Despite the conventional image of the Belle Époque as a time of peace, progress and optimism, the twenty years leading up to the outbreak of the First World War were a period in which the practice of organised violence was part of everyday life for thousands and thousands of male European men. Genuine paramilitary corps (such as the Ulster Volunteer Force), industrial protection groups, private police like the German Zechenwehr or the Italian Volunteer Workers, and countless shooting clubs and military training associations are all examples of the process of militarisation which shaped many European countries.

This workshop aims to address this largely understudied topic by bringing together young and senior scholars to focus on political violence and processes of militarisation in France, the German Empire, Austria-Hungary and the United Kingdom between the 1880s and 1914. By analysing political, military and social contexts as well as individual case studies, the workshop aims not only to fill a gap in our knowledge of this period but also to think afresh and from a new perspective crucial issues such as the relationship between the rule of law and political violence, the impact of armed associations on citizen bodies and mass society, the causes of the First World War and its repercussions on European society.

Department of Historical and Geographic Sciences and the Ancient World
Via del Vescovado 30, Padova, Italy
info: matteo.millan@unipd.it or research@prewaras.eu

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (G.A. No 677199)
First Session. Chair: Carlotta Sorba
h. 09.30 – 13.30

Matteo Millan
University of Padova - PREWArAs Principal Investigator
Introduction. A false problem? Armed groups and political violence in Belle Époque Europe

Alessandro Saluppo
University of Padova – PREWArAs ERC Postdoctoral fellow
A time of remorselessly rising tension, of impending doom: strikebreaking and violence in the Great Unrest, 1910 - 1914

h. 11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break

Arnaud Houte
University of Paris – Panthéon Sorbonne
Political violence and French republican consensus, 1880-1914

Romain Bonnet
University of Padova – PREWArAs ERC Postdoctoral fellow
Organized violence, strikebreaking and the Jaunes. Institutionalized anti-republicanism in France Belle Époque

Second Session. Chair: Giulia Albanese
h. 14.30 – 18.30

Laurence Cole
University of Salzburg
Militias, militaristic associations and political violence in Austria-Hungary c.1880-1914: Connections or disconnections?

Claire Morelon
University of Padova – PREWArAs ERC Postdoctoral fellow
Respectable citizens: patriotism, social order, and latent violence in Austrian armed associations

Sven Oliver Müller
University of Tübingen
Communities of Violence? Emotions and assaults at the homefront in Germany, Britain and France in 1914

Amerigo Caruso
University of Padova – PREWArAs ERC Postdoctoral fellow
Delegating violence? Strikes and social conflicts in Imperial Germany, 1889–1914

Roundtable. Chair: Heinz-Gerhard Haupt
h. 09.30 – 12.30

Comparative and transnational perspectives in the study of pre-WWI political violence and armed associations