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CONFERENCE PAPER • DR SAMUEL BERTHET



DR SAMUEL BERTHET

# The Impact of the First World War on Law and National Sovereignty

## Abstract

The First World War intensified the process of globalization process in many respects such as, for instance, the displacement of populations around the world or the transfers of technology and natural resources. This also applies to the field of international law. The First World War saw the systematization of breaches in the precepts of the sovereignty a nation exerts over its territory and its judicial system.

The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the growth of an articulated national movement in the Indian subcontinent, which became more radical when the British Raj attempted at dividing Bengal in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Wary of the tighter control introduced on British soil, the representatives of the Indian nationalist movement shifted their bases to France.

To control and, in some cases, arrest Indian nationalists on its soil, France agreed to relinquish part of its sovereignty to satisfy the British concerns. The rhetoric of a war against terror – a leitmotiv of contemporary globalization – was introduced in order to disqualify the Indian nationalist movement and enable France to adopt an attitude that was supportive of British interests.

## Profile

Samuel Berthet wrote his PhD on Indo-French relation (1870-1962). He lived in South Asia for 13 years where he collaborated with Jawaharlal Nehru University, Visva Bharati and the University of Dhaka. Among other works, he co-authored *Le Dictionnaire de l'Inde contemporaine*, was research coordinator for a series of films about the Maritime Relation between South Asia and Europe, and curated the photo exhibition *Tagore the Universal Message*, in collaboration with UNESCO and Alliance Française de Chittagong.