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Review of Moreno Almendral, R. (2021) *Relatos de vida, conceptos de nación. Reino Unido, Francia, España y Portugal (1780-1840)*

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white skin as a ‘uniform’ and Anthony Kirk-Green’s assertion that white skin was a ‘bullet-proof waistcoat’, emphasizes the major difference which does not allow for an equal comparison of experience; namely, skin colour. As Lingelbach concludes, however, there were indeed some similarities, but in contradiction to David Chioni Moore, the ‘East is *not* South’ (123).

The fourth chapter concentrates on gender, particularly as the majority of Polish DPs and refugees were women and children. Here, the gendered roles of Polish women in exile are examined alongside their status as refugees and dependents, as well as the potential threat they pose to male administrators and ‘the social boundaries of race’ (133). This chapter adds another dimension to Lingelbach’s impressive entangled history as it navigates social, racial and cultural boundaries that are strained by the presence of Polish refugee women and their status, in nationalist discourse, as *Matka Polka* (Polish Mother); thereby ‘central to the reproduction and preservation of the nation’ (132).

The last chapter is sizeable, and is really three chapters in one. Using subdivisions, Lingelbach looks at British perspectives of the refugees (Poles as an ‘in-between group’ between colonizer and colonized), Polish self-perceptions (as Western Europeans with their own stark class distinctions), and African perspectives (as ‘approachable whites’ with a different spirit to Europeans). Although each has its merit, the rationale for them coming under one heading and then being subdivided is not clear and each could easily be a chapter in their own right.

Overall, Lingelbach’s work has provided a much needed spotlight onto the complex and ambivalent position of a ‘subaltern white’ and is careful to frequently reiterate to the reader that the Polish refugees were by no means a homogenous group. Taken together, the distinctions of gender, class, ethnicity and religion have made this case study an important insight into a time when British colonial rule was on the brink of collapse. The Polish refugees were not necessarily a welcome addition to colonial East and Central Africa, but an essential one to ensure the Polish army could lend their services to Britain, bolstering the ‘brothers-in-arms’ rhetoric that came to dominate in DP camps in the post-war period and eventually collapsed into ‘betrayed ally’. This is an excellently researched book which employs the use of original oral histories, extensive archival work, and some of the most thorough footnoting ever witnessed. Lingelbach’s book is an important contribution to all the fields mentioned in the introduction, using an unusual case study which prompts further questions about ‘the importance of giving shelter to people who have been forced to flee their home’ (265).

Raúl Moreno Almendral, *Relatos de vida, conceptos de nación. Reino Unido, Francia, España y Portugal (1780–1840)*, Publicacions de la Universitat de València: Valencia, 2021; 326 pp.; 9788491347859, €23.50 (pbk)

Reviewed by: Eric Storm, *Leiden University, the Netherlands*

One of the main issues of debate in the field of nationalism studies is whether nations and nationalism are modern phenomena or clearly defined nations and feelings of loyalty

towards them already existed before. The Age of Revolutions is mostly seen as the main turning point. A Spanish monograph, based on the doctoral dissertation of the young scholar Raúl Moreno Almendral, now sheds a fundamental new light on this transition period with a comparative study of the meaning of the 'nation' to authors of autobiographical writings in four major European countries: the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal. The book is based on a detailed analysis of 170 autobiographies, diaries, memoirs and travelogues, almost evenly divided between the four countries and the period of study (1780–1840). Although most authors certainly belonged to the upper strata of society, he also uses non-elite sources and those written by women or inhabitants of peripheral areas. As a consequence, the author also explores how the nation was experienced by more or less ordinary people.

The book is set up as a comparison, with individual chapters for each of the four countries under review. In each of them Moreno Almendral also discusses the existing historiographical debate, in which it becomes clear that research traditions vary considerably per country. In the United Kingdom, for instance, much attention has been given to the complicated interaction between the four 'nations' and the British state. In the French and Portuguese case the nation is not put into doubt by most historians and although the Revolutionary Age has been studied extensively the evolution of feelings of national attachment has barely been examined. In Spain the topic of nationalism has received more scholarly attention, and recently – and this also applies to Portugal – historians have become aware that at the time the Spanish and Portuguese nation also included the inhabitants of the (American) colonies. In his own analysis of the primary sources, Moreno Almendral consequently includes the colonial dimension and the interaction of national with regional identifications.

One of the qualities of the book is its analytical acumen and conceptual clarity. In order to overcome the yes-no argument between the modernists and their opponents, he distinguishes between five different conceptions of the nation, of which the first three already existed before the Age of Revolutions. Firstly, the term 'nation' was applied to a loosely defined group of people sharing the same geographical background or speaking similar languages, which frequently occurred with communities of (foreign) students or merchants. Secondly, there existed a more consistent classification of the civilized world into 'ethnotypes' or 'peoples', each with their own characteristics. Thirdly, 'ethnotypes' often received a political connotation as they were linked to a specific kingdom or realm. As a consequence, a country's 'national character' was supposedly reflected in its own peculiar institutions and corporate rights. Fourthly, with the introduction of the sovereignty of the nation, the nation was redefined as a community of equal citizens that expressed its collective will through a representative system. The last is the Romantic conception of the nation as a culturally defined community with a unique national character or 'spirit'.

The book provides many fresh insights. All five conceptions of the nation, for instance, can be found in the sources; however, references to the new revolutionary and Romantic understandings are relatively sparse. Interestingly, the revolutionary understanding is often mixed with the politicized ethnotype, for example by emphasizing the defence of the fatherland and by explaining the revolutionary transformations as a

restoration of the 'old constitution' or a return to the 'glories of the past'. This also provides an avenue for conservatives and even reactionaries to adopt the language of nationalism, as according to them loyalty to the King and God's laws was an integral part of this 'ancient constitution'. Although Moreno Almendral argues that the Age of Revolution produced two radically new conceptions of the nation, he also shows that at least in these four countries the politicized ethnotypes were already widespread and continued to be the most frequently used conception in the early nineteenth century. In this way, he provides a very nuanced interpretation of this crucial transition period. Obviously, the French Revolution, the subsequent wars and the fierce debates surrounding the true nature of the nation helped to (temporarily) increase the national awareness of the population.

Although this really is a great comparative monograph, there are some limitations. The author himself also admits that by choosing 1780 as a starting date he leaves out the beginning of the Age of Revolutions during the American War of Independence. As the focus of the book is on the turbulent period between 1789 and 1815 – which in the Spanish and Portuguese case continued into the 1820s – it is difficult to assess how widespread these national conceptions were in more peaceful times, or earlier in the eighteenth century. A more fundamental critique is that by selecting four relatively stable states with a continued presence from at least the late medieval period until the present, the conclusions of the book cannot be easily applied to other parts of Europe. Moreover in a period when borders were anything but stable, it would have been interesting to analyze the probably much more unstable territorial identities in areas such as current day Belgium, the Rhineland and parts of Northern Italy, which were quickly annexed to France. The same is true for East-Central Europe and the Americas where national identities were much less clearly delineated in this period. But hopefully this task could be taken up by others. In the end, it is a pity that the book most probably will not be translated into English, not least for its containing lengthy untranslated quotes in five different languages. However, the author has already published a number of recent articles in English with some of the most important findings of his investigations.

Kenneth Morrison and Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, Bloomsbury Academic: London, 2021; 264 pp., 30 b/w illus; 9781350081741, £85.00 (hbk); 9781350202849, £28.99 (pbk); 9781350081789, £26.09 (ebook)

Reviewed by: Elliot Short, Exeter, UK

For almost four years during the violent disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia, the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo was encircled, shelled and assaulted. The siege cost the lives of over 11,500 citizens and left countless scars on the bodies and minds of the inhabitants of this once proudly multi-ethnic city. In *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, Kenneth Morrison and Paul Lowe provide a fresh and unique perspective on the siege and the lives of those who endured it. As one interviewee observed, 'it was the most accessible war