

# Nationalism and the Multinational State

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We live in a world of nation-states where national cohesiveness constitutes the legitimizing ground for political unity. In such a world, multinational political units are considered to be peculiar entities whose existence is either taken as an exception to the rule or is considered to be transient and therefore destined to collapse into its national units.

A product of Europe's historical experience, nationalism found its way to the Muslim world and gained many adherents and advocates in its ethnic (i.e., Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish) and religious (i.e., Pakistani, Iranian) forms. The nationalistic mindset has become an intrinsic part of the political thinking of many Muslim individuals and groups. As a result of the discontinuity in historical political thinking and practice effected by the European cultural and political domination of Muslim life for the last two centuries, many Muslims are unaware of the much superior political structures which existed—albeit in rudimentary, distorted, or compromised forms—before Western penetration.

In this paper, I will discuss the origin and development of the concept of nationalism, underscore its defects, and point out some of its devastating consequences, especially in regions rich in ethnic and religious minorities. I argue that nationalism is a European phenomenon invented by German intellectuals and employed by Prussia in order to bring about a united German state. I contend that a national government tends to suppress minority groups and is therefore inappropriate to societies with heterogenous and diverse populations. I conclude by discussing, in general terms, the model of communal pluralism that flourished under the *khilāfah* system.

## The Genesis of Nationalism

Nationalism is a relatively modern political doctrine. Writers on nationalism trace it back to Rousseau, a European philosopher who insisted that a good political community was characterized by a homogeneous population. However, nationalism as we know it today began to take shape not in France, but in Germanic Prussia. German writers interested in a united German state began to advocate nationalism as the only legitimate basis for statehood.

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Among the leading German nationalists, Herder and Fichte stand out as the most articulate proponents of united Germany and as the foremost advocates of nationalism in general. Herder advanced the notion that God intended the world to be composed of diverse cultural groups, each of which would have its own unique national character. Therefore, he concluded, it was the duty of the members of the various cultural groups (or nations) to preserve their unique national heritage and to make sure that the cultural qualities of their groups remained pure. Since the preservation of the community's national character is possible only when the nation in question is ruled by a national government, Herder theorized, the realm of the state must coincide with that of the nation. Multinational states were thus unnatural, but not because Herder feared that one nation may dominate another. Rather, they were unnatural because states containing more than one nation posed a threat to the principle of diversity. Nations that were politically united under one state risked losing their national identity and, hence, of being extinguished.<sup>1</sup>

Fichte, following in Herder's footsteps, proclaimed that the German people constituted one nation and that the German nation had to be ruled by one sovereign state. In the play *Patriotism and Its Opposite*, published in 1807, Fichte expressed his nationalist sentiments through one of the play's characters. "Understand me rightly," the character says. "Separation of the Prussians from the rest of the Germans is purely artificial ... the separation of the Germans from the other European nations is based on Nature."<sup>2</sup>

In the same year, Fichte delivered a series of lectures in Berlin in which he called for the unification of the German-speaking people into one independent state. Fichte was addressing his Prussian audience at a time when the German people were divided into numerous states and municipalities. "The German-speaking parts of Europe had the most diverse political arrangements, and the fact that Prussians and Bavarians, Bohemians and Silesians all spoke German was not considered a great political moment..."<sup>3</sup>

It was natural for the Prussian proponents of nationalism to choose linguistic ties as the criteria of nationhood, for their dream was to unite all German-speaking peoples under the leadership of Prussia. Herder, and later Fichte, insisted that language was not simply a means of verbal and written communication; it was rather the repository, as it were, of a people's national character and heritage. The way individuals think and perceive the world was determined, to a great extent, by their language.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 58-9.

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Kedourie, *ibid.*, 68.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 63-8.

By inventing a political doctrine connecting language and political divisions, Prussian nationalists found a powerful way to get back at the Austro-Hungarian Empire and to justify Prussia's expansion at the empire's expense. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the largest state in Europe, its rule extending over vast territories in central and eastern Europe. This empire was composed of many different nations, and people who spoke German as their native language represented a significant portion of its subjects. The empire itself was ruled by the House of Hapsburg, a German dynasty dating back to the twelfth century, and was the main rival to the Prussian monarchy. It was also the major obstacle confronting the ambitions of a Prussia seeking to expand beyond its borders.

The nationalist ideology advanced by Prussian political philosophers was almost completely alien to the majority of Europeans living around the turn of the nineteenth century. Of course these people were aware of their ethnic and linguistic differences, but only a tiny minority of them would go so far as to equate ethnic and linguistic divisions with political divisions. "A nation, to the French revolutionaries," argues Kedourie,

meant a number of individuals who have signified their will as to the manner of their government. A nation, on this vastly different theory (i.e., the nationalist theory), becomes a natural division of the human race, endowed by God with its own character, which its citizens must, as a duty, preserve pure and inviolable. Since God has separated the nations, they should not be amalgamated. 'Every nationality,' proclaims Schleiermacher, 'is destined through its peculiar organization and its place in the world to represent a certain side of the divine image.'<sup>5</sup>

It is often argued that the nation-state system dates back to the Treaty of Westphalia which, in 1648, ended the Thirty Years' War in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Yet on closer examination, one could see that this event did not establish a system of nation-states. Rather, it recognized the sovereignty of the state and its independence from papal authority. As Kedourie observed, modern proponents of nationalism tend to confuse the state with the nation, and hence use one to justify the other. Long after the Treaty of Westphalia was signed, Europeans continued to attach their loyalties to political and religious institutions rather than to their fellow nationals.

Up until the nineteenth century, Europe rarely had political divisions pre-

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>6</sup>Daniel S. Papp, *Contemporary International Relations* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 17.

dicated on national identity. People's resistance and acquiescence to political orders had always been in response to state institutions and to the agitation of local leaders who had inspired them to support or oppose one dynastic rule or the other. The proponents of nationalism seem to forget that nations are the outcome of long and persistent efforts by established states governed by ambitious and calculating statesmen whose skills and policies, and frequently their luck, helped them expand their hegemony and prevent foreign encroachment into their spheres of influence.

Furthermore, the nation-state system allegedly established by the Treaty of Westphalia appears, under close scrutiny, more of a myth than a reality. Despite numerous wars, including two world wars, not all German-speaking people have been integrated into one united German nation. Substantial German populations still live in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and France, let alone Austria, whose population is overwhelmingly of German stock. On the other hand, many states in Europe and elsewhere continue to demonstrate, even in our own time, the futility of talking in any meaningful and coherent sense of a system of nation-states. Multinational Switzerland, Turkey, and Canada could hardly be classified as nation-states.

## The Defects of Nationalism

In spite of the overwhelming acceptance and support that the doctrine of nationalism receives from both politicians and political writers, it does have its critics. Some of the most powerful arguments leveled against nationalism have been advanced by Lord Acton. In his *Nationality*, published in 1862, Lord Acton presented four major arguments against nationalism:<sup>7</sup>

Firstly, nationalism requires that one should identify with ethnic groups rather than political institutions and that one's loyalty should be given not to moral principles, but to a group of people with whom he/she shares some physical features. Associations based on physical similarities are more appropriate to animals than to civilized human beings and are, therefore, morally inferior to associations established on moral and rational principles. It is unworthy of intelligent beings to blindly commit themselves and give their allegiance to ethnic groups or nations for, properly speaking, civilized individuals should support state institutions and give their loyalty to laws and principles.

Secondly, political societies that adopt the principle of nationalism oppress their ethnic minorities. In a national state, everyone has to observe one code of law and completely submit to the rules and regulations enacted by the national government. In such states, rules of law as well as political arrange-

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<sup>7</sup>Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 78.

ments carry the imprint of the dominant ethnic group. Ethnic minorities are thus placed in an unfavorable condition; at best, they have to give up their identity (lifestyle, language, religion, etc.) or suffer alienation and oppression.

Thirdly, nationalism lessens the possibility of free interaction and mutual help among nations. In multinational states, inferior nations could interact with intellectually superior nations in ways that would enhance their overall condition while being protected by a general law that recognizes the existence of both. It is true that inferior groups may be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by intellectually superior groups. But the very fact that the state is composed of a multiplicity of nations, and that it also needs to develop all of its resources and to maintain its territorial integrity, reduces the possibility of such abuses.

Finally, in a multinational state possessing a multiplicity of associations and diversity of interests, individual freedom is better protected against an overpowering national government. The multiplicity of groups and interests reduces the likelihood that the central government would become dominated by one group of interests.

Acton's criticism highlights the problems confronted by members of ethnic or religious minorities in a nation-state dominated by one social group with markedly different values and customs. Nationalism, which rejects the coexistence of autonomous or semiautonomous ethnic groups in the state, encourages national leaders to devise policies aimed at assimilating ethnic minorities in order to achieve national integration. This means that ethnic minorities that have social and religious practices incompatible with those of the mainstream of the society would have to give up their ethnic identity or become an out-cast and undesirable social group.

In *Nationalism and National Integration*, Birch likens Acton's suggestion (i.e., that inferior ethnic minorities can improve their conditions by becoming united in a multinational state with intellectually superior groups) to Hegel's contention that more-civilized nations are justified in regarding lesser-developed nations as barbarians who may duly be dominated by and assimilated into nations on the cutting edge of civilization. The difference between the two propositions, Birch contends, is that "Hegel wanted to see the barbarians assimilated by civilized nations, and thereby improved, whereas Acton wanted to see them left in their uncivilized conditions."<sup>8</sup> In fact, contrary to Birch's claim, the similarities between the two propositions are only superficial. On closer examination, one would see that Hegel's solution causes the degradation and humiliation of minority groups and would lead to the rise of tension and mistrust among social groups, for such an approach calls for force

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<sup>8</sup>Anthony H. Birch, *Nationalism and National Integration* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 27-8.

and the external imposition of a new lifestyle. Acton's proposal, meanwhile, does not rule out assimilation and insists that social progress and adaptation of less-developed groups should be achieved gradually and voluntarily by the minority's free choice, thereby preserving its individual freedom and dignity.

In the name of national integration and social unity, nationalist writers leave the door wide open to abuses and mistreatment of minority groups by the dominant group. Being an empty formalism, a form without content, nationalism is a potentially dangerous political doctrine. To begin with, it does not give us any precise definition of the social basis of nationhood. Nationhood is thus based on "culture and history in France, language in Germany, ethnicity in Japan, and religion in Pakistan and Israel."<sup>9</sup> The problem of formalism is further complicated by the fact that nationalist policies have been used even by states controlled by small but powerful ethnic minorities.

Nationalism is primarily a Western European phenomenon. It was developed in Germany and later found support in Italy, Spain, France, and, to a lesser degree, in England. As long as it was exclusively confined to Western Europe, which is characterized by relatively homogeneous societies, its flaws and defects were largely undetected. But as soon as it began to spread to other parts of the world, especially to areas with highly mixed and diverse populations, its defects became glaringly obvious. In the remainder of this paper, I will attempt to analyze the impact of nationalism on the Middle East (one of the most ethnically and religiously heterogeneous areas in the world) and to point out the major problems created by the imposition of the nation-state system on the region.

## Communal Pluralism

In a diverse and heterogeneous society, one can recognize two types of minorities: ethnic and confessional. Ethnic minorities are subgroups distinguished from the dominant group by physiognomic, linguistic, or cultural characteristics. Confessional minorities, on the other hand, are subgroups distinguished by their values and ideologies, as well as the resulting practices. The classical Muslim world was divided into a multiplicity of confessional groups along ideological lines. Society was differentiated, under classical Islamic organization, into a dominant Muslim community and a variety of non-Muslim minorities. Each confessional community was allowed to maintain its own code of law and an autonomous local administration run by local notables and religious leaders. Confessional communities had, however, to declare their allegiance to the Muslim authorities and to pay an annual tribute

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 29.

in the form of poll tax (*jizyah*). This pattern of communal pluralism was later adopted by the Ottomans and continued to be the basic social organization in the Middle East until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1919.

Communal pluralism has been criticized for its tendency to revert to hierarchy. Rodinson termed this pattern of social organization as "hierarchical pluralism," since, despite their relative autonomy, confessional minorities were subordinated to the dominant Muslim majority.<sup>10</sup> Rodinson argues that under the communal system that prevailed in the Ottoman Empire (a similar system flourished in the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the central government was controlled by the Muslim majority. Yet he and other critics seem to forget that even under modern democratic systems, state institutions are usually run by members of the dominant social group. In those countries where the population is differentiated along religious lines (i.e., India, Pakistan, or Israel) the dominant religious group tends to control state institutions. Likewise, countries where ethnicity is the basis of social differentiation (i.e., Canada and England), the state is run for the most part by the ethnic majority. The difference between the communal and national systems, however, is that while in the latter the majority imposes its values and ideas on the rest of society, the former system protects its minorities from the majority's ideological and moral encroachment.

The communal system that flourished under the Ottomans was not without its own problems. Yet the transformation from a multinational empire into a system of nation-states fashioned after the European model has proven to be disastrous. It is true that the Ottoman Empire's problems had become so large by the beginning of the twentieth century that one could hardly begin to imagine how they could be solved without dissolving the empire. Nevertheless, the creation of numerous nation-states out of the ruin of the Ottoman Empire did not solve the problems, but rather gave rise to a host of new problems that tended to exacerbate the ones already in existence.

In *The Making of the Modern Near East*, Yapp takes issue with the widely accepted description of the Ottoman Empire as the sick man of Europe. He argues that contrary to the claims of many Western historians, the Ottoman Empire was engaged in a process of profound reform. Yapp contends that some Western sources tend to perpetuate this image of the Ottomans for four reasons: 1) The Ottomans' image has been constructed mainly on biased information obtained from the archives of their enemies; 2) The Ottomans' history has been written by Christians who are either prejudiced against Islam or have little insight into the functioning of the Ottoman system; 3) Authors of books on the Middle East are committed to nationalism

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<sup>10</sup>Rodinson, as quoted in Birch, *ibid.*, 6.

and liberalism and therefore have a negative view of multinational empires; and 4) Those Europeans primarily responsible for giving the final blow to the Ottoman Empire wanted to believe that it was doomed to extinction anyway.<sup>11</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this paper to determine whether the Ottomans would have been able to reform their empire if the Allied forces would have left them alone (I tend to think that the Ottomans were already on an irreversible course towards dissolution). I do think, however, that Yapp's last two points are relevant to this discussion. The British and French, prejudiced by their own nationalist and liberal thought, were neither able nor willing to recognize the incompatibility of the nation-state system and the social reality of the Middle East. In the following section, I will discuss the social structure of the Ottoman Empire and highlight the peculiar features of Middle Eastern society in general.

## The Ottomans and Their Heirs

When Ottoman I ('Uthmān) died in 1326 C.E., the Ottoman state was still a small but expanding municipality in western Anatolia. In less than a century, this state expanded its hegemony into the Balkans and the greater part of Anatolia (Turkey proper). It was, however, not until 1453 C.E. when Muhammad II (known also as the Conqueror) seized Constantinople and made it the Ottoman capital, that the Ottomans became a world power recognized and feared by the great powers of the time in the Christian West and Muslim East. Muhammad the Conqueror was, in addition to being a brilliant military leader, an astute statesman and gifted reformer. He is remembered not only for his military achievements but also for the many reform measures he introduced into the Ottoman system.<sup>12</sup> Having consolidated Ottoman control over the Balkans and Anatolia, he moved quickly to organize the state and codify relations between the capital and local communities and municipalities, a significant proportion of which were composed of non-Muslims.

The administrative system employed by the Ottomans was known as the *millet* system. This system did not originate with the Ottomans but was in fact borrowed from classical Islam. The term *millet* was derived from the Arabic word *millah*, meaning religious community. Under this system, confessional communities were regarded as autonomous social units which enjoyed both administrative and legal independence.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Ottoman rulers intro-

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<sup>11</sup>M. E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East* (London: Longman, 1987), 93.

<sup>12</sup>Gerard Chaliand, ed., *Minority People in the Age of Nation-States* (London: Pluto Press, 1989), 57.

<sup>13</sup>Chaliand, *Minority People*, 58; Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (Beirut: Khayyats, 1966), 22.



duced a series of regulations aimed at protecting peasants against abuse by the local authorities.

To understand the superiority of the Ottoman to the local Balkan administrations one has only to compare Ottoman laws with the code of the Serbian monarch, Stephen Dusan. For example, Dusan's code required the peasant to work for his lord two days a week; Ottoman regulations required the *raeya* to work only three days a year on the sipahi land. Protection of the peasantry against the exploitation of local authority was a basic principle of Ottoman administration.<sup>14</sup>

Ottoman administration, with its tolerant attitude toward religious minorities and noninterventionist policy, was seen by local communities throughout the Balkans as a major improvement over the heavy-handed policies of their former patrons. The *millet* system of communal pluralism continued to function for almost five centuries, being abandoned only in 1909 by the Young Turks. The same system was later applied to the empire's Arab provinces after the Ottomans incorporated Syria and Egypt, in late 1516 and early 1517, during the reign of Sultan Salīm II.

The Ottomans entered Syria in the latter part of 1516 after defeating the Mamlūk army at Marj Dabiq, a site located to the north of Aleppo. After this decisive battle, in which the Mamlūk sultan Qansaw al Ghawrī perished, the Ottomans were able to advance to Cairo, the Mamlūk capital, meeting with only little if any resistance.<sup>15</sup> With the fall of Cairo, all of the Arab provinces under Mamlūk control (including Arabia) became part of the Ottoman Empire. The new rulers recognized local authorities and, with the exception of a few minor changes, kept the internal organization of the various local communities intact. The Arabs did not seem to resent their new rulers partly because of the wide measure of local autonomy accorded to them and partly because the Turks were regarded as Muslim *ghāzīs* (warriors) and champions of the Islamic cause. Furthermore, Ottoman strength assured the Arabs that they would be protected against internal disorder and foreign encroachment.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike Christians residing in the Balkans, Muslim Arabs had another reason for welcoming the new Turkish rulers. Being coreligionists, the Turks were willing to employ qualified Arabs in the administration of the state. Muslim Arabs played an important role under the Ottomans, especially in the judicial administration. Since a good command of Arabic was essential for

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<sup>14</sup>Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, Pub., 1973), 13.

<sup>15</sup>Zeine, 7-8.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 10.

mastering the Sharī'ah (Islamic law), many judges, jurists, and legal scholars came from the Arabic-speaking peoples of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>17</sup> It was therefore only a matter of time before Arabs became partners with the Turks in running the state. Nūrī al Sa'īd Bāshā, a high-ranking officer in the Ottoman army and later several times prime minister of Iraq, observed that:

In the Ottoman Empire, Arabs, and Muslims, were regarded as partners of the Turks. They shared with the Turks both rights and responsibilities, without any racial distinction: the higher appointments in the state, whether military or civil, were open to the Arabs; they were represented in both the upper and the lower houses of the Ottoman parliament. Many Arabs became Prime Ministers, Sheikh-al-Islams, Generals and Walis, and Arabs were always to be found in all ranks of the state services.<sup>18</sup>

For almost four centuries, Muslim Arabs and Turks were bound together under the banner of Islam. Throughout this period, the question of Arab nationalism was never an issue. Although Arabs were aware of the fact that they were ethnically different from the Turks, they had never considered a specifically Arab nationalism as a political doctrine or a basis for political organization. The Turks themselves "made no attempt to assimilate non-Turkish elements in their Empire."<sup>19</sup> Pan-Arabism was mainly a reaction to the pan-Turanism movement that flourished after 1909. The beginning of a nationalist ethos among Arabs and Turks was the result of their exposure to Western culture. Some Arab intellectuals, troubled by the continuous economic and political deterioration of the empire, came to see nationalism as a powerful tool that could be used to mobilize their fellow Arabs against the increasingly intrusive policies of the Young Turk leaders. In addition, such a nationalism could also be used to justify the Arabs' secession from the Ottoman Empire. Arab nationalists eager to achieve independence from Istanbul apparently never considered the consequences of establishing national states in a region so nonhomogeneous as the Middle East.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Middle Eastern society was already highly diverse and heterogeneous. Yapp eloquently describes the social structure of Ottoman society on the eve of the empire's collapse. "Another valuable concept which has been applied to Near Eastern society," writes Yapp,

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>18</sup>Quoted in Zeine, *ibid.*, 16-7.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 9.

is that of the mosaic. In this view Near Eastern society is seen as a mosaic of autonomous corporations existing side by side and not arranged in any particular order of eminence, or at least not an order accepted throughout the society. Government itself may be regarded as one such corporation and, like the others, [is] defined partly by inheritance and partly by function, the provision of defense and some modest administrative services.<sup>20</sup>

The Ottoman central government was only one of a multiplicity of organizations that permeated the Middle East. The state was not the monstrous apparatus it was depicted to be. On the contrary, the state had a minimal amount of control over the lives of individual subjects and interacted with them only indirectly through various local and regional intermediate organizations. Thus the traditional image of an oriental despot presiding over the state, intruding into the lives of his subjects and closely controlling their activities, was more of a fiction than reality.<sup>21</sup> Intrusion and tight control was introduced later by the Young Turks in their attempt to "modernize" state institutions by adopting nationalist policies. The Committee of Unity and Progress, a group of Ottoman nationalists that took charge after the abdication of 'Abd al Hamīd II, the last Ottoman sultan, in 1909, opted for the Turkification of all non-Turkish provinces as well as the centralization of state institutions. It was the implementation of these developments that triggered Arab indignation and the subsequent Arab revolt.

## Arab Nationalism

With the increased centralization of political decision making under the Young Turk regime, Arab demands for political participation were intensified. The Young Turks were, however, reluctant to give Arab leaders a more active role in running the state and instead began implementing a new set of policies aimed at the Turkification of the Arab population. These new policies met with strong resistance from the Arabs, and those Arab leaders who were alarmed by this new development quickly began mobilizing the Arab population against the Young Turk regime. Several clandestine organizations were formed in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.

Although Arab demands for reform were aimed initially at fixing abuses within the system, the reformist tone was quickly replaced by calls for an independent Arab commonwealth. Plans for joint action against the Turkish

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<sup>20</sup>Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East*, 3.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 39.

government were negotiated between local Arab leaders in Syria and Sharīf Husayn, the governor of Makkah, on the one hand, and between the latter and the British authorities on the other. In 1909, Husayn's army, composed of Arab warriors and British soldiers, entered Damascus. Three days later, Amīr Fayṣal, the son of Sharīf Husayn, was declared king of Syria, thereby ending the Turkish rule of Arab lands.

Arab independence was encouraged by the Allies, especially England, which were in a state of war with the Ottoman Empire. Under the banner of self-determination, the Allies pledged to support the aspirations of all nations struggling for independence. The principle of self-determination was, however, one of those ambiguous concepts open to wide interpretation. Interestingly enough, "the pursuit of self-determination in 1919 produced a peculiar institution known as the mandate."<sup>22</sup> According to the mandate concept, the newly independent territories were to fall under the direct control of European nations until such time as the Arabs would be able to govern themselves. It appeared that the advocates of self-determination concluded that the Middle East's political boundaries and institutions had to be determined not by the inhabitants, but by the occupation forces of the Allies.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the former multinational system was replaced by several nation-states fashioned after the Western liberal model. Ethnic minorities at first demanded equal treatment for all confessional groups, but soon realized that equal treatment required a uniform legal system applied to all communities equally. This meant that confessional communities had to give up their own systems of rules, which had been recognized and sanctioned by a higher law under the Ottomans, and submit to a homogeneous system determined by the dominant confessional community. Under the new system, confessional groups would be reduced into associations of groups sharing common values and views, i.e., to philosophical societies.<sup>23</sup>

In the absence of the former system of communal pluralism which had prevailed for centuries in the Middle East, members of the various minority groups began to recognize that the new system of nation-states would take away their autonomy and impose upon them a new legal system formulated by the dominant social groups.

To an imperial government the groups in a mixed area are all equally entitled to some consideration; to a national government they are a foreign body in the state to be either assimilated or rejected. The national state claims to treat all citizens as equal members of the nation,

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<sup>22</sup>Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 134.

<sup>23</sup>Chaliand, *Minority People*, 60.

but this fair-sounding principle only serves to disguise the tyranny of one group over another. The nation and all of its citizens must be animated with the same spirit.<sup>24</sup>

## Conclusion

Historical evidence shows that nationalism derives from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century German philosophical thought. This doctrine was first used by German, and later Italian, nationalists to inspire their countrymen to bring about national integration.

Nationalism, through its rejection of the coexistence of autonomous or semiautonomous ethnic groups within the state, encourages national leaders to devise policies aimed at assimilating ethnic minorities in order to achieve national integration. This means that ethnic minorities having social and religious practices viewed as incompatible with those of society's mainstream must either give up their ethnic identity or become an outcast and undesirable social group.

As long as nationalism was exclusively confined to western European states, all of which enjoy relatively homogeneous societies, its flaws and defects were not readily apparent. But even in Europe, nationalism was not free from defects: anti-Semitism in Germany and elsewhere in Europe was partially a consequence of nationalism. However, as soon as it began to spread to other parts of the world, especially those with highly mixed and diverse populations, its defects became extremely obvious.

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<sup>24</sup>Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 25.