

THE PROBLEMS OF NATIONALISM IN EASTERN EUROPE  
PAST AND PRESENT

Peter Sugar  
Professor of History  
University of Washington

Defying the proclaimed ideological similarity of the various governments of Eastern Europe (except Greece) during the last 40 years, nationalism is the strongest single motivating force today in that region. Nationalism has forced those in power to make certain ideological concessions giving birth to a basic contradiction even in terminology, national communism. Still, a major issue for the leaders of the various parties and states remains unresolved: the people's primary loyalty has little if anything to do with the world view which they are supposed to accept as the sole valid motivating force for their behavior.

Obviously, the manifestations of nationalism in Eastern Europe today are different from those visible at the end of the Second World War, and deviate even more markedly from still earlier versions. Nationalism in Eastern Europe has its own history which must be understood when its present day varieties are analyzed. Therefore, a summary of this history will precede the discussion of today's problems.

For the purpose of this paper, Eastern Europe is defined as that part of the continent which lies east of the German and Italian speaking people and west of what were/are the borders of Russia/Soviet Union. This definition, which I have used for thirty years, is justified by the fact that it deals with people whose nationalism developed first after that of those living west of them; they were the first who had to adjust this new idea to local conditions and circumstances. This fact alone makes the study of nationalism in Eastern Europe important. Non-Europeans, as well as Europeans and Americans dealing with non-European lands and people, usually compare the nationalism and institutions of the so-called Third World to those of West European nations and states, in most cases with unsatisfactory results. A better knowledge of the East European varieties would make the comparisons much more fruitful because the East Europeans and all non-Europeans did not simply imitate the West Europeans, but everywhere created their own variations on the basic imported themes. More can be learned by people all over the world from the East Europeans' successes and failures than from those of the West Europeans.

## Defining Nationalism

If the definition of Eastern Europe is fairly easy to present and justify, the same cannot be said about the definition of nationalism. As we all know, nobody has, so far, produced a definition of nationalism which has gained universal acceptance. It is relatively easy to fix a time frame for the existence of modern nationalism which is different from patriotism and all other feelings uniting people that go beyond the limits of the family. Boyd C. Shafer was only one of the many scholars to emphasize that "any use of the word nationalism to describe historical happenings before the eighteenth century is probably anachronistic."<sup>1</sup> He was referring to eighteenth-century West European events. Why Shafer believed this is indicated by Ernest Gellner's clear statement that "nationalism as a phenomenon, not as a doctrine presented by the nationalists, is inherent in a certain set of social conditions; and these conditions...are the conditions of our time."<sup>2</sup> Gellner's statement has timeless and universal validity because under the conditions of our time he understands the urbanized, industrialized societies whose daily life is regulated by a powerful central administration (democratic or undemocratic) irrespective of when and where a given political unit reaches this stage in its development.

Gellner refers to nationalism as a doctrine and as a phenomenon. As a phenomenon, he ties it to the industrial revolution, but he also indicates that for some people, the nationalists, it has been a doctrine. Some scholars agree with him, and try to define the concept. For example, Elie Kedourie writes that "nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own."<sup>3</sup> Others see nationalism as a "historical process,"<sup>4</sup> "a state of mind,"<sup>5</sup> or "a product of political, economic, social, and intellectual factors at a certain stage in history,...a condition of mind, feeling and sentiment."<sup>6</sup> The one thing all these definitions have in common is the historical moment at which nationalism was born in Western Europe.

Nations, of course, existed before nationalism and can exist without it.<sup>7</sup> Nations are brought together by what I, among others, have called the "natural," practically "inborn" feelings that everyone has for those fellow humans with whom he or she associates all his or her life and to whom, therefore, he or she feels attracted.<sup>8</sup> Nationalism is "not something original or natural to man, like his physique or family,"<sup>9</sup> according to Anthony D. Smith. It is "inscribed neither in the nature of things, nor in the hearts of men," agrees Gellner. Nationalism, I have argued in another study, is "acquired" by people, and each generation has to learn it anew.<sup>11</sup> What is learned depends to a considerable extent on the teacher. Thus nationalism can and

does mean different things in different countries at the same moment in history, or it can and does change its focus in a given country through time.

Somebody had to be the first teacher. This teacher or rather teachers were members of the emerging industrial bourgeoisie in what Hugh Seton-Watson described as the Old Continuous Nations.<sup>12</sup> These are the same nations, those of Western Europe, that shaped what Gellner calls the "conditions of our time." The story is too well known to require repetition. What might be worth stressing is this new social force, the bourgeoisie, did not try to replace the old ruling class, the nobility, but instead wanted to eliminate its privileges and create equal opportunities for itself to gain the same prominence politically that they had already acquired economically. The bourgeoisie could not claim equal opportunity just for itself, as this would have simply increased the number and kinds of the very privileges it attacked. On the other hand, it could not claim equal political rights for everybody, a universalist approach that first appeared in the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizens issued by the revolutionary French National Assembly on August 26, 1789. The group for which the emerging middle class claimed to speak, for whom it wanted equality, were the members of their "old continuous nations" which had developed over centuries and to them were "natural," well known entities. When they claimed liberties for the nation, they politicized that nation by claiming equal political, social, and economic rights for its members. In fact they tried to conquer government in the name of the nations. When they did this, they invented nationalism, popular sovereignty, modern democracy, classical liberalism, the concepts of human and civil rights -- to mention only the most important results of their gradually successful struggle. What they tried to create were the preconditions favorable for the development of the "conditions of our time." In this sense the Marxists are correct when they say that nationalism appeared when the industrial bourgeoisie acquired an increasing role in government. Yet, even this short summary of their actions proves that the Marxist interpretation of the bourgeoisie's motives is historically incorrect. Bourgeois nationalism, Lenin wrote, "drugs the minds of the workers, stultifies and disunites them in order that the bourgeoisie may lead them by the halter."<sup>13</sup> Stalin agreed with this interpretation when he wrote that the bourgeoisie "appeals to its 'native folk' and begins to shout about the 'fatherland' claiming that its own cause is the cause of the nation as a whole. It recruits itself an army from among its 'countrymen'...."<sup>14</sup> Both present nationalism as something invented by the middle class simply as a tool to dominate the workers, as a modern opiate for the masses to join the old one, religion, in keeping the lower classes in bondage. This interpretation could possibly deserve serious consideration had nationalism appeared on the political scene of the "old continuous" or any other nation after the

bourgeoisie's achievement of political power and after the emergence of consciously class-related differences between various segments of society. This was not the case. In another study, Ernest Gellner stresses this point very sharply when he states that "nationalism is not class conflict that has failed to reach consciousness, but class conflict is national conflict that has failed to take off for lack of deep cultural, symbolic differentiae."<sup>15</sup> He sees class conflict, maybe even Marxism, as nothing more than frustrated nationalism!

The preceding remarks contain nothing unfamiliar to any, even superficial, student of nationalism. But I thought that making those remarks was necessary because their application to Eastern Europe demands that they be clearly kept in mind.

If nationalism must be inculcated into each new generation, if its acquisition by individuals as a doctrine, guide to action, or feeling, and so on, is the result of education, then much attention must be paid to the educator. Today, he or she is usually the teacher, on all levels of formal education, sharing with students something in which he or she usually believes often without knowing that it is the approved version of nationalism serving to legitimate the current regime. More will be said later about this role of formal education in propagating accepted forms of nationalism. The first propagators, teachers, of nationalist views were not formal, trained educators. In the lands inhabited by the "old continuous nations" they were the politically active educated members of the new industrial middle class, the first group of people fitting our present-day definition of the intelligentsia.

### The Beginnings

In Eastern Europe around 1800 there was no industrial middle class, no intelligentsia. There were no national governments of states with which "nations" could identify and which, therefore, could be taken over by them. In many cases even national self-awareness was just beginning. Nations did, indeed, exist, but to what extent the people belonging to them were cognizant of their existence can be debated. With the exception of some relatively small areas in Bohemia and Silesia, even rudimentary beginnings of industrialization were lacking. Yet everywhere in Eastern Europe there were people who were dissatisfied with their position in society, who wanted to alter the rules and regulations which kept them in these positions, and who were looking for new arguments to bring about the desired changes. These people imported nationalism to Eastern Europe. It was a "new tool" which had proved effective in Western Europe and which they could use to build the social order of their dreams. These importers of nationalism had to be educated to read the literature in English, French, and German and to learn about events in the West. They also had to be ready to become politically active; they were the first to act as the East

European intelligentsia. They came from practically all social and professional strata, but not from the practically nonexistent middle class. Therefore, their goals, methods, aims, and philosophy had to be and were very different from those of the nationalists whose works they read and whose teachings they wished to apply to their own people and homelands. Nationalism, therefore, could not be adopted, it had to be adapted.

Who the adaptors were determined not only the immediate, original definitions of what was demanded by whom and for whom, but it also set a "tone," for the various emerging East European nationalisms, sometimes for decades, sometimes for more than a century. Nearly twenty years ago, I differentiated between four types of East European nationalism basing my definitions on the single criterion of the origin, programs, and lasting effects of these early East European nationalists.<sup>16</sup> I will not repeat my arguments and descriptions, but will simply list the labels I used because, at least to some extent, they are self-explanatory. These were bourgeois, aristocratic, popular, and bureaucratic nationalism. In the first of these four varieties I placed only the Czechs; the Poles and Hungarians were my examples of the second; the Serbs and Bulgars illustrated the third variety; while the bureaucratic nationalists were found among the Turks, Greeks, and Romanians. I believe that what I did two decades ago still makes sense and will use some of these labels later, but today I wish to look at East European nationalism from a different point of view.

Irrespective of the time when the first East European nationalists became active -- the time lag between the earliest in one country and the latest in another can be as much as a century using certain criteria -- and, irrespective of the type of nationalism, 1848 roughly marked the end of the first period of nationalist activity in Eastern Europe. Disregarding numerous and important local variations, the East European nationalism in this first period of its existence was ideologically adaptive, romantic, nation- and myth-building, historical, and optimistic. Language reformers, historians, poets, and occasionally clergymen were the main propagators of this nationalism. Their aim was to make their respective nations conscious of their existence, proud of their past, and confident that the unsatisfactory present could and would be transformed into a future as glorious as the past. If the language was too backward to express these feelings using the modern vocabulary of nationalism and similar imported concepts, it had to be altered. If the past had not been glorious enough to justify the belief in a great future, it had to be recreated. In the Balkans hajduks, martalose, and so on -- whatever the label -- had to be recast as nationalistic freedom fighters.<sup>17</sup> When national heroes of the required number or stature were missing, they had to be created.<sup>18</sup> Where historical figures could be endowed with actions or ideas that suited the early nationalists, this too was done.<sup>19</sup> Even historians of major

stature made "errors" consciously to serve the nationalist cause.<sup>20</sup>

The combination of the activities just listed with the type of person who undertook them produced an almost endless variety of early East European nationalisms. All of them were, obviously, different from the "model" which, at least in theory, the East Europeans were introducing in their lands. I used the rather neutral word, lands, on purpose because to speak of countries, let alone governments, would be misleading. The West European nationalists of the old continuous nations had not only nations, but also states of their own whose governments they wanted to take over, or at least reform, preaching popular sovereignty. The East Europeans not only had to create conscious nations, but also had to revive and/or create from scratch states in territories which, around 1800, were parts of the dynastic empires of the Romanovs, Ottomans, and Habsburgs. The Poles could also list the Hohenzollerns among their masters. Speaking of who should govern, how, and in the name of whom was secondary when first nations and then states had to be created.

During this first phase when all nations faced identical tasks though not necessarily at the same time, East European nationalism was more historical in its approach than what Herder or Rousseau had preached in the West, but it was, nevertheless, mainly cultural nationalism which did not see other nationals as enemies. The second period, roughly 1848 to 1914, moved away from this approach. This first variant of East European nationalism was basically nation- and myth-building.

The revolutionary year of 1848 has been studied repeatedly and in great detail as an all-European phenomenon and by various nations as an important event in their histories.<sup>21</sup> Its importance for the history of East European nationalism, although it has been recognized, still awaits a good detailed study. What happened is the easiest to demonstrate in the lands of the Habsburgs. The 1846 events in Galicia created a sharp distinction between Poles and Ukrainians. This distinction was not solved by the Viennese government's establishment of the province of Bukovina as an independent Crownland three years later, and continued to deteriorate practically to the present day. In 1848 not only did the Croats, Slovaks, Serbs, and Romanians living in the lands of the Crown of St. Steven fight against the Hungarians, but their struggle created divisions which became worse and worse as time passed and before long also involved the Romanian and Serb states. While before 1848 serfs agreed at least on their common grievances, the free peasants of the post-revolutionary period remembered that they had fought each other in 1848 and were unable to work together to solve their remaining, by no means unimportant, common problems. Let us note also that the first Pan-Slav Congress was held in 1848 in Prague, that it was the first of the numerous Pan- movements, and

that it represented the realization of several small nations that they were not strong enough to fight successfully for a state of their own and, therefore, they tried to do it as a group, a new super-nation.<sup>22</sup> Finally, 1848 marked the defeat of classical liberalism and the emergence of a hard-nosed, power-grabbing approach to politics which we today label Realpolitik. To amass enough power for the next round of the struggle became more important than to justify the struggle ideologically.

#### The Watershed of 1848

Not surprisingly, all these important changes altered the nature of East European nationalism also. The leadership did not change too drastically and still represented the four approaches I described twenty years ago, but their aims and -- most important -- their methods had little in common with those of earlier periods. If nothing else, then the months of fighting concluded the phase of conscious nation-building. The actions of the Habsburgs and Romanovs made it clear that absolutism had to be ended and replaced by constitutional, national governments representing the will of the nations. In short, with some delay in relation to the West, the East European nationalists were now ready to fight for governments which would express the will of the sovereign people. They could not simply take over the running of affairs in Vienna or St. Petersburg because these cities were not capitals of old continuous nations like London, Paris, and, in a sense, even Berlin.

The nationalists' first task was to gain recognition for their nation's claim to sovereignty over a well-defined territory. Every nation had its claims and could justify them on historic, cultural, or ethnographic grounds. The problem was -- as is well known -- that these claims, justified or imaginary, overlapped in practically every respect. Was Bohemia a German or a Czech land? Was Transylvania Hungarian or Romanian? Was the Ukraine historically Polish, Russian, or Ukrainian? What were the borders of the Croatian Triune Kingdom? What lands were Bulgarian, which were Serb or Greek? These and many similar questions were given a great variety of answers based on all kinds of arguments and evidence. Of course, arguments presented by a group favoring them were considered to be "irrefutably" correct; those which presented different interpretations were just as "obviously" not only false but designed to rob those who had the truth of territory and independence.

Thus, between 1848 and 1914 nationalists faced two enemies: the dynastic empires from which they wanted to obtain at least autonomous self-rule and all the other people who shared their goals but also claimed some of the same territories, and the same determination to be recognized as sovereign over them. What emerged was something like a quod licet Jovi non licet bovi attitude of denying others the rights, privileges, and even the validity of dreams perfectly justified for one's own nation. It

took for granted that one's own nation was "the chosen people," the most talented and able, and therefore the one destined for regional leadership. This attitude can be seen in the writings of politicians in power, for example Ilija Garasanin; of those who had lost power, men like Lajos Kossuth; and even of those who hoped to come to power one day, as did Roman Dmowski. The Serbian statesman's well-known Nacertanije, Kossuth's plans of 1850 and 1862 for the creation of a Danubian Federation, and the young Pole's early thoughts recognized the multinationality of the region and proposed cooperation. Yet each of these men -- as well as others -- reserved for the Serbs, Hungarians, and Poles respectively the position of leadership and even the right to exclude from the hoped-for state those whom they considered undesirables.<sup>23</sup>

This exclusionary attitude created steadily sharpening hostilities and xenophobia, and also led to the emergence of modern, political anti-Semitism. The nationalism of this second period became gradually more and more chauvinistic-jingoistic, state-building, present- and future-oriented, ahistorical, pugnacious, and exclusionary. Irrespective of the four groups of tone-givers repeatedly mentioned already, all nationalisms changed to this type from the one described for the first period of East European nationalism. The overall label for this second type of East European nationalism would be state-building although in the cases of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, it was also nation-building.

#### Between the Wars

The third, shortest but by no means unimportant, period is the one between the two world wars. The well-known and always repeated result of the First World War was the elimination of empires and the creation, recreation, or drastic transformation of the states of East Central and Southeastern Europe. Equally well-known is the fact that most of these states, except Bulgaria and Hungary, were as multinational as the old empires had been, and that they either were satisfied and hoped to maintain the status quo or were revisionists who aspired to change it in accordance with their gains or losses following the war.<sup>24</sup> These changes do not need detailed discussion since they have received it repeatedly in the past. While keeping them in mind, other factors have to be stressed because they drastically influenced the nature of nationalism in the region.

The first of these factors was the emergence of important middle and working classes as well as the growth of political consciousness among the peasantry. This change was caused in part by the war economy and in part by the various governments' goals to "modernize," "industrialize," and "urbanize." Consequently, victors and vanquished alike wrote new, democratic constitutions and paid lip service to democracy, school, and land

reforms, to mention only the most important issues. These new constitutions and plans could not work. The post-1920 leaderships -- except for the short-lived Béla Kun regime in Hungary and the longer Stamboliski government in Bulgaria -- were identical with those of the pre-1914 years. They usually did not want change, and even when they did, they did not know how to bring it about. They failed to see that the new system, parliamentary democracy, was based on something which could not be legislated or defined: democracy as a way of life which grew slowly and "organically" in the old continuous nations and their direct successors, the United States, Canada, or Australia, and was understood in these places without needing explanation or definition. Democratic institutions do not work without democracy, especially not in multinational states needing drastic economic readjustment.

The resulting confusion not only brought dictatorships to the East European countries but also drastic changes in their nationalisms. By 1920 all states, whatever the ideology of the ruling party, were ostensibly nation-states or rather people's states irrespective of nationality, in which the people were sovereign and the government legitimate because it carried out the people's will. In short, the goal of the early nationalists, first in Western Europe and then increasingly in Eastern Europe, to capture the government for the nationals had been theoretically achieved. In practice, faced with the changes brought about by the war and following peace settlements and the new social and economic conditions, the still ruling old leadership did not represent the people's will. Now the game plan was reversed. It was not the nationalists who tried to conquer government, it was the government that used nationalism to win the backing of the population. Experts dealing with nationalism in the post-World War II period, concentrating mainly on the so-called Third World, have stressed this new direction as a basic characteristic of nationalism.<sup>25</sup> It is considered to be the nation-building tool used by governments to convince the population that they deserve its support. We must realize that this reversal of roles first occurred in East Europe between the wars. The argument used by the governments went roughly like this: We know what you (the population) want; we want the same things and promise honestly and in the best of faiths to deliver them to you. After all, we are your government. We realize that our promises have, so far, remained unfulfilled. This is not our fault, but that of the dirty revisionists who want to reverse the just settlements of the peace treaties, or (in the case of the losers) the fault of our dirty neighbors who not only took our land but are now oppressing our brothers. As long as they do not change their policies, we must concentrate on defense and cannot afford major changes because countries are the weakest in periods of transition. As members of "our nation" we must stick together, support the government, and work for a better future for our fellow nationals. You must suppress, or at least

postpone, your desires for higher living standards, better working conditions, etc., in the name of the national goal, and of the future. The good of the nation, which the government understands and represents perfectly, is the most important consideration.

If Ernest Gellner was right -- and I believe that he was -- when he wrote about "nationalism as a phenomenon...inherent ...[in] the conditions of our time," in the urbanized, industrialized, highly centralized society, then what happened in Eastern Europe in the interwar period is simply the artificial introduction of state-sponsored nationalism before the "conditions of our time" warranted and justified it.

Under these circumstances, interwar nationalism retained some of the features of the preceding period. It certainly continued to be chauvinistic, pugnacious, and exclusionary, but it gained some new features becoming strongly propagandistic, state-centered, self-righteous, and directed against specific enemies. Who these enemies were -- neighbors, minorities, Jews, Communists, etc., -- was something the governments believed themselves justified to determine. While echoes of the earlier period could still be heard in statements such as "the unspoiled peasant is the best representative of our national purity and character" or "the backbone of the nation through the centuries were the nobles," these were, at best, nostalgic mementoes of what seemed to some to have been the better days of the past. When populists or village explorers took such beliefs seriously, the governments moved against them labelling them unpatriotic agitators. There could be only one nation, one nationalism, one interpretation of the past, present, and future -- and it was the government that knew what it was. Therefore, one more characteristic must be added to describe the East European nationalism of this interwar period: it was not only state-centered but also officially determined.

While these features were valid for all East European versions of nationalism in the interwar period, we must recognize two different types of nationalism. The status quo nations' assertiveness was mixed with self-satisfaction and a certain amount of fear that the revisionists' challenge might find supporters.

These nations had to place the results of the peace conference beyond the debatable, and thus their nationalism became presumptively indefeasible in addition to the other characteristics already mentioned. On the other hand, the defeated nations faced the general interwar problems but in more difficult circumstances than their "enemies." They also had to combat the inferiority complex or at least the self-doubt brought on by defeat. The incessant domestic and international propaganda harping on the crimes of the Paris peace makers served

this purpose, but also increased the regimes' totalitarian tendencies. When this was reflected in their nationalisms it added to them revanchism and protofascism.

As the attempts of the East European governments to bring their countries up to the "conditions of our time" failed, as their anxieties increased, the sharpness of their attacks on all those who could be used as scapegoats increased and their definition of nation and nationalism narrowed until it shaded over into totalitarianism. In the interwar period its right-wing varieties were preferred, but once this approach to running societies was accepted, the door to all types of totalitarianism, including those of the left, was opened wide.

#### Under Communist Rule

The years of the Second World War, the first impression made by the behavior of the Soviet armies, and the differing experiences after 1945 (by 1948 at the latest) resulting everywhere in the establishment of Communist governments were demoralizing. I will disregard the usual periodization of Eastern Europe's history since 1948 and concentrate on a different classification relevant only to the development of nationalism.<sup>26</sup>

In the living memory of all those alive at the end of the Second World War, nationalism was one of the strongest, if not the strongest, ideological and emotional force in society. The new regimes, embarked on transforming the people over whom they ruled into "Communist men," preached that nationalism was one of the great falsehoods and evils of modern times, and had to be eliminated if for no other reasons than because it made difficult, if not impossible, cooperation with the fraternal people and governments within the rapidly evolving Soviet zone of influence. Yet at the same time, special care was taken to allow minorities to live their own lives by giving them autonomous regions on the Soviet model. The seeming contradiction was not noted, but the establishment of these regions did as little to eliminate nation-based antagonisms as did the preachings of the ruling parties. While anti-nationalism and internationalism were the ideals, once again promulgated by governments, nationalism made its appearance in a new form in the dispute between Stalin and Tito.

#### National Communism

Without any doubt Tito's biggest sin, in the eyes of Stalin, was refusing to take dictation from Moscow. Tito differed from the master of the Kremlin in various ways. What was wrong with Tito's approach to the reorganization of Yugoslavia and, it was hoped, the entire Balkan Peninsula into a federal state? After all, the Soviet Union too was made up of several states. The names of the Soviet Republics showed that they had been established along ethnic lines. Why was it a mistake to organize

these states too along national lines? Tito could not even be accused of having invented the principle of "Communism in one state." This was, as he reminded Stalin, one of the strongest arguments Stalin used against Trotsky.<sup>27</sup> Tito rejected the manner in which Communism was being built in the Soviet Union. His goal -- like Stalin's -- was Communism, and yet he believed that every state had to find its own means to achieve it in accordance with the economic and national realities faced by its party. Tito in fact declared that Communism had to be adjusted to local conditions thus inventing what was first called Titoism and, after he found imitators, National Communism.<sup>28</sup> By doing this, he destroyed one of Marxism's original claims to fame, its scientific character. The laws of science do not change from country to country, but, according to Tito, the laws of Marxism do. What this argument meant was extremely significant for Communists all over the world and challenged the Soviet Union's supremacy in the Communist fraternity.

In Yugoslavia, then, National Communism made its appearance when elsewhere nationalism was still considered a sin by Communists. The name given to this newism is correct. The noun is always more important than the adjective that modifies it. Tito's goal was to introduce Communism into his country, and he made the required tactical concessions without which he could not have operated -- in spite of his wartime successes -- in a multinational country. National Communism retained several characteristics of interwar nationalism. It continued to be propagandistic, self-righteous, state-centered, and officially determined, but also had a most important new feature: nationalism, was subordinated ideologically and ceased to be a goal in its own right.

#### Old Nationalisms Survive

After 1956 old-fashioned nationalism surfaced in both its late-nineteenth century and interwar forms. At first voiced rather timidly and experimentally, it became more and more vocal as time passed. Disputed lands occasionally became issues again. The Bessarabian question can be discussed in Romania today, and the Macedonian one is very much alive in Bulgaria. I do not include the Transylvanian issue and will discuss it under a different heading. The just-cited territorial questions are reminiscent of the interwar, government-directed version of East European nationalism. The Albanians in Kosovo might have a great variety of goals in mind, including a separate state within Yugoslavia or secession followed by union with Albania. Whatever they have in mind, their activities and aims are the same as were those of the state-builders in the second half of the last century.<sup>29</sup> The Slovaks have had clear goals of a similar nature ever since Czechoslovakia was established. By the mid-1980s they appear to have achieved most of them thanks to the reforms introduced during the Prague Spring in 1968-69.<sup>30</sup> Some of these old nationalisms survive everywhere in Eastern Europe, color all

other versions to some extent at least, and make cooperation of the various "fraternal states" very difficult.

### Communist Nationalism

A third version of nationalism in Eastern Europe emerged after the 1956 events in Hungary. It was first expressed in János Kádár's often quoted statement, "all those who are not against us are with us," and blossomed fully in his country. It re-emerged in the ideas of the Prague Spring in 1968 and in the Eurocommunist movement which adopted most of the Czech ideas. Its last clear expression was the Solidarity movement in Poland.<sup>31</sup> This third version is communist nationalism, which is still a mixture of two theoretically exclusive ideals, but now the nationalist element is dominant. Once again government- and party-sponsored, this approach includes a state that does anything but wither away, a government that is legitimate because it has popular support, and goals that are purely national and anything but international. It differs from the nation- and state-building varieties of the preceding two periods by being less enemy- and more homefront-centered and by retaining at least the semblance of ideological unity with the other socialist or people's republics.

Communist nationalism can easily coexist with ethno-nationalism or "new ethnicity" which is not simply an East European phenomenon, but is very much visible in this part of the world, too.<sup>32</sup> In a sense ethno-nationalism reverses the classic historical development from ethnicity to nation and finally to nationalism. It is a reaction to two developments in history. The first is what we have already discussed repeatedly, how nationalists tried to conquer and subsequently dominate government, which they considered legitimate only if it followed the nation's wishes. Also mentioned has been the fact that this horse (nation) and carriage (government) sequence has been reversed during the last sixty and especially the last forty years, that nationalism is now formulated by governments, and that the population is asked to accept as its goals those proclaimed by the men in power. Thus, in a sense, nationalism no longer legitimizes governments, instead serving as the justification for what the authorities demand from the people. The old horse does not enjoy being the cart, especially because in the modern state centralization has reached extreme proportions. The people feel that they have very little in common with the faraway, extremely impersonal, and powerful government. They might obey its orders, might even agree with the power-holders, but emotionally they do not see eye to eye.

The modern, industrial, urban environment is the second major cause for the emergence of ethno-nationalism. It has created a milieu in which the average person feels lost, depersonalized, and often insecure. Environment and state no longer produce feelings of security and belonging; "the

conditions of our time" have transformed nationalism into a governmental doctrine and left the nation behind, forcing its members to search for something else with which they can identify. This something else is "new ethnicity."

The new ethnicity differs sharply from the one that existed roughly two hundred years ago when the modern concepts of nation and nationalism developed. It is neither nation- nor state-building, and can recognize the existence of nation and state into which it wants to fit as perfectly acceptable and legitimate. The new ethnicity is not secessionist, demands only autonomy, and is often satisfied with social, cultural, and economic autonomy without also claiming political self-determination. The great debate in Yugoslavia today is between autonomists and centralizers, and the Slovaks appear to be satisfied with what they achieved some twenty years ago. Excepting some hotheads, the Slovaks, Croats, Slovenes, and so on are realists who know that in our days it is better for them, for reasons of economy and security, to live in a state which is larger and more powerful than would be one whose borders followed ethnic demarcation lines.

The new ethnicity is operative even among minorities whose numbers were diminished by the massive shifts of people after the Second World War. The Hungarians are the single largest group remaining outside their country in Eastern Europe. We never hear of those living in the Vojvodina because the Yugoslav authorities have reacted correctly to the Hungarians' new ethnicity there. In contrast, the problem of Hungarians in Transylvania is constantly discussed and not only in the countries involved.<sup>33</sup> The Romanian state is strong enough to keep its minorities quiet, and Hungary is not interested in regaining Transylvania, but it is very interested in the treatment of Hungarians in that province. The Transylvanian Hungarians would probably be happy with the lot of the Vojvodina Hungarians, and this would please Budapest too. Unlike the Yugoslav authorities, the Romanian government apparently does not differentiate between the new ethnicity and old-fashioned revanchist chauvinism. Only this can explain Bucharest's minority policy, which is the continuation of the attitude of the interwar status quo nationalists, and the issue it made of the publication in Budapest of a three-volume History of Transylvania.<sup>34</sup> One can hardly find a better example of the survival until today of the presumptively indefeasible, pugnacious nationalism of the interwar period than the full-page advertisement attacking this work which the Romanian government placed in The Times of London.<sup>35</sup>

Modern states and governments can co-exist with the new ethnicity if they understand its nature. Is ethno-nationalism a true form of nationalism? I think so, but admit that this can be debated. If we disregard it, we are still left with several types of nationalism in Eastern Europe today. They are not two

variants of the same nationalism that we discussed for the interwar period; they appear to be distinctly different kinds of nationalism. I believe that they are, after all, only different manifestations of a new nationalism which is typical of Eastern Europe only.

East Europeans, irrespective of the kind of nationalism that expresses their feelings, live in a world in which the official truth, some form of Marxism, is accepted by all, at least in theory, and in which numerous supernational institutions, including the Warsaw Pact and CMEA, appear to be permanent features. To these basic indicators of an international order must be added coordinated foreign policies, compulsory teaching of the Russian language in all schools, and repeated declarations of solidarity with states and nations which the average person does not consider even friendly. It is not difficult to see why people believe that an attempt has been made consistently since 1945 by a foreign power, the Soviet Union, to force all of them into a uniform, denationalized mold. This power has proved at least three times -- Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, and Poland 1981 -- that it has the means to enforce its dictates, directly or indirectly, if local feelings and ambitions go beyond what it considers acceptable. It is therefore not surprising that people and nations fear being forced into a supernational framework that is not clearly defined, never clearly or comprehensively explained, but is big, frightening, strange, impersonal, and -- most important-- nationally deracinating. It is something they wish to resist because they prefer the clearly defined, comprehensive, clearly expressed, manageable, familiar, and, therefore, comfortable national identity. It is this identity that the remnants of pre-1945 nationalists, national communists, and communist nationalists defend against the real or imaginary dangers they face. This defensive nationalism is the true, specifically East European nationalism of the last forty years into which all other expressions of nationalism fit. It is not necessarily anti-Russian, anti-Soviet or anti-Marxist/Bolshevik in a clearly expressed ideological sense, but it is defensively anti-everything, clear or unclear, that is equated with the assumed although unexpressed aims of the Soviet government. Present-day East European nationalism is defensive nationalism.

THE PROBLEMS OF NATIONALISM IN EASTERN EUROPE  
PAST AND PRESENT

Peter Sugar  
Professor of History  
University of Washington

#### ENDNOTES

1. Boyd C. Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955), p. 5.
2. Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 125.
3. Elie Kedouri, Nationalism (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1960), p. 9.
4. Carlton J. H. Hayes, Essays on Nationalism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926), p. 5.
5. Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), p.16.
6. Louis L. Snyder, The Meaning of Nationalism (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1954), pp. 196-97.
7. A very important study dealing with this issue is John A. Armstrong, Nations Before Nationalism (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).
8. Peter F. Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," in Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer (eds.), Nationalism in Eastern Europe (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1969), pp. 3-5.
9. Anthony D. Smith, Nationalism in the Twentieth Century (New York: New York University Press, 1979).
10. Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 125.
11. Peter F. Sugar, "Ethnicity in Eastern Europe," in Peter F. Sugar (ed.), Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe (Santa Barbara and Oxford: ABC-Clio, 1980), pp. 419 ff.
12. Hugh Seton-Watson, Nations and States (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1977), pp. 21-22.
13. V. I. Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question," first published in Prosveshcheniye, Nos. 10-13 (1913) in Collected Works (Moscow: Progress Publishers, Fifth Printing, 180), Vol. 20, p. 25.
14. J. V. Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," first published as "The National Question - and Social-Democracy," in Prosveshcheniye, Nos. 3-5, (1913) in Collected Works (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), Vol. 2, p. 317. The

arguments developed in this article were presented in shortened but often identical wording in "The Immediate Task of the Party in the National Question," presented to the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party on Feb. 5, 1921. Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 16-30.

15. Ernest Gellner, "Ethnicity between Culture, Class and Power," in Peter F. Sugar (ed.), Ethnic Diversity. pp. 269-70.

16. Peter F. Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots," pp. 47-54.

17. A summary of all beliefs in early "freedom fighters" and of the materials on which these were based was presented for Bulgaria in a very scholarly fashion by Bistra Cvetkova, Hajdutstvoto v Bulgarskite Semi prez 15/18 Vek (Sofia: Nauka i Izkystvo, 1971). Most East European literatures have similar works.

18. Miklós Toldi is today an example of the Hungarian national hero who reaches high honors coming from a lowly social background. He never existed, but was created by the epic poem Toldi written by János Arany in 1846. Appearing on the scene much later, but playing a similar role by today in the popular mind would be figures like the "good soldier Schweik" or -- in a negative sense -- Pan Tadeusz.

19. Nineteenth-century Romanian historiography, beginning with the publications of the first parts of Nicolae Balcescu's Istoria Rominilor sub Michailu Voda Viteazul in Revista romina pentru stiinta, litere si arte in 1861-63 depicted Michael the Brave (1593-1601) as a modern Romanian nationalist consciously trying to unify the three Romanian Principalities. Once again, only one of several possible examples.

20. The best known and often quoted examples of historians who wrote good history, but occasionally inserted in their works passages serving nationalist aims, were the Czech Fratisek Palacky, whose famous ten-volume Geschichte der Böhmen first appeared in Prague between 1836 and 1867 and the Hungarian Kalman Thaly whose work was centered on the late 17th and early 19th centuries. Similar, but lesser known figures were active all over Eastern Europe.

21. The relevant literature is too rich to be listed and the citing of a few titles only would not be judicious. Let us note that François Fejtő, who edited a study for the 100th anniversary of the revolutionary year, chose as the English title of his work (originally published in French), The Opening of an Era: 1848 (New York: H. Fertig, 1966) indicating that he saw in the events of this year not the culmination of liberal agitation, but the beginning of a new Europe. It is also significant that even a small people, the Slovaks, not too active in 1848 produced a

collection of documents dealing with the event of that year, under the editorship of Daniel Rapant, between 1950 and 1961 under various titles (Dejiny Slovenskeho postavnia R. 1838-49 and Slovenska Povstanie Reku 1848-49) filling eight thick volumes.

22. In spite of its age, the best introduction to Panslavism is still Hans Kohn, Pan-Slavism; Its History and Ideology (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1953).

23. For a good, short explanation of the Nacertanije see Michael Boro Petrovich, A History of Modern Serbia, II (New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1976), pp. 231-33. For Kossuth's ideas turn to Zsigmond Pál Pach et al. (eds.), Magyarország Története, X (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976- ), Vol. VI, pp. 709-13. The pre-World War I plans of Dmowski can be found in his Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka (Lvov: H. Altenberg, 1907).

24. It is worth remembering that Eastern Europe contained the states that had lost the most and gained the most in World War I. Hungary (not counting the Croatian lands) lost 67 percent of her territory and 58 percent of her population. Romania's territory increased by 112 percent and her population by 113 percent.

25. Besides the works of Smith and Gellner already cited numerous works deal with this transformation, including: American Universities Field Staff (K. H. Silver, ed.), Expectant People, Nationalism and Development (New York: Random House, 1963); Glen St. J. Barclay, 20th Century Nationalism (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971); Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz (eds.), Nationbuilding (New York: Atherton Press, 1966); Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communications (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1966); Anthony D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism (London: Duckworth, 1983).

26. The customary division of Eastern Europe's history since the establishment of Communist rule is the following: The Stalinist Period, 1945/8-53; De-Stalinization, 1953-56; The Diversification of Communism, 1956-68; attempts at individual national existence within the limits of the Brezhnev Doctrine, 1968-80; the last seven years have not yet acquired a generally accepted label.

27. For the Stalin-Tito controversy, see: The Soviet-Yugoslav Dispute: Text of the Published Correspondence (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1948).

28. The literature covering the events in Eastern Europe is immense. This and subsequent footnotes cannot even list all of the most important titles and those listed should be considered simply as samples of what is available. On Titoism see: Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in Historical Perspective (New York: Columbia

University Press, 1982); Josef Kalvoda, Titoism and the Masters of Imposture (New York: Vantage Press, 1958); Charles P. McVickers, Titoism: Pattern for International Communism (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957). Władysław Gomuła was, for a time, considered the second Tito, but, at least to some extent, he turned out to be an old-fashioned Communist. For details see either Frank Gibney, The Frozen Revolution (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959), or Nicholas William, baron Bethell, Gomuła, His Poland and His Communism (Harlow: Longmans, c. 1969). Finally, for national communism good introductions are, among others, Howard Machin (ed.), National Communism in Western Europe (London-New York: Methuen, 1983), and Peter Zwich, National Communism (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983).

29. Sinan Hasani, Kosovo, istine i zablude (Zagreb: Center za informacije i publicitet, 1986) is somewhat biased, but contains much valuable material. The best study in a western language is Jens Reuter, Die Albaner in Kosovo (Munich: Oldenburg, 1982). A good short English summary can be found in Pedro Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1963-83 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 156-71. The most recent work on Kosovo is Milos Misovic, Koje trazio republike Kosov 1945-85 (Belgrade: Narodna Knjiga, 1987).

30. See the chapter "Federalism and the Slovak Problem," Gordon H. Skilling, Czechoslovakia's Interrupted Revolution (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 451-89.

31. On the developments in Hungary in the years after 1956, the best book is T. Iván Berend, Gazdasági útkeresés, 1956-1965 (Budapest: Magvető, 1983). On the Prague Spring see the already cited work by Gordon H. Skilling. On Eurocommunism the work of Santiago Carillo, Eurocommunism and the State (Nan Green and A. M. Elliott, trans.), (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1971) is basic. Other works recommended include: Rudolf Tokes (ed.), Eurocommunism and Detente (New York: New York University Press, 1978) and François Fonvieille-Alquier, L'Eurocommunisme (Paris: Fayard, 1977). The literature on Solidarity by now is massive. Good introductions to the subject include: William F. Robinson (ed.), August 1980: The Strikes in Poland (Munich: Radio Free Europe Research, 1980); Lawrence Weschler, Solidarity (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); Neal Ascherson, The Polish August (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981).

32. To my knowledge it was Walker Conner who first used the term ethno-nationalism in "The Politics of Ethnonationalism," Journal of International Affairs (January, 1973), 27, pp. 1-21. See also his "The Ethnopolitical Change and Governmental Response," in Peter F. Sugar, Ethnic Diversity pp. 147-84; Peter F. Sugar, "From Ethnicity to Nationalism and Back Again," in Michael Palumbo and William P. Shanahan (eds.), Nationalism: Essays in Honor of Louis L. Snyder (Westport, CT - London: Greenwood,

1981), pp. 67-84. Anthony D. Smith wrote about this subject too in The Ethnic Revival (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) as did several sociologists including Hugh Donald Forves, Nationalism Ethnocentrism and Personality (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), and John F. Stack, Jr. (3ed.), The Primordial Challenge; Ethnicity in the Contemporary World (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986).

33. A somewhat biased presentation of the problem of Transylvania can be found in Anne Fay Sanbord and Geza Wass de Czege (eds.), Transylvania and the Hungarian-Romanian Problem (Astor, FL: Danubian Press, 1979).

34. Bela Kopeczi et al. (eds.), Erdely Tortenete, III (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, 1986).

35. "A Conscious Forgery of History under the Aegis of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences," The Times (London), April 7, 1987, p. 7.

Comments by

Gale Stokes  
Professor of History  
Rice University

Peter Sugar's paper has two parts: a brief introduction and the body of the paper, in which he outlines the characteristic features of nationalism during four main periods of East European history. The first part, and much of second part, is based on the view that the social relations of capitalist society, especially those created by the industrial bourgeoisie, constitute the fundamental basis of nationalism; whereas the second part is an effort to describe the varieties of nationalism characteristic of four periods of widely differing circumstances, that is, to define the constituent aspects of fundamentally differing nationalisms. For me, the first portion of the paper has serious flaws, whereas the second part is useful, interesting, and accurate, that is, a stimulus to further considerations and comment.

Let me try to say first where I think the problems lie in the introduction. First, almost as an aside, I would quibble with the use of Seton-Watson's notion of "old continuing nations," in which category Seton-Watson includes such diverse peoples as the Scots, Swedes, Portuguese, and Russians. What I think Sugar really means when he uses this term are the English and the French. Of course, Seton-Watson does describe these as "two outstanding sovereign states...[that] can rightly be described as nation-states," but I think Sugar is actually reverting to an older descriptive tradition, the Western-Germanic (voluntarist-organic) dichotomy of Hayes and Kohn.

More important, I do not think that the analysis presented in the introduction is more or less obvious, accepted by even the most superficial students of nationalism. It is one thing to agree with Gellner's broad generalization that a shared high culture defined as "nation" is the natural social unit for industrial society, quite another to turn this into a direct link between the industrial bourgeoisie and nationalism. It is with Sugar's identification of the bourgeoisie, and the industrial bourgeoisie at that, as the teachers of nationalism, and in his agreement that "nationalism appeared when the industrial bourgeoisie acquired an increasingly stronger role in government," that I would like to take issue.

It has become less and less clear in the past twenty years just who the bourgeoisie were and what impact they had they had on political development and nationalism. As Geoff Eley and

David Blackbourn have pointed out in their reassessment of the role of the German bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century, neither in England nor in France have scholars been able to agree on what bourgeois revolution might have been. The criticisms of the social interpretation of the French Revolution raised thirty years ago by Alfred Cobban have long since passed into the mainstream of the historiography of the French Revolution, and today questions concerning the relationship of state structure to class and political forces, of "ideology as anonymous, collective, and...constitutive of social order," and of "a competition of discourses for the appropriation of legitimacy" exercise those seeking to understand that great cataclysmic event. In England Martin Weiner has demonstrated that despite the English success in commerce and manufacturing, the gentrification of the English middle class led to a devaluation of just those qualities we consider bourgeois and to a decline of the English entrepreneurial spirit. In Germany, where Eley and Blackbourn make a strong case for the bourgeoisification of society in the nineteenth century, it is a truism that the bourgeoisie did not attain political power. And in Europe as a whole Arno Mayer has convincingly demonstrated how strong the perquisites of the old regime remained to 1914.

This placing of the bourgeoisie into a much more complex and richer pattern of social development in the nineteenth century is not to deny that social context is important to the understanding of nationalism. It is, however, to suggest, as William Sewall has done in his excellent comments on Theda Skocpol's book on states and revolutions, that multivariate explanations are more appropriate. A full historical explanation of the emergence of nationalism must go beyond the obvious and crucial moment of the French Revolution, although it must always return there, and beyond any simple class analysis. For example, a fundamental structural element that made nationalism possible was the state system. I think that it could be argued that in Europe this system grew up separately if not entirely independently of capitalism. That is, the state system, whose conventions began to be formalized as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Italy and which entered European legal theory and practice in the seventeenth century, is not a political epiphenomenon of a social development but a process with its own dynamic. In another sphere, the notion of natural law, which blossomed in the eighteenth century into ideas that the controversies of 1788-89 turned to political use, can be seen as growing from a series of intellectual events we call the Scientific Revolution as much as they can be seen as emerging from political writings influenced by socio-political events. Indeed, the invention of moveable type probably lay behind the very possibility of conceiving of a progressive evolution of ideas, and to the possibility of eighteenth-century notions of progress that are connected with the ideals of popular sovereignty and political equality. In discussing his concept of

print-capitalism, Benedict Anderson uncovers linkages between socio-economic development and the emergence of nationalism that are considerably more suggestive than the direct bourgeoisie equals nationalism relationship. In short, the social roots of nationalism are far less well known than Sugar suggests, and considerably more complex. Social historians of the late 1980s are drawing a much more subtle picture of the interrelations between social, political, and intellectual spheres than we have known in the past.

Moreover, I would suggest that Sugar's insistence on the role of the bourgeoisie is undercut by the very evidence he presents here, or, more precisely, from a nineteenth-century phenomenon that he above all knows well, since it forms a basic part of his influential earlier essay on nationalism -- the fact that nationalism appeared in many East European countries long before any social change that might account for it. Gellner was aware of this problem, which he attempted to slide over by speaking of changes that came when an industrial economy cast "its advance shadow" across a society. Even the most powerful and consistent exponent of the direct linkage between the bourgeoisie and nationalism in Eastern Europe, Miroslav Hroch, was reduced to finding pre-bourgeois funnels and other similarly strained phenomena in place of the non-existent actual bourgeoisie his determinism required but his research could not find. A more direct approach is simply to admit that nationalism is not primarily captured in class relations, and is not reducible primarily to social relations, but is rather a complex ideology, with all the overtones of state apparatuses, cultural systems, and social interactions that word currently implies.

If we move now to the second, and much longer part of Sugar's paper, the portion in which he presents his adjectival nationalisms, as we might call them, we have a much more interesting, insightful, and plausible narrative. I find Sugar's four periods illuminating and well conceived. What Sugar has done in effect is to rewrite Carlton Hayes's categories into an East European idiom. I do not mean to say that there is an equivalent correspondence between Sugar's categories and Hayes's, but rather that the methodology is the same. That is, Sugar offers a chronological categorization of varieties of nationalism that well captures the changing political situations in Eastern Europe to which these nationalisms responded. I particularly like, once the first period of awakening is past, Sugar's insistence that the three later nationalisms are all closely connected with the state. First we have state-building nationalism, in which the nationalists tried to find a vocabulary that would make them recognizable to the great powers and justify their entry into the ranks of sovereign nations. In a post-French Revolutionary world in which equality was a fundamental value and in which the state system defined the rules of international personhood, those who wished to participate in

public life as full-scale human beings had no choice but to seek political independence.

Sugar also puts his finger on an important change when he characterizes interwar nationalism as state-sponsored. This apparently is an ubiquitous feature of nationalism. Once the nationalists have succeeded in creating independence and sovereignty, nationalism becomes not a struggle for equality and freedom, as it is presented in the early phase, but a ritualized, sanctified, and infeasible (to use Sugar's word) ideology of hegemony. One way it does this is by providing a believable origin-myth, that is, by authorizing state proprietorship over a specific kind of authenticating history, which the state distributes in its chain of retail outlets, the schools. But much more important, especially in an economic environment in which industrialization is bringing an increase in social diversity, state-sponsored nationalism helps the state class by permitting it to homogenize the plural interests being created by industrialization into an abstract unity, the nation. By claiming that all are equal in the nation the state is absolved from treating interests that compete with it seriously. The closeness of nationalism to fascism in Eastern Europe during the interwar period grows in part from this relationship. State-sponsored nationalism only appears to be consistent with the notion of popular sovereignty. In fact it denies the pluralism that must lie at the root of a functioning democracy.

Are all these nationalisms, and I have not discussed defensive nationalism, actually different phenomena, as Sugar suggests? This is a third issue I would like to raise, and it is the stickiest one because it is concerned with the question of definition. Sugar never actually defines what he means by nationalism, although he mentions a couple of definitions. I find this admirable, because in my view the entire endeavor of attempting to define nationalism, which occupies the first chapter of many a work on the subject, is misconceived. What it implies is that nationalism is a thing, a collection of attributes the specification of which will permit us to know the phenomenon, that is, to confine it within certain boundaries. But reification sets us off on the wrong track, or if not the wrong track, then at least a track that is well trod. Nationalism is such a protean ideology because it is a process of interactive relationships between those who send messages we can identify as nationalistic, and those who, in receiving those messages, reinscribe them according to their own circumstances. These messages are seen by both parties as having potential functions, and for that reason an effort is made to present and interpret them in stylized ways that the participants deem appropriate. The most salient characteristic of these interchanges is that they take place in public rather than in private. Nationalism is public discourse. It is therefore not just a collection of ideas the listing of which will produce understanding of the

phenomenon: it is the discourse of struggle. What is at stake when people are involved in nationalism is power.

This insight, or truism if you wish, relates to whether the nationalisms Sugar describes are really different. In a way they are because they correspond to different socio-political circumstances, and this is the real contribution of his paper. Sugar has aggregated his data, so to speak, into four major categories and successfully indicated the fundamental aspects of each category. Some historians, notably Snyder and Seton-Watson, have carried disaggregation to the point that they end up simply with a list of individual cases, and we lose sight of why we should consider placing them into the same category in the first place.

Sugar does not fall into that trap, but if we wish to know why all the categories Sugar describes, with all their differences, remain at the same time nationalism, some further generalization is needed. All of Sugar's periods, or at least the last three, are special cases of the overall problem of power allocation in the post-French Revolutionary world. In other words, nationalism is a political problem. In the nation-building phase intellectuals in the weak nations of Eastern Europe found the rhetoric of nation-building suitable for establishing a state that would, by extension, empower them. In the interwar period the same leaders, having achieved power, found a similar vocabulary appropriate for defending their authority, confronting their neighbors, and mobilizing their populations. And in the most recent era new elites have found nationalism a useful defensive device in opposing the overwhelming power of a dominant foreign state. Sugar would not deny this description, because in fact that is the main insight of his paper -- if we are to attempt a broad-ranging interpretation of East European history since the French Revolution, it must be related to the power relations in which these "lands in between" have found themselves.

It seems to me that we have two great needs in the historical study of Eastern Europe. The first is for monographs. It is difficult for specialists in other areas of Europe to grasp just how few first-rate monographs we have to work with in Eastern Europe. Whereas in English history any study worthy of note must place itself in a literature of dozens if not hundreds of works, in Eastern Europe even the main political figures often still await their biographer. So we need soundly based archival studies. But the paradox of the need to produce good monographs is that to do so scholars of necessity must work in a single language (or in a relatively narrow group of languages), which often means the writing of histories that are not broadly conceived. Very few persons aim for large-scale integrating ideas that will make sense of the region. One of the most impressive things about Peter Sugar, and not the only impressive

thing, has been his willingness to run the risk of thinking big. The paper we have under consideration today is a good example of the breadth and vision of his work, and its characterization of how a changing geopolitical situation transformed the function of nationalist discourse in the four eras of modern Eastern Europe is a good example of the suggestive power of his thought. So, even though I have raised at least one complaint about the paper, and have used the second half of his paper to go in a somewhat different direction than Sugar himself might, I would like to finish by saying that one can only admire, as I have for many years, a person who, not for the first time, has provided us with a powerful set of basic categories with which to fit together the fractured and diverse history of Eastern Europe.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Hugh Seton-Watson, States and Nations (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), p. 17.
2. Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 142-43.
3. David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, The Peculiarities of German History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).
4. Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 184; William H. Sewell, Jr., "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case," Journal of Modern History, 57 (1985), p. 61; François Furet, Interpreting the French Revolution (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 49.
5. Martin J. Wiener, Industrialism and the Decline of the Capitalist Spirit (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).
6. Arno J. Mayer, The Persistence of the Old Regime (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

7. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983).
8. See, for example, John E. Toews, "Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," American Historical Review, 92 (1987), pp. 879-908.
9. See his "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism," in Peter Sugar and Ivo Lederer, eds., Nationalism in Eastern Europe (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1969).
10. Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, p. 108.
11. Miroslav Hroch, Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

## "EURONATIONALISM" AND EASTERN EUROPE

Comments by

Robert L. Hutchings

Professional Lecturer in Soviet Studies  
School of Advanced International Studies  
Johns Hopkins University

Assistant National Intelligence Officer  
National Intelligence Council

In his excellent paper, Professor Sugar has followed the usual practice of distinguishing "good" from "bad" nationalisms, with the period before 1848 good, that after 1848 bad, and that of the interwar period unspeakable. One need not lapse into value relativism, however, to note that nationalism is always two-sided. The positive act of creating a community -- linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or territorial -- also implies the negative, or potentially negative, act of setting that community apart from others. Hence I am not certain that Professor Sugar's three earlier periods of East European nationalism can be so easily categorized.

There are, in any case, nationalist echoes from each of these periods evident in Eastern Europe today. Let me outline briefly several kinds of nationalism that seem now to be at work and in so doing to introduce one variant -- which I shall call "Euronationalism" -- not mentioned in Professor Sugar's survey. This will entail -- with apologies to Professor Stokes -- some disaggregation; but I will try to reaggregate at the end with reference to the Soviet factor, also neglected in the paper.

Ethnonationalism, as Professor Sugar describes it, is clearly at the heart of contemporary manifestations of East European nationalism. It is, as he rightly observes, a reaction against foreign domination as well as against the alienation felt in modern industrial society; it involves an existential quest for alternate value structures and a collective identity. We might note in passing that these impulses have given rise to other developments as well, both positive and otherwise: a widespread religious revival, particularly among Roman Catholics, the privatization of daily life, and a worrying moral decay suggested by rising rates of alcoholism and suicide.

-----  
NOTE: The views expressed here are the author's. They do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Government.

Ethnonationalism, or the "new ethnicity," is manifested everywhere in a general rise in national consciousness, a growing interest in history and culture, and a new urge toward national self-assertion. Independent publishing houses in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and elsewhere are turning out full-scale historical series; underground presses put out a wide range of journals contributing to a cultural and national renaissance; "flying universities" convene to hold informal seminars and lectures; "parallel societies" are emerging as surrogate sources of national self-expression. In Bulgaria, the late Lyudmila Zhivkova, daughter of the party first secretary, tapped an unsuspected vein of nationalist sentiment in her glorification of Bulgarian history and culture during her brief tenure as culture minister. And in Hungary, the rock opera *István a Király* (Stephen the King) -- still running in Budapest theaters -- reveals the extent to which national history has penetrated into the general consciousness.

There is also the related phenomenon of nostalgic/romantic nationalism seen in such trends as the reclaiming of aristocratic surnames and titles and a general fascination with things Habsburg. It is manifested more particularly in Hungary's Populist revival, with its evocation of village life, its anti-cosmopolitanism and anti-intellectualism, and its occasional obscurantism and xenophobia. (Now dominant within the Hungarian Writers' Association, neo-Populism increasingly penetrates official thinking as well, through the Patriotic People's Front and other organizations.)

From here it is a short jump to chauvinistic/jingoistic nationalism and even outright revanchist nationalism. Professor Sugar has alluded to Romanian reprisals against its Hungarian minority and polemics between Budapest and Bucharest over Transylvania. He might also have noted the brutal assimilation campaign directed by the Bulgarian regime against its Turkish minority, Bulgarian-Yugoslav polemics over Macedonia, a new wave of anti-German sentiment among Poles, an ugly resurgence of anti-Semitism in several East European countries, and heightened national animosities in Yugoslavia, particularly between Serbs and Albanians.

There is at least one case of nation-building of the nineteenth-century variety. In Macedonia, efforts toward building national identity and linguistic unity -- undertaken by the Yugoslav regime largely to counter rival Bulgarian claims -- hark back to similar efforts among Slovaks, Croats, and others more than a century ago. One might even mention the GDR under this heading: with national fulfillment precluded by the nature of the postwar division, the Honecker regime has sought instead to manufacture a nation to fit the state. By rehabilitating historical figures such as Martin Luther, Frederick the Great,

and Bismarck and expropriating them as "objectively progressive" precursors of the East German state, the regime has sought -- with little success -- to vindicate its argument that the GDR is not only a sovereign state but also a separate German nation.

Regime-sponsored nationalism has as its most extravagant example the bizarre myth-building of the Ceaușescu regime in Romania, which seeks to merge nation, state, and party with the Ceaușescu clan. A few years ago, historians were pressed into service to trumpet the Dacian civilization's 2050th anniversary (they had missed the 2000th and evidently were not prepared to wait for the 3000th), and anthropologists discovered in Romania the remains of the first European homo sapiens. Ceaușescu himself is described in official panegyrics as "the man who bears the nation in his soul" and "the highest among all the Carpathians of Romanian history." And of course there have also been more substantive expressions of national self-assertiveness, particularly in Romania's independent-minded foreign policy.

Related, if less extreme, efforts to tap the national theme are evident in Poland, where martial law was wrapped in the cloak of the Polish army uniform and "normalization" attempted under the aegis of the "Patriotic Movement of National Rebirth." And this, from János Kádár, who has been the most subtle and successful at tapping the national theme as an agent of political authority: "We belong together whether we like it or not; we are sons of the same people; we have one country; we live together. Either we prosper together or we sink together.... The Communists are no worse as Hungarian patriots than non-party people. We too were born Hungarian."

Finally, there is a growingly important variety of East European nationalism -- not mentioned in Professor Sugar's paper -- which might be called (for want of a better term) "Euronationalism." National identity, in this view, is linked to and dependent upon a broader sense of Europe as a cultural and historical community; indeed, nowhere is the "European idea" stronger than in Eastern Europe. In the Czech lands particularly, there is a national conception stretching from Milan Kundera, Václav Havel, and the philosopher Karel Kosík in the postwar period to Tomáš Masaryk earlier in the century and to František Palacký before that; it holds roughly that the Czech Question must be transformed into a humanitarian, universal, and hence a European question.

"Euronationalism" thus conceived is evoked in Kundera's now famous article, "The Tragedy of Central Europe," which opens with a Hungarian news agency dispatch at the time of the Soviet invasion of November 1956: "We are going to die for Hungary and for Europe." The meaning here is that Hungary's survival is linked to the European ideal of a family of free nations and, reversing the proposition, that Europe's survival depends on

national self-determination among its smaller members. Thus the idea of "central Europe" -- and, in some quarters, of "Mitteleuropa" -- is part of a broader "Euronationalism."

Under martial law in Poland, the call was to "Europeanize the Polish Question." In Hungary today, the writer George Konrad and the philosopher János Kis, among others, argue for overcoming the Yalta division by restoring a European community of nations between (and in spite of) the superpowers. Even regime figures in Hungary, East Germany, and elsewhere stress the special role of the "small states" in promoting European reconciliation. In all these conceptions, the national question in Eastern Europe is a European question, to be resolved only through the community of European states. And such sentiments are echoed in Western Europe in calls for the "Europeanization of Europe" -- an old leftist rallying cry now gaining much wider currency; it aims at creating a network of economic and cultural ties between East and West which eventually will make the alliance systems irrelevant.

Professor Sugar's catch-all for the contemporary situation in Eastern Europe -- "defensive nationalism" -- is not quite adequate to cover all these manifestations. (And what is defensive to one man may be offensive indeed to another: many Romanians doubtless consider reprisals against the Hungarian minority a perfectly appropriate defense of Romanian national interests. Hungarians in Transylvania feel otherwise.) The term, however, nicely captures both the vulnerability and indomitability of the smaller nations of Eastern Europe. On the one hand, these nations can disappear; Kundera defines the small nation as one whose very existence may be put into question at any moment. And when some Hungarian economists say that closing the scientific-technological gap is the key to Hungary's national survival, they seem to mean that literally. On the other hand, many in Eastern Europe would echo Palacký's last words more than a century ago: "Before Austria was, we [the Czechs] existed; and after Austria is gone, we shall still be there." Substitute "Soviet Russia" for Austria, and this is a sentiment to which Kundera, Havel, Adam Michnik, and many others would subscribe.

Professor Sugar also uses the term "Communist nationalism," which he contrasts with national Communism by stressing the primacy of the noun over the adjective modifying it. The term may be appropriate for certain third-world national independence movements of the Marxist-Leninist variety; it seems inappropriate for Eastern Europe, where the governing ideology was imposed from outside and remains the essence of Party rule. That the nature of Communist rule has been adapted to local conditions is clear, but "Communist nationalism" connotes a sea change that has not yet taken place in Eastern Europe. Indeed, it strikes me almost as an oxymoron, like fried snowballs (to borrow Kołakowski's judgment on "democratic socialism"). If "nationalism" were the noun in Eastern Europe, "Communist" would not be its modifier.

Communist nationalism also would seem incompatible with "socialist internationalism" as defined and interpreted in Moscow. As Professor Sugar devoted relatively little space to the Soviet factor, it might be well to conclude with a brief consideration of whether, or to what extent, national self-determination in Eastern Europe is compatible with present and likely future patterns of Soviet influence in the region.

Though often contradictory, Gorbachev's policies in Eastern Europe seem to have sanctioned diversity and legitimized change; such, at least, was the brunt of his remarks last month on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. Coming at a time of impending leadership change in several East European countries, the potential is growing for new movement in the "national" direction. And the very intransigence of East European economic dilemmas may embolden some leaders to consider radical measures that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. One can at least imagine -- in Poland or Hungary, perhaps -- a regime-directed effort at reform combined with a broad popular movement toward peaceful change.

Such an evolution would pose a stark choice for the Soviet leadership: to accept a much wider degree of diversity, and indeed of national self-determination, in the region, or to suppress a genuine reform movement encouraged by Gorbachev's own calls for glasnost and perestroika. The latter course would destroy Gorbachev's carefully cultivated image as a champion of detente and architect of a "European house" and undermine the entire edifice of his foreign and domestic strategies. Hence (to end on an optimistic note) the limits of Soviet tolerance may be greater than in the past; and the advent of a more dynamic period of East-West relations may offer much greater scope for "Euronationalism" in Eastern Europe. A myth, perhaps, but myths are often more enduring than realities in this part of the world.