

70,000 actually spoke it at home. The figures for the Ukrainians are comparable.²⁷

In short, ethnic and linguistic nationalism may be on divergent routes, and both may now be losing their dependence on national state power. What may be called non-competing multi-lingualism or bilingualism analogous to the relation in the nineteenth century between official culture/state languages and subaltern dialects and patois, already seems common. The tendency to give vernaculars official status by the side of national/international culture-languages – Spanish in Latin America, French in parts of Africa, more generally English (which is the medium of secondary education in the Philippines and is, or until the revolution was, in Ethiopia) – should not mislead.²⁸ The model may no longer be a struggle for supremacy, as in Quebec, but a division of function, as in Paraguay, where both Spanish and Guaraní are taught and spoken by the urban elite, but Spanish is the medium of communication for all written purposes other than, perhaps, *belles lettres*. It is unlikely that Quechua, given equal official status in Peru since 1975, will seek to replace Spanish as the language of, say, daily press and university, or that, whatever official standing of some vernacular in African or Pacific British ex-colonies, the way to education, wealth and power will not continue to pass through English.²⁹

This speculation brings us to some concluding reflections on the future of nations and nationalism.

²⁷ Robert F. Harney, "'So great a heritage as ours.'" Immigration and the survival of the Canadian polity' (*Daedalus*, vol. 117/4, Fall 1988), pp. 68–9, 83–4.

²⁸ On the significance of English, see François Grosjean, *Life with Two Languages* (Cambridge MA 1982), where it is stated that in only 38 states had English no official standing whatever in 1974. In 20 (non-English-speaking) countries was it the only official language, in another 36 it was used in courts and as principal medium of instruction in schools (p. 114). For the problems of competing with English, see also L. Harries, 'The nationalization of Swahili in Kenya' (*Language and Society*, 5, 1976, pp. 153–64).

²⁹ In some ways the modern (oral and visual) mass media 'which do not require the arduous steps of literacy' (David Riesman, Introduction to Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (New York 1958), p. 4, have diminished the utilitarian case for vernacular literature for the monoglot, who is now no longer cut off from information about the wider world. The transistor radio has been the chief agent of this cultural revolution. See e.g. Howard Handelman, *Struggle in the Andes: Peasant Political Mobilization in Peru* (Austin, 1974), p. 58. My attention was first drawn to this revolution in the early 1960s by the late José María Arguedas, who pointed to the multiplication of local radio broadcasts in Quechua for the immigrants to Lima, usually operating at the time when only the labouring Indians were awake.

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CHAPTER 6



Nationalism in the late twentieth century

I

Since this book was first published in early 1990, more new nation-states have been formed, or are in the process of formation, than at any time in this century. The break-up of the USSR and Yugoslavia have so far added sixteen to the number of internationally recognized sovereign entities, and there is no immediately foreseeable limit to the further advance of national separatism. All states are today officially 'nations', all political agitations are apt to be against foreigners, whom practically all states harry and seek to keep out. It may therefore seem wilful blindness to conclude this book with some reflections on the decline of nationalism as a vector of historical change, compared to its role in the century from the 1830s to the end of World War II.

It would indeed be absurd to deny that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the regional and international system of which, as one super-power, it was a pillar for some forty years marks a profound, and probably permanent, historical change, whose implications are, at the time of writing, entirely obscure. However, they introduce new elements into the history of nationalism only insofar as the break-up of the USSR in 1991 went far beyond the (temporary) break-up of Tsarist Russia in 1918–20, which was largely confined to its European and transcaucasian regions.¹ For, basically, the 'national questions' of 1989–92 are not new. They belong overwhelmingly to the traditional home of national causes, Europe. There is so far no sign of serious political

¹ Even so, the 'pan-Turanian' ambitions of Turkey in central Asia, fortunately pursued not by Kemal Atatürk but by his defeated political rivals like Enver Pasha, and the Japanese interest in Russia's Pacific Far East, anticipate themes of which a lot more will be heard in the 1990s.

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separatism in the Americas, at least south of the US-Canadian border. There is little sign that the Islamic world, or at least the rising fundamentalist movements within it, are concerned with multiplying state frontiers. They want to return to the true faith of the founders. In fact, it is hard to see how separatism could interest them as such. Separatist agitations (largely terrorist) are clearly shaking corners of the South Asian sub-continent, but so far (except for the secession of Bangladesh) the successor states have held together. In fact, the post-colonial national regimes not only in this region still overwhelmingly accept the nineteenth-century traditions of nationalism, both liberal and revolutionary-democratic. Gandhi and the Nehrus, Mandela and Mugabe, the late Zulfikhar Bhutto and Bandaranaike, and, I would wager, the imprisoned leader of Burma (Myanmar), Ms Aung-San Su Xi, were or are not nationalists in the sense of Landsbergis and Tudjman. They are or were on exactly the same wavelength as Massimo d'Azeglio: nation-builders not nation-splitters (see p. 44 above).

Many more post-colonial African states may collapse into chaos and disorder, as has recently happened to some; including – though one hopes not – South Africa. Yet it is to stretch the sense of words to see the collapse of Somalia or Ethiopia as being brought about by the inalienable right of peoples to form independent sovereign nation-states. Friction between ethnic groups and conflicts, often bloody ones, between them, are older than the political programme of nationalism, and will survive it.

In Europe the outburst of separatist nationalism has even more specific historical roots in the twentieth century. The eggs of Versailles and Brest Litovsk are still hatching. Essentially the permanent collapse of the Habsburg and Turkish empires and the short-lived collapse of the Tsarist Russian empire produced the same set of national successor-states with the same sort of problems, insoluble in the long run, except by mass murder or forced mass migration. The explosive issues of 1988–92 were those created in 1918–21. Czechs were then yoked to Slovaks for the first time, and Slovenes (formerly Austrian) with Croats (once the military frontier against the Turks) and – across a millennium of divergent history, with the Serbs who belonged to Orthodoxy and the Ottoman empire. The doubling of Romania's size

produced friction between its component nationalities. The victorious Germans set up three small Baltic nation-states for which there was no historical precedent at all, and – at least in Estonia and Latvia – no noticeable national demand.² They were maintained in being by the Allies as part of the 'quarantine belt' against Bolshevik Russia. At the moment of Russia's greatest weakness, German influence encouraged the setting up of an independent Georgian and Armenian state, and the British the autonomy of oil-rich Azerbaijan. Transcaucasian nationalism (if such a term is not too strong for the grassroots anti-Armenian resentment of the Azeri Turks) had not been a serious political issue before 1917: the Armenians were, for obvious reasons, worried about Turkey rather than Moscow, the Georgians supported a nominally Marxist all-Russian party (the Mensheviks) as their national party. However, unlike the Habsburgs and the Ottoman empire, the multi-national Russian empire survived for another three generations, thanks to the October Revolution and Hitler. Victory in the Civil War eliminated the possibility of Ukrainian separatism, and the recovery of Transcaucasia eliminated local nationalisms, though – since it was achieved partly through negotiations with Kemalist Turkey – it left a few sensitive issues for future nationalist resentment, notably the problem of the Armenian enclave of Mountain Karabakh in Azerbaijan.³ In 1939–40 the USSR in practice recovered all that Tsarist Russia had lost, except for Finland (which had been allowed to secede peacefully by Lenin) and former Russian Poland.

The simplest way to describe the apparent explosion of separatism in 1988–92 is thus as 'unfinished business of 1918–21'. Conversely, ancient and deep-seated national questions

² This emerges from the voting figures for the Russian Constituent Assembly in November 1917, analysed by O. Radkey, *Russia Goes to the Polls* (Ithaca 1989).

³ The Armenians illustrate the difficulties of tying nationality to territory. The present Republic of Armenia (with Yerevan as its capital) had not been of particular significance to that unhappy people before 1914. 'Armenia' was primarily in Turkey. The Russian Armenians were both a rural transcaucasian people, and a substantial urban population – probably the majority of the population in Tbilisi and Baku – as well as a large national and international diaspora. 'Armenia', one might say, was what was left when Armenians had been exterminated or expelled from everywhere else.

which actually seemed dangerous to European chanceries *before* 1914, have not proved explosive. It was not 'the Macedonian Question', well known to scholars as leading to battles between rival experts in a half-dozen fields at international congresses, which provoked the collapse of Yugoslavia. On the contrary, the Macedonian Peoples Republic did its best to stay out of the Serb-Croat imbroglio, until Yugoslavia was actually collapsing, and all its components, in sheer self-defence, had to look after themselves. (Characteristically enough, its official recognition has been hitherto sabotaged by Greece, which had annexed large parts of Macedonian territory in 1913). Similarly, the only part of Tsarist Russia which contained a genuine national movement before 1917, though not a separatist one, was Ukraine. Yet Ukraine remained relatively quiet while Baltic and Caucasian republics demanded secession, remained under the control of the local Communist Party leadership, and did not resign itself to separation until after the failed coup of August 1991 destroyed the USSR.

Moreover, the definition of 'the nation' and its aspirations which, paradoxically, Lenin shared with Woodrow Wilson, automatically created the fracture lines along which multinational units constructed by communist states were to break, just as the colonial frontiers of 1880-1950 were to form the state frontiers of post-colonial states, there being no others available. (Most of their inhabitants did not know what frontiers were, or took no notice of them.) In the Soviet Union we can go further: it was the communist regime which deliberately set out to *create* ethno-linguistic territorial 'national administrative units', i.e. 'nations' in the modern sense, where none had previously existed or been thought of, as among the Asian Moslem peoples – or, for that matter, the Bielorussians. The idea of Soviet Republics based on Kazakh, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Tadjik and Turkmen 'nations' was a theoretical construct of Soviet intellectuals rather than a primordial aspiration of any of those central-Asian peoples.⁴

The idea that these peoples, whether because of 'national oppression' or Islamic consciousness, were putting the Soviet

⁴ Cf. Graham Smith (ed.), *The Nationalities Question in the Soviet Union*, part IV: 'Muslim Central Asia' (London and New York 1990), e.g. pp. 215, 230, 262.

system under the intolerable strain which led to its collapse seems to be merely another expression for some western observers' justified horror of the Soviet system and their belief that it could not last long. In fact, central Asia remained politically inert until the collapse of the Union, except for some pogroms of the national minorities whom Stalin had tended to banish into those remote regions. Such nationalism as is developing in those republics is a post-Soviet phenomenon.

The changes in and after 1989 were thus essentially not due to national tensions, which remained under effective control even where they genuinely existed, as in Poland and among the Yugoslav peoples, so long as central party operated, but primarily to the decision of the Soviet regime to reform itself, and in doing so (a) to withdraw military support from its satellite regimes, (b) to undermine the central command and authority structure which allowed it to operate, and consequently also (c) to undermine the foundations of even the independent communist regimes in Balkan Europe. Nationalism was the beneficiary of these developments but not, in any serious sense, an important factor in bringing them about. Hence, indeed, the universal amazement at the sudden collapse of the eastern regimes, which had been entirely unexpected, even in Poland, where a deeply unpopular regime had shown that it could keep a massively organized opposition movement under control for almost a decade.

One has only to compare the German unifications of 1871 and 1990 to note the differences. The first was seen as the long-awaited achievement of an objective which, in one way or another, was the central concern of everyone interested in politics in the German lands, even those who wanted to resist it. Even Marx and Engels felt that Bismarck '(tut) jetzt, wie im 1866, ein Stück von unserer Arbeit in *seiner Weise*'.⁵ But until the autumn of 1989 none of the major parties in the Federal Republic had paid more than lip-service to the creation of a single German state for many years. This was not only because it was obviously not practicable until Gorbachev made it so, but because nationalist

⁵ Engels to Marx, 15 August 1870 (Marx-Engels, *Werke* vol. 33 (Berlin 1966), p. 40.

organizations and agitations were politically marginal. Nor did the desire for German unity motivate the political opposition in the DDR, or the ordinary East Germans, whose mass exodus precipitated the collapse of the regime. No doubt, among all their doubts and uncertainties about the future, most Germans welcome the unification of the two Germanies, but its very suddenness, and the patent lack of serious preparation for it, demonstrate that, whatever the public rhetoric, it was the by-product of unexpected events outside Germany.

As for the USSR, it collapsed not, as some Sovietologists had predicted, under its internal national tensions⁶, undeniable as these were, but under its economic difficulties. *Glasnost*, which the reform-communist leadership of the country regarded as a necessary condition of *perestroika*, reintroduced freedom of debate and agitation and also weakened the centralized command system on which both regime and society rested. The failure of *perestroika*, i.e. the growing deterioration of living conditions for ordinary citizens, undermined faith in the all-Union government, made responsible for it, and indeed encouraged or even imposed regional and local solutions to problems. It is safe to say that before Gorbachev no Soviet republic envisaged secession from the USSR except the Baltic states, and even there independence was then obviously a dream. Nor can it be argued that only fear and coercion kept the USSR together, though it undoubtedly helped to stop ethnic and communal tensions in mixed regions from degenerating into mutual violence, as they have subsequently done. Indeed, in the long Brezhnev era local and regional autonomy was by no means illusory. Moreover, as the Russians never ceased to complain, most of the other republics were rather better off than the inhabitants of the RSFSR. The national disintegration of the USSR, and incidentally of its constituent republics, almost all effectively multinational, is plainly more the consequence of events in Moscow than their cause.

Paradoxically, the case for nationalist movements with the power to undermine existing regimes is rather stronger in the west, where such agitations disrupt some of the most ancient

⁶ Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *L'empire éclaté* (Paris 1978); *idem*, *La gloire des nations, ou La Fin de l'empire soviétique* (Paris 1990).

nation-states: the United Kingdom, Spain, France, even in a more modest way Switzerland, not to mention Canada. Whether complete secession of Quebec, Scotland or some other region will actually take place is at present (1992) a matter for speculation. Outside the former Euro-Soviet red belt, successful secessions since World War II are extremely rare, and peaceful separations virtually unknown. Nevertheless, the possible secession of Scotland or Quebec can today be discussed as a realistic possibility, which it was not twenty-five years ago.

II

Yet nationalism, however inescapable, is simply no longer the historical force it was in the era between the French Revolution and the end of imperialist colonialism after World War II.

In the 'developed' world of the nineteenth century, the building of a number of 'nations' which combined nation-state and national economy was plainly a central fact of historical transformation and seen to be such. In the 'dependent' world of the first half of the twentieth century, and for obvious reasons especially in the colonized part of it, movements for national liberation and independence were the main agents for the political emancipation of most of the globe, that is to say for an elimination of imperial administration and, more significantly, direct military domination by the imperial powers, a situation that would have appeared almost inconceivable even half a century ago.⁷ While, as we have seen, these national liberation movements in the Third World were in theory modelled on the nationalism of the west, in practice the states they attempted to construct were, as we have also seen, generally the opposite of the ethnically and linguistically homogeneous entities which came to be seen as the standard form of 'nation-state' in the west. Nevertheless, even in this respect they were *de facto* more like than unlike the western nationalism of the liberal era. Both were typically unificatory as

⁷ Wars waged on a considerable scale by super-powers using all except their nuclear (and chemical/biological) weaponry, have been spectacularly less successful than pre-World War II history would have led one to suppose – e.g. in Korea and Vietnam.

well as emancipatory, though in the latter case the reach exceeded the grasp more frequently than in the earlier.

The current phase of essentially separatist and divisive 'ethnic' group assertion has no such positive programme or prospect. This is demonstrated by the mere fact that, for want of any genuine historical project, it attempts to recreate the original Mazzinian model of the ethnically and linguistically homogeneous territorial nation-state ('every nation a state – only one state for each nation'). This is unrealistic as a matter of observation – and, as we have seen (pp. 160–2) it is also completely out of line with late twentieth-century linguistic and cultural developments.

It is, as we shall see, entirely irrelevant to the problem of the late twentieth century, for which it provides no general solution, or, except by a rare and happy accident, no local solutions. It merely complicates the task of addressing these problems.

Nevertheless, the force of the sentiments which leads groups of 'us' to give themselves an 'ethnic'/linguistic identity against the foreign and threatening 'them' cannot be denied. Least of all in the late twentieth century, when a crazy war has been fought, to widespread patriotic enthusiasm, by an imaginary British 'we' against a symbolic Argentinian 'they' over some South Atlantic bog and rough pasture, and when xenophobia has become the most widespread mass ideology in the world. However, xenophobia, readily shading into racism, a more general phenomenon in Europe and North America in the 1990s even than it was in the days of fascism, provides even less of an historic programme than Mazzinian nationalism. Indeed, it rarely even pretends to be more than a cry of anguish or fury. Moreover, even the romantic sympathisers with the sovereign independence of selected small peoples are rarely found insisting on the Janus-like characteristics of M. Le Pen's National Front. It has one face, and most of us would prefer it to have none.

What is the nature of this cry of distress or fury? Time and again such movements of ethnic identity seem to be reactions of weakness and fear, attempts to erect barricades to keep at bay the forces of the modern world, similar in this respect to the resentment of Prague Germans pressed into a corner by Czech immigration rather than to that of the advancing Czechs. This is not only the case of small linguistic communities vulnerable to

quite modest demographic changes, such as the thinly populated hills and coasts of Welsh-speaking Wales, or Estonia, whose one million or so Estonian speakers would in any case place it at the very lower limit of populations capable of maintaining a modern linguistic culture at all levels. It is not surprising that the most explosive issue in both areas is the uncontrolled immigration of monoglot speakers of the English or Russian language respectively. However, similar reactions are to be found among much larger populations whose linguistic/cultural existence is not, or does not seem, in any way threatened. The most absurd example of this is the movement, which acquired political clout in some states of the USA in the late 1980s, to declare English as the only official language of the US. For while hispanophone immigration is indeed sufficiently massive in some parts of the USA to make it desirable, and sometimes necessary, to address this public in its own language, the idea that the supremacy of English in the USA is, or is likely to be, in jeopardy, is political paranoia.

What fuels such defensive reactions, whether against real or imaginary threats, is a combination of international population movements with the ultra-rapid, fundamental and unprecedented socio-economic transformations so characteristic of the third quarter of our century. French Canada may illustrate this combination of an intensified petty-bourgeois linguistic nationalism with mass future shock. On paper the French language, spoken as a native tongue by a quarter of Canada's population, a community about half the size of Canada's native anglophones, and buttressed by the official bilingualism of the federation, the international backing of French culture and upwards of 130,000 students in francophone universities (1988), seems safe enough. And yet the stance of Quebec nationalism is that of a people in headlong retreat before historical forces which threaten to overwhelm it; a movement whose very advances are viewed in terms of potential weakness rather than as success.⁸ Indeed, Quebec

⁸ Léon Dion, 'The mystery of Quebec' (*Daedalus*, vol. 117/4, Fall 1988, pp. 283–318) is a good example: e.g. 'This new generation does not show the same desire to stand up for the French language as its elders did, partly because it feels protected by ... the French Language Charter ... and partly because Canada's Anglophones and speakers of other languages are becoming more tolerant of French' (p. 310).

nationalism has *de facto* abandoned the large francophone minorities in New Brunswick and Ontario in order to barricade itself within an autonomous or even separatist province of Quebec. The sense of the *Canadiens'* insecurity is indicated by the belief that Canada's now official 'multiculturalism' is simply a plot aimed at 'crushing *Francophonie's* special needs under the political weight of multiculturalism',⁹ and it is, of course, reinforced by the patent preference of the 3.5 million post-1945 immigrants to have their children educated in English, which opens far wider career perspectives in North America than the French language does. Yet on paper the threat of immigration is less in francophone than in anglophone Canada, since between 1946 and 1971 only about 15% of newcomers settled in Quebec.

What lies behind the fear and insecurity of French Canadians is patently a social cataclysm which is indicated by the dramatically sudden collapse of the Catholic Church in what had for so long been a conservative, Catholic, clerical, child-producing society not only among the farmers but among townspeople. It seems that in the course of the 1960s church attendance in the province dropped from well over 80% to 25%, while the Quebec birth-rate has become one of the lowest in Canada.¹⁰ Whatever lies behind such a startling transformation in Québecois mores could hardly fail to create a disoriented generation hungry for new certitudes to replace the collapsing old ones. It has even been argued that the rise of militant separatism was a surrogate for the lost traditional Catholicism. The guess – it would hardly lend itself to convincing verification or falsification – is not implausible, at all events for someone like this author who has observed an entirely non-traditional, indeed, in its liking for pubs and alcohol, an entirely counter-traditional, Welsh nationalist militancy emerging among a younger generation in one part of North Wales; as the chapels have emptied, the preacher and amateur scholar is no longer the community's voice, and the decline of a public commitment to temperance has removed the most obvious

⁹ R.F. Harney, "So great a heritage as ours." Immigration and the survival of the Canadian polity' (*Daedalus*, vol. 117/4, Fall 1988), p. 75.

¹⁰ Gérard Pelletier, 'Quebec: different but in step with North America' (*Daedalus*, vol. 117/4, Fall 1988, p. 271); Harney, "So great a heritage as ours", p. 62.

way in which individuals demonstrated their membership of a puritan culture and community.

Massive population mobility naturally intensifies this disorientation, as do economic shifts, some not unconnected with the rise of local nationalism.¹¹ Wherever we live in an urbanized society, we encounter strangers: uprooted men and women who remind us of the fragility or the drying up of our own families' roots.

In the case of the western ex-communist societies, this social disorientation is intensified by the collapse of life as most of the inhabitants have known it and learned to live it. Nationalism or ethnicity – to quote Miroslav Hroch, writing about contemporary central Europe – is 'a substitute for factors of integration in a disintegrating society. When society fails, the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee'.¹²

In the socialist and ex-socialist economies, governed essentially, in Janos Kornai's phrase, by the 'economics of shortage'¹³ ethnicity, like kinship, and other networks of potential reciprocity or patronage, already had a more concrete function. It gave 'members of the same group an edge over claimants from "other" groups'¹⁴ for scarce resources; and, conversely, defined the 'others' whose claims came second to 'ours'. Where the former

¹¹ Quebec nationalism in the 1970s produced a large business exodus from Montreal, hitherto both the largest Canadian city and the centre of Canadian business, to the advantage of Toronto. 'The city is coming to grips with a more modest destiny as a regional center for Quebec and eastern Canada.' Even so, the notably smaller impact of minority languages on Montreal than on other cities does not seem to have lessened linguistic militancy. In Toronto and Vancouver white Anglo Protestants no longer form the majority of the population, whereas in Montreal French Canadians form 66% of the population. Cf. Alan F. J. Arbib, 'Canada as an urban nation' (*Daedalus*, vol. 117/4, Fall 1988, pp. 237–64).

¹² M. Hroch, 'Nationale Bewegungen früher und heute. Ein europäischer Vergleich' (unpublished paper 1991) p. 14. Hroch, I need hardly add, insists that the apparent revival of old national agitation in east-central Europe is not (usually) the continuation of an old nationalist tradition, but a sort of re-invented tradition, an 'Illusion der Reprise'. 'As e.g. the nineteenth-century Czech patriots dressed up as Hussite fighters, so today the patriots of contemporary east-European national movements dress up as nineteenth-century patriots' (p. 11).

¹³ J. Kornai, *The Economics of Shortage* (Amsterdam 1980).

¹⁴ Katherine Verdery, unpublished draft on 'Nationalism and the "Road to Democracy"', p. 36.

nation-wide society and government disintegrates entirely, as in the ex-USSR, the 'outsider' is helpless. 'Towns, [administrative districts], republics, are fencing themselves off in defence against migratory demand'; local food cards divide the market into separate mini-economies 'and protect resources... from "aliens"'.¹⁵

However, in post-communist societies ethnic or national identity is above all a device for defining the community of the innocent and identifying the guilty who are responsible for 'our' predicament; especially once communist regimes are no longer there to function as scapegoats. As someone has said about Czechoslovakia: 'The country is swarming with otherness. Every one's first finger is sore from pointing at Others and calling them names.'¹⁶ But this is a universal rather than merely a post-communist situation. 'They' can be, must be, blamed for all the grievances, uncertainties and disorientations which so many of us feel after forty years of the most rapid and profound upheavals of human life in recorded history. And who are 'they'? Obviously, and virtually by definition, those who are 'not us' – the strangers who, by their very alienness, are enemies: present aliens, past aliens, even purely notional aliens as in Poland where anti-Semitism continues to explain Polish ills in the total absence of Jews. If the foreigners with their knavish tricks did not exist, it would be necessary to invent them. But at the end of our millennium they rarely have to be invented: they are universally present and recognizable within our cities, as public dangers and agents of pollution, universally present, beyond our borders and control, but hating and conspiring against us. In the unhappier countries they are, and have always been, our neighbours, but our very co-existence with 'them' now undermines the exclusive certainties of belonging to *our* people and *our* country.

What, if anything have such ethnic/nationalist reactions in common with the recent rise of 'fundamentalism' in many parts of the globe, which has been described as appealing to 'people who cannot tolerate random and haphazard existence and

¹⁵ Caroline Humphrey, "Icebergs", barter and the mafia in provincial Russia' (*Anthropology Today*, 7(2) 1991, pp. 8–13).

¹⁶ Andrew Lass, quoted by Verdery, 'Nationalism and the "Road to Democracy"', p. 52.

unexplained conditions (and thus) often converge on those who offer most complete, inclusive and extravagant world views'.¹⁷ It is seen as 'always reactive, reactionary'. 'Some force, tendency, or enemy must be perceived as potentially or actually eroding, corroding, or endangering one's movement and what it holds dear.' The 'fundamentals' that fundamentalism stresses 'always come from some earlier, presumably primal and pure... stage in one's own sacred history'. They 'are used for setting boundaries, for attracting one's kind and alienating other kinds, for demarcating'. And they conform to George Simmel's old observation that

Groups, and especially minorities, which live in conflict... often reject approaches or tolerance from the other side. The closed nature of their opposition, without which they cannot fight on, would be blurred... Within certain groups, it may even be a piece of political wisdom to see to it that there be some enemies in order for the unity of the members to be effective and for the group to remain conscious of this unity as its vital interest.¹⁸

The similarities with a number of recent ethnic/nationalist phenomena are evident, especially where these are themselves linked with, or seek to re-establish links with, a group-specific religious faith – as among (Christian) Armenians opposing (Muslim) Azeri Turks, or in the recent and markedly Old Testament phase of Likud Zionism in Israel, so different from the aggressively secularist, and even anti-religious, ideology of the movement's founders.¹⁹ It seems probable that the visiting extraterrestrial would see ethnic exclusiveness and conflict, xenophobia and fundamentalism as aspects of the same general phenomenon. Nevertheless, there is one important distinction. Fundamentalism, whatever its religious version, provides a

¹⁷ Martin E. Marty, 'Fundamentalism as a social phenomenon' (*Bulletin, The American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 42/2 November 1988, pp. 15–29).

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 20–1.

¹⁹ It is not clear how far genuinely traditional Jewish religious orthodoxy, which is, of course, opposed to the establishment of a state for all the Jews in Israel before the return of the Messiah, has attenuated or dropped its opposition to Zionism. At all events Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, advertising the paraphernalia of religious practice, must not be automatically identified with the other (and probably growing) wing of Jewish fundamentalism which seeks to reimpose the full rigours of ritual on a secularized society.

detailed and concrete programme for both individuals and society, even if it is one selected from texts or traditions whose suitability for the late twentieth century is not obvious. What the alternative to the present, degenerate and evil, society is, presents no immediate problem: women are once again hidden from sight, or married ones have their hair shorn; thieves are once again punished by having hands or legs cut off; alcohol, or whatever else is ritually prohibited, is banned; and Koran, or Bible, or whatever constitutes the authoritative compendium of eternal wisdom, provides complete practical and moral guidance on all subjects, as interpreted by those whose business it is to do so. The call of ethnicity or language provides no guidance to the future at all, even when new states are formed on the basis of these criteria. It is merely a protest against the status quo or, more precisely, against 'the others' who threaten the ethnically defined group. For, unlike fundamentalism which, however narrow and sectarian in its actual appeal, draws its strength from the claim to *universal* truth, theoretically applicable to all, nationalism by definition excludes from its purview all who do not belong to its own 'nation', i.e. the vast majority of the human race. Moreover, while fundamentalism can, at least to some extent, appeal to what remains of genuine custom and tradition or past practice as embodied in religious practice, as we have seen nationalism in itself is either hostile to the real ways of the past, or arises on its ruins.

On the other hand nationalism has one advantage over fundamentalism. Its very vagueness and lack of programmatic content gives it a potentially universal support within its own community. Except in genuinely traditional societies reacting against the initial impact of modernity, fundamentalism appears to be, universally, a minority phenomenon. This may be concealed either by the power of regimes which impose it on their peoples, whether they like it or not (as in Iran), or by the capacity of fundamentalist minorities to mobilize strategically placed votes effectively in democratic systems, as in Israel and the USA. But it may be taken for granted that nowadays the 'moral majority' is not a real (electoral) majority, just as a 'moral victory' (the traditional euphemism for defeat) is not a real victory. Yet ethnicity *can* mobilize the vast majority of its community

— provided its appeal remains sufficiently vague or irrelevant. There is little doubt that most non-Israeli Jews in the world are 'for Israel'; that most Armenians support the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia; and that most Flemings do their best not to speak French. Of course this unity crumbles as soon as the national cause is identified not with generalities, but with much more divisive specifics: not with 'Israel' in general, but with the policies of Begin, Shamir or Sharon; not with Wales in general but with the supremacy of the Welsh language; not with Flemishness as against Frenchness, but with a specific Flemish nationalist party.²⁰ To this extent movements or parties specifically committed to a 'nationalist' programme, mostly separatist, are likely to be the expression of sectional or minority interests, or to be politically fluctuating and unstable. The rapid changes in the membership and electoral fortunes of Scots, Welsh, Québécois and no doubt other nationalist parties of the past twenty years illustrate this instability. Such parties, as always, like to equate themselves with the sense of collective separateness, hostility to 'them' and the 'imagined community' which may be almost universally felt in their 'nation', but they are very unlikely to be the only expressions of such a national consensus.

III

The anguish and disorientation which finds expression in this hunger to belong, and hence in the 'politics of identity' — not necessarily national identity — is no more a moving force of history than the hunger for 'law and order' which is an equally understandable response to another aspect of social disorganization. Both are symptoms of sickness rather than diagnoses, let alone therapy. Nevertheless, they create the illusion of nations and nationalism as an irresistibly rising force ready for the third millennium. This force is further exaggerated by the semantic illusion which today turns all states officially into 'nations' (and members of the United Nations), even when they are patently not. Consequently, all movements seeking territorial autonomy tend to

²⁰ From 1958 to 1974 the three main Belgian parties (in their Flemish versions) never totalled less than 81.2% of the vote in Flanders. See A. Zolberg in M. Esman (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World* (Ithaca 1977), p. 118.

think of themselves as establishing 'nations' even when this is plainly not the case; and all movements for regional, local or even sectional interests against central power and state bureaucracy will, if they possibly can, put on the national costume, preferably in its ethnic-linguistic styles. Nations and nationalism therefore appear more influential and omnipresent than they are. Aruba plans to break away from the rest of the Netherlands West Indies, because it does not like to be yoked to Curaçao. Does that make it a nation? Or Curaçao, or Surinam, which is already a member of the United Nations? The Cornish are fortunate to be able to paint their regional discontents in the attractive colours of Celtic tradition, which makes them so much more viable, even though it leads some of them to reinvent a language not spoken for 200 years, and even though the only popular public tradition with genuine roots in the county is Wesleyan Methodism. They are luckier than, say, Merseyside, which can mobilize in defence of the equally or more hard-hit local interests only the memory of the Beatles, of generations of Scouse comedians, and the proud tradition of its rival football teams, while taking care to keep away from anything that reminds its inhabitants too obviously of the divisive colours Orange and Green. Merseyside cannot blow a national trumpet. Cornwall can. But are the situations which produce discontent in one area substantially different from those which do so in the other?

In fact, the rise of separatist and ethnic agitations is partly due to the fact that, contrary to common belief, the principle of state-creation since World War II, unlike that after World War I, had nothing to do with Wilsonian national self-determination. It reflected three forces: decolonization, revolution and, of course, the intervention of outside powers.

Decolonization meant that, by and large, independent states were created out of existing areas of colonial administration, within their colonial frontiers. These had, obviously, been drawn without any reference to, or sometimes even without the knowledge of, their inhabitants and therefore had no national or even protonational significance for their populations; except for colonial-educated and westernized native minorities of varying, but generally exiguous, size. Alternatively, where such territories were too small and scattered, as in many colonized archipelagos,

they were combined or broken up according to convenience or local politics. Hence the constant, and eventually often vain, calls of the leaders of such new states to surmount 'tribalism', 'communalism', or whatever forces were made responsible for the failure of the new inhabitants of the Republic of X to feel themselves to be primarily patriotic citizens of X rather than members of some other collectivity.

In short, the appeal of most such 'nations' and 'national movements' was the opposite of the nationalism which seeks to bond together those deemed to have common ethnicity, language, culture, historical past, and the rest. In effect it was *internationalist*. The internationalism of the leaders and cadres of national liberation movements in the Third World is more obvious where such movements played a leading part in the liberation of their countries than where countries were decolonized from above, for the post-independence breakdown of what previously operated, or seemed to operate, as a united movement of 'the people' is more dramatic. Sometimes, as in India, the unity of the movement has already cracked before independence.

More commonly, soon after independence tensions develop between the component parts of the independence movement (e.g. in Algeria, Arabs and Berbers), between peoples actively involved in it and those not, or between the emancipated non-sectional secularism of the leaders and the feelings of the masses. However, while the cases where multi-ethnic and multi-communal states have fractured, or are close to breaking, naturally attract most attention – the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the splitting of Pakistan, the demands for Tamil separatism in Sri Lanka – it should never be forgotten that these are special cases in a world where multi-ethnic and multi-communal states are the norm. What was written almost thirty years ago remains substantially true: 'Countries including many language and culture groups, like most African and Asian ones, have not split up, and those taking in only part of a single language group, like the Arab ones and North Africa, have ... not united.'²¹

²¹ John H. Kautsky, 'An essay in the policies of development' in John H. Kautsky (ed.), *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries: Nationalism and Communism* (New York-London 1962), p. 35.

The intervention of outside powers, finally, has obviously been non-nationalist in both motivation and effect, except by pure accident. This is so evident that it does not require illustration. However, so also has been the impact of social revolution, though rather less effectively. Social revolutionaries have been keenly aware of the force of nationalism, as well as ideologically committed to national autonomy, even when it is not actually wanted, as among the Lusitan Slavs, whose language is slowly retreating, in spite of the admirable efforts of the German Democratic Republic during its period of independent existence to foster it. The *only* form of constitutional arrangements which socialist states have taken seriously since 1917 are formulas for national federation and autonomy. While other constitutional texts, where they existed at all, have for long periods been purely notional, national autonomy has never ceased to have a certain operational reality. However, inasmuch as such regimes do not, at least in theory, identify with any of their constituent nationalities²² and regard the interests of each of them as secondary to a higher common purpose, they are non-national.

Hence, as we can now see in melancholy retrospect, it was the great achievement of the communist regimes in multinational countries to limit the disastrous effects of nationalism within them. The Yugoslav revolution succeeded in preventing the nationalities within its state frontiers from massacring each other almost certainly for longer than ever before in their history, though this achievement has now unfortunately crumbled. The USSR's potential for national disruption, so long kept in check (except during World War II), is now patent. In fact, the 'discrimination' or even 'oppression' against which champions of various Soviet nationalities abroad used to protest, was far less²³ than the consequences of the withdrawal of Soviet power. Official Soviet anti-Semitism, which has undoubtedly been

²² The deliberate policy of Romanization in Ceausescu's Romania is among the rare exceptions. It breaks with the elaborate arrangements for national autonomy which were instituted when the communists took power after World War II.

²³ This statement is not to be understood as condoning the mass transfer of entire populations on the grounds of their nationality that took place during the war. This cannot be condoned under any circumstances, except to save such populations from extermination.

observable since the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948, must be measured against the rise of popular anti-semitism since political mobilization (including that of reactionaries) became permitted again, not to mention the massacre of Jews on a considerable scale by *local elements* in the Baltic states and Ukraine as the Germans marched in but *before the systematic German killing of Jews began*.²⁴ Indeed, it may be argued that the current wave of ethnic or mini-ethnic agitations is a response to the overwhelmingly non-ethnic and non-nationalist principles of state formation in the greater part of the twentieth-century world. However, this does not mean that such ethnic reactions provide in any sense an alternative principle for the political restructuring of the world in the twenty-first century.

A third observation confirms this. 'The nation' today is visibly in the process of losing an important part of its old functions, namely that of constituting a territorially bounded 'national economy' which formed a building block in the larger 'world economy', at least in the developed regions of the globe. Since World War II, but especially since the 1960s, the role of 'national economies' has been undermined or even brought into question by the major transformations in the international division of labour, whose basic units are transnational or multinational enterprises of all sizes, and by the corresponding development of international centres and networks of economic transactions which are, for practical purposes, outside the control of state governments. The number of *intergovernmental* international organizations grew from 123 in 1951 through 280 in 1972 to 365 in 1984; the number of international *non-governmental* organizations from 832 through 2,173 in 1972, more than doubling to 4,615 in the next twelve years.²⁵ Probably the only functioning 'national economy' of the late twentieth century is the Japanese.

Nor have the old (developed) 'national economies' been replaced as the major building-blocks of the world system only by larger associations or federations of 'nation-states' such as the European Economic Community, and collectively controlled

²⁴ Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens not Darken? The 'Final Solution' in History* (New York 1989), pp. 257–62.

²⁵ David Held, 'Farewell nation state' (*Marxism Today*, December 1988), p. 15.

international entities like the International Monetary Fund, even though the emergence of these is also a symptom of the retreat of the world of 'national economies'. Important parts of the system of international transactions, such as the Eurodollar market, are outside any control whatever.

All this has, of course, been made possible both by technological revolutions in transport and communication, and by the lengthy period of free movements of the factors of production over a vast area of the globe which has developed since World War II. This has also led to the massive wave of international and intercontinental migration, the largest since the decades before 1914, which has, incidentally, both aggravated inter-communal frictions, notably in the form of racism, and made a world of national territories 'belonging' exclusively to the natives who keep strangers in their place, even less of a realistic option for the twenty-first century than it was for the twentieth. At present we are living through a curious combination of the technology of the late twentieth century, the free trade of the nineteenth, and the rebirth of the sort of interstitial centres characteristic of world trade in the Middle Ages. City states like Hong Kong and Singapore revive, extraterritorial 'industrial zones' multiply inside technically sovereign nation-states like Hanseatic Steelyards, and so do offshore tax-havens in otherwise valueless islands whose only function is, precisely, to remove economic transactions from the control of nation-states. The ideology of nations and nationalism is irrelevant to any of these developments.

This does not mean that the economic functions of states have been diminished or are likely to fade away. On the contrary, in both capitalist and non-capitalist states they have grown, in spite of a tendency in both camps to encourage private or other non-state enterprise in the 1980s. Quite apart from the continued importance of state direction, planning and management even in countries dedicated in theory to neo-liberalism, the sheer weight of what public revenue and expenditure represent in the economies of states, but above all their growing role as agents of substantial redistributions of the social income by means of fiscal and welfare mechanisms, have probably made the national state a more central factor in the lives of the world's inhabitants than

before. National economies, however, undermined by the trans-national economy, coexist and intertwine with it. However, except for the most self-sealed at one end – and how many of these are left after even Burma appears to consider re-entering the world? – and perhaps Japan at the other extreme, the old 'national economy' is not what it was. Even the USA, which in the 1980s still seemed sufficiently vast and dominant to deal with its economic problems without taking any notice of anyone else, at the end of that decade became aware that it 'had ceded considerable control over its economy to foreign investors... [who] now hold the power to help keep the US economy growing, or to help plunge it into recession' (*The Wall Street Journal*, 5 December 1988, p. 1). As for all small and practically all medium-sized states their economies had plainly ceased to be autonomous, insofar as they had once been so.

Another observation also suggests itself. The basic political conflicts which are likely to decide the fate of the world today have little to do with nation-states, because for half a century there has not existed an international state system of the nineteenth-century European type.

Politically the post-1945 world was bi-polar, organized round two super-powers which may just be describable as jumbo-sized nations, but certainly not as parts of an international state system of the nineteenth century or pre-1939 type. At most, third-party states, whether aligned with a super-power or non-aligned, could act as a brake on superpower action, though there is no strong evidence that they did so to much effect. Moreover, as far as the USA was concerned – but vestigially this was probably also true of the USSR before the Gorbachev era – the basic conflict was ideological, the triumph of the 'right' ideology being equated with the supremacy of the appropriate super-power. Post-1945 world politics were basically the politics of revolution and counter-revolution, with national issues intervening only to underline or disturb the main theme. Admittedly this pattern broke down in 1989 when the USSR ceased to be a super-power; and indeed the model of a world divided by the October Revolution had ceased to have much relation to the realities of the late twentieth century for some time before then. The immediate result was to leave the world without any

international system or principle of order, even though the remaining super-power attempted to impose itself singlehanded as the global policeman, a role probably beyond its, or any other single state's, economic and military power.

There is thus at present no system at all. That ethnic-linguistic separation provides no sort of basis for a stable, in the short run even for a roughly predictable, ordering of the globe is evident in 1992 from the merest glance at the large region situated between Vienna and Trieste in the west, and Vladivostok in the east. All maps for one fifth of the world's surface are uncertain and provisional. And the only thing clear even about its cartographic future is that it will depend on a handful of major players outside the region, except for Russia (which is likely to remain a political entity of some substance). They are major players precisely because they have not so far been disrupted by separatist agitations: Germany, Turkey, Iran, China, Japan and — at one remove — the USA.²⁶

For a new 'Europe of nations', and still more a 'world of nations', would not even create an ensemble of independent and sovereign states. In military terms the independence of small states depends on an international order, whatever its nature, which protects them against rapacious stronger neighbours, as the Middle East immediately demonstrated after the ending of the super-power balance. Until a new international system emerges at least a third of the existing states — those with populations of two and a half million or less — have no effective guarantees of independence. The establishment of several additional small states would merely increase the number of insecure political entities. And when such a new international system emerges, the small and the weak will have as little real role in it as Oldenburg or Mecklenburg-Schwerin had over the politics of the German Federation in the nineteenth century. Economically, as we have seen, even much more powerful states depend on a global economy over which they have no control and which determines their internal affairs. A Latvian or Basque 'national' economy

²⁶ At the time of writing the European Community as such has not demonstrated an ability for collective action in international diplomacy, and the United Nations is an adjunct to US policy. This may, of course, not be a lasting situation.

separate from some larger entity of which it forms a part is as meaningless a concept as a Parisian economy considered in separation from France.

The most that could be claimed is that small states are today economically no less viable than larger states, given the decline of the 'national economy' before the transnational one. It may also be argued that 'regions' constitute more rational sub-units of large economic entities like the European Community than the historic states which are its official members. Both observations are correct, in my view, but they are logically unconnected. West European separatist nationalisms like the Scottish, Welsh, Basque or Catalan are today in favour of bypassing their national governments by appealing directly to Brussels as 'regions'. However, there is no reason to suppose that a smaller state *ipso facto* forms more of an economic region than a larger one (say Scotland than England) and conversely there is no reason why an economic region should *ipso facto* coincide with a potential political unit constituted according to ethnic-linguistic or historic criteria.²⁷ Moreover, when separatist small-nation movements see their best hope in establishing themselves as sub-units of a larger politico-economic entity (in this case the European Community) they are in practice abandoning the classical aim of such movements, which is to establish independent and sovereign nation-states.

However, the case against *Kleinstaateri* today, at least in its ethnic-linguistic form, is not only that it provides no solution for the actual problems of our day, but that, insofar as it has the power to carry out its policies, it makes these problems more difficult. Cultural freedom and pluralism at present are almost certainly better safeguarded in large states which know themselves to be plurinational and pluricultural than in small ones pursuing the ideal of ethnic-linguistic and cultural homogeneity. It is far from surprising that the most immediate demand of Slovak nationalism in 1990 was to 'make Slovak the only official language and force the population of 600,000 ethnic Hungarians

²⁷ This should be clear from Sydney Pollard, *Peaceful Conquest: The Industrialization of Europe 1760-1970* (Oxford 1981), which treats its subject as 'essentially one of regions in a European context' (p. vii).

to use only Slovak in dealing with the authorities'.²⁸ The Algerian nationalist law of late 1990 'making Arabic the national language and exacting heavy fines for using anything else in official transactions' will be seen in that country not as a liberation from the French influence, but as an attack on the third of Algerians speaking Berber.²⁹ It has been rightly observed that

A modern version of the pre-nineteenth century world of uprooted local attachments sounds good, but that does not seem to be the direction in which today's nation-state unbuilders are pointing... They are all aiming towards states based not on tolerant and fairly open little countries, but on the blinkered view that what should hold people together is ethnic, religious or linguistic sameness.³⁰

Monolithic aspirations of this kind are already leading to autonomist and separatist aspirations of threatened minorities within such nationalist entities, and to something better described as Lebanonization than Balkanization. Turks and Russians attempt to secede from Moldavia, Serbs declare their independence from a nationalist Croatia, other Caucasian peoples reject the domination of the Georgians, while conversely ultra-ethnic noises are to be heard in Vilnius doubting whether a leader whose name indicates a German ancestry can properly understand the deepest ancestral aspirations of Lithuanians. In a world in which probably not much more than a dozen states out of some 180 can plausibly claim that their citizens coincide in any real sense with a single ethnic or linguistic group, nationalism based on the establishment of such homogeneity is not only undesirable, but also largely self-destructive.

In short, in the classic Wilsonian-Leninist form, the slogan of self-determination up to and including secession as a *general* programme can offer no solution for the twenty-first century. It can be best understood as a symptom of the crisis of the nineteenth-century concept of the 'nation-state', caught between

²⁸ Henry Kamm, 'Language bill weighed as Slovak separatists rally', *New York Times*, 25 October 1990.

²⁹ 'Algerians hit at language ban', *Financial Times*, 28 December 1990.

³⁰ 'The state of the nation state', *Economist*, 22 December 1990 – 14 January 1991, p. 78.

what *The Economist* has called 'supranationalism' and 'infra-nationalism'.³¹ But the crisis of the large nation-state is also the crisis of small ones, old or new.

So what is in doubt is not the strength of men's and women's longing for group identity, of which nationality is one expression, but (as the Islamic world shows) not the only one. Nor is it the strength of the reaction against the centralization and bureaucratization of state, economic or cultural power, i.e. against its remoteness and uncontrollability. Nor need we doubt the fact that almost any local or even sectional discontent capable of wrapping itself in coloured banners, finds it attractive to claim national justification.³² What sceptics doubt is the alleged irresistibility of the desire to form homogeneous nation-states and the usefulness of both the concept and the programme in the twenty-first century. Even in regions where the classic aspiration for separate nation-states might be expected to be strong, effective devolution or regionalization has pre-empted it, or even reversed it. State separatism in the Americas, at any rate south of Canada, has declined since the American Civil War. And it is significant that the states defeated in World War II, on which a high degree of devolution was imposed – presumably in reaction against fascist centralization – lack most of the separatist movements of the rest of western Europe, though on paper Bavaria and Sicily are at least as obvious breeding-grounds for such movements as Scotland and the francophone parts of the Bernese Jura. In fact, the separatist movement which developed in Sicily after 1943 proved short-lived, though its disappearance is still mourned by a few as 'the end of the Sicilian nation'.³³ It was killed by the regional autonomy legislation of 1946.

Thus nationalism today reflects an only half-acknowledged crisis of the old Wilsonian-Leninist ideology and programme. As

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 73–8.

³² 'The class make-up of the activist leaders... [of the Occitanian movement] indicates that the causes of this discontent lie less in regionally uneven economic development than in grievances felt by professions and white-collar classes... throughout France. William R. Beer, 'The social class of ethnic activists in contemporary France' in Milton J. Esman (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World* (Ithaca 1977), p. 158.

³³ Marcello Cimino, *Fine di una nazione* (Palermo 1977); G. C. Marino, *Storia del separatismo siciliano 1943–1947* (Rome 1979).

we have seen, even many old, strong and determined nationalist movements have their doubts about actual state independence, even when they maintain the aim of total separation from the states of which they form part at present (as the Basques and Scots nationalists do). The old and still not adequately answered 'Irish Question' illustrates this uncertainty. On the one hand the independent Irish Republic, while insisting on its total political autonomy from Britain – underlined by remaining neutral in World War II – in practice accepts considerable mutual involvement with the United Kingdom. Nor has Irish nationalism found it difficult to adjust to the curious situation in which Irish citizens, when in Britain, enjoy full citizen rights in the United Kingdom as though they had not separated from it, i.e. *de facto* dual nationality. On the other hand, faith in the classic programme of a single united independent Ireland has rapidly waned. Thus probably both the governments in Dublin and London would agree about the (relative) desirability of a single united Ireland. However, few, even in the Irish Republic, would see such a union as anything except the least bad of a selection of bad solutions. Conversely, if Ulster were in such a case to declare its independence from both Britain and Ireland, most Ulster Protestants would also see this ultimate refusal of the Pope as a lesser evil. In short, only a handful of fanatics would, it is safe to say, regard this achievement of national/communal self-determination as more than marginally better than an acutely unsatisfactory status quo.

We may also detect a crisis of national consciousness in the old nations, and for similar reasons. That consciousness, as it emerged in nineteenth-century Europe, was situated somewhere in the quadrilateral described by the points People–State–Nation–Government. In theory these four elements coincided. In Hitler's phrase (where the word *Volk* stands for both 'people' and 'nation') Germany consisted of 'Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Fuehrer', i.e. one people/nation, one state, one government. In practice the ideas of state and government tended to be determined by political criteria typical of the period since the era of great eighteenth-century revolutions, but the idea of 'people' and 'nation' largely by pre-political criteria which were helpful in the creation of the imagined and imaginary community. Politics

constantly tended to take over and remould such pre-political elements for its own purposes. The organic connection between the four elements was taken for granted. But that is no longer possible in the historical or old-established large nation-states.

This may be illustrated from a public opinion survey in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1972.³⁴ This is admittedly an extreme case since Germany had passed from the, in theory, most complete pan-German political unity under Hitler to a situation where at least two states coexisted which could claim to be all or part of the German nation. However, it is just this situation which allows us to detect the uncertainties and ambiguities in the minds of most citizens, as they think about 'the nation'.

The first thing to emerge from this enquiry is considerable uncertainty. 83% of West Germans thought they knew what capitalism was, 78% were in no doubt about socialism, but only 71% ventured an opinion on 'the state' and 34% had not the least idea of how to define or describe 'the nation'. Among the less educated uncertainty was even greater. 90% of Germans who had completed secondary education felt they were informed about all four terms, but only 54% of (non-apprenticed, i.e. unskilled) Germans with only primary education felt they knew what 'the state' was, and only 47% felt they knew about 'the nation'. This uncertainty sprang precisely from the breakdown of the old congruence between 'people', 'nation' and 'state'.

When asked 'Are nation and state the same, or are we talking about different things?' 43% of West Germans – 81% among the most educated – gave the obvious answer that they were not the same, since two German states coexisted. However, 35% believed that nation and state were inseparable, and so, logically enough, 31% of workers – 39% among those under 40 years – concluded that the German Democratic Republic now formed a different nation, because it was a different state. Let us note also, that the group with the strongest conviction of the identity of state and nation – 42% – consisted of the skilled workers; the group with the strongest conviction that Germany consisted of one nation divided into two states were Social Democratic voters.

³⁴ Bundesministerium für innerdeutsche Beziehungen, *Materialien zum Bericht zur Lage der Nation*, 3 vols. (Bonn 1971, 1972, 1974), III, pp. 107–13, esp. p. 112.

52% of them held this view as against 36% of Christian Democratic voters. One might say that, a century after the unification of Germany, the traditional nineteenth-century concept of 'the nation' survived most strongly in the working class.

What this suggests is that the idea of 'the nation', once extracted, like the mollusc, from the apparently hard shell of the 'nation-state', emerges in distinctly wobbly shape. Not, of course, that Germans east and west of the Elbe had ceased to think of themselves as 'Germans' even before the two states were united, although probably most Austrians after 1945 no longer thought of themselves as part of a greater Germany, as a majority of them had done between 1918 and 1945; and certainly the German-speaking Swiss actively distanced themselves from any suggestion of German identity. What East and West Germans were uncertain about, with good reason, was the political or other implications of 'Germanness'. And it is far from clear that the establishment of a single Federal Republic of Germany in 1990 has removed these uncertainties entirely.

One suspects that similar enquiries in other historic 'nation-states' would produce similarly confused responses. What, for instance, is the relation between 'Frenchness' and *francophonie* (a term which did not even exist until recently – it is first recorded in 1959)? Whether he meant to be or not, General De Gaulle was completely at odds with what we have seen to be the traditional and non-linguistic definition of Frenchness, when he addressed the inhabitants of Quebec as Frenchmen abroad. Quebec nationalist thinking, in turn, has 'more or less abandoned the term *homeland* (*la patrie*) and has embroiled itself instead in interminable debate about the merit and demerit of such terms as *nation*, *people*, *society* and *state*'.³⁵ Until the 1960s 'Britishness', in terms of law and administration, was a simple matter of being born to British parents or on British soil, marrying a British citizen, or being naturalized. It is a far from simple matter today.

None of this means that nationalism is not very prominent in

³⁵ Dion, 'The mystery of Quebec', p. 302. The Gaullist version of Quebec as French, as given in a French cabinet statement on 31 July 1967, was that France could not 'disinterest herself in the present and future fate of a population descended from her own people and admirably faithful to their country of origin or consider Canada as a foreign country in the same sense as others' (*Canadian News Facts* vol. 1, no. 15, 14 August 1967), p. 114.

world politics today, or that there is less of it than there was once. What I am arguing is rather that, in spite of its evident prominence, nationalism is historically less important. It is no longer, as it were, a global political programme, as it may be said to have been in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. It is at most a complicating factor, or a catalyst for other developments. It is not implausible to present the history of the Eurocentric nineteenth-century world as that of 'nation-building', as Walter Bagehot did. We still present the history of the major European states of Europe after 1870 in this manner, as in the title of Eugene Weber's *Peasants into Frenchmen*.³⁶ Is anyone likely to write the world history of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in such terms? It is most unlikely.

On the contrary, it will inevitably have to be written as the history of a world which can no longer be contained within the limits of 'nations' and 'nation-states' as these used to be defined, either politically, or economically, or culturally, or even linguistically. It will be largely supranational and infranational, but even infranationality, whether or not it dresses itself up in the costume of some mini-nationalism, will reflect the decline of the old nation-state as an operational entity. It will see 'nation-states' and 'nations' or ethnic/linguistic groups primarily as retreating before, resisting, adapting to, being absorbed or dislocated by the new supranational restructuring of the globe. Nations and nationalism will be present in this history, but in subordinate, and often rather minor roles. This does not mean that national history and culture will not bulk large – perhaps larger than before – in the educational systems and the cultural life of particular countries, especially the smaller ones, or that they may not flourish locally within a much broader supranational framework, as, say, Catalan culture today flourishes, but on the tacit assumption that it is Catalans who will communicate with the rest of the world through Spanish and English, since few non-residents in Catalonia will be able to communicate in the local language.³⁷

³⁶ Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford 1976).

³⁷ When abroad, two-thirds of Catalans considered themselves 'Spanish' in the 1970s. M. Garcia Ferrando, *Regionalismo y autonomias en España* (Madrid 1982), Table II.

As I have suggested, 'nation' and 'nationalism' are no longer adequate terms to describe, let alone to analyse, the political entities described as such, or even the sentiments once described by these words. It is not impossible that nationalism will decline with the decline of the nation-state, without which being English or Irish or Jewish, or a combination of all these, is only one way in which people describe their identity among the many others which they use for this purpose, as occasion demands.³⁸ It would be absurd to claim that this day is already near. However, I hope it can at least be envisaged. After all, the very fact that historians are at least beginning to make some progress in the study and analysis of nations and nationalism suggests that, as so often, the phenomenon is past its peak. The owl of Minerva which brings wisdom, said Hegel, flies out at dusk. It is a good sign that it is now circling round nations and nationalism.

³⁸ Among the rare theorists who seem to share my doubts about the strength and dominance of nationalism is John Breuilly in *Nationalism and the State*. He criticizes both Gellner and Anderson for assuming 'that the self-evident success of nationalism means that nationalism is very strongly rooted in the thought or behaviour of people' ('Reflections on nationalism' (*Philosophy and Social Science*, 15/1, March 1985, p. 73)).

MAPS



Maps

Myths and Memories of the Nation

ANTHONY D. SMITH

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Introduction

'Ethno-symbolism' and the Study of Nationalism

This book seeks to explore one of the central issues of our epoch, the rise of nations and the world-wide appeal of nationalism. The late twentieth century has witnessed an unexpected resurgence of ethnic conflict, and nationalism has once again become the central fact of contemporary politics. Why is it that so many people remain so deeply attached to their ethnic communities and nations at the close of the second millennium? Why do the myths, memories, and symbols of the nation command such widespread loyalty and devotion? And why are so many people still prepared to make considerable sacrifices, even of life and limb, for their nations and cultures?

As might be expected, these questions have been addressed in a variety of ways and from very different standpoints. But most of the answers have fallen into four main categories of explanation: the primordialist, the perennialist, the modernist, and the ethno-symbolic. To date, these form the major paradigms of explanation of the nature, power, and incidence of nations and nationalism. The chapters in this book exemplify the last of these paradigms, and seek to explore its many facets in a variety of thematic contexts. But, since the main concerns and aims of 'ethno-symbolism' emerged as a response to problems raised by the other major paradigms, we must first outline the theoretical context in which they emerged. I shall begin, therefore, with a brief statement of the main features and problems of the primordialist, perennialist and modernist paradigms.¹

PRIMORDIALISM AND PERENNIALISM

Early explanations of nationalism tended to be greatly influenced by organic varieties of nationalism. Nations were seen as the natural and primordial divisions of humanity, and nationalism was thought to be

ubiquitous and universal. What is now termed *primordialism* emerged from these widely accepted assumptions. For the primordialists, the key to the nature, power, and incidence of nations and nationalism lies in the rootedness of the nation in kinship, ethnicity, and the genetic bases of human existence. There are, in fact, several kinds of *primordialism*, and I shall briefly outline three of them.

The first is popular, and, as we saw, nationalist. It sees nations as elements of nature, or the divine plan, not just of history. Nations, as the Abbé Sièyes put it, 'exist in the state of nature', and as such are the ultimate source of power, will, and law. They are like natural organisms, subject to the laws of nature, forgotten and silent perhaps, but continuing to exist beneath the debris of history until the moment of their rebirth. The trouble with this nationalist view of nations and nationalism is that it offers no independent evidence of the existence of nations outside the affirmations of the nationalists, nor does it confront the incidence and consequences of migration, colonization, and intermarriage for the composition of modern nations. It also fails to explain how and why, nations were forgotten, why they were so often, in Ernest Gellner's phrase, 'determined slumbers', why only some of them 'awoke', and why the nationalist awakeners emerged when and where they did.²

A second variety of primordialism stems from the recent revival of sociobiology. Van den Berghe (1978, 1995), for example, argues that nations and ethnic communities are really extensions of kinship units and are built up from the same nepotistic drives of *inclusive fitness* as smaller clans and families. At root, they are all attenuated collective extensions of individual genetic reproductive drives, and this is attested by our choice of cultural signs (colour, language, religion) indicating biological affinity. Thus, for van den Berghe, myths of shared descent largely correspond to real biological ancestry, because of the need for at least some generations of endogamy to forge ethnic identity. But, as Walker Connor (1994) points out, such *myths* rarely correspond to what we know of real biological descent; even apparently endogamous ethnic communities have often had mixed ancestral origins and some degree of intermarriage with other peoples in the past. Besides, it is very difficult to demonstrate that the genetic pools of families and clans can be extended through nepotism to much larger population groups such as ethnic and national communities.³

Finally, there is the familiar cultural variety of primordialism, associated with Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz (1963), in particular, while dismissing the political significance of biological descent groups, spoke of the overwhelming power of the *primordial tie* attributed to the *givens*

of human existence, namely, congruities of blood, speech, custom, religion, and territory, *givens* that threatened to dissolve the *civil ties* of the modern state. It is important to note that Geertz speaks of *attribution* by human beings of overriding efficacy; it is *we* who feel this ineffable power and endow it with life-enhancing primordiality. Nevertheless, while the cultural approach reveals what we may well call the 'participants' primordialism 'of the community's membership—the members' own sense of the immemorial nature of their nation—as well as the centrality of symbolism in the study of ethnicity and nationalism, it does little to advance the cause of explanation. Primordialism vividly identifies the problem, but is unable to provide any solutions. (Brass 1991, chs. 1–2; cf. Grosby 1994)⁴

A similar charge can be brought against the second major paradigm, the *perennialist*. This term denotes those who hold that nations (if not nationalism) have existed throughout recorded history, but are not part of the natural order. An older generation of historians, many of them influenced by an organic version of nationalism, tended to see *nations* everywhere in the historical record, from the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians to the modern French and British, and to explain the history of humanity in terms of national alignments and conflicts. Nations, in other words, were perennial collective actors but not *natural* or *primordial*. (Walek-Czernecki 1929; Levi 1965)

Actually we need to distinguish two kinds of perennialism. The first we may call *continuous perennialism*, because it claims that particular nations have existed for centuries, if not millennia. Thus, for many earlier scholars, nations like the French, Greeks and Egyptians are immemorial or *perennial*, whereas others in Africa and Asia are more recent. The second kind of perennialism is about nations-in-general. It claims that nations come and go, emerge and dissolve, only to reappear continually in different periods and continents; and here, we may speak of a *recurrent perennialism*.⁵

Now, while it is quite possible to demonstrate in some cases a continuity of national identity going back beyond the Reformation, at least for their élites—as Adrian Hastings (1997) has done for the English, Irish, Scots and other Western nations—there is always the danger of imposing a *retrospective nationalism* onto communities and cultures whose identities and loyalties were local, regional, and religious, but barely national. This is the burden of Susan Reynolds' (1984, ch. 8) critique of the rather teleological approach of Hugh Seton-Watson (1977). While it might be possible, as a result of consistent definition and open-ended empirical investigation, to categorize certain communities in antiquity and the Middle Ages as nations (for example, the Jews, the Armenians, the Swiss, and the Japanese), this

would hardly suffice to allow us to claim that nations were recurrent phenomena of history, since the nationalist ideologies and the vast majority of nations can be shown to be of much more recent vintage, including all those *nations of design* (Tilly 1975, Conclusion) created by nationalists or by pragmatic politicians through international treaties in the aftermath of prolonged wars like the Napoleonic or First World War. (See Kohn 1967; Tipton 1972; Johnson 1995)⁶

MODERNISM

It is just these historical and theoretical observations that form the starting-point of modernism, the dominant scholarly paradigm today. Modernists regard both primordialist and perennialist approaches as expressions of nationalism itself, or at least as heavily influenced by its assumptions, and therefore fatally flawed. For modernists like Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner, the nation is not only recent, it is also novel, and a product of the processes of modernization. They regard the era of the French Revolution as marking the moment when nationalism was introduced into the movement of world history. It was then that the ideal of the sovereignty of the people was fused with the drive to cultural homogeneity, to forge self-determining nations of co-cultural citizens. Hence, nations as well as nationalism are purely modern phenomena, without roots in the past. (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990)

There are several varieties of modernism. The socio-economic version regards nations and nationalism as products of the uneven development of capitalism and of disparities in regional resources. Both Tom Nairn (1977) and Michael Hechter (1975), operating from a post-marxist base, argued that economic and political cores continually exploit the resources of the periphery, breeding a nationalist reaction to imperialism or to internal colonialism on the part of peripheral élites, notably their intelligentsias.

Ernest Gellner (1964, ch. 7; 1983), on the other hand, proposed a socio-cultural version of this model. He argued that nations and nationalism were exclusively modern phenomena; pre-modern societies and cultures had neither use nor room for nations.

The great tidal wave of modernization, as it swept outwards from the West, eroded traditional societies and cultures, uprooting masses of people and proletarianizing them in the anonymous city. Here, the sole means of communication was through a shared linguistic education, provided by a state-run, standardized, and public education system. Hence,

the drive to cultural homogeneity in a specialist, literate, state-supported *high culture* was built into the requirements of modernity. But the unevenness of the waves of modernization also generated conflicts over resources between the old inhabitants of the city and the newly urbanized ex-peasants. Such conflicts created the possibility and incentive for ethnic secession wherever social conflict was reinforced by cultural markers such as colour, language, and religion.⁷

But it can be argued that these rather abstract, materialist schemata are overly deterministic. They regard nations and nationalism as functional for industrial or capitalist modernity, and leave little room for collective choices. As a result, they appear to make detailed historical investigation of élite or collective actions irrelevant. Besides, Gellner fails to explain why so many pre-existing *low* (non-specialist and non-literate) cultures turned themselves into *high* cultures and managed to eject the former high culture of the rulers, as occurred in Bohemia and Finland.⁸

This failure to consider the pre-modern roots of modern nations also appears in the political versions of modernism. John Breuilly (1993), for example, claims that nationalism is a spurious historicist solution to the alienation brought on by the split between the absolutist state and civil society. Nationalism must be seen as an exclusively modern, and a strictly political argument and movement, rather than a sentiment of cultural identity. Nationalist ideologies and intellectuals, symbols and ceremonies, are not without importance, but only insofar as they are able to mobilize, co-ordinate, and legitimize the various sub-élites who seek power through control of the modern state. Here too the modernist failure to come to grips with cultural identity (and in this case, ideology) renders its explanation partial and one-sided.

Breuilly's rather narrowly defined, state-centred modernism, like that of Anthony Giddens and Michael Mann, suffers from an excessive emphasis on the role of political institutions, and is too dismissive of the legacies of pre-modern ethnic and cultural ties.⁹

Ideology, on the other hand, forms the key to Elie Kedourie's (1960) path-breaking approach. He is equally insistent on the modernity, and indeed the European philosophical provenance, of nationalism, but he accords a primary role to disaffected intellectuals who purvey nationalist ideology through philology, folklore, and the rediscovery of ethnic history and culture—first in Germany and then in Eastern Europe and the Balkans—in their pursuit of Enlightenment meliorism. In his later work, Kedourie (1971) traced modern nationalism, as a doctrine of the collective will and a quest for unattainable perfection on earth, to antinomian medieval

Christian millennial doctrines, whose influence he saw extending, through the ravages of European imperialism, to the violent messianic nationalisms of Asia and Africa, with their cults of the *dark* gods. Kedourie does not, however, ask why the nationalist message of the *marginal men* in Africa and Asia should continually fall on such receptive ears, nor how an ideology like nationalism can have such profoundly disturbing effects in so many parts of the world. There is also a world of difference between the pessimistic, world-negating visions of Christian apocalyptic millennialism, and the often earth-bound, auto-emancipatory optimism of even the most romantic nationalisms.¹⁰

A similar kind of cultural diffusionism can also be found in Benedict Anderson's influential account (1991) of the origins and spread of nationalism. But here it is allied to a species of post-modernist constructionism. Nationalism, for Anderson, is a modern cultural artefact. Its object, the nation, is defined as an *imagined political community*—imagined as sovereign, finite, and horizontal. In a world characterized by a basic linguistic diversity, and a widespread desire to transcend mortality, it was only the revolution of print-capitalism—the conjunction of the invention of printing with the capitalist diffusion of its products, books; and later newspapers, in the vernacular languages—that made it possible for people to imagine the nation, once a social space had been created by the decline of sacred monarchies and religious script communities. This in turn required a new conception of linear time, one that allowed people to see themselves as members of linguistic communities moving inexorably forwards through empty, homogeneous time. But, once created, the ideal of the nation could, like any other cultural artefact and construct, be pirated by others in different parts of the world, according to their historical circumstances, to produce different kinds of nationalism—creole, vernacular, official, communist and the like. Anderson is sensitive to these varied circumstances, yet he fails to explain how nationalism can have such a profound popular emotional appeal, how the possibility of *imagining the nation* turns into the moral imperative of a mass *dying for the nation*, and why imagined print communities should become prime candidates for nationhood and mass self-sacrifice.¹¹

THE ETHNO-SYMBOLIC ALTERNATIVE

This brings us to the central problem of every kind of modernist analysis, whether of Gellner, Breuilly, Kedourie or Anderson. I refer to their

systematic failure to accord any weight to the pre-existing cultures and ethnic ties of the nations that emerged in the modern epoch, thereby precluding any understanding of the popular roots and widespread appeal of nationalism. This failure stems from serious inadequacies in the social constructionism and instrumentalism that underpin their modernism, in providing convincing accounts of cultural and political phenomena like nations and nationalism. These limitations include:

- (1) a failure to distinguish genuine constructs from long-term processes and structures in which successive generations have been socialized;
- (2) a concentration on élite actions at the expense of popular beliefs and actions; and
- (3) a neglect of the powerful affective dimensions of nations and nationalism.

Historical ethno-symbolism emerges from the theoretical critique of modernist approaches, as well as from a different reading of the historical record. For ethno-symbolists, what gives nationalism its power are the myths, memories, traditions, and symbols of ethnic heritages and the ways in which a popular *living past* has been, and can be, rediscovered and reinterpreted by modern nationalist intelligentsias. It is from these elements of myth, memory, symbol, and tradition that modern national identities are reconstituted in each generation, as the nation becomes more inclusive and as its members cope with new challenges.

These cultural and historical elements also form the basis of competing claims to territory, patrimony and resources. Where there are clashing interpretations of ancestral homelands, and cultural heritages—as for example in Macedonia, Kashmir, Nagorno-Karabagh, and Palestine—normal conflicts of interest are turned into cultural wars, and moral and political crusades replace everyday politics. History and culture provide the motives for conflict as well as solidarity. They are not simply pretexts, by which the *atavistic emotions* of the masses, in Kedourie's words, are manipulated, nor are they simply *invented traditions* designed, as Eric Hobsbawm claims, to channel and control the energies of the newly mobilized and enfranchised masses. History and culture form integral parts of the fabric of popular visions, and of the social structures and processes in which the designated populations are embedded and through which their élites must forge their strategies. (Kedourie 1971, Introduction; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Introduction and ch. 7)¹²

These are some of the considerations which have led scholars like John Armstrong, John Hutchinson, and myself to consider alternative approaches to an understanding of the continuing power of nationalism and

the nation in the modern world. These approaches have much in common and I have found it useful to term them *historical ethno-symbolism*. They seek to overcome the limitations of modernism, while acknowledging its insights, as well as those of the other major paradigms. In what follows, I shall outline the main features of these approaches, thereby highlighting the themes that unite the chapters in this book.¹³

The *ethno-symbolic* approaches make a number of claims, which constitute a set of basic themes or motifs.

1. *La Longue Durée*

The first theme is the claim that, if we want to grasp the power and understand the shape of modern nations and nationalisms, we must trace the origins and formation of nations, as well as their possible future course, over long periods of time (*la longue durée*), and not tie their existence and formation to a particular period of history or to the processes of modernization. Nations are historical phenomena, not only in the generic sense that they are embedded in particular collective pasts and emerge, sometimes over long time-spans, through specific historical processes, but also because, by definition, they embody shared memories, traditions, and hopes of the populations designated as parts of the nation. Indeed, a central theme of historical ethno-symbolism is the relationship of shared memories to collective cultural identities: memory, almost by definition, is integral to cultural identity, and the cultivation of shared memories is essential to the survival and destiny of such collective identities. That is why, as the first chapter on *Nationalism and the Historians* makes clear, historians have played so central a role in the delineation of the nation and in the rediscovery, transmission, and analysis of its ethnic heritage. It may also be the reason why historians dominated causal enquiry into the nature, course and appeal of nations and nationalism, at least in the earlier stages.

Historical enquiry, while it may demystify and dispel fictions, can also reinforce the shared memories and aspirations of members, their *ethno-history*, by providing material or documentary evidence for events and personages held in reverence by the community. At the same time, it may reveal the long-term processes in which the rise of nations and the spread of nationalism are embedded. For historical ethno-symbolism, this double historicity of nations and nationalism—their rootedness in shared long-term memories or *ethno-history*, and the resulting need to analyse them over long historical time-spans—constitutes an underlying methodological postulate. (See Llobera 1994, ch. 1; A. D. Smith 1986, chs. 1–2)

2. *National past, present, and future*

This long-term relationship between national past, present, and future constitutes a second major theme, and it can be examined under three headings: recurrence, continuity, and reappropriation.

Recurrence: For perennialists, the nation is a recurrent form of social organization and nationalism a perennial mode of cultural belonging. But this is to read the history of earlier epochs in the light of the nationalist present. The empirical evidence of such past ages presents a much more problematic picture. Chapter Three, *The Problem of National Identity: Ancient, Medieval and Modern?*, explores some of the historical evidence which may support perennialist or modernist arguments, and concludes that, on the whole, the concept of the nation, like the ideology of nationalism, is largely modern, as are most nations. There may well be exceptions like the Jews and Armenians (perhaps also the medieval Japanese and Ethiopian Amhara), and much depends on the tightness of the definition of the nation employed. Using my own definition of the nation—as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members (admittedly a fairly modernist definition)—it is clear that the majority of nations, and nationalisms emerged in the modern world inaugurated by the French and American Revolutions. At the same time, as we saw, there may be some nations that predate modernity, and there are certainly some widely diffused ethnic elements that recur throughout recorded history: these include ethnic origin myths, beliefs in ethnic election, the development of ethno-scapes, the territorialization of memory, and the vernacular mobilization of communities. All of which suggests that *modern* nations may have *pre-modern* precursors and can form around recurrent ethnic antecedents.¹⁴

Continuity: Under this heading falls the vexed question of the 'date of commencement of nations' (Hastings 1997, ch. 1)—or how far back in time it is possible to trace the origins of particular nations. If the first heading signalled the recurring components or potential *building-blocks* of nations-in-general, the rubric of continuity points to the persistence of cultural components of particular nations, for example, elements that have been handed down through the generations—names, symbols, languages, customs, territories and rituals of national identity. Some of these continuities are explored in Chapters Two and Four, on *National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent* and on the myths of *Chosen Peoples*, and again

more theoretically and in connection with nationalist ideology, in Chapter Six, *Gastronomy or Geology?* Clearly, much more work needs to be done on identifying the links between earlier ethnic components and modern national cultures, a point made forcefully and critically by John Breuilly (1996).

However, with ideas of ethnic election and their secular transformations, as with memories of golden ages, a start has been made in establishing important cultural continuities, despite the breaks often introduced by conquest, colonization, migration, and assimilation. (See also A. D. Smith 1993) This should help to counteract what John Peel has called the *blocking presentism*, and constructionism of so much current work on ethnicity, which views our understanding of the ethnic past as social construction based on present needs and reflecting the interests and preoccupations of present generations. (Peel 1989)¹⁵

Reappropriation: If continuity signifies the forward reach of the ethnic past to the national present, the rubric of *reappropriation* represents the converse movement, a reaching back into the ethnic past to obtain the *authentic* materials, and ethos for a distinct modern nation. This is the subject of Chapter Six, *Gastronomy or Geology?*, which depicts nationalist intellectuals as *political archaeologists* who aim, not to return to the past, but to recover its pristine ethos and reconstruct a modern nation in the image of the past *ethnie*. Hence, the quest for rediscovery, authentication, and reappropriation of the ethnic past by philologists, historians, archaeologists and ethnologists. Despite many instances of self-delusion and manipulation, it is necessary to treat these activities of nationalist intellectuals as an essential element of the complex interrelationship between national present (and future) and ethnic past. (See A. D. Smith 1981, chs. 5–6; Pinard and Hamilton 1984; Anderson 1991, ch. 5)¹⁶

3. The ethnic basis of nations

The third fundamental theme, and claim, of ethno-symbolism concerns the ethnic foundations of nations and nationalism. The ubiquity of ethnicity is its starting-point. Ethnic groupings can be found in every epoch and continent, wherever human beings feel that they share common ancestry and culture. Such groupings come in various forms and display varying degrees of organisation and self-awareness. As a first step, we may distinguish *ethnic categories* from *ethnic communities*, with other organizational forms such as ethnic associations in between. *Ethnic categories*

are populations distinguished by outsiders as possessing the attributes of a common name or emblem, a shared cultural element (usually language or religion), and a link with a particular territory. *Ethnic communities* or *ethnies* (to use the French term) are human populations distinguished by both members and outsiders as possessing the attributes of:

1. an identifying name or emblem;
2. a *myth* of common ancestry;
3. shared historical memories and traditions;
4. one or more elements of common culture;
5. a link with an historic territory or 'homeland';
6. a measure of solidarity, at least among the élites.

This allows us to define an *ethnie* as a named human population with *myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories and one or more common elements of culture, including an association with a homeland, and some degree of solidarity, at least among the élites*. (A. D. Smith 1986, ch. 2; cf. Horowitz 1985, chs. 1–2)

There is, in most cases, a more or less powerful link between modern nations and pre-existing, and often pre-modern, *ethnies*. Ethno-symbolism claims that most nations, including the earliest, were based on ethnic ties and sentiments and on popular ethnic traditions, which have provided the cultural resources for later nation-formation; and that even those new *state-nations* in Africa and Asia that sought to turn ex-colonies into territorial nations must forge a cultural unity and identity of myth, symbol, value, and memory that can match that of nations built on pre-existing ethnic ties, if they are to survive and flourish as nations. It is this *ethnic model* of the nation that has proved the most influential, with its emphasis on genealogical descent, vernacular codes, popular mobilization and historical nationalism in a *homeland*. Most nations, including the first nations in the West (if we leave aside the earlier cases of the Jews, Armenians and Ethiopian Amhara), have been formed around *ethnic cores*—dominant populations united by presumed ties of shared ancestry and vernacular culture—and have gradually expanded their social depth, territory, and geopolitical range around this dominant ethnic core and presumed descent group, to include other ethnic populations, as was the case with the English, the French and the Castilians. This is the burden of the second chapter, on *National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent*, which represents an early statement of some theoretical aspects of historical ethno-symbolism, and especially of its emphasis on the role of one or more ethnic myths of descent in the formation of nations and national identity. (See also A. D. Smith 1989)¹⁷

A crucial part of this third theme is the popular basis of nations and nationalism. Nations may have emerged around élite groups, but even in these early stages, élites were repeatedly forced to take the cultures and interests of wider strata into account. These vernacular cultures and interests were often popular and ethnic in character; they assumed ties of affinity based on presumed common origins and shared customs, linked to *regna* or kingdoms, as Susan Reynolds has argued for early medieval Europe. Even a modernist like Eric Hobsbawm admits the importance of pre-existing (and often pre-modern) *proto-national* communities of language, religion, and region, though he refuses to allow any linkage between them and the rise of a modern, state-creating nationalism. (Reynolds 1983; Hobsbawm 1990, ch. 2)

4. The cultural components of *ethnies*

The fourth major claim of ethno-symbolism is that the pre-existing components and long-term continuities of ethnic communities and nations are cultural and symbolic rather than demographic. The *differentia specifica* of *ethnies* and nations, as well as their continuities, appear in the myths, memories, symbols, values, and traditions of an ethnic community which regards itself as ancestrally related, culturally distinct, and linked to a particular historic homeland. For John Armstrong, following Fredrik Barth, the contents of the *myth-symbol complex* communicated by vernacular linguistic codes, tend to differentiate *ethnies* and guard the cultural border of the community against outsiders. (Armstrong 1982, ch. 1) For myself, this differentiating function needs to be complemented by an analysis of the unifying role of a whole range of cultural and symbolic components—myths and symbols, but also values, memories, rituals, customs, and traditions. Distinctive clusters of these components mark out the boundaries of various *ethnies*, but they also serve to unite the members of each *ethnie* and structure their relations and activities. Hence, although in one sense the major symbolic and cultural elements of an ethno-symbolic approach are *subjective*, in that they focus on the perceptions, memories, beliefs, and values of individuals and communities, their long-term patterning produces a *structure* of relations and processes that is independent of those beliefs and perceptions, one which can provide a framework for the socialization of successive generations of ethnic and national members and for the regulation of their interests through myths of ethnic descent and symbols of territory and community. (See A. D. Smith 1998, ch. 8)

This emphasis on culture, in the broadest sense, introduces some flexibility into ethnic membership, which in normal circumstances allows for a degree of demographic replenishment and cultural borrowing, and hence social and cultural adaptation. This suggests that, contrary to approaches that sharply distinguish between an open and flexible *civic* nation and a rigid and closed *ethnic* nation, the *ethnic* components constitute only one, albeit ever-present, set of (often contested) elements within the totality of modern nations, and they can also encourage openness and receptiveness to outside influences. The history of modern Catalan nationalism is a case in point. (See Miller 1995; A. D. Smith 1995, ch. 4)¹⁸

There are, however, circumstances, internal and external, that bring to power nationalist intelligentsias who, in their quest for authenticity and cultural purity, increasingly seek to purge their cultures of foreign elements and ultimately of outsiders. Despite the very different emphases on *genealogy* or *ideology* in myths of descent, the drive for cultural homogeneity and purity is more common in the case of *ethnic* nationalisms, that is, those whose criterion of national membership is genealogical rather than territorial. This point is the focus of Chapter Seven, on *Ethnic Nationalism and the Plight of Minorities*, which analyses the dire effect of national homogenization and purificatory ethnic nationalisms on ethnic minorities and the consequent flow of refugees, and hence on the stability of regional inter-state orders.

5. Ethnic myths and symbols

Of particular importance among the cultural components of ethnicity are myths of ethnic origin and election, and symbols of territory and community.

Myths of origin and descent constitute the primary definers of the separate existence and character of particular *ethnies*. As Chapter Two on *National Identity and Myths of Ethnic Descent* illustrates, they include accounts of the time and place of the community's origins, and trace the lines of descent from presumed common ancestors; thus Turks trace their ancestry to Central Asia in the first millennium, and to their founding father, Oghuz Khan, and Jews do likewise to Abraham and Canaan (or even to Ur or Haran). Equally important for the survival of *ethnies* has been the development of myths of ethnic election. These may be missionary or covenantal in character. Missionary election myths exalt their *ethnies* by assigning them god-given tasks or missions of warfare or conversion or overlordship; so the Franks or the medieval French monarchs interpreted their role as latter-day king Davids defending the new Israel (France

and/or the Church), and the Russian Tsars came to see in Orthodox Russia a third Rome, the only truly Christian kingdom after the fall of Constantinople. Covenantal election myths tend to set the chosen people apart from their profane surroundings, through a covenant between the deity and the elect, namely, a conditional promise of continued divine favour in return for constant observance of divine commands and ceaseless performance of a singular moral and ritual code, such as the Israelites were enjoined to practise in the Old Testament. These variations and their consequences are explored in Chapter Four on *Chosen Peoples*, and more briefly in Chapter Ten on *The Resurgence of Nationalism?* (See Armstrong 1982, chs. 6–7; Akenson 1992)

Symbols of territory and community take a variety of forms. They include emblems of difference (flags, totems, coins, ritual objects), hymns and anthems, special foods and costume, as well as representations of ethnic deities, monarchs and heroes—like Pharaoh's double crown, the Jewish Menorah or the fleur-de-lis. Particular interest and significance attaches to the symbolism of ancestral or sacred territory and the development of *ethnoscapes*—landscapes endowed with poetic ethnic meaning through the historicization of nature and the territorialization of ethnic memories. These poetic landscapes often come to be associated with crucial events and personages in the history of the ethnic community and may be invested with sacred significance, a powerful motif of ethnic nationalism, explored in Chapter Five, *Nation and Ethnoscape*.

6. 'Ethno-history'

A further major theme concerns the multiple, changing and uneven nature of *ethno-history*. By *ethno-history* is meant the ethnic members' memories and understanding of their communal past or pasts, rather than any more *objective* and dispassionate analysis by professional historians. Such a mode of historical discourse has three facets: it is multi-stranded and contested; it is always subject to change; and it is globally uneven.

Given the multiplicity of interests, needs and outlooks of members of any community, the likelihood of a single, unified version of the communal past emerging in any relatively free society must be minimal. In fact, the past is as much a zone of conflict as the present, and we can therefore expect to find, at any given point in time, two or more versions of the ethnic past, often in competition or conflict. This was the case in Greece throughout the nineteenth century, when a classical *Athenian* version of Hellenism held by westernised intelligentsia and merchants was pitted against

a Greek Orthodox popular ethno-history which harked back to the medieval glories of the Byzantine empire, a point underlined in Chapter Eight, on *Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism*. A similar conflict erupted in France in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and particularly during the Dreyfus Affair, when a medievalizing monarchist and Catholic vision of French ethno-history was challenged by a secular, revolutionary and classicizing interpretation of the French past. (See Campbell and Sherrard 1968, ch. 1; and Gildea 1994, chs. 3, 7)

If *ethno-history* is always multi-stranded and contested, this implies a continuous process of reinterpretation of national identities. Homi Bhabha's dualism of traditional *pedagogical* and everyday practical *performative* narratives of *the people* fails to capture the complexity of a situation in which every generation fashions its own interpretations of national identity in the light of its reading of the ethnic past or pasts. The fund of ethnic elements, the ethno-historical heritage handed down through the generations, is always being reinterpreted and revised by various social groups in response to internal differences and external stimuli. Hence, British, Japanese or Egyptian *national identity* is never fixed or static: it is always being reconstructed in response to new needs, interests and perceptions, though always within certain limits. (Bhabha 1990, ch. 16)

From a comparative standpoint, the incidence of ethno-history is markedly uneven. Some communities can boast a *rich* or well-documented, and eventful, ethnic past; others can only summon up the barest memories and sketchiest traditions. (For example, Russian or Arab ethno-histories are eventful and abundantly documented, while Slovak and Estonian ethno-histories are more sketchy and poorly recorded). This *unevenness* of ethno-historical cultural resources is itself a source of national competition and conflict, as the less well endowed communities seek to attain cultural parity with the better endowed. Hence, the appeal for Finns of the national epic of the *Kalevala*, edited in 1835 by Elias Lönnrot, as they strove to free themselves from Russian political and Swedish cultural domination—a theme taken up in Chapter Eight, on *Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism*, in the context of richly documented ethno-histories with vivid memories of *golden ages*, as well as in the concluding chapter. (See Branch 1985, Introduction)

7. Routes to Nationhood

Another central ethno-symbolic concern is the manner in which nations in the modern world have come to be formed. Armstrong, indeed, presents

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a complex schema on the emergence of nations, showing how a variety of factors operating at broader or narrower levels, combine to create the terrain and impetus for particular nations. These factors include differences in nomadic and sedentary lifestyles with associated nostalgias; the influence of great religious civilizations like Islam and Christianity; the impact of imperial administrations and *mythomoteurs* (constitutive political myths); the differences in ecclesiastical organization; and, at the lowest and most dependant level, the role of language *faults* and of particular languages. (Armstrong 1982, ch. 9)

As Chapter Four on *Chosen Peoples* illustrates, I have sought to identify *patterns* of nation-formation, depending on the initial ethnic starting-point. The important distinction here is between *lateral* and *vertical ethnies*. The former are aristocratic and extensive, their boundaries are ragged, and they rarely (seek to) penetrate culturally or socially the middle or lower classes. The latter are demotic and intensive, their boundaries are compact, barriers to entry are relatively high, and their culture spreads across all classes, if unevenly at times. There are also immigrant *ethnies*, or rather, *part-ethnies*, which have hived off from the main body to set up colonies and gradually form a separate new *ethnie*. We can then trace the routes by which modern nations have been formed from these three ethnic *bases*: a route of *bureaucratic incorporation* by which aristocratic *ethnies* may forge strong states and incorporate outlying regions and lower classes into their upper-class ethnic culture and symbolism; a route of *vernacular mobilization* whereby an indigenous intelligentsia uses folk culture to mobilize middle and lower strata and create ethnic nations; and finally, an *immigrant-colonist* route in which the founding immigrant *part-ethnie* is supplemented by waves of pioneering colonizers who together create a *plural* or polyethnic immigrant nation and culture. (See A. D. Smith 1989)

8. The longevity of nationalism

The final theme of ethno-symbolism concerns the power and durability of nations and nationalism. Nationalism is a modern ideological movement, but also the expression of aspirations by various social groups to create, defend or maintain *nations*—their autonomy, unity and identity—by drawing on the cultural resources of pre-existing ethnic communities and categories. Nationalism, defined as *an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining identity, unity and autonomy of a social group some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual or potential nation*, has proved a powerful instrument for forging a world of nations based on

pre-existing ethnic ties and sentiments; and it is one that has by no means run its course.¹⁹

These aspirations for nationhood can be found in pre-modern epochs, but they are particularly widespread and powerful in the modern era. This suggests that nationalisms, as well as nations, are likely to be recurrent phenomena in future, as they were in past epochs (Billig 1995). However, the underlying ground of their persistence is not simply their frequency and intensity in the modern epoch. Both frequency and intensity are products of deeper causes, namely the ability of modern nationalisms to draw sustenance from the pre-existing memories, myths, symbols, and traditions of each ethnic community and region. Where such memories, myths, symbols, and traditions are either lacking or negative—conflictual, ambiguous, and disintegrative—the attempt to create new communities and cultural identities is likely to prove painfully slow and arduous, especially where the new identities lack clear boundaries and must compete with well established and deep-rooted identities and communities. This is the theme explored in Chapter Nine, on *National Identity and the Idea of European Unity*, in the context of attempts to create a European cultural identity that could underpin the drive for European economic and political union. These attempts raise serious doubts about the possibility of transcending nations and superseding nationalism, since the very idea of 'Europe', insofar as it can be pinned down and given systematic coherence, appears as a pale reflection of the much more rooted, vivid and tangible national identities. Here, again, I have employed an ethno-symbolic approach to uncover some of the deeper, unspoken cultural myths, memories and assumptions about the 'new Europe'. (See Delanty 1995; Benda-Beckman and Verkuyten 1995)

The ambiguities and nebulous character of European cultural identity contrast strongly with the dramatic and powerful diaspora nationalisms of the Greeks, Jews, and Armenians with their rich memories of golden ages of saints and heroes, their stark symbols of trauma and suffering, and their potent popular myths of glorious restoration in their age-old homelands, discussed in Chapter Eight on *Zionism and Diaspora Nationalism*. The implication, spelt out in the concluding chapter, is that the continuing power of myths, symbols, and memories of ethnic chosenness, golden ages and historic homelands has been largely responsible for the mass appeal of ethnic nationalism in the aftermath of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet empire; and that we are therefore unlikely to witness the early transcendence of ethnicity or the supersession of nationalism.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

These are the major themes and considerations that account for the plan of the book, which is divided into two parts.

Part One is more theoretical and historical in focus.

Chapter One considers the relationship between nationalism and those historians who have sought to describe its course and explain its appeal. In particular, it explores the assumptions and myths in the work of historians who have investigated the phenomena of nations and nationalism, from Michelet, Acton, and Renan to Seton-Watson, Hobsbawm, and Breuilly.

Chapter Two is an early statement of some ethno-symbolic concerns. It reveals the importance of an ethno-symbolic approach in uncovering the crucial role of myths of ethnic descent in the formation of modern nations and national identities. It explores the nature and consequences of such myths in their different versions, in England, France, Greece, Turkey, and Israel, and emphasizes the differences between 'genealogical' and more 'ideological' myths of descent.

Chapter Three applies these arguments to the question of 'national identity' in ancient and medieval epochs, both on the theoretical and the historical levels. Setting aside the sweeping claims of perennialists and modernists, it enquires how far it is possible to speak of nations before the modern epoch, notably in antiquity, and whether the term 'nation' can have a single, clear and unambiguous meaning in both pre-modern as well as modern epochs.

Chapter Four looks at the role of myths of ethnic election and the beliefs in chosen peoples as critical factors in the survival of ethnic groups, from the covenantal model of the ancient Israelites to the looser missionary models of many peoples in Europe and outside. It also explores the implications of these beliefs, and their subsequent transformation in the rise of modern nations.

Chapter Five, the final chapter in *Part One*, considers the nature and role of the territorial dimensions of ethnic communities and nations. It explores the central role of the territorialization of memory and of 'ethnoscapes' in the formation of nations, laying particular emphasis on the

sacralization of historic territories in aggravating and prolonging conflicts between nations.

Part Two is more empirical and contemporary in focus.

Chapter Six provides a general account of the role of nationalist ideologies and movements in the formation of modern nations. Comparing the ethno-symbolic approach with other perspectives, such as perennialism and modernism, it shows how nationalism can best be understood as a form of 'political archaeology', particularly on the part of intelligentsias intent on the reconstruction of modern nations.

Chapter Seven applies this ethno-symbolic approach to the ways in which demotic ethnic nationalisms politicize cultures and seek to purify their communities of alien elements. This 'darker side of nationalism' has particularly serious consequences for ethnic minorities within the boundaries of these demotic communities, and it helps to explain the incidence and flow of ethnic refugees all over the world.

Chapter Eight is a comparative study of diaspora nationalisms and, in particular, of Zionism. It emphasizes the role of myths, memories and symbols of ethnic chosenness, trauma, and the 'golden age' of saints, sages, and heroes in the rise of modern nationalism among the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks—the archetypal diaspora peoples.

Chapter Nine considers the current debates about European unity and national identity. It emphasizes the significance of myths, memories, symbols and traditions, or their absence, in recent attempts to forge European unity and create a European cultural identity. It also explores the potential of a European 'family of cultures' for greater cultural unity, while pointing to the difficulties of a nebulous analogy of the nation competing with well entrenched and vivid national identities.

Chapter Ten, the final chapter, provides a concise overall statement of the ethno-symbolic approach, and applies its insights to the current resurgence of nationalism since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It emphasizes the deeper roots of the persistence and variety of ethnic nationalisms in the uneven distribution of ethno-history and 'golden ages', the impact of religious ideals, notably of myths of ethnic election, and the differential nature of ancestral 'homelands'.

Notes

1. Another fashionable approach, or rather set of approaches, which we can term 'post-modernist', views the nation as a composite or hybrid construct of various cultural, social, and ethnic groupings. But such approaches hardly amount to a separate explanatory paradigm (or aim to provide one). As Chapter Five, on *Gastronomy or Geology?*, attempts to show, they really accept the modernist paradigm and apply it to contemporary Western polyethnic states'. (See A. D. Smith 1998, ch. 9)
2. For these nationalist metaphors, see Pearson (1993). Some nationalists adopt a voluntarist view, according to which people must belong to a nation, but can choose to which nation they wish to belong, a tradition epitomized in Ernest Renan's lecture, *Qu'est-ce que la nation?* (1882), a reply to Heinrich Treitschke's ethnic German justification for the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. See Guibernau (1996, ch. 1).
3. For all his 'primordialism', Clifford Geertz (1963) considers kinship groups too small and hence politically irrelevant. As for endogamy, it is again the belief, rather than any documented fact, that is significant.
4. For Eller and Coughlan (1993), cultural primordialism is non-rational and as sociological insofar as it places primordial attachments outside the domain of social interaction and construction in an unexplained realm of 'emotion'. But, as Grosby (1994) demonstrated in his response, this is to narrow our understanding of the 'sociological' and to miss out other important kinds of human relationship that are neither constructed nor part of a means-end causal chain.
5. This is a view put forward by John Armstrong (1982; 1995), though on occasion he combines it with a more specific 'continuous perennialism' in respect of the French and Russians, for example. For a clear-cut example of this 'continuous perennialism' in respect of the British Isles, see Hastings (1997, chs. 2-3).
6. I have recently explored this question again in A. D. Smith (1998, chs. 7-8). Even Hastings (1997) concedes that most nations are modern, and post-date the French Revolution.
7. I have conflated the earlier (1964) and later (1983) formulations of Gellner's theory. Both Nairn and Hechter use Gellner's earlier version; Nairn acknowledges his debt to Gellner's specific concept of uneven development.
8. Gellner (1983, ch. 3) is clearly concerned with this issue, and accepts the advantages of cultural legacies from the past for nation-creation. Yet, in his last work (1997, ch. 15), Gellner takes a stronger line, arguing that most nations do not have 'navels'; they are invented for them. For this debate and my reply, see A. D. Smith (1996).
9. For similar analyses that stress the centrality of the 'modern state' in the genesis and diffusion of nationalism, see Giddens (1985, chs. 4, 8) and Mann

- (1993, ch. 7; 1995). I have discussed their contributions, along with Breuilly's, more fully in A. D. Smith (1998, ch. 4).
10. Kedourie's analysis also suffers from a degree of idealism, in that nationalism is seen as the intellectual product of a fusion of ideas of self-determination derived from Kant with ideas of cultural diversity derived from Herder. This heady brew spreads like an epidemic and, like an opiate, it destroys those who administer the drug, as well all those on whom it is inflicted. Kedourie's one-sided and hostile portrait of nationalism overlooks its constructive aspects, and its vital role in creating, as well as controlling, social and political change.
11. Anderson's 'imagined community' is generically related to Hobsbawm's 'invented tradition', so important in the latter's eyes for the creation of nations. But Anderson reveals a more profound and positive appreciation of the persisting role of nations and nationalism, and a greater sensitivity to the underlying cultural changes that made national imaginings possible. See A. D. Smith (1998, ch. 6).
12. Hobsbawm (1990, ch. 2) elaborated his earlier analysis of 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) by distinguishing an earlier nineteenth century mass civic-political nationalism from a late-nineteenth century divisive ethno-linguistic variety of nationalism. But, despite his acknowledgement of 'proto-national' regional, linguistic and religious communities, he refused to allow them any influence on the rise of a state-creating modern nationalism which he suggested was largely a product of the need of capitalist élites to control the recently mobilized and enfranchised masses through the use of national 'invented traditions'.
13. There are important differences between Armstrong, Hutchinson and myself. Hutchinson (1987; 1994) argues for the importance of cultural nationalism, but also suggests a role for pre-modern ethnicity in, for example, Irish nationalism. Armstrong (1982) adopts a mainly phenomenological approach, but couples it with a social 'boundary' approach derived from Fredrik Barth; yet he also assigns a major role to myths and symbols in the preservation of ethnic identities over *la longue durée*.
14. For this definition of the nation, see A. D. Smith (1991, ch. 1). For a general discussion of the problems of defining the concept of the nation, see Connor (1994, ch. 4). Though the distinction between *ethnies* and nations is crucial, it does not correspond to the chronological or the sociological divide between pre-modernity and modernity. Not only do many *ethnies* persist (or are crystallized) in late modernity and also become 'modernized'; a few nations antedate modernity (chronologically and sociologically) and owe little or nothing to the processes of 'modernization'.
15. This is very much the view put forward by the editors and most of the contributors to Tonkin *et al.* (1989); reacting against the idea that the 'past determines the present', they have opted for an equally unilateral understanding in which, for the most part, 'the present shapes the past'—or, at any rate,

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our understanding of it. One could equally well claim that our 'understanding' of the past is inevitably shaped by the frameworks of meaning handed down from previous generations, even when we dissent from their particular views of the past. (See also Eriksen 1993) The question of continuities of nations is also bedevilled by definitional problems. For Walker Connor (1994, ch. 9) we can only speak of mass nations; nations only exist when a majority of the designated population participates (indeed votes) in public life; whereas for Adrian Hastings (1997, ch. 1) nations can be said to exist when a significant minority of the population outside the ruling élite reveal a national consciousness, in which case we can speak of medieval nations.

But are these 'nations' in the full sense of the term (a modern, and modernist, sense?), or only potential or 'pre-national' peoples? Perhaps we should avoid trying to draw too hard-and-fast lines between *ethnies* and nations in each case, but rather identify processes (of territorialization, homogenization, legal standardization, etc.) by which nations are formed, often discontinuously, out of pre-existing *ethnies*.

16. That is why cultural nationalism, as Hutchinson (1987, ch. 1) highlights, is so important for the creation of nations. This was also probably the case with pre-modern *ethnies*. A religious culture provided the foundation for the crystallisation and persistence of fluid ethnic categories. From this standpoint, nationalist 'political archaeology', for all its rhetoric, is not as fictive and fantastic as modernists are apt to portray.

17. This suggests that the fashionable distinction between 'ethnic' and 'civic' nations and nationalisms is not as clear-cut as is often assumed. (See Breton 1988) Western 'civic' nations assume a fundamental ethnic core which has allowed them to tolerate a measure of cultural hybridity through immigration and intermarriage. This is because the more cultural elements of language, territory, and history can be separated to some extent from their ethnic moorings, so allowing outsiders to join the nation and assimilate its culture.

18. The open, assimilatory character of Catalan linguistic nationalism can be contrasted with the relatively closed and more exclusive character of Basque religious and 'racial' nationalism. For a rich and illuminating study of these ethnic nationalisms, see Conversi (1997).

19. For this definition of nationalism, see A. D. Smith (1991, ch. 4). On globalization and nationalism, see Billig (1995, esp. ch. 6) and Guibernau (1996, ch. 7).

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