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The failure of third world nationalism

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Texte intégral

Many books and essays on nations and nationalism underscore the importance of ethnic and cultural factors, but typically play down the political factor. In my view, however, a nation is first of all the *political* arrangement of a human collectivity, and this feature has not been emphasized as much as it deserves to be. The failure of postcolonial countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East underlines that the making of a nation rests not only on ethnic, linguistic, and religious self-identity, but also on the formation and consolidation of a public sphere in which citizens have the feeling of participating in the polity and of being integrated into the sphere of the state. Nationalist ideology gives birth to a nation only if that ideology allows the shaping of a public sphere in which the citizen is perceived under the aspect of his universality and not solely under that of his specific cultural identity.

The inability of many Third World nationalisms to ensure political participation satisfactory to the broad majority calls into question the relationship between nationalism and the nation. Social scientists have been too quick to embrace the notion that as soon as a country becomes independent, it constitutes a nation. It may, of course, but most often a nation is the result of a long historical process during which consensual values emerge to furnish grounds for national concord and civil peace. This is not the picture presented today by most Third World countries, where obedience to the central power is secured by force or the threat of force.

We face then a problem of definition. Either all political collectivities are nations insofar as they endow themselves with a central power, or only those that grant their citizens effective participation in the polity truly deserve to be called nations. Properly understood, the idea of the nation is strongly connected to the idea of civil peace, which presupposes that a broad majority freely give their allegiance to the central power and feel that they participate in the polity. If this feeling is not broadly shared, if allegiance flows mainly from fear, it makes little sense to speak of a nation. In this light, most political collectivities in the Third World are still engaged in nation-building, searching for institutions that will ensure allegiance to the central power without resort to methods such as the arrest and torture of opponents, prohibitions of speech, and the like.

The nation, a historical category that first appeared in the modern West, is a collection of individuals with a form of political organization based on a strong sense of participation in the activities of the state. A nation is integrated through institutions that allow participation in the political realm, notably through elections. It is a human collectivity whose particular historical circumstances have endowed it with geographical frontiers that set it apart from its neighbors. It makes use of a political organization that grounds the legitimacy of power, and it establishes rules for the operation and distribution of this power through an administrative hierarchy that is accepted by the members of the collectivity. A nation is a modern political concept for two reasons: it is a collection of free individuals (free vis-à-vis traditional authorities and lineages), and it is a political system that allows these individuals to participate in the power of the state by swearing exclusive political allegiance solely to that state. This effective participation (betokened by universal suffrage in the choice of local and national representatives) that marks *a* nation is basically different from the fictive participation that obtains in the case of a political community integrated by means of belief in a charismatic leader who claims to "represent" the people.

I start, then, front the premise that a nation is a political community whose political arena has been pacified. The successful pacification of the political arena hinges upon the nature of the competition for power. A political community that changes governments through the shedding of blood is not yet a nation, and neither is one that changes presidents only when one happens to die in office. The use of violence to effect changes of government betrays a lack of consensual values within the community, meaning that there are individuals within it who disagree about the very basis of the social bond, and stand ready to kill one another because of this disagreement.

Thus there are today two kinds of political communities: those that have pacified the realm of the political, thereby creating a public sphere, and those that have not and maintain power solely by force. The former are what I call nations. The latter, assuming that they too wish to pacify the political arena, are no more than nations-in-formation. The existence of a pacified political arena does not mean an end to all conflict; rather, it means only that power is not taken by force. News of a military coup against the German chancellor or the British prime minister would he met with disbelief, because the world takes it for granted that in both Germany and Great Britain (outside Northern Ireland, at any rate), the political sphere is pacified. Yet reports of a putsch in Syria or Algeria would arouse little surprise, for in these countries the only way to change the government is by force. Neither Syria nor Algeria, needless to say, has a pacified political arena.

From this vantage point, we can see the problem of the relationship between the concepts of the nation and nationalism. It has long been thought that a nationalist ideology is enough to "make" a nation. Yet nearly all the authoritarian regimes around the world that are currently resisting democratization_and thus hindering their political communities from becoming nations_are the creations of nationalist movements. This is as true for Algeria as for Burma or Iraq. We must focus carefully on the relations among nationalism, the nation, and the public sphere, for serious misunderstandings persist One of the most common is the confusion of nationalist ideology with the nation itself, or the tendency to look upon the former as the exclusive basis of the latter.

Some scholars consider nationalism to be the basis of the nation.[1] Others, conversely, consider the nation to be the cornerstone of nationalism.[2] Both groups link the idea of the nation to that of nationalism, differing only on the precise character of the relationship and on

the lines of influence within it. Between them there is something like a dialogue of the deaf. Some scholars think that nationalism is as old as the hills, while others conclude that nations are a strictly *modern* phenomenon. All of them are right to some degree; their weakness is their shared failure to see that nationalism in and of itself does not create nations, and that nations do not produce nationalism in order to maintain civil *concord.* On the contrary, nationalism impedes the building of the nation by serving as a constant source of tensions and conflicts.

1. Nationalism as a Source of Division

There is an important literature on the nation and nationalism that, far from recognizing the latter's divisiveness, instead depicts it as the very cement of national cohesion. This depiction cannot withstand scrutiny. As paradoxical as it may seem, nationalist ideologies have virtually. always served to divide rather than unite (wartime is an exception). Their very foundations_whether cultural, religions, or ethnic_conceal intrinsic sources of disunity. History teaches us that a religion, unless its believers feel threatened by the believers of another religion, will tend toward division, since there will always be those among the faithful who regard themselves as closer to God than others are. In nonsecularized societies, this greater proximity to the divine can be converted into an immediate political advantage for use against the less fervent. It is the same for ethnicity, when a powerful group uses the fiction of "pure" origins to establish its supremacy. Ethnic conflicts are as strong within the group as without, given the segmentary logic that leads people to claim a privileged relationship to the origins of the *ethnos.* Nationalist ideologies rank individuals, groups, and even whole regions according to their cultural distance from the imagined national center. The potential for grievance and strife is built into this situation. Politics in such a society must be governed either by force or by belief in some metasocial principle strong enough to legitimize the inherent inequalities.[3]

A political community that is held together solely by nationalist ideology will never enjoy lasting civil peace. There will always be a "nationalist gambit" available, a "purer-than-thou" dynamic that can be used to create a hierarchy of categories and underwrite a chauvinistic ideology that claims a monopoly over "pure" nationalism. The central challenge facing any political community is to integrate all its members into the political system on the basis of a criterion that enjoys majority support. Cultural or ethnic nationalism is inherently incapable of meeting this challenge. In fact, it makes integration even more difficult by playing on distinctions of more and less pure (or true and false), and by classifying members of the community according to how far back they can trace their ancestors or when they joined the party. In doing all this, nationalism conjures up an "ideal national type" who is very hard to find in reality, but who can be used as an imaginary norm to show how various others fail to measure up. This sort of nationalism impedes the integration of people into the political community on an equal footing; it is contrary to the principle of universal citizenship and chauvinistic at heart. Nationalist ideology excludes whatever or whomever does not belong to the local culture or *ethnos,* while sorting those who do belong into a hierarchy based on their supposed degree of belonging. Those whose lack of "pure" or venerable origins places them low on the totem pole may often find themselves suspected of disloyalty, as the very authenticity of their belonging is questioned.

Nationalist ideologies are the contemporary form of that local patriotism which has always existed, and which sustains itself on the feeling of belonging to a group with a distinctive

culture and set of traditions. Nationalist ideologies are grounded in cultural or ethnic identity (or rather, in the awareness of identity that group members possess). At bottom, this identity is formed out of what Clifford Geertz calls "the primordial ties or feelings" of kinship, language, religion, customs, proximity, and the like.[4]

Any community whose members are aware of their cultural or ethnic identity can produce a nationalist ideology by adopting a common enemy. If this self-conscious community is living under the domination of cultural or ethnic outsiders, it will rebel by devising a nationalist ideology based upon some combination of ethnic traditions, language, religion, and the like. These resources can be used to help create a sense of solidarity against those who appear alien to this imagined community in search of a political incarnation. Yet the overthrow of foreign domination and the triumph of nationalist ideology does not spell the birth of a nation, but only of a central power. The creation of a central power usually signals that nation-building has begun, but the process can take generations.

It is natural that nationalist ideologies should live on traditions and primordial ties, and that they should emphasize the community's inherited cultural identity, even to the point of mythologizing the past. The nations of Western Europe were no exceptions; nevertheless, their traditions were refashioned and subjected to rational criticism designed to adapt them to the needs of bourgeois society. The cultural identities of the various European societies were based on traditions handed down from the past within the ambit of the new-model societies that first began to appear in the early seventeenth century.

It is no accident that right-wing parties in Europe today conceive of the nation in terms of cultural identity and tradition. Nationalist ideology_sometimes pushed to the point of chauvinism_has found a home on Europe's extreme right, from Maurice Barrès, the Nazis, and the Italian Fascists all the way down to Jean-Marie Le Pen today. Yet the skill of extreme rightists at expressing nationalist ideology does not mean that they are necessarily more attached to the nation than are those with leftist leanings. On the contrary, by politicizing nationality, the extreme right fosters an atmosphere unfavorable to civil peace. The left in Europe is more likely to conceive of the nation in terms of a public sphere and to regard nationality as a juridical rather than a political question. The right takes its bearings from the soil, from localism, from the peasantry, from ethnicity and the values of the past, while the left uses as its references universality, natural and human rights, "free compacts, freely arrived at," and appeals to a common future.

Nationalism is bellicose without, and a source of conflict within. Nationalism by itself creates neither national concord nor the nation, if by "nation" one means a community of citizens that presupposes public-spiritedness, civic education, solidarity, and equality_in short, the citizenship that grants rights and requires duties. A nation comes into being when the political community that identifies with a given nationalism is able to give itself a public sphere. This is why Third World regimes that use violence to stay in power are preventing their communities from becoming nations. Theirs is a basic political failure, and resides in their incapacity to bring peace to the political arena. In many cases, they spawn opponents who resemble them in this incapacity; if and when such opponents triumph, the political arena will still be ruled by violence. If Algeria's Islamists take office, they will not build the nation, for their ideology is built upon the fiction of religious purity, upon indictment and exclusion. Like the leaders of the regime that they fight, they are nationalists, but they will never bring the community civil peace, which is something quite different from fear. submission, and inequality.

2. The Public Sphere and Nation-Building

This insight allows us to define the nation in relation to the integrative mechanisms that it uses in order to establish a universal citizenship within its boundaries. Ethnic or cultural identity, language religion, and the like are not enough to integrate a nation, still less to ensure civil peace. These elements are constitutive of any political collectivity that seeks to distinguish itself and acquire a unique identity of its own. But a nation, as distinguished from a mere collectivity, has something more: a pacified political arena. A nation in this sense of the word is the product of a dual dynamic. On the one hand, there is traditional society, with its emphasis upon ethnicity, culture, religion_in short, everything that Emile Durkheim summed up under the rubric of "mechanical solidarity."[5] On the other are the requirements of the public sphere, a realm of universal rights and duties, peaceful political contention, and civic education. This point of view suggests that the nation_considered as a pacified political arena_is not at odds with the cultural inheritance of traditional society. On the contrary, the nation will continue to value traditions, culture, and primordial bonds, but will make these compatible with the idea of human sovereignty, which will eventually lead to universal equality in the public sphere and freedom of conscience in the private sphere.

The nation is a political category of modernity, and modernity is synonymous with the creation of a public sphere using traditional society's cultural resources, but reorienting them to take account of the individual's due autonomy. This public sphere has national limits, however, because all societies, no matter how modern they may he, are also national communities affirming distinctive cultural identities. To this end, they make use of cultural foundations that are uniquely their own and that they find in their respective pasts. When a traditional society creates a public sphere, it transforms itself into a modern society, establishes a state, and constitutes itself as a nation.

Sociological and historical scholarship on the nation has not sufficiently emphasized the dual dynamic that underlies nation-building. It is a matter of ethnicity and culture, but also one of universality borne along with the notion of the public sphere. The public sphere is the arena where political freedom is exercised. Because it assumes the formal equality of persons, the public sphere has a universalist and cosmopolitan character. It abstracts from questions of religious or genealogical belonging, and has no room for any codified, formal inequalities. In the public sphere, there are no Jews, Muslims, Christians, or Buddhists, but only subjects of the law and individuals with purchasing power that makes them of interest to merchants. The ideology of the public sphere is in fact the ideology that guides the behavior of disembodied, rational egoistic, and interchangeable individuals, moved solely by self-interest. The public sphere is where one finds what Marx called "the icy waters of cash payment." Virtuous sentiments, human solidarity, family conviviality, religious fervor, moral values, attachment to the soil, the significance of symbols, and the like_all these distinctive currents of the traditional community no longer ran through the "disenchanted" precincts of the public sphere.

The philosopher in whose thought one may find the underpinnings of this notion of the public sphere is undoubtedly Immanuel Kant.[6] For Kant, every man is an end in himself, whatever his origins may be. By making man a subject of rights and laws, and by giving to citizenship a juridical content, Kant reveals himself to be the architect of the nation understood as a collection of citizens.

Ernest Gellner found it surprising that Kant should be considered as the theorist of the nation, since Kant's philosophy opposes nationalism. Gellner's mistake lay in his failure to establish the formal link that joins the nation, citizenship, and the public sphere. Gellner also failed to perceive that Kant, as the philosopher par excellence of the public sphere, is by this same token the theorist of the nation. "A person's identity and dignity," writes Gellner, "is for Kant rooted in his universal humanity, or, more broadly, his rationality, and not in his cultural or ethnic specificity. It is hard to think of a writer whose ideas provide less comfort for the nationalist"[7] True, but there are few authors who so pertinently strengthen the concept of the nation.

There is a crucial distinction here; Kant is the theorist of the nation, *not* of ethnic nationalism. To put it more precisely, he weakens the more bellicose aspects of nationalist ideology. By introducing the universal dimension into nationalist ideology, Kant neutralizes its conflict-breeding structure and lays the groundwork for a pacified political arena. Starting with the "unsociable sociability" of man, he tries to reconcile morality and liberty by making individual wills compatible through the notion of the legal subject. In this conception, the law supposes that the individual is responsible for his actions and free vis-a-vis his community allegiances, and also assumes that an individual has as many rights as duties toward others.

The pacified social space thus created reproduces itself as the arena wherein citizenship is exercised. In this arena, the abstract social bond is sustained by a political identity in which individuals, freed from the old communities that they used to identify with, now recognize themselves. The Enlightenment did not create the political community, yet by pacifying it, it did create the nation, permitting it to demonstrate its viability and impose itself as a universal model thanks to the (Enlightenment-inspired) concept of "national concord" Kant has nothing to do with any nationalist ideology that smacks of communal chauvinism, yet once national borders are drawn and the community must be pacified, Kant's ideas are of vital importance.

If the elites of Muslim countries intend to shape a pacified community_that is to say, a nation_they must take their inspiration from Kant. They must "Islamize" Kant in much the same way that Thomas Aquinas "Christianized" Aristotle. The democratic future of the Muslim countries will depend on the capacity of Muslims to make Kant compatible with Islam. This compatibility is philosophically possible inasmuch as both Islam and Kantianism are universalist teachings.

The Enlightenment's role in the emergence of the nation was not lost on Gellner. He affirmed that while "high culture" founds the nation, it is necessary to "pay the price of secularization."[8] The clerisy most be secularized, which means going beyond the Kantian tension between the ethico-religious and the politico-juridical. But Gellner does not perceive tha*t* secularization is the process by which religious passions and affective attachments to ethnicity are purged from the social bond in order to let the pacified public sphere expand into full-scale national concord. He does not perceive that this process of secularization of the high culture is synonymous with the formation of the public sphere, without which there can he no nation.

3. Nation and Forgetting

Much has been written about the differences between "cultural nationalism" of the German type and "civic nationalism" of the French type. In reality, every modem nation combines the

two logics, cul tural-ethnic and civic-universal. A political community that has not affirmed the civic bond among its members has not fully become a nation. Because each nation must deal with a unique set of historical circumstances, it may sometimes seem that a given nation's experience is governed exclusively by one of these logics. This is why observers will continue to speak of a French and a German model of nationhood, even though nations everywhere have both civic-universal and cultural-ethnic foundations.

In France, the nation had to be built with the public sphere as a starting point, but without sacrificing local memories. In Germany, the nation had to be developed differently, by stressing the culture or even the ethnicity of the people, but without sacrificing the individual's political autonomy to the cultural community. Yet the French did not exclude the cultural dynamic that comes from rootedness in the soil, and the Germans did not exclude the individual autonomy that reigns in the public sphere.

In order to become French, a foreigner must "forget"– in other words, abandon_his origins.

The differences between the two coun tries can be traced to historical circum stances. France has been stamped defini tively by the spirit of 1789; it is also a country of immigration, needing to integrate foreigners who are asked to renounce their cultures of origin by adhering to universal political principles. France nationalized the foreigners living on her soil by making them universal Frenchmen; hence the myth of the universality of French civilization and its *mission civilisatrice*.***[9]*** Germany, on the contrary, was a land of emigration; it needed no flow of newcomers from outside to make up a demographic deficit. Hence the closed definition of nation ality centered on Germanic identity and evidenced by language and descent.

Even when it drapes itself in the vestments of universalism, nationalism remains a communalist ideology tending toward chauvinism and exclusivity. The generosity of Ernest Renan's definition of the nation as a "daily plebiscite" did not save the inhabitants of the colonies_for instance the Algerians, whose territory was a department of the French Republic_from being denied French nationality even when they requested *it.****[10]*** This is because Kenan's definition has an essential requirement, namely, forgetting. In order to become French, a foreigner must "forget"_in other words, abandon_his origins.[11] In this respect, Renan's argument is addressed to foreigners rather than to the native-born. Why speak of a "daily plebiscite" to people born in France. who have no need to affirm that they are French? The acts of voting yes in a "daily plebiscite" and of "forgetting" one's origins can only be the business of foreigners, who are thereby embracing the "high culture" of France_a high culture that must efface not only foreign ways, but also the various "low" or vernacular cultures of provincial France in order to let the nation, acting by means of the state, exert its "monopoly of legitimate education."[12] The goal of such education is to inculcate future citizens with the values of the Republic and the cultural norms necessary to common life in the public sphere.

Actually, the native-born have to "remember that they forgot," as Benedict Anderson put it in a chapter added to the French version of his *Imagined Communities.* Foreigners granted French citizenship have to forget absolutely their origins and their past, without any remem brance whatsoever.

Yet the "forgetting" of which Renan speaks is relative, given that he defines a nation as the result of history. "The cult of ancestors," he writes, "is the most legitimate of all; ancestors

have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory (I mean real glory): here is the social capital upon which to build a national ideology."[13] A little later, he adds: "[The nation] presupposes a past, yet sums itself up in the present hy a tangible fact, namely, the common assent, the clearly expressed desire, to pursue life in common. A nation's existence is (forgive me for this metaphor) a daily plebiscite, just as the existence of the individual is a perpetual affirmation of life."[14] Thus in Renan's view, a nation is the product both of the past and of individual will. Yet the express and voluntary affirmation of readiness to adhere to it is mainly the concern of foreigners, for whom forgetting is the basis of their integration. For Renan, a nation is not only a public sphere where individuals who have forgotten their roots meet; it is also a "spiritual principle that results from the deep intricacies of history. It is a spiritual family, not a group determined by the lay of the land."[15]

Renan gives a fair definition of the concept of the nation, but he does not seem to be aware of its double aspect, which integrates both the public sphere and the heritage of the past. His opposition to German nationalist authors has been overrated by commentators who have often perceived only one aspect of his argument. "The community of interests," he wrote, "assuredly makes for a powerful bond among men, but are interests enough to make a nation? I do nor think so. A community of interests is useful to ratify trade agreements. Nationality has a side that involves feeling; it is body and soul at one and the same time. A *Zollverein* [customs union] is not a fatherland."[16]

Renan is not only a theorist of the nation; he is also an ideologist of French nationalism, which like any other nationalism, tends toward chauvinism and exclusivity, and is belligerent both within and without the borders of the state. Without spelling it out, Renan is aware that modernity consists in building national public spheres, that is to say, in reconciling two contradictory dynamics, one aiming at cosmopolitanism and the other seeking rootedness in local soil.

A nation secures its unity by means of a political system corresponding to the history and culture of the country. Marcel Mauss defines a nation as a sociological formation within which all the "micropowers" have been absorbed by a central power. In his view, a nation "must have abolished all division by clans, cities, tribes, kingdoms, or feudal domains" in such a way that the individual, freed from local political loyalties, can swear allegiance to the state and its laws.[17] The model of the nation, according to Mauss, is a society politically integrated by the state and built on consensual values. The centralized character of the political organization, however, implies a participation that must in turn presuppose a certain degree of democratic functioning. Following Mauss, Dominique Schnapper, in her book *La communauté des citoyens: Sur I'idee moderne de la nation,* contends that a nation is a process of societal integration via politics, which is to say via the participation of individuals (one way or another) in the power of the state.[18] The nation, as her book's title indicates, is a community of citizens whose loyalty to the state is the counterpart of their participation in the political realm.

4. Citizenship in Third World Countries

In most Third World countries, a nationalist ideology emerging in reaction to colonial domination generated a national-liberation movement that first won the independence struggle and then organized itself into a central power, acting as a state. This state continued the technological and social changes that began under colonialism, bringing the formal methods

of Western-style administration as well as the physical attributes of modernity. Yet the postcolonial state has always had difficult relations with society, for it has been unable to make power impersonal or tame the influence of clan or clientelist politics. This is another way of saying that the central power has proved unable to promote a public sphere wherein a political citizenship of the universalist type could be exercised.

The stumbling block is the challenge of institutionalizing power. Consider the case of postcolonial Algeria, where political inequalities characteristic of traditional society have been reproduced in new forms. In fact, it is not enough to be from this or that tribe, region, or religious brotherhood in order to enjoy a privileged status. In today's society, in order to be politically superior, you have to belong to the army, or more precisely, to the upper ranks of the officer corps. The army uses nationalist ideology, with its penchant for rank ordering, to reproduce traditional society's unequal political structure. The army unifies the country, but at the cost of profound political inequality. The people, exposed to the egalitarianism of official slogans and speeches. chafe at this. Hence the malaise and frustration that have created adherents of the Islamist utopia, which promises to make all believers politically and economically equal

In Algeria, the army has failed politically. It has not been able to bridge the gap of political inequality, and it has no wish to promote civilian elites that could take over the mission of national integration-Civilian officials are necessary, of course_naked military dictatorship would look bad_but they have always been nonentities who tremble before the Ministry of Defense. The main problem concerning the state and hence the nation in Algeria is to convince the generals that managing public affairs and leading the state are outside their competence. Publicly and officially all the high-ranking officers support this idea, but they are convinced that the state is still young and needs to be defended by military stratagems.[19]

As in Algeria, Third World military establishments typically see themselves as the guardians *par excellence* of nationalism. As officers work their way up the ladder of promotions, they draw nearer to the ideal type of the nationalist individual. The generals' claim to political legitimacy is based on a belief in their maximal proximity to this norm. Prepared to lay down his life for his country, consciously committed to the rigors of barracks life, deprived of certain civilian comforts, symbolizing the force that freed his people from foreign overlords, the soldier is convinced that he is the shield of the country, and as such, the rightful holder of that legitimacy from which all political and administrative authority must flow.

Yet all this is merely an ideological cover for political inequality. By posing as the holder of legitimacy, the soldier in fact prevents the political integration of other members of the community and impedes the emergence of citizenship. The military's political interests dictate that it oppose the creation of a public sphere, which is why the Algerian army's highest-ranking officers talk more about the heritage of the national-liberation movement than about the republican ideology of the state, in which the army is only one institution among others. Hence their refusal to ground the community upon universal citizenship. The political system that the army has created is fundamentally inegalitarian, and can function with a minimum of civil peace only as long as it is built around a charismatic leader with whom the members of the national community can identify.

The political approach of the Algerian military is a case study in failure that sheds light on similar failures elsewhere in much of the Third World. Born of a reaction against French domination, Algerian nationalism promised to build a modern nation for free men and

women. Why did it fail? Elie Kedourie observed that Algeria is not the only case. "A nationalist ideology,'" he wrote, "is clearly not *ipso facto* a guarantee of prosperity and of good and honest government. Thirty years of FLN rule in Algeria or the record of successive Iraqi, Syrian, or Egyptian nationalist regimes, or in Yugoslavia under the monarchy as under Tito and his successors, are a few examples that may serve as an illustration."[20]

Third World nationalism fell short because it lacked the intellectual tools needed for an ideological and historical critique of the social bond. The postcolonial state sired by nationalism is condemned to defend the tradition upon which that nationalism is based. Tradition, along with religion and ethnic bonds, sustains and reinforces nationalism. It subjects the individual to these forces from the past, whereas the nation frees the individual from old communal loyalties.

There are numerous examples that can illustrate this inconsistency. The Algerian Family Code of 1984, decried by so many women's groups, can only be understood if one keeps in mind that the state's goal is to return to the older order of society in which women hold a strategic position as the guardians of traditional values, and as mothers, play an essential role as keepers of patriarchal ideology. Algeria's schools, too, became part of this campaign to valorize tradition, and it has been rightly said that they created the Islamic Salvation Front, Algeria's radical Islamist movement. Reforms have been tried, but the schools still teach a nationalist ideology untempered by notions of the public sphere and human rights. Properly-reformed schools would foster more critical thinking by taking account of the categories of political modernity and the liberties that constitute the public sphere.

Traditional structures may have lost their political efficacy, but they continue to influence the local political culture and people's behavior.

The traditional communities (religious brotherhoods, tribes, lineages) to which individuals swore fealty were vehicles of authority. Now they have lost their functions, or at least been partly eclipsed by the central power. Their fading has created a political void between the rulers and the ruled, aggravated by market-spawned economic inequalities. Third World societies, therefore, are caught in the middle. They are no longer traditional societies, which had their own manner of political integration, but neither are they modern nations, politically integrated by consensual values.

Traditional structures may have lost their political efficacy, but they continue to influence the local political culture and people's behavior. The upshot is usually a "traditionalist spirit" or state of mind that betrays the degradation of a tradition that has lost its coherence in the face of modernity and its agents, Western domination and the market, The political culture fueled by the reaction against Western domination conceives of the members of the "national" community not as citizens linked by abstract bonds, but as brothers and cousins linked by blood if not by religious faith. The fictive character of consanguinity (several million people cannot really he that closely related) is made up for by the symbolism of the martyrs" blood spilled during the war of liberation. which helps to reinforce national unity.

Yet tensions between different regional and local groups are a fact of political life in such societies. Official discourse condemns these tensions as relics of regionalism, tribalism, and clannishness, but local feeling keeps them alive, Algerian regionalism is especially peculiar in that the various regional groups are contending over which is the most nationalist The objectives of Algeria's various regionalisms have nothing to do with regional autonomy, and

still less with secession. Instead, what is being sought is hegemony within *national* ruling circles. Local "patriotic" feelings are flattered when individuals from "down home" are named to national office. The local clientele can then get rich, of course, but that is not what really counts. The internalization of national feeling does not abolish local patriotism, which remains vibrant and contributes in its own way to the affirmation of nationalism.

What we are witnessing is the emergence of a new, *nationalized* form of tribalism. Libya's Muammar Qadhafi has codified this in his regime's official ideological tract, *The Green Book,* where he writes that the nation is a big tribe, which is to say, a big family. A family has no need of separation of powers, or any other institutional restraint on official conduct; the administration is free to ransack the populace. The power and prestige of a civil servant are measured by his capacity to use his office to get rich. This is not a matter of a few greedy and unscrupulous functionaries; it is the expression of a power relationship created by the political ideology around which the community is built Corruption is not an abuse of power; it is power's distinctive sign.

There is a refusal to organize the community politically on the basis of ideological and economic divisions because the political arena is not differentiated from the sphere of religion or kinship. Institutions that could deal with social conflict are seen as useless, for *the* members of the community are supposed to be as united as the fingers of one hand The community does not need a public sphere where individuals would defend their respective interests.

A community bringing together individuals aware of their interests would set up a public sphere regulated by the rule of law. By contrast, a "national tribe" uniting individuals who are not aware of their divergent ideological and economic interests does not need a public sphere. The basic problem in the Third World is the prevailing conception of the social bond. Nationalism does not help; on the contrary, as I have tried to show, it hurts.

But nationalism can be harmful to the public sphere and to the nation even in democratic countries. The reluctance of Western countries to grant immigrants citizenship and to perceive them in their universality as human beings shows that the Western pattern of the nation devised by the Enlightenment is betrayed. In a stimulating essay, Alain Touraine points to this gap between the theoretical model of the beginning and the actual situation. "Nationalist ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries" have so strongly influenced our thinking and our political experience that we have almost forgotten that the European idea of the nation had been devised in a sense contrary to the direction taken by nationalist policies."[21]

Notes

[1] See Anthony D. Smith, The Ethnic Origins of Nations (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1987)

[2] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin art the Spead of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983)

[3] See Alain Touraine, *A Critique of Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995)

[4] Clifford Geertz, ed _. Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa (New York: Free Press, 1963)

[5] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (orig. publ. 1893; New York: Free Press. 1964)

[6] A good compendium is Hans S. Reiss, ed.. *Kant: Political Writings,* 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

[7] Gellner, Nations and Nationalism. 78_79

[8] Ibid., 79

[9] See Lahouari Addi, "Colonial Mythologies: Algeria in the French Imagination," in L. Carl Brown and Matthew S. Gordon, eds.. *Franco-Arab Encounters* (Beirut: American University Press of Beirut, 1996)

[10] The Blum-Violette Project, a 1936 plan that would have granted French citizenship to 20,000 native Algerians, failed because the colonial lobby did not want it. The rhetoric of the plan's opponents emphasized the ethnic and religious foundations upon which they thought that citizenship should rest.

[11] The forgetting or abandonment of origins upon which the French pattern of the nation is built contrasts with the pluralism and religious freedom that the Founding Fathers envisioned for the new United States

[12] Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, 134

[13] Ernest Renan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (Paris: Presse Pocket, 1992), 34

[14] Ibid.. 53

[15] Ibid., 52

[16] Ibid.. 54

[17] Marcel Mauss, *Oeuvres,* 3 vols. (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1968-69), 3:584.

[18] Dominique Schnapper, La communauté des citoyens: Sur l'idée moderne de la nation (Paris: Gallimard. 1994)

[19] See Lahouari Addi. "Algeria's Tragic Contradictions," *Journal of Democracy* 7 (July 1996): 94-107.

[20] Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993)

[21] See also Alain Touraine, "Le nationalisme contre la nation," *L'année sociologique* (1996): 16