

THE WRATH OF NATIONS



CIVILIZATION
AND THE FURIES OF
NATIONALISM

320.54
WILLIAM PFAFF

By the author of *Barbarian Sentiment*

In his first book since the much-acclaimed and much-discussed *Barbarian Sentiments*, William Pfaff writes an enthralling narrative of the fall of empires and rise of nations—and with them, of that modern nationalism which has become the most powerful political force in the contemporary world.

Born in the revolution against oppression and dynasties, nationalism has both created nations and ruined them. It paved the way for Nazism but eventually destroyed it. It forced Soviet armies out of Afghanistan and Eastern Europe, and eventually crushed Communism. It brought down the European colonial empires, but has left Africa confronting anarchy, and much of Asia dominated by ambitious and authoritarian new nations.

It is the enemy of internationalist ideology, yet becomes an ideology itself, employing the apparatus of totalitarian control in search of utopias placed in the past rather than the future. It is this which links the Serbian drive to recapture a mythical "Greater Serbia" to the Islamic fundamentalists' ambition to reestablish a lost Islamic universal empire.

Ethnic nationalism—the force which ignited both world wars—now has laid waste to Yugoslavia and threatens the rest of the Balkans and the Soviet Union's successor states, while it continues its destructive way in much of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

Yet nationalism cannot simply be condemned as reactionary or outmoded, a force which progress will push aside—as progressive philosophies and philosophers of history argue. It is rooted in the human need for secure place, communal loyalty, individual identification. It is an ineradicable factor in political existence.

(continued on back flap)





BOOKS BY WILLIAM PFAFF

The Wrath of Nations
Barbarian Sentiments
Condemned to Freedom

With Edmund Stillman

Power and Impotence
The Politics of Hysteria
The New Politics

WILLIAM PFAFF

Civilization and the

The **WRATH** of **NATIONS**

Furies of Nationalism

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TO C., A., AND N.

*Home is where one starts from. As we grow older
The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated
. . . Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment . . .*



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And when you hear of wars and revolts, do not be alarmed by it; such things must happen, but the end is not so soon. . . . Nation will rise in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be great earthquakes in this region or that, and plagues and famines; and sights of terror and great portents from heaven.

—LUKE 21:9–12

Les Morts gouvernent les Vivants.

—AUGUSTE COMTE

I *Nationalism*

This book is about the most powerful political force of the twentieth century, which is likely to prove the most powerful of the twenty-first as well: nationalism. Nationalism is a profound, if often malign, expression of human identities, a negative force, but also a positive one. It is an expression of love as well as of hate. It is a fundamental element in modern political life and international relations. It demands to be better understood.

The book describes where nationalism comes from, why, and when, and estimates where it is taking us. It considers the historical sources of nationalism, and also its counterparts and counterfeits in the evolution of modern society, not only in Western Europe, where the nation-state originated and is dominant, and in America, but in Asia and Africa as well, where western ideas of nationalism, as of internationalism, have exerted decisive, and frequently destructive, influence during recent years.

Nationalism has been the cause of much hateful violence in modern history, and is so again today in the Balkans and the states of the former Soviet Union. The related phenom-