

This is not the only, perhaps not the major, reason for the persistence of the territorial-civic model of the nation. It is, after all, a fundamental assumption of the inter-state order and its juridical definition of the state. But the leading role of local intelligentsias must not be overlooked. It helps to flesh out the bare structure of the inter-state system and its components by its pressure for social integration and cultural homogeneity in the public realm and by its holding up of a different image of political community from that offered by ethnic nationalists. Though the reality usually falls far short of that image, though many populations fail as yet to identify with a territorial and civic community, the pressures to do so – and thereby to achieve a measure of integration and homogeneity – remain powerful.

That such images and pressures bear different connotations in different societies, that homogeneity, civic education or territorial participation may mean somewhat different things in Angola, Nigeria and Pakistan, is undeniable. Yet there remains for many of the professionals, merchants and bureaucrats of non-Western states a common language – common concepts and symbols – of civic-territorial nationalism that underlies many of the actions of such states and their élites in the inter-state systems and by means of which they make sense of their relations and actions.

But it is only one of the nationalist ideologies and languages in the contemporary world. It faces challenges from many sides, not least from a rival form of nationalism and national identity. It is to that rival and its political consequences that we must now turn.

CHAPTER 6

Separatism and Multi-nationalism

The impact of nationalism on the rise and incidence of national identities is not confined to the creation of territorial nations. Perhaps even more significant, and certainly more explosive, has been its role in the formation of ethnic nations. It is the challenge of ethno-nationalism to the world order of states that has brought nationalism, and nations, into such disrepute in so many quarters. To assess the validity of this judgement, we need to look more closely at the impact of ethnic nationalism today and in the recent past.

We need first to recall our distinction between the two models of the nation, the civic-territorial and the ethnic-genealogical, and the two routes of the formation of nations, that of bureaucratic incorporation and that of vernacular mobilization. Those nations created by aristocratic élites from a lateral community by using a strong state to incorporate lower strata and outlying areas have predictably manifested a fervent territorial nationalism, both towards minorities within the politically demarcated territory and to enemies outside its boundaries. In contrast, those nations created 'from below' by excluded intelligentsias and some middle strata from a vertical community, using cultural resources (ethno-history, language, ethnic religion, customs, etc.) to mobilize other strata into an active, politicized 'nation', have equally predictably evinced a powerful ethnic nationalism directed both inwards to galvanize and purify the 'true' nation and its members, and outwards against alien oppressors and competitors for political power. It is this latter kind of nation and nationalism that accounts for the vast majority of active nationalisms today.

RECURRENCE OF DEMOTIC ETHNO-NATIONALISM

We can, in fact, distinguish several waves of ethnic nationalisms since the late eighteenth century. The first is the classic period of ethnic self-determination in the early to late nineteenth century,

with its main centres in Eastern Europe and a little later the Middle East. Generally speaking, movements of ethnic self-determination mobilized some of the middle and lower strata into a vernacular politicized culture and then attempted to secure the secession of that community and its 'historic' territory from large, unwieldy empires. Essentially such movements were directed against regimes that were both modernizing and autocratic. The regimes generally ruled over a medley of ethnic communities and categories whom the rulers sought to integrate and, usually fitfully, homogenize. Hence, classic ethnic nationalism can be seen as both provoker of, and response to, an 'official' imperial nationalism of the dominant *ethnie's* ruling élites, as in the case of the Habsburg, Romanov and Ottoman empires.¹

A second group or wave of ethnic nationalisms emerged in the overseas territories of European colonial empires in the early to mid-twentieth century. Such movements continue to challenge the peace and stability of post-colonial states in Africa and Asia today. We find early intimations of such demotic ethno-nationalisms in Bengal at the turn of the century, and among Kurds, Karen, Ewe, Somali and BaKongo before and after the Second World War. Such movements, like their European predecessors, aim at outright secession from the (colonial and) post-colonial state that is seen, in a manner analogous to the earlier European empires, as an alien intrusion or imposition, despite the fact of its claim to be autochthonous. Demotic ethno-nationalisms bring the contrasts between state and nation into sharp focus; all across Africa and Asia they mobilize distinct ethnic communities in the name of submerged and neglected, but irreplaceable, culture-values, threatened with extinction by the forces of modernization and the bureaucratic state that in turn is often at the service of a dominant *ethnie* and its élites. For Tamils, Sikhs, Moros, Baluchis, Pathans, Uzbeks, Kazhaks, Armenians, Azeris, Kurds, Georgians, Palestinians, South Sudanese, Eritreans, Tigre, Oromo, Luo, Ganda, Ndebele, Ovimbundu, BaKongo, Lunda, Ewe, Ibo and many others, the new states into which colonialism incorporated them are viewed with sentiments that range from reserve to outright hostility, which may spill over into protracted wars of ethnic liberation threatening the stability of whole regions.²

Even in the West and the 'old, continuous nations' of Europe, ethno-nationalism has renewed itself. Since the 1960s a third wave of ethnic movements for autonomy or separation has swept through much of Western Europe, reaching Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland and the Soviet Union. Perhaps the earliest manifestations of this particular wave could be found in Canada, among the Quebecois, and in the United States, among the Southern Blacks and later the Indians and Hispanics. On the other hand a good many of the European ethno-nationalisms (for example, the Catalan, Basque, Breton, Scots, Welsh and Flemish movements) were pre-war in origin, with cultural antecedents reaching back in some cases to the 1880s.³

It is this third wave of ethno-nationalisms that has prompted a critical reassessment of theories of the national identity. For the earlier diffusionist models of historians and socio-demographers like Deutsch and Lerner failed to explain why members of particular ethnic communities are available for vernacular mobilization and political activism. Besides, they too readily assumed a secular tendency for smaller communities with 'low' cultures to be assimilated by their dominant ethnic neighbours, a prediction that events in the 1960s and 1970s clearly disproved.⁴

The place of diffusionist models has been largely taken by dependency models, which stress the processes of 'internal colonialism' by which peripheral communities are economically and politically subordinated to core *ethnies*, especially during and after industrialization. But here too there have been problems. Approaches that emphasize the dependence of the 'periphery' on the 'core' fail to explain the incidence and timing of recent ethno-nationalisms. Industrialization often long antedated the rise of such movements, and ethno-nationalism appears to correlate with no specific type of socio-economic background. We find vigorous ethno-nationalisms in economic settings as diverse as Slovenia and Catalonia on the one hand and Corsica and Brittany on the other, with Wales and Flanders occupying an economic middle ground. As Walker Connor has demonstrated, there appears to be no correlation between degrees of ethno-nationalism and economic factors of any kind.⁵

For these reasons we need to look more closely at the significance of Western 'neo-nationalism' against the background of the wider

global movement of ethnic mobilization. For on the success or failure of such movements hangs much of the shape and meaning of national identity in the future, as well as the stability of the various regional systems of states in the world.

In fact all these demotic ethno-nationalisms exhibit remarkable similarities in their goals and meanings for the participants, despite changes in the social composition and consumption of these nationalisms. These similarities stem from the basic processes of vernacular mobilization and cultural politicization that are the hallmarks of the route by which demotic vertical *ethnies* are transformed into ethnic nations. As a result, the type of national identity that they generate is quite different from the territorial civic identities examined in the last chapter, and it poses a radical challenge to the plural nature of most contemporary states.

ETHNIC SEPARATISM FROM OLD EMPIRES

The classic cases of ethnic self-determination in the last century were those of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. But, even then, there were instances of ethnic separatism on the western, northern and southern fringes of Europe: in Ireland, Norway, Finland, Brittany, Catalonia and the Basque country. The links and overlappings of classic and later ethnic 'neo-nationalisms' are typical – they reveal the kinship of the various 'waves' of separatist ethnic nationalisms and their common cultural groundwork.⁶

What was this common cultural basis? The goals of all these movements were remarkably similar. They included:

1. the creation of a literary 'high' culture for the community where it was lacking
2. the formation of a culturally homogeneous 'organic' nation
3. securing a recognized 'homeland', and preferably an independent state for the community
4. turning a hitherto passive *ethnie* into an active ethno-political community, a 'subject of history'.

The cultural basis for the pursuit of these aims was the presence and/or rediscovery of a distinctive 'ethno-history'. Where that history was deficient it would have to be reconstructed and even 'invented' in places. In either case the uses of ethno-history were always selec-

tive: it was as important to forget certain things as to remember others.

The uses of ethno-history were essentially social and political. Nationalists were interested not in inquiring into 'their' past for its own sake, but in the reappropriation of a mythology of the territorialized past of 'their people'. Throughout, the basic process was one of vernacular mobilization of a passive *ethnie*, and the politicization of its cultural heritage through the cultivation of its poetic spaces and the commemoration of its golden ages.

Cultivating poetic spaces meant, first of all, identifying a sacred territory that belonged historically to a particular community, and that was thereby sanctified by the association. Such a sacred homeland held within its domains places of pilgrimage and reverence – Mount Zion, Mount Ararat, Mount Meru, Croag Patrick, Qom, Yasna Gora – places of historical collective salvation and redemption, where saints and sages had inspired their followers or the deity had appeared to the community or its representatives. From these sacred historic centres the light of ethnic election shone forth to consecrate the whole land.⁷

Cultivating poetic spaces also signified a process of turning natural features of the homeland into historical ones, and naturalizing historical monuments. Rivers like the Danube and Rhine, mountains like Zion and Olympus, lakes like the Vierwaldstättersee and Lake Peipus, have become humanized and historicized by their associations with communal myth and endeavour. Conversely, historical monuments like Stonehenge, the Breton dolmens, megaliths, tells and ruined temples, have all become part of a particular ethnic or regional landscape, an inseparable component and memorial of older civilizations absorbed by the flow of time into their natural habitats. It was just these natural and monumental features that struck so rich a chord in the ethnic nationalism of the returning intelligentsia when they sought to rediscover their ethno-history and mobilize their peoples through vernacular culture. For composers, artists and writers, the nationalist myth of poetic landscapes evoked powerful sentiments of nostalgia and identification, which they amplified and diffused through their art. For Smetana and Dvořák in Bohemia, Sibelius in Finland, Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, and Borodin and Moussorgsky in Russia, their country's landscapes and changing

themselves and the majority of 'their' ethnic populations generated by the rationalist 'culture of critical discourse' that they have imbibed through their increasingly secular education.¹¹

But, equally important, the beneficiaries of this return to a reconstructed ethno-history are the members of the mobilized *ethnie* at large. For their status is reversed through the process of vernacular mobilization: not simply in the sense of being activated, and no longer passive objects of external domination, but more particularly because it is a form of *their* folk culture that is appropriated by the historicist intellectuals and elevated into a literary 'high' culture. For the first time the masses become the subject of history, under the slogan of popular sovereignty. At the same time in *their* culture is sought the individuality, the uniqueness, and hence the *raison d'être*, of the community-turned-nation.¹²

In the process of vernacular mobilization quite new 'relations of communication' are forged. Where familial and ethnic modes of communicating values, symbols, myths and memories, and of socializing new generations in these traditions, had prevailed in many areas, the effect of vernacular mobilization by a returning intelligentsia was to create a new mode of 'national' communication and socialization, in which ethnic values, myths and memories became the basis of a political nation and a politically mobilized community. Under the aegis of different kinds of intelligentsia in conjunction with certain classes (usually bourgeoisie, but sometimes lower aristocracy or even workers) a new and distinctly national identity is created, which diffuses a reconstructed ethnic folk culture to all classes of the community. That identity has its civic elements, too; members are now legal citizens of the political ethno-nation, and they begin to define themselves in territorial terms as well. But the basis of their kind of national identity remains true to its demotic roots; the national identity created by intellectuals and intelligentsia among formerly vertical *ethnies* strives to stay close to its putative ethnic culture and boundaries. Mass mobilizing ethnic nationalism creates a political nation in the image of its presumed ethnic roots.

Hence the very different form that national identities take among communities created by the mobilization and transformation of formerly demotic *ethnies*, at once more intense and often more inward-looking than territorially-based national identities. The deep

seasons, legends and monuments, stirred strong nationalist passions that through their music they were able to communicate to large and receptive publics.⁸

Equally important was the celebration and commemoration of the heroic past. Max Weber remarked on this aspect of demotic ethnic nationalism, apropos of the Alsations whom the German Reich had annexed, when he wrote of their sense of community with the French (despite the fact that many Alsations were German-speakers): 'This can be understood by any visitor who walks through the museum in Colmar, which is rich in relics such as tricolors, *pompier* and military helmets, edicts by Louis Philippe and especially memorabilia from the French Revolution; these may appear trivial to the outsider, but they have sentimental value for the Alsations. This sense of community came into being by virtue of common political and, indirectly, social experiences which are highly valued by the masses as symbols of the destruction of feudalism, and the story of these events takes the place of the heroic legends of primitive peoples.'⁹

These historical memories and heroic legends are not, in fact, confined to 'primitive peoples'. We find them throughout the first great wave of classic Eastern European and Middle Eastern nationalisms – among Poles and Czechs, Finns and Armenians, Germans, Turks and Arabs. In each case nationalists rediscovered and often exaggerated the heroism of past ages, the glories of ancestral civilizations (often not 'their own') and the exploits of their great national heroes, even when those heroes belonged more to the realm of legend than history and, if they lived, knew nothing of the nation which was so busy reclaiming them from obscurity. Siegfried, Cuchulain, Arthur, Lemminkainen, Nevsky, Agamemnon, formerly heroes of ancient sagas, were now elevated into exemplars of national virtue and prototypes of the regenerated 'new man' extolled by ethnic nationalists everywhere.¹⁰

Whom did these rediscoveries and reconstructions serve? In the first place a deracinated intelligentsia, seeking entry into the 'living past' of their resurrected *ethnie* in order to mobilize its members in the quest for social status and political power. By placing their professional skills at the service of their newly-found community, the returning intelligentsia attempts to bridge the gulf between

preoccupation of many Irish nationalists with the revival of a Gaelic culture, or the powerful sentiments evoked among Finns by the rediscovery of Karelia, its landscape, history and poetry, are typical of this intense rediscovery and spiritual mobilization of a lost ethnic past in the service of a newly politicized community, where every member must be re-educated into the new vernacular culture that claims to be the only authentic voice of the people.¹³

The consequences of this intense preoccupation with an 'authentic' vernacular culture and history are well known. In Eastern Europe and parts of the Middle East it inevitably brought populations that had long lived side by side in stable, if sometimes uneasy, relations into competition and even conflict. In ethnically mixed areas the quest for a homeland in which the authentic culture could be explored and realized helped to create antagonisms or exacerbate pre-existing rivalries. By the late nineteenth century these areas in particular became the scene of the most intense conflicts and terror.¹⁴

Terror and instability were aggravated, not only by the passions aroused by the process of vernacular mobilization, but also by the slow but visible decline of the old empires in which most demotic *ethnies* had been incorporated. For centuries the only source of political legitimacy in these areas had been the imperial state and its monarchs. There was no obvious and accepted alternative. To locate an alternative source in the historic culture-community was not only to create a new type of political identity, but also to elevate that identity into the underlying principle of a new political order, one that derived political authority from the doctrine of a sovereign people. Hence the importance of repeated 'French revolutions' in lending credence to the idea of a sovereign culture-community as the sole legitimate source of political authority, within that exemplar of a compact nation in the very heart of the prestigious West. Only that example and that prestige could have given political legitimacy to the intelligentsia's programme of vernacular mobilization, and turned a moral and cultural transformation into a political and social revolution. The reverberations of the French Revolution in the hinterlands of the Habsburg, Ottoman and even Romanov empires, were felt well into the twentieth century.¹⁵

But the fusion of French ideals of the sovereign people and

vernacular mobilization of pre-modern demotic *ethnies* by the intelligentsia produced a rather different model of 'national identity' among these folk communities. Popular participation, rather than civil and political rights; populist organization, more than democratic parties; intervention by the people's nation-state, rather than protection of minorities and individuals from state interference; these became for many decades the hallmarks of the newly formed ethno-political nations erected on the basis of pre-modern demotic *ethnies*. This attempt to fuse the civic ideals of the territorial nation with the genealogical attachments of the ethno-political nation, usually in the wake of a secessionist struggle from large empires, has provided the model for subsequent waves of vernacular mobilization and the creation of separatist ethno-political communities in the new states of Africa and Asia, as well as the old states of the West.

ETHNIC SEPARATISM IN POST-COLONIAL STATES

The vast majority of ethnic separatist movements after the Second World War have occurred in the newly formed states of Africa and Asia. In other words, they have sprung in a double sense from colonialism: first, because it was the colonial state that brought many quite separate and distant ethnic communities and categories under a single political jurisdiction, increasing both the scale of politics and the chances of conflict over centrally distributed resources; second, because it was during the process of decolonization, during the years of decline and handover, that ethnic separatisms emerged to challenge the civic order of the future post-colonial state and its territorial national identity.

The basic processes at work in these post-war ethnic separatisms are similar to those of classic ethnic nationalism. But their order is often telescoped or even reversed. Instead of the politicization of the *ethnie* and its heritage succeeding the process of vernacular mobilization by an intelligentsia, as in Eastern Europe and the fringes of that continent, we often find the two processes occurring together or even changing their usual sequence. Whereas in Europe the nationalist movement emerged from a preceding cultural 'reawakening' over some decades, in Asia and Africa the two kinds of nationalism were often conjoined or simultaneous. Among the

Kurds, for example, the first cultural and literary organizations sprang up in the wake of the Young Turk coup in 1908. Apart from a short-lived Kurdish journal founded in 1898, the first Kurdish cultural organization (*Taali we Terakii Kurdistan*, Recovery and Progress of Kurdistan) was formed in the autumn of 1908, publishing a lively cultural gazette in Istanbul, and young intellectuals set up Kurdish clubs in the main Kurdish cities. By 1912 the first Kurdish political association, *Kivîya Kurd* (Kurdish Hope), created in 1910, was legalized. The First World War interrupted Kurdish political activity, as did the ensuing deportations and massacre of Kurds; but new political organizations, notably *Kurdistan Taali Djemiyeti* (the Society for the Recovery of Kurdistan), took up the struggle. The campaign to standardize the script and modernize the Kurdish language is an offshoot of the wider nationalist political struggle and proceeds *pari passu* with politicization of a tribally divided ethnic community in the various guerrilla campaigns against the Turks, Iraqis and Iranians, notably in the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶

In the case of the Baluchi in Pakistan, though their intellectuals can look back to a long history and a rich and ancient folklore, it is clear that the process of vernacular mobilization developed as an outgrowth of a Baluchi political nationalism from 1947 onwards. It is only recently, for example, that a distinctive Baluchi alphabet, based on a modified form of the Persianized Nastaliq style of the Arabic alphabet, was used in a Baluchi textbook produced in Canada in 1969, but many Baluch nationalist works are written in Urdu and English. In this case recurrent wars with the central authorities in Pakistan have engendered widespread Baluch national consciousness, cutting across tribal divisions, while gradual urbanization and education has produced a literate class that is providing a new nationalist leadership.¹⁷

In still other cases, such as those of the Palestinians and Eritreans, the process of vernacular mobilization must first discover an ethnic past that is serviceable for present needs and then create a unified and distinctive consciousness and sense of ethnic community out of a politicized common culture. In the Palestinian case this means accentuating a separate Palestinian cultural personality and distinguishing it from the wider Arab identity. In the case of Eritrea cultural unity must be created out of the common fate of regional

unity and political struggle. In both cases it is the military and political struggle itself that will provide the crucible of vernacular mobilization, though here too it presupposes some measure of cultural symbolism held in common.¹⁸

Current cases of separatist ethno-nationalisms, whatever their origins, seek autonomy or secession from relatively new states whose boundaries and *raison d'être* are part of the colonial legacy. The primary source of their disaffection lies in the plural nature and fragile legitimacy of the post-colonial state itself. While economic grievances provide the catalysts of rebellion in most cases, as the new state fails to deliver its promises or favours certain ethnic communities and categories at the expense of others, it is the very nature of the post-colonial state that creates the underlying conditions for the possibility of a resort to secession. Given the considerable power of the state and its offices, not only is ethnic competition for political power in the new states sharpened but victory and defeat carry with them far higher rewards and penalties than in the developed and more unified states of the West. Because social classes are less developed and ethnic ties more pronounced, especially in conditions of urban competition, the political constituencies of leaders and parties are much more likely to be composed of one or more ethnic community or category, distinguished as such in the party's slogans and programmes. Fierce political competition between ethnically defined constituencies tends to harden the boundaries and promote the self-awareness of *ethnies* and ethnic categories; moreover, failure in that competition, particularly if repeated, may drive the defeated community to contemplate secession, especially where its leaders have internalized negative stereotypes or where, as in the Biafran case, such stereotypes helped to create conditions of terror and massacre. Unless, therefore, the leaders of new states take active measures to defuse ethnic cleavages through economic and administrative measures, as the Nigerian leadership since 1975 has attempted to do, or is prepared to use the dominant *ethnie* to repress ethnic opposition by force, the latent tendencies of the new polychronic states to generate ethnic instability must always be reckoned with.¹⁹

There is, of course, a close relationship, perhaps a dialectical one, between attempts to create a civic and territorial national identity

and movements aiming to separate from that 'territorial nation' one or other ethnic community or category and fashion it into an 'ethnic nation'. The more the leaderships of the new states strive to create integrated territorial nations out of a polyethnic mosaic, the greater the chances of ethnic dissent and even attempted secession wherever colonialism and nationalism have roused a returning intelligentsia to rediscover their ethnic past and its cultural heritage.

Where such pasts can no longer be recovered, or where an intelligentsia that could recover them is absent, neither colonialism nor an integrative territorial nationalism will be able to ignite ethnic dissent, let alone a separatist movement. This is true of many small ethnic categories in sub-Saharan Africa, where it is possible to speak of 'failed nationalisms' in the sense that movements of ethnic nationalism never got off the ground, despite the colonial presence, the beginnings of Western capitalist penetration and the example of other nationalisms near by. In these cases the necessary 'internal' conditions – a stratum of secular intellectuals, a wider intelligentsia and a recoverable ethnic past – were lacking.²⁰

This is not to deny the importance, in many cases, of the degree of relative economic and cultural development of different ethnic communities and categories or of the regions in which they are located. The burden of Horowitz's argument turns on just these developmental relationships. Movements of ethnic separatism, he contends, emerge most quickly and frequently among backward ethnic groups in backward regions, like the southern Sudan, Kurdistan, the Karen and Shan of Burma and the Bengalis of Pakistan. They have too little to gain from inclusion in the new states with their project of creating integrated territorial nations. On the other hand, advanced ethnic groups in backward regions are reluctant to secede. They do so only when, as population exporters to other regions of the new states, their position becomes untenable and the costs of remaining become too high. For advanced groups in advanced regions, like the Yoruba, Baganda and Sikhs, secession is likely only if its economic costs are low, and usually it is more profitable for the community to remain within the undivided state. Backward ethnic groups in advanced regions may contemplate secession more easily, but they are rarely preponderant within the region; the anticipated economic benefits of secession are not matched by

sufficient political control, with the exception of southern Katanga. In general, economic interest combines with group anxiety to explain the paths to ethnic separatism, but in the greater number of cases group anxiety outweighs perceived economic gains.²¹

Horowitz's matrix of secession is intended to be only a guide. There are too many intervening variables – the severity of ethnic discrimination, civil-service representation, the extent of migration into regions and so on – to be able to deduce the incidence and timing of secession from the relative development of groups and regions. Nevertheless, the fact that it highlights the numerical preponderance of secession movements among backward ethnic groups in backward regions suggests the utility of relating secession to the relative position of groups and regions within the new states.

The problems of this kind of matrix are twofold. First, there is the difficulty of pinning down terms like 'advanced' and 'backward', given the possible combinations of indicators and the fluctuating evaluations and conflicting stereotypes in each case. The Eritrean and Biafran cases illustrate the difficulty of applying such terms to whole groups or deducing outcomes from hypotheses based on these terms. Recent events in the Baltic states also cast doubt on predictions about the reluctance of 'advanced' groups in 'advanced' regions to secede. Second, as these cases suggest, entirely different factors need to be fed into any such matrix, making it far more complex and difficult to use. I am thinking of factors like the degree of political repression (as Horowitz concedes in the Basque case) and democratic freedom, the opportunities for cultural and political mobilization and the presence or absence of an intelligentsia, as well as a usable ethnic past, however recent. The existence of ethnic antagonisms in the past is also a relevant factor in the aftermath of colonialism and in the context of a fragile new state.²²

But perhaps the most potent factor, and the one that most influences the chances of creating new ethnic nations, is the determination and power of the élites who control the apparatus of the new states to resist movements of ethnic secession, often with considerable force. In fact, very few ethnic separatisms have achieved their goals since the Second World War. Most new states were created through the process of decolonization, not secession. The exceptions – Bangladesh and Singapore – were the products of exceptional

circumstances; the separation of Singapore, with its overwhelmingly Chinese population, was an agreed process, whereas that of Bangladesh was the result of an unusual geopolitical constellation of regional power. In every other case, notably Biafra, Eritrea, Kurdistan, Kalistan and Tamilnad, neither agreement nor an unusual regional geopolitical constellation exists. While each of these (and other) ethnic separatisms has had its external backers, at least temporarily, none has been able to count on a degree of external support that would force significant concessions from a state whose ruling classes are drawn from the dominant *ethnie* and have set their faces against even a measure of ethnic autonomy. The ensuing political instability has taken many forms, ranging from simmering ethnic discontent to open protracted wars of secession, as in Ethiopia, Angola and Sri Lanka, with little prospect of an early peaceful resolution.²¹

What does this instability bode for the creation of ethno-national identities within the context of post-colonial states? Do the integrative and sometimes discriminatory pressures of these states erode or reinforce the processes of vernacular mobilization and cultural politicization that are the hallmarks of the transformation of demotic *ethnies* into ethno-political nations? It is difficult to be categorical here. It is clear that the pressures of integration have undermined the structures and eroded the cultures of many smaller ethnic categories that lacked literary traditions, as in Siberia and Africa, or had partially lost them, as in parts of Latin America. In these cases the failure to develop or maintain literary 'high' cultures and specialist communications groups has lowered the resistance of these ethnic categories to cultural integration in the post-colonial states. Such categories, perhaps for these reasons, also lacked the political will and military resources to counter acculturation and integration.²⁴

On the other hand, where there existed a living cultural and literary tradition that could be adapted to modern conditions, the integrative pressures of the post-colonial state, following on as they often did the divisive policies of colonialism, frequently reinforced the processes of ethnic mobilization and politicization. Growing conflict has itself crystallized a sense of ethnic identity in what was before often only a linguistic or ethno-regional category and may still be divided by religion and ethnic origin, as is the case with

Eritreans and southern Sudanese. Even such well-known ethnic groups as the Kurds and Ibo knew little unity and cohesion until after the Second World War, the former being divided to this day into mountain tribes that were often in dispute, the latter into villages and districts that were drawn together, in competition with non-Ibo and non-Christians, only by the changes wrought by British colonialism and the fierce ethnic competition after 1960. It is the conflicts with states and other communities in which Kurds and Ibo were involved that have given the members of both groups a wider self-awareness and a sense of their common history and destiny. In this respect the endemic instability of the post-colonial state has fuelled the regional and ethnic conflicts that over the years tend to promote a heightened sense of ethnic identity and strengthen the aspirations for separate ethno-national identity.²⁵

Ethnocide and ethnic mobilization, then, are equally possible outcomes of the often fragile but coercive nature of the post-colonial state and its attempts to integrate into a 'territorial nation' a poly-ethnic society. This is true in many cases, despite the efforts of regimes in several states to accommodate, and even satisfy, the economic and political demands of minority *ethnies* and regional ethnic categories. Where this balance no longer holds, where disaffected *ethnies* become alienated enough to resort to terror and revolt, their ethnic nationalism may become the vehicle for a new national identity that draws many members of the community involved in the conflict into a new type of politicized vernacular culture and creates a different kind of participant society. In these cases the movement itself is the prototype and harbinger of a new society and culture. Its cells, schools, guerrilla units, welfare associations, self-help groups, women's societies and labour unions, as well as its songs, flags, dress, poetry, sports, arts and crafts, all presage and create the nucleus of the future ethnic nation and its political identity, even where secession is prevented and the community fails to obtain its own state. In these cases the movement has helped to create a proto-nation out of a demotic *ethnie*, for the nation is not to be equated with the state, even when it aspires to have a state of its own.²⁶

SEPARATISM AND AUTONOMISM IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

A third wave of demotic ethnic nationalisms has been sweeping industrial societies since the late 1950s. This is a new phenomenon; the renewal of nationalism in states that had experienced nationalism before the Second World War and were thought to be immune from its influence. The difference between the ethnic nationalisms of developing societies and those of the developed states is apparent: in the former we are witnessing a straightforward trajectory in which the drive to create territorial nations in the new states evokes a reactive ethnic separatism, whereas in industrial societies we have entered a second cycle in the drama of nationalism, re-enacted on the ashes of former national hatreds. In North America, Europe and the Soviet Union undergoing *perestroika* the interventionist state has rekindled among its ethnic minorities those aspirations for autonomy and even separation that had previously been muted or repressed. No wonder many observers were surprised by the vigour of this nationalist renewal.²⁷

What are the new features of this renewal? First, they are, for the most part, autonomist rather than separatist: the majority of followers of the ethnic movement prefer to have cultural, social and economic autonomy while remaining part of the political and military framework of the state into which they were incorporated, often centuries ago. There are exceptions to this generalization. More radical wings of the movement, such as ETA among the Basques and the SNP in Scotland, have opted for outright independence from Spain and Britain; a few movements, as a whole, have expressed separatist aspirations, as with Sajudis in Lithuania. But, on the whole, most ethnic movements in industrial societies have preferred autonomy to separation.²⁸

Second, movements of ethnic autonomy recognize the possibility, perhaps desirability, of dual identities, a cultural-national and a political-national identity or, as they would see it, a national identity within a territorial state identity, a Breton nation within France, a Catalan nation within Spain and so on. In other words they recognize the duality of historical memories and political sentiments that cannot easily be severed, not to mention the economic benefits

to be gained by remaining within an existing state framework, as for example, the Scots realized during the devolution debate in the 1970s.²⁹

Third, movements of ethnic autonomy in industrial societies take place in well-established states enjoying a generally higher standard of living than that of most developing states. They may occur among relatively less advanced groups in less advanced regions, but few of these groups, or their regions, are poor in the manner we encounter in developing societies; Bretons and Brittany cannot be compared with the southern Sudan. In some cases, indeed, both *ethnies* and the regions they occupy are more advanced than the dominant group and the centre; Basques and Catalans, and Slovenes and Croats, enjoy higher levels of economic development than Castile or Serbia. But in all these cases the states of the developed world are less precarious and novel, and their economic base is more advanced, than those of the developing world.³⁰

Fourth, with one significant but partial exception, movements for ethnic autonomy in industrial societies are directed against modern 'nation-states', that is to say, states that had for some time been regarded and regarded themselves as 'nations', even though from the standpoint of a strict interpretation of nationalism, they were national hybrids, a mixture of *étatiste* and nationalist principles. The partial exception, of course, is the Soviet Union, which represents a federation of nations preserving borders roughly similar to those of a former empire and held together by a command structure based on Russian national preponderance. So ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union today wears a double aspect: a movement of ethnic autonomy from the Soviet state, as in the West, and a more separatist rejection of Russian imperial preponderance, a reaction to an older imperial tradition of incorporation. In this sense ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union is closer to the classic nationalism of the nineteenth century than Western 'neo-nationalisms', which are directed as much against neglect by the 'nation-state' as against its bureaucratic interference.³¹

But there are also more fundamental similarities between the renewal of ethnic nationalism in industrial societies and the earlier waves of ethnic nationalism in nineteenth-century Europe and twentieth-century separatisms in Africa and Asia. For one thing,

they are all movements of 'subject peoples' against dominant *ethnies* and 'alien' states and their ruling élites. Theirs are movements of popular mobilization, at least in their rhetoric and slogans, if not always in deed. They are directed against the *status quo*, the existing distribution of power within the polyethnic state, its systematic exclusion or relegation of certain ethnic categories and its denial of their collective culture and rights. In this they contrast sharply with the territorial nationalisms of dominant *ethnies* and their bureaucratic states.³²

Second, all these demotic movements involve processes of vernacular mobilization and cultural politicization. They are bent on creating a new kind of individual in a new kind of society, the culturally distinct ethnic nation. This means returning to an idealized image of 'what we were', which will serve as an exemplar and guide for the nation-to-be. By returning to an ethnic past the community will discover a cognitive framework, a map and location for its unfocused aspirations. Similarly, 'our past' will teach the present generation not only the virtues of their ancestors but also their immediate duties. It will disclose to the community its true nature, its authentic experience and hidden destiny. From its past the community will discover the inner morality that defines its unique character. Hence the underlying impetus of all these demotic ethnic nationalisms is to rediscover their communities (even where that means 'inventing' large parts of the 'self') through the uses of landscape and history and the resuscitation of dying customs, rituals and languages. It is not enough simply to mobilize the masses; to sustain that mobilization, to turn 'masses' into 'nations', it is first necessary to 'vernacularize' them and thereby bestow a unique identity and destiny upon them.³³

Third, in all these movements intellectuals and intelligentsias play an important role. The extent, and exact nature, of that role, as we saw, varies according to context; in different societies and periods the meaning of the term 'intelligentsia' may vary, but it varies within definite limits. For it is nevertheless possible to discern the strong influence, and often leadership, of intellectual and professional groups both in the process of vernacular mobilization and in the cultural politicization of wider strata of the community or category. The intellectuals and professionals not only revive customs and

languages, rediscover history and (re-)establish ceremonies and traditions; they also give these activities and rediscoveries a national political meaning they never previously possessed. From the re-discovery of epics like the *Edda* and *Kalevala* to the revival of hurling in Ireland and folk singing in Brittany, the leading role of educators, artists and journalists is evident; and this remains true of the latest surge of demotic ethnic nationalisms in industrial societies.³⁴

The renewal of nationalism in industrial societies must, therefore, be understood not as something new and *sui generis* but as a new phase of the whole process of demotic vernacular mobilization that has been sweeping various parts of the world since the eighteenth century and possibly earlier, if we include the Puritan Dutch and English movements in the early and mid-seventeenth century.³⁵

The kinship between all these movements is also historical. In fact, several of the 'recent' movements for ethnic autonomy in the West are really not at all recent; they merely experienced an upsurge of support in the 1960s. But that upsurge built on pre-existing vehicles and ideals formed before 1939 and in some cases – Wales, Scotland, Catalonia, Euzkadi, Brittany – before 1914. In all these cases a cultural renaissance, literary, linguistic and historical, preceded the formation of political movements demanding ethnic autonomy.³⁶

There is really nothing surprising about this upsurge of ethnic nationalism among minorities within old-established, industrial states, just as there is no cause for wonder at the subsequent revival of nationalism in the communist states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In each case we are dealing with perceptions of neglected or suppressed identity, and in each case it is the centralized state itself that is held to blame. One has to admit that in this matter the state can do no right; benign neglect is as much cause for grievance as crass intervention.³⁷ That is why it is perhaps wiser to treat the state's role as that of powerful catalyst of underlying conditions and sentiments that must be sought elsewhere. This is not to absolve it of all responsibility for ethnic unrest. Clearly, state policies can greatly exacerbate (as well as determine the timing and intensity of) underlying sentiments and conditions, particularly when the state acts in an ethnically partisan manner, as not infrequently happens and not only in the developing states.³⁸

Where then should we look for the causes of those conditions and sentiments that so often fuel movements of ethnic autonomy and separation? Obviously the answer to such a broadly framed question will vary with the period and area under consideration. But we can, I think, usefully single out certain recurrent factors that together create the conditions and promote the sentiments that underlie the proliferation and renewal of ethnic nationalisms all over the world. It is these factors, and the prospects for 'national identity' in the next century, that we need finally to address.

CHAPTER 7

Beyond National Identity?

Of all the collective identities in which human beings share today, national identity is perhaps the most fundamental and inclusive. Not only has nationalism, the ideological movement, penetrated every corner of the globe; the world is divided, first and foremost, into 'nation-states' – states claiming to be nations – and national identity everywhere underpins the recurrent drive for popular sovereignty and democracy, as well as the exclusive tyranny that it sometimes breeds. Other types of collective identity – class, gender, race, religion – may overlap or combine with national identity but they rarely succeed in undermining its hold, though they may influence its direction. Governments and states may muzzle the expression of national aspirations for a time, but it is likely to be a costly and ultimately fruitless expedient. For the forces that sustain national allegiances have proved, and are likely to prove, stronger than any countervailing trends.

Why have national identity and nationalism become so fundamental in the modern world? First, because of their ubiquity. If any phenomena are truly global, then it must be the nation and nationalism. There is scarcely an area of the world that has not been marked by ethnic and national conflicts or witnessed the rise of movements claiming national independence for their chosen populations. The nationalist dream of a world of nations, each homogeneous, united and free, even if far from realization, has been taken up by peoples across the globe, and has inspired popular resistance, effort and conflict. The globalization of nationalism, if not yet of the homogeneous nation, is a powerful reality, one that conditions our cultural outlook and political endeavours.¹

But national identity today is not only global, it is also pervasive. Though there are some situations in which it is felt to be more important than in others, it may also be said to pervade the life of individuals and communities in most spheres of activity. In the cultural sphere national identity is revealed in a whole range of