

□ Introduction □

Nationalism, once thought of as a historical phenomenon emerging along with capitalism and the nation-state in Europe during the eighteenth century, has resurfaced in this century as part of the struggles for national liberation and self-determination in countries and regions of the Third World dominated by colonialism and imperialism.¹ Today, in the final decade of the twentieth century, it has become a worldwide phenomenon, spreading to every corner of the globe—from the Middle East to South Africa, to Europe, to North America, and to the former Soviet Union. That such nationalist fervor should develop in an age when the internationalization of capital has torn down national and geographic boundaries and ushered in a global political economy is hardly surprising, since issues of national liberation and self-determination, regardless of political form or class content, remain unresolved for a number of groups.²

Originating in Europe in the eighteenth century, when the rising bourgeoisies found it necessary to establish nation-states to protect their economic interests and thus consolidate their class rule,³ nationalism became the preferred form of political expression for rival capitalist powers engaged in a life-and-death struggle for world domination during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the twentieth century, nationalism and national movements emerged throughout the world in the context of the struggle against European colonialism and imperialism.⁴ National struggles against foreign domination in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, for example, took 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.⁵ In these and other countries and regions of the Third World subjected to external domination, the yearning for national independence and self-determination took the form of political struggles to establish sovereign national states with jurisdiction over a national territory based on self-rule.

Such movements took various 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 a multitude of national, ethnic, and religious conflicts (as in India, Nigeria, and Rwanda), which have led to continued social strife.

Elsewhere, the advanced capitalist countries have experienced movements of previously colonized peoples and territories (such as Puerto Rico) or of oppressed groups and nationalities (as in Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, and Quebec), especially during the past several decades.

In the socialist countries, especially in the former Soviet Union, where the opening accorded by glasnost and perestroika reforms and the subsequent crisis of Soviet society provided an opportunity for nationalist forces, such movements have sprung up in the Baltics, the Transcaucasus, and Central Asia, 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 that country apart. In China, on the other hand, the conflicts in Tibet and more recently in Xinjiang have given way to peaceful relations between the Han majority and the more than fifty-five minority nationalities that live in various autonomous regions and provinces throughout the country.⁶

Nationalism and national movements are phenomena that cannot be studied in isolation from the social and class structure of the society in which they arise. A class analysis of such movements, therefore, is imperative for a better understanding of the dynamics of social change that these movements entail. We contend in this book that class conflicts and class struggles are manifestations of social and political divisions that are, at base, a reflection of relations of production.⁷ Such production relations (i.e., class relations) come to inform the nature and content of political relations, which at the *international* level take the form of *national* struggles. Thus, on the national level, exploitative relations between two contending classes within a national boundary take the form of an internal class struggle; a similar relationship at the international level manifests itself in the form of a national struggle—a struggle that, in essence, is the national expression of an international class struggle that is often based on an alliance of a number of classes unified for a single, most immediate goal—national liberation.⁸

These struggles for self-determination, which as I have described them are characteristic of Third World anti-imperialist national liberation struggles, take quite a different form in the advanced-capitalist imperial centers of Europe and North America. Here the struggles waged by national minori-

ties against the central state—as in Quebec and the Basque Country, as well as among Native Americans in the United States and Canada—tend to be demands for limited autonomy, self-rule, or similar such status within the boundaries of the larger federal structure, demands that fall short of full national independence and statehood.

In the context of the socialist states, we find an entirely different dynamic at work. In some cases, as in China, the nationalities question and nationalities policy may be framed as an issue of national integration, of finding a way to recognize cultural diversity and allow regional autonomy to various ethnic and nationality groups. In other cases, as in the former Soviet Union, where the center fails to deal with deep-seated national antagonisms inherited from an earlier period, some national groups may come to play a disproportionately dominant role; the resulting hostilities may in time give rise to the disintegration of the central state along national lines. It is important to remember, however, that while long-suppressed national aspirations within an apparently cooperative federated state may give rise to national movements that *appear* to be “above class,” here too an analysis of the class nature of national movements is necessary for a clear understanding of the dynamics of such movements.

The primary aim of this book is to provide a comparative-historical perspective on nationalism through case studies of nationalism, ethnic conflict, and struggles for national self-determination. By this means, the volume traces the historical development of some of the most important national movements of this century situated in different geographic and sociopolitical settings. No attempt is made to engage in theoretical discussion or debate on the nature of nationalism or the national question in general, or to develop a general theory of nationalism and self-determination based on the experiences of the various national movements examined here.⁹

The unique histories, cultural characteristics, class nature, and political forms of the struggles of peoples for national liberation around the world examined in these pages can themselves give us insight into these movements. In order to understand these movements fully, however, we must also look at a few key substantive questions that lie at the heart of the phenomenon of nationalism (and the national question) in order to sort out their class nature.¹⁰ The central question we must raise in all of these cases is: Why should we take a *class analysis approach* to the study of nationalism, ethnic conflict, and movements for national self-determination?

Nationalism, writes Albert Szymanski in his book *Class Structure*, “is the ideology that members of a nation, people, ethnic group, or ‘racial’ minority have more in common with each other than the various constituent

classes of the group have with other people in similar class positions."¹¹ He continues his definition by saying:

"Nationalism" dictates that because of their postulated overriding common interest, all classes within the ethnic group, people, or "racial" minority should work together economically and politically to advance their collective interests *against* other "nations", "races", ethnic groups, or peoples (even against those who are in the *same* classes). Nationalism is the advocacy of ethnic or "national" solidarity and action over class consciousness and action. It is, thus, the opposite of class consciousness that argues solidarity should occur and political alliances be formed primarily along *class* lines (even against the relatively privileged groups within one's subordinate ethnic group). Nationalism and class consciousness are, thus, alternative strategies of political action for gaining improvement in one's life.¹²

"In fact," adds Szymanski, "nationalism is a product of class forces. Although different kinds of nationalism differ qualitatively in their effects, *all* serve some classes within a given racial or ethnic group as opposed to others."¹³

Adopting a class-analysis approach for the study of nationalism would entail analyzing the class base of a particular national movement, the balance of class forces within it, and the class forces leading the movement. On this basis, we can determine the nature and future course of development of a national movement and see whether it is progressive or reactionary. Once the class character of the movement and its leadership is established, we can differentiate politically among various types of national movements. This differentiation can in turn provide us with clues to the movement's social and political character.¹⁴

Understanding the class nature of a given national movement may also help us understand the nature of the class forces that that movement is struggling *against*, and hence the nature and forms of the struggle itself. The class content of a struggle against imperialism, for example, may transform it from a national struggle into a class struggle being fought at the national and international levels; that is, although the struggle takes the form of a national struggle, it is, in essence, a struggle for state power.¹⁵

If, as James Blaut points out, national struggle is class struggle, that is, "one very important form of the struggle for state power," then we need to ask "which classes make use of it, in which historical epochs, and for which purposes?"¹⁶ Looking at the struggle in this way, we can expect a relationship between the class character of a national movement, its class leadership, its political goals, and, if it is successful, the nature and direction

of the postindependence state. Thus, the ideology of a national movement led by a national or petty bourgeoisie, which can be characterized as "bourgeois nationalism," will lead to the creation of a national *capitalist* state; an anti-imperialist national movement led by the working class in alliance with the peasantry, on the other hand, will give rise to a popular *socialist* state.¹⁷

Because the settings in which these struggles take place are so diverse, we must look carefully at the relationship between class, nation, and state in order to understand the social relevance of nationalism (and the national question) as manifested in different spatial, temporal, and political contexts.¹⁸ Consequently, the three parts of this book look separately at nationalism, ethnic conflict, and struggles for national self-determination in the Third World (Part I), the advanced capitalist countries (Part II), and the socialist states (Part III). Specifically, Part I examines the Palestinian, Kurdish, South African, and Indian movements, as well as the role of women in national liberation movements in Africa, the Middle East, and Central America. Part II looks at nationalism and national movements in Puerto Rico, Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, and Quebec. Finally, Part III takes up the nationalities question in the former Soviet Union, China, and the former Yugoslavia. Together, the twelve chapters provide a wide-ranging comparative-historical analysis of some of the most important national movements and struggles for national self-determination in the world today.

In the first chapter, on the Palestinian national question, Gordon Welty traces the progress of Palestinian nationalism from the social, economic, and political structure of Palestinian society under Ottoman rule, through the popular opposition to Zionist colonization that emerged even before the British Mandatory period, to its awakening after 1947, when Zionist war plans led to the emergence within Israel and especially in the diaspora of such political movements as Pan-Arabism and "pragmatic" nationalism, and eventually to the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964. Since 1967, Israeli attempts to control the Palestinian population through violence (exercised by the military and paramilitary apparatus) and through political, economic, legal, and social institutions have resulted in a deepening and maturing of the nationalist movement. The political mobilization of the Palestinian diaspora in the 1960s, Welty points out, was reflected back into the Occupied Territories after 1967, giving rise to the popular resistance, which led, in turn, to the Israeli military debacle in Lebanon after 1982—all of which has come together and found dialectical expression in massive Palestinian unrest and finally, in December 1987, in the uprising known as the Intifada, which represents the coming to full maturity of the Palestinian nationalist movement. Clearly, the various politi-

cal tendencies within the Palestinian national movement reflect the class forces that exist in Palestinian society. The movement's success stems from the willingness of these class forces to effect a popular alliance to achieve their national goal of independence and self-rule. The future of the Palestinian movement and the nature of the new society that it is now building will depend on how these forces interact and which class(es) emerge as leaders in charting the development path for the Palestinian people in the years ahead.

In Chapter 2, Ferhad Ibrahim examines the Kurdish national question as it is played out in several states in the Middle East (mainly Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria). Not unlike the PLO, the Workers' Party of Kurdistan (PKK), the leading force confronting the Turkish state in the most recent period of nationalist upsurge among the Kurds in Turkey, has, according to Ibrahim, served as a catalyst to reinvigorate and mobilize the Kurdish national movement and renew its demands for national self-determination. Certainly, given developments across the border in Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991, and the crushing defeat suffered by the Kurds there at the hands of Saddam Hussein's regime, the future of the Kurdish national movement and the struggle of Kurds for self-rule is far from certain. But, like the Palestinian cause, the resistance of the Kurds against their oppressors is gaining them growing attention in the world community and may eventually lead to the establishment of a national homeland. Certainly, as in other cases of nationalism and national movements, the Kurdish movement will undergo internal struggles over leadership and political direction that will reflect class struggles lodged in the social structure of the society, and the direction that the movement takes will thus depend on the nature and composition of these forces and how they come to define the movement and the new society it creates.

In his chapter on apartheid in South Africa, Martin Murray argues that the national question in South Africa has been a bone of contention among political organizations committed to eliminating racial oppression and class exploitation in that country. Despite common opposition to white minority rule, he writes, there is no shared agreement over what defines the "nation" among such political organizations as the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, and the Pan Africanist Congress. Indeed, Murray concludes that the definition of the national question prefigures the "imagined community" of postapartheid South Africa.

In Chapter 4, Dipankar Gupta takes up the question of the interplay of religion, ethnic conflict, and national politics in India, and particularly the role of the central state in confronting linguistic, nativist, and regional movements to keep the Indian nation-state intact. Gupta argues that the

acceptance of cultural and linguistic differences is the enduring basis on which Indian politics is played out and that the political center both symbolizes and actively demonstrates the unity, coherence, and sovereignty of the Indian nation-state. But while the center projects itself as protector of cultural, religious, and linguistic differences, it increasingly uses ethnic conflict to maintain its hold on power. Thus, the center increasingly ethnicizes secular regional demands as a way of striking back at those who challenge its entrenched rule. But, paradoxically, when it does so it confronts the Indian union with its gravest threat.

The role of women in Third World national liberation struggles, a role seldom examined in great detail in studies of nationalism and national movements in the Third World, is taken up by M. Bahati Kuumba and Ona Alston Dosunmu in Chapter 5. Focusing on national liberation struggles in Southern Africa, the Middle East, North Africa, and Central America and on the role of women in resistance movements in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Algeria, Palestine, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, Kuumba and Alston Dosunmu find that such struggles, where questions of class, gender, and nation intersect, provide a mixed picture of progress for women but that in general, rather than causing women to submerge their own struggle, struggles for national liberation lead to improved status for women. This status, of course, may continue to improve or may deteriorate after independence is achieved: women have made limited gains in struggles led by bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist forces, such as in Algeria, but have achieved greater progress in movements and nations led by working-class and peasant masses relying on broad popular support, as in South Africa, Angola, and Nicaragua. The form and content of women's participation in national liberation struggles, Kuumba and Alston Dosunmu conclude, are linked to the imperatives of the struggle. In turn, the depth and breadth of female participation in the national struggle has a direct bearing on women's role in nation building after independence is achieved. Likewise, the degree to which the new government goes beyond nationalism to pursue the alleviation of class, ethnic, and gender divisions has great bearing on the subsequent status of women, and the degree to which women participate fully in the various phases of national liberation and reconstruction is an indicator of the movement's commitment to equality for all the people.

In his chapter on Puerto Rican nationalism, Juan Manuel Carrión chronicles the nationalist challenge and the colonial response during the Great Depression and the Second World War, as well as the resurgence of nationalism in the postwar period of U.S. hegemony over the island. Carrión next examines the upsurge in the struggle for independence in Puerto Rico in the

1960s and 1970s and assesses the prospects for self-determination during this period. He concludes his chapter by analyzing the Puerto Rican national movement during the 1980s and provides some important insights on the future of Puerto Rican nationalism.

Next, in Chapter 7, Martin Orr examines Irish nationalism and the struggle against British domination in Northern Ireland. He argues that this conflict is fundamentally the result of eight hundred years of British imperialism. In opposition to this attempt at domination, the Irish have mobilized in a variety of nationalist movements, and every British attempt to strengthen its rule has had the contradictory effect of eroding it. Now, mired in an urban guerrilla war that it continues to characterize as criminal terrorism, Britain is looking for a way out. It would not be surprising, Orr concludes, if these efforts continue to have contradictory results—nourishing both reactionary loyalism and militant nationalism.

In Chapter 8, on Basque nationalism, Francisco Letamendía traces the history of the Basque national movement during this century, especially since the Spanish Civil War, and its recent development as a reaction to the Francoist state, a repressive fascist state that attempted to crush the Basque national movement through its military and police apparatus. Letamendía points out that the formation of numerous national political organizations during the Franco years actually contributed to a resurgence of national consciousness, which in turn led, in the late 1950s, to the founding of a number of radical organizations that took up armed struggle against the central state. Prominent among them was ETA (*Euskadi ta Askatasuna*, or Basque Country and Freedom). To counter the increasingly violent situation, which had put the Basque region on the national political agenda in Spain, ETA underwent an intense internal debate as to the appropriate response to the Spanish state and, in the process, split internally into what became known as its political and military wings. Subsequent to this split in the mid-1970s, new political organizations sprang up once again and developed a unified approach through a new socialist coalition, the Patriotic Socialist Coordinating Council (KAS). Under the current situation in the mid-1990s, Letamendía believes that the armed struggle has become counterproductive; its persistence, he feels, is dividing Basque society and thereby defeating its own purpose of building a unified national movement to achieve self-determination for the Basque people.

In Chapter 9, Gilles Bourque examines the origins of Quebec nationalism and the current situation in Quebec, where the independence movement has been developing within the framework of the transformation of the capitalist economy and state in Canada during the twentieth century. Bourque points out that Canadian federalism has reproduced a multiplicity of contra-

dictions linked on the one hand to the national question (the struggles of Acadians, Métis, Quebecois, and Amerindians) and on the other hand to the regional question (the demands made by the western provinces and the Maritimes on Central Canada—Ontario and Quebec). Even if the struggle of the Quebec national movement is the only one capable of breaking up Canada, Bourque adds, one cannot analyze the current situation as a simple conflict between two monolithic blocs, for it is the complex relationship between these national and regional conflicts that jeopardizes a compromise that would satisfy Quebec's demands. The acceleration of capitalist development after the Second World War and the establishment of the welfare state in the 1960s, Bourque argues, imposed an important reorganization of relations between the different social forces within Quebec society and thus created a new type of national movement. These dual phenomena provoked the marginalization of the Catholic Church and the traditional elites. The rise of the new middle class and of new Quebec capitalism, as well as the political coalescing of the working class, created a new, and more aggressive, type of national movement. The Quebec state, which had become resolutely interventionist, thus appeared as an instrument of national liberation, first for the new middle class, from which the state bureaucracy was primarily recruited, and then for certain members of the capitalist class, who saw in it the promotion of Quebec capitalism. After a weakening of the movement during the 1980s, Bourque concludes, one can now see a spectacular rise of the sovereigntist option. The inability of the Canadian state to satisfy even the most minimal of Quebec's demands and the failure of conservative government policies during the 1980s have recharged the movement and enlarged its grassroots base.

In Chapter 10, Levon Chorbajian argues that the national question in the former USSR, more so than in Eastern Europe, was at the cutting edge of change and led to the ultimate failure of the Gorbachev reforms by the late 1980s. Chorbajian provides an examination of Soviet nationality policy and its impact on three important regions: the Transcaucasus, the Baltics, and Central Asia. Under the centralized Soviet system, Chorbajian writes, nationalism became the vehicle for the expression not only of strictly national issues but also of a host of economic, political, and ecological concerns that took on an ethnic hue. Some of these concerns, he adds, may prove as troublesome to now-independent Commonwealth states as they were in the former Soviet Union. Without communism or a centralized state authority as a scapegoat, nationalism and ethnic conflicts in the former Soviet republics, Chorbajian concludes, will inevitably give way to growing class struggles in the years ahead.

Gerard Postiglione examines China's nationalities policy and its impli-

cations for modernization in Chapter 11. He identifies the basic dimensions of China's modernization effort as social equality, economic development, cultural autonomy, and national integration. He provides an overview of the national minority situation by focusing on population characteristics, group identification, regional variations, intergroup relations and migration, religious traditions, language, and cross-border nationalities. He also examines aspects of the Chinese constitution and the specific provisions within it for regional autonomy. Postiglione uses the cases of Tibet and Xinjiang province as a basis for discussing China's national minorities situation. Finally, he brings out various aspects of the Chinese case in order to situate China's nationalities policy and relations between its national minorities in a social-ist context.

Finally, in her chapter on the former Yugoslavia, Jasminka Udovički provides a comprehensive political history of relations between the various nationalities and examines the sources of the national and ethnic conflicts that plunged Yugoslavia into civil war in the 1990s. Udovički argues that ethnic divisions in the former Yugoslavia have their roots in the history of colonization and foreign domination but that these forces of separation and conflict were coupled with and tempered by a deeply rooted sense of a common Slavic origin and language that served as a powerful force of amalgamation. The shared experience of World War II fratricide, for example, functioned on two levels: on the one hand, as a powerful agent of mistrust and fragmentation, and on the other as an agent of unification. The only possible way out of total mutual annihilation, she writes, lay in national reconciliation. Thus, the apocalypse carried within itself an undercurrent of rebirth. Conflict between the various groups was held in check under the Tito regime in the postwar period when Yugoslavia became a federation of six autonomous republics. And for nearly fifty years, the various ethnic groups lived in peace and harmony in the new federal state. Now, with the dissolution of Yugoslavia into several separate states, the various national, ethnic, and religious groups are engaging in a war for territories. Peace and national coexistence and self-determination cannot be obtained by the international community, Udovički concludes, but hinge on the readiness of the various peoples involved to support a society that commits itself to protecting the rights of all national and ethnic minorities.

Together the twelve chapters in this book provide an in-depth analysis of some of the most important national movements and struggles for national self-determination around the world. It is hoped that the analyses provided in these pages on the nature and dynamics of various forms of nationalism, ethnic conflict, and national struggles will lead interested read-

ers to examine other such cases of struggles that movements for national liberation have waged during the course of the twentieth century.

NOTES

1. For a detailed theoretical discussion on the rise of nationalism and national movements historically and today, see James M. Blaut, *The National Question: Decolonising the Theory of Nationalism* (London: Zed Books, 1987).

2. For an analysis of the internationalization of capital and its implications in the twentieth century, see Berch Berberoglu, *The Internationalization of Capital: Imperialism and Capitalist Development on a World Scale* (New York: Praeger, 1987).

3. See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848* (New York: World, 1962), chap. 7, and Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* (New York: Scribner's, 1975), chap. 5.

4. For a discussion of the theory of nationalism and the various nationalist movements, see Horace B. Davis, *Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978). Also see Davis's earlier study, *Nationalism and Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967).

5. 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: William Morrow, 1972).

6. A number of these cases are examined at length in various essays included in this book.

7. See Albert Szymanski, *Class Structure: A Critical Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1983), pp. 5-7, 76-84.

8. James Blaut similarly argues that national liberation struggles against imperialism at the international level are, in essence, class struggles. See Blaut, *The National Question*, pp. 176-95.

9. For an extended analysis of various theoretical positions on debates on the theory of nationalism and the national question, see Blaut, *The National Question*, esp. chap. 1.

10. Given the focus of this book on struggles for national liberation and self-determination, no attempt is made here to deal with reactionary nationalist movements, such as fascism.

11. Szymanski, *Class Structure*, p. 430.

12. *Ibid.* (emphasis in original).

13. *Ibid.* (emphasis in original).

14. See Berberoglu, *The Internationalization of Capital*, chap. 7. Also see Berch Berberoglu, *Political Sociology: A Comparative/Historical Approach* (New York: General Hall, 1990), chap. 2.

15. *Ibid.* See also Blaut, *The National Question*, pp. 23, 46, 123.

16. Blaut, *The National Question*, pp. 4, 46.

17. Albert Szymanski, *The Logic of Imperialism* (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 426-29, 537.

18. See Berch Berberoglu, "Nationalism and Ethnic Rivalry in the Early Twentieth Century," *Nature, Society, and Thought* 4, no. 3 (1991): 269-73.

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