

**Saideman, Stephen M. and R. William Ayres, *For Kin and Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism and War* (New York, N.Y.: Columbia University Press)
Cloth, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-0-231-14478-0, \$35.00 / £20.50**

Many today consider ethnic nationalism to be unambiguously linked to violence. This perspective links intolerance toward minorities with belligerence toward other nations. This book casts doubt on these popular assumptions, suggesting that the Nazis are an exception and not the rule. Stephen Saideman and William Ayres have played a central role in spearheading the cause of global ethnopolitics within an American political science establishment that considers ethnicity to be principally a domestic matter. In their new book, they point out that xenophobia actually reined in a number of potential inter-state conflicts that might have engulfed post-communist Eastern Europe. Their book, based on interviews, survey and electoral data, asks why certain ethnic conflicts took place while other dogs didn't bark. The focus on potential conflicts which failed to ignite injects rigour and a fresh approach into an ambulance-chasing industry myopically focused on flashpoints like Bosnia or Rwanda. In particular, the authors ask why only certain East European nations – Serbia, Croatia and Armenia – exploited the decline of communism to violently reclaim territory in adjoining states inhabited by their ethnic brethren. This phenomenon, known as irredentism, demonstrates that inter-ethnic dynamics within states have international consequences.

Numerous potential irredentists threatened to fill post-Soviet space: Hungarians could have incorporated adjacent Hungarian-settled lands in Slovakia, Romania or Serbia. Albanians could have reunified with Kosovo and pursued the dream of Greater

Albania. Russians might have laid claim to Near Abroad territory where ethnic Russians were numerous. Ditto with Greater Romanian ambitions in Moldova. Yet in all these cases, nationalists who pushed an irredentist agenda like Zhirinovskiy in Russia, or the Greater Romania party, were punished at the polls. Why? The authors convincingly argue that the *content* of nationalism matters for conflict: ethnic nationalists are less likely to seek new territory than civic ones. Serbia and Russia had long traditions of statehood in which they governed multi-ethnic empires. Their dominant ethnic status remained unchallenged, and, as such, Russian and Serbian national identities stressed politics over blood while their elites were quite relaxed about governing and acquiring multi-ethnic lands. The desire for dominance, rather than xenophobic homogeneity, was paramount. This meant that the Serbs under Milosevic were unconcerned with diluting ethnic Serbianness and thus sought to hang on to the largely non-Serbian territories of Bosnia, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia was more of a tactical than xenophobic strategy, designed to secure territory and not deployed against pliant minorities like the Vojvodina Hungarians. Russia was likewise content to subsume its identity within the multiethnic Soviet one. But when the USSR broke up, a recessive xenophobic Russian nationalism emerged, focused more on the threat from internal minorities than the need to reclaim lost non-Russian republics. One could argue that Putin's shift back toward a more traditional Eurasianist 'civic' Russian nationalism may benefit minorities but portends increased Russian revanchism toward its neighbours.

Subjugated ethnic nations of recent vintage, like Armenia, Albania and Croatia, in contrast to the Serbs and Russians, prized ethnic homogeneity and lacked political traditions of ruling multi-ethnic territory. This explains Albania's limp support for

Greater Albanian policies toward Macedonia as well as Armenian rejection of potential deals with Azerbaijan that would lead to the acquisition of new territory populated by significant Azeri minorities. Armenian and Croatian irredentism occurred despite, not because of, local xenophobia. Representatives of stranded ethnic kin and the wider overseas diaspora were unusually well-placed in the power structures of both countries, disproportionately influencing state behaviour in often unpopular ways. Bosnian and overseas Croats in Tudjman's regime, or Karabakhi and diaspora Armenians in the Ter-Petrosyan and Kocharian governments used their influence to prioritise the needs of cut-off ethnic kin. This behaviour also characterizes the Greek generals, whose Cypriot military service in the 50s and 60s forged ties to Greek-Cypriot irredentists which disposed the generals to invade Cyprus in 1974 without a democratic mandate. In Russia, Hungary, Romania or Albania, the influence of ethnic kin and the diaspora was much weaker.

The democratic politics of post-communist Eastern Europe reveals that xenophobic nationalist messages concentrating on the threat from immigrants and minorities plays better with the electorate than appeals to annex diverse new territories. Popular irredentism is doused by distaste for the ethnic minorities who would be acquired alongside ethnic kin. In Hungary, some nationalists frankly remark 'To kill Hungary, give it Transylvania', a reference to the fear of acquiring the millions of ethnic Romanians who live there. Similar concerns apply to the acquisition of Kazakhstan by Russia or Moldova by Romania. Even co-ethnics may be perceived as foreign, and the feelings may be mutual. Kosovars look down upon Albanians and Romanians are cool toward their ethnic brethren in Moldova, much as Germans at home were not entirely

convinced of the Germanness of East Germans or *aussiedler* from Eastern Europe. Hungarians consider their kin in Slovakia and Romania to have escaped the trauma of 1956 and its aftermath, thereby missing out on a shared national experience. Even the well-organised Crimean Russians could not excite Russian voters and politicians back home to press for Crimean annexation. Certainly there is concern for ethnic kin, but not in sufficient quantity to spend blood or treasure to incorporate them. This is especially true when the newcomers' inclinations would disproportionately benefit the political opposition. Ethnic Hungarian immigrants to Hungary would gravitate to the centre-right – hence socialist opposition to them, just as successful Somali irredentism in Ethiopia would boost the Ogaden clan of rump Somalia against their non-Ogaden competitors.

Overall, this book presents a new approach to the study of ethnicity and nationalism, which avoids the pitfall of selecting cases to fit the argument, helps blend ethnosymbolist and modernist arguments, and bridges the study of comparative ethnopolitics and that of international relations. It deserves to be on the bookshelf of every serious scholar of nationalism and ethnic conflict.