

Feb. 15, 2005

5 and 6 NATION AND NATIONALISM I, II

Read: Gladney 135-176

Eric Hobsbawm, Introduction. Nation as Novelty. Pp. 1-45 in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge, 1990 (45)

- I. “Nation” is a NEW idea
 - A. The modern sense of the word is no older than the 18th century
 1. The word and related words have been around
 2. Discuss: other meanings?
 - a. What does “Indian nation,” “Cherokee Nation” suggest to you?
 - b. Can we say “American nation”? Why or why not?
 - c. “United Nations”, “Wealth of Nations”?
 - 1) Could the UN just as easily be “United Countries”? Or “United States”? (except that one’s taken)
 - B. “Nations” themselves are also new
 1. Discuss: “nation,” “state,” “country,” “nation-state”
 2. Question: name some nation-states—states that contain only one nation, one “people”
 - a. There really aren’t many
 - b. Dominican Republic (unusual for Caribbean)
 - c. Japan almost qualifies (non-Japanese: Ainu, Koreans)
 - d. Some Gulf states (usually called emirates) contain only one “people”
 - C. How can we define “nation”?
 1. Hobsbawm says we can’t characterize nation-states by providing an *a priori*, objective set of distinctions that allow us to distinguish a nation from other entities

2. Each nation is the product of particular, localized, or regional historical conjunctures
 3. Not like classifying birds or lizards, where you can work out a priori criteria
 4. The criteria themselves are fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous (language, ethnicity)
- D. Similarly, the vocabulary of nationalism today may mean very little
- E. So, no *a priori*, objective characterization is possible
1. Hobsbawm:
 - a. Defining a nation by its members' consciousness of belonging to it
 - b. Is tautological, and provides only an *a posteriori* guide to what a nation is
 - 1) Discuss: "tautological," "*a priori*," and "*a posteriori*"
 2. But Hobsbawm says that an initial working assumption might be:
 - a. Any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a "nation"
 3. Discuss:
 - a. Exceptions (apart from point above about non-homogeneity of citizens of most states)?
 - b. Ireland
 - c. Israel
 - 1) Is Israel a "Jewish state"? If so, why?
 - 2) Is Israel a "Jewish nation"?
 - 3) Can you think of other examples like Israel?
 - 4) We will see in Gladney that were Tibet a free state, there would be similarities in how that state and its citizens would be conceptualized

d. Other examples?

II. History of the concept of nation

A. Root meaning of word: naissance, origin, descent (ancient French dictionary)

1. “Nación” was an aggregate of the inhabitants of a **territory**
2. Could be a province, a country, a kingdom
 - a. Was used when speaking of foreigners
3. *Patria, tierra*, usually “homeland” place, township, land where one is born
 - a. Territory of origin—*pays natal* (Old French)

B. Themes:

1. Meaning of foreigner (German loan word, contrasted with *volk*)
2. Territory of origin
3. Common descent group...ethnicity
4. Speaking the same language
5. We could consider Castile to be one of the earliest European kingdoms approximating the “nation-state” idea—Castilian language

C. In the 19th century Europe nation and nationalism developed in stages:

1. Originally seen as something purely cultural, literary and folkloric
2. Then a body of pioneers and militants promoting ‘the national idea’ and beginnings of political campaigning for this idea
3. Then nationalist programs start to acquire mass support

D. This process sometimes occurs

1. Before creation of a national state: Ireland
2. Sometimes afterwards: “We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians”

- 3. Sometimes never: discuss: Third World examples?
- E. The meaning changed to include notion of a political body:
 - 1. Common government
- III. Eighteenth century ideas about “the people”
 - A. American and French revolutions: Ideas about “one nation” and one state
 - 1. American colonists were distinguished from King George and his supporters neither by ethnicity nor language
 - 2. So, at that time, many of the modern meanings of “nation” simply didn’t hold (ethnicity, common language, religion, territory, common historical memories shared by those seeking to establish themselves as a separate state)
 - B. Always present: the element of citizenship and mass participation
 - 1. And desire: Hobsbawm’s discussion of John Stuart Mill
- IV. In 19th century:
 - A. The principle of nationality, whose primary meaning was political, developed, that a “people” should constitute a state (under some conditions)
 - B. Hobsbawm discusses major arguments
 - 1. Had to be viable (culturally, economically, size)
 - 2. Many arguments were made about size
 - a. “Ridiculous” that Belgium and Portugal be states
 - b. Examples of very small states today?
 - 3. After WWI, the “principle of nationality” appeared in peace treaties
 - a. Produced a Europe of 26 states (27 if we add Irish Free State)
 - b. These were not then, nor now, nation-states
 - 1) A recent study of regionalist movements in W. Europe alone counts 42 of them

4. Notion of self-determination
 - a. Yes in independence movements (Latin America)
 - b. Empire was still very much present in Europe
 - c. The notion of each people needing to be independent and sovereign was evolving during the late 19th and early 20th century
- C. But how to establish criteria for “a people”
1. French “people” did not all speak French, by any means
 - a. The requirement that they do became a characteristic of French state-building
 - b. Nor did the British
 - c. Discuss: languages and language loyalty in Europe?
- V. Ideology of state = nation = people developed
- A. Why this evolution from empires?
1. Discuss: examples of empires
 - a. British, Hapsburg, Ottoman
 2. We will read Segal and Handler’s contention that this development is intricately tied to colonial activity in the rest of the world
 3. It is clear that “nation” ideology closely linked to the development of modern states
 4. A great deal of literature is concerned with this issue¹
- B. Empires did not see the need for a single “people”
1. In fact, they exploited these differences: worked to increase divisions between subjects
 - a. For example, the idea of “ethnic soldiering”

¹ See Benedict Andersen, 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London, Verso. Ernest Gellner, 1983. *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

- C. The idea emerged that strong states need citizens who think alike, share identity in various ways
1. Notion of right to rule conferred by divinity was losing legitimacy
 - a. All states claim a monopoly on use of legitimate force
 - b. But is very costly if force is the main way of maintaining rule
 2. Citizens of a state ideally would embrace one language, one heritage, one religion, etc.
 - a. Loyalties to other groups came to be seen to compete with loyalty to the nation-state
 - b. Familiar idea?
 - 1) Discuss: current examples?
 3. During 19th century many subject populations made this “a people need to be sovereign” argument
 4. Newly recognized states’ legitimacy was based on concept of nation
 - a. Belgium, Serbia, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria
 5. Liberal philosophy aided this evolution of the “principle of nationalism”
 - a. We will be discussing the idea of “liberal” philosophy at various points in the course
 - b. Era of triumphant bourgeois liberalism, approx. 1830-1880
 - 1) Discuss
 6. Changes in economic system also supported shift
 - a. Read discussion in Hobsbawm
 - b. Each territorially circumscribed state tended to pursue mercantilist policies as a unified whole
 - c. Earlier (Hanseatic League, for example), and later (today) extra-territorial, transnational units played a larger role

1) Discuss: international markets and states, present controversies?

d. Note that empires were still very much present

1) But they were colonial empires

2) If we ignore that various populations in Europe continued to feel they continued to be under colonial rule

VI. As notion of nationalism grew

A. Nationalist movements gained in strength

1. National unification or expansion

a. Germany, Italy, Greeks

1) At the moment of unification, 2 ½ % of the population of Italy spoke Italian

B. Hobsbawm points out that the concept of “nation” was manipulated

1. There was no historical precedent whatever for the formation of Yugoslavia

2. No one questioned existing states’ multinationality—Britain, France, Spain

a. Discuss: “nations” within these states?

b. What these people felt didn’t matter very much

1) And many individuals did favor unification

c. They were better off—bigger is better

1) How could the Slovenes manage by themselves?

3. Evolutionary ideology very strong: these small groups, languages, were seen to be doomed as civilization progressed

a. Discuss: “doomed” European languages?

b. Evolution was seen as natural law—inevitable

- c. Society was to evolve from family and tribe to country
 - 1) Development of nations clearly is a stage
 - d. From the local to the regional, the national and eventually global
 - 1) Idea that at the next phase in human evolution, barriers will melt and dissolve
 - 2) Attempts to construct artificial world languages (e.g., Esperanto) are an example
 - e. Some of this philosophy was seen as applicable to colonies' progress, some of it did not
3. Folklorization processes of cultures and languages
- a. Preserve the dialects
 - 1) Hobsbawm discusses the spaces that opened up for thick Irish accents, Scottish, on the stage...so long as safely reduced to appendages
 - 2) Songs in Neapolitan
 - b. Folk museums; anthropologists recovering oral traditions, etc.

VII. Conclusions

- A. Role of liberal ideology?
 - 1. Evolution and progress
 - 2. The familiar slogans: "liberty, equality, fraternity"
 - a. How does the U.S. Declaration of Independence put it?
 - 3. Conservatives and traditionalists were opposed
 - a. Tories in colonial America an example
 - 4. But don't equate this "liberal" with its meaning today of progressive, on the left
 - a. Nationalists may want ethnic cleansing

- 1) Although they're politically liberal
 - a) E.g., anticlerical
 - (1) Against religious institutions having a great deal of power
 - b. Another example: nationalism and eugenical reasoning go together
 - 1) Strengthen the nation, and so may be against birth control, abortion
 - 2) Examples?
- B. Characteristics of nationalism²:
1. Is primarily a principle that holds that the political and national unit should be congruent
 2. "Nation" is not primary nor an unchanging social entity....is historically grounded, in a fairly recent period
 - a. Although nationalist sentiment may see "a people" as having lived a long time in the same place
 - 1) Examples?
 - b. They are not natural, God-given, etc.
 - 1) Why nationalists are so interested in what historians are up to
 - 2) Example of anthropologist Anastasia Karakasidou's research on Greek Macedonians speaking a Balkan language³
 - 3) She was denounced by the Greek Parliament
 3. Nationalism sometimes takes preexisting cultures and turn them into nations
 - a. Sometimes invents them

² Hobsbawm agrees with Gellner (1983) in the list above that follows.

³ Karakasidou, Anastasia N., 1997. *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- b. Often obliterates pre-existing cultures
 - c. Examples of all three?
 - d. Discuss: China and nationalism in Gladney
4. Nationalism comes before nations. Nations do not make states and nationalisms, but the other way around.
 5. Nationalism emerges only at a point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation
 - a. Particular stage of technological and economic development
 - b. Standard languages cannot emerge before printing, mass literacy and hence, mass schooling
- C. So, nations are dual phenomena
1. Constructed by political forces
 2. But any analysis must include Mills's notion of desire
 - a. The role of ordinary people's assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests in the process
 - b. By no means do nationalist activists always accurately represent these feelings
 - 1) Examples?
 - 2) Perhaps Chechnya earlier; with the repression they have suffered under the Soviet Union and Russia
 - 3) Who knows what these people feel at present?
 - 4) It is difficult for a researcher to get at these feelings