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IFDT

University of Belgrade, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory

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*5th International conference of
the Group for Social Engagement Studies
Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade*

POLITICS OF ENMITY: CAN NATION EVER BE EMANCIPATORY?

Belgrade, September 26-28, 2016

<http://instifdt.bg.ac.rs/politics-of-enmity/>

Description

Nation and nationalism are in many ways peculiar and elusive concepts that could very easily be interpreted as being both 'banal' and infinitely complex; primordial and modern; imagined and real. Since belonging to a specific national group can be seen as an important source of collective strength for many, solidarity of these collectives may serve as the basis for action to further strengthen these (imagined) bonds. The process itself, more often than not, assumes the existence of another, equally potent, equally solidary collective – most often irreducibly distinct from ours. This positioning which comes part and parcel with the idea of the nation – more so with nationalism – seems to centre around the idea of enmity: the antipode of solidarity among those who belong to 'Us'. Enmity, as well as solidarity, is thus one of the cornerstones of the 'practicing of nation', something which shapes and perpetuates nation as a political identity framework.

It is often argued that nationalism can be seen as the modern form of *Gemeinschaft* which answers ontological needs created by the uncertainties of modernity and its power structures. On the other hand, we witness a growth of a global society with an increasingly integrated system, primarily socio-economic, but also cultural and perhaps political. Globalisation creates opportunities, but also crises in which we have to remake our lives and identities (Giddens, 2000). At the same time, social relations continue to be governed and institutionalised in accordance with national temporalities and located within the spaces of the nation. The shift from national to post-national regime cannot be established. Rather, what we see is the emergence of trans-border nationalism as a perverted adaptation of the nation-state model (Brubaker, 2015). The powers of the nation-state are increasing in spite of the global challenges of migration, opening the new perspectives on solidarity but also on enmity.

Bearing those issues in mind, we seek contributions which will give a new turn to the discussion about the nation and its frequent attendant, nationalism. Is nation still able to bring about an ontological revival of faith in certainty? Can it be a sufficient supplement to the post-metaphysical self-reflexivity and 21st century disciplinary regimes? How does nation, within or without a nation-state, fit in a global and ever more globalised world scheme? Can it be a means for emancipation in today's world? If so, emancipatory for whom, when and how? How did the notions of nation and citizenship build on each other in a world which saw new divisions, new wars, new nation-states? In what sense have friendship and hostility (Schmitt 1927, Derrida 1994, Bojanić 1995; 2015) gained new meanings, and what are those meanings? Does nation-building always involve a common enemy one has to fight? Or does it meet its limits with being a mere remedy for contemporary forms of inequality, or a tranquilizer for those unsettled by the complexity and insecurity brought up by globalized capitalism? These questions become increasingly important as we witness the crisis of the collectivity-building process of the European Union. Does the contemporary politics of difference contest the notion of enmity or, quite to the contrary, reaffirm it?

We welcome both theoretical and empirical work on the role of nation in contemporary world and in historical perspective. We would also like to place specific focus on the conceptual aspects of studying ethnicity across disciplines. Which conceptual apparatus is most adequate for approaching the notion of nation in social sciences and humanities? How do we study the social practices revolving around the nation? Should we envisage the nation as identity or ideology, does it involve belonging to social groups, communities etc.? We particularly encourage contributions which challenge the nation as an actual constitutive framework of our thought.

List of the themes to be explored (not exhaustive)

- Nations without enemies: forms of 'benevolent' nationalism
- Enmity towards economic globalization: an 'emancipatory' form of nationalism?
- Nationalism as a pacifier of political 'enmities' (class struggle, civic engagement, etc.)
- Liberalism and the politics of enmity: 'to tolerate is to insult'
- Contradictions of anti-capitalist nationalism: who's the real enemy?
- State-building, nation-building and emancipatory politics
- Relationship between the nation and other forms of collective identity
- Nation and international cooperation in face of global challenges
- Discourses of the nation
- 'Small' nations and their struggle for recognition
- Nation, gender and power relations
- Nationalism, race and ethnicity beyond the European context
- Nationalism as emancipatory form of struggle in anticolonial and postcolonial context
- Nation and symbolic geography
- (Banal) nationalisms and (banal) cosmopolitanisms
- Contemporary debates between primordialists, instrumentalists and constructivists
- Nationalism with a Schmittian twist: distinction between friend and enemy as constitutive of a nation
- Nation-state and ethno-religious diversity: can there be both?
- Nationalism and violence in the Balkans: lessons from the past and present
- Nationalism as theological concept and/or religion

Confirmed speakers

Rogers Brubaker, University of California, Los Angeles

Florian Bieber, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

Jasna Dragović Soso, Goldsmiths University of London

Montserrat Guibernau, Queen Mary University of London

Organization of the conference

The conference is organized by the Group for Social Engagement Studies, part of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade, in the cooperation with the Center for Advanced Studies – South East Europe, the University of Rijeka and the Centre for Southeast European Studies, the University of Graz.

The conference is organized in the framework of the international project „Figuring out the Enemy: Re-imagining Serbian-Albanian Relations“. The project aims to reinvestigate events and discourses from the past and recent times, seeking to give explanation and identify common views, ideas and traditions that undermine the present enmity and promote Serbian-Albanian cooperation. The project is supported through the Regional Research Promotion Programme (RRPP) by the Swiss Development Cooperation.

Technical information and application procedure

The official language of the conference is **English**.

Presentations should not exceed **20 minutes**.

The Program Committee of the conference will select the presenters based on the submitted abstracts. The book of abstracts will be published.

Conference **applications** should be sent only via e-mail to the following address: conference@instifdt.bg.ac.rs. We kindly ask you to put in your email subject the following title: '*Name: title of the paper*'. The complete application in the .doc, .docx or .pdf format must contain: the title of the presentation, an abstract of up to 200 words and a short biography, in English.

There will be **no registration fees**. Conference organisers will provide lunch and refreshments during the conference program. Participants are kindly requested to make their own accommodation and travel arrangements.

Important dates

Application deadline: **30 June 2016**

Notification of acceptance: **10 July 2016**

Conference dates: **26-28 September 2016**

Program Committee

Florian Bieber, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

Adriana Zaharijević, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

Rigels Halili, Centre for East European Studies, University of Warsaw

Gazela Pudar Draško, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade

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Armina Galijaš, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

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