

Panayi, Panikos: *An Ethnic History of Europe Since 1945. Nations, States and Minorities*. Harlow: Longman 2000. ISBN: 0-582-38135-5, 0-582-38134-7; xiii + 274 pp. Maps, bibliographic references, index

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An Essential Contribution to the Study of Ethnic Minorities in Europe?

Ethnicity, the rise of nationalism, the formation of new nation-states in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and the peaceful split of Czechoslovakia have become central topics for politics and scholarship in the 1990s. Studies on ethnic conflict, nation building, and particular ethnic and minority groups in Europe abounded throughout the last decade. However, a cohesive book that provides a systematic and general picture of minority existence so far has been missing. Panikos Panayi's *An Ethnic History of Europe since 1945* tries to fill this gap for the post-war period. As the author correctly states, so far: „no single author has attempted to examine the European ethnic mosaic since the end of the Second World War. The present volume is therefore the first attempt by an individual author to rectify this situation“ (p. 3). Thus the author sets a high goal for himself in making a general and definite contribution to the field. He assumes an interesting starting point by not limiting his focus only to indigenous, autochthonous or settled minorities, but also including immigrant minorities.

The author structures his book into four sections, the first one dealing with a general introduction to European minority history with a special focus on the time since 1945; the second one locating this particular history within the wider framework of European social and economic history; the third one discussing ethnicity as the key issue of European minority history, and finally the fourth one describing the interrelation of majorities and minorities within a system of nation-states. Section one briefly discusses the typology of minorities and gives the reader a short explanation of the concept underlying the author's

notion of minorities. The second section focuses on demographic, geographical, economical and social conditions of minority existence, providing the reader with detailed information about spatial distribution, housing, social cleavages and the incorporation (or exclusion) of minorities into or from mainstream European societies. The third section centering on the author's definition of ethnicity discusses the politicization of cultural differences underlying his definition of ethnicity. The last section is dedicated to the role of the state in recognition of minority existence or marginalization of minorities, and briefly describes the role of modern media in their inclusion or exclusion.

The author's approach, including indigenous as well as migrant minorities, provides for a challenging intellectual comparison leaving the reader with the question of what the merits, but also the limits, of comparison are. The binding element offered by Panayi is ethnicity that sets dispersed, localized, or immigrant minorities (the three categories he uses) apart from majorities in a world of nation-states. Thus, at the outset of the book one expects to learn where the author places himself within the camps of scholars who have passionately argued from the mid-1980s on about the essence of ethnicity and nationhood. The reader is surprised from the outset that Panayi does not bother with contextualizing his concept of ethnic groups and nations within these debates. Instead we learn that „ethnicity, nation, nationalism, nation state and minority each [...] have a precise meaning which have become confused by [...] over-use in the media and social science discourse“ (p. 3-4). However, the author does not hesitate to attempt to enlighten his readers as to the precise meanings which have been lost.

As we learn, since ethnicity stems from the Greek word *ethnos* and just means nation, „no difference exists between an ethnic group and a nation“ (p. 4 and p. 101). Key to the concept of an ethnic group/nation are appearance (dress, customs etc.), language and religion and the politicization that revolves around these three factors. Within this triangular relationship the miracles of ethnicity and nationhood are easily resolved. So why bother about all the debates on whether nations and

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nationalities have a long lasting historical ethnic kernel? Or why worry whether these categories are just a product of modernity or mere constructs, and what role elites might have played within this process? Why discuss how ethnicity and nationhood came to be widely applied and accepted concepts or what the relationship of ethnicity, nationhood and nationalism might be? (The latter as we learn on page five is „usually regarded as the ideology of a growing bourgeoisie“).

For Panayi the world is simple and theory just conflates simple truths that are evident for an unbiased scholar with a view for empirical realities and linear, not to say mechanistic, concepts in which reality can be framed and described. No surprise, then, to read that also the very concept of minority is easy and clear. „Perfect minorities,“ we read with astonishment, are „smaller than majorities, concentrate in particular locations, look outwardly different and lack power vis-a-vis the dominant population“ (p. 9). Perhaps one should not be too critical of the author here for not going into theoretical depth when mainly having an undergraduate audience in mind and wanting to provide a textbook with a clear narrative and a factual basis to build upon.

Thus, let's address the empirical parts of the book which make up sections three to four of the book as well as the initial table I (p. xii and xiii) that tries to give a systematic overview on postwar European minorities from A (Albania) to Y (Yugoslavia) and from Azerbaijanis [sic] to Vlachs within the author's framework of description. Taking a closer look at the table and its three key categories (dispersed, localized and immigrant minorities/refugees), one wonders if the proposed framework makes sense and has a high degree of explanatory power. The reviewer has certain doubts about the coherence of the categories and the way the author applies them. To give a few examples: in handling the cases of multiethnic Switzerland and Belgium, citing Flemings and Walloons or Swiss-Germans, Swiss-French, Swiss-Italians and Romansh [not „Romantschians“ as the author has it] all as minorities is not plausible. Why Romanian-Germans are listed as a dispersed minority whereas Romanian-Hungarians are localized is also not intelligible. The same is true for Bulgaria's Mus-

lim population, which should be a localized minority in Panayi's terms, not a dispersed one. Moreover, Bulgarian Muslims ought properly be listed as Turks and Pomaks, not only as Turks. In the Moldavian case, Russians, Ukrainians, and Gagauz are completely absent whereas Poles figure as a minority. Why Rusyns, whom the author lists with their outdated name as „Ruthenians,“ figure as a minority in Slovakia, but not in Ukraine remains an open question. If Armenians show up as localized minorities in the cases of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey, they should also be mentioned as immigrant minorities in the case of France. The reader might also wonder what the difference between the „Croats“ [sic] in Germany and the Croats in Yugoslavia might be. And the „Azerbaijanis“ should correctly be called Azeri in a monograph about ethnic minorities. On it goes, with too little space to list all the flaws and inconsistencies in this review.

The doubts raised by the table at the beginning of the book are confirmed by its content: a structure and a convincing analytical framework are missing; instead the reader is bombarded with facts, anecdotes and haphazardly collected statistical data making the texts into mere evidence of the author's skill in locating bibliographical references and fabricating them into an often barely readable text. Some tools of good old social history 70s style would have helped to circumvent these pitfalls: tables documenting quantitative processes over time and not only at an arbitrarily chosen point in time, graphs demonstrating development and putting things into a comparative perspective.

Except for two minor tables (pp. 31-32), coherent systematization of the data which is provided for the reader is lacking. Instead one is overwhelmed by a huge amount of data and eclectic numbers incorporated into the text or even constituting a considerable proportion of it. What help is it for the reader to be told about minorities in four or five different countries on two pages jumping from the late 1940s through the 1960s to the present? This, however, would all be negligible if one could discover an argument in the book and if the narrative got the facts straight. But the author does not seem to have any

argument, probably also the reason why he does not bother appending a conclusion for the reader, instead just ending the book abruptly. One would be skeptical assigning the book to students and advising them to rely on the facts the author provides or on the logic of the text. Assuming, for instance, that the author is correct in asserting that ethnicity is determined by appearance, language, and religion, and following him that ethnos equals nation, what can one make of the statement that „in essence, culture is a product of modernity, building upon appearance, language and religion“ (p. 139)? Does ethnos then equal nation and nation culture? Or is it the other way around? And what might finally be the differences between such highly controversial concepts as ethnos, nation and culture? Or are we operating here along tautological lines? Would there remain any space for nations not being based on ethnocultural idioms, given that this definition has any validity? One might say that at night all theoretical cats are grey once an effort to differentiate and define properly is given up. Or what should one make out of a sentence such as „All parties which participate in the political processes of nation states are nationalist because they work within the parameters of the existing boundaries“ (p. 225). What a relief for political scientists to read this; a detailed analysis of party programs and politics is no longer needed as long as one is aware of the geographical boundaries in which parties articulate their opinions. By analogy, one should assume that labor representatives and trade unions operating within the framework of companies are capitalist if one follows this logic.

The book also shows deficiencies at the basic factual level. When going into the details of international organizations and the impact of international institutions on minority existence in Europe after 1945 (p. 185), the failure to mention either the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe or the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is unpardonable. It leaves the reader with the impression that the author either is not familiar with the topic he is writing about or finished this piece of scholarship in an all too great

haste. The latter finds support as one stumbles from one spelling mistake to the other. Proofreading the text and verifying some simple facts would also have helped in this respect to prevent things like „ius solis“ (p. 208) instead of *ius soli*„ „Widergebur“ (p. 147) instead of *Wiedergeburt*„ „Nordiska Riksparteit“ (p. 226) instead of *Nordiska Rikspartiet*„ „Juerg Haider“ (p. 236) instead of *Joerg Haider*„ „Vatra Rumaneasca“ (p. 248) instead of *Vatra Romaneasca*„ „Securitatea“ (p. 182) and „Securitatae“ (p. 248) instead of *Securitate*„ three different incorrect versions (pp. 90, 92, 248) of the late Romanian dictator’s name before arriving at the correct spelling *Ceausescu* [with diacritical „s“ after the „u“] on p. 249, or telling the reader that the 1989 head-scarf affair in France took place under the Jospin government (Rocard was in office in 1989)–to name just a few of the mistakes. In summary: the hopeful promise of the author finally to provide the first authoritative monograph on ethnic minorities in post-war Europe remains unfulfilled. Panayi’s book is not an essential contribution to the field.

Rainer Ohliger über Panayi, Panikos: *An Ethnic History of Europe Since 1945. Nations, States and Minorities*. Harlow 2000, in: *H-Soz-Kult* 19.04.2001.