

Introduction

During the final decade of the twentieth century, the global community witnessed the remarkable growth and spread of nationalism and ethnic conflict. In the first, inaugural issue of *Nations and Nationalism*, the journal of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, published in 1995, the editors, Anthony Smith et al. wrote:

The last few years have witnessed a widespread resurgence of nationalism and proliferation of ethnic conflicts. The reemergence of ethnic nationalisms across the globe has taken many people by surprise and forced them to reassess prevailing assumptions and beliefs about the direction of historical development and the motive forces of social change. In longer historical perspective, the latest resurgence of nationalism is one of many since the French Revolution which have propelled the nation into the forefront of world politics. Given the unsatisfied aspirations of ethnic communities in many parts of the world, it is unlikely that the present wave of nationalisms will be the final one.¹

Today, as we leave the twentieth century behind us, movements for national liberation and autonomy have become a worldwide phenomenon, spreading to distant corners of the world—from the Middle East to southern Africa, to Eastern and Western Europe, to North America, and to the former Soviet Union.² The recent transformations in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, especially the Balkans and the Transcaucasian region, have fueled the upsurge in national rivalries and led to ethnic conflict and civil war that now stretches across the globe.³

This book examines the origins and development of nationalism and national movements in the twentieth century and provides an analysis of the nature and dynamics of nationalism and ethnic conflict in a variety of national settings. Examining the intricate relationship between class, state, and nation,

this book attempts to develop a critical approach to the study of nationalism and national movements within the broader context of class relations and class struggles in the age of globalization.⁴

Originating in Europe in a period when the rising European bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century found it necessary to establish nation-states to protect their economic interests and thus consolidate their class rule, the phenomenon of nation (and nationalism) became the political expression of rival capitalist powers engaged in a life-and-death struggle for world domination throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵

In the twentieth century, nationalism and national movements emerged across much of the world as rallying points in the context of the struggle against European colonialism and imperialism.⁶ National struggles against foreign domination in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, for example, have taken the form of anticolonial or anti-imperialist liberation struggles—as in India and China in the 1940s, in Algeria and Cuba in the 1950s, and in much of sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s and 1970s.⁷ In these and other countries and regions of the Third World subjected to external domination, the yearning for national independence and self-determination has taken the form of political struggles to establish sovereign national states with jurisdiction over a national territory based on self-rule.

During the past century, we have seen nationalist movements develop in a variety of settings—in the Third World, in the advanced capitalist countries, and under socialism—varying in accordance with different geographic, historical, and cultural settings.⁸ “Taking the century as a whole,” write Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, “nationalism has come in waves, crashing across the ruins of empires.”⁹

When the great multinational states of the nineteenth century fell apart, transforming the landscapes of eastern Europe, central Asia, and the Near East after 1917, not only were new nation-states formed in their debris, but nationalism itself became an object of academic study in the interwar years, conducted under the sign of a new validating norm, the self-determination of peoples. But this generally positive valence of nationalism in the first postwar decade dissipated rapidly before the rise of fascism, with its expansionist drives and attendant excess, its chauvinism and privileging of race. Something resembling the euphoria of national self-determination in 1917–18 then accompanied the end of the Second World War, as the European peoples cast off the Nazi occupation, while another wave of interest in nationalism and nation-forming rose from the slow collapse of the great European overseas empires in the decades after 1945.¹⁰

In the postwar period, Third World national liberation movements appeared in several forms: secular political struggles for a homeland (as in

Palestine); struggles for regional and cultural autonomy and self-rule across several states (as in Kurdistan); struggles to end racism and national oppression (as in apartheid South Africa); and ethnoreligious conflict in a multinational setting (as in India).¹¹ A multitude of national, political, cultural, and religious conflicts in the context of larger regional military confrontations have surfaced even in generally tolerant secular states, such as Lebanon, where the resurgence of national, ethnic, and fundamentalist religious movements have led to social strife and civil war.¹

In the advanced capitalist countries, movements of previously colonized peoples and territories (such as Puerto Rico) and of oppressed groups and nationalities (as in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, and Quebec) have emerged and developed during this century, especially during the past several decades. In this setting, the struggles of minority ethnic groups have tended to focus on limited autonomy and self-rule that recognizes ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and historic rights and freedoms within the context of a federated state with minimal political control over the affairs of the minority ethnic population by dominant groups in society.¹²

In the socialist countries, especially in the former Soviet Union, nationalist movements have sprung up in the Baltic, Transcaucasian, and Central Asian republics, as they have in Eastern Europe, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, where a civil war between the Serbs, the Croats, and the Bosnians has torn apart that country.¹³ Here, the newly emergent nationalist forces have challenged communist rule and installed in its place a series of market-oriented bourgeois states tied to global capitalism.¹⁴

This book consists of three parts made up of seven chapters. In part I, chapters 1 and 2, I examine mainstream and Marxist theories of nationalism and ethnic conflict. I show that while conventional social theorists have focused on subjective factors, such as culture, ideology, religion, and other superstructural phenomena in examining the origins and development of nations and nationalism, Marxist theorists have adopted a materialist conception of history based on an analysis of the class nature of the state, nation, and nationalism in explaining the nature and transformation of superstructural phenomena that are socially defined. In contrast to mainstream, bourgeois-idealist formulations of nation and nationalism, which are viewed by conventional social theorists as an expression of free will defined in accordance with bourgeois subjectivist notions of social behavior, I show that Marxist theory, grounded in the materialist dialectic that is historically situated and guided by the logic of social relations formed by underlying class relations and class struggles, is better able to explain the structure and dynamics of society and social change, including such phenomena as nation and nationalism, and their relationship to class and state. Thus, providing a

critical approach to the study of nationalism and ethnic conflict, I draw the reader's attention to the analysis provided by Marxist theory as a viable alternative to conventional modes of theorizing on class, state, nation, and nationalism.

In part II, chapters 3, 4, and 5, I examine the political context of nationalism and national movements in various national settings. Chapter 3 provides a comparative analysis of nationalism and ethnic conflict on a world scale, focusing on a variety of national movements engaged in struggles for national self-determination throughout the world. Chapter 4 examines the resurgence of nationalism in the Third World, focusing on the Palestinian and Kurdish national movements as case studies of nationalism and ethnic conflict within the context of the recent rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. Chapter 5 looks at the rise of right-wing ultranationalist movements in the advanced capitalist countries at century's end—a development that occurred in reaction to growing racial and ethnic tensions that are a consequence of economic decline and decay resulting from the globalization of capital. Here I address the apparent paradox of the resurgence of nationalism and ethnonational conflict in the age of globalization—a process that is a direct outcome of globalization itself.

In part III, chapters 6 and 7, I address the crucial relationship between class, state, and nation—the pillars of nationalism and ethnic conflict—and provide an analysis of the social forces that serve as agents of nationalism and class struggle. In this section of the book I argue that nationalism and national movements cannot be fully understood unless the *class basis* of politics and the *class forces* behind political ideologies and mass movements are clearly revealed. In this context, I show that the state comes to play a central role in confronting various class forces and facilitates the class project of one or another of the contending classes vying for power to advance their particular class interests. A reactionary hold on power or a revolutionary transformation of existing social, economic, and political conditions thus becomes the motive force of sociopolitical relations as manifested through varied forms of class struggle that ultimately resolves the question of state power. This triangular relationship between class, state, and nation, which is organically linked to the forces of nationalism, ethnic conflict, and class struggle, explains well the dynamics of power wielded to shape and reshape society and its course of development.

The book concludes by drawing upon the theoretical and political implications of social relations that are often in conflict with various dimensions of social life. This book makes a strong case in favor of an analysis that brings into focus the dynamics of class, state, and nation to explain the class nature of nationalism and ethnic conflict in the age of globalization.

NOTES

1. Anthony Smith, Obi Igwara, Athena Leoussi, and Terry Mulhall, eds., "Editorial," *Nations and Nationalism* 1, no. 1 (1995): p. 1.
2. Berch Berberoglu, ed., *The National Question: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).
3. Thanasis D. Sfikas and Christopher Williams, eds., *Ethnicity and Nationalism in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Sudbury, Mass.: Dartmouth, 1999); Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers 1809–1999* (New York: Penguin, 2001); Cathie Carmichael, *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the Destruction of Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2002).
4. See Albert J. Szymanski, *The Capitalist State and the Politics of Class* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1978) and Albert J. Szymanski, *Class Structure: A Critical Perspective* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1983); Berch Berberoglu, *Class Structure and Social Transformation* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1994) and Berch Berberoglu, *Political Sociology: A Comparative/Historical Approach*, 2nd ed. (New York: General Hall, 2001). See also Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000).
5. See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789–1848* (New York: World, 1962), chap. 7 and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital: 1848–1875* (New York: Scribner's, 1975), chap. 5. See also Louk Hagendoorn, György Csepeli, Henk Dekker, and Russell Farnen, eds., *European Nations and Nationalism: Theoretical and Historical Perspectives* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2000) and Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2003).
6. For a discussion on nationalism and various nationalist movements, see James M. Blaut, *The National Question: Decolonizing the Theory of Nationalism* (London: Zed Books, 1987). See also Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).
7. See Norman Miller and Roderick Aya, eds., *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World* (New York: Free Press, 1971); Donald C. Hodges and Robert Elias Abu Shanab, eds., *NLF: National Liberation Fronts, 1960/1970* (New York: Morrow, 1972).
8. For an extended analysis of the political history of various national movements throughout the world, see Berberoglu, *The National Question*.
9. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, "Introduction: From the Moment of Social History to the Work of Cultural Representation," in Eley and Suny, *Becoming National*, p. 3.
10. Eley and Suny, "Introduction," p. 3.
11. Berberoglu, *The National Question*.
12. Dilip Hiro, *Lebanon: Fire and Embers: a History of the Lebanese Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's, 1993).
13. This is especially the case in Quebec, but also in Puerto Rico and the Basque Country and elsewhere in the advanced capitalist countries, as well as in parts of the

Third World, such as Kurdistan. See Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia, and Scotland* (London: Macmillan, 2002); William A. Douglass, Carmelo Urza, Linda White, and Joseba Zulaika, eds., *Basque Politics and Nationalism on the Eve of the Millennium* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000); Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

14. Aleksandar Pavkovic, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism and War in the Balkans* (Hampshire, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Dusan Kecmanovic, *Ethnic Times: Exploring Ethnonationalism in the Former Yugoslavia* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001).

15. Rawi Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy: Post-Soviet States in Comparative Perspective* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).