

Lecture 7

History and nationalism

Inventing the past

- With the rise of the national states new symbols emerge (flags, anthems, emblems of the nation) & **historical continuity** needs to be invented:
- Ranger & Hobsbawm “invented traditions”:
- Primary education
- Invention of public ceremonies
- Mass production of public monuments

Invented traditions:

(according to Hobsbawm)

- a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past
- responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition

National rituals

- Secular rituals, N, national identity
- Public rituals (ceremonies) & everyday ritualised activities
- Billig: banal N
- The need to establish some kind of illusory homogeneity to present itself as distinct entity and in order to be able to 'demand' loyalty whenever necessary

National rituals and symbols

- establish and revitalise, reinforce and recreate the feeling of shared identity among people
- both public ceremonials and everyday-life routines: a set of interrelated banal rituals and routines which people are entirely oblivious of most of the time (cf. Billig)
- every state needs ritualised remembering which occurs on special occasions in the form of public ceremonials + on daily basis, this reproduction of a nation as a nation and its 'citizenry as nationals' has to take place as well

National symbols

- Emblems
- Hymns
- Festivals
- Customs
- Linguistic codes
- Sacred places etc.

Myth (from 'Myths & Nationhood')

- A myth is one of the ways in which communities establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own systems of morality and values. In this sense ... myth is a set of beliefs, usually put forth as a narrative, held by a community about itself. ... Myth is about perceptions rather than historically validated truths

National myths

(taxonomy by George Schöpflin)

- Myths of territory
- Myths of redemption and suffering
- Myths of unjust treatment
- Myths of election
- Myths of military valour (bravery)
- Myths of rebirth and renewal
- Myths of foundation
- Myths of ethnogenesis and antiquity
- Myths of kinship and shared descent

Shared national memories

- Memories of liberation, migration, the golden age(s), of victories/defeats, of heroes, saints...
- Myths of descent, together with historical memories and common culture, are necessary for any nation to form a community. For this reason, a nation has to create these elements in order to establish itself as different from its neighbours (Anthony Smith)

Next week's readings

- Holmes, Leslie (1997): *Post-communism: An Introduction*
- Frentzel-Zagorska, Janina (ed.) (1993): *From a One-Party State to Democracy: Transition in Eastern Europe*
- Minkenberg, Michael (2002): "The Radical Right in Postsocialist Central and Eastern Europe: Comparative Observations and Interpretations" *East European Politics and Societies* Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 335-362
- Pajnik, Mojca (ed.) (2002): *Xenophobia and Post-Socialism*
- Ramet, Sabrina P. (ed.) (1999): *The Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989*
- Magaš, Branka (1993): *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: Tracking the Break-up 1980-92*
- Nedelsky, Nadya (2003): "Civic Nationhood and the Challenges of Minority Inclusion: The Case of the Post-communist Czech Republic" *Ethnicities* Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 85-114.
- Ramet, Sabrina Petra (1996): *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War*