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show that despite President Clinton's problems on health care, most Americans favor government action to guarantee coverage for everyone. Voters may criticize government in the abstract, but they will turn to it to keep the air and water clean, the streets safe, and poor children fed.

Similarly, people value the communities that traditionalist conservatives so extol, but they also recognize that such communities can be disrupted or destroyed by economic change. So, in the name of conservative values, those who treasure these communities often turn to the state for protection or relief. What the moderate Left has always understood—and what conservatives usually try to deny—is that capitalism, in effect, socializes its problems. The state steps in to resolve difficulties

that capitalism can't. Where there is no money to be made, capitalism moves on. Government necessarily cleans up after it.

Political debate in the United States would certainly be more bracing if conservatives followed Frum's formula, for he proposes a clear contest between those who believe in government and those who do not. But I doubt very much that a majority will rally to his cause. Even among conservatives, as Frum well knows, the minimal state is destined to be a very hard sell.

—E. J. Dionne, Jr., a Wilson Center Fellow, is a columnist for the Washington Post, and is the author of *Why Americans Hate Politics* (1991).

## The Revenge of Nationalism

**BLOOD AND BELONGING:** Journeys into the New Nationalism. By Michael Ignatieff. Farrar, Strauss. 263 pp. \$21

**THE FUTURE OF GERMAN DEMOCRACY.** Ed. by Robert Gerald Livingston and Volkmar Sander. Continuum. 168 pp. \$19.95

**CIVIL WARS:** From L.A. to Bosnia. By Hans Magnus Enzensberger. New Press. 144 pp. \$18

Until recently, it was fashionable in many academic and some political circles to assert that nationalism was finished. Indeed, for nearly two decades, a number of influential historians and social scientists on both sides of the Atlantic argued that nations had precious little to do with ethnicity or territory, that the symbols of nationhood—stamps, flags, national anthems—were old stage props dusted off for use in the

"invention of tradition." A nation was really little more than a social "construct" of fairly recent manufacture, an "imagined community" that was now destined for the rubbish heap of history. What the future held in store was a global community in which civilized, multiethnic societies would peacefully coexist.

The post-Cold War era has therefore come as something of a shock. To be sure, the most distinguishing characteristic of the new world disorder has been the disintegration of nation-states. But the process has in no way resembled what the imagined-communities scholars imagined. From Bosnia to Somalia, territorial demands have led to ethnic cleansing and mass refugee flights—hardly a basis for global harmony and peace. Even the dream of a single, federalist Europe run by bureaucrats sitting in Brussels has been shattered by

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an upsurge in nationalist sentiment and the persistence of distinct cultural identities. In the old Soviet Union, the Communists had attempted to create a supranational state based on ideology, a vast bureaucracy, flags, war films, and parades. But beneath the veneer of Soviet brotherhood, the old nationalist passions continued to smolder. Their decisive eruption in 1989 perhaps best demonstrated the flimsiness of the social-construction theories: Nations do seem to have old and enduring connections with an ethnic (or tribal) identity, and the thirst for national self-determination cannot easily be quenched.

The return of nationalism has triggered a fresh series of studies whose authors seek to understand the phenomenon rather than to deny its existence. One of the most probing and sprightly works to date is Michael Ignatieff's *Blood and Belonging*. Ignatieff, the author of *The Russian Album* (1987), among other books, is a keen observer and graceful writer. The work at hand, which is based on a series on nationalism produced for the BBC, combines historical analysis with an account of his travels to Croatia, Germany, Ukraine, Quebec, Kurdistan, and Northern Ireland. A self-described cosmopolitan who grew up in Canada, studied in the United States, and taught in Britain, Ignatieff aims neither to decry nor to praise nationalism. Instead, he seeks to dissect it. Unfortunately, as his book progresses, Ignatieff becomes mired in his own artificial distinctions and contradictory definitions.

The birth of the nation-state is often traced to the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War. The treaty recognized the right of rulers to determine the religion of their subjects and marked the rise of a new European state system dominated by France, England, Austria, and Russia. Religious wars were replaced by wars over the balance of power among nations.

In the 19th century, irredentist movements sprang up all over Europe, most powerfully among the various German-speaking statelets and principalities. After Napoleon's invasion and occupation of these lands in 1806,

philosopher Johann Fichte and other German writers began to espouse the notion of a cultural and ethnic nation—the nation as representing the *Volk*. As Ignatieff notes, "All the peoples of 19th-century Europe under imperial subjection—the Poles and Baltic peoples under the Russian yoke, the Serbs under Turkish rule, the Croats under the Hapsburgs—looked to the German ideal of ethnic nationalism when articulating their right to self-determination." When Germany, under Prussian guidance, achieved unification in 1871 and rose to world power status, "it was a demonstration of the success of ethnic nationalism to the rest of Europe."

**T**hough Ignatieff does not mention it, Germany's peaceful reunification in 1989 again served as a model for some of the Balkan peoples. The Slovenians and Croats, whose independence Germany recognized in 1991, were partly emulating Germany's own claim to self-determination. Moreover, as Ignatieff does make clear, the viciousness of the Serb war against the Slovenians, Croats, and Bosnians is not the product of a warped conscience peculiar to the Balkans but "stems in part from a pathetic longing to be good Europeans—that is, to import the West's murderous ideological fashions."

But Germany's quest for self-determination remains troubled. While the fall of the Berlin Wall resolved the country's territorial status, it reopened the question of a German identity. In the essays collected in *The Future of German Democracy*, authors ranging from the former chancellor Helmut Schmidt to the novelist Günter Grass attempt to tackle this question. Many of the essays stress that the unexpected collapse of the East German regime helps to account for the political turbulence Germany is now experiencing. West Germans—not East Germans—had become habituated to partition. "Americans hardly noticed at the time that among many [West] Germans . . . enthusiasm for unity was very faint," observes Robert Gerald Livingston, director of the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies.

As a consequence, some former East Ger-

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mans feel the need to assert their Germanness. As historian Heinrich-August Winkler describes it, "Aggressive behavior towards foreigners and especially the socially weakest among them" is a way of proving that one is a real German. But the problem is even more complex. All Germans will have to come to terms with the idea of living in a multicultural society. The leading Christian Democratic politician, Heiner Geissler, is on the mark when he declares that "the people in Germany will have to be told in the future they will be living with more, not fewer, foreigners." The challenge for the Germans, as for other European peoples, is to reconcile traditional notions of nationhood with the influx of refugees and immigrants from Africa and Asia.

The far greater challenge, though, lies in grappling with ethnic upsurges in places such as Bosnia and Rwanda. For Ignatieff, the key is to distinguish between ethnic and civic nationalism. Like Harvard University sociologist Liah Greenfeld, who introduced this distinction in her monumental book *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (1992), Ignatieff cites Britain as the first country to develop a healthy and sound civic nationalism. Ignatieff concedes that Britain was dominated by the English but stresses that it successfully combined other traditions—Welsh, Scottish, if not Irish—with the development of democratic institutions. Most important, Britain, unlike Germany, never made blood and ethnicity the criterion for legal citizenship. Under civic nationalism, says Ignatieff, citizenship is based on sworn loyalty to a constitution, and differences between individuals are respected. Ethnic nationalism, by contrast, insists on the link between ethnicity and nation, and on the exclusion of outsiders. Ironically, ethnic nationalism often takes its most virulent form when the differences between two peoples are most minute.

Yet this division between ethnic and civic nationalism is a bit too tidy. In reality, the two often shade into each other. Britain and other civic nations are scarcely immune to the ethnic tensions that trouble other societies. Canada, for example, represents Ignatieff's perfect civic nation: It allows its minorities a wide assortment of rights through a democratic structure. In Quebec,

French is spoken everywhere; not even signs can display in English. Moreover, alone among Canadian provinces, Quebec has the right to recruit only French-speaking immigrants. Yet the Quebecois still insist on sovereignty. "A state is the only way to protect the identity of a people, you know," says Claude Beland, the leading Quebec banker. "Identity I define as the harmony between your values and your actions." Quebec highlights the insatiable character of nationalism: It perceives threats where none exist.

In truth, Ignatieff's notion of civic nationalism is something of an oxymoron. No real nationalist can be bought off with an amorphous promise of democratic rights. Oppressed people such as the Kurds scarcely know what the term means. And why should they? Even the United States is not a perfect civic nation. Despite its universalist claims, the United States was led from its origins until the 1960s by a largely Anglo-Saxon elite. The ideal of the melting pot was not to create a multicultural society, but rather to integrate immigrants into the existing Anglo-Saxon American culture. As the wars over multiculturalism and affirmative action indicate, the breakdown of Anglo-American dominance triggered a new struggle over the ethnic definition of the United States that remains unresolved.

**I**n fact, as Hans Magnus Enzensberger observes in *Civil Wars*, the same bloody impulses that have manifested themselves in Bosnia are turning up in Los Angeles. Enzensberger, Germany's leading literary and political critic, observes at the outset of his book that most varieties of modern nationalism have to be distinguished from their 19th-century predecessor. Most nationalists of our time more closely resemble armed mobs than heroic guerrillas. Their goal is not to create a nation but to revel in sheer destruction. In a horrifying vignette, Enzensberger tells of an armed band destroying a hospital in Mogadishu. Far from being a military operation, it was wanton violence. The perpetrators slit open beds and smashed x-ray machines and oxygen generators, even though they knew that they might need the facilities them-

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selves within hours. No matter. "In the collective running amok," notes Enzensberger, "the concept of 'future' disappears."

Unfortunately, the future seems to hold a good deal more such "nationalism" in store. The most recent manifestation came in Rwanda, where the Hutus slaughtered the Tutsis while the Western nations wrung their hands. Indeed, these ethnic upsurges pose a particular challenge to the West. The confusion was perhaps best illustrated when, toward the end of the Cold War, the United States actively sought to perpetuate the existence of the Soviet empire for fear of East European nationalist desires. President George Bush went to rather extensive lengths to prop up Mikhail Gorbachev's ailing regime, and his recognition of the new Baltic countries was notably reluctant. The Baltic states, however, did not represent ethnic groups bent on exterminating one another; they were countries seeking to recover, not establish, their right to self-determination.

The question of national self-determination will continue to present an all-but-intractable problem for the West, both in domestic politics and in international dealings. Even something that looks as innocent as multiculturalism has its own explosive potential for separating communities rather than creating broad ethnic harmonies. The problems are no less complex in non-Western countries. Per-

haps instead of drawing artificial distinctions between civic and ethnic nationalism, scholars might usefully draw contrasts among three varieties of ethnic nationalism: the one that represents legitimate aspirations for independence in response to oppression by an imperial power (as in the case of the Baltic states), the one that represents illegitimate claims based on spurious grievances (see Quebec), and the one that represents nothing more than warlords bent on ethnic cleansing (as in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia). The first should be encouraged, the second should be shunned, and the last should not even be dignified with the label "nationalist."

Given the horrors of Rwanda and Bosnia, it is understandable that the authors of these three books view the concept of nationalism with apprehension. But in finally taking nationalism seriously, these writers risk making the same mistake as the imagined-community scholars. Both sides ignore the positive aspect of nationalism. The Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Hungary—these represent the successes of nationalism. They provide room for a cautious optimism.

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## Beyond Multiculturalism

**DICTATORSHIP OF VIRTUE:** Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future. By Richard Bernstein. Knopf. 367 pp. \$25

New York Times correspondent Richard Bernstein, who at one time reported from France, believes that America's current battles over multicultur-

alism are "the *dérâpage* [rough translation: the "slippery slope"] of the civil rights movement." Just as Robespierre's insistence on virtue led to terror, Bernstein cautions, so the campaign to root out racism and sexism in school is the first step on the road to Maoist-style thought control. (Bernstein also worked in China.)