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Petitioning from the Margins

Hungarian Minorities and the League of Nations (1919–1939)

JULIA BAVOUZET (WIEN)

275. Institutsseminar des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung

Montag, 05. Juni 2023, 17 Uhr c.t., Hörsaal 2 (Untergeschoss, rathausseitig)

The collapse of central empires that followed the First World War led to the reorganization of statehood in the region. Taking the Hungarian case as a springboard to tackle this transformation, the presentation will address the issue of minority protection as a new field of international governance that emerged from the Peace Treaties. Using this opportunity to discuss the recent scholarship on the post-imperial transition, I would like to question the practices and representations surrounding the minority protection and the communication channels between the young Habsburg successor states and the League of Nations as international guardian of the new order. At the core of the analysis will be the petitions sent by representatives of the Hungarian minorities to the League: their drafting, circulation, discussion and eventual revision, so as to highlight the *nébuleuse* of actors involved and the progressive structuration of networks as a procedure is being invented. Therefore, I will focus on the decision-making process in the League's Minority Section and the involved governments more than on the outcomes and consequences of these decisions. Moreover, I would like to address the issue of who is entitled to make a claim and render a decision, or to draw on Bourdieu's terminology, to produce an authorized language on the national and international stage, in a time of changing statehood and crystallization of new international forums.

Julia Bavouzet is currently a post-doc researcher at the Institute of Austrian Historical Research (University of Vienna), where she continues her research on the Habsburg monarchy and the successor states. In 2017 she defended her PhD thesis at the Paris-Nanterre University (awarded with *Hungarica* PhD-prize), in which she focused on a social history of the Hungarian administrative elite. Since then, she was affiliated to the CRPM (Université Paris Ovest Nanterre), the CREE (Inalco, Paris), and moved to Vienna to join the IfÖG in 2020.

Moderation: Peter Becker