The State of the Nation

Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism

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> The theoretical problem is to separate the quite spurious 'national' and 'natural' justifications and explanations of nationalism, from the genuine, time- and context-bound roots of it. (Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change*)[1]

Nationalism, so far the most potent principle of political legitimacy in the modern world, holds that the nation should be collectively and freely institutionally expressed, and ruled by its conationals. In numerous essays and four books, Ernest Gellner, an exceptionally brilliant, fluent, prolific and witty philosopher, anthropologist, sociologist and multilingual polymath provided lucid and persuasive accounts of why nationalism is a necessary component of modernity, and why it is its typical and major principle of political legitimacy.[2] This chapter seeks to provide a preliminary posthumous analysis of Gellner's legacy. It needs little justification since all worthwhile subsequent writing and research on nationalism will benefit from Gellner's work, whether they build on his presumptions or dissent from them.

Gellner's arguments about nationalism disturbed both conservatives and secular rationalists. The reasons are not hard to find. Nationalism relegates religion to a secondary, and even inessential, principle of a stable and legitimate political order and thus challenges traditionalist conservatism. Nationalism also suggests that law, reason, utility, material prosperity and social justice are secondary principles in establishing a stable and legitimate political order, and has therefore provoked persistent condemnation from rationalist liberals and socialists for some two hundred years.[3] Gellner's writings on nationalism were a sustained criticism of one very pious Oakeshottian conservative, the late Elie Kedourie; but they were also intended to reassure rationalist

liberals (including social democrats). One question is whether he provided the right reassurances.

This chapter scrutinises the core arguments of Gellner's *Thought and Change*, *Nations and Nationalism* and *Nationalism*. His other writings on the subject are treated in parentheses. This textual focus is not difficult to justify: *Nations and Nationalism* was Gellner's most elaborate statement on the subject; and was largely a rich expansion of the themes first sketched in *Thought and Change*. His last work, *Nationalism*, completed but not published in the summer before his death, does not repudiate the key propositions advanced in *Nations and Nationalism*. However, it does contain some tacit and important qualifications, as well as elaborations, of his views – as did his *Encounters with Nationalism*, a late collection of essays and reviews, and as did his 'Reply to Critics', who included this author, in *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, edited by J. A. Hall and I. C. Jarvie. Benefiting from these late writings this chapter will close by answering the question in the subtitle above.

Thought and Change

Gellner's first extensive statement on nationalism asserted that both liberalism and Marxism got it wrong.[4] Most liberals assumed nationalism was a doomed legacy of outmoded irrationalism, superstition and savagery; most Marxists thought it was a necessary but temporary stage in the path to global socialism. They were both a touch previous in their assumptions. Indeed, while Marxism, as an organised ideocracy, is now fast heading towards its grave and political liberalism is wracked with self-doubt, nationalism seems in vigorous and rude health.

Marxism and liberalism were not wrong, however, because two other popular theories are right, namely 'Dark Gods theory' and 'naturality theory'. Dark Gods theory has it that nationalism is the inevitable expression of the atavistic, irrationalist passions that motivate human beings – an original sin.[5] Gellner rejected this idea as 'utter nonsense', even when it included sensible premises like the importance of belonging, identification and exclusion in human behaviour.[6] That human beings have always been organised in groups with loyalty-instilling capacities must be distinguished from their more recent and historically novel propensity to identify with the modern anonymous nation. Naturality theory has it that people have nationalities in the way that they have eyebrows and blood groups; that it is natural that those who share a nationality should wish to share the same political unit; and this is a good thing. Gellner, by contrast, insisted on the contingency of

nationalism. It is, however, underpinned by social foundations: 'there are undoubtedly overwhelmingly powerful factors in the *contemporary and recent social conditions which do make these* [nationalist] suppositions . . . natural and probably irresistible'.[7]

Gellner rejected naturality theory and Kedourie's idealist argument that nationalism is the result of a world-historical intellectual error: an accidental and bad set of ideas, loosely derived from Kant, and disseminated by philosophical incompetents with disastrous consequences.[8] Contrary to the assumption of the naturality of nationalism, the typical political units for most of history were not animated by nationalist principles – which did not feature in small tribal or village units, city states, feudal entities, dynastic empires or in the loose moral empires of a shared religion. Premodern political units rarely, and only accidentally, coincided with those of 'nations', 'i.e. linguistic and cultural boundaries'.[9] Within them the nationality of the governors was not a fundamental issue of legitimacy; the governed simply asked of their rulers whether they were 'less corrupt and grasping, or more just and merciful' than their predecessors.[10] Now, to use the nouns of social anthropologists, the relationships between 'structure' and 'culture' are utterly changed. Nationalism is a principle of political legitimacy for us precisely because culture has become so important that it 'does not so much underline structure: rather, it replaces it'.[11]

Once social 'structure', i.e., social roles, were tightly circumscribed, nested and ascriptive, and for this reason shared linguistic and cultural communication was not essential to the preservation of social order and effective interaction; but now social roles are open and changeable, and 'those who communicate must speak the same language, in some sense or other', and the classification of people by 'culture' is classification by 'nationality'.[12] The negative social foundations of nationalism are thus explained by the erosion of rigid social structures. A shared culture has become much more important in creating and sustaining social cohesion than it was. The positive social foundations are explained by economies of scale in the production of literate citizens by state-sponsored educational systems. 'The minimal political unit, formerly circumscribed by defence or economic requirements, 'is now determined by the preconditions of education',[13] which means it must be larger than the family, village and city-state. Moreover, the relevant educational system must operate 'in some medium, some language (both in the literal and the extended sense)'.[14] Literacy, an essential aspect of a normally socialised modern human being, is generated by state-sponsored educational systems, which are multiply facilitated if the idioms of the home and the school are the same. In turn, modern

educational systems explain the cultural identifications that move so many human beings. These identifications are, however, historically recent and novel, and are not (authentically?) nostalgic: modern people 'do not in general become nationalists from sentiment or sentimentality, atavistic or not, well-based or myth-founded: they become nationalists through genuine, objective, practical necessity, however obscurely recognised'.[15]

Though and Change provided a schematic account of why modern loyalty-invoking units are not very small and local, like tribal, feudal or classical units: functioning educational systems have to operate on a broader scale; and of why they are cultural units: a shared culture is an indispensable feature of a modern social system. Gellner went one stage further and asked why these cultural units tend to be smaller than those of agrarian religious civilisations (e.g., Christendom or Islam), even though these wider civilisations could have furnished a shared language or culture. In other words, he sought to explain the divisiveness of nationalism – why it fractures wider political entities, such as the empires of the *ancien régime*. His answer was that 'nationalism is a phenomenon connected not so much with industrialisation or modernisation as such, but with its uneven diffusion'.[16]

The uneven impact of successive waves of industrialisation and modernisation generate sharp stratifications between peoples that are not hallowed by custom, that are not easily politically regulated, but that are remediable through 'national' secession. Intelligentsias that experience blocked social mobility, and who share cultural traits with proletarians experiencing multiple humiliations in urban environments, and discrimination in labour markets, provide the personnel for nationalist movements. They seek to establish their own nation-states if they presently have no feasible prospect of being fairly treated or assimilated – which Gellner seemed to treat as the same thing. These new nation-states will be modern, or at least they will be structured as such, even if in ideological self-deception the intelligentsia romantically believe themselves to be restoring their old nation. They will talk like *narodniks* but act as westernisers.[17] Contrary to the wisdom of historiographers, poets and philologists: 'Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist – but it does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on, even if . . . these are purely negative.'[18]

These are the core propositions of *Thought and Change*. Gellner anticipated criticisms by clarifying and qualifying his theses in three ways.

First, he recognised that 'some pre-modern loyalty-evoking political

units', notably the strong dynastic states of the Atlantic seaboard of Europe, embraced populations and territories 'similar to those which one would expect to be produced by modern nationalism', and posed the question 'do these rather different phenomena, so close to "nationalism", contradict the theory?'[19] In a dense and slightly confusing passage, he suggested three possible theory-saving options:

(i) he could accept that the modernising forces generating nationalism have been operating in Europe at least since the Reformation, or

(ii) he could refuse to classify these phenomena with modern nationalism (which left open the possibility of a non-modern nationalism?), or

(iii) he could accept that a pre-modern shared culture, including membership of a dynastic state whose boundaries roughly overlapped with a language, might be *a* factor, amongst others, in inclining people in the direction of particular bedfellows for the construction of a modern nation.

Gellner wanted to protect his theory from the charge that it is tautological and/or unfalsifiable, and to separate the modern phenomena of nationalism – 'citizenship through education, group *differentiae* in terms of the language of instruction, and unmediated membership of mass co-cultural societies' – from other superficially related premodern phenomena, 'even if a few of those others also make a banner of language-and-culture'.[20] The latter are the religious and linguistic imperialisms of some ethnically based pre-modern dynasties.

Secondly, Gellner insisted that 'it is impossible to predict with confidence, prior to the crystallisation of this or that nationalism, just which "nations" will emerge'.[21] Cultural differences are widespread and real, and injustices, exploitation, humiliation are equally so, but it isn't easy to tell just which identifications and oppositions will emerge to produce specific nationalisms. This predictive weakness may make his theory look suspiciously untestable, but he left the impression that it can be tested in other ways, and that it has the merit of rejecting two alternative theses:

(i) that all pre-modern cultures will inevitably generate nations, and

(ii) that some pre-modern cultures are far more likely than others to form the raw materials of modern nations.[22]

Thirdly, he recognised that nationalism is not an all-powerful or all-pervasive political force. There are exceptional zones that have resisted the norm of 'one culture, one polity': Switzerland, Belgium and Canada. The last two cases did not concern him because the weaknesses

of Belgian and Canadian nationalism confirm the assumption that bilingual or multilingual states will be less nationally stable than those that are monolingual. Switzerland is more embarrassing: Gellner described it as 'a traditional society which has weathered modernisation' so it can tolerate linguistic pluralism. Also, there 'is a sense in which various kinds of Swiss "speak the same language" even if they do not do so in a literal sense';[23] a curious argument. Gellner additionally recognised that just as nationalisms can be obstructed or modified 'by special circumstances', so they can also be facilitated by power politics which may manipulate nationalist ideas, *or* by the dissemination of political norms which are infused with nationalist assumptions. He mentions what for him was a homely example, the formation of the Czech national state which resulted from a coalition between Czech intellectuals and western foreign policy.

He closed his first discussion of nationalism by briefly evaluating it. He wasted no time condemning nationalist chauvinism in the standard manner of liberal cosmopolitans. Instead he considered that the 'main boon which nationalism has conferred on mankind . . . may well be political'. The benefits are not merely psychological though these are important – the dignity and self-respect arising from the elimination of 'second- or *n*th class citizenship' and the joys liberated peoples enjoy from not being 'bossed and knocked about by others with whom they cannot or are not allowed to identify', and being bossed and knocked about by 'their own' people instead.[24]

The major political benefit that nationalism has given to humanity is that it has preserved pluralism in the world, and thereby preserved political liberalism. This conclusion was reached by considering the most feasible counterfactual alternatives to a world of nation-states: a world government *or* a world in which the major empires of the late nineteenth century had been preserved. In both these situations, Gellner reasoned that liberalism would have been obliterated. A world government passing through the second, global phase of industrialisation would have resembled South Africa under apartheid, a coercively organised hierarchy of races and ethnic communities; while a world of industrialising empires would have been wracked by ferocious battles over citizenship fought between the metropolitan cores and the more numerous and poorer peoples of the territories they had conquered. The ironic message was that nationalism, unintentionally, preserved the miracle of western liberalism because it inhibited global despotism and helped destroy the world of the European empires. For this reason, if no others, Gellner thought that liberals should take comfort from the benign repercussions of nationalism.

Nations and nationalism

The theory articulated in *Thought and Change* went largely unnoticed in the writings of political scientists, political sociologists and political philosophers – perhaps because it was buried within a wider discussion of philosophy and social change, and perhaps because it was patronisingly classed as a provincial 'English' variation on the themes of the modernisation school ascendant in American social science.[25] *Thought and Change* was known, if at all, for sharply stating the conventional wisdom of the emergent affluent society of the late 1950s and the early 1960s: a modern state has one major principle of political legitimacy, the GNP must increase. The other major principle, that the state must be a nation-state, was less remarked upon.

In complete contrast, Gellner's book-length statement, wittily expounded nearly two decades later in *Nations and Nationalism*, was very well received amongst political scientists and political sociologists who study nationalism, and those who do not, and rightly so.[26] *Nations and Nationalism* was at once more sociologically ambitious than *Thought and Change*, bearing the imprint of Gellner's dialogues with Durkheim and Marx; more conceptually novel, displaying the value-added of his theory of industrial society; and more empirically promising, as it set out a typology of nationalism-inducing and nationalism-thwarting situations.

There are, however, fundamental continuities between *Thought and Change* and *Nations and Nationalism*. First, Gellner continued to reject four erroneous theories of nationalism:

(i)   the nationalist theory that it is natural, self-evident and self-generating;

(ii) Kedourie's theory that it is a contingent consequence of 'ideas' which did not need ever to be formulated, and appeared by a regrettable accident', and is inessential to the life of industrial societies;[27]

(iii) Marxism's 'Wrong Address Theory': the liberationist message intended for classes was 'by some terrible postal error' delivered instead to nations; and

(iv) 'Dark Gods Theory'.[28]

The thesis is restated that nationalism is an essential component of modernisation, of the transition from agrarian to industrial society – the latter requiring a state that can produce and be maintained by one common, literate and accessible culture. The vocabulary in which this idea is expressed has, however, become part of a wider philosophy of history. Nationalism is now defined as:

the general imposition of a *high culture* on society, where previously *low cultures* had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases the totality, of the population. It means the general diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of a reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomised individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of the previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves.[29]

The preconditions (and maintenance) of nationalism include widespread or universal literacy, and a society committed to economic growth through its formal commitment to social mobility – both horizontal and vertical. Industrial society requires effective and widespread context-free communication through a common medium, a 'high culture'. Communicative media are placed centre-stage in generating and maintaining nationalism, but the argument stresses the functionality of a shared culture for the effective operation of modern work organisations and bureaucracies.[30]

In *Nations and Nationalism* nationalism is still seen as distinctive to modernity, but it is now part of a philosophy of history that distinguishes three phases in human progress: the pre-agrarian, the agrarian, and the industrial. In a reworked and non-teleological form of historical materialism, Gellner maintained that each of the three key phases is associated with characteristic modes of production, coercion, culture and cognition.[31] Nationalism is distinctive to industrial society, and intimately connected to its mode of production. It would have made no sense in tribal societies because such societies were and are stateless, and the ambition to unify the national culture and the state would therefore have been incoherent. In the 'agro-literate' polity or the agrarian empire, nationalism also would have made no sense, because such empires did not need their elites and peasant masses to share a common culture. In the industrial society, by contrast, nationalism is an essential part of the cultural atmosphere – its 'exo-socialisation', i.e., educating persons in a culture that mostly frees them from familial and corporate ties, is a *sine qua non* of social cohesion. To these suppositions Gellner added a modified Durkheimian account of normative orientations through the ages. Whereas tribal societies worship their rulers directly or indirectly (as spirits), agrarian societies worship their rulers directly or indirectly (in monotheistic religions), while in industrial societies the participants directly worship themselves (nationalism). Nationalism is the functional equivalent for industrial societies of the world religions of agro-literate polities, and of the animistic cults of pre-agrarian bands, nomads and tribes.

Table 2.1 *Gellner's typology of the inducing and thwarting of nationalism*

Type	P	-P	Situation
1	A, -E	B, -E	typical prenationalist situation
2	A, -E	A, -E	untypical prenationalist situation
3	A, E	A, -E	early industrialism without ethnic catalyst
4	A, E	B, -E	*ethnic nationalism*
5	A, E	A, E	*mature homogeneous industrialism (established nationalism)*
6	A, E	B, E	*classical liberal western nationalism*
7	A, -E	B, E	*diaspora or 'middle-man' nationalism*
8	A, -E	A, E	Decembrist revolutionary, but not nationalist, situation

Source: adapted from *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 94. (Nationalism-generating situations in italics)

Gellner also provided a typology of 'nationalism-inducing and nationalism-thwarting situations' which considerably amplified the crude 'model' sketched in *Thought and Change*.[32] There are three dimensions to the typology. Gellner differentiated

(i) power-holders from the rest: P and -P;
(ii) those who have had access to a modern education or a viable modern high culture from those who have not: E and -E; and
(iii) a polity in which the power-holders and the rest, and the educated or uneducated, share a homogeneous culture (A and A), from one in which they do not (A and B).

These three dimensions generate the eight possibilities in Table 2.1: a line containing A and A represents a culturally homogeneous territory, whereas a line containing A and B represents a bicultural territory.

The typology suggests four situations in which nationalism will be engendered, and four in which it will be absent or thwarted. Consider the latter. In types 1 and 2, where no one, power-holder or non-power-holder, has access to modern education, nationalism cannot exist, *ex hypothesi*. The typical agro-literate polity, type 1, is not culturally homogeneous, although a few such specimens might exist, type 2.[33] In the third scenario, type 8, the old ruling class of the agro-literate polity retains power, and is challenged by a politically weak, but educationally privileged intelligentsia – a 'Decembrist' revolutionary and economically privileged intelligentsia – a 'Decembrist' revolutionary situation, type 8. No *nationalist* problems and conflicts arise here, said

Gellner.[34] In the last case, type 3, early industrialism within a culturally homogeneous society, the power-holders are differentiated from the non-power-holders by the former's monopoly of modern high culture. This situation gives rise to class conflict, which may be moderately ferocious, but without the catalyst of ethnic differentiation is unlikely to be especially politically destabilising – contrary to the assumptions of classical Marxism.

The typology implies, by contrast, four nationalism-engendering situations:

(i) *satisfied nationalism*, type 5, characteristic of mature homogeneous industrialism in which the power-holders and non-power-holders share access to the same style of modern education, and are co-cultural conationals – in which case we can expect no [internal] nationalist conflicts and problems;[35]

(ii) *classical liberal nationalism*, type 6, characteristic of territories in which some have power and others do not, and this difference correlates with cultural differences, even though the relevant persons are both educationally equipped for modern society – a situation, Gellner suggested, which historically corresponds to the 'unification nationalisms' of nineteenth-century Italy and Germany;[36]

(iii) *ethnic nationalism*, type 4, characteristic of territories in which power-holders have privileged access to the central high culture, which is their own, while the powerless are also the educationally deprived, sunk in low cultures. The small intelligentsias of the powerless spearhead efforts to make their low culture into a high culture – a situation, Gellner suggested, which historically corresponds to the nationalisms of Eastern, Slavic and Balkan Europe;[37] and

(iv) *Diaspora nationalism*, type 7, better described as 'middle-man' nationalism, arises in societies in transit from Agraria to Industria, and is characteristic of groups that historically had access to commercial and educational high culture, often through their caste-roles as pariah 'middle-men' in the agrarian economy. These groups are economically better equipped for modernisation than those who historically lacked access to a high culture. They are also ethnically distinctive, but lack political and military power – and so are likely candidates for genocidal assaults or mass expulsions as economic competition grows within a modernising and nationalising polity; and in consequence, are likely to generate 'diaspora nationalisms'. Gellner had in mind the Jews, Greeks, Armenians,

overseas Indians in Africa, overseas Chinese in south-east Asia and the Ibos of Nigeria.[38]

This typology rested on a theory of social conflict, explicitly directed against Marxist propositions. Conflict is predicted to occur 'where "ethnic" (cultural or other diacritical marks) are visible and accentuate the differences in educational access and power', and above all, when they inhibit the 'free flow of personnel across the loose lines of social stratification'.[39] In short: blockages in social mobility, when tied to ethnic or other diacritical markers, are at the heart of nationalist conflicts. Exclusionary control of cultural capital, or usurpationary attempts to capture it, rather than exclusionary control of propertied capital or usurpationary attempts to expropriate it, give rise to vigorous social wars, and nationalist conflicts.

This theory of conflict is tied, in deliberately provocative language, to a discussion of 'social entropy' and equality in industrial society.[40] An ideal-typical industrial society should have a systematic randomness, and thus be 'entropic': social origins should not matter in determining placement in the occupational and prestige hierarchies, and in this sense *natural notion*, one already in use in the society in question, rather than industrial society should be egalitarian. 'Entropy-resistant traits' constitute a very serious problem. They 'have a marked tendency *not* to become, even with the passage of time . . . evenly dispersed throughout the entire society'.[41] Such traits can be invented, Gellner suggests, to apply to a particular class of persons, but: 'the entropy-resistance of a concept, in this sense, will normally be of interest *only if it is a reasonably natural notion*, one already in use in the society in question, rather than artificially invented for the present purpose'.[42]

He then discussed a range of entropy-resistant traits, physical or genetically transmitted, and religious-cultural habits which are often just as resistant to the industrial 'melting pot'.

This illuminating discussion sits uneasily with the arguments in *Thought and Change* which had suggested the almost plasticine materials with which modern nation-builders could 'invent' their nations and nation-states. Nevertheless Gellner restated his conviction that we cannot predict which cultures will be blessed with success in their efforts to become nationalist cultures with political roofs.[43] He went further, and suggested that the 'weakness of nationalism' is much greater than it might appear at first glance.[44] The number of languages in the world may be some 8,000, and the number of other cultural or historical materials which might be used to mark potential national cultures is even higher. Yet there are at present about 200 states in existence – many of which are postage-stamp states that cannot be counted as

aspirant nation-states. The potential number of nation-states may be higher given the existence of numerous unsatisfied nationalisms which may succeed, one day. Yet the ratio of effective to potential nationalisms is a small one – much less than nationalists might imagine. The implication is that a blind, unpredictable and evolutionary process selects which nationalisms shall succeed, and which shall not. There is an apparent paradox here. Nationalism is a very strong force in the modern world; in most cases it prevails, and it does set the standard for what constitutes a modern state. However, very few potential nations are strong enough to make it to modernity and statehood.

Reviewing and reformulating the theory in *Thought and Change and Nations and Nationalism*

Gellner's theory has been subject to diffuse criticisms, which I have grouped into five principal categories. The next section addresses how robust the theory remains in the light of these criticisms, and how it might be reformulated.

The philosophical functionalism of the argument

Both in *Thought and Change* and *Nations and Nationalism*, Gellner's argument seems to be explicitly, brazenly and unashamedly, function-alist. Functionalism is characteristic of historical materialism,[45] and forgivable in a social anthropologist, but less easily accepted by social scientists committed to causal explanations or methodological individu-alism. It is ironic that it is Perry Anderson, grandfather of the Marxist New Left, who complains that the 'most arresting feature of [Gellner's] theory of nationalism is its single-minded economic functionalism'.[46] He cites in support a passage from the conclusion to *Nations and Nationalism*:

So the economy needs both the new type of central culture and the central state; the culture needs the state; and the state probably needs the homogeneous cultural branding of its flock . . . In brief, the mutual relationship of a modern culture and state is something quite new, and springs, inevitably, from the requirements of a modern economy.[47]

There is no denying the functionalist cast of these arguments. If one is sceptical about functionalist arguments in the social sciences the impor-tant question is whether Gellner's case can be reconstructed in a non-functionalist manner. It is clear that for him nationalism is explained by its beneficial consequences (functionality) for modern society.[48] A strongly functionalist version of his argument would go as follows:[49]

(i)   Nationalism is an *effect* of modernisation.
(ii) Nationalism is *beneficial* for modernising states – because a highly specialised division of labour requires a unified high culture, which is underpinned by a highly developed and specialised educational system.
(iii) Nationalism (in Gellner's sense) is *unintended* by the actors producing modernisation.
(iv) The causal relationship between nationalism and modernisation is not recognised by the agents operating in modernising societies.
(v)   Nationalism functionally maintains modernisation by a feedback loop operating through the actions of modernising states.

Formulated in this way Gellner's argument would display the vices of functionalist reasoning – in which events and processes occur wholly, or largely, beyond the understanding of human agents, in which consequences precede causes, and in which suspicions arise that supraindividual and holistic entities are tacitly invoked to do explanatory work.

One obvious way to reconstruct Gellner's argument is to deny (iv), and replace a functionalist with a 'filter explanation.'[50] It would take the following form: modernising elites believe that nationalism is essential for modernisation, precisely because it breaks down barriers to modernising success. Nation-building nationalists *recognise* the beneficial consequences of nationalism, and this fact helps explains its political diffusion. Nationalists believe that nation-building will break down traditionalist or religious inhibitions on economic growth, and political blockages – such as imperialist domination or caste-like barriers that prevent the liberation of productive economic, political and cultural energies.[51] It is not at all difficult to find wide-ranging support for this filter explanation. Prospective nation-builders, like Paidraig Pearse and Jawaharlal Nehru, embraced nationalism because they believed it would liberate the Irish and Indian nations, and free them to develop their educational, economic and political systems, and the Japanese reformers of the Meiji restoration deliberately imitated features of German and French nation-building in their efforts to build a modern Japan. The idea that nationalism could lead to a renewal – or revival – of social energies was implicit in the advice rendered by Rousseau in *The Government of Poland*, which commended a citizen's army and a comprehensive state-controlled education system.[52]

Although this 'filter explanation' would avoid strong functionalism, it remains vulnerable on two grounds. First, the 'real' filter in explaining the actions of the first nation-builders and nationalists may have been

the perception that nationalism was essential for military success or geopolitical security, rather than economic success. Therefore the historical relationship between nationalism, modernisation and industrialisation may have been more indirect and unintended than Gellnerian theory suggests[53] – and it may be that Gellner's theory accounts better for the maintenance of nationalism than it does for its origins.

Secondly, the universal truth of the 'filter explanation' may be doubted, that is nationalism may not be essential for modernisation. Communist regimes in the USSR, China and North Korea did not primarily rely – although one might argue that they did rely tacitly (remember Stalin's 'socialism in one country') – on nationalism for 'first-stage industrialisation', although one might argue, correctly, that none of them are exemplars of modernising success. There have been some highly successful industrial city-states, for example Hong Kong, which have not required nationalism to travel to their version of modernity. And, a point to which I shall return, Gellner himself appeared to suggest that Islam, unlike the other world religions, might be capable of performing modernisation's necessary support functions – thereby making nationalism inessential for the breakthrough to modernisation.[54]

These qualifications, do not, however, imperil the general thesis that nationalism is beneficial, and even possibly optimal, for modernisation, providing we accept the qualification that this relationship is widely recognised by nationalists themselves. It is also tempting to draw a distinction between explaining the genesis of nationalism and explaining its diffusion. The *genesis* of nationalism may have been at least partially autonomous of modernisation and industrialisation, and its functionally beneficial consequences may only have been partially related to modern economic development. The *diffusion* of nationalism, its attractiveness to those who followed the first modern nations, may be more centrally linked to their belief in a Gellnerian-style filter explanation. Rather than being foolish victims of the contagious bad ideas, as Kedouri implied, nationalists believed that nationalism would assist modernisation in the way that it had the British, the Americans, the French and the Germans.[55] In short, it is possible to argue for the core Gellnerian thesis that there is a functional relationship between nationalism and modernity, but it does not have to be expressed in a strongly functionalist form.

The place of nationalism in a philosophy of history

Delineating stages in history is partly a matter of taste. Some completely reject the idea of a philosophy of history; those who do not may dislike

three-stage tales of human progress; and some prefer explicitly evolutionary to non-teleological and episodic conceptions of the transitions between stages in human history. My position, in this chapter, is that of a critical supporter of Gellner's philosophy of history. But within that philosophy there are three potentially embarrassing questions about nations and nationalism:

(i) could there have been nations before nationalism, and, if so, can Gellner's theory cope with such anomalies?

(ii) could there have been nations and nationalism before industrialism, and if so, can Gellner's theory be reformulated to cope with this difficulty?

(iii) can there be post-industrial national conflicts, and if so, how do they fit in with Gellner's general theory?

Nations before nationalism, and nationalism before industrialism?

Gellner's is a strongly 'modernist' theory. He informed his readers that nationalism only became an historical possibility from approximately the eighteenth century – indeed he cast the philosophers of the Enlightenment in the role of the first alienated intelligentsia, 'the westernisers of the west'. Nationalism invents nations, rather than the other way around.

Yet a considerable number of specialists on nationalism, implicitly or explicitly, reject the stark modernism of Gellner. Thus historians write of the 'old continuous European nations', and compare them with the 'new nations' of eastern Europe and elsewhere in the world.[56] Historical sociologists write in a similar vein: John Armstrong's *Nations before Nationalism* and Anthony Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* are sustained criticisms of the (strong) modernist interpretation of nations and nationalism.[57] Smith, for example, argues that ethnic culture and social organisation were persistent, intensive, widespread and salient in much of Euro-Asian antiquity and the medieval era. Moreover, particular kingdoms were often based on ethnic communities: for Smith, nationalism represents 'the transformation and universalisation of a pre-existing political and social norm'.[58] Similarly, Liah Greenfeld's *Nationalism* treats sixteenth-century England as the first nation and the site of the first nationalism, and her researches on England, France, Russia, Germany and America extend back to the Renaissance.[59]

Can one defend Gellner's theory against these arguments? He anticipated one possible line of defence in *Thought and Change*: the forces of modernisation have been at work since the Reformation, or before. This reply is not, however, convincing; it seems to operate against the

placement of nationalism within Gellner's triadic stages of history, and to suggest that Protestantism and vernacular print languages were more important than industrialism in spawning nationalism. Yet it seems empirically sensible to concede that 'national consciousness' developed in some territories before full-scale industrialisation: consider just the colonies of Latin America, North America and Ireland.[60] Moreover, it seems sensible to concede that protonationalist ideas existed, at least in embryonic forms, in commercial societies like early modern England and Holland.[61] This leaves Gellner with his other, and theoretically more consistent, line of defence – to refuse to classify the phenomena of pre-eighteenth-century ethnic or national consciousness with modern nationalism or nationalism proper. There are good grounds for doing so.

Many of the authors who survey the rise of 'nations' before nationalism are conceptually confused;[62] and, secondly, many of them concede that nationalism 'both as an ideology and movement, is a wholly modern phenomenon'.[63] Gellner's theory can not be embarrassed by the existence of the word nation in pre-eighteenth-century England, or indeed by the presence of national consciousness, especially of a religiously mediated kind. It would be embarrassed by explicitly nationalist doctrines of legitimacy, nationalist programmes and nationalist movements flourishing in the time of Henry VII. Most of those who discuss 'nations' before 'nationalism' are in fact establishing the existence of cultural precedents, and ethnic and other materials subsequently shaped and re-shaped by nation-builders. But it is a conceptual confusion, or so at least a Gellnerian must insist, to assimilate the materials upon which nationalists will draw, to nationalism itself. Consciousness of a shared cultural, religious or territorial identity is not of the essence of nationalism. Its essence is a theory of political legitimacy: the governed must be conational with and representative of the governed. That said, the work of Armstrong, Smith and Greenfeld may be used to qualify Gellner's work in one respect: they furnish evidence that the first nations were *innovations* rather than *inventions*, and that predicting or 'retrodicting' which nations would emerge in the age of nationalism may be less difficult than Gellner declared.

Most of those who have written of nations before the age of nationalism, whether they be historians like Hugh Seton-Watson, or historical sociologists, like Armstrong, Greenfeld and Smith, concede the modernity of nationalist doctrine and political programmes. They recognise that the writers of the Enlightenment and their romantic critics, and the phenomena of the American and French revolutions, produced an explicitly novel set of doctrines, nationalism proper. Gellnerian theory can thus, in principle, be saved: there may have been talk about nations,

and indeed national consciousness, before nationalism, but, so to speak, there was no nationalist talk of nations and national consciousness before nationalism. That said, Gellner was left the problem that the historical evidence does not suggest a neat causal or functional relationship between industrialisation and the onset of nationalism, and I will consider later how he sought to manage this little 'local difficulty' in his last writings.

Nationalism after industrialisation?

Another possible embarrassment for Gellner's philosophy of history would be evidence of revived or new nationalist secessionist movements emerging within a fully industrialised environment, after the 'great transformation' from Agraria to Industria has been completed. Do the phenomena of 'ethnic revivalism', 'ethnonationalism', 'mininationalism' or 'neonationalism' as they have been variously and sometimes misleadingly labelled, both in advanced OECD countries and among and within the post-Soviet successor states, constitute a problem for Gellner's theory?

It is not transparent how exactly such evidence would refute the theory. The evidence would be consistent with some of the propositions in *Nations and Nationalism*, where Gellner differentiated between early nationalism and late nationalism – which occur respectively in the conditions of early and mature industrialisation.[64] In early industrialism there is 'a terrible difference' between the life-chances of the well-off and the starving poor, whereas in late industrialism there is not such acute objective social discontent – and, in consequence, although a late nationalism may be motivated by blocked social mobility and inequality, it will, on materialist assumptions, presumably, be less virulent. In short, on these premises, Gellner's theory would be most embarrassed by violently virulent nationalist secessionisms within advanced 'Industrias', not by the existence of such movements themselves, which, after all, might be occasioned by 'counter-entropic' traits.

Gellner is presumed by many to have argued that the world is drifting towards advanced industrialised homogeneous nation-states in which secessionisms are less likely – and that is one possible reading of his *obiter dicta* on the 'future of nationalism'.[65] A moment's reflection, however, should make clear that an industrialised world characterised by divergent demographic growth rates across culturally differentiated communities, displaying counter-entropic traits of whatever kind, and large-scale migratory movements, in which migrants can retain their original high culture (if they have one), is not going to be free either of nationalist secessionist possibilities, or of 'integral nationalisms'. Conse-

quently, even if Gellner can be convicted of the view that nationalist secessionist movements are less likely after industrialisation – a view for which I think there is no explicit textual warrant – his theory itself is not deductively linked to such a view.

Another line of defence would be that the scale of virulent nationalist secessionism, or nationalist irredentism, at least within the OECD, has not been very substantial. There are no significant secessionist or irredentist movements in Austria, Australia, Denmark, Iceland, Luxembourg, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland or the USA. There are significant 'devolutionist' movements in Wales within the United Kingdom, in Catalonia in Spain, in Brittany and Corsica in France, and amongst both linguistic communities in Belgium. There are also significant, but peaceful secessionist movements in Canada, amongst the Québécois, and in Great Britain amongst the Scots – who seek independence 'within' the NAFTA and the EU respectively. There has also been a recent effervescence of what may become full-fledged secessionist sentiment in Italy, notably in 'Lombardy' or 'Padania' – though it seems likely to remain a form of regional resentment; and similar traits can be found in Belgium. Germany has been unified, but it has officially abandoned its other possible irredentist ambitions. Within 'western Europe' only Greece, the Republic of Ireland, and possibly Finland retain, in principle, ambitions to complete their nations, and in each case (apart, possibly, from Greece), the support for 'reunification' with the relevant conationals situated across recognised sovereign boundaries is generally peaceful, sentimental and inactive – which is not to say that it is finished.[66] Significant cases of protracted violent secessionism or unificationism in Europe have existed in the Basque country and Northern Ireland, but even here the relevant movements have smaller support-bases than their peaceful and regionally inclined conational competitors. The two Cypriot communities are, however, undoubtedly capable of further war.

Yet all in all there is not a great deal in the European Union, or the OECD, to embarrass Gellner's theory.[67] Extensive armed violence and insurrection by aggrieved nationalist groups within the OECD is rare. Basque separatists in Spain; Irish republicans and loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland; Israelis and Palestinians in and outside of Israel/Palestine are responsible for the lion's share. Sporadic activities by Corsicans, Tyrolese German-speakers and Bretons are small beer by comparison. In most regions of OECD states the aggrieved ethnic communities would appear to be capable of being satisfied by public policy changes and/or constitutional changes which recognise their

national cultural claims. This *may* be so of the Québécois in Canada, the Scots and Welsh in the UK, the Walloons in Belgium and the Catalans in Spain. A similar argument may be advanced for the bulk of Basques and Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland: Basques may be satisfied with extensive autonomy; northern Irish nationalists by the functional equivalent of shared sovereignty.[68] Indeed many of the actual or potential national and ethnic conflicts in advanced industrial countries may be remediable by accommodative political institutions, such as consociations, federalisms and condominiums, a point on which Gellner *is* weak, and to which I shall return.

If the scale of nationalist secessionism within advanced democratic capitalist societies seems exaggerated, the success of nationalist secessionism within the industrialised states of what were the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia is a fact. And there are further secessionist movements within the debris of these former communist systems: in Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechen-Ingushetia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Dniester, Gagauzia, Kaliningrad, Crimea, Krajina, Kosovo and the Vojvodina. These phenomena are, however, not an overt embarrassment for Gellner's theory - unlike some other theories.[69] The respective communist systems failed to invent durable Soviet and Yugoslav nationalisms or 'high cultures', but they did industrialise through adapting - and in some cases creating - national cultures, and, incidentally, national political units, which then, in most cases, became the bases of secessionist movements when the communists lost their grip on power - which in turn was connected to their failures in managing industrial performance. This said, not all of the conflicts which generated secession from these communist polities are fully explicable within Gellnerian theory, which, as presently formulated, cannot treat sensitively the importance of the state-system and political regime types in explaining what encourages or thwarts nationalist secessionisms.

A superfluous defence of the Gellnerian theory is also available: most other social and political theories are left in a much worse state by evidence of secessionism in industrialised societies. Marxists, who thought future statelessness was also to be nationlessness, when we were all expected to *be* class-less and culture-less (or perhaps monocultured in a multicultured way), have an embarrassing affinity with liberal functionalists, who anticipated that the outcome of modernisation would be an instrumental and cosmopolitan world-federal order rather than a world of nation-states, who thought that *idiocracy* would vanish beneath the benefits of affluence, and that the fate of the nation-state was to be undermined from above, by international organisations, and from below, by political decentralisation.[70]

How predictionless or retrodictionless is the theory?

Gellner explicitly denied that one can predict which nations will acquire political roofs, and, by implication, just which phenotypically or culturally counter-entropic traits, or other materials, will provide the markers for the nations built by nationalists. There are at least two difficulties here. First, the selection process that determines which of the thousands of potential nations eventually become member states of the United Nations may not be as blind, or as unpredictable, as Gellner suggested. Secondly, if 'invented' or 'designed' nations are less stable than the 'old' or 'continuous' nations such evidence would suggest that 'real' ethnic or other foundations are more vital to the success of nation-building than Gellner suggested. I shall only elaborate the first point since the second point has been well made by Anthony Smith.

Historical evidence does suggest that while many may be called to be nations only a few are chosen – who now remembers the Burgundians? However, Gellner's own theory, in principle, has greater retrodictive potential than he implies. His suppositions point towards a key selection mechanism: *ceteris paribus*, those possessed of a high culture, or on the verge of possessing one on the eve of modernisation, should be better endowed with nation-building potential than other potential nations. Those who have no 'high culture', or potential 'high culture', presumably are bereft of an intelligentsia, and lack the requisite quota of poets, balladeers, bibliophiles, engineers and officers for successful nation-building. For this reason Gellner's casual citation of the nationalist potential implicit in the existence of 8,000 languages should not be accepted at face value. How many of these languages have the capacity for rapid transformation into a high culture, that is, one with an extensive vocabulary, a formal grammar, an alphabet, a literary tradition, a capacity for context-free communication, etc.? This question is open to empirical resolution but the number of feasible potential nations on the eve of modernity must have been less than a fundamentalist Gellnerian would imagine. A Gellnerian should also assume that viable candidates for nationhood must have a threshold population of around 250,000 (the population of Iceland which has successfully produced a national high culture) on the grounds, suggested in *Thought and Change*, that economies of scale are required to sustain a 'non-parasitic' and modern, education system. If so, then the numbers of potential nationalist 'peoples' on the eve of modernity was probably much less than 8,000. This question is capable of resolution through appropriate investigation of demographic and anthropological data.

Empirical appraisal of the selection mechanism implicit in Gellner's

theory need not, of course, be confined to the linguistic and demographic properties of potential nations. In *Nations and Nationalism* Gellner recognised that those communities which are tightly integrated into a literate world religion are more likely to be candidates for successful nation-building or secessionist movements than those which are not. On Gellner's own logic, one should therefore predict greater nation-building capacity in some premodern cultures than others, and expect the number of feasible nations on the eve of modernity to be less numerous and more predicable than he implies. This argument is one way of reconciling Gellner's general theory with the arguments advanced by the 'nations before nationalism' school. Moreover, nothing in this argument commits one to an objectivist definition of the nation in which one trait, say race, is given pre-eminence.

If one were to extract from the mechanism of possession of a proto-high culture possible retrodictions or predictions about which cultures are most likely to generate modern nations, and test them against the historical evidence, one would, however, run into the issue of rival 'selection mechanisms'. The most obvious alternative selection mechanism affecting which cultures become nations, or at least realised nation-states, is *exogenous* rather than *endogenous*. Power politics may best explain which states have the borders that they do, and therefore which nations get to win their own nation-states or stakes in a multi-national state. Since the onset of modernity – whenever that was – the state-system and the great powers have been decisive arbiters of the prospects of nations' achieving statehood or autonomy. The four great waves of modern state-creation have accompanied the collapse or weakening of empires: the formation of the states of Latin America in the 1820s and after, the new European states recognised at Versailles, the new Asian, African, Caribbean and Pacific states established after 1945; and the new successor states established on the ruins of the former tsarist and Soviet empires after 1989.

Most politically realised nations owe their existence, or at least their territorial shape, to the calculations, decisions and indecisions of the extant great powers which watched another great power collapsing or caused it to collapse. Even if the Gellnerian ingredients of blocked social mobility and strong diacritical markers are present to fertilise nation-alism a potentially secessionist nationalism may be prevented from being successful by its exogenous environment: the Irish, the Poles and the Eritreans, to name but a few, took a long time to win their freedom. 'Nation-state' formation frequently takes place, as it were, by permission, rather than as a by-product of the strength of indigenous mobilisation for nationhood. Thus the French helped the birth of the American

nation; the British empire hastened the collapse of the Spanish empire; the victorious Allies decided the fate and shape of 'nations' at Versailles and presided over the redistribution of the debris of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires; and the departing colonial powers shaped the frontiers of the so-called new 'nations' (mostly multiethnic and multinational states) which they left behind. The best-known illustration of the salience of great states in determining the fate of nations is the fact that the principle of self-determination was widely ignored by the great powers after World War I, because they wanted to create economically and strategically (rather than nationally) viable states as checks and balances on Germany and the Soviet Union.[71] So the boundaries of Hungary, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia in the interwar years were established with scant respect for ethnic boundaries. Plebiscites were used to establish local preferences in some frontier zones, but not in geopolitically significant territories like the Sudetenland or the South Tyrol. Subsequently, from 1948 until 1989, the superpower system preserved borders which make no sense on any reasonable construal of national 'self-determination'.

Sadly, it also seems reasonable to suggest that within collapsing empires the proto-nations that enjoy strategic positions or resources – be they demographic, military or economic – are likely to do better than more marginal communities, which may face the threat of genocide, mass-population transfers or coercive assimilation. Better, in short, to be Tartarstan than Chechnya, or Croatia rather than Bosnia. There is no need to elaborate further: power politics, and power resources, provide an alternative (or at least a supplementary and overdetermining) selection mechanism to that implicit in Gellner's theory.[72]

The typology and forms of nationalism

Gellner's typology was an admirable effort at theoretical parsimony. Three dimensions are used to generate four types of nationalism (outside of or against satisfied nation-states): western liberal nation-alism, ethnic nationalism, diaspora nationalism and mature homogeneous nationalism.

There are, however, problems with the typology, even if we leave aside the simplicity of the dimensions. First, its explanatory capacities are implicitly limited to nationalist conflicts within states; it has little to say about nationalist conflicts between states. Secondly, it is not clear that classical liberal western nationalism emerged from the conjunction of a clash between educated power-holders from one high culture facing educated non-power-holders from another high culture, whereas ethnic

nationalism emerges from a clash between educated power-holders from one high culture facing uneducated non-power-holders from a low culture. Gellner cited as the classic exemplars of classical liberal western nationalism the 'unification nationalisms' of Italy and Germany, and suggested that 'a few battles' and 'some diplomacy' were all that were required to sort out the right political roofs for the previously subordinated high cultures. By contrast, in eastern Europe and the Balkans matters were much messier, because nationalism was mobilised behind 'a high culture as yet not properly crystallised' which made matters a great deal more ferociously 'ethnic' - population expulsions, liquidations, coercive assimilation and other horrors occurred. Gellner euphemistically recognises the 'markedly un-benign'[73] forms German and Italian nationalisms took in the twentieth century but does so in a parenthesis that almost suggests that it is a problem for John Plamenatz, who developed one form of the contrast between western and eastern nationalisms, rather than for him! Yet, German and Italian nationalisms were markedly 'un-benign' in frontier zones. Indeed the German variety notoriously excelled Balkan nationalism in its bloodthirstiness.

This difficulty suggests that the important difference between ethnic (or what Gellner calls Habsburg) nationalism and classical liberal (or western) nationalism is not the availability of a high culture functional for modernity in the latter case but not in the former, but rather, amongst other things, the fact that in the Habsburg-type of nationalism there are multiple and roughly equal but intermixed and counterentropic cultures (i.e., B1, B2 . . . B*n*), whereas in the classical liberal case the B group can feasibly homogenise -- or at least courteously control - all the possible other Bs in its nation-building ambitions. Alternatively, some nationalists can afford to be liberal - and choose to be so, while others fear that they cannot afford to be liberal - and choose to act accordingly.

The key complaint I am making here is that the typology was used by Gellner to classify actual historical 'types' which do not follow logically from it. The typology is only useful for considering 'homogeneous' and 'bicultural' situations; and it cannot, by definition, be used to explain 'multicultural' situations.[74] 'The typology is also a typology of cultural nationalisms, rather than one of political nationalisms, which have been far more common in the literature on the subject.[75] And precisely because the typology is bereft of political content - other than a very crude distinction between power-holders and non-power-holders - it is difficult to assent to Gellner's illustrations of his 'types'. For example, exclusionary and integral nationalisms (which normally have a strong ethnic content - although frequently denied in, e.g., the French case)

have developed amongst peoples possessed of a high culture in combat with those who also have a high culture; while inclusive and civic assimilationist nationalisms have developed amongst peoples who have not historically had a crystallised high culture but have been engaged in combat with those who have had a high culture (e.g., the contemporary Eritreans).

The apolitical character of Gellner's theory

Gellner's theory of nationalism rests on cultural and materialist premises. What it appears to lack is a sustained and developed sense of the political - with the notable exception of Gellner's perception of the precariousness of western liberal pluralism, and his preparedness to give retrospective thanks to nationalism for preserving it. The apolitical charge can be substantiated in several ways:

(i) his typology is geared towards explaining the development or thwarting of nationalist secessionism, but does not provide a politically sensitive account of what may dampen nationalist secessionism;

(ii) the theory appears to rely on culturally or materially reductionist accounts of political motivation;

(iii) as we have already claimed Gellner neglects the role of power-politics in explaining which cultures become nations, and the possibility that nation-builders explicitly see the functional relationship between nationalism and modernity which he posits;

(iv) although Gellner sees the connections between nationalism and egalitarianism in modern societies, he does not, strangely enough, see the mutually reinforcing relationships between nationalism, egalitarianism and democratisation;

(v) and lastly, he displays contempt for nationalist doctrines.

These points are elaborated below.

(i) Gellner did not provide a politically sensitive account of what may dampen nationalist secessionism. He appeared to assume that the range of possibilities in modern times is bifurcated: there is a simple choice between nationalist homogenisation through assimilation, and nation-list secessionism which produces another nationalist homogenisation; Nowadays people can live only in units defined by a shared culture, and internally mobile and fluid. Genuine cultural pluralism ceases to be viable under current conditions.[76]

This argument is not empirically tenable, unless it is rephrased as an

equilibrium theory, which asserts that homogeneous nationalism is the most stable outcome in modern times. In modern times states have frequently adopted what John McGarry and I call strategies for eliminating national and ethnic differences, through four principal devices: genocide, mass-population transfers, territorial restructuring through partitions/secessions, and cultural engineering through integration or assimilation.[77] Their widespread usage confirms the intuitive sense in Gellner's idea of a nationalist homogenising tendency. Yet one initial qualification must be made: political integration of diverse peoples often occurs without full-scale cultural assimilation, which suggests that Gellner too easily assumed that a political nationalism must be a (high) cultural nationalism.

More importantly here, modern political entities have also developed strategies for managing national and ethnic differences that, prima facie, counteract the potency of nationalist homogenisation. There are four major 'macro-methods' through which genuine cultural pluralism (if not democracy) may operate: systems of control; arbitration; federation/autonomy; and consociation. The last three of these are compatible with liberal and egalitarian pluralist principles.[78] Throughout modernity these methods have existed at various times, and in many parts of the world, and new versions of them are continually springing into being. Thus Belgium has recently federalised, South Africa is (or was?) temporarily consociationalised, and the European Union is increasingly embattled because of the ambitions of federalists.

All four of these systems of cultural pluralism, viz. control, arbitration, federation and consociation, may, as Gellner's theory suggests, be less stable than homogeneous nation-states. Systems of control, like empires, communist dictatorships and majoritarian or 'ethnic democracies', as some prefer to call systems dominated by a Staatsvolk, have shattered in many places. An orthodox Gellnerian might, reasonably, classify some of these cases as imperial 'hang-overs' from 'Agraria', succumbing to modernising pressures – the break-up of Ethiopia might be an exemplary illustration. External and internal arbitrations of ethnic conflicts are also infrequently successful.[79] Democratic biethnic or multiethnic federations are few and in regular crises. Czechoslovakia broke up very quickly after democratisation. Consociations frequently break down, and when they are successful they can lead to integration, as some believe has occurred through 'depillarisation' in the Netherlands, or they can be transit mechanisms to record a shift in ethnic power, as may be happening before our eyes in South Africa.

Yet the persistence of such strategies, and regimes based upon them, are empirical embarrassments for Gellner's theory. The equilibrium

condition of one nation, one state, seems to be continually elusive. Switzerland is a real anomaly for Gellner's theory. Multiethnic and multinational states in which there is a common sense of political (not cultural) nationhood exist. Some would even argue that Gellner lived in one – though as an Irishman I cannot be expected to be as generous as others might be on that point.[80] The key issue is that Gellner's theory too readily assumes that the general case, that the political nation and the cultural nation must be one, is the universal and, in the long run, the irresistible tendency. While Gellner admits that nationalism is 'occasionally defeated by some other force or interest, or by inertia',[81] he leaves little for the creative possibilities of political design and architecture. Constitutional and political engineers do not figure in this sociologically reductionist conception of modernity, in which all nationalisms must (eventually) be cultural nationalisms.

(ii) Although he denied it, Gellner appeared to rely on culturally or materially reductionist accounts of nationalists' political motivations. He defended himself against the thesis that he was economically reductionist, suggesting that it is a parody to claim that the nationalist foot-soldier fights for his tobacco shop pension. Nevertheless the impression is conveyed in his writings that job-hunting and job-deprived intelligentsias and proletarians provide the nationalist personnel. Gellner recognised that a range of cultural humiliations and repressions may provoke nationalist protests and insurrections, but once experience of repression, as opposed to blocked social mobility, explains the propensity to engage in nationalist movements then we appear to have moved some distance from industrial society theory. A flexible and non-repressive regime, that has authentically egalitarian and pluralist characteristics, may be able to thwart secessionist pressures precisely because it gives the culturally and educationally differentiated a share in political institutions. In short, the political regime within which national minorities operate, rather than their material or cultural grievances, may best explain their predispositions to be secessionists, federalists or consociationalists, and that is not obvious in the texts Thought and Change or Nations and Nationalism.

(iii) We have seen that Gellner underplayed the role of power-politics in explaining which cultures become nations, and the possibility that nation-builders explicitly see the functional relationship between nationalism and modernity. In this respect he appears as a strict historical materialist: nationalist politics is the superstructural by-product of cultural fissures that are in turn shaped by the uneven diffusion of industrialism. Yet numerous scholars suggest that the genesis of nationalism, and its maintenance, owed much to the functional relationship between nationalism and military success rather than economic performance.

The education and cultural standardisation of troops in the European *ancien régime* preceded that of the general citizenry, and there is more than humour in the thesis that a language differs from a dialect in that the former has an army and a navy. The state bureaucracies of the old European regimes were mechanisms for the genesis of 'official nation-alism', partly through the Gellnerian mechanisms of the development of with vernacular high cultures produced by a new clerisy, the meritocratic literacy, the decay of sacred religious languages and their replacement bourgeoisie. These elites, however, deliberately used protonationalism for military purposes that operated autonomously from the logic of industrial society.

(iv) The connections between nationalism and egalitarianism in modern societies were persuasively observed by Gellner, but he did not spell out the mutually reinforcing relationships between nationalism, egalitarianism and democratisation. The first political nationalisms in the USA and France were explicitly democratic in character,[82] and there are social structural arguments, congenial to Gellner's philosophy of history, which explain why the wider distribution of power-resources in modernity has made democratic outcomes more likely than in agrarian societies.[83] Preoccupied with the miracle of western liberalism, and the virtues of its civil society, Gellner appeared to assume that democratisa-tion has been a lucky accident in some industrialised societies, rather than a systemic trait. Yet it is odd to take the view that nationalism is no accidental by-product of modernisation, indeed to claim that it is intrinsic to its more egalitarian conditions, but not to notice that exactly the same arguments can be made about democratisation. Moreover, the relationships, politically and culturally, between nationalism and demo-cratisation, at least at the doctrinal level are very clear, or, at least, so one can maintain.

(v) It was central to Gellner's definition of nationalism that the doctrine holds that nations should be ruled by conationals. It is central to liberal nationalism that that should be the case with the express consent of the conationals. Nationalism, with qualifications, is therefore a defensible doctrine for modern liberals, and so there is no necessary reason why someone convinced of the explanatory merits of Gellner's account of the roots of nationalism must share his contempt for nationalist political doctrine. Consistent nationalists hold that all nations should be free, free to express themselves, culturally and politically, and, that this freedom is constrained by other nations' rights to the same cultural and political freedom. Nationalism can be a liberal political doctrine, one which emphasises freedom, with at least the following corollaries:

(i) that all people are or should be members of nations;
(ii) that membership of a nation is a beneficial good;
(iii) that nations are the most important cultural and political collectiv-ities;
(iv) that all nations have the right to determine their form of self-government and, relatedly, that all nations have the right to self-determination; and lastly
(v) that the activities of states should, in general, be subordinated to nationalist principles.

Gellner, like most postwar academic commentators on nationalism, refused to treat nationalism seriously as a political doctrine because he shared, understandably, the anti-nationalist animus of the European intelligentsia who matured during or after the Nazi holocaust (although he did so with greater intellectual detachment and hard-headedness). He happily conceded to cosmopolitan critics of nationalism that nation-alist authors are either self-evidently vacuous or incoherent. His theory of nationalism is consequently vulnerable to the charge that it ignores the autonomous significance of political doctrine in shaping social life – which is not, be it noted, an argument that rescues Kedourie's approach to nationalism by the back door.

The claim can be made, but not fully defended here, that nationalist political doctrine is not merely not vacuous, but that all self-professedly modern political doctrines, liberal, socialist or conservative are parasitic upon nationalist assumptions; and that the political success of these doctrines in argument and political struggle rests on these assumptions. Gellner suggested that nationalism has received little attention from political philosophers because 'there was not enough in the way of good doctrines and texts, which is the kind of material they used to like, for them to get their teeth into'. Even if they had, he maintained, nationalist thinkers could not really have made much difference: 'If one of them had fallen, others would have stepped into their place.' In any case 'their precise doctrines are hardly worth analysing' since nationalist ideology 'suffers from a pervasive false consciousness . . . we shall not learn too much about nationalism from the study of its own prophets',[84]

This style of argument was characteristically provocative.[85] Gellner told his readers that nationalist thought is not worth examining in much the same manner that the *philosophes* and Marxists held that religious doctrine was not worth examining, because it represented an inchoate mixture of myth, superstition, error and false consciousness. Indeed Gellner's criticism of Kedourie was just like Marx's criticism of the *philosophes*: do not waste one's breath examining the bad ideas, instead

seek to explain their material roots. Gellner presumed not just that nationalist ideas are bad, or low-brow, as Kedourie complained, but that they are epiphenomenal. The message was that he had no wish to disturb the bad press which nationalists' writings have received. This bad press holds nationalism responsible for many disasters and catastrophes, wars, forced mass-population transfers, imperialisms, fascisms and genocides. Depending on the particular intellectual's account of the source of all evil, nationalism is held to be an expression of patriarchy; capitalism or socialism: feminists interpret nationalism as a by-product of patriarchal thought, penile aggression and other features of male malevolence; Marxists hold capitalism culpable for nationalism; while economic liberals generally see it as a species of collectivism because nationalists demand public regulation of capital and labour markets and are critical of the Ricardian theory of free trade.

One reason Gellner did not take nationalist doctrines seriously is that there have been few universalist theorists of nationalism, and those that have existed, like Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, have usually been read, criticised and admired for their nonnationalist writings. Moreover, universalist themes in nationalist authors, like Burke, Herder, Fichte and List, have generally been seen as motivated by the particularist concerns of their national cause.[86] The naturally parochial audience to whom exponents of nationalism have addressed themselves has meant that their writings and arguments are not treated with respect by cosmopolitan intellectuals addressing other cosmopolitan intellectuals. This cosmopolitan bias in the reading of nationalist writing is something one should never forget. However, rather than discuss Rousseau's *Social Contract* and *Government of Poland*, Burke's views of political obligation, Herder's theory of language or Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* I shall simply note here that liberal nationalist doctrine may be no less coherent than liberalism, conservatism or socialism,[87] and that although nationalism often comes packaged with fairy-tales its myths are no less plausible than the myths of social contracts, of class struggles, of wars between the sexes, of immemorial traditions, of intimations or of natural harmony of interests.

Lest we forget the enemies of nationalism and national self-determination have been, and are, imperialists, cosmopolitans and the godly. And their professed fears about the exclusivism of some nationalisms, historically understandable, can be nicely answered: 'Particularistic nationalism bears the same relation to universal nationalism as self-ishness does to individualism, selfishness being the pursuit of one's own interests without regard to the interests of others, and individualism being the doctrine that it is legitimate to pursue one's own

interests on the same terms on which theirs are free to pursue others.'[88]

Nationalism is most famously associated with the doctrine of national self-determination, which it is fashionable to scorn as incoherent and destructively chaotic in its repercussions.[89] Yet the idea is simple enough: a nation must be free to establish its preferred form of government, whether that be as a constituent component of a multinational state or federation or as an independent state. (Gellner mistakenly implies that only separatist or irredentist nationalisms are properly nationalist.) The idea of national self-determination is attacked as dangerous because it spells chaos to the world's map-makers, threatens the permanent instability of frontiers,[90] and fails to specify who constitutes the 'self' with the right to self-determination, and how that self might be realised. Properly understood, however, national self-determination is a recursive principle of democratic consent: every nation should have the right to seek self-determination, including the right to secede to create its own state, providing the members of the nation consent to such self-determination, and providing they grant the same right to those who do not regard themselves as part of the nation concerned.[91] Imperialists, cosmopolitans and the godly riposte with searching questions: 'who are the people?', 'what if there is more than one nation in a given region?', and 'how does one ensure that each nation is granted self-determination in territories where nations are intermingled?' These are important questions, but they do not demonstrate the incoherence of national self-determination. All that they prove in the first place is that implementing the idea of self-determination may not be easy. Liberals, socialists, conservatives and feminists have difficulties with working out the implementation of their core ideas, so nationalists are not alone in their problems with their doctrines. Note, secondly, that there are ways in which multiple nations may grant one another free and equal self-determination – through consociational or federal arrangements, or even through genuinely agreed partitions and negotiated exchanges of populations. Indeed the liberal nationalist must agree with John Stuart Mill that there are cases where nationalities are so intermingled that the nations concerned must make a virtue of necessity by developing appropriately complex forms of political accommodation and respect, such as democratic condominia.[92]

Nationalism implies that loyalty to the nation should be the first virtue of a citizen. This idea has internal and external implications. It suggests that loyalty to the national community should transcend loyalty to more particular identifications, personal, cultural, economic, or political, and that members of one's nation have higher moral claims

than members of other nations. Whatever may be said of the merits of such thinking, and note carefully that I am not endorsing it without qualification, it is scarcely fair to say that it is incoherent. Nationalist moral doctrine is at odds with cosmopolitanism – the doctrine that one owes equal duties to all members of the human species – and with personalism – the doctrine that you owe first moral obligations to your personal friends;[93] and it is at odds with statism – that your first loyalty is to the state (except when one's nation is a nation-state). Cosmopolitanism, personalism, statism and nationalism have all attracted rational arguments and exponents – and it is not credible to insist that nationalism is alone in its weaknesses. Nationalist thinking is not incompatible with the belief that nations may be duty-bound towards other nations; indeed it is *internationalism* proper to observe (genuine) international law and to provide charitable assistance to other nations. In brief, liberal nationalism does not deserve the contempt with which Gellner wishes to be associated.

Nationalism also has prescriptive public policy content, independently of particular political ideologies. Most obviously, nationalism suggests a doctrine of citizenship. Who should and who should not automatically be entitled to membership of the nation? Nationalists vary in their answer to the question, depending on the stress they give to ethnic or civic conceptions of the nation, but at least they provide an answer. Liberals, socialists and conservatives in practice accept the nationalist answer or debate its frontiers. The nationalist theory of citizenship is in turn closely bound to the development of the modern welfare state, in which, in principle, conationals are treated as members of a collectivity engaged in mutual insurance and assurance. Nationalism also has prescriptive implications for education – educating potential citizens in a national culture, in respect for nationally endorsed institutions, in prescribing the moral universe of rights and obligations, in preserving and developing distinctive cultural idiosyncrasies, and in freeing the educated from the prejudices, be they patriarchal or otherwise, of the home or the sect. Nationalism additionally limits the operation of free markets: nationalists rarely believe in the unrestrained movement of labour, though they may embrace the free movement of capital.[94] Nationalists are anti-Smithians – Adam not Anthony – who seek to inhibit particular consequences of homogenising capitalism, or for that matter of homogenising cosmopolitan socialism. They have, in the current parlance, some minimal communitarian values. These are core elements of coherent political reasoning endorsed tacitly by millions of people on this planet. They may, of course, be mistaken, but they are not obviously mistaken.

Nationalism should not be equated with fascism or racism, as Gellner recognised, although it may become infected by the latter notions. Nationalism, as a doctrine, from Herder onwards recognised the equality of nations. In both its romantic and instrumental-developmental versions it celebrates the diversity of national differences, and, therefore, in principle, is not genocidal or racist. Racism and religious creeds have arguably been more responsible for genocides than nationalism. Racism, by contrast with nationalism, ranks races in an evolutionary and moral hierarchy, and is therefore dispositionally genocidal; while religious believers, dogmatically convinced of their possession of the truth, may well be disposed to engage in mass killings of non-believers. The fusion of racism and religious chauvinism with illiberal nationalism is a dangerous and potentially murderous phenomenon but to suggest that the rise of nationalism *is* responsible for genocides in the modern world is contestable. The argument may seem plausible when nationalism is defined as the ethnocentric glorification of the in-group, or as the religious deification of the nation, or in Conor Cruise O'Brien's characteristically inflammatory words as 'the most effective engine for the mobilisation of hatred and destruction that the world has ever known'.[95] The 'argument' is that from the ideal of the nation-state it is but a short step to putting people into cattle trucks to exterminate them. The implication is that nationalism cannot tolerate ethnic, racial or religious differences but must eliminate them. Such arguments are refuted, at least to my mind, by the existence of multiethnic, multiracial and multireligious nations, and by the fact of peaceful international relations between liberal democratic nations. Yet because Gellner treated nationalism as the doctrine of 'one culture, one state' he leaves it open to the charge that its central doctrine spells a simple choice between assimilation on the one hand, and genocide and forced expulsion or emigration on the other hand. But even vigorously nationalising nation-states have a range of intermediate strategies: their choices are not confined to *either* compulsory assimilation *or* genocide.

Nationalism: Gellner's elaborations, responses to his critics and his last words

In the last two decades of his life Gellner re-engaged with his eastern European roots and with Marxist Leninist scholarship in the Soviet Union, experiences that culminated in the establishment of a Centre for the Study of Nationalism at the Central European University. These activities helped generate a range of essays and books, in which Gellner elaborated his theory, modified it in places, and replied to his critics.

Nationalism

Nationalism is a typically fluent and witty Gellnerian long essay, or mini-book. It maintains the key arguments of *Nations and Nationalism*, especially its philosophy of history and its industrial society theory; defends the theory against real and alleged misinterpretations; recognises, honestly, some of its real difficulties; and lastly, adds some novel perspectives.

Elaborations, qualifications and defence mechanisms

Three key elaborations and qualifications are made in defence of the theory against unnamed critics. First, Gellner denies that his theory is reductive in the sense that it neglects the psychological authenticity and depth of the emotional power of nationalism. Not so, he replies. The merit of his theory is that it seeks to explain why these emotions exist, why they are invested in nations and their fates, and why they feel (and are) authentic and powerful in the breasts of nationals.[96] Secondly, while insisting that he is a pure and proper paid-up modernist, Gellner recognises in multiple passages that some premodern cultures were better equipped than others to become modern national cultures. As he put it, intellectual modernists are anti-creationists on the schooling of children in biology, but they are the creationists in this debate, whereas their opponents are the Darwinians, emphasising slow evolutionary change with occasionally important discontinuities in the nature of ethnic communities. Gellner finally accepted that some nations have genuine and authentic navels, meaning that they have ancient roots (as Anthony Smith maintains); others have had navels invented for them (in Gellner's view, the majority); whereas still others are 'navel-less'. It is, however, an empirical question, to be resolved by research, which of the three types of nation is most common. This is a fair and reasonable concession on Gellner's part, but he did not address whether states built on authentic ancient national pasts are more stable and durable than those that have had their national pasts invented – or which simply lack any past, authentic or invented.[97] Lastly, and importantly, Gellner partially downplayed the primacy of industrialisation in the aetiology of nationalism: bureaucratic centralisation (and its standardising impli-

The most important is the posthumous book, *Nationalism*, which integrates material contained in essay form in *Encounters with Nationalism* and in other occasional contributions. The most important of the essays is his 'Reply to my Critics' – in which he responded directly to the arguments made above, as well as to those made by other critics.

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cations), and 'Protestant-type' religions (with their egalitarian and high-culture diffusing properties) are granted their due as semi-independent agents in the generation of nationalism. Nevertheless, the functional link between industrialisation and nationalism is maintained, and its 'last instance' role in Gellner's theory is apparent.

There is one important recognition of difficulty: Gellner recognises that Greek nationalism in the 1820s preceded industrialisation – 'the Morea did not look like the Lancashire dales'[98] – a matter of no small import as he also believed that the first nationalist rising was that of the Greeks. Leave to one side whether the originality of the Greeks in this case is suspect: the United Irishmen of the 1790s, the North American revolutionaries of the 1770s, and Bolívar's South American revolution-aries, arguably have prior claims.[99] Instead, let us focus on how Gellner seeks to finesse the difficulty. In an explicitly *ad hoc* argument he claimed that despite their peripheral agrarian location the 'Balkan bandits', i.e., the Greeks, were very susceptible to the diffusion of Enlightenment and Romantic ideas. Though no Balkan specialist, I suspect the argument is correct, but the trouble is that it does not solve Gellner's problem. He has invoked the autonomous role of doctrine and ideas and their cultural resonance, rather than industrialisation, to account for the nationalists in the first nationalist uprising. Elsewhere he made a better response to Ken Minogue: industrialisation casts a long shadow over preindustrial peoples, enabling certain communities to anticipate its consequences and reorder their identities and actions accordingly.[100] That response is consistent with the filter explanation I discussed above.

Novelties

There are three novelties in *Nationalism* compared with *Nations and Nationalism* – though the first two were foreshadowed in essays pub-lished between 1984 and 1994. The first novelty is Gellner's new preference for a more explicitly historical conception of the stages of nationalism, and the 'time-zones' of nationalism within Europe – and his apparent loss of interest in his own typology of nationalism-inducing situations. The five stages are the time of the Congress of Vienna, the age of Irredentism, the age of (Woodrow) Wilsonism, the era of ethnic cleansing and the age of attenuated and satisfied nationalism. I shall not quibble here with the historical details in this delineation of stages – though I could. What should be apparent to the reader is the absence of a neat link – or attempts to forge links – to either industrialisation or uneven economic development, in accounting for the transitions between the stages. With the exception of the era of attenuated

nationalism the sequence of stages seems to operate according to the rhythms and ruptures of the politics of the great powers rather than the functional logic of industrialism and the stresses of uneven development. By contrast, the great merit of the typology in *Nations and Nationalism* was that it attempted to link nationalist types to the variables emphasised in industrial society theory.

What of Gellner's three (or is it four?) time-zones of nationalism in Europe? In the first zone, the Atlantic seaboard, nation and state cohabited in premodernity before the era of modern nationalism. From the cohabitation came Portugal, Spain, France and England. In the second zone, the nation existed but was stateless, and had to be forged though war and diplomacy. The bride was ready, but a groom had to be found: so shot-gun marriages occurred between Germany and Prussia, and between Italy and Piedmont. In the third zone, neither the nation nor the state existed, and ethnic cleansing was necessary to generate the nation-state form. Now we are in the lands of the Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov empires. The fourth time-zone, was the area captured by the USSR (and Yugoslavia). The question there is: in which of the five stages and which of the three time-zones will the successor entities find themselves?[101] And so on. This tale and its question are not without interest, though the tale does read suspiciously like the potted story of nationalism of Hans Kohn, Alfred Cobban and others – in which nationalism, such a good thing in the west, becomes an increasingly venomous and murderous creature as it travels east. Gellner's defence would be that he is seeking to explain the truth in that tale – why the sociology of central and eastern Europe meant that the repercussions of nationalism would be very different there to what happened around the Atlantic seaboard. Nevertheless his is a great-power centred account. In which time-zones or stages do we fit Ireland, the Low Countries or the Scandinavians?[102] But at least the time-zones, unlike the stages, do have the merit of being linked to his wider theory: the equilibrium condition of modern politics and culture is the nation-state; its formation in particular locations will be a function of the preceding national, political, agrarian and industrial materials.

The second novelty in *Nationalism* is Gellner's explicit consideration of the relationship between Islam and nationalism. This question married two fields in which he distinguished himself as an original scholar. The combination, however, seems unhappy. Some of the very traits that Gellner had sketched to argue that Islam is functional for modernisation[103] are the same as the cluster he associates with nationalism – egalitarianism, diffusion of a high culture, non-magicality, and unmediated relations between the individual and community. The traits

which allegedly make Islam secularisation-resistant are then invoked to claim that Islam can, and may well trump nationalism as a legitimation formula, in a way that Christianity can no longer do in the west. Indeed, Gellner claims that fundamentalism is presently victorious over nationalism – though he did not make this a prediction for the future.[104] Though no Arabist or Islamicist I have great scepticism about the merits of these arguments – perhaps because I want to believe that Islam will not be secularisation-resistant, in the long run, and certainly because I do not want to accept that contemporary Algeria has this message for the Islamic world: *de te fabula narratur*.

Gellner applies his arguments almost wholly to Arabic lands – though he has interesting remarks to make about Kemalist Turkey and Khomeini's Iran. But one does not need to be an Islamic specialist to see the difficulties with his case. Kemalist and post-Kemalist Turkey show that Islam can compete with nationalism, whether or not it controls the state, but Gellner himself noted the vitality of Kemalism as an institutionalised 'Decembrism' that controls Turkish Islam, and a more corrupt version of Decembrism still persists in Algeria. Elsewhere it is not evident that fundamentalist Islam has trumped nationalism in South-East Asia, South Asia, or indeed the Middle East. Has Islam triumphed over nationalism in Malaysia and Indonesia, or is it in alliance with it? The break-up of Pakistan in 1971 suggests that a polyethnic or multinational state in which Islam is the sole unifying cultural bond rests on brittle foundations. There have been wars between Islamic states with different dominant ethnonational groups, e.g. the Iran-Iraq war. The ethnonational instability of present-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, or of the successor states in former Soviet Central Asia, is a commonplace. The treatment of Muslim Kurds by Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria points, if anything, to the primacy of ethnonational conflict over pan-Islamic integration. Gellner, in my judgement, too readily concedes Islamist anomalies for his general theory of nationalism – anomalies that he would, I suspect, have sought to explain away if they had been presented by other area specialists or other comparative sociologists of religion.

The last novelty of *Nationalism* is that Gellner felt prompted into politics proper, into making political prescriptions, or drawing practical implications.[105] He describes these prescriptions as 'banal', perhaps because he may have been conscious of how far they support the conventional wisdom of Euro-liberals. He rejected the doctrine of national self-determination as 'rubbish', and maintained that there can be no just solutions to national conflicts[106] – though two pages later this had become an argument that there can be no solutions to national conflicts based on justice alone.[107] He expressed a preference for

stability, i.e. the avoidance of the break-up of existing states without an orderly passage to successor regimes. He also hoped that the (shared?) affluence of industrial society would attenuate most conflicts, and that the 'de-fetishisation' of territory as a means to wealth would simultaneously entrench stability and economic growth. More significantly, he hoped that major order-maintenance functions could become supranational, while social functions could become cantonised, so that cultural pluralism could co-exist with the benefits of modernity.

'Reply to My Critics'

In his lengthy, generous and funny 'Reply to my Critics'[108] Gellner made two important replies to objections to his theory of nationalism. The first, already discussed above, was to reject the claim that his theory is 'reductionist', that it ignores the power of nationalist identity, for individuals and communities. 'This he argued, is unfair, though he conceded that this misinterpretation is widespread. Nationalism is explained as important *both* for people's interests and their identities – which are, of course, partially interdependent. His final restatement of his position was unambiguous. Personally I find it convincing, and Table 2.2 is intended to provide a simple expression of Gellner's views on this issue compared to what I take to be the position of some other theorists. Nevertheless, in *Thought and Change* and *Nations and Nationalism*, the stress is on the instrumentality of nations and nationalism rather than upon their expressive identifications – so, for me at any rate, late Gellner corrects early Gellner, or at least brings into sharper relief what young Gellner believed.

Secondly, Gellner responded to the charge of functionalism. He denied that his theory is teleological; avoided deciding whether it should be classified as a (non-teleological) functionalist argument; but instead insisted that it is causal. Industrial society, its diffusion, its discontents and its uneven impact upon existing ethnic and cultural terrains cause nationalism. His reply means that my labours above were not in vain. A filter explanation – e.g. nationalists realise that nationalism is beneficial for modernisation – can account for the self-conscious nation-builders, whose existence no one doubts. It can also account for the diffusion of nationalism – and indeed for the anomalies occasioned by Greek nationalism before Greece or its hinterland had experienced industrialisation. However, the much stronger functionalist claim, that nationalism is functionally explained (without intentionality) by its beneficial consequences for industrial society, or the straightforward causal claim that industrial society causes nationalism, are now brought into sharp relief

Table 2.2 *Gellner compared with other theorists of nationalism*

Nations are	primarily tools of manipulative elites or ideological masks for interests	primarily expressions of authentically felt identities	*both* tools of elites and authentic expressions of identities
perennial and permanent features of humankind		Pierre van den Berghe	Johann Gottfried Herder (& most nationalists)	Johann Gottlieb Fichte
(often) continuous with premodern *ethnies*			John Armstrong Anthony Smith	John Hutchinson
(mostly) modern	Paul Brass Eric Hobsbawm		Ernest Gellner Benedict Anderson Walker Connor

as strong hypotheses open for empirical testing or modification. To treat the causal claim properly serious empirical research must establish the operational meaning of industrial society (or a range of its possible meanings) and its (alleged) most important nationalism-engendering traits, and proceed to test their interrelationships.[109]

Conclusion

What is living in Gellner's philosophy of nationalism?

With qualifications, Ernest Gellner's arguments about the elective affinity between nationalism and modernity are plausible. His criticisms of naturality, wrong address, dark gods, and accidental-but-bad-ideas theories of the genesis and diffusion of nationalism are short, sharp and persuasive. Nationalism or nations have not been permanent features of human history – or so the evidence suggests. Nationalism has both expressive and instrumental dimensions that appear to be linked to modernisation, and its imperatives. Nationalism may be used to legitimate elites and counter-elites, it may be an ideology of mobilisation especially favoured by the disaffected intelligentsia – though that does not mean that it is specially embraced by 'the lesser-examination passing classes' in Hobsbawn's inaccurate phrase.[110] Nationalist arguments may, of course, be manipulated for illiberal purposes: whether articulated by anti-colonial movements, or by established political elites, they may be used to obtain and exploit territorial, administrative and

economic monopolies. Yet like Gellner we must accept that unless nationalist doctrine made some rough sense of the modern world, unless that world continually stimulated such identity formations, then it could not be tapped by manipulative elites: why else is nationalist manipulation so often more successful than many other kinds? Lastly, on his own logic his theory has greater retrodictive or predictive power than he initially thought, and it need not deny that successful nation-building may depend much more on successful innovation than on fabricationist invention.

What is dead (or at least doubtful) in Gellner's philosophy of nationalism?

The criticisms sketched here are not fatal to Gellner's theory; they are merely necessary qualifications or reformulations. What is dead (or at least doubtful) is his explicitly functionalist argumentation. What is also doubtful is the primacy he gives to industrialisation in explaining the genesis and maintenance of nationalism, unless industrialisation means something broadly synonymous with modernisation, commercialisation and democratisation. Other mechanisms have been conducive to the genesis and maintenance of nationalism – including explicitly political mechanisms, and it is hard to see how the primacy of one or another mechanism might be proven. Gellner's typology of nationalisms is deficient in its range, and defectively elaborated; while his later historical stages, and time-zones, are specifically European, problematic and disconnected from the central premises of his own theory.

Many of the dead or doubtful aspects of Gellner's philosophy of nationalism, in my view, stemmed from Gellner's almost Olympian apoliticism. His last words on the subject, his last political prescriptions, express anxieties about nationalism's destabilising properties, whilst his hopes were expressed, it seems to me, independently of his theoretical convictions. His theory holds that the nation-state is the equilibrium condition of modernity, so he had no good reason for his hopes of a different world-order in which power would be transferred both to supranational and sub-state levels. If however, the nation-state is just one political form amongst many capable of managing or eliminating ethnonational conflict, and if the nation-state can be structured in culturally pluralist ways (consociational, federal or through other modes of co-sovereignty), then the world may not be governed by the logic of the strong version of Gellner's theory.

In my judgement Gellner missed the interdependencies between nationalism and democratisation, and failed to treat nationalism as a

political doctrine that, when suitably furbished, is consistent with most of the liberal values Gellner held dear. Almost intellectually uninterested in ethics, perhaps because he didn't believe in their power, he was tempted to assume that just resolutions of ethnonational conflicts are impossible. That remains to be proven. National self-determination is not a doctrine which inexorably points towards madness and murder; and I am not alone in thinking that, suitably dressed, it might offer some prospect of structuring our world with both authority and justice, but then I believe that nationalism is the major form in which democratic consciousness expresses itself in the modern world. It will be to Ernest Gellner's eternal credit that his wonderfully wide-ranging, clear and often hilarious thought helps us all understand why that is so, and why it must be so.

NOTES

The subtitle of this chapter is stolen from Benedetto Croce's *What is Living and What is Dead in Hegel's Philosophy?*, but whereas Croce's relationship with Hegel was purely intellectual, my relationship with Gellner was personal. He was the external examiner of my Ph.D., and a reliable and generous referee in my academic career. For critical comments I am grateful to Brian Barry, Alan Beattie, James Kellas, James Mayall, David Miller, Karin von Hippel, George Schopflin, Albert Weale, and to my students at LSE. I am especially grateful to John A. Hall for his guidance and patience. I am also grateful but sad to have received, posthumously, Ernest Gellner's warm-spirited response to a previous version of this chapter.

The first draft of this chapter was presented to the Seminar on International Political Economy held at LSE in December 1993, a second to the Political Economy Seminar at the University of Western Ontario in March 1994. Three variations on this second draft resulted in publications: 'On the Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Ernest Gellner's Writings on Nationalism', *Papers in Political Economy*, University of Western Ontario, vol. 47, 1994; 'On the Nature of Nationalism: A Critical Appraisal of Ernest Gellner's Writings on Nationalism', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 27, 1997; and 'On the Nature of Nationalism: A Critical Appraisal of Ernest Gellner's Writings on Nationalism', in J. A. Hall and I. C. Jarvie, eds., *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, Amsterdam, 1996. This essay supersedes the preceding, not least because it alone considers all of Gellner's writings on nationalism, including those written after my first essay.

1 E. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, London, 1965, p. 151.
2 See especially ibid. 1973; 'Nationalism', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, vol. 3, 1973; 'Nationalism, or the New Confessions of a Justified Edinburgh Sinner', *Political Quarterly*, vol. 49, 1978; *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, 1983; 'Nationalism and the Two Forms of Cohesion in Complex Societies', in his *Culture, Identity and Politics*, Cambridge, 1987; 'Nationalism and Politics in Eastern Europe', *New Left Review*, no. 189,

1991; 'The Coming of Nationalism and its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class', in G. Balakrishnan, ed., *Mapping the Nation*, London, 1996; *Encounters with Nationalism*, Oxford, 1994; 'Reply to Critics', in Hall and Jarvie, *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*; and *Nationalism*, London, 1997.

3 A famous nineteenth-century illustration of a liberal criticism of nationalism is Lord Acton's 1862 essay on 'Nationality' (reprinted in J. R. Fears, ed., *Essays in the History of Liberty: Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, Indianapolis, 1985). A recent illustration of socialist criticism is E. Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge, 1990.

4 A later essay, presented in the Soviet Union, discussed further why both Marxism and liberalism have been wrong about nationalism, viz., 'From Kinship to Ethnicity', in *Encounters with Nationalism*.

5 The contemporary version of 'Dark Gods' theory is socio-biological, see, e.g. P. van den Berghes, *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, New York, 1981.

6 Gellner, *Thought and Change*, p. 149 and *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 130.

7 Gellner, *Thought and Change*, p. 151.

8 E. Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4th edn, London, 1985. Kedourie mocked the quest for a general theory of nationalism as 'the sociological temptation', identified Gellner's theory as 'a 'species of economism' and maintained that it did not 'fit the chronology either of nationalism or of industrialisation' (pp. 145, 147–8). The vicissitudes and political contradictions of Kedourie's own position on nationalism went unremarked by Gellner: Kedourie, a religiously orthodox Iraqi-born Jew, and a victim of ethnic cleansing from Baghdad, was a tacit critic of Zionism in 1960, but at the end of his life was a supporter of the state of Israel.

9 Gellner, *Thought and Change*, p. 152.

10 Ibid, p. 153. Gellner was citing the famous conclusion to Kedourie's *Nationalism*. Kedourie thought that his question was the only criterion of legitimacy capable of universal defence. Gellner replied in *Nations and Nationalism* (pp. 127–8) that:

The question which Professor Kedourie asks with such eloquence is indeed one which a typical burgher in an agrarian society would ask himself, if one morning he just heard that the local Pasha had been overthrown and replaced by an altogether new one. If, at that point, his wife dared ask of the burgher what language the new Pasha spoke in the intimacy of his home life – was it Arabic, Turkish, Persian, French or English? – the hapless burgher would give her a sharp look, and wonder how he would cope with all the new difficulties when, at the same time, his wife had gone quite mad. The sensible implication is that Kedourie's question is no longer coherent in a world in which accountable, participatory and representative government is possible, and in which a modern economy requires a national system of communication.

11 Gellner, *Thought and Change*, p. 155.

12 Ibid, pp. 155, 157.

13 Ibid, p. 159. Gellner added (p. 159, n. 1) that 'It is of course possible for nominally independent political units to exist in a kind of educationally parasitic way. But the present argument is not really undermined by the existence of Monaco or Andorra.'

14 Ibid, p. 160.

15 Ibid, p. 160.

16 Ibid, p. 166.

17 Ibid, p. 171.

18 Ibid, p. 168.

19 Ibid, p. 173.

20 Ibid, p. 173.

21 Ibid, p. 174.

22 Gellner could not consistently claim to reject this thesis and accept, as he appeared to do above (see p. 143), that some pre-modern cultures were *a* factor in making up the materials of modern nations.

23 Gellner, *Thought and Change*, p. 174. Highly educated French, Swiss-Deutsch and Italian-speakers frequently speak to each other in English as a neutral second language.

24 Ibid, p. 177.

25 Perhaps that explains why when Gellner re-expressed the argument in *Nations and Nationalism* nearly two decades later there were complaints that he had ignored the writings of North American scholars – see, e.g., B. Shafer's 'Review of Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*', *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, vol. 11, 1984. Many surveyors of writings on nationalism, and many students, appear to see little difference between Gellner's arguments and those of Karl Deutsch's *Nationalism and Social Communications*, Cambridge, MA, 1966. Yet there is this major difference: whereas Deutsch conveyed the notion that the idea of nationalism is transmitted by newspapers, books and radio (and now television) to previously non-nationalist peoples, Gellner insisted that it is the media, 'the pervasiveness and importance of abstract, centralised, standardised, one to many communication, which automatically engenders the core idea of nationalism, quite irrespective of what . . . is being put into the specific messages transmitted . . . That core message is that the style and language of the transmissions is important, that only he who can understand them, or can acquire such comprehension, is included in a moral and political community, and that he who does not and cannot, is excluded' (*Nations and Nationalism*, p. 127). In addition, unlike Deutsch's, Gellner's theory of nationalism does not suffer from facile optimism about the case with which peoples can be assimilated into 'nation-building' projects – for decisive criticism of Deutsch at this point, see W. Connor, 'Nation-building or Nation-destroying?', *World Politics*, vol 24, 1972.

26 See for example, B. Barry, 'Review of Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*', *Ethics*, vol. 95, 1984; J. Kellas, 'Review of *Nations and Nationalism*, *International Affairs*, vol. 60, 1984; A. D. Smith, 'Review of Nations and Nationalism', *Millennium*, vol. 13, 1983; B. Crick, 'Book Review: Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*', *Millennium*, vol. 13, 1983; and J. Dunn, 'For the Good of the Country', *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 21 October 1983.

27 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 129. One of Kedourie's arguments was that nationalism could be cleansed from the planet by the education students used to undergo when they took his courses on the History of Political Thought (Pierre Trudeau, one of Kedourie's students, acted on

Kedourie's premises, refusing to make significant concessions to Quebec nationalism, and thereby helped destabilise the Canadian federation).

Another implication was that Kant was the source of all evil. Gellner contested both Kedourie's history of ideas as well as his idealist insistence on the power of (bad) ideas. He defended Kant in *Nations and Nationalism* (p. 133), maintaining that there is no relationship, other than a verbal one, between individual 'self-determination' and 'national self-determination': Kant was 'a very model for that allegedly bloodless, cosmopolitan, emaciated ethic of the Enlightenment' which romantic nationalists detested. All that nationalists and Kant have in common is that neither are, in Kedourie's sense, respecters of tradition.

28 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 129–30.
29 Ibid., p. 57. The italics are mine.
30 Unlike Benedict Anderson who insists on the pivotal importance of 'print capitalism' (*Imagined Communities*, London, 1983), Gellner stressed the importance of print *per se*. Given that the large-scale production of bibles, so important in the development of European vernacular languages at the expense of Latin, was a state (or state–church) sponsored project, why should we regard capitalism, rather than the mass production of texts, as the salient cause in the origins and spread of languages?

Gellner shared Anderson's emphasis on the impersonal nature of the nation, but unlike Anderson had no time for the metaphoric pun involved in describing nations as 'imagined communities': a pun that plays on (and confuses) the difference between the non-real and the not-immediately-visual. Gellner's emphasis on the anonymous, impersonal and unmediated nature of nations captures what is best in Anderson's notion of 'imagined' community.

31 This philosophy was later stated at length in his *Plough, Sword and Book* (London, 1988), published coterminously with the end of Gellner's long engagement with Soviet Marxist scholarship – *State and Society in Soviet Thought*, Oxford, 1988.
32 Ibid., pp. 164–71.
33 Pre-modern examples might include Iceland, Korea, Thailand and Japan.
34 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 95. 'This argument is odd. It excludes a widespread form of nationalism, a reforming nationalism 'from above' - imposed by a Jacobin intelligentsia on a less than modern peasantry.
35 The square brackets are mine. Gellner strangely treats this case (ibid., p. 97) as a 'nonnationalist one' though it is plainly what historians would call a 'satisfied nationalism'. This suggests that his typology was directed towards explaining nationalist conflicts rather than forms of nationalism.
36 Ibid., p. 98.
37 The contrast between ethnic nationalism and western liberal nationalism is Gellner's reworking of John Plamenatz's contrast between eastern and western (European) nationalisms – itself not dissimilar to Hans Kohn's contrast between civic and ethnic nationalisms: see J. Plamenatz, 'Two Types of Nationalism', in E. Kamenka, ed., *Nationalism* (London, 1973) and H. Kohn, *Nationalism* (Princeton, 1955). Gellner argued (*Nations and*

Nationalism, p. 101) that the key advantage of his approach is that the contrast between 'western' and 'eastern' nationalism emerged logically from the three dimensions of this typology.

38 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 101–9.
39 Ibid., p. 96.
40 Ibid., pp. 63–87.
41 Ibid., p. 64.
42 Ibid., p. 65. The emphasis is mine.
43 Ibid., p. 47.
44 Ibid., pp. 43–50.
45 See *inter alia*: G. A. Cohen, *Karl Marx's Theory of History*, Oxford, 1978, pp. 249–96; J. Elster, *Making Sense of Marx*, Cambridge, 1985, pp. 27–37; and B. O'Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History*, Oxford, 1989, chs. 4–5.
46 P. Anderson, 'Science, Politics, Enchantment', in J. A. Hall and I. C. Jarvie, eds., *Transition to Modernity: Essays on Power, Wealth and Belief*, Cambridge, 1992, p. 207.
47 Ibid., p. 140.
48 I use the expressions 'modern society' and 'modernisation' throughout, in anticipation of the difficulties attached to Gellner's arguments about the relationships between nationalism and industrialisation.
49 See Jon Elster's formalisation of functionalist argumentation, *Ulysses and the Sirens*, Cambridge, 1979, pp. 28–35 and *Explaining Technical Change*, Cambridge, 1983.
50 Elster, *Ulysses and the Sirens*, p. 30.
51 The same logic explains why nationalists were often liberal feminists, promoting the education of boys and girls, and men and women, outside the home in national educational systems.
52 J. J. Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, trans. W. Kendall, Indianapolis, 1985, ch. 12 and ch. 4.
53 This is the principal burden of M. Mann, 'The Emergence of Modern European Nationalism', in Hall and Jarvie, eds., *Power, Wealth and Belief*.
54 There are multiple suggestive – and ambiguous – passages in his writings on this theme. Compare two paragraphs (from his *Muslim Society*, Cambridge, 1981) separated by a few pages:

The elective affinity of scripturalist rigorism or fundamentalism with the social and political needs of the period of industrialisation or 'development' is fairly clear . . . it may well be that, for the viability of a religion, its specific doctrines on faith and morals matter far less than their spirit. Whether that spirit can also remain compatible with an economically developed society, as opposed to a developing one, remains to be seen. (p. 61)

The two processes, 'purification' or radicalisation of religion, and nationalism, are often intimately intertwined, to a degree that it is hard to say which one is 'merely' the external form of the other. (p. 59)

55 In responding to Gellner, Kedourie advanced the remarkable view (*Nationalism*, p. 148), which does not survive any historical scrutiny, that 'the areas . . . where industrialism first appeared and made the greatest progress, i.e., Great Britain and the United States of America, are precisely those areas

where nationalism is unknown'. Only a truly deferential child of the British empire could hold such a pious view.

56 See inter alia H. Seton-Watson, Nations and States: An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism, London, 1977, pp. 15–88, which treats the British, French, Irish, Iberian, Dutch, Scandinavian, Swiss and Russian nations as 'old and continuous'.

57 J. Armstrong, Nations before Nationalism, Chapel Hill, 1982 and A. D. Smith, The Ethnic Origins of Nations, Oxford, 1986. Smith, however, happily concedes the discontinuity between modern nationalism and pre-modern 'ethnicism' – his criticism of Gellner is that this discontinuity builds on historical continuity, i.e. a modern nation is most successfully constructed when it builds on an actual ethnic communal base.

58 Smith, 'Book Review', pp. 280–2.

59 L. Greenfeld, Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity, Cambridge, MA, 1992. Greenfeld's position on the relationship between nationalism and modernity is more extremist, and more indefensible, than Gellner's. For her, 'modernity is defined by nationalism', and she wants to reverse the normal order of causality – maintaining both that nationalism precedes and causes modernity and that it is constitutive of it (pp. 18, 21).

60 The same point is made forcefully by his chief protagonist, Kedourie: 'Nationalist ideology spread in areas like Greece, the Balkans and other parts of the Ottoman Empire when they were innocent of industrialisation' (Nationalism, p. 148).

61 The 'vast disagreement among eminent authorities' on the modernity of nationalism 'has been made possible by the near absence of conclusive evidence. The fact that members of the ruling elite or intelligentsia manifest national sentiment is not sufficient to establish that national consciousness has permeated the value system of the masses. And the masses, until recent times totally or semi-illiterate, furnished few hints concerning their view of group-self' – W. Connor, 'When Is a Nation?', in his Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding, Princeton, 1994, p. 214.

62 The conceptual confusions are illustrated by Greenfeld's opening gambit: The word 'nationalism' is used here as an umbrella term under which are subsumed the related phenomena of national identity (or nationality) and consciousness, and collectivities based on them nations; occasionally, it is employed to refer to the articulate ideology on which national identity and consciousness rest, though not – unless specified – to the politically activist, xenophobic variety of national patriotism, which it frequently designates. (Greenfeld, Nationalism, p. 1) This strategy elides the admittedly much-tangled concept of nation, national identity, national consciousness, patriotism, nationality and nationalism. No wonder that 'nationalism' can be found in the 1500s if the term has such empirical range – though lay usage admittedly accepts this approach.

Connor has been a stern critic of 'terminological chaos' in this field: see 'A Nation Is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a . . .', in his Ethnonationalism.

63 Smith, The Ethnic Origins of Nations, p. 18. Smith recognises that nationalism has the etymological range which Greenfeld suggests, but narrows his definition – in his National Identity, London, 1991, pp. 72ff. – to 'an

ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential "nation"'.

64 Gellner, Nations and Nationalism, pp. 74–5.

65 Ibid., pp. 110–22.

66 The most feasible form in which widespread secessionism will occur across Europe will be in departures from the European Union if it becomes a federation – with the late entrants with glorious imperial pasts as the most likely anti-federalists, viz., the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark and Austria. Given that the European Union has been deprived of its recent geopolitical rationale, and has to rely largely upon materialist incentives for cooperation, it may become subject to the predictable strains that nationalism brings to federal systems.

67 A proper answer to the question 'has there been a nationalist revival in the liberal advanced industrialised OECD?' would require hard data on (a) support for nationalist movements and parties; (b) the formation and impact of new nationalist parties, and nationalist grievances; (c) evidence of relearning of old languages and cultural traditions; (d) opinion poll data on nationalist secessionist of (re-)unification sentiment; and (e) irredentist/ jingoistic political rhetoric amongst politicians, intelligentsias and mass media.

68 See B. O'Leary and J. McGarry, The Politics of Antagonism: Understanding Northern Ireland, London, 1993, ch. 8; B. O'Leary, T. Lyne, J. Marshall and B. Rowthorn, Northern Ireland: Sharing Authority, London, 1993; and J. McGarry and B. O'Leary, Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images, Oxford, 1995, especially ch. 9.

69 For example, James Mayall's otherwise excellent Nationalism and International Society, Cambridge, 1990 (especially p. 64) suggested that legal and political opinion within the state-system, and the geopolitical interests of the two superpowers, had placed an effective moratorium on the prospects of further secessions. Perhaps Mayall's mistake was to suggest that 'there are no more empires to collapse'.

70 We were all expected to become monocultured, though our monoculture would be the rationalisation of all cultures. In efficient states we would eat Italian food, listen to Mozart on Sony Walkmans, distribute welfare like the Swedes and make love like the French; in inefficient states we would eat American food, listen to Swedish pop music on Korean tape recorders, distribute welfare like the Italians and make love like the English.

71 A. Cobban, The Nation State and National Self-Determination, Glasgow, 1969, pp. 83–4 notes that 'The more we study the Peace Conference, the less it seems to have been under the control of the principle of self-determination.'

72 Gellner recognised that the major difference between Edward Carr and himself was that the latter was interested in the impact of nationalism on the state-system, whereas he was interested in the societal transformation (from 'Agraria' to 'Industria') which generates nationalism. See Gellner's 'Nationalism and the International Order', in his Encounters with Nationalism.

73 Ibid., p. 100.

74 In any case there are difficulties with the alleged 'western liberal nationalisms'. These are supposed to have been the civil-territorial forms, by contrast with the ethnic-communitarian types of the Hapsburg lands, Britain, France and the USA are meant to be the exemplars of western nationalism. Yet the Catholics of the British Isles, the provincials and Jews of France, and the Red Indians and black slaves of the USA do not have histories which resonate with this 'type'. It seems best to say that civic nationalism is the name often given to the nationalism of a people who already have a state or territorial unit of government; whereas ethnic nationalism is the name often given to a people who do not have such an identity. This problem is not, however, Gellner's alone; it starts with the first academic treatments of nationalism, in the writings of Hans Kohn and Carlton Hayes.

75 Peter Alter usefully distinguishes 'risorgimento nationalism', 'reform nationalism' and 'integral nationalism' (*Nationalism*, London, 1985); Wolfgang Mommsen differentiates liberal, imperialist, fascist and contemporary nationalisms ('The Varieties of the Nation-state in Modern History: Liberal, Imperialist, Fascist and Contemporary Notions of Nation and Nationality', in M. Mann, ed., *The Rise and Decline of the Nation-State*, Oxford, 1990); whilst John A. Hall distinguishes nationalisms 'from above', nationalisms based on 'desire and fear blessed by opportunity' (Latin America), risorgimento nationalism, integral nationalism, decolonising nationalism and nationalism by trade (*Coercion and Consent*, Oxford, 1994).

76 Ibid., p. 55. This statement sits oddly with a later (p. 138) disclaimer: 'It is not claimed that, even in the modern world, nationalism is the only force operating, or an irresistible one'.

77 J. McGarry and B. O'Leary, 'Introduction: The Macro-Political Regulation of Ethnic Conflict', in J. McGarry and B. O'Leary, eds., *The Politics of Ethnic Conflict Regulation: Case Studies of Protracted Ethnic Conflicts*, London, 1993.

78 Ibid. Federation includes all types of genuine territorial autonomy. Mixed types are also possible: e.g. a democratic condominium in a bicultural region could combine principles of arbitration, federation and consociation.

79 See the sober case studies in W. J. Durch, ed., *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis*, New York, 1993.

80 Social democratic and more conservative appraisals of the United Kingdom as a multinational state can be found respectively in R. Parry, 'State and Nation in the United Kingdom', in M. Messner, K. Armes and K. Martin, eds., *State and Nation in Multiethnic Societies*, Manchester, 1991 and R. Rose, *Understanding the United Kingdom: The Territorial Dimension in Government*, Harlow, 1982.

81 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 138.

82 The 'people' of course were narrowly defined to exclude women and slaves in the American case, and women in the French example.

83 See, for example, T. Vanhanen, *The Process of Democratisation: A Comparative Study of 147 States*, New York, 1990. Gellner would have rejected the sociobiological foundations of Vanhanen's arguments which, in my judgement, are inessential to Vanhanen's case but he would have shared Vanhanen's view of the inescapability of hierarchy in agro-literate polities.

84 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 124–5. Compare the verdict reached by Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*, pp. 14–15): 'unlike other isms, nationalism has never produced its own grand thinkers; no Hobbeses, Tocquevilles, Marxes or Webers'. Therefore, he reasons, nationalism should not be compared with political doctrines, but rather with kinship and religion.
It is strange not to classify Weber as a nationalist grand thinker, stranger still that Rousseau, Burke, John Stuart Mill and Friedrich List are not seen as nationalist grand thinkers, and exceedingly odd, and I say this as an atheist, to imply that religion has never produced its grand thinkers.

85 Gellner's contempt is more provocative than the inaccurate and cliché-ridden view that nationalism is the 'starkest political shame of the twentieth century, the deepest, most intractable, and yet most unanticipated blot on the political history of the world since the year 1900' (J. Dunn, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*, Cambridge, 1979, p. 55). The starkest political shames of the twentieth century were the genocidal regimes of Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, both formally transnational in nature. The most unanticipated blot on our history in this century was also provided by these regimes. Nationalism by contrast helped to destroy both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, and to bring down the other European empires.

86 Burke can be read, like Rousseau, as an exponent of the thesis that nations have the right to resist rulers who do not meet the obligations expected of them by organically developed nations, and List consistently advocated a system of national economy for the USA and France as well as his native Germany – on which see R. Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx versus Friedrich List*, New York, 1991, pp. 96–114.

87 See *inter alia* D. Miller, *On Nationality*, Oxford, 1995, Y. Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton, 1993 and M. Lind, 'In Defence of Liberal Nationalism', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, 1994. These authors are not, of course, identical, nor am I saying that I entirely agree with any one of them.

88 B. Barry, 'Nationalism', in D. Miller, J. Coleman, W. Connolly and A. Ryan, eds., *The Basil Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*, Oxford, 1987, pp. 352–4.

89 For a conservative's perplexed glance at national self-determination, see Kedourie's *Nationalism*, pp. 62–91.

90 D. P. Moynihan calls his recent diatribe against self-determination *Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*, Oxford, 1993, while A. Etzioni lists 'The Evils of Self-Determination', *Foreign Policy*, vol. 89, 1992.

91 See H. Beran's 'A Liberal Theory of Secession', *Political Studies*, vol. 32, 1984 for a provisional attempt to grapple with these issues. Neither Buzan nor his critics think his article is the final word on the subject.

92 O'Leary and McGarry, *The Politics of Antagonism*, ch. 8; O'Leary, Lyne, Marshall and Rowthorn, *Northern Ireland*; and McGarry and O'Leary, *Explaining Northern Ireland*, ch. 9.

93 Barry, 'Nationalism'.

94 Brian Barry provides an astringent review of the arguments of cosmopolitan liberals who believe in the unrestrained movement of people and money in 'The Quest for Consistency: a Sceptical View', in B. Barry and R. Goodin,

eds., *Free Movement: Ethical Issues in the Transnational Migration of People and of Money*, University Park Pennsylvania, 1992.

95   C. C. O'Brien, 'A Lost Chance to Save the Jews', *New York Review of Books*, vol. 30, 1989. Gellner wrote an incisive criticism of O'Brien's views on nationalism, which is now in *Encounters with Nationalism*.

96   Gellner, *Nationalism*, pp. 11–13.

97   Ibid., pp. 90–101.

98   Ibid., p. 41.

99   *Nationalism* is not definitive on this issue. Perhaps Gellner simply meant that the Greeks were the first Europeans to rise in nationalist form against the settlement of the Congress of Vienna, but since he appears to claim that the Congress of Vienna is stage 1 in demarcating the history of nationalism in Europe he is vulnerable to my charge of simple error about the timing and location of the first nationalist risings.

100 Gellner, 'Reply to Critics', p. 7.

101 In an exemplary illustration of the merits of comparison, Rogers Brubaker has made a strong case for arguing that for many entities the post-Soviet period is rather like the post-Versailles era (*Nationalism Reframed*, Cambridge, 1996, especially chs. 2 and 5).

102 Gellner recognised (in *Encounters with Nationalism*, p. 29), the Republic of Ireland as the sole case leading to major frontier adjustment in time-zone 1, but states that it is 'not clear' whether the separation of Belgium from Holland or Norway from Sweden should count as 'specimens of modern nationalism'. The latter anomalies are interesting: if the secessions of Belgium and Norway were not specimens of modern nationalism then what type of nationalism were they – proto-modern?

103 Gellner, *Muslim Society*.

104 Gellner, *Nationalism*, p. 85.

105 Gellner, *Nationalism Observed*, pp. 102–8.

106 Ibid., p. 104.

107 Ibid., p. 106.

108 Anyone who wants to read a delightful assault on Oakeshottian political philosophy should read Gellner's response (pp. 8–13) to Ken Minogue.

109 Gellner also replied to people like the present author who embrace some liberal nationalist ideas. He argued that we should not make nationalists present of their ontology, e.g. by endorsing the notion that nations should be free. However, a *tu quoque* is in order here. As Gellner acknowledged, like him, regard nations as a largely modern phenomenon; moreover, just as he claimed he did, I acknowledge that nations are authentically expressions of collective identity. So apparently the only real difference between us is this. He did want to devalue the authenticity of present national identifications by explaining their origins – refusing national their ontology. But this is precisely what he accused me of being wrong do with his arguments when I charged them with reductionism, i.e. I accused of assuming that his explanation of nationalism somehow denied the authenticity of nationalist sentiment. It is a shame that we could not have had this debate, preferably with wine and food.

110 Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 118.

Part II

The classical criticisms