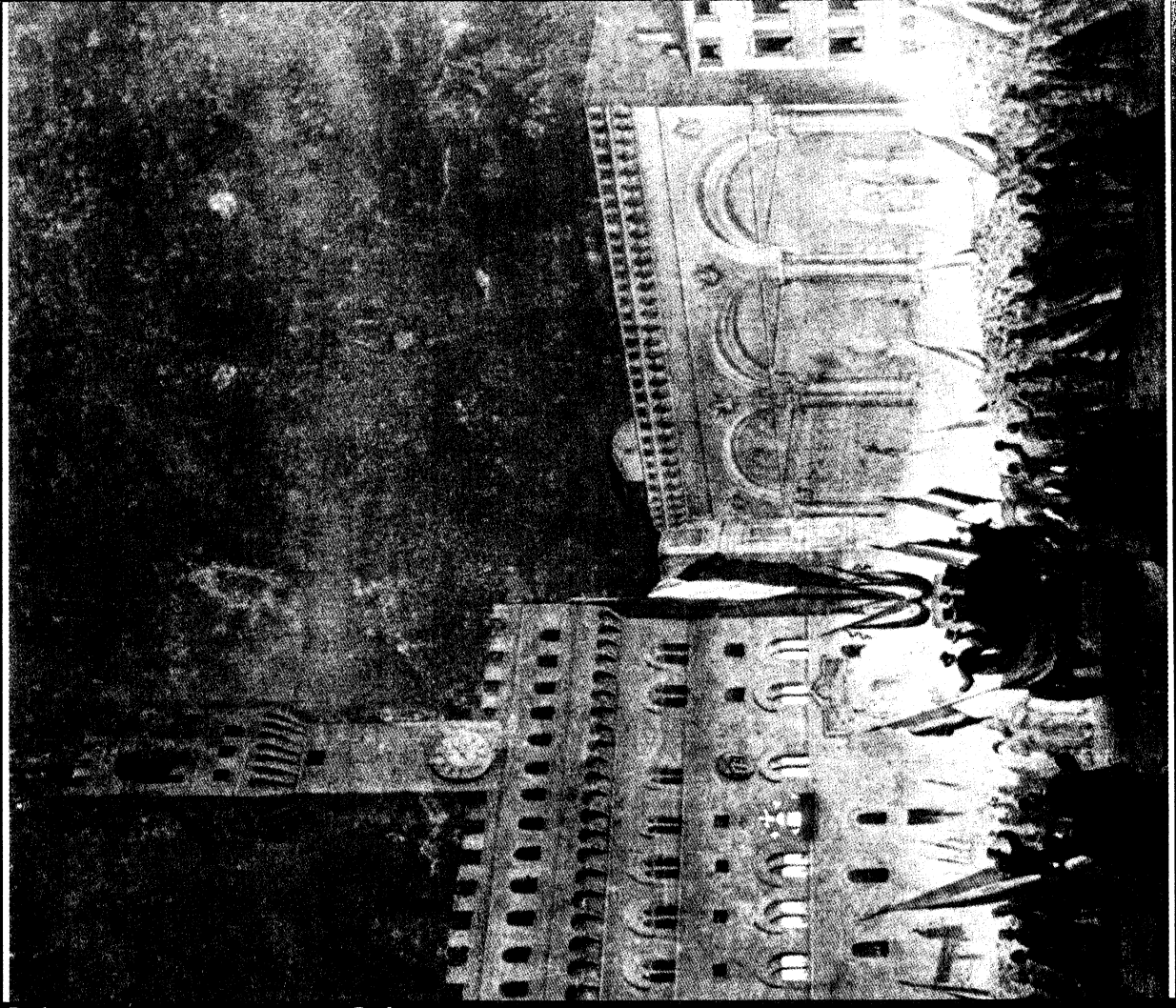


NATIONS AND NATIONALISM

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Definitions

Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.

Nationalism as a sentiment, or as a movement, can best be defined in terms of this principle. Nationalist *sentiment* is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment. A nationalist *movement* is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind.

There is a variety of ways in which the nationalist principle can be violated. The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all the members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners; or it can fail in both these ways at once, not incorporating all the nationals and yet also including some non-nationals. Or again, a nation may live, unmingled with foreigners, in a multiplicity of states, so that no single state can claim to be *the* national one.

But there is one particular form of the violation of the nationalist principle to which nationalist sentiment is quite particularly sensitive: if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety. This can occur either through the incorporation of the national territory in a larger empire, or by the local domination of an alien group.

In brief, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state – a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation – should not separate the power-holders from the rest.

The nationalist principle can be asserted in an ethical, 'universalistic' spirit. There could be, and on occasion there have been, nationalists-in-the-abstract, unbiassed in favour of any special nationality of their own, and generously preaching the doctrine for all nations alike: let all nations have their own political roofs, and let all

Tuzenbach: In years to come, you say, life on earth will be marvellous, beautiful. That's true. But to take part in that now, even from afar, one must prepare, one must work . . .

Yes, one must work. Perhaps you think – this German is getting over-excited. But on my word of honour, I'm Russian. I cannot even speak German. My father is Orthodox . . .

Anton Chekhov, *Three Sisters*

Politika u nás byla však spíše méně smělejší formou kultury.
(Our politics however was a rather less daring form of culture.)

J. Sládeček, *Osmádesátý* ('68), Index, Köln, 1980,
(written under this pen name by Petr Pithart, subsequently prime minister of the Czech lands, and previously circulated in samizdat in Prague).

Our nationality is like our relations to women: too implicated in our moral nature to be changed honourably, and too accidental to be worth changing.

George Santayana

of them also refrain from including non-nationals under it. There is no formal contradiction in asserting such non-egoistic nationalism. As a doctrine it can be supported by some good arguments, such as the desirability of preserving cultural diversity, of a pluralistic international political system, and of the diminution of internal strains within states.

In fact, however, nationalism has often not been so sweetly reasonable, nor so rationally symmetrical. It may be that, as Immanuel Kant believed, partiality, the tendency to make exceptions on one's own behalf or one's own case, is *the* central human weakness from which all others flow; and that it infects national sentiment as it does all else, engendering what the Italians under Mussolini called the *sacro egoismo* of nationalism. It may also be that the political effectiveness of national sentiment would be much impaired if nationalists had as fine a sensibility to the wrongs committed by their nation as they have to those committed against it.

But over and above these considerations there are others, tied to the specific nature of the world we happen to live in, which militate against any impartial, general, sweetly reasonable nationalism. To put it in the simplest possible terms: there is a very large number of potential nations on earth. Our planet also contains room for a certain number of independent or autonomous political units. On any reasonable calculation, the former number (of potential nations) is probably much, *much* larger than that of possible viable states. If this argument or calculation is correct, not all nationalisms can be satisfied, at any rate at the same time. The satisfaction of some spells the frustration of others. This argument is further and immeasurably strengthened by the fact that very many of the potential nations of this world live, or until recently have lived, not in compact territorial units but intermixed with each other in complex patterns. It follows that a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogeneous, in such cases, if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals. Their unwillingness to suffer such fates may make the peaceful implementation of the nationalist principle difficult.

These definitions must, of course, like most definitions, be applied with common sense. The nationalist principle, as defined, is not violated by the presence of *small* numbers of resident foreigners, or even by the presence of the occasional foreigner in, say, a national ruling family. Just how many resident foreigners or foreign members of the ruling class there must be before the principle is effectively

violated cannot be stated with precision. There is no sacred percentage figure, below which the foreigner can be benignly tolerated, and above which he becomes offensive and his safety and life are at peril. No doubt the figure will vary with circumstances. The impossibility of providing a generally applicable and precise figure, however, does not undermine the usefulness of the definition.

State and nation

Our definition of nationalism was parasitic on two as yet undefined terms: state and nation.

Discussion of the state may begin with Max Weber's celebrated definition of it, as that agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence. The idea behind this is simple and seductive: in well-ordered societies, such as most of us live in or aspire to live in, private or sectional violence is illegitimate. Conflict as such is not legitimate, but it cannot rightfully be resolved by private or sectional violence. Violence may be applied only by the central political authority, and those to whom it delegates this right. Among the various sanctions of the maintenance of order, the ultimate one – force – may be applied only by one special, clearly identified, and well centralized, disciplined agency within society. That agency or group of agencies *is* the state.

The idea enshrined in this definition corresponds fairly well with the moral intuitions of many, probably most, members of modern societies. Nevertheless, it is not entirely satisfactory. There are 'states' – or, at any rate, institutions which we would normally be inclined to call by that name – which do not monopolize legitimate violence within the territory which they more or less effectively control. A feudal state does not necessarily object to private wars between its fief-holders, provided they also fulfil their obligations to their overlord; or again, a state counting tribal populations among its subjects does not necessarily object to the institution of the feud, as long as those who indulge in it refrain from endangering neutrals on the public highway or in the market. The Iraqi state, under British tutelage after the First World War, tolerated tribal raids, provided the raiders dutifully reported at the nearest police station before and after the expedition, leaving an orderly bureaucratic record of slain and booty. In brief, there are states which lack either the will or the

By way of anticipation, some general historical observations should be made about the state. Mankind has passed through three fundamental stages in its history: the pre-agrarian, the agrarian, and the industrial. Hunting and gathering bands were and are too small to allow the kind of political division of labour which constitutes the state; and so, for them, the question of the state, of a stable specialized order-enforcing institution, does not really arise. By contrast, most, but by no means all, agrarian societies have been state-endowed. Some of these states have been strong and some weak, some have been despotic and others law-abiding. They differ a very great deal in their form. The agrarian phase of human history is the period during which, so to speak, the very existence of the state is an option. Moreover, the form of the state is highly variable. During the hunting-gathering stage, the option was not available.

By contrast, in the post-agrarian, industrial age there is, once again, no option; but now the *presence*, not the absence of the state is inescapable. Paraphrasing Hegel, once none had the state, then some had it, and finally all have it. The form it takes, of course, still remains variable. There are some traditions of social thought – anarchism, Marxism – which hold that even, or especially, in an industrial order the state is dispensable, at least under favourable conditions or under conditions due to be realized in the fullness of time. There are obvious and powerful reasons for doubting this: industrial societies are enormously large, and depend for the standard of living to which they have become accustomed (or to which they ardently wish to become accustomed) on an unbelievably intricate general division of labour and co-operation. Some of this co-operation might under favourable conditions be spontaneous and need no central sanctions. The idea that all of it could perpetually work in this way, that it could exist without any enforcement and control, puts an intolerable strain on one's credulity.

So the problem of nationalism does not arise when there is no state. It does not follow that the problem of nationalism arises for each and every state. On the contrary, it arises only for *some* states. It remains to be seen which ones do face this problem.

The nation

The definition of the nation presents difficulties graver than those attendant on the definition of the state. Although modern man tends

↑ no doubt?

means to enforce their monopoly of legitimate violence, and which nonetheless remain, in many respects, recognizable 'states'.

Weber's underlying principle does, however, seem valid *now*, however strangely ethnocentric it may be as a general definition, with its tacit assumption of the well-centralized Western state. The state constitutes one highly distinctive and important elaboration of the social division of labour. Where there is no division of labour, one cannot even begin to speak of the state. But not any or every specialism makes a state: the state is the specialization and concentration of order maintenance. The 'state' is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order (whatever else they may also be concerned with). The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of social life. They *are* the state.

Not all societies are state-endowed. It immediately follows that the problem of nationalism does not arise for stateless societies. If there is no state, one obviously cannot ask whether or not its boundaries are congruent with the limits of nations. If there are no rulers, there being no state, one cannot ask whether they are of the same nation as the ruled. When neither state nor rulers exist, one cannot resent their failure to conform to the requirements of the principle of nationalism. One may perhaps deplore statelessness, but that is another matter. Nationalists have generally fulminated against the distribution of political power and the nature of political boundaries, but they have seldom if ever had occasion to deplore the absence of power and of boundaries altogether. The circumstances in which nationalism has generally arisen have not normally been those in which the state itself, as such, was lacking, or when its reality was in any serious doubt. The state was only too conspicuously present. It was its boundaries and/or the distribution of power, and possibly of other advantages, within it which were resented.

This in itself is highly significant. Not only is our definition of nationalism parasitic on a prior and assumed definition of the state: it also seems to be the case that nationalism emerges only in milieux in which the existence of the state is already very much taken for granted. The existence of politically centralized units, and of a moral-political climate in which such centralized units are taken for granted and are treated as normative, is a necessary though by no means a sufficient condition of nationalism.

to take the centralized state (and, more specifically, the centralized national state) for granted, nevertheless he is capable, with relatively little effort, of seeing its contingency, and of imagining a social situation in which the state is absent. He is quite adept at visualizing the 'state of nature'. An anthropologist can explain to him that the tribe is not necessarily a state writ small, and that forms of tribal organization exist which can be described as stateless. By contrast, the idea of a man without a nation seems to impose a far greater strain on the modern imagination. Chamisso, an *émigré* Frenchman in Germany during the Napoleonic period, wrote a powerful proto-Kafkaesque novel about a man who lost his shadow: though no doubt part of the effectiveness of this novel hinges on the intended ambiguity of the parable, it is difficult not to suspect that, for the author, the Man without a Shadow was the Man without a Nation. When his followers and acquaintances detect his aberrant shadowlessness they shun the otherwise well-endowed Peter Schlemiehl. A man without a nation defies the recognized categories and provokes revulsion.

Chamisso's perception – if indeed this is what he intended to convey – was valid enough, but valid only for one kind of human condition, and not for the human condition as such anywhere at any time. A man must have a nationality as he must have a nose and two ears; a deficiency in any of these particulars is not inconceivable and does from time to time occur, but only as a result of some disaster, and it is itself a disaster of a kind. All this seems obvious, though, alas, it is not true. But that it should have come to *seem* so very obviously true is indeed an aspect, or perhaps the very core, of the problem of nationalism. Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such.

In fact, nations, like states, are a contingency, and not a universal necessity. Neither nations nor states exist at all times and in all circumstances. Moreover, nations and states are not the *same* contingency. Nationalism holds that they were destined for each other; that either without the other is incomplete, and constitutes a tragedy. But before they could become intended for each other, each of them had to emerge, and their emergence was independent and contingent. The state has certainly emerged without the help of the nation. Some nations have certainly emerged without the blessings of their own state. It is more debatable whether the normative idea of the nation, in its modern sense, did not presuppose the prior existence of the state.

What then is this contingent, but in our age seemingly universal and normative, idea of the nation? Discussion of two very makeshift, temporary definitions will help to pinpoint this elusive concept.

- 1 Two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating.
- 2 Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words, *nations maketh man*; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.

Each of these provisional definitions, the cultural and the voluntaristic, has some merit. Each of them singles out an element which is of real importance in the understanding of nationalism. But neither is adequate. Definitions of culture, presupposed by the first definition, in the anthropological rather than the normative sense, are notoriously difficult and unsatisfactory. It is probably best to approach this problem by using this term without attempting too much in the way of formal definition, and looking at what culture *does*.

plant is a national educational and communications system. Its only effective keeper and protector is the state.

It would not in principle be impossible to have a single such cultural/educational goldfish bowl for the entire globe, sustained by a single political authority and a single educational system. In the long run this may yet come to pass. But in the meantime, and for very good reasons yet to be discussed, the global norm is a set of discontinuous breathing chambers or aquaria, each with its own proprietary, not properly interchangeable, medium or atmosphere. They do share some general traits. The formula for the medium of the fully developed industrial goldfish bowls is fairly similar in type, though it is rich in relatively superficial, but deliberately stressed, brand-differentiating characteristics.

There are some good and obvious reasons for this new pluralism, which will be explored further. The industrial age inherited both the political units and the cultures, high and low, of the preceding age. There was no reason why they should all suddenly fuse into a single one, and there were good reasons why they should *not*: industrialism, in other words the type of production or of the division of labour which makes these homogeneous breathing tanks imperative, did not arrive simultaneously in all parts of the world, nor in the same manner. The differential timing of its arrival divided humanity into rival groups very effectively. These differences in arrival-time of industrialism in various communities became acute if they could utilize some cultural, genetic or similar differentiae, left behind by the agrarian world. The dating of 'development' constitutes a crucial political diacritical mark, if it can seize upon some cultural difference inherited from the agrarian age, and use it as its token.

The process of industrialization took place in successive phases and in different conditions, and engendered various new rivalries, with new gains and losses to be made and avoided. Internationalism was often predicted by the prophets and commentators of the industrial age, both on the left and on the right, but the very opposite came to pass: the age of nationalism.

What is a Nation?

We are now at last in a position to attempt some kind of plausible answer to this question. Initially there were two especially promising candidates for the construction of a theory of nationality: will and culture. Obviously, each of them is important and relevant; but, just as obviously, neither is remotely adequate. It is instructive to consider why this is so.

No doubt will or consent constitutes an important factor in the formation of most groups, large and small. Mankind has always been organized in groups, of all kinds of shapes and sizes, sometimes sharply defined and sometimes loose, sometimes neatly nested and sometimes overlapping or intertwined. The variety of these possibilities, and of the principles on which the groups were recruited and maintained, is endless. But two generic agents or catalysts of group formation and maintenance are obviously crucial: will, voluntary adherence and identification, loyalty, solidarity, on the one hand; and fear, coercion, compulsion, on the other. These two possibilities constitute extreme poles along a kind of spectrum. A few communities may be based exclusively or very predominantly on one or the other, but they must be rare. Most persisting groups are based on a mixture of loyalty and identification (on *willed* adherence), and of extraneous incentives, positive or negative, on hopes and fears.

If we define nations as groups which *will* themselves to persist as communities,¹ the definition-net that we have cast into the sea will bring forth far too rich a catch. The haul which we shall have trawled in will indeed include the communities we may easily recognize as effective and cohesive nations: these genuine nations do in effect will themselves to be such, and their life may indeed constitute a kind of continuous, informal, ever self-reaffirming plebiscite. But (unfortunately for this definition) the same also applies to many

¹Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation', republished in *Ernest Renan et l'Allemagne*, Textes recueillis et commentés par Emile Bure, NY, 1945.

other clubs, conspiracies, gangs, teams, parties, not to mention the many numerous communities and associations of the pre-industrial age which were not recruited and defined according to the nationalist principle and which defy it. Will, consent, identification, were not ever absent from the human scene, even though they were (and continue to be) also accompanied by calculation, fear and interest. (It is an interesting and moot question whether sheer inertia, the persistence of aggregates and combinations, is to be counted as tacit consent or as something else.)

The tacit self-identification has operated on behalf of all kinds of groupings, larger or smaller than nations, or cutting across them, or defined horizontally or in other ways. In brief, even if will were the basis of a nation (to paraphrase an idealist definition of the state), it is also the basis of so much else, that we cannot possibly define the nation in this manner. It is only because, in the modern, nationalist age, national units are the *preferred*, favoured objects of identification and willed adherence, that the definition seems tempting, because those other kinds of group are now so easily forgotten. Those who take the tacit assumptions of nationalism for granted erroneously also credit them to humanity at large, in any age. But a definition tied to the assumptions and conditions of one age (and even then constituting an exaggeration), cannot usefully be used to help to explain the *emergence* of that age.

Any definition of nations in terms of shared culture is another net which brings in far too rich a catch. Human history is and continues to be well endowed with cultural differentiations. Cultural boundaries are sometimes sharp and sometimes fuzzy; the patterns are sometimes bold and simple and sometimes tortuous and complex. For all the reasons we have stressed so much, this richness of differentiation does not, and indeed cannot, normally or generally converge either with the boundaries of political units (the jurisdictions of effective authorities) or with the boundaries of units blessed by the democratic sacraments of consent and will. The agrarian world simply could not be so neat. The industrial world tends to become so, or at least to approximate to such simplicity; but that is another matter, and there are now special factors making it so.

The establishment of pervasive high cultures (standardized, literacy- and education-based systems of communication), a process rapidly gathering pace throughout the world, has made it seem, to anyone too deeply immersed in our contemporary assumptions, that

nationality may be definable in terms of shared culture. Nowadays people can live only in units defined by a shared culture, and internally mobile and fluid. Genuine cultural pluralism ceases to be viable under current conditions. But a little bit of historical awareness or sociological sophistication should dispel the illusion that this was always so. Culturally plural societies often worked well in the past: so well, in fact, that cultural plurality was sometimes invented where it was previously lacking.

If, for such cogent reasons, these two apparently promising paths towards the definition of nationality are barred, is there another way?

The great, but valid, paradox is this: nations can be defined only in terms of the age of nationalism, rather than, as you might expect, the other way round. It is not the case that the 'age of nationalism' is a mere summation of the awakening and political self-assertion of this, that, or the other nation. Rather, when general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. The cultures now seem to be the natural repositories of political legitimacy. Only *then* does it come to appear that any defiance of their boundaries by political units constitutes a scandal.

Under these conditions, though under these conditions *only*, nations can indeed be defined in terms both of will and of culture, and indeed in terms of the convergence of them both with political units. In these conditions, men will to be politically united with all those, and only those, who share their culture. Politics then will to extend their boundaries to the limits of their cultures, and to protect and impose their culture with the boundaries of their power. The fusion of will, culture and polity becomes the norm, and one not easily or frequently defied. (Once, it had been almost universally defied, with impunity, and had indeed passed unnoticed and undiscussed.) These conditions do not define the human situation as such, but merely its industrial variant.

It is nationalism which engenders nations, and not the other way round. Admittedly, nationalism uses the pre-existing, historically inherited proliferation of cultures or cultural wealth, though it uses them very selectively, and it most often transforms them radically.

Dead languages can be revived, traditions invented, quite fictitious pristine purities restored. But this culturally creative, fanciful, positively inventive aspect of nationalist ardour ought not to allow anyone to conclude, erroneously, that nationalism is a contingent, artificial, ideological invention, which might not have happened, if only those damned busy-body interfering European thinkers, not content to leave well alone, had not concocted it and fatefully injected it into the bloodstream of otherwise viable political communities. The cultural shreds and patches used by nationalism are often arbitrary historical inventions. Any old shred and patch would have served as well. But in no way does it follow that the principle of nationalism itself, as opposed to the avatars it happens to pick up for its incarnations, is itself in the least contingent and accidental.

Nothing could be further from the truth than such a supposition. Nationalism is not what it seems, and above all it is not what it seems to itself. The cultures it claims to defend and revive are often its own inventions, or are modified out of all recognition. Nonetheless the nationalist principle as such, as distinct from each of its specific forms, and from the individually distinctive nonsense which it may preach, has very very deep roots in our shared current condition, is not at all contingent, and will not easily be denied.

Durkheim taught that in religious worship society adores its own camouflaged image. In a nationalist age, societies worship themselves brazenly and openly, spurning the camouflage. At Nuremberg, Nazi Germany did not worship itself by pretending to worship God or even Wotan; it overtly worshipped itself. In milder but just as significant form, enlightened modernist theologians do not believe, or even take much interest in, the doctrines of their faith which had meant so much to their predecessors. They treat them with a kind of comic auto-functionalism, as valid simply and only as the conceptual and ritual tools by means of which a social tradition affirms its values, continuity and solidarity, and they systematically obscure and play down the difference between such a tacitly reductionist 'faith', and the real thing which had preceded it and had played such a crucial part in earlier European history, a part which could never have been played by the unrecognizably diluted, watered-down current versions.

But the fact that social self-worship, whether virulent and violent or gentle and evasive, is now an openly avowed collective self-worship, rather than a means of covertly revering society though the

image of God, as Durkheim insisted, does not mean that the current style is any more veridical than that of a Durkheimian age. The community may no longer be seen through the prism of the divine, but nationalism has its own amnesias and selections which, even when they may be severely secular, can be profoundly distorting and deceptive.

The basic deception and self-deception practised by nationalism is this: nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population. It means that generalized diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. That is what *really* happens.

But this is the very opposite of what nationalism affirms and what nationalists fervently believe. Nationalism usually conquers in the name of a putative folk culture. Its symbolism is drawn from the healthy, pristine, vigorous life of the peasants, of the *Volk*, the *narod*. There is a certain element of truth in the nationalist self-presentation when the *narod* or *Volk* is ruled by officials of another, an alien high culture, whose oppression must be resisted first by a cultural revival and reaffirmation, and eventually by a war of national liberation. If the nationalism prospers it eliminates the alien high culture, but it does not then replace it by the old local low culture; it revives, or invents, a local high (literate, specialist-transmitted) culture of its own, though admittedly one which will have some links with the earlier local folk styles and dialects. But it was the great ladies at the Budapest Opera who really went to town in peasant dresses, or dresses claimed to be such. At the present time in the Soviet Union the consumers of 'ethnic' gramophone records are not the remaining ethnic rural population, but the newly urbanized, apartment-dwelling, educated and multi-lingual population,¹ who

¹Yu. V. Bromley *et al.*, *Sovremennye Etnicheskie Protssesy v SSSR* (Contemporary Ethnic Processes in the USSR), Moscow, 1975.

like to express their real or imagined sentiments and roots, and who will no doubt indulge in as much nationalist behaviour as the political situation may allow.

So a sociological self-deception, a vision of reality through a prism of illusion, still persists, but it is not the same as that which was analysed by Durkheim. Society no longer worships itself through religious symbols; a modern, streamlined, on-wheels high culture celebrates itself in song and dance, which it borrows (stylizing it in the process) from a folk culture which it fondly believes itself to be perpetuating, defending, and reaffirming.

The course of true nationalism never did run smooth

A characteristic scenario of the evolution of a nationalism – and we shall have cause to return to this kind of scenario – ran something like this. The Ruritarians were a peasant population speaking a group of related and more or less mutually intelligible dialects, and inhabiting a series of discontinuous but not very much separated pockets within the lands of the Empire of Megalomania. The Ruritanian language, or rather the dialects which could be held to compose it, was not really spoken by anyone other than these peasants. The aristocracy and officialdom spoke the language of the Megalomanian court, which happened to belong to a language group different from the one of which the Ruritanian dialects were an offshoot.

Most, but not all, Ruritanian peasants belonged to a church whose liturgy was taken from another linguistic group again, and many of the priests, especially higher up in the hierarchy, spoke a language which was a modern vernacular version of the liturgical language of this creed, and which was also very far removed from Ruritanian. The petty traders of the small towns serving the Ruritanian countryside were drawn from a different ethnic group and religion still, and one heartily detested by the Ruritanian peasantry.

In the past the Ruritanian peasants had had many griefs, movingly and beautifully recorded in their lament-songs (painstakingly collected by village schoolmasters late in the nineteenth century, and made well known to the international musical public by the compositions of the great Ruritanian national composer L.). The pitiful oppression of the Ruritanian peasantry provoked, in the eighteenth century, the guerrilla resistance led by the famous Ruritanian social

bandit K., whose deeds are said still to persist in the local folk memory, not to mention several novels and two films, one of them produced by the national artist Z., under highest auspices, soon after the promulgation of the Popular Socialist Republic of Ruritania.

Honesty compels one to admit that the social bandit was captured by his own compatriots, and that the tribunal which condemned him to a painful death had as its president another compatriot. Furthermore, shortly after Ruritania first attained independence, a circular passed between its Ministries of the Interior, Justice and Education, considering whether it might not now be more politic to celebrate the village defence units which had opposed the social bandit and his gangs, rather than the said social bandit himself, in the interest of not encouraging opposition to the police.

A careful analysis of the folk songs so painstakingly collected in the nineteenth century, and now incorporated in the repertoire of the Ruritanian youth, camping and sports movement, does not disclose much evidence of any serious discontent on the part of the peasantry with their linguistic and cultural situation, however grieved they were by other, more earthy matters. On the contrary, such awareness as there is of linguistic pluralism within the lyrics of the songs is ironic, jocular and good-humoured, and consists in part of bilingual puns, sometimes in questionable taste. It must also be admitted that one of the most moving of these songs – I often sang it by the camp fire at the holiday camp to which I was sent during the summer vacations – celebrates the fate of a shepherd boy, grazing three bullocks on the seigneurial clover (*sic*) near the woods, who was surprised by a group of social bandits, requiring him to surrender his overcoat. Combining reckless folly with lack of political awareness, the shepherd boy refused and was killed. I do not know whether this song has been suitably re-written since Ruritania went socialist. Anyway, to return to my main theme: though the songs do often contain complaints about the condition of the peasantry, they do not raise the issue of cultural nationalism.

That was yet to come, and presumably post-dates the composition of the said songs. In the nineteenth century a population explosion occurred at the same time as certain other areas of the Empire of Megalomania – but not Ruritania – rapidly industrialized. The Ruritanian peasants were drawn to seek work in the industrially more developed areas, and some secured it, on the dreadful terms prevailing at the time. As backward rustics speaking an obscure and

seldom written or taught language, they had a particularly rough deal in the towns to whose slums they had moved. At the same time, some Ruritanian lads destined for the church, and educated in both the court and the liturgical languages, became influenced by the new liberal ideas in the course of their secondary schooling, and shifted to a secular training at the university, ending not as priests but as journalists, teachers and professors. They received encouragement from a few foreign, non-Ruritanian ethnographers, musicologists and historians who had come to explore Ruritania. The continuing labour migration, increasingly widespread elementary education and conscription provided these Ruritanian awakeners with a growing audience.

Of course, it was perfectly possible for the Ruritians, if they wished to do so (and many did), to assimilate into the dominant language of Megalomania. No genetically transmitted trait, no deep religious custom, differentiated an educated Ruritanian from a similar Megalomanian. In fact, many did assimilate, often without bothering to change their names, and the telephone directory of the old capital of Megalomania (now the Federal Republic of Megalomania) is quite full of Ruritanian names, though often rather comically spelt in the Megalomanian manner, and adapted to Megalomanian phonetic expectations. The point is that after a rather harsh and painful start in the first generation, the life chances of the offspring of the Ruritanian labour migrant were not unduly bad, and probably at least as good (given his willingness to work hard) as those of his non-Ruritanian Megalomanian fellow-citizens. So these offspring shared in the eventually growing prosperity and general embourgeoisement of the region. Hence, as far as individual life chances went, there was perhaps no need for a virulent Ruritanian nationalism.

Nonetheless something of the kind did occur. It would, I think, be quite wrong to attribute conscious calculation to the participants in the movement. Subjectively, one must suppose that they had the motives and feelings which are so vigorously expressed in the literature of the national revival. They deplored the squalor and neglect of their home valleys, while yet also seeing the rustic virtues still to be found in them; they deplored the discrimination to which their compatriots were subject, and the alienation from their native culture to which they were doomed in the proletarian suburbs of the industrial towns. They preached against these ills, and had the hearing of at

least many of their fellows. The manner in which, when the international political situation came to favour it, Ruritania eventually attained independence, is now part of the historical record and need not be repeated here.

There is, one must repeat, no need to assume any conscious long-term calculation of interest on anyone's part. The nationalist intellectuals were full of warm and generous ardour on behalf of the compatriots. When they donned folk costume and trekked over the hills, composing poems in the forest clearings, they did not also dream of one day becoming powerful bureaucrats, ambassadors and ministers. Likewise, the peasants and workers whom they succeeded in reaching felt resentment at their condition, but had no reveries about plans of industrial development which one day would bring a steel mill (quite useless, as it then turned out) to the very heart of the Ruritanian valleys, thus totally ruining quite a sizeable area of surrounding arable land and pasture. It would be genuinely wrong to try to reduce these sentiments to calculations of material advantage or of social mobility. The present theory is sometimes travestied as a reduction of national sentiment to calculation of prospects of social promotion. But this is a misrepresentation. In the old days it made no sense to ask whether the peasants loved their own culture: they took it for granted, like the air they breathed, and were not conscious of either. But when labour migration and bureaucratic employment became prominent features within their social horizon, they soon learned the difference between dealing with a co-national, one understanding and sympathizing with their culture, and someone hostile to it. This very concrete experience taught them to be aware of their culture, and to love it (or, indeed, to wish to be rid of it) without any conscious calculation of advantages and prospects of social mobility. In stable self-contained communities culture is often quite invisible, but when mobility and context-free communication come to be of the essence of social life, the culture in which one has been *taught* to communicate becomes the core of one's identity.

So *had* there been such calculation (which there was not) it would, in quite a number of cases (though by no means in all), have been a very sound one. In fact, given the at least relative paucity of Ruritanian intellectuals, those Ruritanians who did have higher qualifications secured much better posts in independent Ruritania than most of them could even have hoped for in Greater Megalomania, where they had to compete with scholastically more developed

ethnic groups. As for the peasants and workers, they did not benefit immediately; but the drawing of a political boundary around the newly defined ethnic Ruritania did mean the eventual fostering and protection of industries in the area, and in the end drastically diminished the need for labour migration from it.

What all this amounts to is this: during the early period of industrialization, entrants into the new order who are drawn from cultural and linguistic groups that are distant from those of the more advanced centre, suffer considerable disadvantages which are even greater than those of other economically weak new proletarians who have the advantage of sharing the culture of the political and economic rulers. But the cultural/linguistic distance and capacity to differentiate themselves from others, which is such a handicap for individuals, can be and often is eventually a positive advantage for entire collectivities, or potential collectivities, of these victims of the newly emergent world. It enables them to conceive and express their resentments and discontents in intelligible terms. Ruritarians had previously thought and felt in terms of family unit and village, at most in terms of a valley, and perhaps on occasion in terms of religion. But now, swept into the melting pot of an early industrial development, they had no valley and no village: and sometimes no family. But there *were* other impoverished and exploited individuals, and a lot of them spoke dialects recognizably similar, while most of the better-off spoke something quite alien; and so the new concept of the Ruritanian nation was born of this contrast, with some encouragement from those journalists and teachers. And it was not an illusion: the attainment of some of the objects of the nascent Ruritanian national movement did indeed bring relief of the ills which had helped to engender it. The relief would perhaps have come anyway; but in this national form, it also brought forth a new high culture and its guardian state.

This is one of the two important principles of fission which determine the emergence of new units, when the industrial world with its insulated cultural breathing tanks comes into being. It could be called the principle of barriers to communication, barriers based on previous, pre-industrial cultures; and it operates with special force during the early period of industrialization. The other principle, just as important, could be called that of inhibitors of social entropy; and it deserves separate treatment.

Social Entropy and Equality in Industrial Society

The transition from agrarian to industrial society has a kind of entropy quality, a shift from pattern to systematic randomness. Agrarian society, with its relatively stable specializations, its persisting regional, kin, professional and rank groupings, has a clearly marked social structure. Its elements are ordered, and not distributed at random. Its sub-cultures underscore and fortify these structural differentiations, and they do not by setting up or accentuating cultural difference within it in any way hamper the functioning of the society at large. Quite the contrary. Far from finding such cultural differentiations offensive, the society holds their expression and recognition to be most fitting and appropriate. Respect for them is the very essence of etiquette.

Industrial society is different. Its territorial and work units are *ad hoc*: membership is fluid, has a great turnover, and does not generally engage or commit the loyalty and identity of members. In brief, the old structures are dissipated and largely replaced by an internally random and fluid totality, within which there is not much (certainly when compared with the preceding agrarian society) by way of genuine sub-structures. There is very little in the way of any effective, binding organization at any level between the individual and the total community. This total and ultimate political community thereby acquires a wholly new and very considerable importance, being linked (as it seldom was in the past) both to the state and to the cultural boundary. The *nation* is now supremely important, thanks both to the erosion of sub-groupings and the vastly increased importance of a shared, literary-dependent culture. The state, inevitably, is charged with the maintenance and supervision of an enormous social infrastructure (the cost of which characteristically comes close to one half of the total income of the society). The educational system becomes a very crucial part of it, and the maintenance of the cultural/linguistic medium now becomes the central role of