

Nationalism(s) as a Historical Factor in the Political Life of Canada and Israel

Prof. Alexander Yakobson

Prof. Pierre Anctil

April 29-30, May 1, 2014

Workshop Abstract:

This workshop is a discussion of the notion of nationalism(s) as it applies to the specific case of Canada and Israel. The participants will approach this topic both from a historical and contemporary point of view, with the example of Europe serving as a catalyst in the case under study. They will examine under what conditions Zionism and the state of Israel appeared on the one hand, and how this historical narrative finds a parallel reality (or not) in the emergence of the Canadian state and national identity. Specific themes will be approached, as they apply to the situation in Israel and Canada, such as language, culture, religion, international migrations and issues relating to Aboriginal populations (or nomadic desert populations in Israel). An effort will be made to study how nationalism(s) produced competing narratives, based on differing perceptions of history, of national identity and the role of the state, both within Israeli and Canadian societies. Questions asked will be: Can forms of nationalism(s), rooted in different historical experiences, be reconciled in a single modern and democratic state? Can the political, cultural and linguistic aspirations of different national communities be addressed without resorting to conflict? Is the Canadian solution to competing internal forms of nationalism(s) a viable one in Israel (or elsewhere)? How are Israelis coming to terms with the tensions experienced internally in this regard? What is the future of nationalism(s) in both societies? Are new ideological trends emerging, among various minorities, which point to a more fruitful dialogue and to a possible reconciliation between opposing visions of the state and nationalism(s)? And finally are bi-national or multinational projections of the state a viable solution to the presence of numerous forms of nationalism(s) within one given society?

List of Participants:

Pierre Anctil, full professor, département d'histoire, Université d'Ottawa, fellow Royal Society of Canada.

Hedva Ben-Israel, professor emeritus, department of history, Hebrew University.

Michel Bock, associate professor, département d'histoire, Université d'Ottawa, holder of the Chair in French Canadian History.

Colin P. Coates, Canadian Studies Program, Glendon College, York University and director Robarts Center for Canadian Studies, York University, Toronto.

Efraim Podoksik, Senior Lecturer in Political Science, Hebrew University.

Sylvie Poirier, full professor, département d'anthropologie, Université Laval, Québec.

Shaul Shenhav, senior lecturer, department of Political Science, Hebrew University.

Mohammed S. Wattad, Assistant Professor of Law, Zefat Academic College.

Alexander Yakobson, associate professor, department of History, Hebrew University.

Workshop Program:

Day 1 – Canada – History and political heritage (April 29)

Morning session

- 9h00 – 10h15, The emergence of the Canadian federal state and the constitutional history of Canada – Pierre Anctil (Université d'Ottawa)
- 10h30 – 12h00, Québec nationalism and French Canada – Michel Bock (Université d'Ottawa)

Afternoon session

- 13h30 – 14h45, The political and territorial claims of First Nations in Canada – Sylvie Poirier (Université Laval)
- 15h00 – 16h30, Religion as a theme in Canadian history – Colin M. Coates (Glendon College, York University)

Day 2 – Canada – Contemporary features of Canadian society (April 30)

Morning session

- 9h00 – 10h15, Geography, natural resources and nationalism in Canada – Colin M. Coates (Glendon College, York University)
- 10h30 – 12h00, Multiculturalism as a component of Canadian nationalism – Pierre Anctil (Université d'Ottawa)

Afternoon session

- 13h30 – 14h45, Official languages and language legislation as instruments of nationalism – Michel Bock (Université d'Ottawa)
- 15h00 – 16h30, Human rights advocacy and principles of democracy – Pierre Anctil (Université d'Ottawa)

Day 3 – Israel – Issues of governance and nationalism (May 1st)

Morning session

- 9h00 – 10h15, The map of national identities in Israel – Alexander Yakobson (Hebrew University)
- 10h30 – 12h00, Nationalism and bi-nationalism in the Zionist pre-state movement: the case of J. L. Magnes – Hedva Ben-Israel (Hebrew University)

Afternoon session

- 13h30 – 14h30, Contemporary forms of Jewish identity in Israel – Shaul Shenhav (Hebrew University)
- 14h30 – 15h30, Dancing on two stages: the place and role of the Israeli Arab minority in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Towards the two state solution – Mohammed S. Wattad (Zefat Academic College)

- 15h30 – 16h30, Ambiguities of the Zionist project, or Jews between nation and ethnicity – Efraim Podoksik (Hebrew University)
- 16h30 – 17h00, Concluding remarks