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FROM NATIONAL MOVEMENT

TO THE NATION

(Comparing the past and present of
the nation-building process in Europe)

by

Miroslav Hroch

The nation is an inseparable companion of modern European history. It is not difficult to make ironical remarks or critical examination of "nationalism" in past and present times, or to give good and bad notes to different groups, personalities or even nations. Such a proceeding is however far from being scientific, even if it can seem to be pleasant for some parts of the public, Historians are not judges; their task is to explain historical transformations and changes.

The central point of my paper is, in its first part, to rationalize the fact that the process of modernization included everywhere in Europe the nation-building process. Or in other terms: that our European civil society at the eve of capitalism organized itself not primarily as a community of states, but as a community of (ethnic) nations. The nation-building process in Europe passed in two basic streams, each of them being again composed of rather heterogenous national developments. My research is limited only to one of these two streams, to that one which is characterized as national movement passing the way from the "non-dominant ethnic group" to a nation. The second part of this paper

tries to answer the question, what we could learn from the past of national movements to understand the present situation, above all in Central and Eastern Europe.

I do not intend to discuss the numerous volumes of further research on nations and nationalism. It is only necessary to say that from methodological point of view most of these works are based on one of two kinds of procedure. Social scientists prefer theoretical analysis, exemplifying their generalizations, historians prefer to start with empirical research and achieve some kind of general conclusions. Personally, I have never attempted to develop a "theory," my goal was and is to find efficient methods and procedures to classify and evaluate empirical facts, to analyze the nation-building process as a part of the social and cultural history. My prevailing historical point of view tries to explain historical processes not as singular or irrepetible events, but as a part of a broad development of society and as an object for generalizing procedures.

I am far from thinking that all important problems of the national-building process were explained. All historians of national movements agree that our knowledge of concrete dates has many gaps. All conclusions are only partial results, all "theories" have to be understood as projects for a further research. The reason of this, may be overpointed, statement is, that we have at the present stage an overproduction of theories and a stagnation of comparative research on our topic.

The nation-building process is usually characterized (especially in the anglo-saxon literature of last years) as a process of expanding "nationalism." Such a restriction seems to me to be one-sided. My point of view was in this case that the spread of ideas has to be analyzed in the context of all the society. The nation-building was not a mere game of vain, narcissistic intellectuals. For this reason, it is difficult to accept as a sufficient explanation, if some authors present us the picture of ideas flowing through Europe by their own force. Intellectuals can "invent" national communities only if some important objective preconditions existed. For many years ago, Karl W. Deutsch wrote that national consciousness can only be consciousness of something which exists. To permit the rise of national consciousness, there must be a minimum of cohesion and distinctiveness of a people. Authors, who declare an individual ,decision to be the main reason for the emergence of nations, have to explain, why such a decision has been made in so many countries, independent from each other, under very different conditions and in very different times. The only way, ho to find answer, is to suppose that people who made the same (or analogous) decision to accept the national identity, had also similar reasons to do it. These reasons were sometimes verbalized, but we are justified to reconstruct the motivation of human decisions made below the level of "high politics" through unconscious, unverbalized purposes and goals.

Without intending to start a discussion on this topic, I have to explain, that I do not understand the nation as an "eternal,"

ever existing category, but as a product of the long nation-building process. The fully formed modern nation is therefore considered to be a large social group characterized not by one, but by a combination of several kinds of objective ties, relations and their reflection in national consciousness of the peoplehood. These relation are interchangeable: some of them might plan an important role in one nation, in another only a subsidiary one. Among all these relations (economic, political, linguistic, cultural, religious, geographical, historical), three were irreplaceable: 1) some kind of "memory," based on common past, "fate" of the group (or at least at its core), 2) some kind of cultural, linguistic ties enabling a higher degree of social communication inside the national group, 3) equality of all members of the nation organized as a civil society.

The nation-building process was not irreversible, it could be interrupted and reassumed. Important is, that this process passed in two unequally long states; the first one started during the middle ages, the second one in the time of transition to capitalism, to civil society. The results of the first stage were very different, this being decisive for the differentiation of the second stage of the nation-building process.

For this reason, the second stage of this process, which gave rise to the modern nation in the proper sense of the word, started under two very different socio-political situations (there were, naturally some transitional cases): 1) the late feudal (usually absolutist) state, where the transformation of the old regime -- by

reforms or revolutions -- into a modern civil society, passed parallel with the transition from feudal to civil state-nation as a community of equal citizens; 2) the non-dominant ethnic group, which did not possess its "own" (i.e. ethnic identical) nobility, but was dominated by a "foreign" ruling class, formed an ethnic unit on a compact territory, but not a political unit (or was the political autonomy interrupted), and lacked a continuous tradition of cultural production in written language of their own. This second situation has been subject of my research and is also subject of this paper.

The beginning of the second stage of nation-building process in the situation of the non-dominant ethnic group can be dated from the moment when a group of its members discussed their ethnicity and concluded that the ethnic group, they belonged to, had to be considered as a potential, non-developed nation. Sooner or later, they claimed some deficits, which this nation-to-be missed on its way toward a developed nation. They started efforts to surmount one or more of these deficits and to persuade the members of non-dominant ethnic group to belong to a nation. I understand these organized efforts to achieve all the attributes of a full formed national existence, as a national movement.

The term national movement seem to be the most fitting one to describe and analyze the social and political movement which tried (not always and everywhere successfully) to transform a non-dominant ethnic group into a modern nation. Using the term "nationalism" we only bring confusion into this research. This does not mean that I lock out the term nationalism at all. I only prefer using it in its

traditional, maybe "old-fashioned" sense: limited to a very specific kind of individual state of mind (or collective mentality) giving priority to the values of their own nation over all other interests and values. Nationalism as a state of mind was only one of many forms of national consciousness during the course of the national movement. In a situation of a full formed nation, it became linked to political power and under condition of the national state (but also in classical state-nations) it represented a very frequent motivation of internal and external political measures.

Regarding the nation-building process as a national movement, not as a product of irrational nationalism, we are competent to give its deeper empirical analysis. We can find out, who were its participants, leaders and opponents, we can describe their goals, formulated as a program of their movement. This program included three main groups of demands, corresponding to those deficits of national existence mentioned above: 1) to develop a national culture in own language and fully equalized rights to use their language at schools, in the administration and in economic life, 2) to achieve civil rights in politics including a self-administration, autonomy, or /almost very late/ even independence, 3) to rebuild the own ethnic group into a national society with a full social structure, including educated elites, bureaucracy an a national entrepreneurial class, but also free peasants and nationally organized workers.

Each national movement had its specific combination of these components and also various priorities in various phases. We cannot

regard the national movement as finished, until all the three groups of demands were fulfilled.

Between the starting point and the successful outcome o national movements, three phases can be distinguished, which are characterized by the role played by activists an by the strength of national consciousness developed among the members of a non-dominant ethnic group.

During the first phase the activists above all demonstrated scholarly interest in cultural, linguistic, social and sometimes historical characteristics of a non-dominant ethnic group. Most of them, however, did not take further step of presenting specifically nationally demands trying to remove the deficits. (Some of them even did not believe that their ethnic group could develop a nation.) Phase A.

Subsequently a new type of activists emerged. They regarded national individuality as valuable and set themselves the goal to win over as many members of the non-dominant ethnic group as possible to their project of a future nation. (Their agitation was aimed at spreading national consciousness generally throughout the non-dominant ethnic community.) I have called this period of patriotic agitation Phase B.

We could distinguish two sub-stages during the Phase B. The first one, where the patriots agitated without achieving an evident success and the second one starting there, where larger groups of population began to join and support the national movement.

Phase B was successful when a mass support was aroused, when the main part of population regarded their national identity as having special value. Since this moment it is appropriate to speak about a national mass movement -- Phase C. It was only during this phase that differentiation between democrats and liberals or between conservatives and clerical deepened and became apparent. Differentiated political programs were also typical of Phase C. This does not mean that the modern nation had already been fully formed at the beginning of this phase, but it achieved during the Phase C sooner or later a full social structure, analogous to that of the ruling nation.

This differentiation and periodization has a very practical purpose: It has been worked out as a precondition of a meaningful comparison. The results of a comparative analysis would be rather limited, if we compared national movements only synchronically, i.e., comparing the national movements in various countries at the same time, during one and the same decade. What is more important and fruitful, is a synchronic comparison according to analogous historical situations, analogous phases of historical development. Comparing various national movements in the same phase gives us an opportunity to compare comparable phenomena.

To compare national movements means to apply concrete criteria ("dimensions") to comparable situations, to ask the same questions to various national movements or to their protagonists. The more complex the problem, the greater the number criteria of comparison required. It is however advisable not to apply fairly great numbers

8

of criteria at the same time, but gradually, one after another. To be better understood, I am giving here some examples of such criteria, partially having been used by me or other researchers, partially suggesting new possibilities of comparative research in this field: the social structure of leading patriots and activists; the territorial structure of national activists; the role o the language as a symbol and subject of identification; the mobilizing role of linguistic demands; the role of theater in national movement; civil rights in political program of national movements; the role of political oppression; the role of historical consciousness and historical traditions; the school system and alphabetization; the participation of churches and the role of religion; and the women as activists and as symbols.

One very general criterion of comparison was essential for a topology of national movements: the relation between the transition to Phase B and to Phase C on one side and the transition to constitutional society with civil rights ("bourgeois revolution") on the other. Combining these two series of changes, we can distinguish four types of national movements:

I. National agitation (Phase B) started under the conditions of the old absolutist regime, but it attained a mass character during the time of revolutionary changes of political system. The organized working class movement asserted itself under conditions of national mass movement. The leaders of Phase B fought against absolutism and elaborated the political

program of national movement under the conditions of political revolutions. (This was the case of the Czechs, Magyars, Norwegians, Finns.)

II. National agitation emerged also under the conditions of the old regime, but the transition to Phase C was delayed and occurred under the constitutional regime, after the revolution. This phase-shift could be caused by uneven economic development (the case of Lithuanians, Latvians, Slovenes, Croatians) or by foreign oppression (the case of Slovaks or Ukrainians in Russia).

III. The national movement attained a mass character already under the condition of the old regime and before the establishment of a civil society and constitutional system. This development was joined with an armed insurrection and is limited to the territory of the former Ottoman Empire (Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians).

IV. The national agitation began first under the conditions of a constitutional system and capitalist society and achieved its Phase C sometimes rather early (the case of the Basques, Catalans), sometimes after a very long Phase B (the case of the Flemings) or not at all (Welsh, Scots, Britons). This development is characteristic for West-European national movements.

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All these procedures -- definitions, periodizations, typology --
have not been an end by itself. They do not explain the origins
and the success of national movements. They are, nevertheless,
necessary as a starting point for the essential purpose of every
research: for the causal analysis. How to explain the beginning of
the Phase B? Why were these movements in most cases successful, but
in many cases not? How to explain the differences in their
synchronical course, in their program and final results? Mono-
causal explanations bring as little as the superficial idea that
nations were invented by nationalism. The multi-causal explanation
has various levels of generalization and has to take in account a
changing society and the unevenness of European development during a
chronologically rather long period.

If we try to explain national movements of the 19th century, we
have to start our interpretation with a "prelude" represented by
that long premodern period which I have just called the first stage
of the nation-building process. This first stage is important not
only for state-nations but also for non-dominant ethnic group. My
above-mentioned distinction between state-nations and non-dominant
ethnic groups as two basic results of the first stage is only a
typological construct; in historical reality we can find a lot of
transitional cases between these both types. Many medieval states
with their own written language did not develop successfully into

11

nation-states, but lost their independence fully or partially, while their population kept (or partially even lost) their ethnicity (Czechs, Catalans, Norwegians, Croatians, Bulgarian, Welsh, Irish, etc.) Even in the case of topologically rather "clean" non-dominant ethnic group, we cannot neglect their common past as a mere myth.

The first stage of nation-building process had relevant effects for the second stage also in the case of national movements, namely in three points:

1. Very often, some relics of political autonomy remained, though represented by or utilized through the members of Estates assimilated to the ruling state-nation; the tension between these Estates and the enlightened absolutism was in some cases relevant for further national movement and could be a very stimulating subject for comparative analysis.

2. The "memory" of former statehood/independence could plan an important role as a part of national historical consciousness, which strengthened the feeling among the members of the non-dominant ethnic group that they belonged together.

3. In many national movements, the medieval written language survived more or less from the times of independence; this fact made it easier to elaborate norms of a modern written language and to write new literature in this language. In this connection, it is necessary to mention the difference between

"historical" and "non-historical" nation. This difference was overvaluated in discussions during the 19th century and it has some importance than only in connection with historical consciousness and its role in the national movement.

The first precondition of every nation-building process was a successful Phase A. Collecting data on history, language, customs, etc. of the non-dominant ethnic group brought the decisive amount of facts which could be used during the phase of national agitation. The learned researchers of the Phase A were almost joint with the enlightened patriotism, but supported at the same time the identification with the potential nation. They "discovered" the ethnic group and described it. The later establishment of national identity was impossible without knowledge of a distinct ethnic/historical, territorial/specificity among the leading members of the non-dominant ethnic group.

Phase A developed an intellectual activity, but it cannot be called an organized social or political movement; the patriots, or the majority of them, articulated no "national" demands, they did not organize actions to achieve these demands. It belongs to essential characteristics of a social movement that it intends to change given political or social circumstances. This kind of aims we find however in the Phase B.

Why, under what circumstances, did this new phase of national agitation start. It is still an open question for further discussions and research. The essential point is why a learned

activity absorbed and accepted an emotional approach toward the subject of its research, why a loyalty, and love, to a region switched over to the identification with an ethnic group, a nation-to-be.

As a hypothesis I would like to underline three changes which were decisive: 1) social and/or political crisis of the existing old system (accompanied by new tensions and also new perspectives), 2) this crisis was accompanied also by dissatisfaction, displeasure among some parts of the population, 3) crisis of the surviving old system of moral values based almost on the crisis of religious legitimacy (the feeling of this component of crisis was however limited to a small group of intellectuals coming from various dissenting streams, not necessarily only from enlightened tradition).

In the future, we have to pay more attention to this phenomena of crisis and to the ability and readiness to articulate an answer to this challenge in national terms. As far as this crisis and displeasure were not articulated in national terms, they provoked only simple social, or political, unrest, a social movement.

The decision of some intellectuals to start the national agitation -- the outset of Phase B -- did not mean automatically the birth of a modern nation. This decision opened only the possibility of, and the trend to a transformation; this is why the Phase B has essential importance in the nation-building process.

According to this fact, it is necessary to repeat the question: why, under what circumstances, was the national agitation

successful? How to find out these integrating circumstances and also those playing a disintegrating role? There are some theoretical explanations elaborated by social scientists, but I do not find them satisfying, because they simply do not correspond to empirical facts. On the other side, we cannot confine to an inductive description, as it was done by traditionalist historiography. Among various theories, there exist a consensus on essential role of two factors, being called by various authors by various names/terms. Together with Karl W. Deutsch, I call them social mobility and communication.

In the case of social mobility, the case seems to be but it only seems to be rather simple: the members of patriotic groups belonged in their majority to professions with a higher vertical social mobility, none of these groups were dominated by patriots with a low mobility, like for example peasants. High level of social mobility formed a favorable precondition for the acceptance of patriotic programs during the Phase B, but we know also quite well that it produced as well conditions for successful assimilation of those members of non-dominant ethnic groups who swung up to a higher social position.

Social communication as a process of transmitting information and data about reality, and implanting attitudes and instinctive reasons, plays an important role in modern society. If we were to divide up the social and professional groups to which the patriots belonged, we should arrive at the conclusion, that the patriotic agitation met with a response earlier from that section of the

non-dominant ethnic group which possessed stronger communications links. Also the analysis of the territorial structure of some national movements, which I could analyze more profoundly, demonstrates that national agitation system was on a relatively higher level. Insofar, my results seem to confirm K.W. Deutsch's opinion that the spread of the national movement (he used the term nationalism) went hand in hand with the advance of social communication and mobility as a part of general transformation of the society.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to verify this hypothesis by confronting it with historical reality in two extreme situations. For the first test we have to hand an example in the district of Polesie (a former eastern part of inter-war Poland). It was a district with minimal social mobility, very weak contacts with the market and very low alphabetization. When the local inhabitants were asked at the census of 1919 about their nationality, the majority replied to this question by saying that they were "from hereabouts." (A similar low level of national consciousness corresponded to low level of social communication also in eastern Lithuania, West Prussia, Lowe Lusatia, some Balkan regions, etc.)

But what about the opposite case? Can we consider an intensive growth of communication and a high level of social mobility to be causes of a successful Phase B? If we take in account some countries like Wales, Belgium, Brittany or Schloswig, we can observe a disproportion between a high level of communication and mobility on the one hand and a weak response to national agitation on the

other. What is common to these cases is the fact that national agitation arose in a situation of not only a high communication, but also of a maturing constitutional political system.

It must have existed another weighty factor, besides of social crisis, high level of mobility and communication, which was essential for the improvement of a national movement. This factor acted in various intensity and changed over the time, and it was linked to various nations or social milieus. I call this factor a nationally relevant conflict of interests, i.e., a social conflict or a social tension that coincided with linguistic (or sometimes also with religious) differences. A frequent example of such a tension is the conflict between young academicians coming from a non-dominant ethnic group and therefore usually from a lower social strata, and a closed elite of the ruling state-nation that maintains itself in the prominent social and administrative positions by inheritance. Other ones are the conflicts between a peasant from the non-dominant ethnic group and his landlord, who belonged to the ruling nation, or the conflict between craftsmen belonging to one national group and large-scale trade and industry being in the hand of another, of the ruling nation.

It is important to underline in this connection that what I call nationally relevant conflict of interests can definitely not be reduced to a class conflict. The basic difference between the national movements and various social and class movements was, that its participants belonged to different classes and social groups and

their interests were determined by a broad spectrum of social relations, including naturally also class-relations.

Why could these social conflicts and tensions be more successfully articulated in national terms in some regions of Europe, but not everywhere? National agitation started earlier and get better results during the 19th century there, where members of the non-dominant ethnic group and in most cases also their leaders had no political education and missed political experience. For this reason, they could hardly set out political argumentation. To both sides, it was more appropriate to articulate social contradictions and distrust at the level of national categories, like language being in danger, common culture, "national interest," etc. In this point we can find the main explanation of the topological difference of the "Westeuropean" national movements (belonging to the type IV, mentioned above). Higher level of political experience and political culture enabled in most Western countries to articulate the conflicts of interests in political terms. Under such conditions, the national program had certain difficulties to find the way to the people and some national movements could not achieve the transition from Phase B to the mass movement.

We have therefore to investigate not only the simple and abstract level of social communication reached but also the content and purpose (even if partially unconscious) which was mediated through this system of communication. If the national goals and watchwords used by the agitators as an articulation of social

18

tensions corresponded to the level of everyday experience of some social groups, to that of education and to the system of symbols and stereotypes of the members of non-dominant ethnic group, their campaigning efforts would have hope to achieve the Phase C during a rather short time.

We can resume that the model of a successful national movement included four factors as inevitable components: 1) the crisis of legitimacy (joined with a social, moral, cultural crisis), 2) elementary level of vertical social mobility (emergence of some educated people from the ranks of non-dominant ethnic group), 3) relatively high level of social communication (including its economic conditions), 4) nationally relevant conflicts of interests.

This model, however, does not pretend to be able to explain everything in the long and complex history of national movements. To illustrate it, I would like to add to the first part of my paper some examples of open questions and problems, remaining unsolved in spite of the oversupply of "theories of nationalism."

My comparative research has been focused on the social structure of the Phase B of national movement. Until today, we have no analogical comparison on the Phase C. The social structure is nevertheless, not the only criterion of comparison. As mentioned above, the programs of national movements could be compared.

We know that national movements differed from one another in their proportions and in the order of importances of each of three components of national program. It is hard to find the ideal combination of these programs, but it is certain that we have first

to study a lot to compare the mutual relation among social,
political and linguistic programs, or rather the demands that
resulted from it. Just so little was done in the comparative
research of an inner structure of each of the three components of
national program. We know on the basis of studies in some separate
national movements that this structure was very different.

There is just one step to the question of the relation between
the structure of a national program and its changes on one side and
the social structure of national activists on the other. It is
usually neglected that the acceptance of political demands into the
national program made national movement a battlefield of political
power, in which not only political struggle with the ruling nation
was involved, but also the struggle among the leaders of a national
movement as well.

Very important and inspiring could be a comparative analysis of
social origins of the leading patriots, above all the national
intelligentsia. Some preliminary comparisons in this field, which I
carried out for Czech, Polish, Slovak and German intelligentsia have
shown that there are so far underestimated opportunities here for
interpretation of national stereotypes, social behavior of patriots,
their political culture, social feelings, etc. Especially the
striking differences between the social origins of German and Czech
intelligentsia, gives me a new perspective of the problem.

I have got valuable data concerning the social structure of
some national movements and other research workers have enriched
this knowledge significantly. Being unnoticed so far, there is

still one important component of comparison of social structure of those, who with regard to their education, political or ethnic identity could not have taken part in the national movement, but they did not so. The research of the social structure of a nationally unconcerned or assimilated intelligentsia could bring significant knowledge to our problem.

The last research-deficit, I'd like to mention here, is our familiarity with a historical dimension of the nation-building process. It cannot be passed over only by an ironical reference to national myth and made-up history, or to common general statements about historical experience. The problem of historical dimension has two components: really existing history -- on the first state of a nation-building process mentioned above -- and a reflection of their reality in historical thought of the non-dominant ethnic group.

This historical thought was developing and was quite different in the beginning of national movement and in his end. The comparative research of factors that formed historical consciousness of a rising nation belongs to very important tasks in the future. Even here the comparison of historical consciousness of East and West, etc., a small and ruling nations can also bring valuable knowledge: I tried to compare a Czech and German historical novel and the results (in some relations surprising) should encourage a further research including other national movements.

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Could we use the model, succinctly outlined in the first part of this paper, if we try to explain and understand the "new nationalism" in Central and Eastern Europe during the last years? I cannot accept the routine explanation that the main reason for all these contemporary events is a "nationalism," a nebulous and irrational force which has been suppressed, "deep-frozen" under the communist regime and revived after the break of this regime. It is a logistic concept, having maybe some precedents in fairy tales but not corresponding to historical facts.

Let us try another procedure and call the current events in Central and Eastern Europe "new national movements." During the last four to five years, these movements fought for analogical, but naturally not fully identical goals like those we know from the 19th century.

Their program consists again from the cultural-linguistic, political and social components, but the relevance and mutual approach of these components is different. The linguistic and cultural demands played an important role above all at the territory of the former Soviet Union, where the equal rights of languages were considerably more a formality than reality: Estonians declaring the knowledge of their language to a condition for civil rights, Moldavians changing the enforced Russian alphabet, etc. It is however significant, that the Institute for Slovak Literature (Matica) was the main pioneer in the fight for national independence.

The political program plays in all cases a central role and is directed towards two main goals, having their analogy in the past. The call for democracy corresponds to the program of introducing civil rights in the "classical" national movements, the demand for a full independence stands for the demand for ethnic autonomy from the 19th century. The former independence of most of these nations plays in most cases (but not everywhere) the role of decisive argument. In the meantime, the political independence was reestablished again without serious difficulties and the dispute is concentrated to the question, how to define this independence, in its relation to the neighborhoods and to other nations. The question of national and ethnic minorities became a new importance again.

The social program of these new national movements is joined with a rapid exchange of the ruling classes. This gives a specific aim and motivation to the leaders of national movement. They try to complete the social structure corresponding to that of modern western nations: it means they desire to get these positions at the top to themselves.

At this point, we are coming to the comparison between the "classical" national movements of the 19th century and the current developments. This comparison brings some experience, which could help us to understand our current ethnic problems. There are many analogies and similarities, but also important and symptomatic differences. Allow me to start with analogies.

The transition to the Phase B of national movements occurred almost at the time when the old regime and old social system were disintegrating. As far as old ties disappeared or weakened, the need for a new group identity brought together, in one national movement, people belonging to different social classes and groups as well as later also members of different political camps. Similarly, after the break-down of the system of planned economy and communist control, old ties are disappearing and under conditions of a general uncertainty and unconfidence, national idea takes over the integrating role. This is a stressful circumstances, where people overvalued the protecting effect of their own national group.

This identity with national group, includes, similarly like during the last century, the construct of the personalized nation. Glorious history of this personality nation is understood as personal past of each of its members, its defeats are understood as personal failures and are still touching their feelings. As a result of this personalization, people regard their own nation (it means also themselves) as one body. If anything painful happens to a small part of the nation, i.e., to a group belonging to their own ethnic nation, than all the body feels it painful. If a small group belonging to their own ethnic group (even living very far from the "mother-nation") is endangered by an assimilation, the members of the personalized nation interpret it as an amputation of a part of the national body.

The personalized national body needs -- similarly like in the classical national movements -- again a distinct space. This space

24

was and is now again defined in two different, controversial ways:
a) by ethnic homogeneity, defined above all linguistically like a
cultural space with ethnic borders, b) by historical borders of
"national" territory, which could include in many cases also other
ethnic groups as minorities. This second criterion is a symptomatic
one for the so called "historical nations:" Czechs regarding the
territory inside of the historical borders as their own national
body, Croats regarding all the three parts of historical Kingdom as
their ownership -- and even Lithuanians regarding the former
Polish-Jewish town Wilna as their own capital. This situation has
even more analogies today, where we find besides of the established
historical nations in the proper sense of the word a new group of
nations, those, who enjoyed their independence during the short
inter-war period, like Estonians, Latvians, or even only under
Nazi-protectorate during the World War II, like Croats and Slovaks.
Also in this case, the leaders of national movements interpret the
state borders as national ones and regard the ethnic minorities on
"their" own territory as outlanders, eventually worthless enough to
be expelled or neglected in their national identity. Psychogeography
plays an important role again.

How to explain the priority of ethnic, cultural, linguistic
arguments in the program of new national movements -- at the same
time, where the Western world tries to bid ethnicity farewell? The
key to this problem is to be found in the past. National agitation
started in Central and Eastern Europe during the 19th century in a
situation, where members of the non-dominant ethnic group had no

political experience of life in civic society and they got no political education. For these reasons, they could hardly set out political argumentation and slogans calling for civil and human rights. "Freedom" meant for a Czech or Estonian peasant the abolition of feudal domination, free use of their farmland, not the freedom in the sense of a parliamentary system. Common language and customs were much better understandable to them.

After 50 or even more years spent under conditions of dictatorship, the mentality of the people is analogical: the linguistic, cultural and social demands play their substitutional political also at the present time. This occurs also there, where political leaders are speaking about democracy and civil rights. The importance of ethnic argument is, nevertheless, not the same in all national movements we can observe today.

In some cases, especially under the Soviet rule, the language of the ruling nation remained a symbol of political oppression in the eyes of Estonians, Lithuanians, etc., even if the character of political oppression changes. The ethnic difference under conditions of political oppression became an argument used by the leaders of the national movement against the oppressive system of German bureaucracy in the Habsburg Empire, and similarly in Tsarist Russia and in the Ottoman Empire. Today sometimes even more: the language of a small nation fighting for independence is automatically observed as the language of the liberty.

But it was not only the question of prestige and symbols. Members of a non-dominant ethnic group were during the 19th century

disadvantaged by the unwillingness of the ruling nation to accept the real equality of both languages. The members of the ruling nations, Germans or Hungarians after 1867, refused to learn and to use the language of ethnic groups living on "their" territory. After the emergence of independent national states in 1918-19 the members of the former ruling nations (at least a part of them), above all Germans and Magyars, changed from members of the ruling nation to members of a national minority. Nevertheless, their unwillingness to accept the equality of the language of the small, but now ruling nation of Czechs, Rumanians, Croats, etc., prepared explosive situations. In the present time, members of the former ruling nations -- above all Russians -- become again a minority in the new states built as a result of the successful new national movements. The parallel between the real fate of "Volksdeutsche" and the possible role of "Volksrussen" is striking.

Does also the nationally relevant conflict pay such a relevant role like during the 19th century? Theoretically, we could suppose that it is not the case under conditions, where these conflicts can be expressed in compatible political and social programs. Our knowledge of this category of relations is still rather superficial, nevertheless, we can observe significant conflicts of interests becoming their national relevance. Only a part of these is analogical to those from the 19th century, like, for example, the conflict between the local Estonian, Lithuanian, etc., intelligentsia and the nomenclature-elites coming from the center and refusing to learn local language. Most of the nationally

relevant conflicts are different and belong therefore to the second section of my comparison, finding out differences between the "new" and "classical" national movements.

The reason for the first difference -- in the character of nationally relevant conflicts -- corresponds to the remarkable difference of the social structure. The present situation after the sudden disappearance of the system of planned economy and the nomenclature-ruling class, is very unique in European history. New elites, educated under the old regime but belonging to the national movement, try to achieve the standard of ruling elites. As the educated members of the non-dominant ethnic groups tried during the 19th century to achieve the same goal, they had to fight for each position among the subsistent established elites of the ruling nation, and they had -- if being successful -- to keep the way of life, the moral system, the "rules of game" of these established ruling elites. Recently, the vertical social mobility seems not to be conditioned by any surviving traditional usances, except the individual and national egoism. The fight for the free position at the top of the society seems to be nowadays the most powerful conflict of interests and it gets its national relevance everywhere there, where members of different nations are living at the territory of the same state.

The intern conflicts and differences inside of the nation seem however be today stronger than during the 19th century, the political spectrum being broader. This includes also the variability of national programs: even "nationalist" parties of the

same nation differ in their goals and methods more than before. It is more difficult to construct a model of one complex national program.

Even more important and dangerous is another difference between contemporary situation and the old national movements. National relevant conflicts of interests were during the 19th century above all conflicts resulting from and based on economic growths and social improvement: traditionalist craftsmen against the modernizing industrial management, small peasants against great land owners, small entrepreneurs against big banking capital, etc. Recently, these conflicts are a response to economic depression and decline, to the fact, that the cake get smaller.

At the same time, the "vacuum" at the top of the society opens the door to the quickly advanced careers. The way to reconstruct the new ruling class is open in all streams, concerning above all three groups: new political elites (partially former dissidents), old bureaucracy (experienced managers of the planned economy) and new entrepreneurs (sometimes with dubious capital resources). Every ethnic difference in this fight for positions can be interpreted as national relevant.

There is a difference conditioned by a higher degree of social communication, or even more: by a new quality of it. For this reason we are observing a high acceleration in the transition from the phase of national agitation to mass movements. The modern media are so strong today, that they are able to manipulate masses, they can invent national interests, where they do not exist.

Controlling mass media gives under the conditions of new national movements a nearly unlimited power to those, who are professional enough to use them. This circumstance seems to be extraordinarily important, if we are discussing the solutions, the possible modifications of current conflicts.

Up to this moment, I have not mentioned the difference in general European situations. During the 19th century, the national movement and nation-building process and growing nationalism were the universal phenomenon in all parts of Europe. The new national movements in Central and Eastern Europe are coming on at the same time, when the idea of European integration developed to a reality. We are facing two controversial tendencies in the constitutional development in Europe: the first of them trying to change Europe for a continent of citizens irrespective of their ethnicity, the other, preferring the ethnic identity and trying to build up Europe as a unity of ethnically defined nations.

The controversial character of these both tendencies is evident, but we cannot overlook or underestimate the fact, that the leaders of all new national movements declare their intention to enter the unified Europe. From this point of view, we could speak about two complementary processes of group identification: the national one, based on national relevant conflicts and on historical experience of different nations and ethnic groups and the European, representing new experiences and hopes. If we would describe the current process of European integration in terms of the three-phase periodization, mentioned above, we could find out from the Phase B

to the Phase C in Western Europe, while it in Central and Eastern Europe only the start of the Phase B is prepared. In this context, we have to distinguish between an economically motivated declaration of being a European, and a cultural and political one.

For this and some other reasons, I find it permissible to ask, if the new national movements in their compromiseless concentration on ethnic attributes actually threaten not only European integration, but also the stability of this continent. Their behavior, or more exactly: the behavior of their leaders, includes the danger of ethno-nationally defined conflicts, the danger of nationalist politics. We observe frequently during the recent years that moralist preachers and humanist appeals did not influence some important changes in the state of mind of these leaders and their ideologies in mass media. The reason for this failure does not consist in inability of the preachers.

Similarly like during the 19th century, these new national movements -- after having achieved their Phase C (the phase of mass movement) -- cannot be stopped by political discussions and rational arguments, coming almost from the opposite came of "national enemy." Only their goals and methods could be diversified and modified. All the attempts to suppress by force the national movement, which achieved its Phase C, were unsuccessful and sometimes even provoked its quick radicalization. The most dangerous, sometimes disastrous fact resulting from the success of national movements during the 19th century was that they contributed more or less to the tragedy of World War I. This is today sometimes the key argument used by

those who are criticizing the "new nationalism" in Central and Eastern Europe. These critics oversee, nevertheless, one important fact: it was above all the nationalist policy of great powers, who caused the war; the conflicts between small states and their nationalist politicians were used only as a pretext by the great powers.

The so called "ethnonationalism" is represented in the present time by small ethnic groups and nations, being far from the force and standard of a great power. Their conflicts based on national demands and usually also using very nationalist arguments, are naturally not acceptable as a method of solving problems, they are a factor of regional instability, but they do not endanger the peace and stability in Europe, as it was the case at the end of the 19th century. Naturally under one condition: that none of great powers tries to profit from these conflicts. This seems to be a very restricted danger, because all European powers except Russia are joined in the European Community. Nevertheless, we cannot exclude that some politicians or parties could be seduced to apply great-powers-mentality again and use the new national movements and conflicts to enlarge the sphere of their national influence. Some signs of such foreign policy are included in the well known German proceedings in the case of Croatia and Slovenia.

Another problem is rising during the last years, being rather common since the inter-war times, but different from the times of the 19th century. It is the minority problem. It is not the place here, to analyze details. Let us only stress, that it is important

to differentiate the ethnic or national minority from the small nation. "Minority" means 1) an ethnic group living on a compact territory in a nation-state, being ruled by another nation. This ethnic group belongs to (is a part of) a nation living on the other side of the state border (as a "mother-nation"), for example, Magyars in Slovakia or Transylvania, Serbs in Croatia, Poles in Moravia, Russians in Estonia, etc., 2) an ethnic group living as a spread population in a state being not their own, like for example Slovaks and Germans in Hungary, Germans in Transylvania, Romanians in Serbia, Turks in Macedonia, Gypsies everywhere. Even if the minority movements become sometimes similar forms to national movements, one decisive difference has to be mentioned: it belongs to the logic of their definition that they cannot achieve the status of a modern nation and be independent. Their political program could include in extreme cases an autonomy or a border-revision, aims, which could sometimes be more explosive than new national movements themselves.

Another difference has to be mentioned at the end, the difference between the present national movements in "East" and "West." These movements are distinctively less compatible than they were during the time before 1918. The Western national movements today are still continuing their Phase C or even their Phase B from the 19th century, while most of the Eastern ones ceased to exist after having achieved the independence after World War I. The only national movement continuously still their (interrupted) Phase B or C are Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

X   X   X

What can be changed and what cannot be changed in the structure of new national movements? I try, resuming my paper, to answer this question and use our knowledge about the "classical" national movements and of their analogy with the current events.

The main precondition of all national movements is the deep crisis of the old system, old society, old values, sentiments and mentalities. It is the common feature with other social movements, understood as attempts to change the given social/political conditions. The crisis of old values is nowadays combined with other circumstances, like above all the economic depression, decline (or a visible danger of such decline) in all the spheres of economic and social life. The result is a growing dissatisfaction among the population.

The third important integrating factor was (and is also today) that these both changes happened in a society, whose population had a low level of political culture and no political experience and education. The result of the coincidence of those three factors -- structural crisis, economic decline and political inexperience -- would become a social or political movement under condition that the political system of oppression (absolutism, real socialism) was changed due to liberalization. This all under more general conditions of growing level and intensity of social communication.

This social or political movements could become national, if
two other factors were involved: 1) if the development, mentioned
above, was combined with some deficits of a full national existence,
i.e., if it progressed or ripened under conditions (on the
territory) of a suppressed nation (today) or a non-dominant ethnic
group (in the 19th century), 2) if some nationally relevant
conflicts could be articulated, also joined with regional
differences, with an unevenness of development.

After these clarifications, let us repeat the question: could
these developments be stopped or changed? Which ones of the
variables mentioned above could be changed? Some variables are
independent and cannot be changed or recalled even by the best will
of politicians: the crisis of the old system, economic decline,
deficits of a full national existence. Politicians could stop,
maybe, the democratization and established a dictatorship, but it is
not sure, national conflicts would be stopped through this change.

One more important lesson could be taken from the experience of
the 19th century: if the national movement entered its Phase C (and
this today almost everywhere the case) it could not be stopped, even
not by using force.

There are only two directions where an attempt for change has a
chance for a partial success: 1) political education through school
system and mass media, including a possibility (very hypothetically)
of some kind of "European" education; 2) minimalization of the
nationally relevant conflicts, preventing such situations by a
balanced personal politics in the system of administration, schools,

etc.   Nevertheless the only effective remedy seems to be the most

utopian one: to overcome the economic decline and pass to the

period of prosperity.