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**Andreas Wimmer, Richard Goldstone, Donald L. Horowitz, Ulrike Joras, Conrad Schetter, eds.** *Facing Ethnic Conflicts: Towards a New Realism.* Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004. 392 pp. $102.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7425-3584-8; $39.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7425-3585-5.

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**Ethnic Conflicts: Reality and Illusions of Inevitability**

For several reasons, the edited volume *Facing Ethnic Conflict* is an important book. It is very rare to find in a scholarly treatise of this nature a wide representation of different voices arguing a range of analytical standpoints as well as reporting empirical data about root causes, dynamics of intensification, and methods of management and resolution of ethnic conflicts. Moreover, the idea of the "ethnic" is broadly conceived: it includes conflicts of identities, cultures, and political interests within and across nationalities, states, and diasporic or migratory social formations. This is indeed a commodious book very rich in details, locations, and particularities. I highly recommend it to both theorists and practitioners. The bibliography provided at the end of each chapter is consistently composed of up-to-date literature.

The variety and richness of the book is explained by a number of factors. One of them is the fact that the contributors brought to the work superior backgrounds from three broad areas: academia; public and private policy think-tanks; and on-the-ground experiences in executive or supervisory programs during ethnic conflict and or in peace management. In some cases the same contributor has had professional experiences in areas that fit more than one of the three categories. The case studies and illustrations are diverse and rich in detail and are drawn from wide geographical and cultural areas: Eastern Europe (Kosovo, Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Russia); Africa (Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, South Africa); Asia (Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Cambodia); Western Europe (Switzerland, Germany, Britain, Northern Ireland); North America (Canada, the United States); the Caribbean (Guyana, Suriname); and the Middle East (Palestine). But *Facing Ethnic Conflict* also distinguishes itself by the depth and range of theoretical frameworks it articulates for understanding and, ultimately, managing not only open peace processes in ethnic conflict but also the ambiguities that often obscure the conflict's cultural, social, and political causal roots. This is what makes the book useful beyond the circles of those whose immediate concern might be solely practical. Unsurprising, the most general theory-oriented analyses were provided by political scientists: Walker Connor of Middlebury College ("A Few Cautionary Notes on the History and Future of Ethnonational Conflict"), Milton J. Esman of Cornell University ("Ethnic Pluralism: Strategies for Conflict Management"), Donald Rothschild of the University of California, Davis ("Liberalism, Democracy and Conflict Management: The African Experience"), René Lemarchand of the University of Florida ("Exclusion, Marginalization, and Political Mobilization: The Road to Hell in the Great Lakes"), and Angel Vi?as of the Universidad Comlutense, Madrid ("External Democracy Support: Challenges and Possibilities").

Contributions from sociologists tend to bridge the theory-practice divide: Rogers Brubaker and Andreas Wimmer, both of the University of California, Los Angeles, contributed, respectively, "Ethnicity without Groups" and "Towards a New Realism"; Michael Hechter of the University of Washington wrote "Containing Ethnonationalist Violence"; and Peter Waldmann of the University of Augsburg is the author of "The Asymmetry between the Dynamics of Violence and the Dynamics of Peace: The Case of Civil Wars." Contributions from professors of law are the most similar in content and style to those by the sociologists. They include "Some Realism about Constitutional Engineering" by Duke University's David Horowitz; "Territorial Authority: Permanent Solution or Step toward Secession" by Hurst Hannum of Tufts University; "Decentralized Governance in Fragmented Societies: Solution or Cause of New Evils?" by Walter Kälin of the University of Bern; and "Ethnic Conflict and the Colonial Legacy" by Christopher J. Bakwesegha of Makerere University, Kampala, Rwanda.

The most practical chapters were contributed by

those with backgrounds in national and supra-national state, governmental, or non-governmental organizations. Andrew Ellis, technical adviser on electoral and constitutional processes at the International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance contributed "The Politics of Electoral Systems in Transition"; Richard J. Goldstone, former justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, former chief prosecutor of the UN Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, former member of the International Task Force on Terrorism, and currently chair of the International Independent Inquiry on Kosovo wrote the chapter on "Justice and Reconciliation in Fragmented Societies"; and joint authors Ulrike Joras, associate program officer for the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships and Conrad Schetter, research fellow at the Center for Development Research, University of Bonn wrote the chapter on "Hidden Ties: Similarities between Research and Policy Approaches to Ethnic Conflicts." Others are: Michael Lund, senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies ("Operationalizing the Lessons from Recent Experience in Field-Level Conflict Prevention Strategies"); Hugh Miall, director of the Richardson Institute at Lancaster University ("Transforming Ethnic Conflict: Theories and Practices"); Norbert Ropers, director of the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin ("From Resolution to Transformation: Assessing the Role and Impact of Dialogue Projects"); Valery Tishkov, director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Science, Moscow, as well as former chairman of the Russian Federation State Committee for Nationalities Affairs ("Conflict Starts with Words: Fighting Categories in Chechen Conflict"); Max van der Stoel, a special adviser to Javier Solana, the European High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy ("Looking Back, Looking Forward: Reflections on Preventing Inter-ethnic Conflict"); and I. William Zartman, director of the Conflict Management Program at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University ("Sources and Settlements of Ethnic Conflicts").

The editors of the volume are to be commended for the marvelous conceptual work of grouping the diverse contributions and perspectives into several parts with sub-sections. The first, "Understanding Ethnic Conflicts," comprises the thematic sub-sections "The Rise of the Ethnic Question" (Connor, Brubaker and Bakwesegha) and "The Dynamics of Escalation" (Lemarchand, Tishkov, and Waldman). The second, "Politics of Intervention," divides into the sub-sections "Prevention and Peacemaking" (van der Stoel, Lund, Zartman, and Miall) and "Mediation and Reconciliation" (Ropers and Goldstone). The third, "Institutional Reform," has as sub-sections "Democracy and Electoral Systems" (Esman, Vinas, Rothchild, Horowitz and Ellis) and "Federalism and Autonomy" (Hannum, Hechter and Kälin). The final part is the conclusion, with two essays (Schetter and Wimmer). Wimmer also wrote the introduction to the volume.

In the rest of this review, I provide some insights into what I take to be a representative essay from each part. I know that this is unfair, given the breadth and depth of the contributions. But I am sure those who are interested in reading the book–and I hope they are many–will appreciate my judgment on this. In fact, if there is any criticism of the book that could be stated upfront, it is the reality that, because of its thematic variety, one could easily imagine this volume as three books. It is a credit to the editors, especially Wimmer, that the reader comes away with a greater sense of continuity rather than discontinuity across the parts of the volume.

In part 1, I found Bakwesegha's essay the most convincing. In contrast to the views that ethnic conflicts may be rooted either in primordial conflicts of identities (Connor) or merely in the manipulations of such identity conflicts for sectarian ends (e.g., religious) or partisan profits (e.g., class-economic or political goals), Bakwesegha provides a larger analytical framework. For him, histories of colonial conquests, occupation, and the dynamics of subsequent postcolonial relations account for the vast majority of the initial sources of ethnic tensions. Although not all of these tensions lead to open and catastrophic conflicts, they invariably create the root and generic conditions under which simmering feelings of collective aggression, insecurity, or resentment break into the open–and often violent–conflict. It seems to me that the histories of ethnic relations in parts of Africa–examples of which abound in this volume–support Bakwesegha's view. But evidence for it can also be found in other parts of the world: Northern Ireland, regions of the former USSR, Afghanistan, or Iraq.

In part 2, where "politics of intervention" is the dominant theme, I found Hugh Miall's thesis quite intriguing. To achieve conflict prevention or peace in nascent or already open ethnic conflict, some authors highlighted the vital importance of, and strategies for, effective "negotiation" (Zartman), "accommodation" (van der Stoel), "mediation" (Ropers) or "reconciliation" (Goldstone). Miall, however, emphasized what he calls "conflict transformation." This is the idea that any strategies for prevention or resolution of an ethnic conflict can be, in the long run, effective only if it is part and parcel of a program to address

the structural origins of the conflict. I am partial to this view because of its common sense and the strength of the historical evidence. As presented even in the other parts of this book, we can see that wherever sustainable peace or reconciliation have been achieved before or following an open ethnic conflict, the achievement seems to have been possible only because longer-term solutions were found to the structural problems that, in the first place, created the conditions for the conflict.

In the essays that compose part 3, various views are offered on the strengths and weaknesses of different institutional frameworks (e.g., constitutional engineering; democratization–including aspects of cultural pluralism, regional devolution, federalism, etc.; or electoral management) that may facilitate or impede resolution of ethnic conflicts. Some bold ideas are proposed: non-ethnic competition versus ethnocultural pluralism; cultural assimilation versus multiculturalism; unitary cultural domination in the name of *Staatsvolk* versus supposedly ethnicity-neutral republicanism; etc. Esman does a marvelous work of disentangling the strengths and weaknesses of each of the pair. But I found myself the most intrigued by the thought (proposed by Rothchild, but also evident in Horowitz) that, in the abstract and by itself, the electoral process–even when democratic–does not work like a magic bullet in resolution of ethnic conflicts within a nation-state framework. This insight, I think, ties in neatly with the conclusion reached in the study by Miall and, indirectly, Bakwesegha.

The impression that most remains with the reader–at least this reader–is the insightful manner in which the essays in *Facing Ethnic Conflict* manage to argue the case for realism in understanding ethnic conflicts without reducing the causes of ethnic conflicts to "natural" and inevitable factors. The best essays in the volume show how, given certain historical conditions, ethnic tensions necessarily arise. They also show how some of these tensions–where inadequately understood and diffused or managed–lead to open and violent conflicts. But as tragic and inexorable as the outcomes of some ethnic conflicts might be, our authors resist the temptation to believe that the causal conditions of these conflicts are themselves equally inexorable. The most credible contributions show ethnic conflict to be caused structurally during processes of social-identity formation as well as partisan interests during intra- as well as inter-cultural or national relations. But one will not find in this book's "new realism" much evidence-based support for the currently fashionable argument that ethnicities, nationalities, or even civilizations are divided by God Himself and programmed by nature for constant and unavoidable tragic collisions. *Facing Ethnic Conflict* therefore seems to me to be an effort, quite successful, to make better our theoretical understanding of the nature of ethnic conflict and enhance our capacity for choice and action.

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