

THE ROLE OF NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY STRUGGLES

Nationalism continues to shape world events. As the world's population grows, political boundaries shift and governments change. Different groups contend with one another for land and leadership. The members of these groups often band together in nationalist movements.

In some cases, dictators use nationalism to provoke conflicts among ethnic groups. In others, patriots form nationalist organizations to resist outside interference in the governing of their country. In still other cases, people who live in different countries but share a cultural identity unite against other cultural groups. In all cases, frustrated nationalists sometimes resort to terrorism.

The Bosnian War

By **1990**, Communist control of Eastern Europe had ended. (It had begun in the late 1940s.) The fall of communism led to a crisis in Yugoslavia, a union of six republics. In 1990, the Communist party agreed to end its leading role in that nation. It asked the Yugoslav parliament to create a multiparty system.

Yugoslavia was part of the Balkan Peninsula, long held by the Ottoman Empire. A large portion of the people are Eastern Orthodox Christians. A smaller number are Muslims.

In 1991, the nation was shaken when Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence. Serbia, the largest of the six republics, objected. Serbian leaders, seeking power, revived ancient and modern hostilities between ethnic groups living in the region. (A 20th-century example: During World War II, from 1939-1945, Croatia had cooperated with the German invaders. Serbs had resisted and were punished by the Croats. Each group professed hatred for the other.) Fighting between Serbs and Croats and among other ethnic groups exploded into a bloody civil war.

In 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia also declared their independence. Yugoslavia now consisted of just the republics of Serbia and Montenegro.

While the Croats and Serbs fought each other, both inflicted terrible damage on the Muslim population in Bosnia. The Serb policy of "ethnic cleansing" was especially brutal. Thousands of Muslims were killed, and thousands more became homeless refugees. At the end of 1994, attempts by the United Nations to bring about peace had failed. However, the Croats agreed to stop fighting. A larger, better organized Bosnian army began to win victories against the Serbs.

In November 1995, Bosnian Serbs, along with representatives from Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia, signed a peace agreement in Dayton, Ohio. (The United States had forced the groups to come together.)

The resulting cease-fire however, was shaky, U.S. and European troops worked with United Nations peacekeepers to maintain the cease-fire. At the end of 1998, relations among various ethnic groups were still strained. Many refugees were afraid to return to the towns and villages from which their neighbors had driven them.

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Identify the nationalists and ethnic groups that clashed in the Bosnian war of 1991-1995
2. Imagine that you are a displaced Muslim refugee. How would your life change? What would happen your family, your home, your school, and your career?

NAME: _____

The Crisis in Northern Ireland

In 1921, southern Ireland became a self-governing country with close ties to Great Britain. It was called the Irish Free State. In 1949, it declared itself an independent state, the Republic of Ireland. The population is mainly Roman Catholic. Northern Ireland, in which Protestants make up the majority, chose to retain its close relationship with Great Britain. (Another name for Northern Ireland is Ulster.) Most Protestants of Northern Ireland are descended from Scottish and English people who settled there in the 1600s. These people do not share the nationalist feelings that led the people of southern Ireland to free themselves from Britain. Disputes between Britain and Ireland about self-government go back hundreds of years.

Although Catholics are a minority in Northern Ireland, they are a large minority. Many of them have strong ties to the people in the Republic of Ireland. They never accepted the separation of Northern Ireland from southern Ireland. Protestants own most of the industries in Northern Ireland and outnumber Catholics in the legislature. They, therefore, have great control over Northern Ireland's government policy. Catholics complain of being second-class citizens in their own country.

Catholics in Northern Ireland began to hold civil rights demonstrations in 1969 to call attention to the discrimination they felt. The demonstrators were physically attacked by Protestants. Britain sent troops to restore order.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) is a private organization based in southern Ireland. It used violence against the British in the fight for independence. The IRA, feeling that the British troops favored the Protestants, came to the defense of the Catholics. The IRA demanded that Britain allow Northern Ireland to join the Republic of Ireland.

The Ulster Defense Association (UDA), a Protestant group, terrorized Catholics with bombings and killings. The IRA bombed sites in London and other cities in England, causing many deaths and much destruction of property. Hostility between the Protestants and Catholics intensified over time.

Some Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland, sick of bloodshed and destruction, tried to find a way to end the strife. No plan succeeded until the Multiparty Agreement of 1998. It was negotiated by the British and Irish governments and the political parties in Northern Ireland with the help of the United States. The agreement calls for an elected assembly to govern Northern Ireland. Whether Northern Ireland would join with the Republic of Ireland would be decided by a vote in both areas.

Directions: Answer the following question on separate paper.

1. Why did Ireland split into two parts?
2. Why are Protestants in Northern Ireland often viewed as “non-Irish” by Irish Catholics?
3. What issues have divided Catholics and protestants in Northern Ireland?
4. How did nationalism influence both groups?

NATIONALISM IN CONTEMPORARY STRUGGLES

I. Bosnia

- A. 1990 – Communist control of Eastern Europe collapsed
 - 1. Yugoslavia's parliament set about creating a multi-party system

- B. Yugoslavia was a union of 6 republics occupying parts of the Balkan Peninsula
 - 1. 1991 – Croatia and Slovenia declared independence
 - 2. Serbia objected and its leaders revived old hostilities

- C. Bosnia-Herzegovina
 - 1. 1992 declared independence
 - 2. Croats and Serbs fought each other
 - a) both inflicted damage on Bosnia's Muslims
 - 3. Serbs adopted ethnic cleansing
 - a) a policy to wipe out the Muslim population

II. Kosovo

- A. Violence spreads to Yugoslavia's Kosovo province
 - 1. vast majority of citizens are ethnic Albanians
 - a) Muslims
 - b) Under control of the Serb Orthodox Catholic minority
 - 2. Kosovar demanded self-rule within Yugoslavia
 - a) Serbs and Kosovars engaged in "guerrilla warfare"

III. Northern Ireland

- A. Catholic in Northern Ireland
 - 1. large minority
 - 2. strong ties to the Republic of Ireland
 - a) never accepted the separation of two Ireland's
 - 3. Protestants in Northern Ireland own most of its industries and have greater political control than Catholics do

- B. Irish Republican Army versus Ulster Defense Association
 - 1. IRA used violence against the British in the fight for independence
 - a) demanded that the British allow Northern Ireland to join the Republic of Ireland
 - 2. UDA
 - a) Protestant group
 - b) Terrorized Catholics with bombings and killings