



Cornerstone Forum

*A Conversation on Religious Freedom
and Its Social Implications*

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Transcript: "Modernity and the Emergence of the Nation State" with Liah Greenfeld

Middle East Action Team, Islam Action Team

The following is a transcript from the event: Nation State Formation and the Muslim-Majority World with Author Liah Greenfeld.

Event Details and Speaker Biographies:

<https://www.religiousfreedominstitute.org/rfievents/webinar-modernity-and-the-emergence-of-the-nation-state-with-liah-greenfeld>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6Xf9T2gQ2Q>

*Transcript has been auto-generated and lightly edited for clarity though errors may still be present.

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Ismail Royer: Good morning everyone or good evening or afternoon wherever you are. My name is Ismail Royer, I'm with the Religious Freedom Institute and we're here with my colleague Jeremy Barker. I am the director of the Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team at the Religious Freedom Institute and Jeremy is the director of the Middle East Action Team.

We are doing this webinar as the first of a series of webinars on the relationship between Islam and the state - Islam and government authority. It's part of a broader inquiry into the issue of religious freedom in the Muslim majority world. We are interested in exploring what are the prospects for freedom of both Muslims and non-Muslim minorities to practice their religion and what is the relationship between that and Islam and the state. So the purpose of this first webinar is to lay the theoretical and historical foundation by exploring the nation-state's emergence in the early modern period. This development was a result of a contingent of historical factors but it's also associated with concepts such as the identification of the nation with the state, the inviolability of borders, popular sovereignty, centralization of power, and so on.

So we're going to first introduce Jeremy. Jeremy is the Senior Program Officer director of the Middle East Action Team for RFI. He has lived or worked in the Middle East since 2010 including in Turkey and northern Iraq for many years and he's worked in rights-based relief across the region from Iraq to Turkey to Egypt to Morocco and his fuller biography can be found on our website. We're also going to have with us Osman Softic. Osman Softic is based in Sarajevo. He's in Sarajevo now and he is a senior scholar, research fellow with the Islamic Renaissance front, which is an intellectual think tank based in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia and he's also a project coordinator for the recently established Foreign Relations Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He graduated from the Faculty of Islamic studies in Sarajevo and holds a master's degree in international relations from the University of New South Wales in Australia. So he's going to be one of our interlocutors today and the star of our webinar today is Dr. Liah Greenfeld.

Dr. Liah Greenfeld is one of the, if not the, greatest living scholar of nationalism and the nation state today. She's a university professor and professor of sociology and political science and anthropology at Boston University. She's been called the one of the most original thinkers of the current period and as someone who has been grappling with several of her works over the past few months, I can say that this is absolutely accurate. She is the author of the new relatively recent *Mind, Modernity and Madness: the Impact of Culture on Human Experience* and her seminal work *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. So, Jeremy would you like to say anything?

Jeremy Barker: Thank you with Ismail and Osman. Professor Greenfield thank you for joining this moment. This series of webinars is part of a broader group of activities of publications- of consultations - that have been looking at kind of key questions around the principles that make up religious freedom; the rights of individuals, whether from the minority or majority community because they're thin. Today's conversation we really hope to set some of the foundational conversations of what that looks like and we're so very pleased to have you join and to really start out this question of laying the groundwork for a series of these further conversations. You maybe want to open it up with an initial question.

Ismail Royer: Sure, so Dr. Greenfeld - first of all we're very blessed to have you here and we want to thank you so much for coming. So to start off, I'd like to ask maybe if you could explain to us what distinguishes the modern state from pre-modern socio-political organizations. For example what you've described as *the society of orders* and maybe you can elaborate on that and then explain how the modern nation-state arose out of the different historical and ideological transformations that occurred in modernity.

Dr. Greenfeld: Yes this indeed is a fundamental question especially since it was the focus of the series of the webinar *Islam and the Modern State*.

In 16th century England in which the concept of the state first appeared - it's a very new concept - it was the synonym of the nation. Later - just about 50 years later - towards the end of the sixteenth century this word acquired a more specific meaning than just the name of the nation. It became the synonym for the government of a nation and the embodiment of one principle - one of the two most important principles of nationalism - the principle of sovereignty.

There were no states before nationalism, political organizations and governments. The national world to which we project quite anachronistically our understanding were governments of a very different type. The state is being the embodiment of popular sovereignty and a necessary derivative from national consciousness is necessarily an impersonal and representative type of government. It is impersonal - for example by contrast to the essentially personal government of kingship and it is representative government even in cases of such seemingly personal dictatorship as we have indicated for instance Robespierre during the French Revolution, Hitler, or Mao. Because those leaders who we would consider today tyrants in distinction to pre-modern tyrants, they actually firmly believed themselves, and the populace believes them to be, that they represent the will of the people of the nation.

Now today of course national consciousness is the dominant form of consciousness and what is it? It is that all that really matters is concentrated in this world in the mundane to actually to a complete

exclusion of the significance of the transcendental spheres and that social and political nature, reality, is composed of sovereign communities naturally. Reality is naturally divided into sovereign communities of fundamentally equal members and those communities are called nations. Again, no political community was ever called a nation before the age of nationalism, before nationalism was born in England in the 16th century. So this is a very new type of identity that is given one by the membership in the nation by one's nationality. Now this view of the world, this image of reality, this form of consciousness, is now dominant. And as any dominant form of consciousness, be it communism in the Soviet Union, be it a society of orders in the Middle Ages, be it Caesaropapism in Byzantium, any dominant form of consciousness we always take it for granted and we believe it to be as indeed inevitable, universal and an ideal form of reality. And yet it is, with all its values, and you see I already mentioned three very important values here- egalitarianism, fundamental egalitarianism, who believe that naturally society must be egalitarian and that equality is a supreme social good. Popular sovereignty and the focus on this world, the importance and meaningfulness, independent meaningfulness of this mundane world. I think this in fact like any other dominant form of consciousness, is an historical phenomenon. Historical meaning that it is contingent based on certain unpredictable historical accidents coming together and there is nothing necessary and nothing in fact ideal in it, besides that we believe this to be today. While it is dominant we believe it to be an ideal.

The accidents that led to the emergence of this form of course consciousness were basically of two, fundamentally, of two kinds. One was the purely, purely historical fact that during the Wars of the Roses which were the civil wars between two branches of the royal family in England, the Lancasters and the Yorks. In those wars, the higher in fact feudal nobility of England was physically destroyed. All the men of the nobility were killed which left the whole upper stratum of the society empty and necessitated in fact a very uncommon at that time, uncommon, totally illegitimate and therefore unimaginable trend of massive upward mobility. This was the first accident. And the other accident was that when this was happening the words “people” and “nation” had a certain meaning: “people” basically meaning “plebs” or rebel, that is, the lower classes. And “nation” meaning a tiny elite of supreme decision-makers. Now because of this massive upward mobility the people who were mobile, they were mobile from the people, from the plebs upward, in the consciousness of the society of orders, which was their dominant consciousness, the experience made absolutely no sense. In the consciousness of the society of orders, the different orders differed physically, they differed qualitatively in blood. So the blood they couldn't in fact mix. They couldn't imagine the mixture between them so they were mutually exclusive. And the people, the plebs, they had, it was believed, had regular red blood and the upper order, the nobility had blue blood. And so those upwardly mobile commoners who originated in the people, they had a very positive experience. Suddenly they were, you know, ruling the roost but they couldn't understand it. It was, it was un-understandable for them, their own experience, because they needed to rationalize it for themselves in the sense of both making it understandable and making it legitimate. So suddenly, somebody apparently had this bright idea in the very beginning of the sixteenth century, this amazing idea: “Oh, the people of England *is* a nation!” And this spread like wildfire, because it had such an enormous appeal, to the entire population. First of all to those you know, who were leading the upward mobility and were emerging as the new aristocracy, but also to all the other strata that in fact followed them, you know, now occupying their places, originating even deeper below and occupying places of those new aristocrats. So um, and this is how nationalism was born. Now this very equation of the people, meaning the lowest classes in the nation, that is the equation of the entire population, with the supreme decision-making elite, elevated the entire populace, the people, to the dignity of the elite.

Now it became something in which one would like to claim a membership. Before, to say to somebody, you know, “Oh, you are a member of the people,” this would be an offense. If you said to a French nobleman for example, “look you're just a member of the people,” I mean this French nobleman would likely challenge you to a duel. But now it became something so dignified, that you would *like* to identify with that. It also made all the people, all the members of this community equal, that is interchangeable. Everyone now could occupy any position. It depended now on one's own choice so with this we have freedom of choice, the rise of individual freedom. And the main equality was political equality, that is equality in self-governance, equality in popular sovereignty.

So this is what nationalism is and this is why it has to have the state, representative government and the embodiment of popular sovereignty as a legitimate government. Every nation has a state as its government and because this is the dominant view of our age, even those who are not nations and not states, they claim to be nations and states.

Jeremy Barker: Right, `yeah, this is a fantastic and I think a really important point to make, that while this is the ideal and it may be the dominant view, historically it's actually a rather new phenomenon, only back to the 16th century.

You've laid out and I think the important principle of equality. You also talk about two types of nations of a composite and a unitary, as it relates to the primacy of the people. Can you maybe lay out kind of what that framework is and how that is very...

Liah Greenfeld: Right, well actually there are three types of nationalism that one discovers. You see nationalism is that fundamental view of reality, of social political reality, as naturally divided. We all believe that nations are natural, right? It is naturally divided into sovereign communities of fundamentally equal members. But those two principles of popular sovereignty and fundamental egalitarianism can be interpreted and implemented in social institutions in three different ways.

The original nationalism, English nationalism, which was then adopted together, I mean brought by the immigrating Englishmen to the United States, and to Australia for instance, this original consciousness was individualistic in its conception of the nation. It's very very important that the word “nation” and the word “people” in English of that time and for some two centuries longer was a plural noun. The pronouns that corresponded to the word “nation” and to the word “people” were “we” and “they.” So every nation and every people, you know like “We the People...?” Yes, they were just constituted of those many many individuals. And it is the individuals who gave their nature to the association because individuals now were defined as free and equal. That's why the nation and the people were a free and egalitarian nation and a free and egalitarian people. But this was, this reflected the nature of the specific English experience. You know, the experience was the experience of individuals. But when two centuries later, it happened only 200 years later, all the society started importing this view from England. Again the reason for the importation was purely accidental, it couldn't be predicted that this view would spread. It spread because of its nationalism, because of its completely new vision of the world. England became extremely competitive. It became extremely competitive, because the dignity of the personal identity of every member of the nation depended directly on this membership. And the dignity for Englishmen became tremendously committed to the overall dignity of the nation. That is, the standing of their nation among other nations- and of course the Englishman imagined the rest of the world as nations- the rest of the world was not nations in the consciousness of the other people, only in the English

consciousness. And the moment the English perceived the world as the world of nations, it started seeing others, what they considered nations, threatening their dignity. For example, the Dutch, they thought they were too good economically, you know, too good in trade. So that for the English was an offense and England had four Anglo-Dutch Wars in which it was an aggressor all the time. And the Dutch couldn't understand, "what do they want?" Because they weren't competing, you see, they were living their lives. There was no other polity competing. They weren't at all competitive. Right? Only the English. And because they became so competitive, indeed they very quickly rose from a backward- in every respect- not very significant kingdom to the status of a superpower. And now everyone around them were watching them. And the people were interested, you know. kings were interested, such as Louis XIV of France. Right? They were extremely interested: "How did they? I mean what happened? How are they so super, you know, successful?" (Well I am of course spoiling a lot of history in between but we cannot go into detail.) And then in France, well at the same time it was both in Russia, in Russia of Peter the Great and in France, where they decided to import this nationalism. And then Russia of Peter the Great, it was just the interest of the Tsar - who was all-powerful, autocratic - to make his huge country as successful and active and motivating as England was.

He actually went, he met with William- who was the King William right in the beginning of the 18th century - and he understood how it worked and he wanted to kind of drum national consciousness into the skulls of his servitors and was very successful, having the power of an absolutely autocratic rule. And at the same time, in France aristocracy suffered very much from the absolutism of Louis XIV and the aristocracy observing England - they were very, very dedicated England-watchers - they saw that its extraordinary success was very much connected to the vitality of the aristocracy, the English aristocracy. And so the French decided to import nationalism. They actually were explicit in that. They said things like "we too must become a nation." And this is how this extraordinary new view started to spread. Now, however, when those countries such as Russia and France and then others were importing nationalism, this was no longer an individual experience as in England. So their nationalism became very different. The implementation of those principles of popular sovereignty and egalitarianism was very different from England, and in fact very different between them, even. So in France, first of all the nation was defined as the collective, as a collective individual, you see. Instead of thinking about the rights and qualities and desires, interests of the individual composing the nation, you know, they thought about the rights and will and interests of the nation as a whole.

Jeremy Barker: Right.

Liah Greenfeld: Right? And this was a collectivistic nationalism in distinction to English, American, Australian, Anglo nationalism, so it is individualistic. And this, the French, was collectivistic. Now when the nationalism is individualistic, when you define the nation as an association of individuals, the membership in such a nation is by definition voluntary. because individuals decide. If they don't want to be members they go away; if they want, they ask to become members, right? And so England from the beginning of its nationalism, from the 16th century, recognized that. And people who wanted to become English, who wanted to become members of the nation, they were welcomed, embraced. Right? And of course we see this continued in the United States and in France, no sorry in Australia. Now when the nation is defined as a collective individual, like it was both in France and in Russia -because of the different history of the emergence of nationalism there- when there is a possibility for both civic nationalism, that is voluntary nationality equated with

citizenship -like it was in England and and in the United States- when it is a collective individual there are two possibilities. One that it remains civic; anyone who wants to become a member of the nation is welcome. And this is how it was in France from the beginning of its nationalism and remains like that now, as we see very, very clearly. And why was it that? Because their definition of nationality was based on their achievement. They had... France when it became a nation was such a developed and proud culture in every possible respect. And because its achievement was in the kind of public, you know, you didn't have to look for the sources of its end, of its status anywhere else. It was all visible. So people who admired the French culture were welcomed to become French

Osman Softic: Professor Greenfeld, if I may just ask you a question. Reading one of your fascinating essays on nationalism's dividends, you are talking, basically my understanding is that you're challenging some of the predominant views that nationalism itself was created by capitalism. Whereas you have totally changed it around, turned it around, upside down and you're claiming that it is actually nationalism that created growth, wealth, and you are also talking about nationalism's globalization, which is a very specific, specific term that you're using. So given the fact that where I'm living in the Balkans there is certainly no shortage of nationalism - that nationalism has a really negative connotation and has led to a conflict and misery and dismemberment of larger states and ethnic cleansing and so on - so would you be able to elaborate a little bit on that as well if I may ask you?

Liah Greenfeld: Yes, yes Mr. Softic. Thank you very much, this is a very important question and I was actually just going there. You see, now if one doesn't have a fantastic cultural record that is admired by everyone already around, as in France, then importation of nationalism on which the dignity of every personal identity now depends - you see - that group of importers has to find the source of the dignity of their nation somewhere else. They have never achieved anything, this was the situation in Russia. In fact they were from all the possible points of view and in Europe, considered barbarians, backward right? You know, okay so where would they look for the dignity? They looked for the dignity in the blood and soil. So their definition of their national consciousness, their national consciousness emerged as *ethnic* national consciousness. Here we have ethno-nationalism. And when blood becomes the essential defining characteristic of the population, of course this is very exclusive and this is very hostile, in it's very competition for dignity. You see nationalism is eminently, essentially competitive consciousness and the competition is always for dignity. It is always for prestige, for the standing among other nations. When you define your identity in ethnic terms, in terms of blood - this is basically in racial terms right, there is no difference - then you have to prove all the time that your blood is better than the blood of others. Or in other words, that the blood of others is worse, that it's poisonous right? And if you distinguish by blood - look we have no pity for chickens right, we eat them - okay well when you define the difference between you and other human beings by blood you would not consider them the same humans, right?

Ismail Royer: Yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: There would be necessarily some dehumanizing going on, right? So this is what happens with ethno-nationalism. Now as nationalism spread, more and more societies were like Russia rather than like France. And none at all were like England and the United States, where there was this individual experience, you see. So that the most widespread nationalism in the world is collectivistic and ethnic nationalism. And it is... well, it is very dangerous in its implications for well,

for everything basically. And this is the reason for most wars, in fact for all the wars in the modern period, with the exception of the Anglo-Dutch Wars where they, you know, wanted to prove to the Dutch, they you know, have better herring or something like that. But otherwise you see - I'm going to capitalism - otherwise nationalism, well my argument, I do not explicitly argue with them but basically you see that my thinking is very different from all those people who claim as Marxists - this is a Marxist position you know, that the economic process is fundamental and for that reason you have capitalism and then you will have nationalism. So, you know my thinking is different because it is based on historical evidence and we know that capitalism emerges *after* nationalism and that capitalism emerges *first* in England, which was indeed the very *first* nation you know. And that it moves to other countries only after *they* import nationalism, so that given that, it cannot be the cause of nationalism if it emerges after there is nationalism. So indeed nationalism is very competitive but where you choose to compete, in which area you choose to compete, depends because the competition is always for dignity. It depends completely on the area in which you are likely to end on the top.

So Russia, for example, that is a tremendously competitive nation. It has never competed in the economic sphere so there is no capitalism in Russia, in fact. Never was. They were not interested. They had such a stupendous military power and they invested so much in their high culture and indeed nobody could beat them in either of those, those respects. So that until now, this is where they are competing with the rest of the world. They're not participating, even, in the economic development of the world. You know they sell, sell their oil when they can. I mean they have those tremendous natural resources. But this is not where they compete. But if the nationalism is individualistic, like in England, the United States, Australia, then you would be likely to compete in the economic sphere. Why? Because economic occupations are the occupations of the majority. Economic interests are the interests of the majority of the nation, right? So this is how indeed capitalism - that is more than economy, more than competitive economy- is oriented towards growth.

Ismail Royer: Yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: And it must be. It is oriented towards growth because it is competitive. And because it is competitive for dignity, when one starts one can never stop, because God knows maybe Japan suddenly will emerge and will become, you know, better, or China or something. So you have to compete all the time. you know. To remain in the competition you can never stop. But of course there are other areas of competition for dignity as well.

Ismail Royer: Dr. Greenfeld could you... you touched briefly on the transformation or the switching of order based on the transcendent - political and social order - based on a transcendent vision, a transcendent foundation, to one that is worldly based with the rise of nationalism. Could you elaborate a little bit more on that and tell us what happens to religion in this new order and how is it different than the role of religion in the past?

Liah Greenfeld: Well religion in the past, if we are talking about [the] monotheistic world, we're not talking about the other half of the world...

Ismail Royer: Right, yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: Now it is very important that we are only talking about the monotheistic world... Now, religion in the monotheistic world is everything, right? God is everything. Your personal faith, the personal faith of a believer in one God, depends completely on transcendental spheres. One's identity is defined by the relationship to God, right? One's life, one's eternal life, one's significant life is defined by the relationship to God. What happens in this short terrestrial life, is really kind of an entryway to the real thing. It is God that matters. One is here to witness, to serve witness to God and every community in fact, is what God has decided it to be.

So this is very different from the situation in which this world is meaningful in its own right and when people, actually can decide, can choose in which direction to move. So the emphasis with a choice, with the emergence of popular sovereignty, as one of the principles of the new vision of reality, God necessarily is deprived of His sovereignty. He is demoted. At the same time, He is becoming much less relevant to everyday existence. For many years I have been starting my classes on nationalism in Europe and in the United States, by asking my students - everywhere, everyone in class - to draw a pictogram, which is a very, very quick drawing. I would give them about 30 seconds for the drawing in which they would depict to me the world in which they live and many of those people were religious people. They would declare themselves to be religious people, either Christians or Muslims. And the remarkable thing about those drawings, that they would draw the globe, you know a circle, and then they would draw various things within that circle. For example some would draw their country, maybe their country vis-a-vis another country. And some would draw you know, personal things, like books and friends holding hands and a dog, or something like that, you know. Then I would ask them, "and where is God in your world?" And many of them were actually religious, you see, and they would... they would be shocked by that. They would be shocked by the fact that they didn't have a place for God in their world. God wasn't there. It wasn't... He wasn't relevant, you see. And then they realized that they *believed* themselves to be religious, but it was a wrong belief. They were actually not religious. They realised themselves.

Well, so... and this doesn't matter, doesn't mean that many people do not *believe* that they're religious. They're in fact not religious, but they believe that they're religious, because in so many nationalisms religion becomes redefined as an ethnic characteristic... as an ethnic inborn characteristic. You have this in Christianity in Orthodox Christianity in Greece. This is how it is. You know you're Greek if you are Orthodox and if you're Orthodox you're Greek, you know. And the same is true about Poland, you know, with Catholicism. The very definition of Polishness, is for that. The same is true in Pakistan, very clearly it is an ethnic characteristic.

Ismail Royer: Yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: Right?

Ismail Royer: Turkey.

Liah Greenfeld: Yeah, so many right? But clearly, religion in the religious world you know - in the world in which God decides - is not an ethnic characteristic. Neither in Islam nor in Christianity. Religion is... faith is a choice. It is free. One is responsible for it. One is not born with Christian or Muslim blood. No! One makes the most important choice of one's life, right? This is what religion requires. It requires that this be free!

Now it is not how it is in religion now, which is you know, which is used by secular nationalists. They do not have to know that they're secular, although of course, very often they are. You know the foundation of Pakistan for example, ...

Ismail Royer: Yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: Right? It was the foundation by fundamentally secular men right? Who decided, "okay this will be - you know - the foundation of my secular state." Now it is not like that. Many Pakistanis, I mean a huge majority I imagine, they truly believe that this is innate in them, right?

Ismail Royer: Yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: But... So it is you know... you can see religion or rather - rather a pretense of religion - everywhere around the national world, but it is a very different kind of thing now, you know. Religion becomes a tool in the hands of nationalists who in fact and always pursue completely secular and of competition for dignity in this world.

Ismail Royer: Dr. Greenfield what... what happens with the notion of the separation of church and state or church-state relations? You've talked about how in pre-modern times this, this was not even an intelligible issue to even think about. And yet the modern world is so obsessed with it. Could you... could you explain why that is?

Liah Greenfeld: Well it is actually an important issue. Of course before the pre-modern world, they couldn't believe in it, there was no such... Well, there were no states to begin with, you know, to separate from the religion establishments, or their political establishment was religious, very essentially religiously. But especially in France - this is a very French problem - France was a very ardent convert to the new consciousness of nationalism and to the sovereignty, to the ideal of popular, that is, *secular* sovereignty... sovereignty of the nation. There could be no two sovereigns. This was, you know, logically impossible. So the state was defined as a secular state but it recognized a private sphere, you know. A sphere of freedom *from* the state, which was... one could be you know in one's spare time and at home, one could be believe whatever one wants, so long as in public one did not act on those beliefs, right? And something like that, you see the United States - of course in England there was no separation from church and state right - so with the... and there is none. Still! You know you are... you belong to the, to the state religion. But there is a private sphere, you know. That because of all the others, all the other principles of nationalism, there is always an individualistic nationalism. In any case an individual is supreme and the freedom of the individual is a supreme value. And in the United States... the United States was very important, importantly religious foundation, right? So they *had* to separate church and state, you know, to recognize that certain spheres belong to this state and others belong very much to the church.

Osman Softic: Professor Greenfeld, if I can just follow up on Ismail's question. Since the nationalism, obviously as you so succinctly explained and in your theories and books, it's obviously originated in Europe, in the UK, in England, and then subsequently through - as you said - globalization of nationalisms, it was imported elsewhere in the world... How in your view - would you be able to elaborate on that a little bit further - how did it affect the Muslim world or the Middle Eastern countries, predominantly Arab countries where there was no notion of separation of

religion and state as such, in the past? Obviously it's a novelty and it manifested itself differently in those countries, in that part of the world.

Liah Greenfeld: Okay, you see, it is a novelty everywhere. In the Christian world there *also* was no separation of church and state. It was unimaginable, right? The politics were religious to begin with. Everything in this world was controlled by the transcendental world and its representatives. So the only conflict in Europe, in Western Europe - in Eastern Europe if we are talking about Byzantium and Russia, etc, the Orthodox Christianity right, we are talking about Caesaropapism, which means that the Emperor *is* the high priest. Right? So there is no idea of the separation of church and state.

Well in Western Europe the only conflict that existed was the conflict between papacy. As this, you know, the vicar of Christ on earth and the particular kings who themselves wanted to be the vicars. This came into play, going clearly in France, which was the first church that separated itself - the Gallic Church you know- from the Roman Church, because the king considered himself to be a direct vicar of Christ. And the divine right of Kings spread around all of Western Europe. So there was... it was the separation between kingdoms and the papacy, but not separation of church and state by any means. So the separation of church and state is a novelty for *any* society, okay, in the monotheistic world.

Now people who imported nationalism, there is usually an elite group of people, you know, an interested elite - an elite to whom nationalism appeals because it brings them dignity. Because nationalism makes one's identity dignified. So in in the Arab world or in the Muslim world more generally, the architects of specific nationalisms, the importers of nationalism were all intellectuals. Many of them educated in the West, they were exposed to nationalism, they understood, they found it very appealing, they wanted to have the basis of their own dignity around them, you know, in their nation people, right? And this is how it emerged.

However in Russia for example, as I was talking about Russia, they didn't have any great cultural achievements and well they had to go into blood and earth to find the source of their dignity. But in Islamic countries... in Arab countries in particular, there were no cultural achievements at the time when they imported their nationalism. But there was a *huge* cultural achievement in the past and this cultural achievement was the achievement of Islam. A great religion that came from Arabia. And so they made this very tightly connected to their blood and soil. It became completely irreligious. It was secularized in the process. It became a handmaiden of their secular goals. But, it is there, you know, in the very center of their consciousness. They were the people of Islam!

Jeremy Barker: I think that's a really important point to make and as we are coming to the end of our time, maybe one, one final question of you: you pointed very clearly to kind of the origins of nationalism, the different histories, and how in many ways the form ends up being contingent on the factors that are there present. A question I have is, how fixed are those categories? Or is there shifting between from a kind of collective, civic nationalism toward a more unitary blood and soil? Or so, do they move within that category, and as that, or when that happens, what are some of the fracture points or the tension points that emerge in... in that process?

Liah Greenfeld: Historically... so, speaking about that sociologically in terms of the logic of how cultures and societies develop, of course the availability of all those three types - you know to the imagination - may necessarily, you know they necessarily attract certain numbers of people from one

type to the other types. But this is on the individual level. But on the collective level, in terms of statistical tendency, you know, I mean everyone can decide, every one person can decide that well “you were brought up in this kind of environment.” I was brought up in the Soviet Union right? And I decided that I don't like this kind of thing, I like the American way of thinking, you know? So this is possible for the individual to do. But in terms of how societies, in mass, you know, transit... historically it has been that the movement is from individualistic towards collectivistic.
Yes.

Ismail Royer: Jeremy if you don't mind, I actually have one one more question I wanted to try to ask dr. Greenfeld before we broke up, and that is that the relationship between the nation-state or the rise of nationalism, and then you have what Weber talked about - the rise of the bureaucratic state and bureaucracy. Could you talk about what is the relationship between this sort of totalizing penetration of the, you know, polity by the state? How that arose, how that's related to the rise of nationalism?

Liah Greenfeld: You're talking about the totalitarian state?

Ismail Royer: Not totalitarian, but even in... even in say just in general, one of the characteristics of the modern state being that the state has this sort of penetration from the center into the periphery, or just to everywhere. Now we have this sort of direct relationship between the individual and the state, whereas in the past you had different mediating levels of authority; like guilds and tribes or you know religion, religious officials, feudal lords... but now you know, now the state essentially is the monolith. How did that occur? How did that arise? And what is the relationship between that and nationalism?

Liah Greenfeld: Well, um there have been very centralized governments before. One should think about China, for example. For a long, long time, before there was any nationalism they had very well-developed bureaucratic, all penetrating state... I mean not state, *government*.

Ismail Royer: Yeah.

Liah Greenfeld: When one thinks about absolutism, for example... Absolutism of Louis XIV in France... under him such bureaucratic, all-penetrating government was also developing, before nationalism. But in general of course, there can be no separation between the individual and popular sovereignty. The state is the embodiment of popular sovereignty. There is no separation between the individual and the people. The people is not split into the national people, it is not split into separate orders. Whether it... whether it is an individualistic society or a collectivistic society. The relationship is not simply direct but it is a self relationship. It is like being connected to a part of oneself. This is what the state is. It represents the nation, of which you are a part.

So you're basically... when an individual is commune... I mean, it's like talking to oneself, you know? Well it is a complete... this is, this is our consciousness. This is how we live, you see. So that's why in individualistic societies we always have the right to criticize, to judge, you know our top. You know, our president for example, right? I mean we are equal. I mean maybe he is not representing me and... and we are completely equal.

And in collectivistic societies the state is even more powerful because... not only that it *represents* the people, but it represents the people, the nation *to* itself, you see. One only knows one's identity from that representation. So our relationship to the state and in general, to the nation, is very similar to the relationship between the individual and God.

When... I mean analogous, you see. Analogous, not similar. But this was... the relationship was extremely intimate.

Ismail Royer: Wow.

Osman Softic: Mhm.

Ismail Royer: Wow.

Jeremy Barker: Yeah.

Ismail Royer: Alright.

Jeremy Barker: It looks like we may have froze there, but that may be actually a fine place to end there, setting the stage for a number of conversations that will be coming in the weeks ahead on so many of these topics. And so for Osman, Professor Greenfeld, thank you for, for setting the stage, of really I think a fascinating conversation that we'll pick up on many of these threads throughout, of that question of the relationship between the individual and the state, between religious communities and the state, and what some of the those challenge or flash points are in that conversation. And even how those identities are shifting and how to respond to that.

So with that, Osman, Ismail, thank you for joining me today and I look forward to picking up this conversation in the weeks ahead. Thank you for joining us.

Osman Softic: I look forward to it, thank you very much.

Jeremy Barker: Great and you can learn more about the Religious Freedom Institute on our website at RFI dot org, thank you very much.

Ismail Royer: Thank you everyone for your time and for being with us.

Osman Softic: Okay, bye-bye.

Ismail Royer: Thank you Osman, Salaam-alaikum.

Osman Softic: Salaam.



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