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Quotations on Nationalism

Danilo Kiš

National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature. – Karl Marx

The combination of different nations in one State is as necessary a condition of civilized life as the combination of men in society. Where political and national boundaries coincide, society ceases to advance and nations relapse into a condition corresponding to that of men who renounce intercourse with their fellow men. A State which is incompetent to satisfy different races condemns itself. – Lord Acton

All individual members of civil society are ‘human personalities’ — that is, beings of a moral order, free and equal among themselves, each having absolute dignity and infinite value. As such, they transcend the accidents of place and time, and partake in the essence of universal Humanity. They are therefore not coercible by any ancestral tradition, being vassals neither to their race, nor to their religion, nor to their condition for birth, nor to their collective history. – Pierre Trudeau

The violent breakup of states points to the horrors that face countries in Africa and elsewhere which are not prepared to accept that diversity is integral to the human condition. These failed states will fall prey to greater internecine strife that will sap, if not destroy, the potential of their people. – Nelson Mandela

Nationalism is, first and foremost, paranoia—collective and individual paranoia. As collective paranoia, nationalism is born out of envy and fear. But above all, it is a result of an individual’s lost consciousness. Thus, collective paranoia is nothing else but a sum of many individual paranoias raised to the level of paroxysm. – Danilo Kiš

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