

NATIONALISM AND THE BODY POLITIC: PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE RISE OF ETHNOCENTRISM AND XENOPHOBIA

LENE AUESTAD ED.

This volume aims to question the recent revival of neo-nationalist policies in the light of what unconscious fantasies are involved in these developments. It examines both recent movements of right-wing extremism and the way in which rearticulated neo-ethnic ideas have been adopted by main stream politicians and in main stream public discourse. Politicians from other than the right-wing populist parties have tended to resist specific ways of talking that are considered too extremist, rather than their underlying frame of interpretation.

Governments across Europe have adopted anti-immigrant and anti-Roma policies. Xenophobia and hostility towards 'others' is on the rise, along with appeals to "Tradition and Security". 'Cultures of fear' are linked with fantasies of fusion or 'imagined sameness'. Alongside the image of the nation as a mother and/or father, Reich (1933) called attention to the fantasy of the nation as a body, echoed in Money-Kyrle's (1939) characterization of 'group hypochondria' in connection with the burning of witches and heretics; "The Church, and State united to it, could tolerate no foreign body within itself, and turned ferociously upon any that it found." To address the current political developments, the volume stresses the urgency of understanding the fantasies and affects which underpin them.

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'This unique volume presents a selection of contemporary theoretical discussions of the recent revival of neo-nationalism, but reaching beyond the traditional political debates on the topic: The different contributions in the book offer new and fascinating perspectives by exploring the unconscious fantasies of neo-nationalist policies. As Adorno and Marcuse have already shown, xenophobia, racism, ethnocentrism, and prejudice are connected with deep-rooted emotions, with hatred, uncanny desires, anxieties, and overwhelming fears of annihilation. These emotions cannot be fought politically if it is not possible to understand them as an expression of unconscious and unresolved political conflicts within society.

Therefore, this book is a most valuable and a much-needed contribution to a scientifically neglected issue that threatens Europe from within its own societies. The book is highly recommended to scholars and students of psychoanalysis, psychology, social psychology, and to philosophers and politicians who dare to look beyond the rim of their tea-cup.'

Elisabeth Rohr, Professor of Intercultural Education, Phillips-University Marburg, Germany; group analyst; counsellor of group therapy training projects in Guatemala and Ramallah, Palestine

'*Nationalism and the Body Politic* is a fine, timely collection that should be read by anyone concerned by the rise of nationalist and far right politics in Europe and beyond. Offering numerous insights and frequent provocations to further thought, it brings together an impressive selection of topics and national contexts. Informed by a generous range of theoretical traditions, the book is also a model of open-minded critical dialogue. Above all, the collection is a testament to the ongoing relevance of psychoanalytically informed political and social analysis – perhaps needed now more than ever.'

Peter Redman, Editor, *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*

'This book is an eye-opener for all of us. It addresses dramatic changes in the political and socio-economic climate of our time and calls for simultaneous testing of external and psychic reality. If we fail to grasp how external reality, history and trauma shape our experience of the world, we miss a fundamental momentum in the process of understanding and elaboration.'

Judit Szekacs-Weisz, Psychoanalyst

'Psychoanalysis has traditionally eschewed discussing politics, and neutrality has been held as the touchstone of its scientific respectability. Nonetheless, this is tantamount to a major gelding of psychoanalytic thought and an undue restriction of its impact on human life, both individual and collective. This fascinating collection of articles on the subject of Psychoanalysis and Politics, meticulously edited by Lene Auestad, is a major effort to redress this long-standing omission. The kaleidoscopic effect of the diverse perspectives of the many contributors aims at maintaining a fruitful dialectic tension, rather than a monolithic ideological uniformity, thus inviting the reader to engage in a dialogue with them. I highly recommend reading this book to anyone interested and engaged in psychoanalysis, group analysis, social science, philosophy, or politics.'

Juan Tubert-Oklander, MD, PhD, Psychoanalyst and Group Analyst, Mexico

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