

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

AND THE REDEFINITION OF 'IMAGINED COMMUNITIES':

JEWISH & PROTESTANT MINORITIES
IN FRANCE, IRELAND & ITALY
(1789 - 1948)

22 & 23 MAY 2025

CLSH NANCY

**MINORITY PROTESTANT
RESEARCH NETWORK**

MIRCOM PROJECT

MSH LORRAINE

INSCRIPTION:



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THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN REDEFINING 'IMAGINED COMMUNITIES': THE CASES OF JUDAISM AND PROTESTANTISM IN FRANCE, IRELAND AND ITALY (1789-1948)

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025

**CL
SH** NANCY
ROOM A104

9:00

COFFEE

9:15

WELCOME.
INTRODUCTION.
**Nathalie Collé, director of IDEA
Karina Bénazech Wendling**

9:30

KEYNOTE LECTURE

**«UNE FRATERNITÉ LIBÉRÉE ? APPELS À LA RÉGÉNÉRATION DES
JUIFS, ESPOIRS DE RÉCONCILIATION AVEC LES CATHOLIQUES
(ITALIE, 1796-1848)»¹**

Chair: Julien Léonard

This keynote lecture examines the texts of three patriotic speeches delivered in former Italian ghettos, during official events celebrating Jewish emancipation, by Catholic orators in 1798 and 1799 in Rome, Turin, and Casale Monferrato. Three Jewish texts from the first half of the 19th century, originating from Revere, Ancona, and Livorno, provide a more composite and contrasting perspective of the regeneration and the renewal of Jewish-Catholic relations. Drawing on numerous biblical references, these speeches reframe Jews as heirs of the Hebrews and even as custodians of republican political thought. Blending religious faith with patriotic fervour, emotions play a significant role, exalting the ambitions to create an entirely new community of engaged citizens.

10:45

COFFEE BREAK

11:15

PANEL 1: 'PROTESTANTS AND NATION-BUILDING'

Chair: Laura Popa

« FLORENCE AND EUROPE: PROTESTANT ELITES AND
THEIR CULTURAL INSTRUMENTS, LATE 18TH – LATE 19TH
CENTURY »

The Protestant presence in Florence during the nineteenth century played a highly significant role, yet still overlooked. On this topic, the historiography is almost exclusively limited to the works of Giorgio Spini (*Studi sull'evangelismo italiano tra Otto e Novecento*, 1994; *Risorgimento e Protestanti* 1956), therefore, the study of the Florentine case still awaits a comprehensive analysis. Spini has highlighted the importance of the Protestant minority's contribution – in its international dimension – to the construction of a united Italy and its liberal, partly secular development. During the 19th century, Florence was the epicentre of phenomena and events that acted as catalysts for these processes, and was also a hub of progressive cultural trends, which embedded the city within an extensive network of European contacts. Therefore, we propose to examine the cultural instruments established in Florence with a progressive orientation, largely advocated by Protestant minorities. One such institution was the Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario Viesseux, founded in 1819 by the Genevan Count Viesseux, where Florence's cultural elite experienced a privileged place, largely due to the presence of Protestant intellectuals or those closely aligned with the Reformation. The Gabinetto was a powerful cultural vehicle, becoming one of the centres that contributed the most to the Risorgimento, particularly thanks to its extraordinary library that offered public access to 140 scientific journals and approximately 20,000 printed volumes from across Europe, with the explicit aim of linking Florence and Tuscany – followed by Italy as a whole – to the most innovative experiences of European countries. With emancipation, Florence also became a focal point for significant cultural and educational initiatives: the creation of the Waldensian Faculty and the Claudiana publishing house, as well as the Gould Institute are clear examples of this. Additionally, the periodical *L'Amico dei Fanciulli* was also founded in Florence in 1863, and advocated for a new educational model aiming at overcoming the longstanding gap in female education. We will therefore highlight the international links between these institutions, as well as their influence on Italian society at the time.

Davide Mano

Davide Mano is a historian of European Jewish worlds in the 18th and 19th centuries. He is a member of the Centre de recherches historiques (CNRS) and specialises in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods (1789-1814). His work explores the transformations and continuities of the Jewish community – understood both as a bastion of Jewish tradition and as the heart of Jewish politics – in the transition to European modernity.

**Isabella Gagliardi
Debora Spini**

Debora Spini teaches Political Theory at Syracuse University and New York University in Florence. She is the author of several essays in Italian and English, as well as monographs, including *La società civile post nazionale* (Rome, Meltemi, 2006). She co-edited *Civil society and international governance* (Routledge, 2010) with D. Armstrong, J. Gilson, and V. Bello; *La coscienza protestante* (Claudiana, 2016) with Elena Bein; and *La parola, le pratiche, la cittadinanza* (Artshake, 2016) with Michele Dantini. She is a member of the Study Commission of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy and serves as President of the Centro di Cultura Protestante Pietro Martire Vermigli in Florence. Her publications in Italy and abroad focus on transformations of the public sphere, political subjectivity in late modernity, secularisation, and post-secularisation. Her current research explores the relationship between religion and political violence.

Isabella Gagliardi is Full Professor in History of Christianity and the Churches (SH8-2) at the University of Florence (Department SAGAS). She has been a Research Professor at the Château de Pau Museum (2012-present) and a Senior Research Fellow at the Medici Archive Project (2017-present). She is also an Associate Researcher of the Laboratoire d'Études sur les Monothéismes (LEM), Paris, and an affiliated Researcher at the CNR ISEM Istituto di Storia dell'Europa Mediterranea in Cagliari, Rome, and Milan. Additionally, she is an international researcher for the MUDANZA project (Dancing women, idolatry and rituals: visual culture and cultural history of dance during the long Middle Age), based at Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, under the direction of Principal Investigator Licia Buttà (2023-present). She also serves on the Scientific Committee of the ERC PRIMA, Manuscripts in the Age of Print, led by Principal Investigator Elena Pierazzo at the University of Tours (2024-present). Her research focuses on the history of religious movements and minorities through a gender perspective. She wrote 'Prophetic Theology: The Santa Brigida da Paradiso in Florence', in *The Legacy of Birgitta of Sweden. Women, Politics and Reform In Renaissance Italy*, London, Brill, 2023, pp. 80-106; "La poésie des Jardins mystiques, XV^e-XVI^e siècle", in *Poètes au jardin, De Pétrarque à Shakespeare*, P. Mironneau ed., Pau, Éditions Rmn - Grand Palais, 2023, pp. 28-35; "Manipuler les consciences et persuader spirituellement. Les traités des religions destinés aux femmes", in *Violences faites aux femmes. Un regard sur le Moyen Âge*, Grenoble, UGA Université Grenoble Alpes, 2022, pp. 331-355; "Simone Fidati da Cascia e Lutero", in *Lucia Felici, a cura di Firenze nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento (1498-1569)*, Torino, Claudiana, 2020, pp. 177-190; "Santi, culti e santuari", *Quaderni di Storia Religiosa*, (2019), pp. 283-305; "The religion of italians: a moral and economical questions? Italian studies on Protestantism between the 19th and 20th century", *Perspektywy Kultury*, 13, (2015), pp. 179-200.

¹The titles are in the same languages as in which the papers will be given.

« 'NOUS T'AIMONS, Ô FRANCE'. LA MINORITÉ PROTESTANTE ET LA FABRIQUE DE LA NATION AU RAS DU SOL. L'EXEMPLE DES PROTESTANTS DES PAYS DE L'ADOUR (1848-1914) »

Although Protestants are a very small minority and divided into multiple denominations in the Adour region, they distinguish themselves from the Catholic majority by their commitment to the Republic, the only regime they deem capable of respecting religious pluralism, despite facing both overt and latent anti-Protestant sentiment. While Protestant churches are hesitant to participate in public ceremonies under the Second Republic, their support becomes more explicit under the Third Republic, particularly in the context of the Franco-Prussian War. As their patriotism is called into question, Bearnese Protestants contribute materially to the war effort. Furthermore, their support for the Republic manifests itself in pastoral discourse and writings (sermons, publications), in the local press (daily newspapers, religious periodicals), and through the everyday political engagement of both prominent figures (Félix Pécaut, Pauline Kergomard, Paul Reclus, etc.) and anonymous individuals, whose actions can only be fully grasped through a micro-historical approach. Analysing private correspondence alongside archives from various Protestant churches and public authorities enables us to study how public figures' discourses are received within the Protestant communities. This study sheds light on both the cohesion of this minority around the republican project and the internal forms of divergences that emerge. Indeed, perceptions of Protestantism's role within the French nation vary depending on theological orientations and church affiliations. While liberal Protestants fully participate in the secularisation of education and the separation of Church and State to the point of distancing themselves from Protestantism, Evangelical Reformed and Social Christian groups seek various means to defend Protestantism's distinct identity and role in society. They frame it as a 'secular religion' in opposition to the Catholic Church, which they view as an 'enemy of the secular state.' By asserting a Protestant identity – partly inherited from the reign of Jeanne d'Albret and the Desert period, yet adapted to fit the republican model – Protestants in the Adour region act as an active minority, contributing to the construction of the nation with even greater determination as war looms on the horizon.

Hélène Lanusse-Cazalé

Hélène Lanusse-Cazalé holds a PhD in contemporary history. She is an Associate member of the ITEM research unit, Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, an Agrégée teacher in secondary education and a Lecturer at the Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès.

She has recently published *Protestants et protestantisme dans le sud aquitain au XIX^e siècle. Une minorité plurielle*, Rennes, PUR, 2018 ; 'Le contrôle de la chaire par les institutions représentatives dans les Églises protestantes du Sud aquitain (c. 1840-1905)', *Revue de l'Histoire du protestantisme*, vol. 8/2-3 ; and 'Pouvoirs et institutions dans les protestantismes européens (1840-1905)', in Harismendy Patrick (ed.), 2023, pp. 375-392.

14:00

PANEL 2: 'PROTESTANTS FACING THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL REPRESENTATION'

Chair: Stéphane Dufour

« LES APPORTS ÉTRANGERS DANS LE PROTESTANTISME FRANÇAIS AU PRISME DE LA CRITIQUE NATIONALISTE (FIN 19^E SIÈCLE): ENTRE DÉNONCIATION ET INVISIBILITÉ »

At the end of the 19th century, in the context of the Dreyfus Affair, nationalist circles also targeted Protestantism. The most famous of these polemicists, Charles Maurras, attacked the Monod family – of Swiss and Danish origins – in several articles, claiming that they 'ally themselves with all the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon races of the world.' Through this example, Maurras sought to denounce the influence of Protestants, Jews, Freemasons, and so-called "foreigners" within the Third Republic, which, in his view, aimed to destroy the French nation, Catholic and royalist at its core. The violent and intolerant doctrines espoused by nationalists have been studied in scholarly research (Michèle Sacquin 1998; Jean Baubérot and Valentine Zuber 2000; Laurent Joly 2012; Clémentine Fauré 2019). In this paper, I propose to reexamine this controversy in light of my research on the foreign matrix of French Protestantism (Kirschleger 2024). While foreign contributions to French Protestantism are numerous and diverse, which ones draw the attention of nationalists? Conversely, in their response to accusations of internationalism, Protestants emphasise their genuinely French character, their historical and national roots – thus erasing the foreign contributions that have shaped and continue to shape them. How are foreign influences perceived within this dual framework of national identity and religious minorities?

Pierre-Yves Kirschleger

Pierre-Yves Kirschleger is Associate Professor at the Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier, and holds an Habilitation.

He is a historian of religion, specialising in French Protestantism and its networks. He serves as Associate Director of the Centre de recherches interdisciplinaires en sciences humaines et sociales (CRISES, EA 4424). He co-authored *L'Église réformée de France (1938–2013). Une présence au monde* (with Anne Dollfus), published by Classiques Garnier (2021). His latest work, *La matrice étrangère du protestantisme français (XIX^e siècle)*, was published by Labor et Fides in 2024.

12:15

LUNCH BREAK

« UNE REPRÉSENTATION DE SOI IMPOSSIBLE - DES PROTESTANTS MINORITAIRES EN SITUATION DE DOMINATION: LE CAS DE LA VILLE DE MAZAMET »

Mazamet is a town in the southern part of the Massif Central, where a proto-textile industry developed in the 18th century, followed by the emergence, in the mid-19th century, of the technique of fellmongery – a process that involves separating wool from sheep hides. This industry ensured Mazamet's prosperity until the 1980s. At the beginning of the 20th century, the town had a significant Reformed minority, representing approximately 20 to 30% of the total population. In the 16th and 17th centuries, conversion to the Reformed religion was widespread in this part of the Tarn region, to such an extent that Protestants remained the majority until the French Revolution. While the Protestant community in France faced countless humiliations and persecutions by the Catholic state from the 16th to

Stéphanie Maffre

Stéphanie Maffre is Associate Professor in contemporary history at the Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès and a member of the Framespa Research team (UMR 5136). Under the supervision of Pierre Laborie (EHESS), she has focused her research on issues of representation and on the relationship between memory and history. She also works on religion and its underlying ties with politics and

the 18th century, the Protestants of Mazamet, even after becoming a minority in the 19th century, maintained economic, social, and cultural dominance over the town until the late 20th century. However, when members of this community reflect on their past, their representation of it appears ambivalent. On the one hand, they assert that 'the town was built thanks to them,' while on the other, they evoke the suffering of an oppressed community. This tension highlights the contrast between local memories and the broader, much more violent national history. Conversely, Catholics became the majority from the 19th century onwards due to the influx of peasant workers from the surrounding mountains who sought employment in the wool industry. Despite their numerical superiority, they remained dominated by the minority Protestant group. In the case of Mazamet, the usual scales of domination are reversed, rendering the relationship with the past even more complex. Thus, the concepts of minoration and majoration, as outlined by Philippe Blanchet, offer valuable tools for unravelling the intricate historical narratives to restore meaning to this complexity.

society. Her PhD thesis in contemporary history, prepared under the supervision of Patrick Cabanel, Director d'Etudes at the EPHE, entitled *La trame du passé et les fils de l'histoire. La fabrique du passé à Mazamet: catholiques, protestants et autres. Enjeux historiographiques et mémoriels. XIX^e-XX^e siècle*, is to be published by Presses Universitaires de Rennes.

FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025

8:45

WELCOME & COFFEE

9:00

INTRODUCTION

Stéphane Dufour

9:15

PANEL 3: 'EDUCATION: A MEANS OF INSTITUTIONALISING THE LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS HETEROGENEITY OF THE NATION?'

Chair: Antonella Braida Laplace

15:00

COFFEE BREAK

16:00

KEYNOTE LECTURE

« FRANCE ET ITALIE : LES PROTESTANTS, LES JUIFS ET LA CONSTRUCTION DU PLURALISME RELIGIEUX AU XIX^e SIÈCLE »

Chair: Pierre-Yves Kirschleger

Using the French and Italian cases, this keynote lecture will examine the relationships between Protestant and Jewish minorities within the states and societies that emerged from the revolutionary period of the late 18th century, then how these two groups, in each country, contributed to the construction of religious pluralism, the benefits they were able to derive from it, the hostility it sometimes provoked, and finally how these Protestantisms reacted to the rise of antisemitism in public opinion and, above all, in state policies and legislation during the interwar period and the 1940s.

Patrick Cabanel

Patrick Cabanel is Director of Studies in "History and Sociology of Protestantisms" at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris). His publications include *Juifs et protestants en France, les affinités électives XVI^e-XXI^e siècle* (Fayard, 2004), *Juifs et protestants. Parcours croisés 1517-2017* (Dolmazon, 2020, with Paul Salmona), *Le droit de croire. La France et ses minorités religieuses XVI^e-XXI^e siècle* (Passés composés, 2024), and the edited volume *Un modèle d'intégration. Juifs et israélites en France et en Europe XIX^e-XX^e siècles* (Berg International, 2004, with Chantal Bordes-Benayoun; Italian translation, 2006).

« MINORITIES' ROLE IN INTRODUCING BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN FRANCE AND IRELAND : THE CASES OF JEAN-FRÉDÉRIC OBERLIN AND THADDEUS CONNELLAN »

Relying on a prosopographic approach, this study examines Protestant pedagogues' contributions to national systems of education in France and Ireland. Using the case studies of Jean-Frédéric Oberlin and Thaddeus Connellan, it compares their innovating systems, focusing on their attitudes towards vernacular languages and dialects, their use of the Bible, and the way in which they incorporated national ideals and representations into their pedagogy. This paper analyses the implications of their efforts: to what extent did their bilingual education promote vernacular languages? As members of religious minorities, how did they contribute to the separation of national identities from religious affiliations, and to the recognition of religious plurality by the state? In addressing these questions, this study investigates how education provided opportunities for religious minorities to redefine national identities by rooting them in common cultural or civic grounds.

Karina Bénazech Wendling

Karina Bénazech Wendling is Associate Professor at the University of Lorraine and a member of IDEA research team, as well as Associate Researcher at LEM-CNRS. She holds a PhD in contemporary history from PSL prepared at EPHE/GSRL-CNRS. She is currently working on a postdoctoral project entitled 'Emancipation and education in the transatlantic space: circulation of ideas and struggles for influence, 18th-19th century,' prepared under the direction of Hubert Bost, Director of Studies at EPHE-PSL. She has published several articles in international journals and has two forthcoming books: *Converting Ireland: religious education, language and nationalism*, Manchester University Press, and *De la Bible au soupérisme: éducation, missions protestantes et nationalisme en Irlande au premier XIX^e siècle*, Honoré Champion. She also manages the MIRCOM research project.

17:15

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Stéphane Dufour

«THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF PROTESTANT EDUCATION
IN 19TH-CENTURY ITALY»

This paper draws from a larger prosopographic study of the leading Protestant women schoolteachers sent by the Waldensian Evangelization Committee in various parts of Italy outside the Waldensian Valleys after the Italian Unification. The study addresses who these women were and collectively studies their experiences of nation-state building. Yet, by discussing the cases of Teresa Banchetti (1864–1928) and Flora Aretini (unknown), it will show how each schoolteacher brought both cultural attitudes specific to new converts and an individual understanding of their mission based on their backgrounds and personalities. The study argues that Waldensian schoolteachers strived to build the nation through educational efforts intertwined with religious and ethical commitments. Their role as religious minorities in education extended beyond the mere transmission of knowledge; it was an act of cultural resilience to establish a distinct educational framework. Education became a vehicle for religious minorities to assert their presence and build the nation in a rapidly modernising Italy.

Laura Popa

Laura Popa is a PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at the University of Giessen and a research associate at the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide in the UK. Popa has previously served as a visiting scholar at Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge and held a fellowship at the German Historical Institute in Rome, Italy. Evangelisches Studienwerk financed her PhD studies.

10:15

COFFEE BREAK

10:45

KEYNOTE LECTURE

«BECOMING IRISH? JEWISH IDENTITY AND
BELONGING IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND»

Chair: Karina Bénazech
Wendling

This keynote lecture focuses on the experiences of Jews in Ireland during a period of political, cultural, and socio-economic change in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It explores the challenges and complexities of being a religious minority in a predominantly Catholic country post-independence in 1922. The pursuit of nation-building shaped ideas about 'Irishness' and raised questions of belonging. The paper examines how Jews engaged with processes of 'becoming Irish' and how, as a community, utilised minority strategies to find its sense of place. Integral to this impulse was the question of how to navigate an evolving majority identity with a minority identity that was predicated on difference and separation. The paper also highlights how a narrative of toleration became key to an unwritten social contract regarding acceptance.

Trisha Oakley Kessler

Trisha Oakley Kessler works in Irish and Jewish history, focusing on minorities and the economy. Her doctoral thesis from University College Dublin (2020) examined political, social, and economic change in 1930s Ireland through the prism of Jewish refugee factories. Her current research focuses on Jewish footprints in provincial Ireland, exploring Jewish-non-Jewish encounters and questions of identity and belonging. She has written several articles and book chapters on the Jewish minority in Ireland and is currently finishing a book on Economic nationalism, factories, and Jewish refugees in Ireland, 1933-1945, to be published by Palgrave Macmillan. She is also working on a collection of business correspondence between an Austrian Jewish family business, Brüder Böhm, and its global trade networks between 1938 and 1945. Trisha teaches modern Irish history at Cambridge University and is a Co-Convenor of the Cambridge Modern Irish History Seminar. She is a Research Associate at the Woolf Institute, Cambridge, and a Research Associate at the Herzog Centre for Jewish and Near Eastern Religions and Culture, Trinity College Dublin.

12:15

LUNCH BREAK

14:00

PANEL 4: 'FROM NATIONALISM TO ZIONISM'

Chair: Laura Popa

«FROM TURIN TO JERUSALEM: ITALIAN JEWS AND THE
'NATIONAL BUILDING' OF ISRAEL»

This paper aims to analyse the legacy of the civil religion of the Italian Risorgimento in the Zionist 'national building' of the State of Israel through the case study of the biography of Vittorio Dan Segre (1922-2014). The civil religion born with the Italian Risorgimento (Gentile 2001; Levis Sullam 2004) considerably influenced the Zionist movement, endowing the religious ideal of the 'Promised Land' with nationalist doctrine (Hellinger 2008; Ohana 2009; Schulte 2015). Moreover, both Italian emigration to British Palestine (Marzano 2003; Villa 2005; Bonfil 2018) and the presence of Italian Jews in Israel (Avineri 2014; Della Pergola 2014) have been the subject of several studies. However, a study dealing with the Italian Diaspora's contribution to the 1948 War is absent in this historiographical context. This work aims, through the life of Vittorio Dan Segre, an Italian journalist and diplomat naturalised as an Israeli, to reconstruct the path that links the ideology of the Risorgimento to the contribution, both political and military, that the diaspora of the peninsula made to the construction of the State of Israel in 1948. Segre's biography uniquely describes a close connection between Italy and Israel before and after aliyah. Coming from Piedmont, the homeland of Risorgimento thought, he moved to British Palestine in 1939, at the Italian-Lithuanian kibbutz Givat Brenner, where he met the socialist Enzo Sereni, among the most important representatives of Italian Zionism. From then on, Segre began to support the existence of a close link between Zionism and the Italian Risorgimento. In 1948 he joined the Palmach and was, like other Italians, a volunteer in the Israeli army during the first Arab-Israeli war (Segre 1985, 2004). This research, therefore, aims to investigate the putting into practice of the nationalist ideals inherited from the Risorgimento at the service of the new national reality through the study of the voluntary military service that Italian Jews, including Segre, performed in the 1948 War. The research will be conducted from Segre's autobiographies (1985, 2004, 2014), his documents at the Terracini Jewish Archive in Turin, and the papers of Italian Jewish volunteers kept at the Centre for Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDEC) in Milan.

Maddalena Tosi

Maddalena Tosi graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Classical Literature from the University of Bologna and a Master's degree in Contemporary History from the Universities of Venice and Munich. She is now a first-year PhD student in Contemporary History at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa. Her research interests concern the history of European Jews in the 20th century and the history of Israel. Her research project on the historical biography of Vittorio Dan Segre investigates the relations between Israel and Italian political centrism (Christian Democrats and the Republican Party) between the 1960s and the 1980s and how the Italian diaspora contributed to the construction of the State of Israel, militarily, culturally and diplomatically.

« THE JEWISH NATIONAL FUND ARCHIVE AND IMAGINED
ZIONIST COMMUNITIES IN FRANCE, IRELAND AND ITALY »

The Jewish National Fund (JNF-KKL) Historical Archive is a critical resource for exploring the historical, social, and cultural dynamics of Jewish communities globally, including those in France, Ireland, and Italy. Originally established to preserve records related to the JNF's mission of land reclamation and development in pre-state and modern Israel, the archive also offers invaluable insights into the transnational ties and diasporic identities of Jewish communities in Europe. Its extensive collection of correspondence, maps, fundraising materials, and organisational documents illuminates how Jewish communities in these nations engaged with Zionism to develop an imagined Zionist international community. For French Jews, the archive reveals their pivotal role in the Zionist movement, as well as records the post-WWII reconstruction of Jewish life. Irish Jewish communities leveraged Zionist initiatives to balance their participation in Irish nationalist struggles. The archive's materials also bring attention to Italian Jewish communities, particularly in Trieste, a major hub of Zionist activity and a crossroads between Central and Southern Europe. Trieste's Jewish community played a significant role in fostering early Zionist ideals, as reflected in the JNF's fundraising campaigns and cultural projects that connected local identities to the broader Zionist vision. This paper examines how the JNF archive documents the creation of imagined communities within Jewish populations in France, Ireland, and Italy. It will introduce the structure of the JNF-KKL historical archive, and present highlights from the archive that will show how these groups used JNF campaigns, symbols, and narratives to create a national identity that is both unique to each country and global. The paper will show how the JNF archive is not only as a repository of Zionist history but also a vital tool for understanding the intersections of the diaspora, nationalism, and identity building in Jewish communities across Europe.

15:00

COFFEE BREAK

Yuval Lubin

Yuval Lubin is the Archivist for the Jewish National Fund. He manages the organisation's historical archive which consists of documents, posters, maps, and other paper materials, from 1901 up to 2001. Amongst his responsibilities, Yuval gives professional instructions in Archive orientation, lectures about the content and activities of the archive, and writes articles about archival material for publication. He is also involved in various archive outreach programs the JNF initiates. Yuval has spoken extensively at international conferences, most recently at the Icarus Croatia Days 2024.

15:15

KEYNOTE LECTURE

« JEWS, PROTESTANTS AND THEIR SCHOOLS IN
CATHOLIC IRELAND, 1922-1968 »

Chair: Antonella Braida Laplace

In the central decades of the twentieth century, the cultural climate in the 26 counties which formed the Irish Free State (becoming Éire in 1937 and the Republic of Ireland in 1949) was characterised by barely suppressed sectarianism, self-segregation, pillarisation, and the politicisation of religious doctrines. In the resulting conflict of ideas, minority schools operated like the redoubts for a culture which felt 'under siege'. However, they were also involved in the practical negotiation of compromise strategies of coexistence in a society traumatised by civil war and partition. The Protestant minority schools steered a middle-course between civic liberal imperialism (mainly articulated in private) and civic republicanism (of which they boasted in public). Elite schools for women were a great example of this strategy, which had the advantage of presenting a model of femininity both emancipated and conventional – born and bred to run an empire, but apparently at ease under the increasingly republican institutions of Éire.

Eugenio Biagini

Eugenio Biagini is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at Sidney Sussex College. His research focuses on the social, economic and political history of democracy. He has written on Gladstonian liberalism and the Italian Risorgimento, but Ireland is his main area of research. His British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876-1906 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007) examined the way the Irish Home Rule campaigns affected the making of democracy in the two islands. He has published (with Daniel Mulhall), The Shaping of Modern Ireland (Dublin, Irish Academic Press, 2016) and edited (with Mary Daly) The Cambridge Social History of Ireland since 1740 (Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 2016). His current research focuses on the history of religious and ethnic minorities in twentieth-century Ireland, in a comparative perspective, and on the speeches of Charles S. Parnell. He examines the challenge of nation building, the redefinition of 'public interest', civil liberties and 'the constitution' in deeply divided societies. His forthcoming book, entitled The Minority Mind: Jews and Protestants in Catholic Ireland, 1912-1968, will be published by Cambridge University Press in January 2026.

16:30

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Karina Bénazech Wendling

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025

9:00	Coffee	12:15	Lunch break
9:15	Introduction by Karina Bénazech Wendling	14:00	Panel 2: 'Protestants facing [...] representation'
9:30	Paper by Davide Mano	O	Paper by Pierre-Yves Kirschleger
10:45	Coffee break	O	Paper by Stéphanie Maffre
11:15	Panel 1: 'Protestants and nation-building'	15:00	Coffee break
O	Paper by Isabella Gagliardi and Debora Spini	16:00	Paper by Patrick Cabanel
O	Paper by Hélène Lanusse-Cazalé	17:15	Concluding remarks by Stéphane Dufour

FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2025

8:45	Coffee	12:15	Lunch break
9:00	Introduction by Stéphane Dufour	14:00	Panel 4: 'From nationalism to Zionism'
9:15	Panel 3: 'Education [...] of the nation?'	O	Paper by Maddalena Tosi
O	Paper by Karina Bénazech Wendling	O	Paper by Yuval Lubin
O	Paper by Laura Popa	15:00	Coffee break
10:30	Coffee break	15:15	Paper by Eugenio Biagini
10:45	Paper by Trisha Oakley-Kessler	16:30	Concluding remarks by Karina Bénazech Wendling