the credentials of Schiemann, Hasselblatt and Ammende as early peacebuilders would do well to remember that this was a difficult time in which even a Nobel Prize winning elite career politician acknowledged that important things could have been done better; and Cecil made his observation from the relative luxury of a

world much more comfortable than that enjoyed by any of the members of Central and Eastern Europe's minorities.

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⁴ R. Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles. The Germans in Western Poland 1918–1939* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993) and M. Cornwall, *The Devil's Wall. The Nationalist Youth Mission of Heinz Rutha* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012). See also W. Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland* (CUP, 2012), p.12. Regarding difference of interest between the German state and German minorities, see M. Housden, 'International Affairs and Latvia's Baltic Germans' in D. Potjomkina *et al* (eds.), *The Centenary of Latvia's Foreign Affairs. Ideas and Personalities* (Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2016) p.78.

⁵ Chu, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland*, introduction.

⁶ An example of a relatively rare sensitive English-language treatment of a member of a national minority as a contributor to European peace and stability in the wake of the First World War is J. Hiden, *Defender of Minorities. Paul Schiemann, 1876–1944* (London: Hurst, 2004). For a more general discussion of national minorities and the international system, see C. Fink, *Defending the Rights of Others. The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (CUP, 2004).

⁷ For discussions of the impact of the First World War on the Baltic region, see Annemarie H. Sammartino, *The Impossible Border. Germany and the East, 1914–1922* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2010), especially chapter 2 and V.G. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front. Culture, National Identity and German Occupation in World War I*, (CUP, 2000).

⁸ Hiden, *Defender of Minorities*, p. 21. See also Schiemann's memoirs *Zwischen zwei Zeitaltern. Erinnerungen 1903–1919* (Lüneburg: Verlag Nordland-Druck, 1979).

⁹ M. Garleff, 'Deutschbaltische Publizisten: Ewald Ammende—Werner Hasselblatt—Paul Schiemann', *Berichte und Forschungen* 2 (1994), pp. 189–229.

¹⁰ For details about the arrest of Ammende's grandfather see the documents in Fond 1502–1–1. Russian State Military Archive, Moscow. See also M. Housden, *On their own behalf. Ewald Ammende, Europe's National Minorities and the Campaign for Cultural Autonomy 1920–1936* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014) p. 26.

¹¹ The term 'war land' is taken from Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*.

¹² Most importantly, Schiemann's papers are located at the Baltic German Central Library, Riga and Ammende's paper are located at Fond 1502, Russian State Military Archive, Moscow. Also significant are the papers of Josip Wilfan, the President of the European Congress of Nationalities. He corresponded extensively with all the main members of the congress. His papers are located in the Federal Archive, Koblenz.

¹³ See, for example, Ammende's correspondence with Junge of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* which took place in early 1925. Fond 1502–1–22. Korrespondenz Minderheiten, Ammende papers, Moscow.

¹⁴ The Baltic German community was well aware that the new conditions of Europe provided them with not just challenges, but opportunities. They understood well that transnational organisations such as the Association of German Minorities in Europe and the European Congress of Nationalities would have been impossible before 1914 and they also understood that in the new Europe, they could develop stronger ties to western Europe than had been possible hitherto. For a discussion of some of these points, see A. De Vries, 'Eine nationale politische Pflicht', *Revaler Bote* 1 December 1923.

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- ²⁵ E.Ammende, 'Der Kampf um die Rechte der Nationalitäten und die neutralen Staaten', *Nation und Staat*, (May 1929), pp. 527–8.
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- ²⁷ For recent studies expressing the new mood associated with the creation of the League of Nations and the possibilities which it was held to open up, see S. Pedersen, 'Back to the League of Nations: Review Essay,' *American Historical Review*, 112: 4 (Oct. 2007), pp. 1091–1117 and *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (OUP, 2015), also B. Cabanes, *The Great War and the Origins of Humanitarianism, 1914–1918* (CUP, 2014) and M. Housden, *The League of Nations and the Organisation of Peace* (Harlow: Pearson, 2012). For a series of essays discussing the League's social agenda for peace, including its treatment of national minority issues, see M. Rodriguez-Garcia, D. Rodogno and L. Kozma eds., *The League of Nations' Work on Social Issues* (Geneva: UN, 2016).
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- ³⁶ For more information about Hasselblatt, see Garleff, 'Deutschbaltische Publizisten'. Also J. Hackmann, 'Werner Hasselblatt on Cultural Autonomy: a Forgotten Manuscript' in *Forgotten Pages*, ed. by Housden and Smith, pp. 147–60.
- ³⁷ Garleff, 'Nationalitätenpolitik zwischen liberalem und völkischem Anspruch'.
- ³⁸ See, D.J. Smith and J. Hiden, *Ethnic Diversity and the Nation State*, (London: Routledge, 2012) chapter 4. Housden, *On their own behalf*, chapter 4 and Garleff, *Deutschbaltische Politik zwischen den Weltkriegen*, p. 111.
- ³⁹ In 1922, Estonia's population comprised 969,976 Estonians, 91,101 Russians, 18,319 Germans, 7,850 Swedes, 4,566 Jews and 15,239 people belonging to other nationalities. Garleff, *Deutschbaltische Politik zwischen den Weltkriegen*, p. 163.
- ⁴⁰ The delegation also included a Jew, a Swede and a Russian.
- ⁴¹ K. Alenius, 'The Birth of Cultural Autonomy in Estonia: How, Why and for Whom?' *Journal of Baltic Studies* 38 (2007), pp. 445–62.
- ⁴² There were about 18,000 Baltic Germans in Estonia at the time.
- ⁴³ Earlier legislative drafts had wanted autonomous welfare organisations to be included too, but this element had to be dropped in order to make the legislation acceptable to a section of Estonian *Riigikogu* deputies.
- ⁴⁴ 'Die kulturelle Selbstverwaltung wird verwirklicht. Auf seiner geistigen Eröffnungssitzung beschloss der erste Estländische Deutsche Kulturrat die Durchführung der kulturellen Selbstverwaltung', *Revaler Bote* (2 November 1925). For Hasselblatt's speech, see 'Die Eröffnung des ersten Estländischen Deutschen Kulturrats', *Revaler Bote* (2 November 1925).
- ⁴⁵ M.H. Boehm referred to in Garleff, 'Nationalitätenpolitik zwischen liberalem und völkischem Anspruch', p. 116.

- ⁴⁶ ‘Die Debatten im Kulturrat über die Frage der Verwirklichung der kulturellen Selbstverwaltung’, *Revaler Bote* (5 November 1925).
- ⁴⁷ M. Garleff, ‘The Historiography of Paul Schiemann’ in *Forgotten Pages in Baltic History*, pp. 117–46.
- ⁴⁸ See W. Hasselblatt, *Von der Kulturautonomie zum Nationalitätenkongress*. MSS 53, Herder Institute, Marburg.
- ⁴⁹ E. Ammende, ‘Gründe, Aufgaben und Programm für eine Zusammenkunft der Vertreter aller deutschen Minoritäten in Europa’, *Nation und Staat* (October 1932) pp. 63–4.
- ⁵⁰ Housden, *On their own behalf*, pp. 102–3.
- ⁵¹ See Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938* and Housden, *On their own behalf*.
- ⁵² On other occasions the congress met in Berne, Vienna and London.
- ⁵³ M.H. Boehm, ‘Ewald Ammende als Mittler der europäischen Volksgruppen’, *Jahrbuch des Baltischen Deutschtums*, 10 (1963) p. 59.
- ⁵⁴ *Congress of the European National Minorities London Meeting 14–15 July 1937*, (Vienna and Leipzig, 1938), pp. 7–9.
- ⁵⁵ Polish groups left the congress in 1927 and Jewish groups did so in 1933.
- ⁵⁶ *Congress of the European National Minorities London Meeting 14–15 July 1937*, pp. 8–9.
- ⁵⁷ ‘Bericht über die Teilsitzung des Kongressausschusses von 11. Februar [1931] in Dresden’. R60528, Political Archive of the Foreign Ministry, Berlin.
- ⁵⁸ *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas. Genf, 3 bis 6 September 1930* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1931), p. 96.
- ⁵⁹ *Sitzungsbericht 1930*, p. 54.
- ⁶⁰ *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas. Genf 29 bis 31 August 1931* (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1932), p. 144.
- ⁶¹ *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas. Genf 29.–31. August 1928*, (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1928), pp. 123–34.
- ⁶² For two reports Colban’s meetings with Ammende see the following: Note by Colban, 28 September 1925 and EC, 19 May 1926, both of which are located at R1686. Minority Questions. Protection of Minorities. 41 / 44950 / 30181.. League of Nations Archive, UN Library. Geneva.
- ⁶³ The memorandum was reproduced in the journal run by German national minorities. ‘Denkschrift des Ausschusses der Europäischen Nationalitätenkongresse’, *Nation und Staat*, May 1929.
- ⁶⁴ *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas. Wien, 29. Juni bis 1. Juli 1932*, (Vienna and Leipzig: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1933), p. 133.
- ⁶⁵ See the memorandum ‘Cultural autonomy as a solution to the problem of minorities. Note by M. Krabbe dated 18 November 1931.’ R2161. Minorities. 7th ENK. 29 to 31 August 1931. 4 / 31096 / 3817. League of Nations Archive. UN Library. Geneva.
- ⁶⁶ Letter of 1 January 1934, Margulies to Wilfan. Nachlass Wilfan. 1250. Federal Archive, Koblenz.
- ⁶⁷ For an example of hostile press coverage, see Natan Szwalbe, ‘The Nationality Congress: Hitlerism Exposed’ in *Nasz Przegląd* 23 September 1933. Nachlass Wilfan. 1250, FC4407. Federal Archive, Koblenz. For the report by the League’s observer, see ‘Neuvième Congrès des Nationalités Européennes tenu à Berne du 16 au 19 Septembre 1933.’ R3932. Minorities. Congress of Organised National Groups in the States of Europe. Berne. September 1933. 4 / 6638 / 6638. League of Nations Archive. UN Library. Geneva.
- ⁶⁸ Archive sources show a consistent flow of money from Berlin to Ammende and the German groups attending the congress in the years leading up to 1933. A particularly significant Foreign Office memorandum from 1930 maintained that financial support for the congress should be maintained so long as it took into account the interests of the *Reich*. See Memorandum of 28 August 1930 for the State Secretary and Finance Ministry. R60528. Political Archive of the Foreign Ministry, Berlin.
- ⁶⁹ Ewald Ammende, *Human Life in Russia*, (Cleveland: Zubaal, 1984), first published 1936.
- ⁷⁰ For one of Hasselblatt’s memoranda, see NG-3908, MA 128/3, Institute for Contemporary History, Munich.
- ⁷¹ Schiemann’s name is included among the ‘Righteous among Nations’ which is compiled by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.
- ⁷² I. Ijabs, ‘Strange Baltic Liberalism: Paul Schiemann’s Political Thought Revisited’, *Journal of Baltic Studies* 40 (2009) 495–515.
- ⁷³ A. Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* (Torrance, CA: Noontide Press, 1982), p. 42.
- ⁷⁴ Telford Taylor (ed.), *Hitler’s Secret Book* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), pp. 180–1.
- ⁷⁵ For discussions of the episode see Bamberger-Stemmann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938* and Housden, *On their own behalf*, Chapter 10 ‘Critical Challenges’. The episode is recorded in *Sitzungsbericht des Kongresses der organisierten nationalen Gruppen in den Staaten Europas. Genf 22.–24. August 1927* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1928). For the original accusations against the congress see, J.

Skala, 'Der Kongress des nationalen Minderheiten in Genf 1926', *Serbske Nowiny*, 8 September 1926. R60464, Political Archive of the Foreign Ministry, Berlin.

⁷⁶ See Bamberger-Stemann, *Der Europäische Nationalitätenkongreß 1925 bis 1938* and Housden, *On their own behalf*, chapters 9 to 13.

⁷⁷ R. Cecil, *A Great Experiment*. Oxford: Alden Press, 1941, p. 327.