

Lecture 8: Nationalism and post-communism

30 November 2005

The communist bloc in Central-Eastern Europe experienced massive changes in the 1980s. In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was voted new head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, a year later for the first time speaking of *perestrojka* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness). The Polish reformers' movement *Solidarność* was given the green light and one by one the former Soviet satellite states were urged to restructure.

The end of the 1980s brought the end of the Cold War and the collapse of communism in Central-Eastern Europe. The barbed wires symbolising the closed East/West borders were torn down. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, the world changed. What used to be known as the 'communist bloc' or simply 'East' was not a monolithic counterpart to the 'West' any longer. Communists were ousted from their monopolistic positions of power, while social, economic and political restructuring began to take place.

Post-communist construction of new states & the concept of 'nationalising' nationalism

- Break-up of multinational communist states: the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia

15 republics made up the USSR; new post-communist independent states:

Russia; the Baltic (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia); Ukraine; Belarus; Moldova; the Transcaucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia); Kazakhstan; Caucasus and Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan).

6 republics and 2 autonomous provinces made up YU; now:

Slovenia; Croatia; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Yugoslavia (Republic of Serbia and Montenegro); (The Former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia (FYROM).

Czech Republic, Slovakia

- 'Nationalising' nationalism (Rogers Brubaker)

A nationalising state is understood as the state *of* and *for* a particular ethnocultural 'core nation' whose language, culture, demographic position, economic welfare and political hegemony must be protected and promoted by the state.

Nationalism can be understood as a form of remedial political action.

Post-independence nationalisms of nationalising states are state-based, nation-promoting nationalisms.

Case-study: the break-up of Yugoslavia and 'ethnic cleansing'

Next lecture (7 December 2005):

Nationalism and globalisation (+ new approaches to nationalism?)

The specific scope of next lecture will depend on how much time we have (if Bruno manages to get a documentary:)

- Read selected chapters of core texts (see syllabus) on nationalism that are titled either 'nationalism and globalisation' or 'the future of nationalism' or 'new approaches' etc.
- Read also on the European Union and the questions of national identity in relation to this
- Gender and nation
- Etc. (see pdf files)