Introductory Note

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The collection of articles presented here is based on papers delivered at the 5th Galilee Colloquium on Social, Moral, and Legal Philosophy, held at Kibbutz Kfar Blum in northern Israel, and dedicated to the subject of *The End of the Nation-State? Theoretical Dimensions and Historical Realities*.

The Galilee Colloquia were established by the Swiss–Israel Philosophical Foundation of Keren Kayemeth le-Israel/JNF. Their aim is to bring together each year a select number of international scholars to address, on a comparative level, some of the salient and vexing contemporary social, legal and moral issues. In order to confront these considerations with the practical consequences arising from them, some practitioners from relevant fields are also invited. The venue, not far from the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River, is rich in historical associations and conducive to contemplation. Previous colloquia have dealt with the following subjects:

- *The Justification and Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Normative and Practical Aspects (2006);
- *Religion and Public Space: Cross-Cultural Dimensions (2007);
- *The Politics of Distributive Justice: Norms and Implementation Modalities (2008);
- *Immigration, Asylum-Seeking and Citizenship: Entitlements, Individual Rights and Collective Identities (2009).

The reasons for choosing the subject of the nation-state were motivated by a number of considerations, in which the development of research has been intertwined with the onslaught of recent historical developments: the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the democratic transitions in Eastern Central Europe, as well as the emergence of the European Union, aiming at constructing a supra-national political entity—both on the background of the complex processes of globalization. That processes of democratization went, sometimes, hand in hand with the emergence, or reemergence, of nationalist/ethnic phenomena—not only in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, but also in Spain, suggested a complex relationship between the two developments which has not always been adequately dealt with in the research literature.

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In this context, it was also noted that prior to 1989, the study of nationalism had not been at the center of either historical or social science research, and hence the resurgence of national sentiments, sometimes—as in the former Yugoslavia, leading to a series of violent wars—came as a surprise both to many scholars as well as statesmen. Awareness of the role nationalist ideologies had played in the movements leading to the horrors of World War II gave rise to an understandable reluctance in the post-1945 scholarly literature to endow nationalism with an intellectual cache reserved to the main nineteenth and twentieth century ideas of liberalism, socialism, or conservatism. Sometimes, the very term of ‘nationalism’ was accompanied by a whiff of illegitimacy, undermining what was frequently conceived as the pre-determined universalism *telos* of historical development as perceived by the Enlightenment.

Consequently, post-1945 studies tended to view nationalism in mainly instrumentalist terms: while few of these studies could directly be classified as Marxist, many of them tended to view nationalism as being akin to what could be called “super-structural” or, to use a different terminology, as being merely epi-phenomenal. Not only a Marxist scholar like Hobsbawm presented nationalism as an outcome of modern capitalist developments, but (to mention just a few) Gellner, Deutsch, Greenfield, and Anderson also linked, albeit in different ways, the emergence of nationalism to its function within the processes of modernization as accompanying industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of the bourgeoisie in its different forms.¹ A conservative writer like Kedourie, on the other hand, viewed it as the brainchild of arrogant and sometimes utopian and alienated intellectuals.² The work done by Anthony Smith stood out as being out of tune with this instrumentalist approach by trying to link modern, intellectual, and spiritual expression of nationalism with historical memories and consciousness and anchor them in a web of nuanced continuities rather than seeing them as the exclusive outcome of modernization and secularization.³

The vicious wars in the former Yugoslavia, accompanied by ethnic cleansings, rapes, and mass murders verging on genocide, greatly shocked both public and scholarly opinion which tended to marginalize the depth and salience of nationalist feelings, especially in what appeared as the relatively liberal and mostly successful Yugoslav experience of a multi-national state. One way of explaining the paradox was to cling to another version of the instrumentalist explanation of nationalism—this time presenting leaders like Milošević and Tudjman as merely cynically “using” nationalism for aims which were purely power oriented. What this explanation left unexplained was how did it happen that such instrumentalization of nationalist narratives and symbols succeeded in gaining such a powerful impact on their respective populations: could pure manipulation achieve such tremendous and horrific results if nationalist sentiments were not deeply embedded in the actual consciousness of large segments of the population, half a century of Titoist “Brotherhood and Fraternity” ideology notwithstanding?

Similar issues were raised in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union into 15 separate states, many of them with distinct and sometimes strong nationalist agendas—from Russia to Georgia, from the Baltic States to Ukraine, with the Chechen uprising perhaps heralding further possible developments. The peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia, while

¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge, MA, USA, 1990); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1983); Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (Cambridge, MA, USA, 1983) Liah Greenfield, *Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA, USA, 1992); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, UK, 1983).

² Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London, UK, 1960).

³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford, UK, 1986); *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford, UK, 2003).

negotiated and nonviolent, still pointed once again to the fact that all multinational structures in Eastern and Central Europe had ultimately failed. The unification of Germany, where the slogans of protesters against the communist regime in Eastern Germany mutated within weeks from “*Wir sind das Volk*” to “*Wir sind EIN Volk*,” again pointed to the persistence and power of national memory and identity. That the processes of democratization in post-Franco Spain went hand in hand with increasing demands for Catalan and Basque autonomy—if not outright secession—equally suggested that there appears an umbilical cord connecting the two aspects of self-determination—democratic and national—and that the latter cannot be easily subsumed under merely instrumentalist consideration.

It was these issues which the Colloquium in Kfar Blum tried to address on a multiplicity of levels—historical, philosophical, and sociological—by scholars coming from these different disciplines, and the following collection brings together most of the papers presented.

Liah Greenfeld argues in her paper that contrary to conventional wisdom, which sees in globalization the ultimate demise of nationalism, the truth of the matter is the opposite: far from being merely an economic or financial phenomenon, globalization spreads in its wake also the ideas of nationalism into the farthest corners of the world, and thus making an historical phenomenon, which has its roots in the Judeo-Christian experience, into a universal organizing principle of the political order. In a similar way, but using a different approach, Aviel Roshwald argues in his article that only after 1989 did the principle of self-determination achieve its truly world-historical opportunity. He maintains that it is precisely the supranational structures associated with globalization which make it possible for smaller nations to achieve independence and show the resilience of national ideas even within historical contexts that appear to point to the other direction.

Anton Pelinka, on the other hand, points out the potential inherent in the emerging structure of the European Union, which he calls “an unfinished federal quasi-state,” to provide, in an era of declining state power, a transnational alternative to existing politics. He further suggests that the contemporary nation state is not the nation state as traditionally described in conventional textbooks, and hence despite the various countervailing tendencies now operating in the EU space, the transformation of historical structures is obvious and visible.

Three papers by scholars from the two ends of the Mediterranean suggest how complex this process really is. Montserrat Guibernau points to the apparent paradox that despite a rather rapid advance towards a European integration in economic and political terms, public opinion data of reactions in different EU countries to the recent financial crisis suggest that an overall European consciousness of solidarity and common citizenship is still not as developed as the architects of the European project hoped for. The reason for this, she maintains, is that while traditional national consciousness is anchored in what she calls “emotional” identity, European identity is still perceived as a “non-emotional identity,” hence much less powerful. In a subtle way, this argument turns the conventional view of nationalism on its head: it now appears that the traditional national identity is deeply rooted—of course not primordial, but deeply anchored in popular consciousness—while it is the new European, transnational identity, which is instrumental: if it brings economic advancement and prosperity, there is support for it; if it means economic hardship or having to pay for the well-being of “Others” (e.g., Greeks), there is much less enthusiasm, sometimes even verging on hostility.

Andreas Theophanous recounts some aspects for the reasons why the accession of the Republic of Cyprus to the EU has failed to overcome the division of the island. Analyzing

some of the issues dividing the two communities, he argues that until now it seems that the EU project has not succeeded in constructing a system which would, on the one hand, be based on a commonality of values, while at the same time respect the identities of individual citizens and ethnic communities: the failure of the Annan Plan to satisfy the aspirations of the Greek Cypriot community is thus perceived also as a wider failure to address the need for this balance.

These issues are also raised in the paper of Paschalis Kitromilides who argues that the Balkan wars suggest how difficult it is to find a balance between the emancipatory vision of national self-determination and the danger of going down the slippery slope of extremism and fanaticism. Current developments suggest, in the post-Yugoslav space as well as in Cyprus, how incomplete have been the European attempts to find a satisfactory solution to this conundrum.

Hedva Ben-Israel argues in her paper that the durability of the nation state despite accusations of being incompatible with liberal democracy suggests that nationalism itself has undergone a deep transformation from the romantic notions of the early nineteenth century to a nuanced political structure, which is able to combine respect for cultural heritage—and its varieties—with democratic principles buttressed by institutions guaranteeing freedom for minorities. The ability of such a structure to fit into a world dominated by the ideas and trends of globalization attests both to the durability of nationalism as well as its capacity for change and transformation.

In the essay closing this collection, Elżbieta Matynia brings up the apparently paradoxical phenomenon of borderlands—a concept with obvious deep roots in the Polish heritage of the *kresy*, but of a wider, universal significance. It is precisely because borders—usually arbitrarily determined by the vagaries of war and diplomacy—never really achieved what they were supposed to achieve, i.e. a clear dividing line between disparate communities. In modern times, whichever way borders were drawn according to supposed principles of national self-determination (e.g., Versailles, Trianon, etc.) minorities remained on both sides of the frontiers, and resentment and tension were not overcome. The essay argues that despite this historical burden, such borderlands can paradoxically become keys for connecting people; and while borders are posited as separating people and communities, borderlands—with their gray zones of multiple identities—can become unifying factors and eventually a model for a wider, more integrated European society.

Experience shows, and we are well aware of it, that not all conferences, even if successful, can be easily transformed into equally successful collections of essays. We hope that the articles presented here—in their variety, wide scope, and determination to challenge what is sometimes not always thought-out conventional wisdom—can help further debate and enrich the discourse of the phenomenon of the nation-state, which is without doubt, and despite criticism and prophecies of its demise, a crucial ingredient of contemporary historical reality and moral discourse.