

19 • 20 • 21 MAY 2026

COMMON GROUND OR WALLED GARDENS

MIRCOM 2026 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE JEWISH AND PROTESTANT MINORITIES' CONTRIBUTION TO *VIVRE ENSEMBLE* IN FRANCE, IRELAND AND ITALY (1789 – 1948)



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MIRCOM 2026 CONFERENCE

“COMMON GROUND OR WALLED GARDENS ? THE JEWISH AND PROTESTANT MINORITIES’ CONTRIBUTION TO VIVRE ENSEMBLE IN FRANCE, IRELAND AND ITALY (1789 – 1948)”

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TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

10:15

OPENING

10:30

INTRODUCTION

Prof. Eugenio Biagini
Dr Karina Bénazech Wendling

11:00

**PANEL 1: NEGOCIATING IDENTITIES:
REGIONAL CASE STUDIES**

Chair: Laura Popa

“ATTITUDES AND IDENTITIES OF A RELIGIOUS MINORITY BETWEEN REGION AND NATION.
LUTHERANS IN ALSACE IN AN AGE OF ACCELERATED CHANGE (1789 - 1848)”

Dr Donatus Dusterhaus (Université de Fribourg)

In the first half of the 19th century profound processes of transformation took place. These true system changes can be traced back to the quasi-permanent wars (1792 – 1815) and nation-building processes of that period. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars provided the framework for this (Frie and Planert, 2016). The effects of these changes were particularly evident in the multilingual, multi-confessional Franco-German border region of Alsace (Muller, 2006). In a region like Alsace (with more than 600,000 inhabitants), which on the eve of the French Revolution was still strongly influenced by the political and confessional cultures of the Holy Roman Empire like no other region in France, aspects such as religion and identity (language), war,

nation played a particular role (Vogler, 1993). The Lutherans represented one third of the population in this region (Maurer, 2015). It was the enactment of the Organic Articles by Napoleon for the Protestant churches (and the Concordat for the Catholic Church), which formed the basis for the further organizational development of the Alsatian churches in the French nation state in the further course of the 19th century (Leuilliot, 2019). The role of this Protestant minority will be analysed on several levels against the backdrop of the question of a common ground: firstly the relationship between state authorities and institutions and the Lutheran Churches will be examined. This is of particular interest in view of the Lutheran understanding of the state. The second aspect concerns the coexistence and interaction between the Catholic majority and the Lutheran minority, particularly with regard to the practice of the simultaneum. This legally established practice made it possible for both denominations to use the same churches for their religious services. However, this was not always without conflict. Finally, on a third level, the self-image of Lutherans will be presented on the basis of sermons and speeches by pastors. This paper is intended to provide a particular contribution – based on a mentality-historical approach.

“HOLISTIC EDUCATION AND HONOUR: DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE PEDAGOGY OF THE HEART PRACTISED BY TWO PROTESTANT MINORITIES IN 18TH-CENTURY BRUCH (ALSACE, FRANCE)”

Dr Anne Herrmann-Israel (Université de Haute Alsace)

Situated at the intersection of educational science and psychology, this paper explores two influential pedagogical approaches adopted by two Protestant Minorities in Alsace during the 18th century in contexts of isolation: the holistic education of Pastor J-F Oberlin (Chalmel, 2006) and the Mennonite culture of honour (Fischer-Naas, 2011). Drawing on the two distinct educational processes (*developing one's Self or becoming a social Self?*) outlined by Chalmel (2015), it will first examine their lived experience in terms of Identity/Culture (*Adapted Self/alter Ego, Marginal Self, Resilient Self, Fulfilled Self*), and then the ontological foundations inherent in these specificities, which emphasize the heart as the central seat of the human being (biblical anthropology) and which have fostered the psychosocial transformation of their Self (scriptural writings, Soëtard, 1996, 2011, 2016; Daubigny, 2007; Lecomte, 2005). The second part will outline how their pedagogical practices and approaches contributed to this on an affective, social, cognitive and ideological level (Desmet & Pourtois, 2012), to the point of becoming a sphere of influence for the surrounding communities.

12:30

LUNCH

13:30**PANEL 2: BECOMING DRIVERS OF CHANGE**

Chair: Gareth Atkins

“RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ‘MODERNITY’ IN THE RISORGIMENTO: TEODORICO PIETROCOLA ROSSETTI”**Prof. Eugenio Biagini (University of Cambridge)**

This paper examines the politics and theology of Teodorico Pietrocola Rossetti (1825-1883), the charismatic leader of the movement which became the *Chiese dei Fratelli* (the Italian Plymouth Brethren), focusing on the 1860s and early 1870s. Originally a Mazzinian, and an exile in England after 1848, he was converted to a radical form of premillennial Protestantism through the ministry of another Italian exile, Count Piero Guicciardini. An active supporter of Cavour’s liberalism after 1860, when he started to preach in Italy, Rossetti became nevertheless a critic of Cavour’s formula ‘a free church in a free state’. In his view, the state ought not to recognise any church, but simply guarantee full and unqualified religious freedom to all citizens. He associated religious pluralism with modernity and thought that the latter was best exemplified by the vigorous religious revivalism of the most democratic and modern nation of his time, the USA. The paper highlights how such vision of the relationship between Christianity and politics was at the time revolutionary in Europe, especially when associated with intense Christian religiosity (instead of militant anti-clericalism). It discusses the significance of Rossetti’s vision in the history of Protestant minority strategies in Europe, and concludes with some sobering reflections on the completely different meaning that both premillennial Protestantism and the US model have acquired 150 after Rossetti’s death.

“JEWS IN TRIESTE AND NATIONAL SENTIMENT: COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL PATHS FROM 1848 TO 1914”**Dr Tullia Catalan (Università di Trieste)**

During the 18th century and up to the first half of the 19th century, Trieste’s unique multi-religious and multi-ethnic composition, built by the Habsburgs through careful immigration policies from the rest of Europe and the Levant to strengthen the free port, had given rise to a new city, internationally renowned for its maritime trade and its ability to integrate new arrivals. Thanks to their openness towards ‘the other’, the non-Catholic religious communities present in the city for over a century had interacted positively with the majority society, sharing public spaces (education, social life, philanthropy, business) and private spaces (mixed marriages, conversions, apostasies, religious identity) without any particular conflicts. After the revolutions of 1848, however, the Jews of Trieste also had to contend with emerging nationalism, in a context characterized by deep-rooted multiculturalism but also by strong national passions that cut across the ethnic-religious communities present in the city. The national movements that spread to Trieste from 1848 onwards were at the origin of a series of important rifts between groups, divided between loyalty to the Habsburg Empire and the new Italian and Pan-Slavic national ideals. This paper will focus on the reactions of Trieste’s Jews to the changes caused by the emergence of two opposing factions within the local Jewish community: the loyalist and the pro-Italian sides. It will begin with the initial and limited individual participation in the 1848 uprisings in Vienna and Italy, and then move on to the more radical and widespread political struggle on the eve of World War I. The paper aims to answer a number of questions through documentation collected from the archives of the Jewish community, city archives, and private family archives: What were the reactions of the Jewish community in Trieste to the gradual spread of nationalist ideas among its members? When did these feelings of national belonging turn into exclusive nationalism? Who were the Jews most involved in national struggles? What was the role of women? To which social class did those most involved belong? What were the signs of a break with multicultural society?

“NEGOTIATING THE COMMON GROUND WITHIN LOCAL COMMUNITIES? THE CHALLENGES OF GENDERED PREJUDICES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE CHURCH COMMUNITIES”**Dr Laura Popa (University of Cambridge)**

The Waldensian Evangelisation Committee in Italy employed more than 350 female schoolteachers from 1860 to 1915 in the schools they established across the Italian Peninsula with the aims of contributing to nation-state building and also to evangelise the Roman Catholic majority. Nonetheless, its male members were little concerned regarding the specific challenges faced by women and appeared unaware of the distinct gender-based obstacles that women encountered. Although they used gender-specific language in their annual reports to address women’s evangelisation and devised strategies to engage them in their communities, this awareness did not extend to their interactions with female schoolteachers. Many letters written by these female schoolteachers and addressed to various members of the Evangelisation Committee detail incidents of harassment and unfair treatment within local communities, especially by their male colleagues, including evangelistic schoolteachers, pastors, and evangelists. The female schoolteachers felt empowered to defend themselves against various accusations, such as accusations of immorality, most probably perceived sexual immorality, as the schoolteachers did not use these terms explicitly. To their credit, the Evangelisation Committee most of the time believed the women rather than their accusers and encouraged them to continue teaching. Their letters also include many episodes where women schoolteachers had to confront gender-based prejudices outside their church communities, such as from male school inspectors. In such instances, the harassment was often driven by both their gender and religious minority status, as municipal authorities did not warmly receive minority education, and female schoolteachers in general were an easy target in post-Unification Italy. This paper shows that negotiating common ground was not only a matter of majority and minority dynamics, but also a gendered one.

15:30**BREAK - TEA & BISCUITS****16:00****BOOK LAUNCH****DR KARINA BÉNAZECH WENDLING (UNIVERSITÉ DE LORRAINE / EPHE)****CONVERTING IRELAND: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, LANGUAGE AND COLONIALISM, MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2026.**

Chair: Trisha Oakley-Kessler

Discussants:**Dr Gareth Atkins (University of Cambridge)****Dr Ian D’Alton (Trinity College, Dublin)****Prof. Eugenio Biagini (University of Cambridge)****18:00****DRINKS & CANAPÉS**

9:00

PANEL 3: CONFRONTING IDEOLOGIES

Chair: Karina Bénézech Wendling

“UNE « ASSIMILATION À L'ÉPREUVE » ? LA CONFRONTATION AUX FASCISMES COMME MOMENT DE DÉCLOISONNEMENT ET DE RECONFIGURATION COLLECTIVE POUR LES JUIFS DE FRANCE DANS LES ANNÉES 1930”

Dr Jérémy Guedj (Université Côte d'Azur)

En 1972, l'historien canadien Michael R. Marrus avait sous-titré son livre sur *Les Juifs de France à l'époque de l'Affaire Dreyfus: l'assimilation à l'épreuve*. À maints égards, cela valait très largement également pour les années 1930 dont on sait à quel point la décennie fut marquée par le souvenir du dreyfusisme, encore mobilisateur pour certains alors que les nouveaux combats avaient changé de nature. Cette proposition de communication entend se demander comment la « confrontation »¹ des Juifs de France aux fascismes a contribué à redéfinir leur manière de concevoir leur place dans la société et par rapport aux autres communautés juives avec qui ils formaient, selon les mots de Michaël Werner et Michel Espagne une « unité culturelle transnationale ». Certes, l'idéal d'assimilation se traduisant par la volonté répétée de ne pas agir en tant que juifs mais en tant que français continuait à marquer une attitude largement partagée. Mais les faits semblaient contredire un schéma aussi simple. L'appartenance au judaïsme jouait un rôle bien plus prononcé dans ce qui passait, s'agissant du nazisme bien plus que du fascisme, pour un danger existentiel dont l'antisémitisme constituait l'élément cardinal. Le nazisme réveilla même l'identité de plus d'un Juif éloigné jusqu'alors de tout sentiment personnel ou collectif lié à cette dimension. Beaucoup de Juifs, en outre, rejetaient ouvertement le primat de l'assimilation dans la lutte contre les fascismes car ils y voyaient une faiblesse dans la mesure où la judéité était trop effacée alors que celle-ci ne devait plus être honteuse selon eux. Enfin, et cela concernait une majorité de Juifs au-delà de ces clivages – parce qu'ils ne voulaient pas agir, une fois encore, en tant que Juifs, ou parce qu'ils percevaient plus largement que la confrontation aux fascismes concernait l'ensemble de la société – il fallait réagir en lien avec l'ensemble des composantes de la société et ne pas rester isolés. Ce qui entraînait un décloisonnement, jusqu'à une certaine limite, atteinte à la fin des années 1930, teintée pour beaucoup de Juifs par un sentiment de solitude. Il s'agira donc dans cette communication de saisir ce moment d'ouverture à la fois en partant des discours, souvent explicites et réflexifs tenus sur le sujet, que par les actions concrètes qui donnent autant d'indices de cette reconfiguration.

“A PATH TOWARD INTEGRATION? JEWS AND THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY IN FRANCE (1930-1950s)”

Dr Zoé Grumberg (Sciences Po Paris)

In the 1930s, the French Communist Party (PCF) created special sections for immigrants. Their goal was to give immigrants time to «integrate» in France: first, to learn French and to become French citizens, and then to be able to join the French cells of the PCF. One of these sections was for Yiddish-speaking Jews from Eastern Europe that the PCF only considered as immigrants and not as a minority. However, the Second World War changed the PCF's politics towards Jews: they were now encouraged to fight as Jews because they were targeted by the Nazis as Jews. What impacts did it have on Jewish communists? To what extent did this internal policy change their relationship to integration in France? On which grounds did it create tensions with the PCF? This communication explores three moments in this process and reflects on the interactions between Jews, the PCF and France.

¹ En référence à une série d'ouvrages dirigée par Olivier Dard, Michel Grunewald et Uwe Puschner, *Confrontations au national-socialisme en Europe francophone et germanophone (1919-1949)*, Berne, Peter Lang, 6 volumes parus.

10:15

BREAK - TEA & PASTRIES

10:30

PANEL 4: SHAPING THE NATION AGAINST THE GRAIN OF HISTORICAL LEGACIES

Chair: Adam Coleman

“CHALLENGING THE PAPAL ANTICHRIST: JAMES HENTHORN TODD AND IRISH PROTESTANT ANTI-CATHOLICISM”

Prof. Alan Ford (University of Nottingham)

One of the most divisive early-modern theological ideas was the Protestant appropriation of apocalyptic to explain the events of the reformation—most especially to identify the Pope as that biblical man of sin, Antichrist. The lived-experience of Protestantism in Ireland, a minority religion in a largely Catholic country, meant that apocalyptic fear of popery retained its hold until well into the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, a potent force both in fomenting hatred of what was seen as the antichristian other, and in maintaining the Protestant sense of exclusivity and superiority. Dismantling this key source of division and hostility was, obviously, one of the essential ideological steps towards creating a society where different Christian churches could accept and respect each other's beliefs and live and work together in harmony. This paper examines the initial efforts to challenge the identification of the Pope with Antichrist by the Trinity College Dublin fellow, James Henthorn Todd (1805 –1869). In a series of lectures and publications in the 1840s, Todd used his considerable scholarly talents to reinterpret the main sacred texts—Daniel and Revelation—and reject the Protestant presentist interpretation of apocalyptic. The nature and origin of Todd's views will be examined, showing how his position as a minority within a minority—he was a high-churchman within the overwhelmingly evangelical Church of Ireland—enabled him to mediate between the mutually exclusive claims of Anglican and Catholic biblical interpretation and theology, not only attacking the Protestant use of apocalyptic, but also Catholic claims to infallibility. Even though his work initially aroused considerable hostility from his fellow-Irish Protestants, his demythologising of Catholicism laid the ground for the later development of ecumenism within the Church of Ireland and the recognition of Catholics as fellow Christians rather than satanic opponents, potential partners in a broader, more open society.

“BETWEEN EMPIRE AND NATION: IRISH FREEMASONRY, MINORITY IDENTITY, AND THE POLITICS OF BELONGING, 1922-1929”

Jan Paulus (University of Cambridge)

This paper examines the role of Irish Freemasonry during the period of political upheaval that accompanied the outbreak of the Irish Civil War and the early years of the Irish Free State. In this context, pre-existing associational structures assumed renewed significance. Between 1922 and 1929, citizens of the Free State were navigating the transition from liberal-imperial governance to post-colonial nation-building. Clubs, societies, and fraternal organizations provided continuity amid rupture. Episodes such as the occupation of the Grand Lodge of Ireland on 17 Molesworth Street in Dublin by the IRA reveal how the fraternity was strongly associated with Protestantism, loyalty, and imperial allegiance and was thus consequently recast as suspicious during times of systemic uncertainty. Through ritual, regular meetings, hierarchical organization, and disciplined sociability, the Masonic brotherhood provided continuity, predictability, and mutual trust. The Masonic Hall functioned not merely as a building but as a spatial anchor of the community, where members could deliberate on shared concerns, affirm collective norms, and interpret political change. The Masonic lodge thus provided a structured space for this negotiation and served as an intermediary between the individual and the state, through which members negotiated identity in a rapidly changing political landscape. This paper

reconstructs, through Masonic records, contemporary newspapers, and clerical publications, how the upper echelons of Freemasonry negotiated the institution's identity in public discourse by engaging with it, organizing events such as the 1925 bicentenary, and providing stability for its members. Situating Irish Freemasonry within broader historiographical debates on civil society, imperial networks, and voluntary associations, this paper argues that Freemasonry was one of many sites where the struggle for identity took shape. It further suggests that the Irish case complicates transnational models of Freemasonry by highlighting how imperial affiliations could become liabilities rather than assets in post-imperial societies.

"FROM A NETWORK TO A MOVEMENT – AND AN "INSTITUTION IN PERMANENCE" : THE KIRCHENTAG PHENOMENON, THE POMERANIAN NOBLEMAN REINOLD VON THADDEN-TRIEGLAFF, AND THE SEARCH FOR A COMMON GROUND IN POST-WAR GERMANY

Philipp David (Justus Liebig University Giessen)

This paper examines the history of the 'Kirchentag' phenomenon (German Evangelical Church Congress: 'Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag') by examining both the history of the term 'Kirchentag' itself and the founder of its third form, which still exists today. On closer inspection, Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff (1891–1976), a Pomeranian nobleman and lawyer with Pietist roots, emerges as an intelligent unifier of diverse people, a networker, as we would call him today, who succeeded in utilising the ecclesiastical, social, political and ecumenical contacts he had built up over decades. The paper will show how he and his supporters institutionalised a Protestant lay gathering, which is likely to be unique of its kind and arguably the greatest religious movement in modern Europe after 1945. Finally, it focuses on the ecclesiastical and socio-political goals of this Protestant lay movement and its contribution to social coexistence, to *vivre ensemble*. This case study of an individual's life story illustrates how an influential minority of Protestant laypeople succeeded in launching a lay movement in 1949 and sought, through it, to shape society.

12:30

LUNCH

14:00

ROUNDTABLE 1

Chair: Eugenio Biagini

Prof. Anthony Feneuil (Université de Lorraine)
Dr Marietta Van der Tol (University of Cambridge)
Prof. Em. Alan Ford (University of Nottingham)

15:30

CAMBRIDGE TOUR

19:30

DINNER - OLD LIBRARY

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026

8:30

**PANEL 5: NEGOTIATING THE PUBLIC SPHERE:
LIBERALISM, NATIONALISM AND BELONGING**

Chair: Jan Paulus

"CIVIC LIBERALISM AND MAJORITARIAN DEMOCRACY: STRATEGIES OF ASSIMILATION IN IRELAND, 1848-1922"

Adam Coleman (University of Cambridge)

The main policy initiative of British Liberalism during the second half of the nineteenth century was to effect a gradual assimilation of all interest groups in the nation under the auspices of an egalitarian constitution. Liberals were concerned with the eradication of monopolistic forms of political and social power, embracing representative government and laissez-faire economics. They were adherents to the principle of popular sovereignty, taking for granted the proposition that statesmen ought to legislate in accordance with popular sentiment; to cultivate a spirit of 'nationality'; and to foster an inclusive public sphere permeated with civic virtue or 'patriotism'. Victorian Liberalism was about creating a civic politics based on a common allegiance to a mixed constitution embodied in Parliament that was also compatible with particular ethnic or religious affiliations. Liberals, therefore, prized civic voluntarism over ethnic supremacism; a plural form of political representation over a system granting disproportionate influence to a homogenous majority; and secular constitutionalism over sectarianism or 'nationalism'. With a broad brush, what I wish to demonstrate in this paper is that there was a distinctively Irish tradition of secular civic liberalism during the second half of the nineteenth century. The difficulties faced by Irish liberals, however, were unlike those of their contemporaries in Britain. In Ireland, the absence of a national legislature, the persistence of sectarian enmity, and a general conflation of political allegiance with religious identity, among other factors, militated against the achievement of liberal political objectives. In effect, Irish liberals were obliged to adopt alternative strategies of political assimilation, particularly as the threat posed by majoritarian democracy in Ireland became more apparent to them from the 1880s. Their goals were to safeguard the rights of the Protestant minority against the Catholic majority, and to preserve secular constitutionalism against ethnic nationalism. I wish to identify these strategies and describe how they were employed in late nineteenth-century political debates about Ireland, civic participation, and democracy.

"'A LAND NOT THEIRS'² ? HOW JEWS AND PROTESTANTS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE REFLECTED DIFFERING SENSES OF IRISHNESS"

Dr Ian D'Alton (Trinity College, Dublin)

Jews and Protestants in what became independent Ireland in 1922 were small in numbers – about 3,600 and 217,000 respectively. Protestants comprised only about 7 per cent of the population, down by a third since before the Great War, with Jews only 0.1 per cent – separately and together a vanishingly small proportion of the total inhabitants of the Irish Free State at its foundation. But each community operated as a catalyst, holding up different mirrors to the soul of the nearly homogeneous Catholic-Gaelic nation within which they had perforce to find an accommodation. This paper uses Protestant and Jewish experiences to interrogate what being in 'minority communities' meant in terms of their sense of 'being Irish' and living and prospering in a world where the majority religious group was, where even if aware of them, latently hostile. The aim is not to provide 'parallel histories' of the minorities, but to discuss their interplay in the context of their respective notions of being Irish'. It aims to do this by first illustrating some *commonalities* between Jews and Protestants in living and surviving a minority existence. Secondly, the *homeland* conundrum is interrogated,

² The title of Jew David Marcus's novel about Ireland during the revolutionary period of 1919-21 (London, 1986).

which for southern Protestants was most acute in the two or so decades after independence; for Irish Jews, it was brought into focus by moves to establish an autonomous state in 1930s and 1940s. Thirdly, *belonging* examines how both Jews and Protestants perceived 'Irishness' through relationships with the loss of their British identity at independence, their attitudes towards the Irish language, the place of the ghetto, and why they broadly distanced themselves from advanced national movements. Fourthly, *power* looks at the nature of power relationships between the three parties. Finally, a conclusion using the imagery of all-too-real 'mixed marriages' undertakes an overview of Protestantism and Irishness, Jewishness and Irishness, and how these 'unions' differed. It is hoped that lively discussion will ensue!

"EXPLORING THE 'STREET': JEWISH FOOTPRINTS AND ENCOUNTERS OF DIVERSITY, DIFFERENCE AND TOLERATION IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND"

Dr Trisha Oakley-Kessler (Woolf Institute, Cambridge)

In Con Leventhal's essay 'What it means to be a Jew' in *The Bell* in 1945, he recalls how, as a Jewish child growing up in Oakfield Place in Portobello, Dublin, he and his Jewish friends often fought with their non-Jewish neighbours from Lombard Street West. Between these streets, he notes, there might well have been a ghetto wall for loyalties were so well drawn out. Although as neighbours, they attended the same schools, Leventhal noted that 'we were regarded as strangers', not only because 'we looked foreign' but also that out of school they led parallel lives. Similarly, in his memoir, Chaim Herzog notes that physically and psychologically, Jews did not mingle with non-Jews and that 'the Jewish community was closed in on itself.' Memoirs such as these have led historians to assert that the Jewish minority in Ireland at the turn of the century was clannish, resilient and living a ghettoised existence within the confines of 'Little Jerusalem' around the South Circular Road. This paper reexamines the idea of a ghettoised existence through an exploration of the 'street' as a dynamic arena in which geographies of encounters negotiated difference, diversity and tolerance. It explores how a 'spatial turn' in Jewish studies could inform a new approach to examining the Jewish minority experience in Ireland. Through this lens, Leventhal's youthful pugilism amidst the din of 'religious war songs' can be viewed not only as a skirmish about street boundaries but also a visceral attempt to imprint his sense of place and belonging. By introducing the concepts of urban topography and, in particular, mobility, this paper explores how a variety of sources, including memoirs, newspapers, census statistics, and street mapping, could contribute to a re-examination of the idea of 'Little Jerusalem' as a ghettoised entity. Rather, it suggests that Jewish footprints in Dublin contributed to dynamic processes of coexistence and that these liveable streets embraced 'messiness', allowing for diverse interactions that cultivated ideas of commonality in residence.

10:30

BREAK - TEA & PASTRIES

11:00

ROUNDTABLE 2

Chair: Karina Bénazech Wendling

Prof. Eugenio Biagini (University of Cambridge)

Prof. Erin Jenne (Central European University)

Dr Semir Dzebo (University of Oxford)

12:30

CONCLUSION

Dr Karina Bénazech Wendling

BIOGRAPHIES (ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Gareth Atkins is Fellow of Queen's College and Affiliated Lecturer at the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge. His research focuses on how religion made modern Britain. One strand is about politics: *Converting Britannia: Evangelicals and British Public Life, 1770-1840* (2019) explored how religious people exploited the loosening relationship between Church and State to project their ideas into new spheres, such as the armed forces and colonial officialdom. A second strand concerns the adaptation of religious languages: an edited collection, *Making and Remaking Saints in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2016) shows how not just Catholics or Protestants but freethinkers, atheists and scientists too preserved 'relics' and went on 'pilgrimages'. The third strand focuses on the media through which religion was mediated: I have published widely on historical culture, heroes, stained glass and printed Bibles, among other things. Current projects include a collaborative edition of the diaries of William Wilberforce, and a study of the cultural reception of the biblical story of King David in nineteenth-century Britain.

Karina Bénazech Wendling is Associate Professor at the Université de Lorraine in France. She is a member of [IDEA](#), an Associate Researcher at LEM-CNRS and has been elected 2026 Horkan Visiting Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. She holds a PhD in History and Anthropology of Religions from PSL, prepared at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE-PSL) and the Groupe Sociétés, Religions, Laïcités (GSRL) – CNRS. Her dissertation, supervised by Patrick Cabanel, Directeur d'Études, EPHE-PSL and Prof. Peter Gray, Queen's University Belfast, revisited the question of Protestant proselytism and the controversy over souperism in Ireland in the first half of the 19th century. Her current research expands her work on Ireland to the transatlantic world and studies the mutual influences between Haitian activists, abolitionists, and Irish promoters of education. More broadly, her different research projects question the role of minorities as drivers of change in emerging nation states. She thus coordinates the [MIRCOM project](#) funded by the [MSH Lorraine](#), and sponsored by the GIS EIRE, the SOFEIR and ReliGIS. Her monograph *De la Bible irlandaise au Soupérisme: éducation, missions protestantes et nationalisme en Irlande (1800-1853)* was published by Honoré Champion in 2025. She has two forthcoming books: *Converting Ireland: Religious education, language and colonialism* (Manchester University Press, 2026) and *Les Droites chrétiennes: nouvelles convergences?* with Dr Sébastien Fath (Éditions Classiques Garnier).

Eugenio Biagini is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of [Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge](#). He is a specialist in the history of liberalism and democracy, focusing on modern Britain, Ireland and Italy. His *Peace, Retrenchment and Reform. Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-1880* (Cambridge, 1992), studies the intersection between liberal-democratic politics and religion within the British labour movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. It sought to answer both the question of why there was no Marxism in Britain and what Nonconformist Christianity did to empower popular politics. His *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism, 1876-1906* (Cambridge 2002) examines the democratisation of Irish Catholic politics and the explosion of English Protestant nationalism, driven by a force far more powerful than socialism – populism. Eugenio is the co-editor (with the late C.A. Bayly) of Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1830-1920 (Oxford, 2008) and (with Mary E. Daly) of *The Cambridge Social History of Ireland* (Cambridge, 2017). He is also the general editor of the Cultural History of Democracy (6 volumes, London, 2021). His *The Minority Mind: Jews and Protestants in Catholic Ireland, 1912-1968* – a study of the 'minority' question and the making of a pluralist democracy in the aftermath of a nationalist revolution – will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2026.

Tullia Catalan is Associate Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Trieste. Her research interests include: Racism in Europe (Anti-Semitism, Anti-Slavism); the Jewish migration; the Critical Heritage in Borders Area. Actually she is involved as WP coordinator in two EU Projects: T4EU: <https://transform4europe.eu/> and CU Remember (CERV-2024-CITIZENS-REM) <https://eucu.net/projects/curemember/>. She is also a member of the editorial boards of "Memoria & Ricerca" and "Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History". Among her recent publications: Conversions Paths of Trieste's Jews 1938-1939, in "Quest. Issues in Jewish Contemporary History", n. 22, 2022. https://www.quest-cdecjournal.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/3-Q22_08_Catalan.pdf; *L'Emigrazione ebraica attraverso il porto di Trieste tra Ottocento e Novecento. Spazi, pratiche, organizzazioni assistenziali, memorie* in «STORIA URBANA» 172/2022, pp 37-57; R. Altin, T. Catalan, *The Silos of Trieste. A Human Hub at the Border Between Conflicting Memories, Displacement and Heritage*, in *Dissonantes Kunst- und Kulturerbe/Dissonant Cultural Heritage/Art et patrimoine culturel dissonants*, Nesselhauf, Jonas/Rees, Joachim (Ed.), 20/2025, pp. 151-166.

Adam Coleman is third-year PhD candidate at Trinity College, Cambridge. His research focuses on the entwined histories of democracy and liberalism in nineteenth-century Britain, Ireland, and France.

Ian d'Alton, a graduate of the National University of Ireland and the University of Cambridge, is an historian of southern Irish Protestantism. Awarded the UK's Royal Historical Society's Alexander Prize in 1972, Ian has published widely on the themes of identity, politics, and the social and economic position of this minority from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. An Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Liverpool (2012) and a Visiting Fellow at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge (2014), he is currently a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Contemporary Irish History at Trinity College, Dublin. He is the author of *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (1980) and with Dr Ida Milne, co-editor of and contributor to *Protestant and Irish: the Minority's Search for Place in Independent Ireland* (2019). His latest book is a collection of essays, *Southern Irish Protestants – Histories, Lives and Literatures* (2024).

Dr Philipp David, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Faculty of History and Cultural Studies at Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany, Co-Speaker of the Giessen research area 'Theology, Diversity, Society', and member of the Research Group on the 'Kirchentag' and affiliate of the interdisciplinary network 'Protestantism as a Minority Religion', is currently Visiting Fellow at Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge. His research interests are religious pluralism, history and culture of modern Protestantism, the controversial idea of God in modernity, and ecumenical hermeneutics.

Donatus Dusterhaus was born in Bonn Germany. He has been working since 2013 as Head Librarian at the University of Fribourg – a bilingual (French-German) institution in Switzerland – and also a lecturer for History of writing (paleography) and history of books at the Institute for Medieval studies also at the University of Fribourg. He studied History and French Literature at the universities of Tübingen (Germany) and Aix-en-Provence (France). After graduating at both universities, he worked as a research assistant at the special Research center "War experiences: war and society in modern times" at the university of Tübingen. His Ph.D. Thesis was edited as a book in 2011: «Die Revolution als Schwester des Krieges. Deutungen und Wahrnehmungen von Lutheranern im Elsaß in der Zeit der Französischen Revolution und des napoleonischen Empires (1789-1815)». In it, he examined the sermons and addresses of Lutheran pastors in Alsace during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, focusing on their experiences and attitudes towards revolution and war. Donatus Dusterhaus continues to take an interest in historical questions relating to the history of Protestantism in Alsace, as well as the cultural and educational history of the region. His latest article, written with Odile Dupont is entitled "BETH, Springboard for the Opening of the IFLA RELINDIAL Group 'Religions: Libraries and Dialogue', " in: Leo Kenis, Penelope R. Hall, Marek Rostkowski (Hrsgg.), *Theological Libraries and Library Associations in Europe. A Festschrift on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of BETH*, Leiden 2022, pp. 461-488.

Semir Dzebo is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford, and an incoming Junior Research Fellow at Linacre College. His research examines why ordinary citizens support redrawing state borders, drawing on original surveys across North America and Europe. His work on populist secessionism in Bosnia's Republika Srpska appeared in *Nations and Nationalism* (2025), and his survey of separatist attitudes in the American Pacific Northwest in *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2025). His broader research agenda spans both secessionist and irredentist movements, and he is broadly interested in how elites instrumentalize populist rhetoric to mobilize support, whether for territorial aims or wider political projects. His work at Oxford on the HuRIEE project extends these interests, examining how citizens engage with human rights institutions under conditions of democratic backsliding and armed conflict in Eastern Europe.

Anthony Feneuil is an Associate Professor at the University of Lorraine and a junior member of the Institut Universitaire de France. He teaches theology and philosophy and specializes in the epistemology of religious belief and the intersections of contemporary theology with philosophy and the social sciences.

Born in Dublin, **Alan Ford** was educated at Trinity College Dublin and St John's College, Cambridge. He has worked in the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (1982-8), the University of Durham (1988-98), and the Nottingham University (1998-2016) where he was Professor of Theology and Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning. He retired in 2016 in order to cultivate his garden. He is the author of *James Ussher: theology, history, and politics in early-modern Ireland and England* (Oxford University Press, 2007); and co-edited *The Church of Ireland and its past: history, interpretation and identity* (Four Courts Press, 2017). His most recent publication is 'St Patrick's purgatory: theology and history in the reformation and counter-reformation', *Studies in Church History*, 61 (2025). He is currently working on the creation, continuation and collapse of parallel Protestant and Catholic schools of history in Ireland from 1600 to 2000.

Jérémy Guedj est maître de conférences en histoire contemporaine à l'Université Côte-d'Azur de Nice et membre du Centre de la Méditerranée moderne et contemporaine (CMMC). Ses recherches portent sur les circulations, migrations et minorités en France et en Méditerranée. Sur le sujet de la proposition, il a publié: *Le Miroir des désillusions. Les Juifs de France et l'Italie fasciste (1922-1939)*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2011, rééd. proche 2023; *Les Juifs français et le nazisme de 1933 à 1939. L'Histoire renversée*, Paris, PUF, 2024; *Histoire des Juifs de France*, Paris, coll. « Que sais-je ? », PUF, 2025.

Zoé Grumberg is Associate Researcher at Centre d'Histoire, Sciences Po Paris and an Agrégée secondary-school history teacher. She was awarded several prestigious grants (Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah, Fullbright and Fow Yellow from Yale University). Her PhD «Militer en minorité ? Le secteur juif du Parti communiste français après la Seconde Guerre mondiale et la Shoah, Paris, 1944-fin des années 1950» was funded by Sciences Po and supervised by Claire Andrieu. She is the co-winner of the 2021 Dissertation Prize in Francophone Jewish Studies granted by the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah. She has published [several articles and book chapters](#).

Anne Herrmann-Israel holds a PhD in Education and Training Sciences and is currently exploring pedagogy as practical wisdom of the heart and mind (knowledge, contexts, legacies). Affiliated with the LISEC Laboratory UR 2310 (UHA), she collaborates as an associate researcher with the NeV (Norms and Values) team on the theme "Political, Ethical, and Praxeological Issues in Schools, Universities, Health Institutions, and Lifelong Learning". In collaboration with Michael Byram, professor emeritus at University of Durham, she has published *Comparing and contrasting approaches to education for transition and transformation* (Compare, 2023). She has also co-edited the volume *Interculturality in the Service of Transitions: Rethinking Life and Education in the Anthropocene Era* with Loïc Chalmel (Peter Lang, 2024).

Erin K. Jenne is Professor and Chair of the International Relations Department at Central European University (Vienna, Austria), where she teaches graduate level courses on qualitative and quantitative methods, ethnic conflict management, international relations theory, nationalism and populism, foreign policy analysis and international security. Dr. Jenne has received numerous grants and fellowships: a MacArthur fellowship (Stanford U), a Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (BCSIA) fellowship (Harvard U), a Carnegie Corporation Scholarship, a Senior Fernand Braudel fellowship (European University Institute), and was co-principal investigator for a Minerva Grant from the US Office of Naval Research on soft power diplomacy. Dr. Jenne's first book, "Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment" (Cornell University Press, 2007) won the 2007 Mershon Center's Edgar S. Furniss Book Award. Her third, co-authored book, *Clients, Rivals, and Rogues: Why Great Powers Intervene in Revolutionary Civil Wars*, was recently published by Cambridge University Press. Professor Jenne was an associate editor for the *Journal of Foreign Policy Analysis* and has served in several capacities on the Emigration, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Migration Section of the International Studies Association.

Trisha Oakley Kessler is a Research Associate at the Woolf Institute, Cambridge and at the Herzog Centre for Near Eastern and Jewish Religions and Culture, Trinity College Dublin. She teaches modern Irish history at Cambridge University with a focus on religious minorities in Ireland and the Irish minority in Britain. Her research sits within several disciplines, Jewish studies, Irish history, migration and minority studies and economic history. Broadly, she explores how the Jewish minority navigated its sense of place in Ireland during a period of political, cultural and socio-economic change in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has published several articles on Jewish-non-Jewish encounters in Ireland and is working on her forthcoming monograph *Irish Economic Nationalism, Factories, and Jewish Refugees, 1933 – 1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

Jan Paulus is a historian and a first-year PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, supervised. His research examines Irish Freemasonry between 1885 and 1937, with a focus on nation-building, civil society, and minority identities in post-imperial and divided societies. A former Friedrich Ebert Scholar, Jan holds an MPhil in International History from Trinity College Dublin and a Bachelor of Education in History and English from Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. His research interests include Irish, Imperial, and European history, transnational networks, masculinities, and Enlightenment legacies. The Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, the Cambridge University Trust Fund, and the Cambridge Faculty of History Trust have supported Jan's current work.

Laura Popa is a British Academy International Fellowship Award Holder at the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, where she researches the global history of Bible Women. She holds a PhD from the University of Giessen (2025), funded by the Evangelisches Studienwerk Villigst, which was awarded summa cum laude with no corrections. Her doctoral research examined the involvement of a group of Protestant women schoolteachers in Italian nation-building, 1860–1915. Popa's academic career is marked by extensive international collaboration across the UK (Cambridge), Germany (Giessen), Italy (Turin and Perugia), and Romania (Iași). Her research interests include women's history, the history of feminism and feminist theory, theories of hybridity, nation, and religious minorities, as well as the cultural history of Protestant Christianity.

Marietta van der Tol is Assistant Research Professor - Landecker Lecturer at the Faculty of Divinity. Her research interest is in the comparative study of politics, law and religion. Her Landecker Lectureship carries a five-year research project, titled "Imagining Sacred Lands: the 'Russian World', 'Hungarian World', and 'Holy Serbia'". She is author of the book [Constitutional Intolerance: The Fashioning of the Other in Europe's Constitutional Repertoires](#) (CUP 2025), editor of [The Many Faces of Christianity: The 'Russian World' in Europe](#) (Brill 2025) and teaches modules in Democratic Backsliding at the Faculty of Divinity and the Department of Politics and International Studies. Marietta studied at Utrecht University from 2009 to 2014 (LLM Hons in law, MA in history) and then at Yale University from 2014 to 2016 (MAR Hons in history of Christianity). Her doctoral thesis, ['Politics of religious diversity: toleration, religious freedom and visibility of religion in public space'](#) (University of Cambridge, 2020), explored expressions of tolerance and intolerance in contemporary constitutional law and politics in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Marietta leads the interdisciplinary networks 'Religion, ethnicity and politics in German, Dutch and Anglo-American contexts: nationalism and the future of democracy' (DAAD-Cambridge) and the project 'Protestant political thought: religion, state, nation' (with Dr Sophia Johnson). These networks have curated several special issues, including ['Rethinking the Sacred in Religion and Nationalism'](#) in Religion, State, Society and ['Old Testament Imaginaries of the Nation in German, Dutch, and Anglo-American Protestant Political Thought'](#) in *The Journal of the Bible and its Reception*.

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

10:15 Opening

10:30 Introduction
Karina Bénazech Wendling
Eugenio Biagini

11:00 Panel 1
Donatus Düsterhaus
Anne Herrmann-Israel

12:30 Lunch

13:30 Panel 2
Eugenio Biagini
Tullia Catalan
Laura Popa

15:30 Tea & Biscuits

16:00 Book launch
Karina Bénazech Wendling
Eugenio Biagini
Ian D'Alton
Gareth Atkins

18:00 Drinks & Canapés

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026

9:00 Panel 3
Jérémy Guedj
Zoé Grumberg

10:15 Tea and Pastries

10:30 Panel 4
Alan Ford
Jan Paulus
Philipp David

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Roundtable 1
Anthony Feneuil
Marietta Van der Tol
Alan Ford

15:30 Cambridge Tour

19:30 Dinner

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026

8:30 Panel 5
Adam Coleman
Ian D'Alton
Trisha Oakley-Kessler

10:30 Tea and Pastries

11:00 Roundtable 2
Eugenio Biagini
Erin Jenne
Semir Dzebo

12:30 Conclusion
Karina Bénazech Wendling