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Politics of Ethno-Nationalism: A Post-Colonial and Post-Socialist Schema

(Etnonacionalizmo politika: konceptuali postkolonijinė ir postsocialistinė schema)

Santrauka. *Šio straipsnio paskirtis – sukonstruoti koncepcinę schemą, kuri leistų nagrinėti šiuolaikinę nacionalinio ir etninio tapatumo politiką postkolonialinėse ir postsocialistinėse valstybėse. Siekiama a) pateikti supratingą euristinį nacionalizmo apibrėžimą, b) sukonkretinti šį apibrėžimą papildant jį pažyminiu „etninis", c) įvertinti etninio nacionalizmo sampratos euristinę svarbą siekiant suprasti etniškumo ir nacionalinio identiteto politiką valstybėms atgavus nepriklausomybę, d) suprobleminti "klaidinančios sąmonės" sąvoką susiejant ją su etnonacionalinės politikos idealų patrauklumo idėja.*

1. Introduction: Religion and Ethnic Identity

In a world that is increasing ravaged by religious and sectarian violence tied to ethnic self-determination, the region of Central Asia stands out as particularly typical of a post-colonial, post-independence one. Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are all parts of Central Asia, which, throughout its early history, was heavily influenced by Islamic and Christian cultures. Today, however, the ethno-religious composition is mainly Muslim and Russian Orthodox as Kazaks, Uzbeks, Kyrgyzs, Kirghizes, Tajiks and Turkmen try to forge sovereign nations out of the mess left by the former Soviet Union.

The major tensions in these countries revolve around the fact that since their independence the standard of living of the people has fallen sharply. However, as Qian Zongqi (2006) has noted, the biggest threat to the social order is not to be found in the increasing spread of poverty but rather in the growing religious extremism of various groups. The leaders of those groups responded to the deterioration in living standards by attempting to mobilize their followers against the governments in power via ethno-religious appeals. At the same time the governments in question sought to secularize their societies and to separate religious teachings from political and state practices. However, the increasing Islamization of regional ethnic political consciousness has not augured well for modernization and the secularization of Central Asian states.

The foregoing is tied to a strong anti-Russian sentiment and the fact that, as an ethnic group, the Russians assumed an air of superiority and ever since they set foot in Central Asia. That superiority had them looking down on the local groups/inhabitants as backward and ignorant. After independence, however, the locals in the various Central Asian countries have attempted to reassert themselves in ethno-national terms and have begun to make the Russians aware of the fact that they are not exactly welcome. So after the Soviet Union disintegrated and after the demise of socialism, the independent countries of Central Asia also witnessed the vigorous rebirth of religion in the form of Islamic consciousness.

In Uzbekistan the spread of Islam was most rapid, and while religious consciousness is not a threat in itself, in the hands of ethnic entrepreneurs (Allahar 2004) it has the potential to be. As Qian Zongqi notes, "religious propaganda may become the catalyst for social contradictions when the social and economic situation worsens." According to this author, in Uzbekistan where the per capita monthly income is only $2-$9, poverty is grinding, but yet not as bad as it is in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It is therefore not surprising to discover that "Under the circumstances, someone sedulously propagandizing radical ideas with the aid of religion would undoubtedly be pouring oil on fire, and conflicts would be intensified" (Ibid). What Qian Zongqi is suggesting is that the opening for ethnic entrepreneurship is very clear and this is a fact that is not lost on religious activists and political aspirants (ethnic entrepreneurs) from countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Pakistan, who have played a key role in the religious renaissance via the funding of mosques and religious schools in various parts of Central Asia.

This is the context in which the civil war in Tajikistan is to be understood as leading to antagonisms with the government of Uzbekistan in 1999. Inside Tajikistan extremist religious forces sought to oppose all attempts at modernization and secularization and pushed instead for the promotion of a Islamic consciousness. The example of Tajikistan had a direct echo in Uzbekistan where the ethnic entrepreneurs at the head of the opposition Uzbekistan Islamic Movement (UIM) pursued the creation of an Islamic republic and engaged in armed conflicts with the government forces in both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. When those conflicts ended with the triumph of the Uzbek government the immediate result was a refugee flood of Muslim Uzbeks into Tajikistan as relations between both countries cooled. Today the economic situation has not improved and the situation remains quite volatile.

As shall be argued presently, the global struggles for ethnic and national self-determination and sovereignty are closely bound up with struggles for identity, and those in turn are directly linked to struggles for a homeland or a territorial 'home' base from which to operate. This concern with the land, with who owns it and who belongs on it or to it, has come to define a huge part of modern politics in the global age of physical displacement, diasporic identity, cultural uprooting, and the search for belonging. It is about a

dual sense of identity and belonging: (a) the psychological or individual, and (b) the sociological or group sense. But 'belonging' also implies boundaries that separate those of the in-group from those of the out-group. What criteria, then, are employed in setting those boundaries?

It seems to me that **one** of the clearest answers to this question is place of birth: where one is born is a vital part of who one is; of one's identity. Thus, the English term 'nation,' can be traced directly to the Latin verb *nasci* (to be born). As will be seen, however, given my focus on 'ethnic nationalism' in the modern world, the matter is a great deal more complex than this. For example, whereas the Greeks have just one word to express this combined or compound idea, *ethnos,* which means both 'ethnic' and 'nation,' other societies make a definite distinction between the two. To elaborate, in Greek the notions of ethnicity and nationality are synonymous, and such terms as *ethnikos* (ethnic or national) and *ethnikotis* (ethnicity or nationality), would suggest that the concept of 'ethnic nationalism' is somewhat redundant. This is so because the Greek conception of *ethnos* speaks to the idea of a nation-state or a state that comprises a single ethnic group. This is obviously very much at odds with most modern day multiethnic states such as those that characterize the Caribbean region, where the contested politics of national identity can and has assumed ethnic dimensions, and is often conducted in competitive and acrimonious terms. But it is not necessarily irrelevant to the post-socialist states of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

To return to the idea of belonging, the basic social and gregarious make-up of human beings is seen to be bound up with their above-mentioned search for 'home.' It is a search that is fuelled by a desire not to be left alone, for such aloneness is unnatural and leads to feelings of insecurity and vulnerability (Allahar 1994:18-21). And this is why Benedict Anderson could write that, "...nation-ness and nationalism command such profound emotional legitimacy" (1983:13-14). Much like being the member of a family, to be rooted in one's own land implies an unquestioned acceptance by fellows and a sense of belonging that is both physically and emotionally reassuring. Speaking specifically about the individual in the group, Harold Isaacs wrote:

> He is not only not alone, but here, as long as he chooses to remain in and of it, he cannot be denied or rejected. It is an identity he might want to conceal, abandon, or change, but it is the identity that no one can take away from him. It is *home* in the sense of Robert Frost's line, the place where, when you've got to go there, they've got to take you in (Isaacs 1975:43; emphasis in original).

2. The Point of Departure

This said, the present paper aims to propose a schema for analysing the contemporary politics of national and ethnic identity in post-colonial and post-socialist states. To this end it will seek: (a) to provide a comprehensive operational definition of nationalism, (b) to qualify that definition by the addition of the adjective 'ethnic,' and (c) to assess the extent to which the concept 'ethnic nationa-

lism' can help us to understand some of the politics of ethnicity and national identity in a post-independence (whether post-colonial or post-socialist) setting. My argument will be situated within the broad theoretical framework of a non-reductionist, neo-Marxist class analysis, for it is my conviction that ethno-national consciousness and politics are better understood if we are able to trace the concrete class interests and motives of their promoters.

To begin, there is so much disagreement over the definition and proper meaning of 'nationalism' as a concept, that Ernst Haas has questioned why bother even to ask 'what is nationalism and why should we study it' (Haas 1986)? At the very broadest of levels, nationalism can be seen as an ideology espoused by those who live in already-established nations, complete with economic, political, legal, military, economic and civic autonomy in a clearly demarcated territorial space. Thus, the ideology of nationalism can, and has been used to rally individuals and groups behind the flag of a nation, to give them a sense of belonging to that nation, and to separate them from others who do not belong. But as an ideology, the term nationalism can also be used to characterize a *sentiment,* a yearning or *movement* for independence and autonomy on the part peoples, who, though sharing what Clifford Geertz calls "a corporate sentiment of oneness" and "a consciousness of kind" (1973:260; 307), do not yet inhabit a clearly defined territorial space. Therefore, nationalist movements are quintessentially political movements. And as we have seen in the srtugglesof various social and cultural groups from the former USSR, national and cultural identities are neither natural nor automatic. As Daniel Chirot writes: "almost all the present nations would like to become nation-states, but many nations are actually parts of other states, and many states are not nation-states" (1977:11).

It is this latter phenomenon that interests me most. For I see the situation as quite suggestive of post-colonial and post-socialist social formations in areas such as the former Soviet Union and the Caribbean, where multi-ethnic states like those of Russian Federation and the Caribbean house 'nations' in search of 'homes.' I am thinking of *nations* as ethnic groupings that share the above-mentioned "corporate sentiment of oneness," and of *homes* as places (territories) where the members of such groupings can feel a sense of unquestioned belonging and acceptance. My approach to 'the nation,' then, deals as much with unwritten sentiment as with juridical meaning, and differs somewhat from Anthony Giddens' strictly state-centered view:

> By a 'nation' I refer to a collectivity existing within a clearly demarcated territory, which is subject to a unitary administration, reflexively monitored both by the internal state apparatus and those of other states. A 'nation' .... only exists when a state has a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed (Giddens 1984:116).

Whether dealing with capitalist or socialist colonialism, colonies and those colonial subjects that inhabit them are by definition not independent or sovereign entities. It is

possible, however, for colonial subjects to develop a sense of nation-ness and to agitate for independence and national self-determination while still under the colonizers' yoke. This was clearly the case in the former Soviet republics of Georgia and Chechenia, and in the English-speaking Caribbean on the eve of independence as Crown Colony government paved the way for the emergence of nationalist politics. However, it is after securing political independence, whether by war or by peaceful negotiation with the colonial master, that the *process of nation building* can be said to begin. But since no two countries are exactly alike in their historical experiences, their social class structure and composition, their natural resource endowment, their demographic make-up, or even in the specific values that their cultures embrace, the process of nation building can be expected to vary from country to country. It stands to reason too, that in multiethnic states where two or more ethnic groups are more or less even in numbers, the process of nation building could be a very contentious one. And this is likely to be even more accentuated where the ethnic groups in question have a developed racialized consciousness (Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Trinidad and Guyana).

Further, in order fully to understand the sentiment of nationalism one must look at its proponents and interrogate their motives. In other words, whether as sentiment or as movement, nationalism cannot be divorced from the class and political interests of its leading promoters. By this I mean that nationalism, along with the peculiar brands of ideological appeal that nationalists make, will most often be linked to the discrete economic and political interests of its champions. But one must be cautious in absolutizing the class claim, for in the specific case of ethnic nationalism, for example, Robin Williams has noted that "to dismiss ethnicity as false consciousness ignores the clear evidence that *ethnies* often sacrifice economic interests in favour of symbolic gains" (1994:64-65). Even beyond this, economic gain is not all that is sacrificed for as Ronaldo Munck reminds us, "nationalism matters because people die for it." And, "If people are prepared to die for their country, then this must be a phenomenon worth investigating" (1986:2). The class reductionism of orthodox Marxism must therefore be guarded against, for at different times some peoples and groups will value the symbolic and cultural aspects of group identity higher than the rationally calculated, economic and political gains to be derived (or lost) from pursuing class interests.

On the other hand, as will be seen presently, while the concept of 'false consciousness' generally is fraught with difficulty, it cannot be entirely ignored in any assessment of the political calculations of specific actors, especially when those calculations relate to claims of ethnic belonging. In other words, what to some may appear as false consciousness, to others will represent strategic, rational calculation. It all depends on the situation at hand, and the long-term and short-term goals and class interests of the leading actors. In what follows I will flesh out the concept of false consciousness as it speaks to social classes, with a view later to applying it to an understanding of ethnic and national consciousness.

3. Class Consciousness and False Consciousness

When discussing class and class consciousness Marx was keen to point out that classes, and the proletariat in particular, are not always aware of their potential power. As the capitalist mode of production came to supplant feudal social relations in the countrysides of Europe, large masses of displaced and dispossessed rural dwellers came under the sway of capital, and the beginnings of a proletarian class could be detected. But lacking political organization and education in any given country, members of this class were not automatically or spontaneously united and conscious of their collective strength and possibilities. They amounted to what was basically a statistical aggregate, a group of workers brought together merely by the fact of their common subjugation by capital. For this reason they constituted what some have termed a *class in itself*. In time, however, as greater exposure to capitalist exploitation sharpened the contradictions between this class and the owners of capital, as their organization and education grew, so too did their consciousness of themselves as a class that faced a set of common problems. In the process there also developed the awareness of the fact that they could do something to better their conditions of existence, but this necessitated the collective action of a *class for itself*. In Marx's words:

> The combination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet *for itself*. In the struggle ... this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a *class for itself*. The interests it defends become class interests (Marx 1963:173; my emphasis).

This said, what is the definition of false consciousness, and how is it related to the themes that will be pursued in the following pages? Before answering this question I must underscore the point that in a class-reductionist sense, where actors are seen generally to lack agency, I find orthodox Marxism to be incomplete as an explanation for political behaviour in modern society. However, though incomplete, the insights of the orthodox position cannot be entirely dismissed. What I will do, therefore, is to utilize those insights as they are relevant and, where necessary, I will provide a critique of them.

Although the specific term 'false consciousness' was never used by Marx, there are many allusions to the term in Marx's work, and within the Marxist literature generally, it is quite commonly encountered in analyses of such phenomena as class consciousness, revolution, and ideology. As argued above, class consciousness or class awareness, speaks to the notion that a social class is made up of individuals who share a set of common interests, are politically aware of this fact, and are indeed capable of acting together to promote and defend those common interests. False consciousness, conversely, describes a situation in which individuals who share that common class situation are not aware of the fact, and as a consequence are not able to conceive of acting in concert to pursue their interests. As George Ritzer has written:

> The ideas of class consciousness and false consciousness are closely related in Marx's

> work. Both refer to idea systems shared by social classes. In capitalism both capitalists and workers have incorrect assessments of how the system works and of their role and interest in it (false consciousness).... What is characteristic of capitalism, for *both* the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, is false consciousness (1992:172).

Though correct, Ritzer's contribution is not original, for given the structure and conditions of capitalist exploitation, Georg Lukács earlier had reminded us that both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are subject to false consciousness. The main difference is that bourgeois class consciousness leads to false consciousness because the bourgeoisie is unable to see beyond capitalism as a system, and end up by creating the conditions for their own demise as a class: "the barrier which converts the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie into 'false' consciousness is objective; the class situation itself" (Lukács 1971:54). To which might be added Marx and Engels' forecast that: "What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own gravediggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable" (Marx and Engels 1955:22). Stated differently, the bourgeoisie is incapable of solving the crises of capitalism for it is locked into a logic of exploitation and accumulation that produces increasingly unmanageable economic crises (e.g. overproduction and underconsumption), that in turn condition the development of opposition political consciousness within the proletariat. The vision of the bourgeoisie thus "becomes obscured as soon as it is called upon to face problems that remain within its jurisdiction but which point beyond the limits of capitalism" (Lukács 1971:54).

On the other hand, the sheer survival of the proletariat as a class presents us with an instructive contradiction whereby it is compelled to envision an alternative to capitalism. And that alternative, which is supposedly socialism, will see the disappearance of the proletariat *qua* proletariat. This notwithstanding, Lukács writes that "the protracted death struggle of the bourgeoisie" is dialectically related to the fact that "only the consciousness of the proletariat can point to the way that leads out of the impasse of capitalism" (Ibid:68, 76). Following this logic Ritzer is able to claim that, "The bourgeoisie can never transform its false consciousness into true class consciousness; this is possible only for the proletariat" (1992:173). The idea here is that, in calling the proletariat into existence, the bourgeoisie unwittingly sows the seeds of its own destruction; but the dilemma is systemic and lies beyond the reach of individual actors or the capitalist class as a whole.

But what about proletarian false consciousness? In *The German Ideology,* Marx and Engels acknowledged the limitations of reductionism and mechanical thinking when they wrote that, "...man also possesses 'consciousness,'" but owing to the dominance of bourgeois ideology and the vicissitudes of daily living, it is "not inherent, not 'pure' consciousness" (1947:19). In other words, rather than romanticizing the worker as an always-conscious and informed revolutionary actor, Marx and Engels understood the power and pervasiveness of bourgeois ideology and the practical difficulties that militated against effective proletarian political education and the development of class consciousness.

Given the exploitive, oppressive and alienating conditions under which the worker is forced to live and work, and speaking specifically of the relationship between ideology, consciousness and political action, Engels was led to write the following in a letter to Franz Mehring in 1893: "Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces compelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process" (1977:496). What he is suggesting is that workers, even the most exploited, who are often steeped in the bourgeois ideologies of individualism and materialism, are not to be expected automatically to develop a critical class understanding their difficult life circumstances. In addition, what objectively might be in the best long-term interests of the worker (e.g., joining a labour union), might be resisted out of fear of losing his or her job, or rejected in favour of a course of individual action (e.g., snitching to the boss), that is tailored more to his or her immediate or short-term interests: job security. This example of what is supposedly false consciousness points up the question of rationality and the fact that what may be seen as an appropriate and rational decision in the short-term, may in the fullness of time just turn out to have been wrong.

Because human beings are subjective beings who are subjectively involved in their worlds, their apprehensions of those worlds are understandably ideologically formed. This means that any talk about the existence of 'objectivity' or an 'objective reality' is bound to be itself ideological. So, to speak of consciousness as somehow 'false' begs the question of what 'true' consciousness is, and how one might go about discovering it. This means that class consciousness and false consciousness are matters of *subjective imputation,* which led Georg Lukács to observe that:

> It must not be thought, however, that all classes ripe for hegemony have a class consciousness with the same inner structure. Everything hinges on the extent to which they can become conscious of the actions they need to perform in order to obtain and organize power. The question then becomes: how far does the class concerned perform the actions that history has imposed on it 'consciously' or 'unconsciously'? And is that consciousness 'true' or 'false'(Lukács 1971:53).

Although he was roughly of the same mind as Marx and Engels on the question of false consciousness, Lenin was even less inclined to romanticize the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. Indeed, talking about ideology and political action, he was opposed to seeing the working class as specially endowed with a 'spontaneous,' proletarian, revolutionary consciousness. For him consciousness was created, not given. It was the culmination of a period of education and struggle, for the the working class was so dominated by bourgeois ideology that it could not be expected automatically, naturally or spontaneously to develop a revolutionary consciousness. Equating working class revolutionary consciousness with socialist consciousness, Lenin was in full agreement with Karl Kautsky whom he quotes as follows in *What is to be done?*:

> ... socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from

> without and not something that arose within it spontaneously .... the task of Social Democracy is to imbue the proletariat [literally: saturate the proletariat] with the consciousness of its position and the consciousness of its task (1969:40).

Then Lenin goes on to add his own views to the effect that trade union consciousness amounted to false consciousness. For what trade unions encouraged was a narrow *economism* according to which workers focussed entirely on their local, individual, material interests and in the process lost sight totally of the wider class struggle for socialism and *proletarian internationalism.* Thus, he writes: "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves .... the only choice is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology....trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie" (Lenin 1969:40-41). In sum, then, false consciousness is a thorny term, but if carefully nuanced, will nevertheless prove useful for my analysis of ethnic nationalism, the motives that impel ethnic entrepreneurs (Allahar 2004), and the class interests that underlie "the activism of Third World leaders bent on inventing nations where they do not exist, and engaged in the project of constructing the nation-to-be" (Smith 1988:6).

4. Ethnic Nationalism

My definition of the term 'ethnic' includes the notion of identity and is borrowed in part from Anthony Smith, for whom an ethnic community, or *ethnie,* is "a named human population possessing a myth of common descent, common historical memories, elements of shared culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity" (Smith 1988:9). To this extent it is well known that myth is a crucial element in cementing national unity. Take for example, the recounting of history in the post-independence (1991) case of Ukraine as compared with that of Belarus. The determination to write the history of Ukraine and Belarus from a Ukrainian and Belarusian perspective was intimately tied to the need for (re)discovering or inventing one's history, traditions and myths. Thus, in the specific case of Ukraine the struggle to (re)claim the legacy of the medieval state of Kyiv Rus was a project given over to historians and historiographers, who have sought to enhance the national mythology and to give ethnic Ukrainians a marker by which to root or to anchor their ethnic identity (Kuzio 2006). The process of national re-building in Belarus, on the other hand, was somewhat different owing to the fact that "Belarus had little mythology as an independent nation to draw upon" (Kuzio and Nordberg1999:72).

Related to the question of myth in the formation of national identity is the idea of 'situational ethnicity,' which sees ethnic identity as "incipient, problematic, and situationally determined" (Nagel and Olzak 1982:129), and which implies that, since not all ethnic groups are politically mobilized at all times, ethnic mobilization is a calculated, rational response to the challenges faced by some ethnic groups at historically specific times. As will be suggested, the recent concerns among cultural nationalists with 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia,

Serbia, Chechenia, in Rwanda and Burundi, and with establishing purity of African and Indian roots among various Caribbean populations are cases in point (Allahar 2004). This said, I will understand (ethnic) nationalism as an ideological claim, or a movement seeking to make such a claim, of self-determination and sovereignty. Integral to this statement is (a) the existence of some bounded territory or 'nation' over which nationalists already have jurisdiction and are able to maintain it, or (b) in the case of a nationalist *movement,* some bounded territory over which members wish to claim jurisdiction.

The emphasis on 'territory' as an important dimension of ethno-national unity can be seen in the example of Central Asia following the demise of the Soviet Union. For apart from the historical processes of migration, one of the main reasons for today's conflicts in that region is to be traced back to the Soviet Union and the frequent interference with borders that led to a situation where many of the various ethnic groups that historically inhabited the region are scattered across areas that were not formerly their own. As a consequence to date there are at least 10 disputed territories in the wider region as ethnic sentiments have been reawakened and leaders of ethnic movements have come to the fore to fan the flames of ethnic insecurity and ethnic uprooting.

5. A Working Definition

In an attempt to deal analytically with the density of the concept of nationalism scholars have spoken of two broad types: (a) modern civic or territorial nationalism, where the nation is legally or juridically defined, and contains clear class elements and (b) a more traditional ethnic or genealogical nationalism, where the nation is more ethnically and culturally defined (Calhoun 1993:221). The civic definition sees territory as central but adds a common economy, common laws that apply equally to all citizens, a public mass educational system, shared administrative and military institutions, and a single civic ideology (Smith 1988:9). The latter will include such charged political symbols as a national flag, a national anthem, a national coat-of-arms and a set of national holidays. Deciding on which of these will represent the nation is potentially a matter of intense and continuing political debate among co-nationals, especially in the case of a multiethnic nation-state, whether already formed or in the process of formation.

As a mode of political being, civic nationalism was expected to be more prevalent in those nation states such as are encountered in post-colonial and post-independence Eastern Europe and the Caribbean. And it is the fact of their multi-ethnic make-up that renders the debate over ethno-national identity so intense and at times so acrimonious, for, masked by emotive claims of ethnic entrepreneurs, the class dimensions of civic nationalism often shade into and become complicated by the re-awakened ethnic consciousness so characteristic of modern society. Thus viewed, ethnic nationalism, both historically and today, is to be found where ethnic groups assert themselves as nations (e.g. the Nation of Islam in the US or the First Nations in Canada), or else where they are in the process of reasserting national status. Once more the ex-

ample of Eastern Slavic nationalisms come to mind as one tries to make sense of the question of national identity and nationalism in the context of politics and history in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Thus, in examining the three Eastern Slavic peoples known as Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians political analysts have paid much attention to the issue of ethnic recognition. Given the power and the imperialistic motives of the Russians, during the period of the USSR leading politicians steadfastly refused to regard the Ukraine and Belarus as foreign countries with separate ethnic identities. Thus, Kuzio (2006) tells us, in the writing of the history of the region the Russophile (Russian imperial) and Sovietophile (Soviet) versions were always dominant and they treated Ukraine and Belarus largely as appendages of Russia. Indeed, any talk of Ukrainian independence was seen by Sovietophile historians as 'unnatural' for nature had decreed that the country was naturally part of the Russian union (2006:408). In the post-independence era, however, an Eastern Slavic and Ukrainophile (Ukrainian national) historiography has sought to set the record straight by according Ukraine and Belarus the roles of independent actors on the historical stage.

So, similar to the Greek usage described earlier, my understanding of the term 'ethnic' is closely bound up with that of 'nation;' and 'ethnic' is meant to designate those groups that experience a distinct sense of *we-ness,* or what can be called *nation-ness,* that claim a common history, a common line of ancestral descent, and a common culture complete with a set of common customs and unifying myths. While it is generally felt that civic nationalism is more modern and grew out of this earlier form of ethno-cultural nationalism, the contemporary politics of ethnic nationalism in the Caribbean and the former Soviet Union suggests, if not the reverse, at least a return to the earlier form of group identification.

Ethnic nationalism, then, is to be found in situations where a discrete ethnic group lays claim to a national identity and patrimony that (a) separates it from other groups, ethnic or non-ethnic, and (b) has in mind a clear territorial base. Given the above discussion of civic nationalism, it goes without saying that not all nationalism is ethnically driven, for there are numerous examples of multi-ethnic nations or multi-ethnic states in which class forms the basis for nationalist appeals. Therefore, any comprehensive definition of nationalism will have to include both the civic and ethnic dimensions of the phenomenon. Caught up in the dislocating economics and politics of globalization, certain countries in the former USSR, for example, Ukraine, Georgia and even in the Caucasus region and the contemporary Caribbean, evince a fluid back-and-forth movement between the two approaches to nationalism, as various ethnic entrepreneurs attempt to capitalize on the peoples' general sense of cultural uprootedness and dislocation. As will be seen presently, the entrepreneurs in question are not averse to excavating (their invented version of) history with a view to mobilizing specific ethnic groups for political ends:

> The aim is to present a vivid, archaeologically faithful and comprehensive record of the na-

> tion from the dawn of its existence until the present in a convincing and dramatic narrative form, which will inspire members of the *ethnie* to return to ancestral ways and ideals, and mobilise them to create on its basis a modern nation, or, in nationalist language, 'reawaken the nation' (Smith 1988:13).

Viewed in this way, the overall process of mobilization involves a reciprocity between the two approaches to nationalism whereby both appear to be mutually reinforcing as ethnic groups compete for the right to (re)name or (re)define the juridical nation. And when parties to the competition are of roughly equal power and resources, refusal to yield or compromise will tend to result in separatism or ethnic strife.

The foregoing is related to one additional matter which concerns the idea of territory or the 'home' in 'homeland.' As Harold Isaacs charges: "Territory has a critical role to play in maintaining group separateness; without it a 'nationality' has difficulty becoming a 'nation' and a 'nation' cannot become a state" (1975:53). This is particularly important in the modern age of globalization, diasporas, long distance travel, and mass migrations, and is intimately bound up with the politics of identity and belonging. For whether one is driven out of one's homeland as a slave, an indentured worker, a political refugee, or for reasons of economic hardship, or simply for purposes of family reunification, diasporic politics and the nostalgic imaginings of home from abroad are crucial elements in the territorial aspects of identity and belonging to a homeland. What we do know, however, is that even those communities that have lost their homelands through colonial or imperial conquest, war, migration and so on, will continue to root themselves in the world by reference, even spiritually, to that (imagined) homeland.

6. Marxism and Nationalism

Of the various attempts to deal analytically with the vexing question of nationalism, I have found the work of neo-Marxists to be the most sophisticated and instructive. Among them, however, there is no automatic, agreed-upon consensus. Thus, as a neo-Marxist, when Tom Nairn wrote: "The theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure" (1975:3), he was echoing the sentiments of many like-minded others, who were caught off-guard by the persistence of nationalist and ethnic identity allegiance right into the modern era of global capitalism. But Marxists were not the only ones guilty of this shortcoming, for functionalists, modernization and dependency theorists, among many others, were convinced that the social identities of clan, tribe, village, ethnicity and nation would not survive into the modern period. The exigencies of modern living, industrialization, secularization, urbanization, the destruction of traditional community and the 'freeing' of the individual, were all expected to dictate a more rational approach to identity and survival. Life in a thriving and bustling metropolitan setting, it was felt, would be based more on one's occupational and economic position than one's membership in a tribe, clan, family or ethnic group. Indeed, all the other non-class forms of identity and aware-

ness, particularly the ethnic and nationalist ones, were felt by Marxists to constitute epiphenomena – a *false consciousness*; to be distractions from the *true realization* of the roots of class (economic) exploitation and political disenfranchisement (Campbell 1972:5-6).

Given Marx and Engels' political and ideological commitment to socialism and the politics of class struggle, it is not difficult to understand why they would have downplayed the questions of ethnic and national consciousness. But as the historical record demonstrates, even if the above-noted expectations may have been warranted in their time, world events over the past 100 years have proven them wrong. Benedict Anderson says it well: "...the 'end of the era of nationalism,' so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" (1983:12). As we know, the processes of colonization, slavery, imperialism and globalization have done more to keep global ethnic and national consciousness alive than Marx and Engels ever could have predicted. Further, because their political vision was internationalist (Munck 1986:3), it is understandable that Marx and Engels would have been opposed to nationalism. The final sentence of *The Communist Manifesto* is clear in its exhortation: "Workingmen of *all* countries, unite!" (1955:46; my emphasis).

This exhortation was based on their view that the development of capitalism would internationalize exploitation and thereby eliminate the national differences among the proletariats of various countries. On this basis they claimed that "the workingmen have no country," for "National differences and antagonisms between peoples are vanishing... owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world market, to uniformity in the mode of production..." (Ibid:29). Their point was not so much that working men (and women) had lost their countries to the forces of capitalism and imperialism, but rather that the historic role of the proletariat was one of international solidarity against the forces of imperialism.

In the estimation of Marx and Engels the proletarian struggle was aimed at securing world socialism, not at the national liberation of a single country or group of countries. For this reason nationalist consciousness appeared to them as divisive of the international proletarian solidarity in struggle, as false consciousness, and they tended to ignore it. As V.G. Kiernan has noted: "...nationality in itself was not a theme that greatly interested them; they looked forward to its speedy demise, and in the meantime were far more concerned with its component elements, social classes." And: "Nationalism is a subject on which Marx and Engels are commonly felt to have gone astray, most markedly in their earlier years, by greatly underestimating a force which was about to grow explosively" (1983:344; 346).

This point was picked up by Marxists like Lenin and Stalin and those neo-Marxists who followed them. For by the turn of the 20th century, when imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism, became manifest, movements for national liberation in Europe showed that: "... where a straightforward struggle against imperialism was being waged, fusion or linkage of socialism with nationalism won many suc-

cesses" (Kiernan 1983:349). Thus, throughout the remainder of that century there was an uneasy, very tenuous alliance between those nationalist movements that waged wars of national liberation and those Marxist movements that struggled for socialism. But the stand-off was not as black-and-white as many have made it out to be; for despite their internationalist politics, Marx and Engels did acknowledge that the struggle for socialism is more practically waged in the first instance at the national level: "the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie" (Marx and Engels 1955:21). This is a very important point to underscore, particularly because ideological opponents of Marxism are so quick to distort the record and claim, as Ronaldo Munck does, that "Essentially, Marxism has no theory of nationalism" (1986:2). Hence, though aware of the limitations and distractions of nationalist consciousness, Marx and Engels recognized the need to incorporate some consideration of that consciousness as part of the process of the larger struggle for socialism. How, then, does the so-called national question become articulated with the ethnic dimension of the struggle for emancipation in multi-ethnic, post-colonial settings such as the former Soviet republics and the Caribbean?

7. Class and Nationalism

Regarding the class aspects of nationalism, and in the specific context of the Caribbean, I want to offer some more theoretical observations and suggest three ideal-types of class-bound nationalism: (a) bourgeois nationalism; (b) petty-bourgeois nationalism; and (c) popular or working-class nationalism. The key questions in each of these is: which class gets to name or define the nation? Which class' vision and values will prevail in that definition?

The first example of nationalism, *bourgeois nationalism,* is the type with which we are most familiar. It encompasses the kind of appeal that the capitalist class in Europe made early in the development and consolidation of national economies and the identification of national boundaries. This type of nationalism is very effective in fostering false consciousness and distracting the middle- and working-classes from a clear understanding of their economic and political exploitation and disenfranchisement. It suggests that national allegiance and devotion, from which the bourgeoisie stands to benefit, are paramount and represent the only viable route to sovereignity, security, national unity and prosperity.

As a political ideology, bourgeois nationalism works hand-in-hand with capitalism and liberalism, which seek to portray the private concerns of the bourgeoisie, rationalization of business practices, bureaucratic efficiency and the securing of huge profits, as benefiting the nation as a whole. Even in those cases where rationalism and efficiency demand downsizing, out-sourcing, job losses and worker dislocation, bourgeois nationalists tout these as 'natural' occurrences in any healthy economy. The class vision of bourgeois nationalists is one which understands the nation and its wealth as belonging to the bourgeoisie, and although some concessions

have to be made to other social class fractions and groups along the way, in the final analysis the lion's share of the political and economic spoils belongs to their class. Thus conceived, bourgeois nationalism sprang from European capitalism and the various wars of the 18th and 19th centuries that were aimed at nation building on that continent. In the process, as European capitalism spread across national boundaries to encompass new lands and continents, especially the Americas, it consolidated itself in the practices of colonialism, imperialism and globalization, giving birth to today's *imperialist bourgeoisie,* which has such a direct hand in the moulding of nationalisms in the rest of the (developing) world. Curiously, with the world as its economic playground, the imperialist bourgeoisie is more internationalist than nationalist, for internationalism today is a defining feature of globalization and neo-liberalism. Thus, whereas Marx and Engels clearly favoured the idea of 'internationalism' as it spoke to the proletariat, they clearly opposed the bourgeois version of such internationalism.

The second type of nationalism, *petty-bourgeois nationalism,* is, as the name suggests. It is a form of bourgeois nationalism albeit on a somewhat smaller (petit or petty) scale. Of course it is not possible to quantify nationalism *per se,* so what do I mean by 'smaller scale'? Quite simply, petty-bourgeois nationalism in this usage speaks to the scale of surplus value appropriation of the petty-bourgeoisie relative to the scale of bourgeois appropriation. For example, whereas in economic matters one fraction of the bourgeoisie will favour policies of *free trade* in those areas where it has comparative advantage, the petty-bourgeoisie is more traditionally in favour of *protectionism.* Unable to compete internationally, the petty-bourgeoisie's scale of operations is restricted to the local market, and to the extent that they make nationalist appeals, those are aimed at promoting and protecting their specific spheres of operation: *local* industry, *local* manufacturing, and the exchange of *locally*-produced goods and services. To this end the petty-bourgeoisie is also keen, to the extent it is possible, to have control of, or input into the post-colonial state, where decisions governing the operations of the local economy are taken.

So whereas there exists a petty-bourgeoisie in the countries of advanced capitalism, I wish to call attention to the petty-bourgeoisie in the so-called Third World or developing countries, and the attempts of the latter to define the nation politically and economically. Understanding the position of the Third World petty-bourgeoisie is very complex owing to the fact that some scholars use the term 'petty-bourgeoisie' to refer to the class fraction that has *political control* of the post-colonial political order and the state (Fanon 1963; Sudama 1983; Dupuy 1991), while others focus on the Third World petty-bourgeoisie as a class that is *economically subordinated* to the imperialist bourgeoisie (Frank 1972; Chirot 1977; 1986). In the present context I will treat the petty-bourgeoisie as a single class with distinct economic and political fractions, that are also given to intra-bourgeois conflicts at specific moments.

I am thus in agreement with Trevor Sudama, when he wrote that "the petty-bour-

geoisie emerged as a class in the pursuit of control over the post colonial state apparatus" (1983:77), but at the same time this class was limited to the role of junior partner of the imperialist bourgeoisie. For this reason, whether in its political or economic guise, petty-bourgeois nationalism contains no critique of capitalism, is generally reformist, and seeks mainly to accommodate the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie. This means that petty-bourgeois nationalism is guided by the clear class goal of securing a space for its own economic and political manoeuvers in between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the working classes. To this extent the petty-bourgeoisie is a class that has had different names, some of which are not too flattering. André Gunder Frank (1972) called it the "lumpenbourgeoisie," while Frantz Fanon, who saw it as a "national bourgeoisie," felt nevertheless that its behaviour was that "of a traditional bourgeoisie, of a bourgeoisie which is stupidly, contemptibly, cynically bourgeois" (1963:150).

Alex Dupuy has dubbed the political fraction of this class a *managerial bourgeoisie* given the fact of its control of the post-colonial state, and that in exercising state control it is answerable to the will of the *international corporate bourgeoisie* (Dupuy 1991:75). Because the economic wealth of Third World countries is largely owned and controlled by the international corporate (imperialist) bourgeoisie, access to power and privilege among local classes is seen to come from control of the local state apparatus, for this is the most promising avenue to power, prestige, personal enrichment and privilege via graft, corruption, and other less-than-legal means. On penalty of removal from power, and as junior partners of the imperialist bourgeoisie, members of this class are obliged to do the bidding of the latter.

Understood in this way, the Third World petty-bourgeoisie can be seen to comprise two separate class fractions. The first fraction discussed above can be described, not as national, but as *anti*-national, in that its policies are geared to servicing the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, and are not designed to promote truly national or indigenous development of local industry and manufacturing, and the infrastructure that accompanies such processes. Writing about post-independence Trinidad and Tobago, Sudama notes that this class fraction: "hardly ever took an independent position on any question." It contented itself with "the knowledge that the chosen path of capitalist development and the dominant influence of the international bourgeoisie guaranteed conditions for the pursuit of its economic interests (1983:80).

The second take on the Third World petty-bourgeoisie is related to the presence of another important set of local economic actors. I am referring to what Chilcote and Edelstein (1974:735) among others label the *comprador bourgeoisie.* Compared to the other fraction of this class, the comprador bourgeoisie is smaller and weaker, and has a clear interest, not in cooperating with the imperialist bourgeoisie, but in lessening the country's degree of dependence on the latter. Therefore, following the logic of my argument, I dub this fraction the *patriotic* national bourgeoisie. For whether as large landowners,

local manufacturers, merchants and traders, or even financiers, this fraction of the bourgeoisie is one that is said to pursue policies that, though bourgeois, are more concerned with harnessing the indigenous resources for local industrial growth and development. The activities of this class, which, in strictly local-national terms "owns the means of production of industrial goods, and whose interests are, as a consequence, opposed to those of foreign capital" (Torres Rivas 1977:39), are also concentrated in the areas of small business, banking, transportation, insurance, real estate, legal and accounting services. Its industrial policies are largely those of *protectionism,* which serve to shelter locally nascent industrial, manufacturing and service operations from ruinous foreign competition.

Compared to the *anti*-national fraction of this bourgeoisie, which benefits from the partial freeing of trade, and which is primarily interested in the export of non-processed or unfinished raw materials, this latter fraction is seen to act more as a national, in the *patriotic* sense of the word, bourgeoisie (Allahar 1990:227-235). It is not that this *patriotic petty-bourgeoisie* is somehow more virtuous than the anti-national or even the imperialist bourgeoisie. It just so happens that its class interests do not go as clearly and as immediately counter to the interests of the Third World nation in question. Given its structurally antagonistic position *vis-à-vis* the imperialist and anti-national bourgeoisies, the patriotic petty-bourgeoisie is likely to be more progressive, but can be expected to stop short of calling for socialism and the genuine nationalization of the country's means of production. Analytically then, it is important to make a distinction between the political and economic arms of lumpendevelopment. The class fraction that has political control of the state in the post-colonial order, is separate from the local economic actors who control commerce and the entire agro-export industry, but who are subject to the laws enacted by the former fraction of the petty-bourgeoisie in control of the state.

In a region such as the post-independence, English-speaking Caribbean, the political fraction of the petty-bourgeoisie is composed of the intellectuals, who were groomed by the colonizers, and later by the imperialist bourgeoisie, to assume state power after the latters' departure from the colony. They were often educated in the universities of the colonizers and former colonizers, steeped in the latter's political culture and values, and as a consequence their political campaigns were, and continue to be funded, both directly and indirectly, by foreign interests. Writing on the eve of independence in 1961 C.L.R. James referred to this group collectively as "the West Indian middle classes" and as "political *nouveaux-riches,*" whose "ignorance and disregard of economic development is profound and deeply rooted in their past and present situation. They do not even seem to be aware of it... I do not know of any social class which lives so completely without ideas any kind" (1980:131-134). And half a century later not much has changed. For once elected, this petty-bourgeois class of political leaders, the ones who are put in power to carry on the business of the colonialist and imperialist bourgeoisies, are also able to call upon poli-

tically and ideologically sympathetic foreign states to provide military support and protection whenever threats to their continued rule, actual or perceived, might arise locally. On this score James' critique of this class, though almost 50 years ago, is still generally applicable: "They seem to aim at nothing more than being second-rate American citizens.... They are dying to find some communists against whom they can thunder and so make an easier road to American pockets" (James 1980:134).

This is also the class described by Frantz Fanon variously as "the national bourgeoisie" or "the national middle class" (Fanon 1963). And speaking of this class, one of Fanon's foremost interpreters, Irene Gendzier, writes of "the inability of the bourgeoisie to act in the national interests" and as exhibiting "a total indifference to the needs of the mass of the population; and worst of all, an economically ineffectual and pretentious minority" (1973:218). Generally speaking, neither the political nor the economic fractions of the local petty-bourgeoisies in the post-independence Caribbean countries is either revolutionary or nationalist in the genuine sense of the term, for their principal mandate is to preserve the conditions for the expanded reproduction and accumulation of capital. And capitalism has not shown itself to have the interests of the masses of any single country, let alone the masses of the world, at heart (Allahar 1995:127). In other words, because the leaders of these countries are committed to the retention of capitalism, and even if at times they have been known to espouse a populist rhetoric aimed at national mobilization, the fact remains that each passing day bears testimony to their inability to deliver the goods to the people.

Finally, there is *working class nationalism,* which in my estimation comes closest to a true or genuine nationalism. As the largest class in terms of sheer numbers, its policies have the potential, if only statistically, of taking into account what is in the best interests of the majority of the nation. On this basis I will argue that a *genuine* working class nationalism, as opposed to a working class nationalism based on *false consciousness,* is a stepping stone to socialism!

In the same way that the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie of different countries are able to promote and pursue class-bound nationalist strategies, one may also conceive of popular or working class nationalism. Just as one may speak of a capitalist state that serves principally the interests of the capitalist class(es), I am speaking here of nationalism as an ideology that informs a worker's movement bent on creating a 'nation,' whose policies and programs are more in tune with its interests. Because the interests of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie do not coincide exactly with those of the working class or the wider masses, it is possible to envisage a nationalist claim on the part of workers that goes against that of the various petty-bourgeois fractions. But to the extent that the working class is not homogeneous and workers do not all share the same politics, how is it possible to speak of a workers' state that will pursue the interests of the working class?

As hinted above, this is a serious issue, for it begs the question of whether nationa-

list consciousness among the working class is false consciousness. The answer has to begin with the acknowledgement that while not all the members of the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeoisie as a whole will have identical political interests, so too, within the working class it is to be expected that there will be political differences. And this is where the thorny issue of *false consciousness* comes into play. Those members of the working class, who, for whatever reasons, do not challenge bourgeois or petty-bourgeois definitions of what is in the best interest of the nation, and whose political stance does not include a critique of capitalism, may well be said to be suffering from false consciousness. For as I have argued, throughout its history capitalism has shown itself to be inimical to the long-term interests of working people everywhere.

On the other hand, as long as a significant proportion of the class is organized, educated, united and conscious, and as long as they agitate for a nation in which the broad interests of workers are protected and promoted, we are able to speak either of a genuine working class nationalism or a genuine working class nationalist *movement.* The latter is relevant in the context of 'territory,' for nations that are in search of homes are understandably concerned with the establishment of a physical homeland or 'space' that they can call theirs: "Possession of territory is, after all, a *sine qua non* of statehood and an essential goal of every nationalism" (Smith 1983:xiii).

In sum, therefore, *true* working class nationalism is a step toward socialism, or, stated differently, a step toward working class internationalism! For it is only when the proletariat "wins the battle of democracy" (Marx and Engels 1955:31) and establishes a socialist state that the interests of the working class as a whole can begin *genuinely* to be addressed. This is precisely the sentiment of Marx and Engels as expressed in *The Communist Manifesto*: "In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, *independently of all nationality*" (Marx and Engels 1955:23, my emphasis). This is also consistent with the argument of Anthony Smith who affirms that: "...nationalism is typically a political argument, a tool for seizing the state by mobilizing, coordinating and legitimating the movement of the masses" (Smith 1988:5).

My argument, then, is that a working class nationalism that is not based on false consciousness must in effect be internationalist in its vision, and this is synonymous with international socialism. The specifics of such a working class movement, however, will understandably have to take into consideration the practical conditions facing the working class or proletariat in a given country, be it advanced industrial or developing, and the specific socialist content of the policies to be implemented once that movement is successful.

8. Conclusion: Leadership, Class and Ethnic Nationalism

At this point the question of the leadership of such a movement is relevant. While the working class is quite capable of generating its own nationalist (and revolutionary) leaders, and in fact has done so with regularity over the years and all over the world, one also

has to be aware of the political influence of conscious, non-proletarian individuals on the proletarian movement. A compelling case in point is that of Marx and Engels themselves, who were decidedly not from the working class, yet they were very cognizant of the potential for change inherent in a politicized and class conscious proletariat that contained radical elements of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois sympathizers: "...in times when the class struggler nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, ... assumes a violent, glaring character" and it is precisely at this time that "a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands." In other words, "a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" (Marx and Engels 1955:20).

Lenin is in full agreement and is very clear not to romanticize the revolutionary potential of the working class as something that is either automatic or spontaneous. Indeed, while making the case for scientific socialism, he was keen to underscore the central role of theory, criticism and reflection in the process: "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (Lenin 1969:25). And speaking of theory and its relationship to the process of scientific analysis and understanding, once more he cites approvingly Karl Kautsky, who argued that socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge:

> The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the bourgeois intelligentsia: it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle .... Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arose within it spontaneously (Lenin 1969:40).

In the Caribbean context this brings to mind the potential leadership role of middle class or petty-bourgeois intellectuals in a working class nationalist movement (Allahar 2001b). It also brings to mind Tom Nairn's provocative charge in the European context that: "The new middle-class intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite the masses into history..." (Nairn 1977:340). For what I want to suggest is that, depending on the circumstances at hand, such bourgeois or petty-bourgeois intellectuals may be able either to hijack the working class movement and harness its energies for their own purposes, or to provide genuine internationalist leadership. In other words, depending on the movement's leadership and its general degree of class consciousness and political action, working class nationalism can be channelled in either a reactionary bourgeois, or a progressive socialist direction. The former, as is often the case, may witness the emergence of politically skilled, petty-bourgeois ethnic entrepreneurs, who use appeals to race and ethnic solidarity as distractions, and who also exploit false consciousness by tapping into the emotions of the workers and commanding their al-

legiance. The latter, on the other hand, will look beyond race and ethnic differences and attempt to retain its class character. This will speak to true class consciousness and the attempts by both the leadership and the rank and file of the movement to promote a socialist alternative to dependent capitalism and to create possibilities for the triumph of humanism and communalism over materialism, consumerism and individualism.

To elaborate, as an example of the first (false consciousness) I want to suggest a critical look at the politics of ethnicity and ethnic nationalism and the ethnic entrepreneurs who energize such politics. For it is my contention that the politics in question serve to promote false consciousness. My point of departure is a comment made by Paul Gilroy and directed specifically at Afrocentrism, but is equally applicable to other forms of ethnonational political appeals and movements. First, as Gilroy writes, such (Afrocentric) political movements lack "even the possibility of imagining an alternative to capitalism" (Gilroy 2000:210), thus tying their fate to the fortunes of capital, and second, their spokespersons are responsible for promoting a politics of distraction (race) within the working classes. Stated differently, my charge is that ethnic nationalism is a political appeal made by ethnic entrepreneurs who have very clear and narrow class and power interests at heart, but who, in order to realise those interests, will mask them by emotional appeals to race, hoping thus to gain the support of as broad a base as possible. To secure their goal of mobilizing politically and emotionally a given population, such ethnic entrepreneurs play on an assumed primordial, ethno-racial commonality, which distracts members of the target population from a class understanding of their situation. In the process the latter are prevented from coming to see that the so-called harmony of ethno-racial interests may well mask serious class divisions *within* the ethno-racial group in question.

On the other hand, for my example of genuine working class consciousness and proletarian internationalism, I refer the reader to socialist Cuba, complete with all its notable triumphs and glaring failures. I would also invite the reader here to separate the genuine problems of socialism in Cuba from those problems of socialism induced by imperialist aggression (Allahar 2001a). Because human beings are imperfect (that's what makes them human), the social and political systems they create will reflect those imperfections. The challenge, then, is to establish priorities based on humanistic ideals, to assess the potential costs or consequences of achieving those ideals, and to strive to minimise the latter. To this I suggest that the imperfections of socialism are to be preferred over those of (dependent) capitalism in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims to propose a schema for analysing the contemporary politics of national and ethnic identity in post-colonial and post-socialist states. To this end it will seek: (a) to provide a comprehensive operational definition of nationalism, (b) to qualify that definition by the addition of the adjective 'ethnic,' (c) to assess the extent to which the concept 'ethnic nationalism' can help us to understand some of the politics of ethnicity and national identity in a post-independence setting, and (d) to problematize the notion of 'false consciousness' in ethno-national political appeals. My argument will be situated within the broad theoretical framework of a non-reductionist, neo-Marxist class analysis, for it is my conviction that ethno-national consciousness and politics are better understood if we are able to trace the concrete class interests and motives of their promoters. In other words, whether as sentiment or as movement, nationalism cannot be divorced from the class interests of its leading promoters. But one must be cautious when absolutizing the class claim, for in the specific case of ethnic nationalism, for example, Robin Williams has noted that "to dismiss ethnicity as false consciousness ignores the clear evidence that *ethnies* often sacrifice economic interests in favour of symbolic gains" (1994:64-65), and even beyond this, as Ronaldo Munck reminds us, "nationalism matters because people die for it" (1986:2).

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