



## **Migration History Seminar**

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**Thursday, 10 December 2020**

**Switzerland, Land of Asylum? New Historiographical Perspectives**

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**Marino Ferri, University of Lucerne and  
Ramon Wiederkehr, University of Neuchâtel**

12:30 – 14:00 h

This seminar will be held online on WEBEX: <https://unine.webex.com/meet/jean-thomas.arrighi>

The Migration History Series is co-organized by the History Department of the University of Neuchâtel and the nccr – on the move. For any further information regarding the series, please send an email to [jean-thomas.arrighi@unine.ch](mailto:jean-thomas.arrighi@unine.ch).

## **About the Presentations**

### **The Blurred Boundaries of Humanitarian Solidarity: The Admission of “Hard-Core” Refugees of the International Refugee Organization to Switzerland (1950–51)**

Ramon Wiederkehr, PhD candidate, University of Neuchâtel

The presentation focuses on humanitarian admission of so-called “Hard-Core” refugees under the mandate of the International Refugee Organization (IRO) to Switzerland after the Second World War. These were people who, due to age, physical or mental disability, had not been accepted for resettlement abroad and were stranded in refugee camps around Europe, mainly in Western Germany. Switzerland’s admission of these refugees ties into the state’s broader humanitarian engagement in the immediate postwar era that up to this point focused mainly on aid operations abroad. The admission of the “Hard-Core” reveals not only the ambivalences of humanitarian aid but also how it overlaps with refugee and asylum policy, despite the supposedly clear boundaries between the two.

### **Solidarity and the Apolitical: The Swiss Student Union and Algerian Refugee Students (1956-1963)**

Marino Ferri, PhD candidate, University of Lucerne

For the more than 150 Algerian refugee students enrolled at Swiss universities around 1960, Switzerland was generally not a country of asylum – as they were not juridically recognized as refugees. The term «refugee students» primarily originates in student discourses of the time. My contribution focuses on student actors and thus attempts to develop new historiographical perspectives on contemporary Swiss history. It reflects recent efforts to decenter Cold War history and to pay more attention to peripheral actors, sources and spaces. In a case study, based on archival research in Switzerland and the Netherlands, I examine how the Swiss Student Union reacted to their Algerian counterpart’s efforts to politicize student discourse, tracing its way from blunt rejection to active solidarity.

## **About the Series**

The Migration History Seminar Series are co-organized by the nccr – on the move and the History Department of the University of Neuchâtel. They pursue the twofold aim of showing that migration history is both central to our understanding of the present, as well as a vibrant research field. Throughout the 2020-21 academic year, junior and senior historians will be invited to discuss their ongoing research on a range of topics.