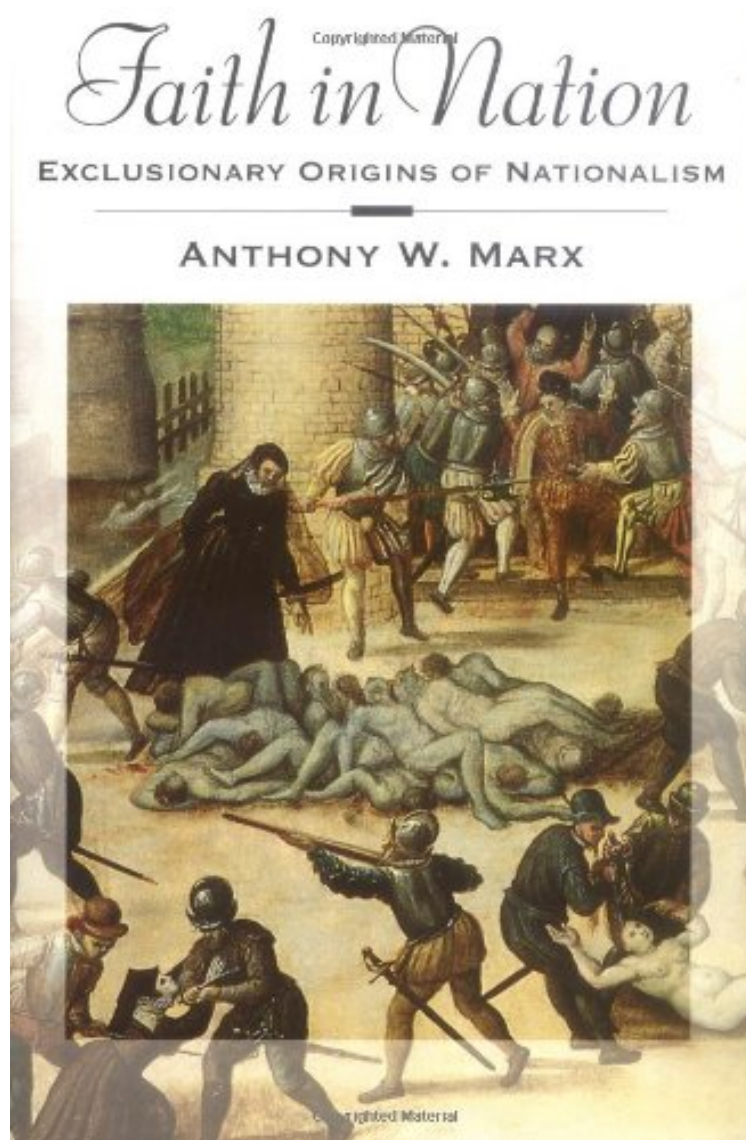


[Download pdf] Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism

Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism

Anthony W. Marx

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Anthony W. Marx : Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Faith in Nation: Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Western Liberalism on TrialBy Yibing WuIn Faith in Nation, Anthony Marx delivers a spirited rebuttal of the "literary trope" (p 15) about a liberal, inclusive Western nationalism. Instead, he argues that even the "truest" brand of Western nationalism-that of England and France-came to being only after brutal fratricide of massive scale. His entire theory is based on a central position that nationalism developed

much earlier than is popularly believed today. This leads one to question why does he insist on such a position? Has he made the case for it? What happens to his theory if the position turns out to be wrong? I will argue that the definition of the state, or the lack thereof, is key to answering all of the above questions. Only by implicitly loosening the definition of the state, can Marx trace the genesis of Western nationalism back to as early as the 16th century, thus cementing the linkage between Western nationalism and religious violence. However, the liberal adaptation of the concept of the state puts Marx's entire theory on shaky ground. According to Marx, the state is the *raison d'état* of nationalism: for nationalism to become a historical force, it "must ... refer to a state as an existing structure or potential object of engagement" (p 8). Although he declares early and clearly what nationalism is (p 4), he never spells out his definition of a state. In fact, what we would think of as a modern state today can hardly be found in 16th century Europe. Only when the definition of a state is sufficiently loosened, can Marx backdate nationalism to the 16th century, when most of the political authorities at the time existed in the form of royal courts. Only after he pushes back the genesis of nationalism, can Marx connect the religious violence of the 16th century to nationalism. Only when the religious violence is viewed as part of the history of nation building, does it acquire significance in the nature of Western nationalism. Otherwise, the St. Barthelme Day massacre or the burnings at Smithfield is just another "normal" religious upheavals in history, thus any association the massacre or the burnings may have with nation building would be purely coincidental-as Liah Greenfeld implied when Marx quoted her in saying, "Frenchness was disassociating itself from Catholicism." To Anthony Marx, however, French nationalism and its French Catholic identity are not external to each other. They are just different stages in the same dialectic process. Therefore, real "Frenchness" is actually the public oblivion in France of the strange relationship between the church and the state. Yet all the grand reasoning depends on Marx's definition of the state. After all, can we call the royal courts of the 16th century "states"? Not only has Marx not given his readers a clear answer, some of his own writings seem to contradict each other. For example, Marx mentions that the Treaty of Westphalia marks the beginning of the modern states (p 35). But the French War of Religions and the reign of Mary Tudor-the very conflicts that are supposedly at the core of nation-state building-occurred almost a century earlier. Even if we use the later date, 1648, as the beginning of the state system, one still has to be cautious to label all subsequent political authorities "states". Regardless whether Louis XIV actually said "I am the state", the fact that monarchical authority is directly associated with an individual ruler makes it transient in nature (relative to institutionalized modern government), therefore it can hardly be designated the "object of engagement" for nationalist ideology. Since Marx's concept of the state is on shaky ground, his entire theory appears highly questionable. I would argue, however, there are two options that can salvage his arguments. One is to weaken the link between nationalism and the state. In other words, nationalism may develop independent of the state. This observation may have a wider application outside of the context of Western history than inside of it. The other option is to introduce a third element, such as political culture, that can bridge the violent past and state and nation building in later times. For example, one accepts that the massive fratricide did happen earlier than the emergence of the nation-state. Nevertheless, the bloodshed molded a new political culture, which manifested itself as a more inclusive nationalism when the nation-state took shape later. If such an interpretation proves to be a more sensible reading of history than that of Marx, then Marx's criticism of Western nationalism can be easily appropriated to deconstruct the Western political culture-the liberal democracy-itself: that it has a ugly past but short memory. However, is the world ready for such a "total recall"? 14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A difficult read but worth the effort.

By C. Ellen Connally

Anthony Marx, who was recently appointed president of Amherst College, exposes the clay feet of Western nationalism in his 2003 work, *FAITH IN NATION*. In this ground breaking work of revisionist political history and analysis, Marx rejects the traditionally held assumptions regarding the origins of Western nationalism. Marx goes about systemically challenging traditional scholarship that places the roots on nationalism 18th and 19th century political engagement, allegiance to the secular power of emerging states, liberalism, toleration and inclusiveness. According to Marx, nationalism was not a product of the Enlightenment. Its birth did not coincide with the rights and toleration of England's constitutional monarchy and it was not epitomized by the motto of the French Revolution, "liberty, equality and fraternity." Through the use of a comparative study of the three great Atlantic seaboard powers of early modern Western Europe, Spain, France and England, Marx shows that the origins of nationalism are in fact sinister, illiberal rather than liberal. Going back two centuries earlier than traditional thought and relying on original sources and the analysis of current day scholars, he reveals the dirty little secret that Western nationalism evolved through a process of exclusion rather than inclusion and from internal discord over religion, usually in the form of religious fanaticism. He shows the church as a tool to facilitate the exclusion of Jews in Spain, the oppression of religious sects in England and France, and sometimes murder so that like minded people could feel a sense of commonality outside the local community and for an allegiance to a central government. Although each of the countries under consideration have different histories, which Marx recounts for the reader, he shows similarities among them in terms of structural logic. Essential to the process of nation building is the transfer of power from local to central rulers. While arguing that the most effective way of transferring that power was religion and fanatical passions, Marx also shows that in most cases this process was not the result of spontaneous social forces but effectuated by policies initiated by powerful forces at the center of the society that ultimately controlled the

periphery. Absolutist rulers of the early modern European states all shared a desire to build coherence and loyalty of their subjects in order to bolster their own authority. However, the more the populace below became engaged, the more control from above was lost. He demonstrates a shifting of social controls from the center to the periphery and occasions when the center totally lost control, such as the Saint Bartholomew's massacre. At first glance, *FAITH IN NATION* is a difficult and complex work. However, once the reader comprehends the basic thesis of the book, he is thrown into a challenging and fascinating discussion of the roots of contemporary world politics which culminates in the final chapter in the discussion of St. Bartholomew as the possible patron saint of nationalism. The conclusion is grim but insightful. Marx subtly raises imponderable questions regarding the origins of the Holocaust, ethnic cleansing in Albania and tribal wars in Rwanda and even race relations in the US. In this post 9/11 work, where Americans ponder the question of why parts of the world hate us and what would drive others to seek the destruction of our way of life, Marx raises fascinating questions for discussion and debate. His scholarship challenges traditional thinking on nationalism but it goes further than that. It challenges the Western reader to reconsider their heritage and perspective on the world in which we live and question the theological backgrounds of our world. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Historical Revisionism at it's finest By Loay An iconoclastic work, a difficult read whose implications are reflected in the news headlines of today. The author locates the roots of European nationalism in its modern, tolerant form, in the religious exclusions and passions of the late 15th century. He suggests that modern nationalism, rather than being caused by a decline of religious belief is the result of the use of religious passions to mobilize populations to engage with their respective elites. This engagement took the form of persecution and exclusion of minorities. The work compares Spain, where the state institutionalized the phenomena in the Inquisition, France, where the state attempted to use anti Protestant sentiments against the Huguenots and Britain where Kings Charles I and James attempted to overcome the anti-Catholic sentiment being championed by members of parliament. In the case of Spain the lack of religious violence and passion led to incomplete nation formation while the most violent nation, France, became the most egalitarian nation. An interesting effort would be to extend the analysis to post colonial states in Africa and the Middle East. Also recommended: *Nations and Nationalism*: Ernest Gellner *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*: E.J. Hobsbawm *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*: Jacques Ellul

Common wisdom has long held that the ascent of the modern nation coincided with the flowering of Enlightenment democracy and the decline of religion, ringing in an age of tolerant, inclusive, liberal states. Not so, demonstrates Anthony W. Marx in this landmark work of revisionist political history and analysis. In a startling departure from a historical consensus that has dominated views of nationalism for the past quarter century, Marx argues that European nationalism emerged two centuries earlier, in the early modern era, as a form of mass political engagement based on religious conflict, intolerance, and exclusion. Challenging the self-congratulatory genealogy of civic Western nationalism, Marx shows how state-builders attempted to create a sense of national solidarity to support their burgeoning authority. Key to this process was the transfer of power from local to central rulers; the most suitable vehicle for effecting this transfer was religion and fanatical passions. Religious intolerance--specifically the exclusion of religious minorities from the nascent state--provided the glue that bonded the remaining populations together. Out of this often violent religious intolerance grew popular nationalist sentiment. Only after a core and exclusive nationality was formed in England and France, and less successfully in Spain, did these countries move into the "enlightened" 19th century, all the while continuing to export intolerance and exclusion to overseas colonies. Providing an explicitly political theory of early nation-building, rather than an account emphasizing economic imperatives or literary imaginings, Marx reveals that liberal, secular Western political traditions were founded on the basis of illiberal, intolerant origins. His provocative account also suggests that present-day exclusive and violent nation-building, or efforts to form solidarity through cultural or religious antagonisms, are not fundamentally different from the West's own earlier experiences.

"Marx has a case to argue and he argues it forcefully, thereby significantly advancing a debate that has tended, in recent years, to languish in a smug and unquestioning liberal consensus. A major contribution to the interdisciplinary literature on nationalism." Partha Chatterjee, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta "Rejecting almost every previous account of nationalism - including mine! -- Anthony Marx provocatively locates its European origins in rulers' strategies of building support for their regimes by ruthless labeling and exclusion of those regimes' enemies. Marx's work will make students of contemporary nationalism rethink their subject." Charles Tilly, author of *From Mobilization to Revolution and Durable Inequality* "This book is a major addition to the social science literature on nationalism; it is also a powerful argument against many of the most celebrated contemporary writers on the subject . . . The central point of the book is that nationalism results from a process of exclusion (most other writers have stressed inclusion), and particularly from internal discord over religion. As both a political scientist and a scrupulous historian, Marx uses this powerful scheme to explain and differentiate events that occurred in Spain, France, and England in the age of domestic religious conflicts. In this remarkable book, it is Saint Bartholomew whom the author proposes as the patron of nationalism. A grim view, but a rich and persuasive argument." --Foreign Affairs About the Author Anthony

Marx is the 18th President of Amherst College. Previously, he was Professor of Political Science and Co-Director of the Center for Historical Social Science at Columbia University. He is the author of *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*, winner of the Barrington Moore Prize, and co-winner of the Ralph Bunche Award.