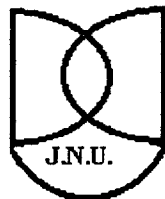


The Emergence of Minority Nationalism in Brittany and Corsica

Dissertation Submitted to
Jawaharlal Nehru University
In Partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Award of the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

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Certificate

This dissertation entitled a "**The Emergence of Minority Nationalism in Brittany and Corsica**" submitted by **Cheri Jacob. K** for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of any university before.

We recommend this dissertation to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Prof. B. Vivekanandan
(Supervisor)

Prof. B. Vivekanandan
(Chairperson)

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Preface

Post 1946 Europe witnessed a well-publicized sub-regional protest against regimes and established states. Spearheading these protests were improvements, which explicitly voiced ethno-national and separatist sentiments. These developments have forced Europe to look again at some of its political instruments because it cast doubts upon the prevailing notions of social mobilization, economic development and political integration. At the maximum this reaction has created an assertion of minority claims for cultural autonomy and for separate powers of territorial decision-making.

Of all the countries in Europe, France has had the most wide-ranging expression of ethnic resurgence. Ethnic activism in France has been expressed along the entire spectrum from violent separatism to peaceful regionalism. The strongest and most persistent manifestation of this separatist sentiment in France has been in Brittany and Corsica.

Brittany is located in North-west France. Most of the people live in the rural hinterland of the province. Breton culture and the Breton nationalists have stressed their cultural links with Wales and Cornwall and the virulence persists in their ardent defense of their identity. As about Corsica, its position in the Mediterranean has historically given it strategic importance. Consequently, it has been occupied by a succession of countries; Geneva, England and since the nineteenth century, France. The defining characteristic of Corsican nationalism has been a continued resistance to foreigners. The violent nature of its ethnic movement, with its militant vigour and bombing tactics have made it a volatile issue in France.

The attempt in this work has been to contextualise the emergence of minority exclusivism couched in the ethnic garb. In the first chapter, the competing paradigms of nation, state, nationalism, both the majoritarian and minority variants are discussed. The emergence of the minority discourse, to include the very same language of the majoritarian nationalist discourse is

elaborated. The second chapter takes up the elaborations of the first chapter; albeit exclusively from the French context. The emergence French language as a linguistic hegemon, the emergence of the French nation state and the discourse of nationalism and the evolution of dissent and the corresponding minority nationalist sentiments have been discussed. The third and fourth chapters deal with the trajectory of emergence, effusion and manifestation of the minority ethnic feeling in Brittany and Corsica respectively. The last chapter attempts a tentative conclusion in a topic, which is, I believe inherently inconclusive.

An unexpected inconvenience had threatened to abort this attempt of mine. I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. B. Vivekanandan for not only infusing that much needed insight into the way this work should progress but also for his moral support that strengthened me to sail through the crisis (one created by my own callousness).

Friends, they say, are your pillars of strength. My extreme gratitude to Srikanth, Dhananjay (I 'bought' their time, literally) - for all the moments in bliss and in bane; Gopan, Shiju and Biju for their concern and care at a stage when I needed it most; Mahesh and Rajesh for their expression of faith in 'my' ability to complete the work before the deadline.

Names and images flash by as I pause to recollect those kindred souls who were with me throughout Amir, Arshad, Tabir, Abu and Khalid - I am proud to have friends like you. A special thanks to Renis - for just hearing me out.


I also take this opportunity to thank the librarian and staff of a host of libraries-J.N.U; the British Council Division, IDSA, Rattan Tata and Teen Murti - without whose help I would not have gathered the material that have been used for the execution of this work.

I also thank my typists (they are too many to name) for having executed the work in excellent condition; that too in limited time. All the same I would

have to mention the patience and corporation accorded to me by Amar Singh Yadav. Thanks for saving the situation impeccably.

A pat of cheer, a word of encouragement, a refreshing smile and of course the comforting, silent acknowledgement of having to put up with someone who is racing 'express speed' to finish the job - Thanks for that Omair; and of course – the coffee did help!

J.N.U.
21st July 2000



Cheri

Chapter 1

Introduction: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Emergence of Minority Nationalism in Europe

This chapter will seek to do three things. First, it will explore the ambiguous legacy of the academic understandings of the concept of ethnic consciousness. The chief contention here will be that a proper understanding of minority nationalism will have to begin with the delineation of the difference between 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic'. Secondly, the chapter will assess the transformation of the ethnic consciousness into 'nation-ness'. The Enlightenment project and the homogenising tendency of nationalist politics tied up to the ideas of modernity will be debated. The final section of the chapter will deal with the emergence of minority nationalism in Europe. An attempt will be made to defend the term 'minority nationalism' as against other similar categories like 'ethnic secessionism', 'autonomous movements', 'regionalism', etc. Also, the origins of the majority - minority axis and the schema of minority inclusion into the nation state will be elaborated.

1. Differentiating 'Ethnic' and 'Ethnicity'

The connotative difference of the terms 'ethnic' and 'ethnicity' offers a good starting point to the phenomenon of minority nationalism that has called into question the existing consensus as to the pervasiveness and resilience of the nation-state concept. The term 'ethnicity' has enjoyed a seemingly sudden resurgence in social science literature since the late 1960s and early 1970s¹. However, a brief perusal of the existing literature will reveal that the terms

¹ Ethnicity was of course not a new term nor was the phenomenon new or unrecognised previously; it was merely labelled differently. Karl Deutsch's seminal work, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Enquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (1953) studies ethnicity entirely, though Deutsch uses the term 'nationality', 'national diversity' and 'differentiation' in lieu of 'ethnicity'. Charles Tilly's book, *The Formation of Nation states in Europe* (1975) does not use the term 'ethnicity'. Nevertheless, sections of this book are devoted to the issues of religious and cultural diversity. See Dennis L. Thompson and Dov Ronnen (eds.), *Ethnicity, Politics and Development*, (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers 1986) p.3

'ethnicity', 'ethnic groups' or 'ethnonationalism' gets to be viewed as a destabilising, potentially revolutionary force that threatens to disintegrate states or at least to disrupt their smooth functioning.²

This etymological assumption of the givenness of the disruptive meaning of ethnicity should be viewed as a process of wilful amnesia within the European social dialectic that seeks to ignore its very own historicity while trying to negotiate and situate the problem of ethnicity. That the current status of the European identity, which is moored to the concept of the nation itself, had its origins in the evolution and codification of the idea of an ethnic group is a pointer as to how to resolve this epistemological confusion. Starting from within the dominant western tradition, the most arresting definition of 'ethnicity' [without its present connotation] is the one propounded by Max Weber: "An ethnic group is a human collectivity based on an assumption of common origin, real or imagined."³ Arnold Dafshefsky elaborates this idea further. He categorises an ethnic group as "a group of individuals with a shared sense of peoplehood based on a presumed socio-cultural experience and/or similar physical characteristics. Such views may be viewed by their members and/or outsiders as religious, racial, national, linguistic and/or geographical. Thus, what the ethnic group members have in common is their 'ethnicity' (without the present connotation)⁴ or sense of peoplehood, which represents a part of their collective experience"⁵. Such a grouping is based on the aspirations of security. As Andrew M.Greezlay points out, 'the ethnic group keeps cultural traditions alive, provide us with preferred associates, helps organise the social structure, offer opportunities for mobility and success and enable men to identify themselves in the face of the threatening chaos of a

² Ethnicity no longer appeared as a term for a folkloric or a primordial phenomenon, the manifestation of tribe feelings, but as a term applied to a political force to be reckoned with. Ibid. p.4

³ Arnold Dafshefsky (ed.), *Ethnic Identity in Society*, (Chicago, Rand McNally College Publishing Company 1976), p.3

⁴ The brackets are mine.

⁵ Dafshefsky, n-3. He further points out that an ethnic group identification occurs when the group in question is one with whom the individual believes he has a common ancestry. p.8

large and impersonal society'.⁶ Thus, we see that 'ethnic grouping' becomes an expression of a basic group identity, basic in that fundamental human attributes⁷ are passed down from one generation to the next. It is a group identity because it binds the individual to a larger collectivity based on a common outlook that differentiates members of the groups from non-members.

This sense of grouping is intrinsically related to the idea of identity. Identity can be seen as the 'pattern maintenance code of the individual personality'.⁸ The process of identification subsumes two processes: 'identification of' and 'identification with'. The former includes placing the individual in socially defined categories. This facilitates the latter. It is the 'identification with' that given rise to identity.⁹ This identity orientation of ethnic grouping involves not only a recognition that because of one's ancestry one is member of a cultural or religious group and the recognition that other groups define one as belonging to that cultural or religious group; it is also because of the positive desire to identity oneself as a member of a group and a feeling of pride when one does so.¹⁰

The shift in the western outlook on 'ethnicity' has to do with the subsuming of the ethnic tropes into the framework of nationalism. The propensity to interact with human beings who speak the same language, share common cultural traits and historic memories and so forth and its subsequent rendering of security, a sense of familiarity and continuity has been reworked to posit the nation-state as the provider of these contingencies. This national ethnic variant often sees other types of ethnicity not in conformity with its state

⁶ Andrew M. Greezley, *Why Can't they be like us?*, (New York, Institute of Human Relations 1969), p.30 quoted in Dafshefsky, n-3.

⁷ Geertz's term – he postulates an 'assumed givenness' of social existence that derives its force from regional and kin connection and it includes communities based on shared religion, languages and social practice Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York, Basic, 1973), p.259 quoted in John F. Stack Jr, "Ethnic Mobilisation in World Politics: The Primordial Perspective" in John F. Stack, Jr. (ed.), *The Primordial Challenge : Ethnicity in the Contemporary World*, (New York, GreenWord Press 1986), p.1

⁸ Dafshefsky n-3. P 5

⁹ Ibid. p.7

¹⁰ For an elaborate discussion of this interconnectedness of desire, pride and ethnic grouping, see Arnold Bose and Caroline Bose (eds.) 'Minority Problems'.

version as inconvenient vestiges, tolerable but not to be encouraged. This interpretation of ethnicity has been summed up aptly by Dov Ronnen. He states that 'ethnicity' becomes a problem (a political one) when groups are crystallized in polarization because the political structure renders impossible the kinds of bargaining that might otherwise modify the boundary between these communities.¹¹ Such an ethnic mobilisation reinforces 'exclusiveness, suspicion and distrust and serve as the ideal foci for conflict.'¹² To an extent, it is true that the rhetoric and style of ethnic politics are often strident, and replete with images of irreconcilability. But to posit this new meaning as the only meaning reeks of an ethnocentrism that has been endorsed and legitimised by the West.¹³

This disparity in the legitimisation of the 'self' and 'other' notions of ethnicity has its roots in the origins of ethnic identity in Europe, it's flowering into the rhetoric of nationalism and its manifestation in the nation-state. Determining the ways and means in which the western thought has accommodated the idea of the *ethnos* (Greek word for people/ nations) into the notion of frontier rigidity would be useful in our attempt to decipher the intricacies of the ethnicity debates.

2. Ethnic Europe : From Empire to Nation

Taking the pre-modern Europe as a starting point for delineating the onset of modernity, the Enlightenment project, the break-up of the Grand Empires and the nascent sprouting of ethno-based national fervour is in fact a choice of convenience. It gives one the luxury of working with a few 'givens': groupings that have a fairly strong stratification on territorial, linguistics, cultural (inclusive of intra and inter-religious divisions) and historical lines. It also gives one the framework of geopolitical restructuring, conditioned by the

¹¹ Thompson and Ronnen, n-1.p 2

¹² Dafshefsky, n-3. P14

¹³ To counter this new variant of 'ethnicity,' development is presented as social change towards conformity with the legal entity. Ethnicity or its substitute terms is seen as an obstacle to that direction of change, which has to be overcome.

forces of modernity, that has cast a lasting impression on the cultural, social and political landscape of Europe.

Europe sans Modernity: the Politics of Intersecting Boundaries

The structuring of boundaries in Europe has been along a six fold criteria:

(a) The shift from nomadism to sedentary agriculture:

It was with the settling down of the European people into set norms of territory-based life that one witnesses the emergence of the concept of territorial identity. The sentiment of territorial identity was further moored by the political players and ecclesiastical powers that sought to tighten their hold on these sedentary populations by delineating territory specific jurisdiction.¹⁴ The disintegration of the Western Roman Empire under the pressure of the invasion from the Germanic, Slavic and Celtic tribes was subsequently followed up by a group identity consolidation amongst these marauding invaders.¹⁵ This genealogical myth can in many terms be seen as a prototype of ethnic consciousness. This was territorially reinforced when the *Stamme* elites chose to get settled down as landed nobles around 10th century B.C.¹⁶

(b) Religion as identity:

The boundary claims of Islam and Christianity, the two competing religions, provided the legitimising impetus for the Christian and Islamic civilizations. A vital factor to be taken into account here is the presumed division between the two lifestyles. Islam was perceived as the nomadic civilization whereas Christianity was sedentary (this reinforces the earlier identity formation). This schism fits into the pattern of the ethnic identity trope of 'in' and 'out' group difference albeit on a much broader scale.¹⁷ This led to

¹⁴ John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism*, (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p.52

¹⁵ Ibid. pp.52-54 The Germanic tribes followed an agglomerative pattern referred to as *Stamme* (a heterogeneous collection of individuals and families under the banner of a leading family). Even after the conquest of Rome, they adhered to the agglomeration so as to legitimise their claim to further aggression (defensive and offensive) p.52

¹⁶ Ibid. p.53. This is a fusion of kin identity with geographic identity.

¹⁷ Ibid. p.90

the idea of a minimal identity criteria vis-à-vis the other (i.e. for a defence of Christendom, the otherwise, diverse populations of Europe came under the Papal banner). What ensued was the creation of a broad frontier zone of insecurity in between Christendom and Islamic civilization.¹⁸

(c) Urbanism:

It has been one of the cardinal impulses for civilisation consolidation. The city as a focal point for the emergence of civilization has been extensively endorsed within the western academia.¹⁹ The effect of urbanism (in the sense of 'city centred life') on ethnic consciousness is two fold: (i) strong civic consciousness expressed in the symbolism of architectonic unity and more direct social participation. For e.g. The Byzantine city and the Italian city-state; (ii) Territorial extension by legal jurisdiction and by the moving out of the residing elites into the surrounding districts, for example, the expansion of Damascus.²⁰

(d) The capital city as a centralisation imperative:

This feature is a corollary to the earlier one. The emergence of the concept of a capital is based on the assumption that the universal terrestrial empire reflects the order of heaven.²¹ A consolidation on such a line would require institutions that assured the supremacy of centralised authority. Thus, the fixed capital gets established as an institution wherein there is a collation of

¹⁸ The creation of such a boundary of the presumedly different civilizations led to 'frontier myths'. The frontier groups like the Castilians and the Ottomans began to perceive themselves as 'chosen' to be the first line of defence and hence as superior to the other groups. This can be seen as a nascent and precious national identity within the broader religious identity. Robert I. Burns, *The Crusader Kingdom of Valencia: Reconstruction of Thirteenth Century Frontier*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1969), p.97

¹⁹ John Rundell and Stephen Mennell (eds.), *Classical Readings in Culture and Civilization*, (London, Routledge, 1998). This book brings together a whole milieu of readings that deal with this aspect.

²⁰ Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, *The Idea of the City in Western Thought: From Walled City to Spiritual Commonwealth*, translated by Stuart O'Donnell, (London, Hollis and Carter, 1970), pp.127-28 It has to be noted that the intense identity produced by the city-state may not have been directly transferred to a broader ethnic identification. But it can be assumed that it was indeed one of the pathways to such an identity formation.

²¹ Robert Falz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe*, translated by Shiela A. Ogilvile, (London, Arnold, 1969), p.68

powers that are in tune with the needs of the compound imperial polity.²² This capital city emerged as the communication centre. The same pattern of cultural expansion referred to in the last section (on urbanism) works here also, though with a much stronger manifestation.²³

(e) Religious organisation and communication:

The most lasting impression of the religious organisation of Europe was the use and codification of the various languages. The intense sectarian controversy within Christianity led to the desacralization of the liturgical languages and the endorsement of the vernacular.²⁴ Also the symbiosis between language and legal order, (which was religious in origin in most cases) which regulated the most intimate spheres of private life led to ethno-cultural divisions that has a lasting impact on ethno-identity formation.

(f) Language barriers:

This was in fact an issue not central to the formation of identity (through it later became a crucial component). The pre-modern European polity with no long-distance communication system was unaware of language as an article determinant of identity. Language consciousness persisted but it was only with

²² This emergence is reminiscent of the ancient city-states. The authority of the 'Super ordinate city' (The term used to refer to the capital city. Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), (pp.199-200), had other reasons too. The economic instability to support a large entourage persisted long enough to enable the entrenchment of particularist interests working for peripatetic government. Also important was the dynasties' reliance on specific ethnic groups for governance for e.g. the Habsburgs reliance on the Catholics of Southern Italy. Robert E. Dickinson, *City and the Region*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1964), pp.117-118

²³ The capital city was conceived as a center albeit ethnic connotations. This universalist aspect of the empire polity was most often subverted by the ascendancy of a single ethnic element in the unified beurocracy. Armstrong, n-14 p 200.

²⁴ The early doctrinal disputes of Catholicism and Orthodoxy paved the way for the emergence of ethno-religious identities centering on languages such as Armenian, Nestorian, Syriac and Coptic. The later conflict between Reformation and Counter Reformation saw the conversion of many modern European languages into written cultural vehicles. Ibid. pp.237-240

the centralisation project that it became a symbolic element of the consciousness of difference.²⁵

The attempt in this section has been one wherein a mapping of the various modes of identity boundary formation in Europe has been done to show the overlapping yet clearly visible structuring of Europe into various groupings. It has to be kept in mind that it is from this legacy of self-fixation that the Enlightenment/Modernity project drew its resources to configure the idea of nationalism and the nation states.

Modernity and the mapping of the European nation-states

The trajectory of modernity, charted out by the Enlightenment²⁶ can be culturally defined as ‘an epoch turned to the future, conceived as likely to be different from and possibly better than the past. The contrast between the past and the future constitutes modernity’s binary code. The present is valid only by the potentialities of the future, as the matrix of the future’.²⁷ This emphasis on the future, which in turn can be viewed as Europe’s transition to a new era, is tantamount to the discovery of the future. As such, it is tied in with the Enlightenment, the opening up of a mundane time horizon and the heralding of a social evolution’.²⁸

²⁵ The Romance/Germanic linguistic boundary existed from the Middle Ages. But language rarely coincided with polity frontiers. (Only during unequal intermingling of linguistic groups did the issue crop up). Ironically, the imperial tradition which rejected the reliance on a single culture, had to bank on a single administrative language. The later change to centralisation saw the diffusion of this single elaborated code. See Ronald Wardhaugh, *Languages in Competition: Dominance, Diversity, and Decline*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell Limited, 1987)

²⁶ The period of the Enlightenment which is generally considered to have taken place in Europe in the 18th century was a period characterised by supreme and almost overbearing confidence in the ability of human reason and rationality to improve the condition of mankind. There was an unquestioning acceptance of the idea that Western civilisation after the darkness and obscurity that was characteristic of the medieval period was now secure on the path of continuous improvement and development to the ideal of a completely rational society that would be free of the friction and tensions that had marked earlier times. This would provide opportunities to men to further develop their individuality and potentials to the fullest possible extent.

²⁷ Riccardo Poggioili, *The Theory of the Avant Garde*, (Cambridge, The Belknap Press, 1968), p.73

²⁸ Goran Therborn, *European Modernity and Beyond: the Trajectory of European Societies (1945-2000)*, (London/ Sage. 1995), p.4

This definitive socio-cultural shift has been variegatedly mapped in western thought²⁹. However, the issue at hand here is the setting for this change. The early impetus adding this variance can be seen in Francis Bacon's influence on the view of learning. Coupled with this were the rapid growth of commerce and industry, the scientific breakthrough, the universal tenets of liberalism (discussed in detail later) and the French Revolution et al..³⁰ The frontier boundaries, which were clearly demarcated, and the intersecting identity boundaries (discussed earlier) were now witness to a dialectic tension that can be understood as a pan-European civil strife. On the one hand, we have the tropes of Reason, Enlightenment, Progress, Modernity et. al.. Posited against this were the Ancient Customs, Wisdom of elders, Clan identity, Heritage etc. This civil strife was fuelled by the absence of the threat of the Islamic "other" from the 16th century onwards.³¹ Also, the church-state identity organisation was given a further density by the advent of the romantic nationalist doctrine. The immediate result was an ethnic-majoritarian consolidation within state boundaries. The factors that led to this were the

²⁹ Saint Simon proclaims that it is the giving way of the military society to the industrial society. Auguste Comte views it as the replacement of the religious age by the positive scientific age of social revolution. Durkheim explains it as the distinction of mechanic and organic solidarity. Ibid. pp.4-5

³⁰ For Bacon see John Claiborne Isbel, *The Birth of European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Stael's 'De l' Allemagne', 1810-1813*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.1-16; for Modernization in Europe see S.N.Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity*, , (Canada, John Wiley and Sons, Inc 1973) pp.22-47; for Liberalism see Tony Spibyey, *Social Change, Development and Dependency: Modernity, Colonialism and the Development of the West*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992), pp.68-71. An important distinction has to be made between the advent of Modernity and the advent of Renaissance and Reformation in an earlier era. For all the creativity that it espoused both these former movements had their eyes on the golden past. It is not that this past-centred vision was not there in the Enlightenment. As Marx contextualised it, 'the awakening of the dead served in these cases to glorify new struggles, not to parody old ones, to exaggerate in phantasy the given tasks, not to flee back from their solution in reality'. 'Der achtzchute Brumeire de Louis Bonaparte' *Marx and Engles Werke* vol.8, 1972 as quoted in Therborn, n-28. P 4

³¹ Therborn, n 28,, pp.21-22. The civil strife in Europe can be phased into two: (a) 1540-1690. The consolidation of religious strifes within Christendom leading to variants of proto nation states -Absolute dynasty e.g. Spain. Constitutional monarchy e.g. Britain (b) 1792-1840. The victory of the Parliament over the Monarch e.g. The Grand Compromise of the British Monarch leading to Bill of Rights. In this phase National Sovereignty was seen as 'People's Will' and not as a dynasty's/rulers' whim.

peasant emancipation of the last third of the 19th Century,³² the rise of the state machinery with its urban elites vying to control the profusion of capital that modernity facilitated and the subsequent breakdown of the multi-ethnic empires.³³

It is seen that economic prosperity lay at the heart of the emergence of ethno-linguistic/ethno-religious entities called nations from the ruins of the imperial empires. However, it has to be realised that the state as the bedrock of central authority persisted even in the language of the nation. The claim that the 'nations' had the right to set up their own political authority in an autonomous territory has, in fact, the notion of the state inbuilt in it³⁴. The difference was that the state was not viewed as an instrument 'expected to function and legitimize its rule on behalf of the nation'.³⁵ The nation, usually a corollary for the people, was conceived generally as an ethnic grouping with a collective political purpose. The importance of the State within the nation was due to its centrality not only in the defense and expansion of the nation's interest vis-à-vis other states', but also for the internal subjugation of 'prior' aggregative principles operating within the society of its own rule.³⁶

The homogenisation attempt of the state was furthered in terms of a political culture, which was defined as the 'articulation of national goals, defense of national interest, and fulfillment of national aspirations within a

³² Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: the Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1976), pp.1-15. Industrialisation and new means of transport and communication led to massive rural-urban migrations. This breaking down of boundaries was overlapped by the radial effect of the diffusion of urban identity into the surrounding areas.

³³ Friedrich Meinecke, *Cosmopolitanism and the National States*, translated by F.B. Kimber, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970), pp.3-28. The breakdown of the empire meant that the various centres could look in terms of a regional consolidation on ethnic lines. A pointer to this tendency was the rejection of the empire's policies that promoted ethnic diversity.

³⁴ David Held, "Central Perspectives on the Modern State", in Gregor McLennan, David Held and Stuart Hall (eds.), *The Idea of the Modern State*, (Philadelphia, Open University Press, 1993), pp.29-79

³⁵ D.L. Sheth, "The Nation State and Minority Rights" in D.L. Sheth and Gurpreet Mahajan (eds.), *Minority Identities and the Nation State*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999), p.20

³⁶ *Ibid.* p.20

national society.³⁷ This conflation of the concepts of the society, nation and state not only meant a subordination of the other societal categories but also a legitimisation of state power in the name of nation.

A new dimension which was absent in the dynastic concept of 'state' was the idea of the state being legitimised through popular mandate. This concept has its roots in the assumption that people were more or less an ethno-culturally homogeneous population.³⁸ Nationalism was the ideologue on which this overarching framework of a people-endorsed state was built. The state was viewed as an impersonal, collective authority, deriving its sovereignty from the entire citizens (viewed as equal). This consolidation of nation in the form of state was recognized as a 'universal necessity'. Herein, we have the genesis of the nation-state.³⁹

The language of nationalism

Having delineated the emergence of the nation-state, it is pertinent to address the particular issue of the language of nationalism. A useful entry point into the concept of nationalism would be the differentiation between nationalism and patriotism. Karl Deutsch's differentiation between the two concepts is illuminating:

³⁷ Ibid. pp.20-21

³⁸ The creation of a national political culture according to Tamir occurs through the exercise of the right to national self-determination. This right Tamir elaborates is expressive of the desire to have a public sphere of one's own. The right therefore operates in such a way as to create a public sphere in which the cultural values, norms and lifestyle of the dominant majority are institutionalised. This institutionalisation of the norms and values of the dominant majority has obviously exclusionary effects on the minorities that exist within the boundaries of the nation state resulting in minority disadvantage and marginalisation. Tamir further notes that problems arise for members belonging to minority groups when they seek to carry their cultural particularity into the public sphere (see Tamir 1993). One of the significant achievements of multicultural theories have been their questioning of the assumption of the culturally homogeneous nation state. They have thus been able to uncover the façade of the culturally neutral nation state behind which lay hidden the cultural hegemony of the dominant majority (see Habermas 1998).

³⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, (London, Harper and Row, 1971), p.4. The onus was on the state triggering an economic growth that would lead to prosperity. The term 'national' thus acquired a cultural basis in modernity and a political basis in the liberal concept of the civil society. see Neera Chandhoke, *Beyond Secularism: The Rights of Religious Minorities*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.1-15

“Patriotism is an effort or readiness to promote the interests of all the persons born or living with the same *patria*, i.e., country, whereas nationalism aims at promoting the interests of all those of the same *natio*, i.e., literally a group of common descent and upbringing, that is to say, of complementary habits of communication. Patriotism appeals to all residents of a territorial group, regardless of their ethnic background. Nationalism appeals to all members of an ethnic group, regardless of their country of residence. Patriotism based on residence often appears at an earlier stage of economic and social mobilization such as was found in Europe during the later mercantilist era, and up to the middle of the nineteenth century. As mobilization progresses and comes to involve larger masses of the population in more intense competition and greater political insecurity, patriotism is replaced by nationalism which is based on far more intimate and slow changing personal characteristic and communication habits of each individual.”⁴⁰

Here it is implicit that despite the similarities (especially in the evocation of the passion of love) patriotism and nationalism differs in the notion of primary value. For the patriot the primary value is the Republic and the free way of life. He perceives, tyranny, despotism, oppression and corruption as inimical to Republican ideas. On the other hand, the nationalist has as his cardinal value the spiritual and cultural unity of the nation. For him cultural contamination, racial impurity, heterogeneity and social, political and intellectual disunion are the enemies of nationalism.⁴¹

Nationalism can be seen as a transformation or adaptation of patriotism, wherein the terms ‘country’ and ‘love of country’ is given new meanings. It

⁴⁰ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1953), p.232

⁴¹ Viroli, n-22. Pp 1-2

can be argued that this shift was a result of the marginalization of the Republican ideal of universal liberty and the corresponding foregrounding of the ethnic unity as a precondition for real liberty. By the end of the eighteenth century, after the French Revolution, the language of Republican patriotism had established itself as a language of liberty and a major intellectual tradition. The main thrust here was the notion of the 'country' as a collectivity of equal citizens geographically and historically bounded. The cultural specificity that ensued from such a geographical and historical boundedness was not to be an impediment for egalitarian ideals, which were perceived as part of the universal good. The country can generate patriotism through politics. If its laws, institutions and customs can be conditioned to the Republican ideal of respect for the principle of equality, with a negation of preferential treatments, then the citizens will love the country. As William Fend points out, the first duty of a country with patriotic ideals demands the correction of social injustices caused by avarice.⁴²

The intolerance of oppression that patriotism posited was in many ways a voicing of protest against the hegemony of the monarchic constellations. The advent of modernity and the internal tension within the power centres found within the dynastic realms vying to assert their dominance over capital (primarily finance), proved to be the testing ground for the practical application of these liberal principles. The crisis of the patriotic ideal started when it was proved to be inadequate as a means of helping people to find a way out of the vortex of dynastic hegemony. The purely political ideal of '*patrio*' sounded too abstract. A different conception of the 'country' was impending so as to impart fervour for the much-awaited rebellion. A radical criticism of this language of Republican patriotism came from Germany. The German theorists rejected the priority of the values of patriotism, the language of the Enlightenment and cosmopolitanism in favour of the spiritual and cultural unity of the nation.⁴³

⁴² Discussion of William Fend's *Patriotism or the Love of Our Country* (1804) in Viroli, n 22. p.102

⁴³ Ibid. p-111

The clearest example of distrust for Republican liberty and the anti-patriotic orientation of the German intellectuals is Johann Gottfried Herder:

“Love your fatherland, for to it you are indebted for your life, education, parents and friends; in it you have enjoyed the happiest years of your childhood and youth. Be an asset to it and worthy of it; concern yourself about its laws. Be not however, its judge but its supporter. He who contributes to the common good is a worthy child of his fatherland.”⁴⁴

It is evident that for Herder patriotism does not require the ideals of Republicanism. It is more of a sense of attachment and duty to a more specific identity: the nation (or rather the love of the nation). The word ‘fatherland’ increases this endorsement of the sense of belonging to a unity that prompts one’s to do one’s share for the common good. In Herder we see the fusion of patriotism into nationalism. The patriotic endeavour is absorbed within the idea of the nation understood as the specific culture and sum of the spiritual life of each people in a given moment of its history.⁴⁵

The unification of Italy and Germany provides a clear indication as to the simultaneous pressures of nation as Republic (as viewed by patriotic Republicans) and the nation as an organic cultural unity. (The nationalist concept) and the external emergence of the ‘organic nation’ as the all encompassing ideal that accommodated even the concerns of Republican patriotism. Mazzini’s role in envisioning a unified Italy is a clear instance of the ascendancy of nationalism over patriotism. Guissepe Mazzinis failure in linking up Republican patriotism with German nationalism should be seen in the context of his attempt to build a unified Italian republic. Mazzini believed that to forge a movement it was not enough to appeal to the political values embodied in the classical ideal of *patria*. It was necessary that one should

⁴⁴ F. M. Barnard, *J.G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.209

⁴⁵ Herder’s definition of national soul is interesting in this context: ‘national soul is the mother of all culture upon the earth and all culture is the expression of national soul’, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.114.

incorporate them into a larger discourse that is inclusive of the cultural values of a nation. Mazzini, however, qualifies that the national culture has to be understood in the broader context of European spiritual development towards liberty.⁴⁶ The love of the country, like other forms of political and moral love, has to proceed from the universal to the particular. This high call for a balance between patriotism and nationalism led to Mazzini's exile. The subsequent unification and independence of Italy was not recognised by him as the *patria* of his dreams: 'No; the Italy of to-day is not the Italy hoped for and foreseen by me thirty years ago, saluted in the germ in 1849, within the walls of Rome, by you and by the men who were then armed priests of the *Ideal*, and who are now the contented soldiers of a Power allied with despotism abroad and living by repression at home'.⁴⁷

In Germany too, where republican patriotism was never a significant intellectual tradition, patriotism became synonymous with loyalty to the monarch and a commitment to protect 'Germany's spiritual uniqueness. As Bismarck remarked in his *Memoirs*, German patriotism needs a prince, as a prince alone can offer the basis for a larger loyalty that transcends local allegiances. Historically and ethnically, Germans are divided. They need a monarch and a dynasty that ensures they unity and strength'⁴⁸. Once the political unity is achieved, the next step is the construction of cultural unity: 'the *Staatsnation* must find its completion in the *Kulturnation*. Politicians, assisted by artists, writers, and intellectuals, have to work to create a more spiritually centered and culturally pure Germany'. Of the two key concepts that condense the intellectual project of the late nineteenth century German patriotism, *Kultur* and *Volk*, the former express the belief in the uniqueness of German spirit, while the original spirit of the German people defines a cultural and ethnic borderline between Germans and non-Germans. The *Volk* celebrated by the *Volkisch* ideology is original and uncontaminated by ethnic filth; it is an

⁴⁶ Viroli, n-22. 144-146, pp. 151-152

⁴⁷ Letter to Ernst Haug, Apr. 1863 *Mazzini's Letters*, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 276

ideal of purity to be contemplated and dreamt of with nostalgia and resentment for the impure world.⁴⁹

This watering down of the commitment to liberty and its related conception of the country in purely theoretical terms as a means of reaching out to the people's feelings of compassion and solidarity misfired in that such feelings which are rooted in language culture and history could be reworked into an ethnocentric framework. In fact, it was this narrowly envisioned, culture-based patriotism that paved the way for the rhetoric of nationalism.

Nationalism: From Rhetoric to Programme

The ethnic problem that has resurfaced in Europe in recent times has to be seen in terms of a dual role of the nation-state and the rhetoric of nationalism in attempting to create homogenous identities. The status of the state as the instrument of this yoking together has been discussed before. But, the error of classical social theory, as Michael Schudson argues, was not in the neglect of the nation state as a unit of analysis but the failure to treat it as a problematic social and historical construction.⁵⁰

He points out that there are several ways to forge societal coherence, 'societies may be *coherent orders*, meaning that political control is effectively exercised. They may be *coherently coordinated*, meaning that people of different roles, interests and values manage through various formal and informal mechanisms to interact peacefully. And they may be *coherent communities* with shared allegiance to a common set of beliefs and values.⁵¹ The underlying problem in trying to understand the role of the state by detaching it from nationalism is to neglect the ways in which the two reinforce each other. The new kind of spatio-cultural meta-narrative that nationalism envisions is in fact programmed by the state apparatus.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p.283-8

⁵⁰ Michael Shudson, "Culture and the Integration of National Societies" in Diana Crane (ed.), *The Sociology of Culture*, (Oxford and Cambridge, Basil Blackwell, 1994), p.21

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 23

This tendency is best understood under the category of cultural imperialism. Here again, one has to tread cautiously so as to avoid the deterministic approach of trying to pin down the nation state and nationalism, as a manifestation of the material outcome of modernity: capitalism, industrialism, et.al.. The need here, on the other hand, is to emphasize the equally relevant psychological content of nationalism.

Benedict Anderson's mapping of nationalism recognizes the primacy of this psychological impetus⁵². Anderson's position is an argument which endorses that national identity is a particular style of 'imagining the community' made possible by and also, in a sense, required by the processes of social modernity: secular rationalism a calendrical perception of time; capitalist driven technological developments, mass literacy and mass communication, political decentralization, and the modern nation-state. All these features combined in complex ways to promote identification with the nation as the dominant form of cultural identity.⁵³ Anderson's aim is to account for nationalist sentiments where they exist in the imaginings of those who do identify with the nation. The importance of the word 'imagine' is crucial to follow the commutations of this formulation. This is evident in the very definition that Anderson gives to the nation:

"The nation is imagined as a community because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill as willingly as to die for such imaginings".⁵⁴ This abstract conception subsequently deriving its legitimacy from the state implementation can be very problematic. In fact, the ethnocentrism and hegemony that

⁵² Giddens too stress this idea that 'nationalism is a phenomenon of modernity, a form of 'psychological belonging' specific to societies organised on the scale and with the technological resources deriving from capitalism and with the nation-state as the most significant power container.' Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984), p.193

⁵³ John Timlinson summarising Anderson's Theses. John Timlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*, (London, Pinter Publishers, 1991), p.84.

⁵⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, Verso, 1983), p.16

nationalism (and its implimentor-the state) passes is implicit even in the very definition given by Anderson. Anderson's rejection of the idea that nationalism is rooted in the fear and hatred of the other and his linking it up with love of country is misplaced.

Even if we accept Anderson's interpretation of nationalism as a cultural artefact with its similarity to kinship and religion, it would be clear that this 'love' is in fact a partial one vis-à-vis the dominant ethnic group found within the boundaries of the nation state.⁵⁵

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An important aspect of the incorporation of nationalism into the workings of the nation state is the bureaucratic incorporation of 'national culture'. The ensuing endeavour of the state making efforts to consolidate the nation includes the creation of a single law and systems of communication throughout the territories, creation of a single taxation system and fiscal policy, construction of a unified transport and communications system, streamlining of the administrative apparatus and the centralization of control in the capital city, the formation of professional cadres of skilled personnel for key administrative institutions. At later stage measures of welfare benefit, labour protection, insurance and uniform education came to be included in the state making process.⁵⁶ The nationalist agenda that is very often hidden in these structural attempts at creating a 'national consciousness' to aid the smooth functioning of the nation-state have the following manifestation.: The growth and transmission of 'common memories' (read as majority memory); myths and symbols of the community, the growth, selection and transmission of historical traditions and rituals, the designation, cultivation and transmission of

⁵⁵ This partisan love can be seen also in Anderson's work. Print Capitalism: "In the process, they gradually become aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions; of people in their particular language field, and at the same time that *only those* hundreds of thousands, or millions belonged. These fellow readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community." Ibid., p.47

⁵⁶ A.D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, (Cambridge, Polity Press. 1995), p.89

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‘authentic values, knowledge and attitude’ in the designated population through standardized methods, the demarcation, cultivation and transmission of symbols and myths of a historic territory or homeland, the definition and protection of common rights and duties for all the members of the designated community.⁵⁷ This last ideal was usually accomplished by extending the principles of universal franchise to all residents.⁵⁸

A clear manifestation of ‘nationalism’ working through the ‘nation-state’ to bring forth ‘a national consciousness’ that leads to a ‘national culture’ is the invention of ‘Traditions’ to justify the nation (both as an entity and as a concept). Traditions include notions pertaining to capital city myths, military uniforms, national flags, national anthem, public ceremonies and mass monuments. Eric Hobsbawm points out that their significance lay in their undefined universality: The national flag, the national anthem and the national emblem are the three symbols through which an independent country proclaims its identity and sovereignty, and as such they command instantaneous respect and loyalty. In themselves they reflect the entire background, thought and culture of the nation.⁵⁹ Even the concept of a ‘national economy’ can be seen as an offshoot of this penchant for conjuring traditions.⁶⁰

Despite this orientation towards an ethno-centric homogenisation, the nation-state derived its legitimacy from its self-proclaimed adherence to the principles of secularism and liberty. This was a result of the relegation of

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.89-90

⁵⁸ The concept of ‘Franchise’ was linked to that of ‘Citizenship’, which initially had a liberal meaning but was later subverted by the nationalist discourse to mean, ‘membership into the discourse of nation building’. As Schudson points out ‘a regime unifies people not only through a system of justice, an administrative apparatus for taxation and a common centre for political allegiance but also through citizenship. Citizenship raises expectations about and identification with nation -state.’ Schudson, n 50, pp .21-22

⁵⁹ R.Frith, *Symbols: Public and Private*, (1973), quoted in Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawn, *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.11

⁶⁰ The national economy with its bounded territorial extension was taken to be the basic unit of economic development. A change in the frontiers of the state or in its policy could have substantial and continuous material consequences for the nation. Hence the need for the creation of this myth which would then bind the citizen’s fate to the fortunes of this ‘imagined economy’ (to borrow Anderson’s usage). The core idea is taken from Hobsbawn, Ibid., p.264

religion to a personal sphere.⁶¹ This shift from the identity based on the notion of religion to an identity based on the notion territoriality foreclosed, at least theoretically, the possibility of justifying the creation of the modern nation-state on ethnic terms.⁶² The modern nation was not an ethno-cultural conception but a politico-cultural one. Ironically, such a political culture (with its aspirations for liberal democracy) was facilitated by the state forcing a linguistic homogeneity. This was the basis for the growth of the modern legal and political institutions of citizenship.⁶³ Tied up to this notion of an impersonal political culture was the concept of civil society.⁶⁴ This space was the public sphere formally occupied by religion. Civil society was a convenient conjecture in which the cultural symbolism of the nation state (still articulated in terms of the ethos and interest of the dominant ethnic group) could now be projected in 'universal national terms'(shorn off its ethnic garb). That the civil society was perceived as a manifestation of the autonomous, liberal democratic character of the state lend credibility to this universalist claim. It has to be noted that this notion of the civil society could also be used to define the majority as an open political category, the 'mainstream' into which the

⁶¹ This idea has its genesis in the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. The principle of territorial existence was formulated to strengthen the integrity of an ethno-linguistic nation qua political community. This was seen as a deterrent that would prevent the dynastic conflicts, which had based its notion of aggression on 'internationally' overlapping religious and denominational identity. The treaty specifically ruled out any further instances of coercion on the part of the Treaty members by espousing the cause of their co-religionists minority in another country. Sheth, n-35, p.22

⁶² Here one witnesses a fusion of the 'national identity' with the concept of 'state-membership'. The articulation of cultural homogeneity was sophisticatedly transferred to the term 'common aspiration': for modernisation of society and the institutional democratisation of the polity. This definition of the nation in modern democratic terms prevented the state, in principle, from acquiring a majoritarian ethnic colour. 'Nationals were viewed as sharing common state membership (even if they were culturally different) and recognition was to come in terms of equal citizenship rights'. Ibid., pp.22-23

⁶³ Will Kymlicka, *Liberlism, Community and Culture*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989). Kymlicka extensively discusses the concept of citizenship in the 12th chapter, 'Communitarianism and Minority Rights', pp. 237-240

⁶⁴ The concept of civil society is one of the key concepts of political theory and signifies the space that exists between the government and the individual. It thus acts as a significant bulwark against the absolutist tendencies of the state. It is thus meant to keep even the most democratic and legitimate of governments firmly under check. It includes within its sphere a vast multiplicity of institutions like the press, the market, universities, churches and other religious bodies and a variety of other associations that operate in complex ways to promote the freedom of the individual against the possible intruding tendencies of the state (for a detailed discussion of Civil Society see Chandhoke).

minorities could assimilate.⁶⁵ At the outset, civil society provided the space for the minorities to co-exist as socio cultural categories—they could preserve their life styles, organise politically (though they could not function as groups who devised and lived by their own laws), and claim special rights given to encourage their economic and political participation in the mainstream.⁶⁶

However, it has to be understood that this egalitarianism and dispensation of equality and justice is nothing but the sense of civil equality that exists within an ethnic ‘in-group.’ (In this case the majoritarian concept of the ‘secular’ national community). It is just that, here it is sought to be given a pan-national character.

National territories and cultural frontiers: the formulation of the boundaries of the modern nation-state

The emergence of the modern nation-states of Europe obliterated old boundaries and created new ones. Beneath the apparent territorial claims of the early years of the formation of the nation-states, one can detect two general justificatory principles – ethnic and historic - pertaining to boundary definition.⁶⁷ Physical geographers identify three stages in the emergence of national boundaries:

- i. *allocation* of territories to one country or another on fairly crude lines;

⁶⁵ Will Kymlicka, *Multi Cultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), pp.1-23

⁶⁶ But the ‘constraint’ which is subtly imposed is interesting. ‘The lack of permission to retain cultural and social practices that conflict with state laws’ (read as majority will). This use of cultural symbols of the ethno-majority gets defended due to its lack of appearance as an anti-minority hegemony. Instead, it gets linked to the industrialisation and modernisation trope. This ‘de-emphasising’ of the ethno-cultural dimension as a constitutive principle of the majority identity and the heralding of the great transformation to a ‘modern nation’ where all identities (major and minor) are mobilised to build a modern society, egalitarian and in opposition to the hierarchical order of the ancient regime is the subvertive principle wherein the cultural imperialism of the ‘national’ state parades as liberal egalitarianism. Sheth, n-35, pp.23-24

⁶⁷ Tensions between these two principles were common. An example of this was the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848, where the planners of Germany discussed the merits of the historical criteria as opposed to the linguistic one in the determination of the boundaries of the proposed new German state. Otto Pflanze, ‘Nationalism in Europe, 1848-1871’ *Review of Politics*, 28 (2), 1961. pp.129-143 quoted in Malcolm Anderson. (ed.), *Frontier Region in Western Europe*, (London, Frank Cass, 1983), p. 35

- ii. *delimitation* of a specific boundary on the basis of accurate geographic knowledge; and
- iii. *demarkation* of the boundary by means of physical objects like fences, pillars or cleared areas.⁶⁸ The transition from the first to the second stage clearly coincides with political and social development that ensues from the formation of a 'nation-consciousness'. The increased political importance of boundaries has coincided with the growth of the nation-state. It is in this context that the third stage has to be understood-symbolic as well as pragmatic. Attention should be given to the terminology under use. 'Boundaries' have to be distinguished from 'Frontiers'. The former has a precise linear quality where as the latter is more diffuse and with zonal connotations.⁶⁹ Having distinguished between the two, one may proceed to survey the various ways in which the 'ethnic national frontier' and the 'historic national frontier' has been evoked to create national boundaries:
 - i. The Ethnic National Frontier: The ethnic drop of boundary delimitation is superficially attractive in that the justice of drawing state boundaries to conform to the frontiers of national groups seems incontrovertible: it subjects political institutions to people, redrawing the political map to coincide with the ethnic map. In practice, where this solution was attempted in Europe, it had the effect of recreating in microcosm in the new states tense inter-ethnic relationship, the type that the new boundaries were designed to resolve; new national minorities were produced. The translation of ethnic into political borders is difficult for two reasons. Its operation tends to depend on the assumption that a person's political aspirations may be inferred from his ethnic nationality, and (usually) that ethnic nationality in turn coincides with linguistic usage. Although the association between language usage and

⁶⁸ I have synthesised the argument of J.R.V. Prescott. J.R.V. Prescott, *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries*, (London, Hutchinson University Library, 1965), pp.64-72

⁶⁹ Lewis M. Alexander, *World Political Patterns*, (Chicago, Rand McNally, 1963), pp.45-46

ethnic nationality has typically been very high, there have been some notable deviant examples, particularly when the boundaries of language and religion have crosscut. Among these have been German-speaking Jews in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, who identified themselves as 'Jewish' by ethnic nationality: Bulgarian-speaking Moslems in Bulgaria, who identified themselves as Pomaks', rather than identifying either with those with whom they shared their language (Bulgarians) or their religion (the substantial Turkish minority); and Serbs and Croats, who shared a language but were distinguished by adherence to different religions and use of separate alphabets (Orthodox and Catholic, Cyrillic and Roman, respectively.)⁷⁰

The inference of political preferences from knowledge of an individual's ethnic nationality or language of habitual use is more problematic. Evidence collected in connection with proposed or actual plebiscites after the First World War, however, has revealed several areas where language was a very imperfect indicator of political allegiance. Thus Protestants in Masuria (adjoining East Prussia), who spoke a dialect of Polish, tended to prefer the religiously-proximate state (Germany) to the linguistically-proximate one (Poland); many German-speakers in Alsace Lorraine favoured union with France; and many Danish-speakers in North Schleswig preferred union with Germany to partition of their province.⁷¹

Two acute problems are raised by this issue. In the first place, is it legitimate to attempt to sound out the 'general will' of a region? Secondly, what response can be made to the criticism of the sensitivity of regional verdicts to the way in which boundaries are drawn: 'the people can not decide until somebody decides who are the people'.⁷² This dilemma has been summed up effectively by Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle in their study of conflict in plural societies:

⁷⁰ Malcom Anderson, n 67., pp.36-38

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 39

⁷² Ivor Jennings, *The Approach to Self-Government*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp.55-56

Individuals have preferences; the community does not. Statements alluding to a 'general will' or a 'community sentiment' are cases of false personification.... Collective choice, as reflected in governmental policies, market allocations, and social traditions, is nothing more than the aggregation, in some fashion, of individual preferences.⁷³

- i. The Historic National Frontier: The 'historic' criterion for the drawing of boundaries is based on the selection as ideal (if not sacred) of frontiers, which had existed at some time in the past when the nationality had an independent state of its own. Thus, Lithuanians could claim not only Memel and Vilnius but also territories further a field which had belonged to the great Lithuanian Empire. Poland could claim not only Silesia and Vilnius but also all of Lithuanian Empire on similar grounds, as they had constituted part of the united Polish-Lithuanian kingdom. Czechs resisted violation of the integrity of the lands of the Crown of St. Wenceslas (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) as vehemently as the Hungarians did in the case of the lands of the Crown of St. Stephen (Hungary proper, Slovakia, Transylvania and other territories). The Bulgarians demanded Yugoslav territory such as Macedonia on the grounds that it had belonged to the ancient Bulgarian Empire. Finally, the Irish claimed Northern Ireland as part of the historic Irish state allegedly unified in the eleventh century by Brian Boru and dismembered by the Normans, while the British claimed it and Southern Ireland – as part of the British Isles, which had long constituted an indivisible political entity.⁷⁴

Of the importance of national territory there can be little doubt. As Frederick Hertz has put it:

⁷³ Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth A. Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies*, (Ohio, Charles E Merrill, 1972) p.22

⁷⁴ Malcom Anderson, n-67. p.41

“The idea of the national territory is an important element of every modern national ideology. Every nation regards its country as an inalienable sacred heritage, and its independence, integrity, and homogeneity appear bound up with national security, independence and honour. This territory is often described as the body of the national organism and the language as its soul. In the ideology of almost every nation, therefore its historical territory is looked upon almost as a living personality which cannot be partitioned without destroying it altogether.”⁷⁵

Among the difficulties associated with the concept of historic frontiers the most obvious is the fact that, since the territorial extent of states, has waxed and waned over the centuries, the choice of the period, which is taken as that in which the historic frontiers were attained, is crucial. This choice tended in practice to refer to the period when the vanished state was at the height of its splendour, this was also usually the period when its area was at its greatest extent. The deviations and contradictions in the assertion of either of these principles are obvious. Examples from the post World War II phase of nation building and boundary drawing have been used since it gives a much clearer picture of the processes involved. What can be understood as a general trend (which can also be used to describe the boundary shifts in the earlier phase of the emergence of the nation state) is that, when one views the nascent form of the boundary building of the modern nation state, both these specific principles of boundary determination operate to chart out the territorial expanse of Europe into clear demarcations. It must, however, be understood that in the creation of the older West European nation-states residual factors like national rivalries (carried down from the dynastic rivalries) and strategic considerations (both commercial and military) might also have played a part.

⁷⁵ Fredrick Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics: A Psychology and Sociology of National Sentiment and Nationalism*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1944). pp. 150-51. Quoted in Malcolm Anderson, *Ibid.* p. 42

3. The Return of the Native: Emergence of Minority Nationalism in Europe

Ethnicity as Politics

Carrying over from the discussion in the previous section, it can be said that the creation of the nation states from within the residue of the multi-ethnic empires was the point at which the ethnic consciousness in Europe acquired a majority- minority orientation.⁷⁶ When viewed in tandem with the programmatic 'national' goal of the modern nation state it may be deduced that it was the imbalance in this ethnic majority–minority axis that led to the re-emergence of ethnic minority identity as a political 'other' to the 'selfhood' of dominant nationalism. As Joseph Rothschild has opined, 'ethnicity is a plastic, variegated, and originally ascriptive trait that, in certain historic and socio-economic circumstances, is readily politicised. Such fertile circumstances abound in modern and transitional societies. Such societies are characterised by asymmetric, non-random self-reproducing correlations between ethnic categories on the one hand, and socio-economic classes and power distribution on the other hand'.⁷⁷ This effusion of an ethnic programme on political lines is primarily a result of the policy of boundary maintenance that is fundamental to the idea of nation state. The state is stringent in its conception of the boundary as a clear physical/ symbolic marker of deference between itself and all other states. That the trajectory of human geography is too intricate and complex to lead to a neat mapping of state boundaries will clearly coalesce with ethnic

⁷⁶ Eric Hobsbawm contextualises this formation of the ethnic majority- minority axis as follows: 'In the Ottoman Empire, each major group had the right of self-government. The Christians and the Jews were allowed to practice their religion, and they had considerable autonomy in the internal affairs in many matters, including legal codes, and courts. For five centuries beginning with 1456, three groups had official recognition as millets or self-governing communities- The Greek Orthodox, the American Orthodox and the Jews. Each of these groups further decentralised its powers to its subdivisions based on ethnicity and language. In the mid 18th century, the Ottoman Empire attempted to establish a common system of relationship to the state by abolishing the millets. Once this was done, the position of each group in society was decided on numerical strength; and majorities and minorities came in to being - 'Identity, politics and the left' *New Left Review*, no.27 May/June (1996) pp. 38- 47

⁷⁷ Joseph Rothschild, *Ethno-politics: A Conceptual Framework*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1981) p. 2

boundaries means that it is exactly the imperfection in the mapping and the ethnic aspirations which lead to the issue of politicised ethno-nationalism.⁷⁸

One of the reasons why this subversive ideology emerged in opposition to the assumedly 'given' and 'eternal' concept of the nation state was the neglect, on the part of the state of very cardinal realities that are inherent in most nation states. This glossing over is pertaining to the notion of ethnic plurality of the nation states. It may be that it is the reluctance to endorse a trait that is often seen as symbolising the empires which were brought down to facilitate the emergence of nation, that has led to the nation states from amicably coming to terms with their plural ethnic reality. Even if the state is aware, it is very reluctantly that it adopts an official endorsement and the subsequent redressal of this crucial issue.⁷⁹

It is clear here that the characterisation of the modern state as a nation state has lost its original meaning. It is no longer possible to view the nation state as culturally homogeneous and the language of nationalism has lost its authenticity. The core nationalist doctrine being attacked here is the discourse that has been constructed on the basis of a few sweeping generalisations. (1) Humanity is naturally divided into nations; (2) Each nation has its peculiar character; (3) The source of all political power is the nation, *i.e.* the whole collectivity of the people (read as majority); (4) For freedom and self realisation, men must identify with the nation; (5) Nation can only be fulfilled

⁷⁸ 'Out of the tension between the reality of multiethnic states and the potentiality of self determination demands there emerges today's politics of ethnonationalism. In fact, politicised ethnicity remains the world's major ideological legitimator and delegitimator of states' Rothschild, *Ibid.* p. 14

⁷⁹ Will Kymlicka even differentiates between two versions of the ethnic 'other' that may be formed in a nation state: (1) National minorities- These are incorporated groups of previously self governing, territorially concentrated cultures. Their entry into a larger state may be followed by a wish to maintain themselves as distinct societies and this may be followed up by the demand for autonomy for self-preservation. The 'union' may be due to three reasons: (a) invasion of one cultural community by another; (b) Changing of the territory from one imperial power to another; and (c) voluntary union. (2) Ethnic Groups- these consist of individual or familial migration from one country to another. These are rather loose associations who seek integration and acceptance as full members into the host society. For them cultural accommodation is the answer to their woes. Thus we can have a multinational state (presence of national minorities) and a polyethnic state (the presence of immigrants)- Kymlicka, n-65, pp. 10-11

in their own states; (6) Loyalty to the nation states overrides other loyalties; and (7) The primary condition of global freedom and harmony is the strengthening of the nation state.⁸⁰ That the state ideology operated at a level wherein it attained the grab of being secular and liberal was instrumental in the success with which it could suppress the ethnic sentiments of the minorities. Infact, it was the secular pretensions of the state that finally proved to be its Achille's heel. The bargaining space that it facilitated was a crucial factor in the political expression of ethnic grievance. This view has been endorsed by Jurgen Habermas who emphasises that, 'it is only in secularised societies can one see the minimum pre- requisites of a communication system....[here] Mutual needs are negotiable and these negotiations have a public character about them'.⁸¹

The resurgence of the minorities unmasked the majoritarian ethnic intentions that were hidden behind the state apparatus. Citizenship rights were perceived as inadequate to protect the identity and interests of minorities. The most contentious issue was the new proposition that there was indeed an inherent contradiction between civil society and national society (as has been noted earlier, the idea of the nation and its national past was viewed as a representation of the dominant ethnic collectivity). The notion that a state's

⁸⁰ Synopsised from A.D Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, (London, Harper and Row, Duck Worth and New York, 1971)

⁸¹ Jurgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Boston, , Beacon Press, 1984), p.77; secularisation can be seen as a central motif in the state programme. A useful definition has been given by Luhman (1982:229) who defines secularism as inaugurating a 'a functional differentiation of the social order which frees individuals from the various kinds of stratified differentiation that prevailed in traditional societies.' The manner in which this contingency operated in Europe is interesting: (1) Industrial Revolution- it herded together large conglomerates in concentrated locations. This led to population management and the development of various institutions that were not bound by local customs and practises; (2) Napoleonic Wars – The introduction of new form of social control. The "Commissariat Supervision" is an early stage of what can be called social engineering by the state (for e.g.: civic hospitals); and (3) Urbanisation- The transition from 'stable burghers' to market towns and further to mills/factories. This 'modernised' urbanism created new spaces that had no reliable guide in tradition. This centralisation imperative was a need of the state so as to facilitate a free flow of people that would lead to a diminishing of local importance. It would also lead to the creation of a public space that is different from a more focalising or aggregating of local spaces. Such a space would deny the various locales from contentions . However this public space was soon to become the arena of another type of contest- a political one. Herein we find the space and platform that was needed for ethnic mobilisation. Condensed from Dipanker Gupta 'Secularisation and Minoritization: The Limits of Heroic Thought', in Sheth and Mahajan (eds.), n-35, pp 42-44 .

legitimacy was a result of the population's perception of the political system as having its roots in its ethnic cultural riches was thoroughly questioned. In fact, this re-emergence and reassertion of minority ethnicity in the mid nineteen sixties may be seen as a reaffirmation of a long existing ethnic identity in the process of positive development; as an integral part of a development where the state (and not ethnic consciousness) is an obstacle to development.⁸² The economic dimension of this grievance derives strength from the resentment and alienation over discriminatory modes in the accommodation of ethnic minority regions into the larger economy of the nation state.

The reason for this structural inequality can be traced to the ambivalent effects of modernisation and of the technology based industrialisation that the state sponsors. The effective result of such a move is that on the one hand it tends to foster functional macro integration while simultaneously encouraging expectations of mobility. Yet, in fact it can be seen that very often such an economic determinism sustains and exacerbates the very inequalities whose traditional legitimacy and seeming inevitability that it seeks to undermine. This consolidation of the advantages of modernity by the majority and the relegation of the minorities to marginality and subordination can also be manifest in a different way. The state seeking to redress the plight of the minorities may end up falling short of the targeted goal of its proposed policy implementation. The minorities very often perceive this failure as a gap between normative practice and actually implemented results. Such a disappointment can fuel indignation and anti-state mobilisation. Very often, such a conflict is premised on the need to defy/control the state apparatus. Ironically, both the dominant and subordinate ethnic groups come to view the state as the 'gate-keeper of the contradiction and the controller of the conflict'.⁸³

Ethnicity as Cultural Potency:

⁸² Thompson and Ronnen, n-1., p 6

⁸³ Rothschild, n-77 p 4

Another entry point into the cause for ethnic mobilisation is to analyse its non-political potency. At the outset it may be reiterated that even if one accepts the primordial theory of ethnic grouping i.e. the fact that certain cultural or physical traits such as language, colour, kinship et.al. are fundamental in that they are acquired at nascent stage of identity formation (in fact such ties predate reformation of economic or political allegiances and identities), it has to be understood that mobilisation per se occurs only when these given traits are infused with an intense value of 'difference'. Once this is done, they are appreciated as unique precious and the binding spirit for those who share them. Henceforth, the community is perceived as 'cohesed' into pursuing collective goals wherein the member's self-esteem is sustained, even enhanced. 'This idealisation of ethnicity through the sacralisation of ethnic markers and the mobilisation of the sharers of these markers is the result of extreme social strain, competition and confrontation. Henceforth the members perceive their fate in ethnic rather than individual or class terms.'⁸⁴

This dormant potentiality that ethnicity possesses is, as mentioned before, seen as non-political force that has to be invoked by the contingencies at hand. This is done by positing ethnic consciousness as an anti-dote for the alienating effect of modernisation. The technocratic rationality of scientific modernity is under attack here. The redeeming role that modernisation preaches is undermined not only for its veiling of the economic and political interest of the majoritarian state under the rationale of objectivity but also for it being perceived as unfit to satisfy the 'inner spiritual frontier' of man. Modernisation is viewed here as merely endorsing functional groupings that can lead to personal anomie and identity fragmentation wherein one cannot

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 27. He further opines that, 'Theoretically even in a multi-ethnic society the allocation of economic possessions, social status and political power might be ethnically indifferent. And, indeed in daily practice, there are many discrete economic transactions, social encounters and political activities during which the actors do not engage their ethnic identities and differences. But at the macro societal level this hypothetical image of an ethnically neutral distribution of resources do not correspond to reality for the pattern of the distribution everywhere cross-corresponds with ethnic criteria. And it is precisely these asymmetrical power relations that transform ethnicity from a cultural or a phenotypical datum into a public issue' pp. 38-39

find meanings and understandings, which are rewarding. It is here that the concept of 'ethnic culture' is introduced to further the argument. The ethnic culture is viewed as a reintegrating identity. A social base where you are accepted by what you are rather than by what you are perceived as. The concept of culture assumes the dimension of a social home, 'the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in'.⁸⁵ At this juncture, one sees that this quest for group identity is translated into a group demand for respect and empowerment of their own culture.⁸⁶ This cultural conflict can be seen as a struggle for recognition. Axel Honneth's thesis on recognition aptly contextualises this predicament of cultural recognition that besets minority ethnic groups. He perceives that the scope of such identity traits increase with recognition from an ethnic 'other.' On the contrary the experience of disrespect carries with it the danger of injury wherein non-recognition is viewed as an insult⁸⁷. Here again the victimised ethnic group glosses over the apparent economic injustices and political deprivations to interpret the experience as primarily a denial of respect. What ensues is a struggle to be treated with dignity and respect.

⁸⁵ Robert Frost, 'The Death of the Hired Man', in *Robert Frost: Collected Poems Vol.1* (London, Verso, 1987) p. 117.

⁸⁶ Culture can be defined as '(i) what is learnt and shared by some people, to their universe of meaning and symbols, to what provides an internal guide to their actions in society; (ii) a sense of identity, a notion of 'I' and of a 'We' which implies a boundary to the Other; (iii) a kind of cognition or cognitive competences; a language in which to think and to communicate with the world, a vista, and a knowledge of the world; (iv) a pattern of evaluation consisting of a set of values and norms, defining good or bad, what is and what is not to be done, and of a register of emotions expressing a specific mode of reactions to events of the world'. see Therbourn, n-28, p.10 A more functional definition is the one provided by Dworkin who demarcates a societal culture as, 'a culture which provides its member with meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social education, religious, recreational and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres They involve not just shared memories or values but also common institutions; a shared vocabulary of tradition and convention' Dworkin, n- , p.231 This institutional embodiment is found in the setting up of schools, media institutions, economy etc.

⁸⁷ Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, translated by Joel Anderson, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995), p. 131 Honneth identifies three levels of disrespect. (a) Primary: where the body integrity is violated. This leads to a shattering of self-confidence which results in the victim no longer being able to control/coordinate his/her bodily movements: and (b) Moral: This is a violation of moral self respect; the exclusion of the individual figure from the rights and responsibilities given to other members of society; the refusal to accept him as a subject capable of moral judgement This results in a loss of ability to relate to others as a legally equal interactional partner. (c) Community: This is a vilification of individual or collective ways of life/ behaviours that sprouts from a social hierarchisation in which certain life forms are viewed as inferior. p.134

The denial of this respect leads to a consolidation of distrust and suspicion. It is here that the germs of cultural resistance first get activated. The resultant discourse assumes a radically antithetical position to that of the dominant discourse. The resistance identity that is thus formed seeks to defend the citadels of their culture and also to try and redefine the societal hierarchy so that they can have a more equal say in the politics of redistribution and justice⁸⁸.

Ethnicity as Contingency

This approach to the understanding of ethnic resurgence is perhaps the most comprehensive it includes the two approaches discussed above. The various contingencies (historical, moral, political, economic and psychological) associated with the genesis of ethnic upsurge may interact in a multitude of ways to determine the salient features that the ethnic expression will assume in the social sphere:

- (a) Political and psychological Contingency: Since both these tropes have been discussed previously, it would suffice that only a reference remark is needed at this juncture. About the psychological contingency, it must be admitted that its advantage over other modes of identity and social linkages is in that it has the capacity to arouse and to engage the most intense deep and private emotional sentiments. As about the political, it can be said that the envisioning of small states as viable from a state-stability point of view has added to the political bite of the ethnic-struggles.⁸⁹
- (b) Historical Contingency: Historically, we see that ethnicity was not a problem in the dynastic regimes of the ancient and medieval era. In the

⁸⁸ Castells identifies such 'resistance' identities as the most significant form of identity building that put up a collective resistance against otherwise unbearable oppression. It is 'the exclusion of the excluder by the excluded'. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, (Malden, Basil Blackwell, 1997), p.9

⁸⁹ Rothschild notes that this changed perception has to do with the idea that 'security is not posed as primarily a function of the state's size but as a function of its strategic alignments and alliances vis-à-vis- the great powers. Rothschild, n-77, p.47

dynastic states, ethnicity was relevant only with respect to administrative efficiency and not normative legitimacy. It was only with the French Revolution that ethnicity became a potentially contentious issue. (This was due to the state's enhancement of specific national cultures). These homogenising pretensions of the states immediately posed the problem of assimilation, acculturation, discrimination and rights. The notion that ethnicity would be superseded by socio-economic issues was proved to be a falsity. The prodigious post-war expansion, which enhanced contact and communication heightened people's awareness of ethnic differences and imbalances. The benefits of the renewed post-war march of industrialisation, and urbanisation have been experienced differentially by various regions and ethnic groups. Hence, the issues of dissatisfaction and competition.

- (c) Moral Contingency: This has to do with the reality of post-imperial fragmentation. The decolonisation process led to the dimming aura of the great colonial empires. This was not just an economic setback; the psychological impact as a result of the great imperial adventure having ended left the people with a sense of scepticism that was channelled into an inward looking critique of the nations⁹⁰. Another contingent factor was linked up to the welfare state being perceived as a ubiquitous, prosaic, often arbitrary and sometimes erratic presence. The overload of services, programmes and demand that the welfare state, sponsored was seen as creating an alienation effect. As noted earlier, the ethnic group steps in as the panacea for a re-identification.⁹¹ This shift from the state to ethnic group vis-à-vis political identification has to be understood in the background of the post war shift from accessible legislatures to unrepresentative, technocratic bureaucracy, which laid emphasis on

⁹⁰ Ali Mazruli, *Post-Imperial Fragmentation : The Legacy of Ethnic and Racial Conflict*, (Denver, University of Denver, 1969), pp.9-14

⁹¹ Ralph C. Beals, "The Rise and Decline of National Identity", *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, (Ottawa) vol.4, no.2, (Spring, 1977), p.164

objective cost effective rationality in investment and infrastructural allocation decisions. The ethnic groups started perceiving this as a manifestation of unaccountability leading to disenfranchisement. The bureaucratic principle of rationality was seen as being insensitive to the particular needs, aspirations and grievances of the ethnic group. Hence the call for localised decision-making.

- (d) Economic contingency: This has to be understood from the point of view of internal colonialism wherein an ethnic group is relegated to the lower rung of the socio-economic structure. It has to be noted that modernisation is not a smooth, self-equilibrating flow but a discontinuous, disruptive pattern of waves that creates and leaves behind it gross discrepancies between advanced and retarded groups/regions.⁹² Overtime, these discrepancies are institutionalised into stratifications, as the advanced sector (the core) provides itself with a diversified economy while relegating the backward one (the periphery) into dependent economic functions. The periphery is left highly vulnerable to price fluctuations and the basic investment decisions that the core reserves for itself. Ethnicity enters the picture when certain cultural markers that distinguish the core and peripheral populations from each other come to be perceived as identifying and categorising the respective economic roles and functions of these two populations and the transformation of these markers (colour, religion, language, accent and the like) from primordial givens into politicised discriminators. Even a would-be benevolent core establishes its own culture as defining the standards and norms of success and socio-economic mobility. Subsequently, we see a stereotyping of the peripheral cultures as second rate. The counter mobilisation seeks to reappropriate these discriminated cultural markers so as to question these hegemonic arrangements.

⁹² See Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975). Especially Chapter 1, 2, 11 & 12.

This interplay of contingencies to create diverse forms of ethnic minority assertion leads one to the need for a tentative classification of variants within the phenomenon of mobilised ethnicity.

Types of Minority Ethnic mobilisation⁹³

While classifying the various types of ethnicity, a good starting point would be to view ethnicity as a form of social segmentation. It is argued that societies tend to have three primary sets of segmentations:

(i) Social Segmentation: It can be, in a broad sense, accepted as the segmentation that is derived from socio-economic conditions within the society, in terms of political and economic relationships. The issues typical of this form of segmentation involve questions of income distribution and resources allocation between social classes.

(ii) Cultural Segmentation: This types of segmentation premises itself around normative values associated with religion, customs, ethical principles and historical traditions of a population group; closely linked to these tropes is the question of language. The issues that arise from this segmentation include educational policies, moral questions, religious practices, etc.

(iii) Territorial Segmentation: It has its roots in the locality of the population groups. This segmentation frequently concerns itself with the organisation and administration of government. The issues in this case include questions of changing formulae for legislative representation due to differential population growth, demands of increased state investment for an economically underdeveloped region, etc.

Ethnicity may now be located as a type of cultural segmentation that may also intersect class and territorial segmentation. The initial bases of this differentiation is usually linked to the perceptions that the members of the ethnic group possess a symbolically different geographic origin from that of

⁹³ I have synthesised the classification given by Robert J. Thompson and Joseph R. Rudolph, 'Ethnic Politics and Public Policies in Western Societies: A Framework for Comparative Analysis', in Thompson and Ronnen, n-1, pp.29-35.

dominant population. (Historical tradition, social customs, language and religions are all viewed as having its uniqueness in having its origin in the geographic specificities). This perception of distinctiveness leads us to a classification of various types of ethnic minority movements:

(i) Movements based on ethno-cultural differentiations: Here the highlighted issue centres around aspects of differentiation based solely on the cultural differences among the various ethnic groups of the population. For example, the Maghrebi immigrants in France.

(ii) Movements based on ethno-class differentiations: This type of ethnic mobilisation is distinguished by substantial difference in the social class status of an ethnic group from the rest of the society. The group in question will be, or will perceived itself to be of a lower status. For example, the movements in Northern Ireland.

(iii) Movements based on ethno-territorial differentiations: In this case one can observe a high concentration of the ethnic group in a geographic areas commonly perceived as their own. Historically, these are the groups, which, by one means or the other, were incorporated into the larger political system. This usually occurs during empire expansion or the initial stages of nation-state building of the dominant territory's population. As a result, the ethnic group frequently possess a distinct set of historical/cultural customs, language and religious practices. The actions of the majority may be perceived as an effort to dominate the ethnic groups and to possibly destroy its distinctiveness. The government institutions and also the political organisation of the dominant ethnicity are seen as tools of majority dominance. The issues connected with this feeling of discrimination include efforts by the groups to maintain its culture, to obtain a fair share of the society's resources and political/government representations on a more equitable basis. For example, Scotland, Wales, Spanish Basques etc.

Towards a defence of the term ‘Minority Nationalism’

The choice of the term ‘minority nationalism’ as against presumed analogues like regionalism, peripheral dissent, ethnic resurgence, secessionism, et. al. is due to the encompassing nature. Firstly, it must be realised that the trope of resurgent dissent duplicates those very tenets that were at a crucial juncture in Europe’s history, instrumental in the emergence of the discourse of nationalism and its realisation in the creation of the modern nation state. Secondly, it has to be kept in mind that ethnic assertions express themselves on a demand-means axis. The demands may be of an output-oriented nature wherein the aggrieved group bargains with the government for concessions (financial aid for teaching/promoting their language in the educational and communication outlets of the region, additional assistance for economic up gradation, etc.). Or it could be of a political nature in which the group seeks guaranteed representation in central decision making institutions or a demand for self-rule within an overall unitary framework (federal autonomy). The trope of separatism is evoked only when the threat of negotiations breaking down looms large.⁹⁴ It is clear that there are various stages in the development of ethnic demands and a term that can definitely accommodate all these with their varying specificities is indeed minority nationalism.

In conclusion, it would be worthwhile to be reminded that contemporary ethnicity need not be seen as a jeopardising tendency that undercuts the benefits of development. Also, it would be futile to view it as a primordial bringing for the reclaiming of a lost Eden in its pristine simplicity. A balanced approach would be one that views contemporary minority nationalism as a highly conscious, overtly political and a new mode of interest articulation and conflict in which the groups evoke a quality of primordial sacredness to ensure a fair share in the politics of modernisation.

⁹⁴ The corresponding means to convey these demands are: (a) collective action to influence the political process (the state); (b) direct action groups that incites civil disobedience and confrontation politics; (c) clandestine group –0 that resort to violence aimed at structures institutions they perceives symbolising the oppressive state (Bombing banks. Parliament, etc.). Thompson and Rudolph, *Ibid.* pp.41-43.

Chapter II

Emergence of French Nation State and Advent of Minority Nationalism(s)

The scheme of this chapter is three fold. First and foremost it will try to delineate those aspects of French history that have been perceived as having led to the construction of 'Frenchness' or rather, the 'spirit of France'. These are: (1) the codification of the French language (2) the effective role of the capital city Paris as the harbinger and progenitor of most of the ideas and movements that have been instrumental in constructing and maintaining the 'Frenchness' as it has evolved to the present day; and (3) the various discourses of 'nationality and nationalism vis-à-vis the language of patriotism and universal liberty.

Secondly, the precedence of the French state to the French nation will be discussed. The vital juncture, the Revolutionary regime wherein one finds that the state apparatus and the organic ideal of the nation coalesce to bring forth the hegemonic French hexagon will be elaborated.

Finally, the emergence of dissent against the homogenizing programme of the French state will be traced amongst its manifestation in the various regional movements that seek to establish their difference from 'Frenchness'.

1. Creating Frenchness

French: The Pedagogy of the Oppressor

"There a birth to language, through a labyrinthine maze of names and identities coiling up, one around the other, a nostalgic ring of the unique. In this story, I deeply believe that language itself was jealous."¹ Abdelkadir's ethnic eulogy refers to the role that the French language has played in envisioning the French society as a unique homogeneity, the highest manifestation of which is

¹ Abdelkadir Khatibi, 'Amour Bilingue' in Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other Or Prothesis of Origin*, (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998). p.2.

the ardent belief in a constructed dominant ethnicity that seeks and succeeds in getting established as an organic vision- The French Nation.

The emergence of the French language is a long saga of assimilation standardisation and programmed perpetuation. Like all the Romance languages (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Rumanian) French rose from the ashes of the Roman Empire, which allowed Latin to develop freely and differently in each of the Roman colonies. In the colony that would one day be France, the Gauls spoke one of the three branches of Celtic. (The other two being Gaelic and Welsh).²

The French language derives itself from the Vulgar Latin brought by the Romans. This language prospered and later survived the Frankish German speaking invasions that began in the fifth century. The invading Franks were actually romanised, giving up their language and taking over the Roman institutions.³

The first memorable date in the adventure that raised a crude Latin 'patios' to the level of a national tongue was the Decree at the Council of Tours, 813. The church, realising the need to accommodate the new converts decided to translate the sermons and homilies into *Lingua Romana Rustica* or old French.⁴ The first legal document that distinguished French as a separate language followed soon after-in 842. The *Serments de Strasbourg* (Oath of Strasbourg); the proclamation of Louis the German's loyalty to the Carolingian prince Charles the bold.⁵

² That France was celtic before the Roman invasions is evident from the words of Celte origin that have found their way into modern French e.g. the names of the rivers Siene, Rhone and ngarne. Ronald Wardaugh, *Languages in Competition*, (Oxford, New York, Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 99.

³ The Gaulish traces on French is minimal as they had no written tradition of the few (about two hundred) words that remain most of them deal with rural life e.g.: rauche (believe). As for the Frankish German, the church, as the repository of culture and written tradition, resisted the assaults on Latin, but the German speaking Franks managed to introduce many of their own words. The anarchy that followed the decline of the Roman empire fostered the growth of local dialectic variants of this creole language', Sanche de Gramont, *The French*, (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), pp.258-259.

⁴ Ibid, p. 259.

⁵ Wardaugh, n.2. p. 99.

The subsequent age of Feudalism saw a dozen French dialects prosper, the two most important being the northern *Langue d'Oil* and the southern *Langue d'oc*, which remained closer to Latin. The dominance of one over the other was a matter of political fortune rather than any inherent excellence. *Francien*, a sub-dialect of the *Langue d'oil* spoken in the Ile-de-France, was adopted by the Capetian kings who made Paris their capital. Hughes Capet, born in 938, was a pivotal figure, for he could speak only *Francien*. Subsequently, the dialect became the *lingua franca* of the royal entourage. This adoption by the courtiers and civil servants meant that the fortunes of the dialect depended on the political and military fortunes of the dynasty. It was the Capetian consolidation of the kingdom that saw this adopted ruling class dialect being imposed on the rest of the country.⁶

The Capetians also encouraged the standardisation of language. The growing sense of nationalism that came from the Crusades and the Hundred Year War; the brilliant court life which attracted visits from other parts of France; the roving troubadours who began to use the *Francien* dialect to recite their *Chansons de Geste*, all helped to establish the dialect as a national tongue without any serious challenge. By the time of king Philippe de Bell (crowned in 1285), official acts were being drafted in French. A further impetus was provided by the determination of Francis I, who, on 15 August 1539, proclaimed the *Ordinance of Villers - Cotterets*, which ordered that all official papers be drafted in French.⁷

As French came into greater use people began to pay more and more attention to the characteristics they saw in the language. The year 1549 was

⁶ The internal history of the French is one in which there has been a gradual extension of the power of the Ile-de-France outward to the peripheries. This centralizing thrust saw the gradual extension of the French king's power within the bounds of what is now modern France: through the Crusades into Langudoc in 1270; through marriage into Brittany in 1532; through inheritance into Loraine in 1766, and through outright conquest. The French language accompanied this French power, Wardaugh, n.2, p.99.

⁷ The purpose of this decree was to replace Latin with French; to extend the royal influence; to enshrine French as the language of law so that those who lived in the kingdom might avail themselves of a living language rather than a dead one when they had legal dealings. Anthony Lodge, *French: From dialect to Standard*, (London/New York, Routledge, 1993), p.176.

another memorable year in the progress of French, the publication date of du Bellay's: *'Defence and Illustration of the French language'*. He sought to minimise the influence of Latin and to prove that French was a language which stood on its own merits and reflected the personality of the French people.⁸ By the end of the 18th century many of those who spoke French were extremely proud of their language. By 1714, with the Treaty of Rastdt, French had become the language of international diplomacy.⁹

Tied to the fortunes of the monarchy it spread through Europe with French armies - to Italy with Francois I, eastward with the crusaders, to England with the Norman invasion and through most of Western Europe under Louis XIV. By the 16th century, French grammars were the fashion in European courts. This impact of French abroad led to the birth of the mystique that since French is spoken everywhere it is a universal language and if it is a universal language it must be inherently superior to other languages.¹⁰ An interesting feature was that even at the heights of its imperial linguistic glory, there was considerable tolerance of local cultures and dialects within France. Little attempt was made to force French onto the common people. This was because the elites were won over and French acquired sufficient prestige as the dominant language.

The advent of the French Revolution meant that it was necessary for the revolutionaries to ignore the myth that French was a classless language. To

⁸ Following Bellay, other began to publish on matters such as spelling, grammar and vocabulary. These first attempts to standardise were intensified in the works of Malherbe (1555-1628), de Vauglas (1586-1650), the founding of the Academic Francaise in 1635 and the publication of the dictionaries of Pomey (1676), Richelet (1680) and Furetiere (1684) Wardaugh, n.2, p.100.

⁹ Lodge, n.7, p.184 - Pivarot's observation on French illustrate, the French attitude to their language:

There has never been a language in which you could write more purely and more precisely than in ones, which is more resistant to equivocations and every kind of obscurity, more serious and more gentle at the same time, (more suitable for all kinds of styles, purer in its phrases, more ingenious in its expression, which has a greater liking for elegance and ornament, but which is more fearful of affectation. It knows how to moderate its strengths with the modesty and restraint it must have in order to avoid the monstrous expressions in which our neighbours to day are fixed. There is more among them which is more attentive to number and rhythm in its declarations, which is the true mark of perfection in languages. - 'Discours Sua 1' universalite to de la Francaise, quoted in Lodge, n.7, p.88.

¹⁰ Gramont, n.3, pp. 271-272.

secure total support, a decree was passed on January 14, 1790 to allow the translation of official declarations into local languages. However, a few months later on October 2, 1790, another decree stated that all official declaration should be read in French at the end of the Sunday mass.¹¹ It was the Convention that was instrumental in attempts to eradicate the various dialects. The immediate result was the passing of a succession of laws either to promote French or to restrict the use of other languages. On October 1793, it was decreed that only French could be used as a language of instruction in schools.¹²

Apart from the reduction of common idioms, the Revolution affected language in a three-fold way. Firstly, mainly due to the Napoleonic conscription and the military campaigns, French spread to the masses. (Keeping millions of soldiers under arms meant that the survivors who left the army were ones with the ability to speak French). Secondly, there was a revolt against good taste and good usage, a purposeful crudeness after the over refinement imposed by the court and a wealth of new terms. After a century of '*style noble*', the despised popular jargon rose from the masses and found its way first into the Third Estate's written complaints addressed to the king in 1789 and then into the pamphlets of Pierre Duchesne and other revolutionary journalists. This created a new style which glorified neologisms and improprieties, and which was clubbed as '*style sans-culotte*'.¹³ Thirdly, a specific oratorical style originated. Factional struggles were fought on the battlefields of eloquence. Factional leaders became captains of debating teams. Men like Robes Pierre and Danton could only be eliminated if they were silenced.¹⁴

¹¹ This ambivalence was because of the realization that for a unified state, the people should 'share' the common language, Wardaugh, n.2, p.102.

¹² In January 1794, German was forbidden in Alsace. It was declared that the new democracy of free people required the use of one language, Ibid, p. 103.

¹³ The violence of the language kept pace with the events, just as the style noble had been suited to the stateliness of the court life. The language was now enriched with words like 'terrorist' and 'guillotine', and the foundation of a political vocabulary were laid with the convention of prefixes like arch, ultra, and anti, and the birth of the first 'isms', such as Jacobinism and Republicanism, Gramount, n.3, pp.274-275.

¹⁴ Ibid, p.275.

Despite the attempts by the Jacobins, little actually changed in the countryside to further the advance of French. In 1861, official figures showed that no French was spoken, in 18,381, of France's 37,510 communities, containing about a quarter of the French population. The ministry of public instruction found that 448,28 of the 4,018,427 children aged 8-13 spoke no French. In 24 of the country's 89 departments, more than half of the people did not speak French.¹⁵ This situation changed in the last decades of the 19th century. Military conscription began in 1875. Under the Third Republic, the school law of Jules Ferry made primary education in French obligatory from 1886. During the course of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, it was absolutely forbidden to use any other language than French for purposes of instruction.¹⁶

Paris: The Centre of the Centre

The principal contrast in the organisation of French Society is the one between the extreme fragmentation of urban and rural life and Paris controlled centralisation. A country made up of diverse regions and of people who have a tendency to break themselves, up into ever smaller units, was unified by laws and languages emanating from Paris. Paris was the trunk and the rest of France its branches.

Paris, whose only 'importance' was the university of Sorbourne¹⁷ was voluntarily taken by the royal house as its coat of arms. The city was never a residence for its monarchs in the way that France came to be under the grand dukes to Tuscany. It was from the fourteenth century that Paris began to consciously and deliberately play the role of the capital city. It was the lawyers of the parliament and the jurists, who, through their treaties, spread the customs of Paris to the whole of France. It was Paris, which organised the Holy league

¹⁵ Wardaugh, n.2, p. 103.

¹⁶ It did not matter what language the children spoke. They were living in France and the language of France was French. It was therefore the responsibility of the schools to teach in French.

¹⁷ This importance originated with licences given by the king to the clergy in the 12th century to teach theology and cannon law. The medieval sorbourne was run by religious orders and attracted students from all over Europe, Gramount, n.3 p.50.

against Henry III and drove him from the city; it was Paris, which started the massacre of the Heugenots, it was for Paris, that Henry IV abjured his Protestant faith.¹⁸

Paris, the religious centre, begins with the conversion of the Frankish King Clovis who made it a Christian capital. Five Ecumenical Councils were held there from 552 to 614. Equally ancient is its role as political capital.¹⁹ The administrative impetus was given by Phillipe-Auguste who, in 1194, kept the duplicates of his royal acts in the Paris palace of Justice. The importance of the city was further enhanced by the concentration of high finance. *Ancien regime* bankers and contract tax collectors formed a Paris-based oligarchy. By the 19th century Paris controlled the French economy through credit and investment. 80% of the first railway bonds were snapped up by Parisians. Provincial capitals were drained by higher interest rates, taxes and networks of middlemen and distributors who favoured Paris. The railways were built to link Paris with its provincial prefectures. The capital thus became the financial hub, the commercial pivot, and the principal market.²⁰

Paris has been viewed as the place where French history was made. Paris has been at the origin of both order and disorder through centralisation and uprising. No successful revolution ever began in the provinces but Parisians have been overthrowing regimes ever since the merchants' provost of Paris-Etienne Marcel threw the Dauphin out in the 14th century. The 1789

¹⁸ George Moore and H. G. Koenigsberger, *Europe in the 16th Century*, (London, Longmans, 1968), pp. 140-145.

¹⁹ Vauban called it the abbreviation of France. Louis XIV, while fleeing the dangers and temptations of Paris for the splendour of Versailles, decreed that 'Paris is the capital of all our states... and must serve as an example to all other cities in our kingdom', Grammont, n.3, p. 49.

²⁰ This importance led to a gradual increase in the area of the city. By the late 19th century, Paris became a great mass reaching out into the Satellite areas which were co-opted. Napoleon III's dream to order the city was taken up by Baron Georges Haussman. On assuming duty as Seine Perfect, he generated funds through direct grants and public loans. He redesigned Paris with an inner centre with a network of boulevards and railway stations. New barracks were connected to the centre cutting through back streets (denying access to slum dwellers). The water supply was enhanced by building reservoirs connected by aqueducts. Small townships were created so that the inner Paris was segmented for the rich -With its profusion of schools, markets, hospitals and public parks, Hausman's Paris was a marvel, it was hailed as a centre of modernity, Moore and Koenigsberger, n.18, p.45-46.

Revolution was a Paris disturbance that started with a local riot in Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marcel. The *Sans-Culotes* were the Paris shopkeepers, artisans and unemployed workers. In 1830, three days of Paris uprising sufficed to overthrow the monarch Charles X. In a historical repeat, the rioting of February 1848 overthrew Louis Philippe; not a shot was fired in the rest of France in defence of the regime. Of the three principal movements in the 1789 Revolution, the Girondins represented the provinces and a federalist programme, the Jacobins advocated a strong central power that would unite France against foreign enemies, and the Hebertistes were the ungovernable Parisians, railing against the authority of the king and the Church.²¹

The Paris Commune²² of 1871 was a clear-cut conflict between the revolutionary aims of the capital and the more prosaic aspirations of the rest of France. The commune which lasted only 73 days was long enough to create the myth that Paris is the summary of France: The myth of popular democracy and proletarian government. In fact even Karl Marx interpreted the commune as a struggle between working class Paris and bourgeois France.

Paris stands as the antidote to the complexity of the French Nation. The quilt of the regions is held together by this binding agent. Much of French history is simply the history of Paris as a *fait accomplie* to the provinces.²³

Viva la France: Nationalist Discourses within France

The 1792 battle of Valmy (Franco-Prussian war) is taken as the first notable instance where war and nationhood were expressly linked and mutually energized. As Goethe put it, 'on September 20, 1792 at Valmy, in northeastern France, the rag tag French army, under fire from the much better trained and

²¹ Gramont, n.3, pp. 56-57.

²² Moore and Koenigsberger, n.18, p. 55-56.

²³ Other countries of France's importance have at least two cities with more than one lakh inhabitants-Berlin and Munich, Rome and Milan, London and Manchester, Tokyo and Osaka, Madrid and Barcelona. But Paris dwarfs all other French cities and monopolises the cumbersome French versatility. Gramont, n.3, pp.46.48.

better equipped Prussian infantry, held its ground to the revolutionary battle cry of 'viva la nation'. This Date and place marks a new epoch in world history.²⁴

French defeat in Franco Prussia was seen as a catastrophe for the nation. The disheartened first republic restored to a mass standardise public education system for unifying and creating Frenchmen. New practices of physical fitness and new ideals of Greek athletic beauty were adopted, replacing the earlier intellectual and catholic disdain of the body and physical activity. The teaching of a standard history through the common *Lavisse* text book sought to inculcate a shared sense of France's past greatness, of its heroes, of it's virtues and its pre-eminent place among the nations.²⁵ This attempts at infusing a sense of national pride into a defeated kingdom is an aftermath of the need to hold the regime together.²⁶

The language of patriotism gained a central place in the French discourse through mediation of Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*. For Montesquieu, the love of the country is a duty and a virtue, an attachment to a particular good: "To remained a virtue it can never contradict the principles of justice. When it does, patriotism is the source of the worst crimes; rectified and tempered by justice, it becomes the source of the most splendid action that honour a nation."²⁷ Montesquieu emphasizes that most sublime virtue is political virtue (*vertu politique*). This has to be moored in a love of equality that leads to the love a country (*Amour de la Patrie*).²⁸ The love of equality forms the core of patriotism. This love is not just civic equality but also the

²⁴ Francois Furet and Denis Richet. *The French Revolution*, (Paris, Hachette, 1965), p.185. Lord Acton's view of nationalism has a counter claim. For him the stage was set for the nationalist awakening by the partition of Poland. "For the first time in history, a great state was suppressed, and a whole nation divided. This famous measure, the most revolutionary act of Absolutism awakened the theory of nationality in Europe, converting a dormant right into an aspiration and a sentiment into a political claim. Thenceforward there was a nation demanding to be united in a state-a soul as it were, wandering in search of a body in which to begin life all over again". In Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the Nation*, (London, Verso, 1995), p. 21.

²⁵ D. Hervieu-Leger, *Religion and Modernity in the French Context*, (London, Routledge, 1990), pp.117 -121.

²⁶ Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the Nation*, (London, Verso, 1995), Introduction, p.14.

²⁷ A.D. Smith, *The ethnic origins of nations*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.69.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p.70.

love of frugality, a renunciation of oneself; the same happiness, the same advantages and the same expectations.²⁹

Early modern theories have stressed that the love of country to a brought spirit of benevolence that embraces parents relatives, friends and citizens but Montesquieu argues that the love of the country is a renunciation of selfish love. Reflecting on the spirit commerce he argues for a patriotism based on the lore of liberty, it is not threatened by the private interest. A republic which favours commerce has to ensure a security wherein the citizens wont feel deprived of profits. Commerce if properly executed can inturn, encourage frugality and nurture civility in private and public life.³⁰

In his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* Voltarie too assimilated the idea of the *patrie* with the polis (political society). He sees the *patrie* as a unity of several families that constitute the polis. Individuals are attached to the *patrie* by the same self love that united them to their family, unless they have an interest contrary to the common good.³¹ Voltaine conception is in effect a comspolitan one. It is a conceptual republic reduced to its essential political and legal structure. Place does not matter, history even less. Montesquieue's contrast between self love and love of country is replaced by an interpretation that views the core of country as enlightened self love.³²

Rousseau also uses *patrie* as equivalent to the republic and accepts the conventional convection of political virtue as love of fatherland, a precious legacy which the moderns seen to destroy. Rousseau poses self as the enemy of the corrupt civility of the moderns. He sees the potential virtue as the moral strength of the citizen who is fighting against the corruption and oppression.³³ This love of the country that sustains the civic virtue is not the love of impersonal and abstract entity; it is the love of a way of life, of a culture, of a

²⁹ Ibid, pp.70-71.

³⁰ Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, (Princeton N.J. Princeton University Press, 1975), p.92.

³¹ Ibid, pp.93-94.

³² Enrizio Virioli, *For Love of Country*, (New York, Kennikat Press, Inc., 1996), pp.199-201.

³³ Ibid, pp.209-210.

language, of a place, but it is a political love-language, culture and religion cannot deep alive their *Amour de La Patrie* if there is no liberty. What Rousseau emphasises is a need for pride in one's notional culture, although his definition of culture is relegated to the civic sphere with a political intent. Students of nationalism have stressed that this is emblematic of the shift from republican patriotism centred around the political concepts of the language to the nationalist language focussing on the concept of nation as a particular cultural or spiritual unity.

With the advent of Michelet we find the language of patriotism assuming nationalistic and monarchical tones Michelet encourages the need for a more intense love of the country. The political city (city politique) presupposes the moral city (cite morale), which lives in a man's soul. It can only live in a particular place immersed in the spirit of the people. This implies that the political city needs a physically and spiritually defined space. If boundaries are confused or dissolved, the spirit of the people would die and both the moral and the political city would perish.³⁴ Here Michelet is emphasising the need for centeredness and particularity. The love the *Patrie* is explained as passion that drives a people towards unity, closeness and solidarity. Michelet furthers the definition of *Patrie* from *Amour de la Patrie* to *Amitie Patrie*.³⁵ In this historical national epic – *Tableau de Ra France* – he eulogises France as spiritual entity. “Hence is first of all a language, secondly a land, delineated by its mountains and rivers, and anatomised b dozen vigorously diverse frontiers. Thirdly it is the powerful centralising force by which a long dynasties of French kings and their revolutionary successors, also operating from Paris, forged the unity of the nation state from the manifold genius of the constituent genius, a living unity of the highest kind: England is an empire, Germany is a country but France is a person”.³⁶

³⁴ D. A. Cress, *Rousseau's Political Writings*, (Indianapolis, Indianapolis Press, 1997), p.45.

³⁵ Ibid, p.67, *Amitie* means the love of the *Patrie* as a living God.

³⁶ A.D. Smith, *National Identities*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1991), pp.178-179.

With Ernest Renan we have the entrenchment of the nationalist principles. Writing in the aftermath of the loss of Alsace- Lorraine in 1871, Renan points to the demise of the grand empires and the rise of nations. Renan argues that by the tenth century all the inhabitants of France were French. The idea of a difference of races in the population of France has completely disappeared. The distinction between the noble and the serfs, even though highly emphasised is in no way an ethnic decision. Renan encapsulates his defence of France with his oft quoted nationalist vision of the nation "a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle a nation is a great solidarity created by the sentiments of the sacrifices that has been made and those which one is disposed to make in future."³⁷

With the success of the French revolution and the dominance of the ideas of the above-discussed writers, we find the consolidation of the nationalist spirits within France. The idea of a republican patriotism and its culmination in the improved recognition of a spiritual nation has been fundamental to the cohesive, centralising, consolidation of France.

The nationalist favour in the modern era was intricately linked with France's fortunes in warfare. Three wars put their stamps on the face of contemporary France. Whether they ended in disaster (1870-1871, 1939-1940) or victory (1914-1918, 1944-1945) they all had profound consequences for the whole nation. From September 1870 until the outbreak of the First World War the Shadow of the disastrous defeat at Sedan hung the French Republicanism and Alsace-Lorraine Question constituted one of the constants of the political life. The crisis in France though was deep and enduring; the response was an immense effort at regeneration undertaken by the Republic.

Its fundamental doubts, its questioning of the whole body of ideas and institutions characteristic of industrial civilization, and by a systematic rejection of the values inherited from the eighteenth century and the French Revolution. This nationalism of the end of the nineteenth century presents

³⁷ Renan, Quoted in A.D. Smith, n.36, pp.217-219.

features, which can be defined as proto-facist or as harbingers of facism. It is very close to emotional and sentimental fascist ethos: it had the same cult of youth, adventure and heroism, the same hatred of bourgeois values, and the same faith in the power of the unconscious.

In fact, the nationalist ideology prefigures the two aspects of the Vichy regime: its dynamic and romantic side, its exaltation of youth and the revolutionary masses, of the values of heroism and struggle, blood and soil; and, on the other hand, the regime's bourgeois and conservative side, its vision of a static society governed by the values of order and hierarchy, a rural and paternalistic society sustained by sound catholic principles.

The originality of the turn of the century nationalism, its synthesis of a romantic and dynamic nationalism with one, which was socially and politically conservative. It not only foreshadows the future fascist and conservative nationalisms, but also proclaims that new form of nationalism, which links a 'certain idea of France' with the Republic and idea of democracy.

Paul Deroulede, who was rapidly to acquire enormous popularity, was the first of the nationalist leaders to appear on the political scene, more than anyone else within this heterogeneous movement, he personifies the idea of *revanche* and the work of regeneration.

The point of departure for the work undertaken by Deroulede was a complete recasting of the ideas left by the preceding age. "The hour has come", he wrote on the morrow of the defeat, 'for national egoism... for an absorbing national passion as jealous as all passions are'. The revolutionary and universalist traditions were held responsible for France's territorial mutilation, and loss of status in the world.

The League of Patriots was founded on 18 May 1882. The historian Henri Martin, a disciple of Michelet, was its first President and Victor Hugo agreed to be its patron. A patriotic organization whose *raison d'etre* was preparation for the glorious day of *revanche*, its first responsibility was the

banishment of any and every divisive element. It preached national unity and fought the spirit of particularism. The league of patriots stipulated that 'Patriotism, which is also a religion, has its own symbols and rites just as it has its own apostles and martyrs'. For children to be given 'a deep and reasoned love for their nation and soil', it was the teacher's duty to bring them upon French glory. The way to restore unity was to bridge the gap dividing the secular France from the believing France. The League's second principle was cultivation of the military spirit. Thus, we have the presence of the Army and of Military training in the schools especially in the programme of the Paul Bert commission.³⁸

2. The French State: The Consolidation of the Nationalist Programme

The modern French state derives the centralised administration created by Cardinal Richelieu in the Seventeenth Century, to secure the rising political power of the French Monarchy against the resistance and turbulence of feudal and religious factions. This was subsequently perfected by Napoleon, as First Consul of the theoretically 'one and indivisible' First Republic in 1800, to hold together the still highly fissile material of corporate, regional and personal ambitions created by the monarchy.³⁹

The French state well nigh precedes French nation. The emergence of France owes considerably to the efforts of the state apparatus that has stood as an eternal backdrop to the shifting seams of historical events/upheavals that France has witnessed. The emergence of the consummate state apparatus, during the Napoleonic Era reveal the cardinal role that the state has played in making France as it is today.

The Napoleonic Regime: Napoleon despised ideology based on abstract principle and did not claim to be an innovator. He aimed to satisfy the need of

³⁸ I have synthesised the argument of Zeev Sternhell, 'Paul Deroulede and the Origins of Modern French Nationalism' in John C. Cairns (ed.), *Contemporary France: Illusion, Conflict and Regeneration*, (London, New View Points, 1978), pp.1-21.

³⁹ Philip Ouston, *France in the 20th century*, (London, Macmillan, 1972), pp. 99-100.

the dominant classes in French society and to follow the trends of historical development of the French state from Clovis to the Committee of Public Safety. Napoleon claimed to represent the Revolution and also to have ended it.⁴⁰ This claim can only be understood if the complexity of the Revolution is borne in mind. De Tocqueville has shown in his *Ancien Regime et la Revolution*⁴¹ that the aim of the Revolution was to modernize French government and society in one convulsive leap. It was at the same time a political revolution foundered in the Terror, there still remained the social and administrative revolutions, the achievement of equality and efficient government, which seemed, to the mass of Frenchmen, the more important aims of the Revolution. Many philosophers of the eighteenth century had looked to an enlightened despotism to carry out these reforms, and Napoleon appeared to be the ideal of the enlightened despot in action.⁴²

The success of the *Coup d'etat* of Brumaire is explained by this change of attitude of public opinion. The Directory had inherited a fearful legacy of debt and inflation, and it had made repeated and genuine efforts to restore the currency by repudiating the paper money of the *assignats*, to balance the budget, and ensure a regular revenue by taxation. But all these efforts broke down through the weakness of finance; threatened the payment and supply of the armies; and deserters swelled the bands of brigands which infested whole areas of France. The defeats in the war of the Second Coalition had caused a revival of Jacobinism and a marked swing to the left in the elections of May 1799. The council of Five Hundred had voted a Law of Hostages, authorizing the imprisonment of relative of *émigrés*, which recalled the worst days of the Terror; and progressive income tax, which frightened the financiers and the bourgeoisie.⁴³

⁴⁰ E.M. H. Markham. 'Napoleonic France' in J.M. Wallace Hadrill./ John Mc Manners, *France: Govt and Society* (ed) (London, Methuen & co. Ltd., 1970), pp-188-190.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, pp 193-194.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp.197-198.

⁴³ Hans Kohn – 'Napoleon and the age of nationalism, in J. Friguglietti, *The shaping of Modern Nationalism*, (London, Routledge, 1989), pp.71-77.

The idea of a revision of the Constitution to strengthen the executive power was already in the air from the beginning of the year 1799. A group of politicians such as Daunou, Roederer and Talleyrand, who were to form the party of the Brumairians, was forming *Round Sieyes*, who entered the Directory in May 1799. *Sieyes* thought of using General Joubert to carry out his *coup de'etat*, but Joubert was killed at the battle of Novi in August 1799.⁴⁴ Once the new government of the three consuls had been approved, it was Napoleon who turned the tables on *Sieyes* and the Brumairians whose aim in supporting the *coup de'etat* against *Sieyes* took place in the secret meeting, which hammered out the draft constitution. He accepted *Sieyes* proposals for strengthening the control of the central government and for a system of representation based on the principle of Authority from above. The communal and departmental electors were to draw up lists of local and national notables from which the government would nominate officials and members of the legislature. But *Sieyes* plan for an executive composed for a powerless Grand Elector with two co-equal counsels was rejected. Instead there was to be a First Consul with all executive power, and the Second and third Consuls were to be merely advisory. In compensation for this defeat, *Sieyes* was given the presidency of the new Senate, with power to nominate the members, who in turn would nominate to the Legislature and Tribunate. This firmly entrenched in the legislative assemblies the Brumairians still hoped to be able to control the First Consul.⁴⁵

Popular enthusiasm for the Concordat and the signature of the Peace of Amiens (March-April 1802), gave Napoleon the opportunity to extend the consulate from a ten-year tenure to a life-tenure. The Senate proposed that the Consulate should be extended for a further ten years but Napoleon took the matter out of their hands by insisting on a plebiscite. This was prepared by the Council of state and asked the electorate to vote on the Consulate to Napoleon for life. After the plebiscite Napoleon induced the Senate to make important modifications to the Constitution by the procedure of *senatus-consultum*. The

⁴⁴ Ibid, pp.192-193.

⁴⁵ M.J. Sydenham, *The French Revolution*, (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1974), pp.67-69.

first Consul could now nominate his own successor for confirmation by the Senate, and could negotiate treaties without submitting them for approval. A new Privy Council was created, encroaching on the functions of the Council of State, which had proved too independent for Napoleon's liking. The powers of the Senate were increased. It could now revise the Constitution, dissolve the Legislature and Tribune and nominate the Consuls. But at the same time the Senate was made more servile. The first Consul was to preside over the Senate, and he could nominate an unlimited number of Senators. The electoral system was also changed. Instead of the system of the 'national list', which had never in fact been put into operation since the national list was not drawn up till 1801, there were assemblies of Cantons and Aggrandisements elected by universal suffrage. These assemblies chose the members of electoral colleges of departments but only among the six hundred most highly taxed citizen of the department who were elected for life and nominated candidates to the Senate and Legislature. The president and up to twenty members of the electoral colleges were to be nominated directly by the First Consul. This electoral system survived the Empire and was used, with Modification, under the Restoration.⁴⁶

The first and one of the most important reforms of consulate was in finance the creation of a centralized administration for the assessment and collection of taxes. Since 1799 the yield from direct taxation being in the hands of local authorities had been slow and uncertain. The Directory had made an effort to carry it through. Gaudin, a financial official of the *ancien regime* who was called in by Napoleon, brought the tax returns up to date by the end of 1800. The Bank of France was founded in 1800 as in 1803 it was given the monopoly of the issue of bank notes. In 1804 the *Droits Refunis* revived the indirect taxes of the *ancien regime*- a rationalized excise on liquor and tobacco. In 1811 tobacco became a government monopoly. These taxes yielded a large and expanding revenue up to the end of the Empire. Despite the wars and the

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp.74-77.

economic dislocation of the continental system and the British blockade the finance of the regime remained fairly strong up to 1813. Till the Russian campaign, war paid for itself through indemnities and contribution from vassal states, which went into a separate *domaine extraordinaire* under the personal control of the Emperor.⁴⁷ Even at his fall in 1814 the public debt amounted to no more than 60 million francs, and the rapid recovery of the public finances under the restorations an indication of their strength under the Empire. The reform of local government was frankly a return to the centralization of the Bourbon monarchy untrammelled by the checks, which had existed in the *ancien regime*. By the law of February 1800, Prefects appointed by the First Consul were to be in sole charge of the department. The elected councils of department cantons and communes were reduced to advisory functions, and mayors were to be nominated by the central government.

The Civil Code was issued in 1804 and it was renamed Code Napoleon in the Revolution. In 1792 the convention had appointed a drafting committee, which produced a plan for a code. In all, five plans had been discussed by 1800. Such a code defining the rights and relations of persons and property was urgently needed. In 1789 legal unity of the French nation did not exist. There were over three hundred local codes in force and a fundamental division between the law of the north and the south. In the south property rights were based on written Roman law the code of Justinian in the north on customary Teutonic law. On top of this were the accretions of later feudal caused a drastic upheaval in the property the nationalization and sale of the lands of the Church and the Nobles. This new situation needed to be defined and stabilized.⁴⁸

The Code 1804 was a compromise between the different principles reflecting in its emphasis the changing trend of opinion since 1789. The plan of the Convention represented the high watermark of the philosophic, rationalist influence. It recognized the equality of persons, civil marriage, divorce on grounds of incompatibility, adoption, inheritance by illegitimate children if

⁴⁷ Markham, n.40, pp.194-195.

⁴⁸ The Spirit of the Napoleon System by Louis Madelin in n-43, pp.183-189.

recognized by the parents, and equal division of property among the heirs. It was hostile to Roman law, which enforced the despotic authority of the father and gave absolute freedom to dispose of property by bequest: and inclined more to customary law, because it limited paternal authority and safeguarded the division of inheritance in the family. From 1795 onwards a reaction in favour of Roman law and traditional juristic concepts was perceptible. Controversy during the revolutionary period turned on the choice of principal on which to base the new legal system. Was it to be an abstract *Loi naturel*, ignoring the traditions and prejudices of the past, or one of the existing systems-Roman, customary, or feudal law?⁴⁹

Paternal authority was restored, and the subjection of married woman. Grounds for divorce were severely restricted; adulterous wives could even be imprisoned by their husbands. Property up to one-quarter of the whole could be bequeathed away from the family. The recognition of illegitimate children was discouraged. These provisions were deliberately intended as an antidote to the moral laxity of the period of the Directory, resulting from the breakdown of the social order in war and inflation. The general character of the Code reflects the ideas of the middle class, which had benefited from the Revolution. It emphasized the rights of individual property, and, above all, it reassured the holders of national lands, by confirming the revolutionary land-settlement.

Fisher points out (in *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. IX, Ch. 6) that 'A few years earlier the code would have been steeped in revolutionary extravagance; a few years later it would have borne the hard imprint of despotism'. The four later codes-those of civil Procedure, criminal Procedure, the Penal Code and the commercial Code – follow more closely the rules of the *ancien regime*. The jury-system, introduced in the revolutionary period, was severely curtailed, especially in criminal cases, and special courts without juries, reminiscent of the *cours prevotales* of the *ancien regime*, were

⁴⁹

Ibid. pp.183-189.

authorized for cases of rebellion, coining, smuggling, assassination by armed bands.⁵⁰

In addition to the hierarchy of civil and criminal courts, the *Conseils de prefecture* and the *Conseil d'Etat* dealt with administrative justice, litigation between private citizens and the state. *Letters de Cachet* was openly revived by a decree of 1810, which gave the *Conseil Prive* the power of arbitrary arrest.⁵¹ The Revolution was not opposed to some form of recognition for outstanding services to the nation, and occasionally civic crowns' were awarded to individuals by decree. As First Consul, Napoleon awarded 'swords of honour' to soldiers. In 1802 he brought forward a project for a Legion of Honour, which would be open both to soldiers and civilians with a hierarchy of grades and pensions. The members were to be appointed by Grand Council, presided over by the First Consul. This provision was the one to which Napoleon attached most importance. He was determined that patronage and honours should be in his own hands, and *Sieyes'* national list of notabilities, which had been completed by the end of 1801, was a privileged body beyond his control. In defending his project in the *Conseil d'Etat* he revealed the counter-revolutionary trend of his ideas. "I do not believe the French love liberty and equality. They are not changed by ten year of revolution. They are like the Gaul's, proud and fickle, they have only one sentiment, honour". When Thibaudeau objected that decorations were 'baubles that mankind is governed.'⁵²

The main outlines of the modern French state may be seen emerging from the time of Richelieu, and then Louis XIV in the subjugation of the French nobility and of all *Frondiste* tendencies. The absolute monarch was taken to personify the 'nation' and the revolutionaries of 1793 transferred this concept of the king's person and applied it to the 'people' – the 'nation' then became identified with the 'one and indivisible Republic'. The dynamism of

⁵⁰ J.M. Thompson. *Napoleon*, (Oxford, John Wily and Sons, 1952), pp.177-179.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp.177-179.

⁵² Markham, n.40, pp.194-195.

centralization was retained by the Jacobins as a response to internal dissension and external attack against the Revolution itself. Finally, Napoleon carried centralization to its conclusion by setting up the administrative system of Prefects, which has remained ever since.

If the centralized French state was thus a reality at least in its administrative structures, it also became the basis of an ideology that was in part mythical. This is the ideology of French nationalism. But in France *le mythe* has the power of becoming a fact in the sense of becoming a factor which influences political and social behaviour. In France the myth of the 'one and indivisible Republic' was an ideological tool meant to overcome the fact that France, at the time of the Revolution, was in fact many and divided, composed of several societies distinguished by language, culture and ethnic origins. The centralizing nature of the French state and the ideology which justified it were attempts by those who controlled the state to arrest the potentially centrifugal forces that might develop in such a situation. At the time of the French revolution there was no French nation but a state whose function was to create one. Thus the revolutionaries developed the concept of the nation state as an ideological tool, which could be used as a weapon in a political struggle. Those who used this weapon were the enlightened bourgeoisies seeking to overthrow the remnants of federalism in their regions.

Two points should be made at this juncture. First, the notion of national identity is by definition a subjective one imposed from above by a nationalistic educational system. Secondly, the nation building process in France has not been entirely successful. There has remained to some extent the ancient substratum of a patchwork of peoples identity has been superimposed on a more ancient identity, distinguished by a different language, culture and history. In other words large numbers of French people have a double identity. It is the combination of these two factors the incompleteness of the imposition of the French identity and the persistence of a more ancient identity which has left an ideological space, which various forms of regionalism and ethnic

nationalism have tried to fill in competition with the dominant culture. Struggles for the space took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by regionalist movements led mainly by clericals and conservatives as a means of attacking the central governmental especially when this was Republican and anti-clerical. And it is the persistence of this space, which has left open the possibility of a resurgence of these movements in the period following the Second World War.

3. Dissent from the Regions: Awakening of Ethnic Consciousness within the French Hexagon

As has been mentioned towards the end of the last section; there exist several minorities within the boundaries of the French state excluding minorities such as North Africans, Italians, Portuguese, and so on, who originate from outside it and are not territorially defined within France itself. There have been attempts by the activists themselves and others to theorize about these natures of the developments. This theorizing has forced a rethinking about the nature of the 'state' and the 'nation' and their combination into the 'nation-state'. The nature of nationalism itself may become clear as we examine the clash between two different nationalisms: that of the local society (the 'region') and of the French state.

A useful, if not totally satisfactory, criterion for distinguishing the existence of an ethnic minority is the presence of a distinct language. Today, after centuries of assimilation and repression, several languages are still spoken within the boundaries of the French state. There exist one Celtic language, Breton; Basque, which is a language *Sui Generis*; two Germanic languages, Flemish and Alsatian; and four Romance language French, Occitan, Catalan and Corsican. The territories of two of these linguistic groups Brittany and Occitania are found entirely within confines of 'the Hexagon'. The French Basque Country, French Catalonia and French Flanders are minority parts of larger linguistic groups, which straddle its borders. Alsace and Corsica, each possessing a distinct dialect or language, nevertheless share a common

linguistic and cultural heritage with the German and Italian-speaking peoples. It is in these areas that minority nationalism has arisen, though not to the same extent in all of them.

Catalonia

French Catalonia formed part of a larger unit, which was divided between France and Spain. It was attached to France in 1659 under the treaty of the Pyrenees. The area became partially integrated economically into the wine growing economy of the French midi, and the Catalan wine growers shared much in common with their counterparts of Languedoc. Because of this economic integration, Catalans tended to look northwards, towards Paris, as their cultural, political and economic reference point, rather than southwards, towards Barcelona, even when the latter was the capital of the largely autonomous Spanish Catalonia.

Ethnic activity in Catalonia has been at a low level and is mainly concerned with preserving the language and culture, although some attempt has been made to give it political expression. The *Group Rossellones d' Estudis Catalans* (GREC) was founded in the 1960s. In 1969 the group established a *Universite Catalane d'Ete*. In which several subjects were taught in the Catalan language. This idea is the Catalan movement's principal contribution to ethnic activism in France and has been imitated by others. In 1975, the Town Council of Perpignan (the principal town of French Catalonia) created the *Centre de Documentation et d' Animation Culturelles Catalanes* (CDACC). An attempt to translate these cultural demands into the political arena was made by the setting up of the *Comitat Rossellones d' Estudis d' Animacio* (DREA), created in 1970 mainly by extreme leftists in the wake of the events of May 1968. But such political forms have found little response in the local population and the region has been quite calm compared with other regions.⁵³

⁵³ Oriol Pi Sumyer 'Catalan nationalism. Some Theoretical and historical consideration in Edward A. Toyakiyam/Ronald Rogowki *New Nationalisms in the Developed West.*' (ed) (Boston, Allen & Unwin, 1985). pp.254-277.

Flanders

French Flanders is the southernmost tip of a Flemish-speaking area, which is today divided among three states- France, Belgium and Holland. However, unlike Catalonia or the Basque Country, this area was never united into a homogenous society. The French portion, especially, consisted of a series of separate regions, which were mingled with French speaking areas. Nevertheless, regionalist movements existed an autonomy movement, which sought the unification of all Flanders. This movement was marked by its extreme right-wing view, and during the Second World War some of its members collaborated with the Nazis. It was this collaboration, which resulted in the movement being discredited after the war, and is one of the principal reasons why regionalism and autonomies have been slow to develop in the area.

It is only in recent years that there has been some development of regionalism, and as in Catalonia, the concerns are mainly with the preservation of the culture and language. Today there are two main tendencies. The *Cercle Michel de Swaan*, which has its roots in the right wing groups of earlier periods, refuses both the 'American way of life' and Marxism. The other tendency grew up under the influence of the 'internal colonial' theories which had been developed in other regions. At first it was not organised into a group. Then, in 1977, the Flemish Summer University, directly influenced by its Catalan counterparts, was held. After the university sessions, an association *Menschen Lyk Wider*, was created to develop the idea of a statute of autonomy for French Flanders. But so far it has had little impact.⁵⁴

Alsace

Alsace is unique among the ethnic regions of France, in that it has lived within two different states. France and Germany, for quite long periods of its

⁵⁴ John Loughlin, 'Regionalism and Ethnic nationalism in France' in Ives Meny/Vincent Wright (ed) *Centre-Periphery Relations in Western Europe*, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1985) pp.208-209.

modern history. Incorporated into France under the *ancien regime* in 1848, it was annexed to Germany by Bismarck, in 1879, and remained German until 1918 when France annexed it and thousand of Alsatians were drafted into the German army. It was these fluctuations, as well as the fact that both German and the Alsatian dialect were spoken by many Alsatians, that gave to the regions strong particularity. This was so even at the level of administration. In the interwar period the Concordat, which had been signed between the Catholic Church and the German government, was retained even the after Alsace's reincorporation into France. A commissariat general (21 March 1919), aided by a Consul Consultatif (9 September 1920), was created to facilitate the reintegration of Alsace into the French Republic, but, in fact, served to maintain the unity of the region. The hardening attitude of French governments, hostile to any form of particularism within the Republic, combined with the worsening economic situation to provoke strong regionalist and autonomy movements. The French Communist Party supported the latter and then split with the setting up of an Alsatian Communist Party. However, as in Flanders, an important number of the Alsatian autonomists showed more sympathy for Nazi ideology than for Marxism and these eventually collaborated with Hitler during the Occupation.

The experience of Alsace under Hitler differed considerably from the period between 1870 and 1918. In the earlier period Germany had given to the region a large degree of autonomy. Hitler made no concessions. The result was that the nostalgia which had been one of the main causes of the development of autonomism in the 1920s and 1930s was absent in the post-war period. Furthermore, most Alsatians were tired of the insecurity involved in the economic upsurge of post-war France. For all these reasons as well as the discredit thrown on the idea of autonomism by the collaboration of some autonomists with the Nazis, regionalist demands have been confined mainly to defense of the language and to promoting the right to learn German in school (this had been suppressed by the Fourth Republic).

Several groups have been created for this purpose. These include the Cercle Rene Schickele, The Front Cultural Alsacien (1974), The Comite Pour le Droit au Dialect a la Maternelle (1978), The Groupe des Militants da la Culture Alsacienne (1980) and Unsar Gerachtigkeit-movement Pour l'autogestion Culturelle en Alsace, which supported Francois Mitterand in the presidential elections of May 1981. Small groups, dedicated to a more political expression of regionalism and autonomism, have come into existence. The movement *Regionaliste d'Alsace-Lorraine*, founded in 1970 by Dr. Iffring, is frankly neo-Nazi in inspiration. It has advocated 'l' independence de l'Alsace-Lorraine' within a 'empire europeen des peuples germaniques'. The group split in 1975 when those who rejected Iffring's Nazism set up the *Movement EL-Front autonomiste de Liberation*, seeking autonomy within the French state. These groups, however, have failed to attract significant support.⁵⁵

Occitania

Occitania is the term used by ethnic activists to describe the area of France south of the Loire, where the 'Oc' dialects are spoken. The *Langue d'oc* is so called because of the way in which the word for 'yes' is pronounced. French kingdom from the time of the Albigensian Crusades in the thirteenth century, which were used by the Capetian kings of the north as a pretext to extend their territorial control.

A form of regionalism existed here in the nineteenth century as a romantic literary movement called the Felibrige, led by the Provençal poet Mistral. Today there are two main cultural movements. The *Institut d'Etudes Occitanes* (IEO) was founded in 1945 and has concerned itself with solidifying the linguistic forms of the Occitan language. Robert Lafont, its spokesman, has advocated the ideas of autonomy and autogestion. It is he who has popularised the 'internal colonialism' thesis. There does exist a nationalist tendency whose leader is Yves Rouquette, but the majority tendency seems to be that led by Lafont. The other movement is the latter-day Filibreens, who see themselves as

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 209-210.

successors of the nineteenth-century movement of Mistral. Their main activity is the study of the latter's works and the preservation of local customs. They are not directly involved in political activity perhaps because of the diversity of their members' political positions, ranging from the extreme right to the centre-left.

The Occitanian movement resembles those of the first three regions in as much as it has largely been a movement for the preservation of the cultures and language of the region. Where it differs is in the size of this movement and the extent to which it has given rise to protest movements such as the fight of the Larzac peasants against the establishment of a military base on their lands and the agitation of the wine growers in the Midi. Nevertheless, political mobilization has remained minimal and the movement has been confined mainly to intellectuals.⁵⁶

The Basque Country

The French Basque Country, situated at the western extremity of the Pyrennes, comprises three of the seven provinces of Euskadi. When Henry of Navarre became Henri IV of France in 1589, the three northern provinces were attached to the French monarchy. The French Basque Country, unlike its Spanish counterpart, has seen little industrial development but has remained essentially rural. Its society has been marked by conversation, and the church and local notables have been its leaders. These elites have exercised a mediating function between the society and the state.

The first manifestation of regionalism in the modern period was the founding of the group ENBATA (*Association des Etudiants Basques*) in 1953 by Basque students at the University of Bordeaux. At first the group concerned itself with preserving Basque culture and folklore, nostalgically seeking to recreate a society, which they had left behind – the peasant society of the Basque Country. In 1956 it transferred its headquarters to the Musee Basque in

⁵⁶ Alan Touraine, *Sociological Intervention and Internal Dynamics of the Occitanist Movement*, in Tirkyakian/Rogowski, n.53. pp. 157-175.

Bayonne (the principal town of the French Basque Country). The act may be seen as an anticipation of the stirrings of nationalist sentiment. Within the group at this period were several tendencies, ranging from regionalism to nationalism. The more conservative adherents, mainly notables and local businessmen, wished to use it as a vehicle for promoting regionalist ideas. This was a response to the break-up of traditional Basque society through economic decline emigration. Furthermore, the traditional mores of Basque society, based on the family and the Catholic faith, were under threat from the penetration of modern ideas by the mass media. The other main tendency was made up of young intellectuals, who were influenced by the struggle for national liberation waged by ETA in the Spanish Basque Country. This group wished to show support for their fellow Basques suffering under the repression of the Franco regime. Furthermore, they gave a sympathetic hearing to ETA refugees living on the French side of the border.

ENBATA's public face changed different periods, as these two tendencies struggled for control of the group. In 1960 the nationalists managed to force the group to adopt some nationalist positions. In 1963 ENBATA became a political party. However, the leadership remained in the hands of the regionalists who tried to discourage contact with ETA members. In 1967 this element was overthrown and the younger, more nationalistic, members took over. From this period the group also began to develop these sympathetic to socialism. Then contacts with ETA increased Between April 1975 and January 1979 there were fifty-three violent incidents, including bomb attacks against police stations, tourist offices and secondary residences. There were also attacks on ETA refugees by right-wing Spanish extremists, which resulted in some deaths.

The French Basque Country is interesting because here may be found a higher level, as it were, of ethnic activity than in the regions just examined. The Basque movement has included conservative regionalism, demands for the preservation of the language and culture, electoral activity and separatist

violence. It would be wrong, however, to exaggerate the extent of this movement. In electoral terms the movement failed to make any significant impact. In 1967, when ENBATA was at the height of its influence, it obtained very little support in the elections of that year. In Mauleon the result was 1,899 votes out of 40,126 cast, or 4.6 percent; in Basse Navarre 1,058 out of 31,109 cast, or 3.4 percent; in Soule 821 out of 9,107 cast, or 9.01 percent. This was in the rural areas. In Bayonne the result was 3,156 out of 70,007 cast, or 4.58 percent. Today same name exists. Separates violence, too, has been on a much lower scale than in Corsica and Brittany. It may be concluded, therefore, that the Basque movement failed to obtain a foothold in the mass of the population. The latter has remained unmoved by appeals to its 'national identity' and has continued to give its support to conservative politicians, either Christian Democrat or Gaullist.⁵⁷

The transformation from a loosely knit empire to a highly centralized nation state has been at the cost of the aspiration and identities of the various minorities with in France the lack of sensitivity on the part of French State has indeed been the most cardinal cause for the emergence of minority dissent in various parts of France.

⁵⁷ John Grugel, 'The Basques' in Michael Watson, (ed.) *Contemporary Minority Nationalism*. (London, Routledge, 1990) pp. 100-117.

Chapter III

The Emergence of Dissent In Brittany

Breton Movement Gets An Impetus

The incorporation of Brittany into France took place during the efforts of the French royalty to ward off the English invaders. It was during the inspirational efforts of Joan of Arc to reclaim the holy French kingdom that you see the duke of Brittany signing the Oath of Federation that put him in alliance with the French king. This Oath of 1247 at once made Brittany an ally of France albeit any vassalage. Subsequently, we have the Act of Union in the fourteenth century. This saw the merging of the two royal houses through marriage. However, Brittany was allowed to maintain a fair degree of autonomy and the centralising efforts of the French *ancien regime*¹ had only a tangential influence upon the province. The advent of Napoleon and his virulent programme for establishing a Francophone regime saw the delegitimisation of the Breton way of life in order to install the civilizing French ways.

It was this attack on their cultural exclusivism, especially in a concentrated way during the Vichy regime, that led to the emergence of a voice of dissent up until the Revolution this had the shape of nostalgia, an emphasis on the antiquity of the Breton culture and its cultural links with the Celtic group Wales, Cornwall and Ireland. The early decades of the twentieth century saw the spirit being channelled into efforts that were meant to protect the 'national' character of Brittany from the ethnic malignity of the dominant French state. This exclusive character reached its height during the Second World War when a nationalist organisation called *Breizh Atao* (Brittany for ever) supported the

¹ Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1975) pp 117-118.

Germans against the French. The consensus at this point had been that the goal of Brittany for Bretons was what Breton nationalism was all about.

Since 1945 the fortunes of the Breton movement ('Emsav' in Breton circles) have undergone a profound transformation. The combined effect of the upsurge in French national sentiment at the Liberation and the notoriety of those Breton activists who collaborated with fascism in one way or another, led to a post war political climate hostile to the cause of Breton specificity. So damaging was the legacy of collaboration that, as late as 1974, a popular magazine was moved to describe the nationalist organization responsible for blowing up then TV mast at Roc'h Tredudon, in protest at the insufficient air time accorded to the Breton language and culture, as '*une sequelle du nazisme*'² (a sequel to Nazism).

Yet by the latter part of the 1970s a Breton nationalist party, the *Union Democratique Bretonne* (UDB) had succeeded in gaining recognition by the Communists and Socialists as the third component of the Union of the Left alliance in Brittany and, as a result, had made considerable progress in local government representation. With achievements such as this, as well as the unifying the regenerating influence brought to bear by the UDB on other elements of the Emsav it justifiably claimed in 1982: "The UDB is part of the political landscape. Its influence in Brittany is increasing, since it has become the focal point for the whole of the movement. This phenomenon, due just as much to its own militant qualities as to the collapse of the various forms by which traditional national nationalism has tried to keep itself afloat, appears to provide the basis for bringing about what was always the ambition of the Emsav: its unification. The history of the UDB is thus one of success, quite unique within the Emsav, after twenty years of existence".³ The fortunes of the Breton movement in the 1980s, however have failed to match up to this

² M. Nicholas, *History of the Breton Movement*, (Paris: Syros 1982) pp 12-14.

³ Malcolm Williams 'Peripheral Nationalism in the European Union', in Tony Spiby (ed) *Britain in Europe* (London, Routledge, 1997), pp 428-429.

positive appraisal and implied prognostication. But, before examining the recent problems, it is important to say a word about the legacy of collaboration and notably how it was overcome, leading to the emergence of the UDB.

The 1930s saw the development of fascism in the Breton movement, in the form of the *Parti National Breton*, composed of Emsav's separatist elements. By 1937 the PNB had clearly become a party embodying the essential features of national socialism, including the corporate state, rejection of the class struggle, the cult of force, discipline and elitism, and racism as shown in the following rejection as France again prepared for war with Germany. The overtures of the PNB after 1940 towards the nazis cannot be accounted for simply in terms of opportunism, but also reflect a major ideological convergence.

'Moderate' nationalists, such as Yann Fouere, who never favoured direct collaboration with the Nazis, did work closely with the Vichy government in the hope that the provincialist rhetoric of Petian, heavily influenced by the doctrine of Charles Mauras, would lead in the direction of regional autonomy for Brittany. Fouere was largely responsible for obtaining from the Vichy government the creation of the *Comite Consultatif de Bretagne* in 1942; a consultative body entitled to express its views regarding the Breton language and culture, and the creation of one weekly radio programme in Breton lasting one hour, as well as certain optional examinations in the Breton language. At his trial, his defence lawyer argued that Fouere was a moderate, opposed to the anti-French separation of the PNB, and that his loyalty to France was beyond question. What this omitted was the role under Vichy of his newspaper, *La Bretagne*. Thus when the Journal Official began to name high-ranking freemasons in France generally with a view to taking measures against them, the paper published the names of Breton freemasons, and on occasion it even divulged information in order to remedy the inefficiencies of Vichy repression.⁴

⁴ Alain David. *The Breton Movement: 1919-1945* (Paris, Syros, 1976), P.15.

The discredit which the Breton movement had brought upon itself meant it was not until 1957 that an overtly political organisation to promote the cause of Breton autonomy, the *Mouvement Pour Organisation de la Bretagne* (MOB), was created. This move was itself enormously facilitated by the activities of CELIB (*Comite d'Etude et de Liaison des Interets Bretons*), which in the 1950s was the spearhead of the regional economic planning the presence at its head of former Prime Minister Rene Pleven and a host of eminently respectable Breton politicians, and the resolutely a political image which it strove to maintain, conferred on CELIB a degree of credibility which no Breton organisation could have hoped to attain in 1945.⁵ CELIB succeeded in bringing to public attention the specific needs of the Breton population, particularly the problem of emigration, without being accused of separatism or fascism. This success was based on a number of factors. The 'eternal morass' of Fourth Republic politics, with its unstable governments and shifting parliamentary alliances, made it possible for the Breton deputies of whatever party to exert considerable political influence at the centre by voting together as a group on issues directly concerning the region. The CELIB's parliamentary commission, by exerting pressure in this way, succeeded in the establishing for a while an authentic dialogue between the regional representatives and central government and led to the promise of a regional development plan for Brittany, the famous Loi-programme.⁶

It was the political functional regionalism practised by CELIB, which created the conditions for Breton political activism to re-emerge. The MOB skilfully exploited the opportunities created by the activities of CELIB, presenting itself as a political extension of the economic regionalism represented by CELIB. A kind of symbiotic relationship developed between the two organisations and the CELIB itself defined the complementary roles as follows:

⁵ Michael Nicholas, n2, pp. 297-298.

⁶ Vaughan Rogers, 'Brittany' in Michael Watson (ed), *Contemporary Minority Nationalism*, (Routledge, London/N. York, 1990), p. 68.

“Whereas the CELIB strictly limits its activities to the economic, social and cultural problems of Brittany, the MOB adopts positions on question of an institutional order. It recommends a reform, which would allow Brittany, through regional decentralisation of its structures, to control a part of its own interests in a federal France.”⁷

The prestige and respectability of CELIB made for the MOB to advance as moderate, responsible requests, demands for the institution of federalism in France (a crime for which for a long time one could be prosecuted).

The symbolic relationship came to an end in 1962 in the aftermath of the Gaullist victory at the general election. The bi-polarisation of political life in France broke up the Breton parliamentary alliance and Breton deputies dutifully respected the exigencies of party disciplines. The promise of the Loi-programme was broken. The lie had been given to the illusion that the two organisations were merely different dimensions of the game decentralist tendency. The logic of CELIB’s strategy, whatever its leaders may have thought, was to promote the integration of the Breton economy into the expanding French and international economy. The convergence between the and the modernising ideology of Gaullism, plus the new left-right polarity, led to the political integration hitherto uncommitted CELIB leaders such as Joseph Martray, who joined the Gaullists, and Michel Philiponeau, who joined the French socialists. The objectives of the nationalists in the MOB, on the other hand, were at bottom disintegrative. The apparently moderate federalist stance was none the less tantamount to promoting the dismantling of the French state in its unitary form.⁸

Abandoned by its former ally, the MOB found itself in a crisis. Some of the younger elements had for some time been disenchanted with what they

⁷ Ibid. P.69.

⁸ R. Dulong, *The Breton Question*, (Paris: Armand Collins- 1975) p. 136.

perceived as the ideological bankruptcy of the MOB, highlighted by the reaction amongst its leaders to the Algerian crisis. The MOB student section at Rennes University saw the activities of the FLN in Algeria as a struggle for national liberation, to which Breton nationalists must lend their support. The MOB leadership could not comply with this demand and the conservative tendency expressed itself in MOB's newspaper, *L' Avenir de la Bretagne*, in 1958: 'We cannot give up our national and cultural solidarity with the white men of Christian heritage who are threatened with losing everything if Moslem fanaticism triumphs'.⁹ This current, then, had an order of racial priorities, which led it to become the objective ally of virulent French nationalism, which denied the right to self-determination on the basis of ethnic distinctiveness to the citizenry of the republic.

The concept of social class provided a further source of conflict in the early 1960's. The MOB, against a background of intensifying class based conflict in Brittany, consistently refused to incorporate the concept of class into its analysis and programme, declaring that its objectives were to bring together the Breton people, whatever their opinions and political persuasion, in the assertion of their rights and liberties. The students at Rennes reacted in a hostile fashion to this refusal.

The MOB, increasingly isolated and torn by internal dissension, began to sink back into obscurity. The young Turks who had been questioning the MOB's failure to define its position on the left-right spectrum, departed to form the *Union Democratique Bretonne* in 1964.¹⁰

⁹ Vaughan Rogers, n.-6, pp. 69-70

¹⁰ Jill Lovecy, "Protest in Brittany from the Fourth to the Fifth Republics: From a Regionalists to a Regional Social Movement" in P.G. Cerny (ed), *Social Movements and Protests in France*, (London, Routledge, 1982), p.191.

The Move to the Left: The Ascendancy of the UDB:

The advent of the UDB opened a new era in the history of the Breton movement. On the basis of an ideological renewal and a strategic re-orientation, the UDB spearheaded the emergence of the nationalist movement into the political arena with unprecedented success. Building on the idea that the position of Brittany was essentially colonial, the UDB made it a cornerstone of its prescriptive analysis. The colonial model made it possible for the UDB to bring together all the elements constituting the 'Breton problem' under one heading, thereby imbuing nationalist ideology with an apparent coherence, which it had previously lacked. The cultural, socio-economic and political oppression suffered by Bretons was attributable to the combined effects of the capitalist system and the imperialism of the French state. The colonial theme had the added advantage of highlighting the notion of the people, rather than that of the nation. This was particularly important because it paved the way for the UDB to establish Breton nationalism as a political phenomenon of the Left.¹¹ Instead of insisting upon the Breton nation as an eternal entity independent of economic and social variables, the traditional concept of nationhood so dear to previous manifestations of Breton nationalism, the UDB placed the historical experience of the Breton people in the context of colonial domination, thus facilitating a convergence between the idea of national liberation and the concept of social class. The UDB conceded that the processes of assimilation and acculturation had eroded the specificity of Brittany effectively and asserted therefore that it was inappropriate to postulate the existence of a Breton nation. Instead, the UDB emphasises the 'national vocation' of Brittany to be realised through a process of liberation from centralist domination and capitalism, thus casting those elements of the Breton population facilitating the operation of the system of colonial

¹¹ Ibid. p. 207.

domination and the elements of the Breton movement, which rejected the concept of class struggle, as the class enemy.¹²

The ideological renewal generated by the UDB rests, however, on shaky foundations. The specific character of the Breton problem, which it is crucially important to establish in order to justify the existence of the UDB at all, is substantiated by attempting to answer the argument that many other regions suffer from very similar problems and the Breton specificity cannot be established through an enumeration of the economic, social and culture problems of the region. The UDB's answer to this argument goes as follows:

“Certain, the Bretons have several problems in common with other regions. Let us mention the best known of them—under-industrialisation in Western Basse, Normandie and in Brittany, the framing problem in Alsace, in the west and particularly in Brittany, because of its peripheral position in relation to the developed regions of France and the EEC, rural exodus in inland Guyenne and in Brittany, demographic disequilibrium, due to emigration on a massive scale, in Corsica, in Auvergne and in Brittany, alcoholism in Normandy, Alsace and Brittany, military installations, of great strategic importance, in the Limousine and in Brittany, the language question in the Basque country and in Brittany. We observe that only in Brittany are all these difficulties to be found at once. It is these conditions taken together which constitute the specificity of the Breton problem. It cannot therefore, be reduced to the mere French regional question.”¹³

¹² J.E. Rece, *The Bretons against the French*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 143.

¹³ G.V. Rogers. 'Ethnicity, Inequality and Integration: Ethnic Activism in Post war Brittany' in Peter Morris (ed), *Equality and Inequalities in France*, (Nottingham, Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 149.

The criteria of colonialism selected are, for example, totally arbitrary. At no stage is it made clear exactly why the particular problems selected for inclusion in the enumeration constitute the basis for a situation of colonial domination. Also, the terms in which the Breton problem is defined as specific and not reducible to the French regional question effectively deny to other ethnically distinct groups the status which the UDB took the base metals of Breton nationalism, transformed them into the gold of national liberation ideology and forced them into a socialist mould. The significance of this 'alchemy', as Louis Quere has observed, went far beyond the boundaries of Brittany, and the colonial analogy developed by the UDB was incorporated by many other ethnic minority movements on French territory. The UDB therefore provided further proof that ideological coherence is not a prerequisite for political success.¹⁴

The strategic re-orientation inspired by the UDB was aimed in two directions, first the nationalist movement itself and second the French left. For the UDB, one of the greatest sources of the weakness of the nationalist movement was its chronic divisiveness. To combat this, the UDB adopted a muscular policy of unification, by applying the principle of democratic centralism and party discipline within its own ranks and attempting to outstrip its rival in the Breton movement. It has always been most vociferous in its condemnation of what it regards as the irresponsible, unrealistic and counter-productive activities of the *Front de Liberation de la Bretagne*. It would have no truck with other organisations in the movements, which it considered doctrinally unsound, such as the *Parti Strollad Ar Vro*, a re-incarnation of the MOB, which emerged and quickly disappeared again in the 1970's.¹⁵ The UDB's insistence on discipline encountered considerable resistance from some

¹⁴ Vaughan Rogers, n-6, p.71.

¹⁵ Louis Quere, *The Interdicts and the French Frontiers*, (Paris, Hausmann Press, 1978), p. 320.

nationalist quarters, which accused it of Stalinism. Nevertheless, this had the effect of reinforcing its image as a no-nonsense respectable organisation of the Left, which was a crucial factor in establishing its credibility with the French Communists and Socialists, the second major aspect of the UDB's strategic renewal.

Basing its strategy on the conviction that the colonial situation of Brittany could be eliminated only through socialism, the UDB cultivated an association with the French Left. This option became increasingly credible as the political circumstances in France began to evolve, first of all with the growth of a rejuvenated Socialist Party, and, second, with the establishment of the Union of the Left on the basis of a Joint Programme of Government, including a commitment to genuine regional decentralisation. This new set of circumstances gave nationalist movement a new sense of purpose since, for the first time, they had the opportunity to participate in the development of an alternative to the government of the day, an alternative which promised more in terms of self-determination than had over previously been envisaged.¹⁶ For the French Left, association with the UDB brought assistance from enthusiastic, hard-working militants and the possibility of attracting support in an area where, with a few very notable exceptions, the population had remained largely impermeable to the appeal of socialism. The alliance began with the UDB supporting left-wing candidates at election in Brittany and later developed into participation in election on a Union of the Left ticket. This led in 1977, when the Socialists made significant gains in the local elections in Brittany, to the election of thirty-nine UDB local councillors and a share in the administration of cities like Rennes, Brest and Nantes.¹⁷ As a result, Ronan Leprohon, a UDB founder member, was elected on to the Regional Council. He soon launched a scathing attack on it, as a place where prominent politicians indulged themselves by continuing arguments began in Parliament in Paris. The UDB

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 317.

¹⁷ J. Blondel, *Government of France*, (London, Methuen, 1976), p. 77.

considered the Council wholly inadequate, with insufficient powers or resources, indirectly elected, and suffering from the notorious '*cumul des mandats*' of its member, which encouraged absenteeism and irresponsibility. The UDB counted on the French Left to rectify such deficiencies.¹⁸

While the alliance with the Left soon paid practical dividends, certain longer-term dangers began to manifest themselves; in respect of both political action and ideology. The considerable success achieved by the UDB in persuading the French Left to incorporate in its analysis and programme a more radical perspective on the Breton problem may have represented a significant advance for the cause of regionalism, but it constituted a growing threat to the nationalist movement. The danger for the UDB was strikingly illustrated in the regional manifesto published by the *finistere federation* of the Socialist Party in January 1978, which adopted a line of analysis amounting, not so much to an accommodation of certain nationalist demands, as to deep encroachment into the ideological territory hitherto occupied by the Breton movement. The stifling of the Breton culture, for example, was closely linked by the *finistere socialists* to, 'The process of capitalist exploitation which, by forcing generations of our compatriots to emigrate, has condemned our region to economic stagnation. To this, and other clear evocations of the colonial theme developed by the UDB, the manifesto added a forceful affirmation of the right and need to 'live and work in our own homeland', another slogan frequently employed by the UDB.¹⁹ The only means of achieving this, according to the manifesto, was through the establishment of socialism: 'This old an yet brand new idea', which 'by liberating the Bretons from the dual exploitation from which they suffer, as Bretons and as workers, represents from them a dual opportunity. Here, the Socialists were 'borrowing' another theme popularised by the UDB, based on the famous dictum of Yann Sohier, founder of the

¹⁸ Rogers, n-13, p. 138.

¹⁹ Rogers, n-13. p. 138.

cultural movement *Ar Falz*, according to which 'The Breton is doubly proletarian, as a proletarian and as a Breton'.²⁰

The UDB began to realize in the late 1970s that the alliance with the French Left had led, not only to a substantial erosion of its ideological specificity, but that it had also severely restricted its freedom of action as an independent political party. In placing all its eggs in one basket, the electoral victory of the left, it had tied its own fortunes too closely to those of its partners and its room for political manoeuvre outside of this strategic framework was now severely limited. In March 1978, Ronan Leprohon, anticipating the defeat of the by then disunited French left in the parliamentary election of April, declared 'We have been struggling in Brittany for fourteen years with the victory of the Union of the Left as our starting hypothesis. We must now admit that, objectively, fourteen years of UDB activity are currently being sanctioned by failure'.²¹ The UDB began to perceive that its *raison d'etre*, the expression of autonomist aspirations in Brittany, was in danger of disappearing.

In response to this danger, the 1978 Party Conference endorsed a motion Recommending a radical break with the Strategy hitherto pursued and called upon the party to explain to the Breton population that 'Decentralisation, regionalisation and de-concentration are traps and that only socialist autonomy will allow the Breton people to assume its full role in the international struggle against capitalist oppression. The disarray of the French Left was presented as an opportunity to preserve our ability to redefine a strategy capable of building a socialist society which takes account of the needs of Breton workers' and for the UDB to 'affirm more powerfully the need for the existence of the party as an indispensable instrument in the decolonisation of the Breton people'.²² This implied the development of 'a programme, which cannot be taken over by the French Left and the socialists in particular'. However, the motion stressed that

²⁰ Rogers- n-6. p-74.

²¹ Ibid. p. 74-75.

²² Nicolas, n-2 p. 345.

'the affirmation of our specificity must not lead our party to cut itself off from the tactical gains previously attained, such as our presence in a few municipal councils'. Yet the resolution adopted by the Brest conference overtly referred to the 'national question', or 'the right of the Breton people to separation' and envisaged an 'autonomous status for Brittany which will guarantee legislative, executive, administrative and judicial sovereignty for the Breton people.'²³ After having spent fourteen years overcoming the damning image of the Breton movement in which separatism and treachery were confounded, the UDB was now clearly implying a new commitment to the creation of a Breton state. In anticipation of the inevitable criticism that it was there by demonstrating the dubious nature of its socialist credentials, the party resolved to include, in its constituent charter, a new clause which was a clear rebuff to the French Left. 'The UDB condemns chauvinism, the negation of nationality, and bourgeois nationalism, in opposition to which it advances revolutionary nationalism. As Nicolas has observed, if the UDB was seeking to develop a programme which the French left could not take over, then it had made a considerable start.'²⁴

The party's new line was re-affirmed at its St. Nazaire Conference in 1980 and the 'cold shoulder' attitude towards the French Left was given concrete expression in the decision which was taken to begin negotiations with representatives of the other ethnic minorities of metropolitan France and the Overseas Departments and Territories with a view to presenting a candidate representing them all at the 1981 presidential election. This plan, however, came to nothing when negotiations broke down, demonstrating the immense difficulty experienced by the UDB when it sought to exert a telling influence outside the alliance.

²³ John Ardagh, *France in the 1980s* (Middlesex, Secker & Warburg, 1982) p. 123-130.

²⁴ Nicolas: n-2, p. 346-347.

The UDB and the Socialist Government:

Precisely at the point where the UDB began to distance itself from the Left, the objective for which the party had striven from its inception until the late 1970s was attained: the accession of a socialist government in France. The party hailed this as a great victory for the Left as a whole, in which of course, it included itself. Claiming some of the credit for the Socialists' success for itself, the party engaged in a policy of 'critical support' for the new government. However, as the 'socialist experiment' unfolded, relations between the UDB and the new majority became increasingly sour and it is to the dynamics of these relations that attention must now be turned.

In his major study of the Breton movement, Michael Nicolas identified the dilemma facing the Emsav in the following way.

Participating in the French political process implies the necessity to contract electoral, if not programmatic, alliances with powerful partners...., Conducting a strategy of this kind presents the Emsav with the risk of failure through having its nature perverted by integration into a logic which has as its effect the reinforcement of [French] national unity.²⁵

The need to avoid succumbing to the centripetal and assimilatory forces to which the UDB laid itself open in contracting an alliance with the French Left must not, however, lead the party into the introspective isolation of the 'nationalist impasse, which constitutes the principal danger generally haunting movements of this nature. The way forward for the Emsav, Nicolas maintained, must lie in 'subverting' not only the economic and administrative process of French Society, but also 'the ideological principle which lies at their heart, [French] nationalist ideology: hence the need for an internationalist perspective

²⁵ Ibid. p. 346-347.

which goes beyond the level of discourse'.²⁶ Nevertheless, the success of the Emsav depends upon the consolidation of the elements, which characterize the Breton minority (awareness of cultural distinctiveness, social conflicts with specific characteristics), which the Emsav must identify and with which it must closely associate itself. The application of this conceptual framework to the experience of the UDB in the 1980s goes a long way to explaining the recent difficulties of the party and to providing a basis for a prognosis.

The problem of devising an effective role for itself under the Socialist government rapidly became acute for the UDB as the party sought to re-establish its credentials as a component of the left whilst at the same time affirming its independence of analysis and action. This enterprise took the form of a systematic monitoring of the proposals for reform emanating from the government, especially, of course, those relating to the decentralization programme. This disappointment felt by many militants when the government's blueprint was published, highlights the problematic position of the party. The party quickly observed 'the discrepancy between the electoral promises and the first proposals of the Government. Severe reservations were expressed concerning the technocratic character of the proposal reforms, regretting the subordination of economic and political questions to issues of administrative efficiency. In respect of the reform of the functions of the prefectural corps for example, the UDB commented that 'First of all they talked about abolition, then a change of title, but now all we have is a modification of their power'.²⁷ The department of Loire-Atlantique, containing the historic capital of Brittany, Nantes, was not to be included in the Breton region and would remain in the region of the Pays de la Loire. Corsica was to be accorded special status with extra power as devolved to its regional bodies, but Brittany would retain its status as a region just like any other. Once more, the party emphasised that there was a fundamental distinction between the

²⁶ Ibid. p. 346-347.

²⁷ J. Hayward, *The One and Indivisible French Republic*, (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986) pp. 49-53.

concept of decentralisation which, as the decentralisation program itself underlined when it was eventually adopted in February 1982, 'far from weakening national unity will, on the contrary, reinforce it', and autonomy conceived of by the UDB as a process of decolonisation, carrying with it the dismantling of the French unitary state as far as Brittany was concerned.²⁸ A further preoccupation of the UDB, in its response to the blueprint, concerned the accession of the region to full local authority status, which as the reform stipulated, would only become effective on the election of the Regional Assembly by direct universal suffrage. The lack of haste of the minister responsible to take the steps necessary for holding such elections was the object of sharp criticism. Despite all these areas in which the reform received the UDB's strong condemnation, thus putting a considerable distance between itself and the Government, the need to avoid isolating itself led the party to affirm that, 'In summary, the application of the Socialist programme would be a great step forward' and must be supported by the militants: 'It is up to us to put our shoulders to the wheel of a change which must not be restricted simply to the institutional domain'.²⁹ Regarding regional elections, the UDB affirmed that 'The *Parti Socialiste* cannot go back on such an important promise'. The UDB was continually faced with the Hobson's choice of remaining in critical support of the government but with negligible influence, or dissociating itself and retuning to complete isolation. At the Party Conference in 1982, 'solidarity but not alignment' was the catch phrase of the leadership in an attempt to square the circle. The tension caused by this stance, however, resulted in the departure of long-time '*tete pensante*' of UDB strategy, Roman Leprohon, who joined the Socialist Party in a flurry of recrimination. For Leprohon, the position of the UDB had become untenable:

It should either have participated directly in the policy of decentralisation, which the line adopted at St Nazaire made

²⁸ S. Tarrow, *Between Centre and Periphery: Grass root politicians in Italy and France*, (Yale, Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 163-165.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 163-171.

impossible, or it should have clearly opted for the Opposition camp, which was intolerable because the Breton people had voted in favour of the Left.”³⁰

The importance of the party in these circumstances had already caused a crisis to erupt in the Brest federation of the UDB (Leprohon’s own), recognized for a long time by the party as its ‘guiding light’. Its rejection of the official line was countered by the leadership by its dissolution and the requirement to rejoin the party on an individual basis with a clear commitment to the independent line adopted at St Nazaire.

And yet, in the *Rapport Politique* drawn up for the 1982 Conference, the UDB appeared quite lucidly to accept the validity of Leprohon’s analysis when it decided against a course of systematic criticism of the government, a course which, as we have observed, it has already begun to follow.

This attitude would be very likely to isolate us. As the little terriers of the Left, we could only snap at a few heels and, eventually, collecting a few kicks in return, take in a semi-opposition as uncomfortable as it would be undesired.³¹

The lucidity of the party’s perception was not matched by strategic inventiveness and the situation envisaged by the leadership in its striking little metaphor was precisely what was to come to pass.

The aftermath of the 1982 Conference saw a hardening in the attitude of the UDB towards the socialists, exemplified by the account in ‘Le People Breton’ of Leprohon’s departure, which was denounced as ‘treachery’, the re-

³⁰ Vangham Rogers –n-6. p. 77.

³¹ Ibid. p.77.

affirmation of the autonomous strategy and severe criticism of the 'austerity' measures which the Socialists had already begun to introduce with regard to the economy. Despite the fact that the exigencies of affirming its own independence as a party were pushing the UDB further and further away from the government, the electoral alliance with the Socialists was still pursued. Not surprisingly the preparation of the 1983 municipal elections saw the eruption of considerable animosity between Breton Socialists and UDB militants over the issue of the placing of the UDB candidates on Union of the Left lists. The considerable fall in the government's popularity, coupled with the UDB's critical stance, caused the Socialists to be much less enthusiastic than hitherto about allowing the UDB to figure prominently. The consequence of this was, as the UDB saw it, that UDB candidates were insufficiently represented on the electoral lists; or figured too far down to have much hope of being elected.³² In fact, the situation was far from uniform across Brittany, with the alliance holding up extremely well in some municipalities, whereas in others the animosity which had developed led the UDB to abandon the strategy of alliance and present its own lists, protesting at 'hegemony' shown by the Socialists; so that relations degenerated still further.

In those areas where the UDB sought to fight alone, its results were derisory, amounting to an average share of the vote of 3 per cent. Without the strategy of alliance, the UDB failed to make a significant electoral breakthrough, strikingly illustrating the observation contained in the 1982 Conference report of the *Bureau Politique*, which admitted: 'For the UDB itself, the conquest of autonomy is difficult'.³³ In those areas where the alliance remained solid, considerable progress was made and the party more than doubled its number of local councillors. It was one of the UDB's most successful candidates, Iffig Remond, who was elected mayor of the small

³² Ibid. p.77.

³³ Tarrow, n-28, pp. 169-170.

municipality of St. Hernin in Finistere, as head of a United list, who put the 'success' of the party into perspective in the following manner: 'This is not the way to take power, we must work to take over at grass roots level'.³⁴ That is how the Left managed to implant itself in the rural community. But progress in this direction was very disappointing, as the party's own 1982 Conference report perceptibly conceded: 'Our party finds it difficult to publicise the overall analysis which would make it possible for every worker to make the link gradually and simply between his day-to-day experience and the objectives which we propose'.³⁵

The consequences of the analytical and strategic contortions indulged in by the UDB and its demonstrable inability either significantly to influence the government policy from its position of 'critical support' or to emerge as a credible independent force had already begun to make themselves felt in several important ways. By 1983, for example, the membership level of over 2,000 cared-carrying militants who joined the UDB before the advent of the Socialist government had dwindled to approximately 800.³⁶ Since 1981 the party's right to pride of place in the nationalist movement had begun to be challenged by the emergence of several rival organization, such as the *Parti Republicain Breton*, *Emgann (Le Combat)* and *POBL (Parti pour l'Organisation d'une Bretagne Libre)*. Already by 1983, the Breton movement was beginning to move back to the position of fragmentation and disarray from which the UDB had, it seemed extricated it in the 1970s. The problems extended to the party's newspaper, *Le Peuple Breton*, whose financial situation was reaching crisis point. In early 1984, the party launched an appeal for money to 'save *Le Peuple Breton*'. The significance of the crisis was particularly serious in that the UDB placed enormous emphasis on countering the disinformation it imputed to the predominantly Parisian but also regional press. But subscriptions were not being maintained and the annual *Fete du*

³⁴ Rogers n-6, p. 78-79.

³⁵ Ibid. 78-79.

³⁶ Ibid. 78-79.

Peuple Breton, organized on the model of the Communists' *Fete de l'Humanite*, had made a financial loss, but suggesting the UDB's declining credibility as a political force.³⁷

In 1984, the issue of the party's future relations with the French Left came to a crisis point. For the first time in the UDB's history, rival motions were presented to the annual Conference. The motion presented to delegates by the self-styled 'regionalist' leadership recommended the maintenance of the policy of critical support from the government. Against this, the Leon and Brest federations of the party, described by their opponents as the 'nationalists', called for a much more independent line and stressed the inadequacies of Socialist policy. 'Contrary to certain declaration, 'the dissident' document affirmed, 'it is our duty to keep an account of the Left's derelictions of duty in Brittany. To put greater pressure on the government to meet the UDB's demands, the insufficiencies of its policies in Brittany should be publicly highlighted. The strategy of the UDB must be to act 'without the slightest servility', and use elections as a bargaining counter, refusing to stand down in favour of the candidate of the Left at the second ballot unless negotiations took place on a range of issues, such as economic policy and its effects in Brittany, measures in favour of the Breton language and culture, and, the regional elections, which had once again been postponed."³⁸ The dissident faction went on to reiterate a long-standing principle of the party, which, in practice at least, had ceased to figure prominently in the UDB's position.

"The struggle for socialism is in dissociable from the struggle for autonomy. In failing to recognize this, we give priority to the efforts of French parties in Brittany, which is a further stage in the process of assimilation and a further retrograde step for the Breton question."³⁹

³⁷ n-27, pp 78-80. J. Hayward.

³⁸ Ibid. pp. 78-79.

³⁹ Tarrow, n-27, pp 182-184.

The leadership's response was to appeal for the principles of 'democratic centralism' to be respected. Henri Gourmelon, for the *Bureau Politique* emphasized that the party had already debated the issue, adding that 'Democracy means accepting that one is in the minority'. (Fortunately for him, the opponents of the survival of Breton distinctiveness have not adopted this ill-considered remark as their battle cry!). The call for unity and respect for democratic centralism was ignored by the dissidents, who attributed the sharp decline in membership to the close ties with the French Left. The 'regionalists' rejected this analysis and, while conceding that it was possible to discern 'an accentuation in the Jacobin tendencies of the Socialists and Communists' since their accession to power, insisted that this did not preclude the continuation of joint action. The proposal to break more radically with the French left was defeated and the Leon federation walked out; issuing a communiqué announcing that 'they had left the Conference, but not the UDB'.⁴⁰ The party leadership, in somewhat Stalinist fashion, made no mention of the dispute in the Conference report in *Le Peuple Breton*. In an attempt, however, to contain the dissent, which had been expressed, the UDB proceeded to adopt a policy, which was entirely consistent with the analysis of the dissidents. It was decided to abandon the practice of unconditional support for the left at the second ballot, which had been adopted in different circumstances, which the Right in power and the Left in opposition but capable of taking power and willing to undertake specific commitments. 'Today we see that the promises have, for the most part, not been kept... and that obtaining further promises is to a large extent illusory. In order to demonstrate its new combative stance, the party refused to participate in the forthcoming European elections. It justified this decision in the following terms: 'We shall not be present at the European elections, by the express wish of the Government of the Left which we contributed to bringing to power'.⁴¹ The electoral system for the European Parliament adopted by the Socialist government was thoroughly castigated by

⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 182-184.

⁴¹ Williams, n-3, pp. 428-249.

the party leadership for its undemocratic character in treating France as a single constituency with no specific regional representation, despite the vote by the European Parliament in favour of proportional representation on a regional basis for all countries in the Community. The loss of UDB support at the European election was presented by the party as a 'warning' to the left.

In effect, therefore, despite the determination of the party leadership to maintain the option of electoral alliance with the left and to defeat the push for a clean break, the UDB was staggering in an ungainly fashion towards the opposition camp. This was further underlined when, in October 1984, in pursuing its more combative stance, the UDB organized a demonstration at St. Nazaire, the choice of venue being dictated by the very high incidence of unemployment in this area (19 per cent) and the continuing determination to affirm the Breton identity of the Loire Atlantique department. The spokesman for the UDB in Loire Atlantique after the demonstration put considerable distance between the party and the government when, in an interview for *Quest-France*, he replied to the question 'Do you place yourself in the category of those let down by socialism?' by replying:

If there are those who feel left down by socialism, then they can only be the Socialists themselves. We, in fact, only called for support for Mitterrand at the second ballot, although we found encouragement for the regions in the proposals of Socialist candidate. However, we realized very quickly that the government of the Left would not go very far in this direction. We are not disappointed, we simply have the bitter satisfaction of having been proved right too early.⁴²

⁴² Rogers. n-6, pp. 8-82.

The party, presenting itself as the mouthpiece of economic grievances in Brittany, put forward a five-point plan for reducing unemployment in the region: (1) Two development contracts must be established between the state and the region to invest in shipbuilding and electronics; (2) An essential boost to the capacity of the region for investment would be achieved through an increase in the resources available to the Regional Council and the creation of a regional investment bank. In support of this demand, the UDB observed that, in the case of banks such as the *Credit Mutuel de Bretagne*, out of 2.35 thousand million francs raised in a single year, only 620 millions had actually been invested in the region; (3) An authentic Breton agricultural policy must include the passing of a law to regulate the accumulation of land and to facilitate the entry into agriculture of young farmers; (4) A more solid fisheries policy would improve circuits of distribution; (5) State investment in the tertiary sector in Brittany was essential to absorb the labour resources being 'released' by industry, along with state-financed incentives to produce further industrial decentralization in favour of the region.⁴³ These proposals were accompanied by a virulent critique 'social democracy' practiced by the government and the 'chit-chat of the politico-technocrats and our impotent local politicians'.⁴⁴

The UDB, in organizing the demonstration, pursuing the strategy referred to by Nicolas of attempting to develop close links with the immediate economic difficulties experienced at the grass-roots level. The inability to achieve credibility in this respect was shown by the turnout for the demonstration against regional unemployment – 300 protesters. The failure was echoed in relations with the government, when ministers failed to receive a UDB delegation to discuss the development plan early in 1985. As a result, the UDB implemented its threat not to give way to the Socialists at the second ballot of the 1985 departmental elections and relations reached a new low. These developments took place against a background of continuing internal

⁴³ Ibid. n-5, pp. 80-82.

⁴⁴ M. McDonald, *We are not French: Language, Culture and Identity in Brittany*, (London, Routledge, 1990), pp. 171-172.

disarray. In January 1985, the leaders of the dissident Leon federation of the party were finally expelled. The decision was only taken after a delay of six months, which attested to the reluctance of the leadership to proceed to this ultimate sanction against prominent figures in the Breton movement, such as Rene L Hostis, President of *Divan*, the organization, which had been so dynamic in its promotion of nursery schools in the Breton language. It was clear, however, that the UDB was resorting to the proto-Stalinist reflex, which for so long had characterized its internal workings when the authority of the leadership was questioned.

With its credibility attacked from without and within, the UDB began to embark, in the aftermath of the 1985 departmental elections, upon a new strategy as an alternative to the now moribund alliance with the French left. In an editorial in its April edition, *Le Peuple Breton* began to promote the theme of uniting all elements and organizations which had 'comparable aspirations' for the future of the Breton people in preparation for the regional elections now set for 1986. These potential partners would include 'progressive, ecologist, cultural and trade union forces'. The preoccupation, with the need to re-establish contact with grass-roots opinion and discontent, was thus given concrete expression in the attempt to create a new political consensus in Brittany between the alienated, the disenchanted and the disenfranchised trade union, cultural and political activists. However, by alienating small organizations, the Socialists had created the conditions under which such organizations could come together and present a united front. The classic forces of Left have left vacant a space in the political arena. It is up to us to occupy it before the legislative and regional elections of 1986'.⁴⁵ The party proceeded, on the basis of its new strategy, to make overtures, not only towards the ecologists and small left-wing groups in Brittany, but also towards other elements in the Breton movement. In a key phrase, Henri Gourmelon, emphasizing the need for unity, revealed the desperation of the UDB in its fight

⁴⁵ Ibid. pp. 177-179.

for survival, when he declared that the party was ready to seek alliance at local level, 'even if certain elements of our analysis have to be questioned. The great strength of the UDB since its inception, and especially since the adoption of democratic centralism in 1970, had always been its attempt at rigorous analysis and vigorous discipline. This, as we have seen, has not always endeared the party to its members and supporters, but it was crucial factor in the emergence of the UDB as infinitely more successful in terms of ideological and political impact than any previous emanation from the Breton movement. This it should consider such a compromise in its basis position is a measure of the low ebb to which its fortunes had sunk.

In 1985, an analysis in *West European Politics*, argued that, in the main, 'the dialectic of unity through diversity' underpinning Socialist policy towards the regions and cultural minority had created a real possibility for the re-incorporation of the more moderate elements [of the ethnic minority movements] – representing the majority – into the mainstream of political life. The author's main contention was that 'the Socialist strategy of drawing the alienated back into the fold has been largely successful. In the case of Breton movement, however, it would appear that the forward progression implicit in the term 'dialectic' has been markedly absent in the 1980s, as disillusionment, despair and desperation have grown and the movement has receded (far from the mainstream) towards fragmentation, disarray and impotence. A record low in the fortunes of the movement was reached at the regional elections, called at the very last possible moment by the government to coincide with the parliamentary elections of March 1986. The performance was inferior to the most pessimistic predictions, with a share of the vote of 1.51 per cent. The UDB, with its characteristic lucidity, analysed the disaster as follows: 'These elections reveal the fundamental difficulty for a "different Left" to exist in competition with the Socialist Party, which at present benefits from the image as the only effective barrier against the Right. This analysis remains valid.'⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Ibid. 181-184.

Thus the Breton movement had returned to square one, in a situation apparent as weak as that before the UDB was launched to become the most successful organization in the history of the Emsav.

The 1990's saw the emergence of a more virulent form of dissent. All along, the struggle by the Bretons to gain recognition had retained something of a Quixotic, folkloric nobility. It had an immense that had retained its uniqueness that derived success in not harming innocents despite scores of symbolic bombings. But that clean record was broken on April 24, 1994. When the Breton Revolutionary Army bombed the Mc Donald restaurant in the Breton town of Que'vert. Subsequently another bomb was discovered at the central post office in the regional capital Rennes. Also, the Berton militants have blasted standard targets like administrative offices, police precincts and utility installations, as well as more. Politically personalised sites in the hometowns of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin.⁴⁷ The extreme leftist politics of the original Becton ideology can be seen to be fusing with a newfound penchant for violence and a propensity to blame their social woes on the Americanisation of France. The idea of a totally free Brittany may have watered down. Most Breton leaders feel that for the immediate future they must channel their campaign into economic and cultural action instead of allowing the proponents of militant action to parade their bloody assault with the token of neo-tribalism.

⁴⁷ Time Europe, vol: 155, no.17, May 1, 2000, www.timeeurope.org.

Chapter IV

The Corsican Scenario: Minority Ethnicity Confronts The French State

The French Presence In Corsica

The first major French involvement in the island's history was in 1738, when Genova was obliged to seek the aid of Louis XV to quell a Corsican uprising. Louis had no designs on the island himself, but he was not keen, for strategic reasons, to let it fall into the hands of any other power, so the expedition, which he sent, had the aim, not of conquering the island, but of forcing an accommodation between the Genoans and the local inhabitants. The French forces withdrew in 1740, but by that time the Corsicans were no longer willing to accept the simple return of Genoan domination. Indeed the memory of the cruelty and misery of the Genoan domination has no doubt been significant in more recent times in stiffening the resolve of the Corsicans never to be 'Italian', despite the close affinities with the Peninsula in linguistic and religious terms.¹ The Treaty of Worms, signed in 1743, effectively divided Europe into two power blocks. Genoa reluctantly had to choose France as a permanent ally. Under that alliance, another French expedition was sent to Corsica, at the request of the Genoans in 1747, to subdue the local population. The commander of the forces was the Marquis de Cursay, the benevolence of whose 'occupation' contrasted so vividly with the normal pattern of Genoan administration that the enthusiasm of a 'French Party' was at once engendered. De Cursay carried out a programme of construction work, building bridges and establishing ports, and brought to the island a standard of administration, which it had not previously enjoyed. At the Genoans' request, the French left Corsica

¹ Robert Ramsay, *The Corsican Time-Bomb*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1983), pp.2-3.

in 1753 and the Corsicans began seriously to struggle for independence.² After the Seven Years' War France decided on a longer-term occupation of the island; the international right to do so was obtained under the Second Treaty of Compiègne, signed in 1765.

The whole issue of Corsica's constitutional position was thrown into the melting pot in the Revolutionary period. As in metropolitan France, it was a time of uncertainty, division and sudden reversals of fortunes. In 1790 the way ahead must have seemed relatively clear to the majority of Corsicans. Paoli, having been feted in Paris, where he addressed the Constituent Assembly, returned to the island where he was elected President of the Departmental Directorate and Commander in Chief of the National Guard by a Consulte assembled at Orezza. His dream of a distinctive Corsican Constitution, backed by the protection of a France, which had itself, in theory at least, a constitutional monarchy, seemed to be realisable. Two years later the picture (and European history) had changed dramatically. Louis XVI had been beheaded, Paoli had been made the scapegoat for a disastrous French attack on Sardinia, which had been decided on, in October 1792, by the Committee of National Defence and the young Napoleon had vaulted from Corsica on to the national stage.

It was the Napoleonic *legend* almost more than the Napoleonic regime, which cemented Corsica to France. By the 1840s when Mazzini tried to include Corsica in the movement towards Italian unity, his message of the *Risorgimento* fell on deaf ears - despite the fact that since the Bourbon restoration the island had been the object of governmental neglect.³ The First World War was catastrophic for Corsica. Popularly the loss of men in the Great War is put at 20,000-30,000. Emigration was carried forward on its own momentum. The later waves of emigration tended to be less exclusively

² Ibid, p.4-5.

³ J. Heyward, *The One and Indivisible French Republic*, (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1973), pp.29-33.

emigres of officialdom' and contained more people destined to join the urban proletariat of metropolitan France than white-collar workers. The global effect of this outward flow is impossible to establish with accuracy in a region where local statistics have been unreliable. However, on the basis of births and deaths figures, that from its highest point of around 273,000 in 1881, the Corsican population had dropped by a massive 100,000 by the Nineteen Forties.⁴

The military tradition in Corsica and the disproportionately large number of Corsicans in government service of one form or another had forged ever stronger links of loyalty and identification between the island and mainland France and in the First World War there had been no question in the minds of either Corsicans or *continentaux* (mainland Frenchmen) about the sharing, by the Corsicans, of the national burden the sacrifice. Mussolini's overall strategy was to win prestige for his regime by territorial expansion and colonial conquest, it is not surprising that Corsica should have featured on his list of territorial claims. By 1938 the Fascist press was calling for the annexation of Corsica, *terra italianissima*. The Corsican response was an emotional wave of French patriotism culminating in 1938 in the public swearing of the famous Oath of Bastia by thousands of the local population, led by Monsieur Ferracci, President of the War Veterans Association (*Anciens Combattants*) and the Mayor of Bastia, Hyacinthe de Montera.⁵

Corsican occupation and liberation

By 1940, after the rapid invasion by the Germans of northern France and the Armistice, the Vichy administration under Petian had become the legal government of the island. As de Gaulle, in exile in London, began to build up an attentive listening public with his Free French broadcasts, his message that battles had been lost but in the end the victory would be won, struck a

⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *The Unexpected Rebellion: Ethnic Activism in Contemporary France*, (New York, University Press, 1980), pp.67-69.

⁵ Ramsay, no.1, p.18.

responsive chord in Corsica and in early 1942 several groups of the Resistance began to form. General Giraud had become, with de Gaulle, co-chairman of the French Committee of National Liberation and the Resistance leaders reported to him in Algiers. Operation 'Vesuve' began in mid-September 1943. It was spearheaded by a hundred members of the *Bataillon de choc* under General Gambiez, who were put ashore from the submarine *Casabianca*. In all, the Free French forces eventually numbered 6,500 and, while the local forces added another 10,000 these were largely untrained and badly equipped. The expedition was completed by a token force of 400 American marines. The actual battle of Corsica lasted less than a month - from 9 September to 4 October 1943. Its importance in strictly military terms is difficult to assess, but its psychological and political significance were considerable at national and even international level.

On 4 October the last Germans left Bastia and Corsica had become 'the first French *département* to be liberated', as de Gaulle emphasised when he few into Ajaccio the very next day for a tour of the island. Ecstatically received everywhere he went, his simple message was the same: 'patriotic' Corsica had displayed traditional courage in achieving her liberation; this was an example for the rest of the nation. For their part, the Corsican leaders of all shades of political opinion did not hesitate to couple de Gaulle's name with the great Corsican heroes of the past - Paoli and Napoleon.⁶ Questions about the state of Corsican agriculture, the rate of emigration, or the development island's infrastructure all paled into insignificance beside this key emotional identification and it is perfectly understandable that Corsican preoccupations should have centred in 1943, and for the remaining wars years, on emotional and national issues. Corsican identification with France was never higher than at the moment of the Liberation. Local pride in having shown the rest of France the way to freedom and in having been so closely associated with the hero, de

⁶ Ibid, pp.21-23.

Gaule - who succeeded in consolidating his standing as Leader of Free France thanks to the Corsican military operation - was intense.

Demands for economic improvement

It was not until the early nineteen-sixties that the Corsicans seriously began to take stock of their economic and social position and to make demands of the French Government. The reasons for this 'self-awakening' were numerous. Perhaps the most important factor was that the colonial era was drawing to a close and this had a disproportionately greater impact on Corsica than elsewhere in France. At the same time, as the Second World War receded into history, there was a general change of mentality throughout Europe from the old super-patriotism to more economic and social preoccupations. This change in attitude came more slowly in Corsica, but it did eventually come. Thirdly, by the nineteen-sixties there was a rising level affluence throughout Europe, including France, which had not been matched in Corsica. When 'exiles' returned on holiday from the continent it was obvious to the resident Corsicans that they were enjoying a higher standard of living than that obtainable on the island. The growing importance of the mass media also played an important part in opening up Corsican thinking to the outside world and in fuelling materialistic aspirations. There was a growing feeling that the island had been neglected and specific issues, such as a threat in 1960 to the island's railway, gave sharpened focus to this realisation.

One of the main complaints was about the low level of employment opportunities on the island. For although unemployment levels were never more than a few percentage points above the national average, this fact masked two important factors - an extremely high emigration rate and appreciably lower activity rates. No official statistics exist on emigration from the island, but the Corsicans were very aware of the extent of what is still today referred to

as the *diaspora*, many families having more 'exiled' than insular members.⁷ Wage levels, too, were lower in Corsica. Even though up to 1972 official statistics in this sphere amalgamated those of the island with the more prosperous Provence-Cote d'Azur, hourly pay rates over, for example, the period 1965-74 rose by 304.3%, as against 309.2% for Languedoc-Rousillon and 310.6% for the country generally. The nineteen-sixties also saw a gradual evolution of demands for a general improvement in the island's economic position, and for recognition of the special handicaps, which Corsica faced, to the emergence of more overtly political movements, which began to focus on demands of a *regionalist* nature. These eventually went far beyond the purely economic sphere and for the first time touched on the island's institutional structures, thus indirectly involving a consideration of the French Constitution.

The initial impetus came from a group of what might loosely be called 'concerned citizens' who had no particular sectional axe to grind and certainly no party political platform. They included local businessmen and professional people, and local journalists, notably Paul Silvani, took the lead. The movement was called 'Le mouvement du 29 novembre'. The implication was therefore that in terms of benefiting from that membership, Corsica was not yet fully integrated into the French State; there was, however, no trace of anti-French feeling in the movement. The issue which brought the Movement of 29 November together in Ajaccio was a renewed threat to the island's railway. Given the mountainous terrain of the island and the extremely poor state of the roads, this railway, which ran on an axis Ajaccio-Bastia with a branch line to Calvi, was a vital but costly link in the island's communication and was seen as an important factor in its economy.⁸

The island's transport links with the mainland were another constant bone of contention. The type of vessels used on the routes, their capacity and

⁷ Charles Tilly, *Coercion Capital and European States A.D. 1990-1992* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1992), pp.54-59.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp.71-77.

the frequency of the services were considered to be inadequate and the freight and passenger tariffs were considered to be an extremely onerous burden for Corsica to carry without State help. The Movement of 29 November acted as a ginger group, alerting public opinion to the issues involved, organising 'round tables' to bring together elected representatives and commercial interests, and attempting to put pressure on the Government to pay more attention to the economic and development needs of island.

The development of Agriculture

SOMIVAC, a semi-state body, was set up in 1957 with the aim of developing agriculture through the making available of loans and the provision of additional amenities of agricultural significance, such as water supplies, irrigation schemes, rural electrification and the improvement of roads access. The new body was soon under considerable pressure from all sides to show results. One of the principal areas on which SOMIVAC concentrated its efforts was the Eastern Plain. In ancient times this Plain had been used by the Romans for the growing of wheat, but it had never been developed agriculturally in modern terms by the Corsicans, whose traditional sectors were animal husbandry, particularly the breeding of mountain goats and pigs, using chestnuts as a primary feedstuff; the production of lices; and wine production of medium quality. Even after the malarial swamps in the areas had been disinfected by the Allied troops in 1943 there was little local initiative taken to make use of the thereby enhanced land resource and much of it remained as unbroken *maquis*.

The beginning of the SOMIVAC operations coincided with the French withdrawal from Algeria and the repatriation of the *pieds noirs* (literally 'black feet'), the descendants of the French settlers who had colonised the country in the nineteenth century. Many of these, particularly those who had been land-owners and who had been compensated for their loss of property, sought opportunities to settle in the south France and Corsica, where the climate and

general conditions were closest to those they had been used to in North Africa. The first of the *colons*, many of whom had family connections with Corsica, arrived in 1958 and over the following six years their total number rose to around 17,000. First, the *pieds noirs* were offered advantages, which were denied to native Corsicans. There is no doubt an element of truth in this, since SOMIVAC, by insisting that the individual entrepreneur would have to invest a minimum of 60,000 francs of his own money, put participation in the new development beyond the reach of most local small farmers.

The second major area of complaint against the development of the Eastern Plain by the *pieds noirs* was that by concentrating on quantity in wine production (cheap wines for blending purposes) they were destroying the reputation and brand image of the established Corsican wines, which, broadly speaking, occupied a place about the middle of the market in terms of quality. Such a complaint is certainly justified, though it could be argued that in terms of the Corsican economy overall at the time the emphasis on quantity was the better bet; however, the political dimension was once again that it was the outsiders who stood to gain the natives who stood to lose. The third main complaint against a *pieds noirs* implantation was an extension of the second and was to prove the most explosive. It related to the questionable methods employed by some of the new agricultural entrepreneurs. They were able, within a very short time, to achieve vastly improved yields due partly to mechanisation and the efficient use of plant on a flat terrain which let itself to that type of 'industrial farming'.⁹

Emergence of Corsican interest-groups

In the early nineteen-sixties most of the umbrella organizations, such as that of the '29 November' movement did not call into question existing political and administrative structures; nor did they have a clear political focus. During

⁹ Ramsay, n.1, pp.35-40.

the nineteen-sixties, however, the amorphous protest movements began to give way to groupings which were ready to put forward comprehensive analyses of the Corsican situation and detailed programmes for change including structural change. The most distinctly ideological group to emerge was the I'Union Corse l'Avenir, which was founded in June 1963 by Charles Santoni and Dominique Alfonsi. They engaged in a series of activities aimed at stimulating new political thought on the island. Their primary audience was the youth of the island, who were in any case beginning to resent the necessity of emigration. Summer schools were organised and as well as topics such as the island's transport links and the general economic situation, which were as we have seen being debated by other groups at the time, these meetings dealt with regional planning and development and the need for Corsican as a language to benefit from the Deixonne Law of 1951 which would give it recognition as a 'regional language'.¹⁰

The other main group which wished to pursue action beyond the piecemeal demands of the early 'Round Table' meetings was centred on the brothers Max and Edmond Simeoni (both doctors in Bastia) and Paul-Marc Seta, who were the driving force in the Committee of Studies for the Defence of Corsican Interest (Comite d'Etudes et de Defense des Interest de la Corse or CEDIC). The two groups came together in July 1966 in a meeting in Corte, the ancient capital of the island, which they labelled the Regionalist Convention of Young Corsica. This attracted over 500 participants drawn from all levels of Corsican society and while there was widespread agreement on what might be called the diagnosis of the island's problems, there was a discernible difference in emphasis in the action recommended by the respective organising groups: SEDIC propounded a policy of demanding for the island more economic aid and more fiscal protection, while Charles Santoni and his followers clearly wished to 'politicise' the situation to a much greater extent and to go beyond the purely economic arguments: 'Development is something which surpasses

¹⁰ Ibid, pp.41-43.

simply economic growth. It can only take place if it is linked to social progress, was his formulation. The present colonial relationship between mainland France and Corsica would, he argued, have to be changed, and Corsican society with it.

At a Congress at Cateraggio on 3 September, which was billed as representing 'the joining of the great regionalist battle', the CEDIC group formed themselves into the Corsican Regionalist Action ('l'Action Regionalist Corse' - ARC). The statutes (i.e. the constitution) of **this new movement** are revealing. For despite the fact that CEDIC had been largely economic in its pre-occupations, the Preamble of the ARC constitution presented the Corsican problem as a *minority* problem. France was faced with the Corsican problem the day she decided to make the island a *department* like all the rest. France has never been able to find a satisfactory solution to the problem, because she has clung to the principles of an obtuse centralism and closed her eyes to the obvious facts-facts which are geographical, historical, cultural and ethnic. The Government had responded to the pressure to do something for the Corsican economy by the creation, in October 1966, of the Inter-Ministerial Mission for Planning and Equipment in Corsica, under the chairmanship of Victor Mosca, and by the setting up of the Economic Expansion Fund for Corsica. The island's three deputies had pressed for a locally administered fund, but the heavy preponderance of central government representatives on the management committee - of the nineteen members twelve were to represent 'interested Ministries' - and the fact that M. Mosca was to be the fund's director greatly diminished the attractiveness of the fund in the eyes of the local people.

This was a clear example of central government throwing away a political advantage which was there to be exploited, for had the responsibility for economic development been given in larger measure to Corsicans themselves in 1967 the Government would have gained considerable political credit; later the administration would have to make greater concession in terms of development programmes, but the record of government action in Corsica in

the nineteen-sixties and seventies is generally one of 'too little, too late'.¹¹ In 1968 the issue of regionalisation assumed major political importance on the national plane, as President de Gaulle put forward his ideas for reform. This naturally gave increased impetus to the regionalist movement in Corsica. In a televised statement on 11 March 1969, he followed this up by announcing that proposals for reform aimed at giving a large measure of regional self-management would be put to the electorate in a referendum. De Gaulle lost the referendum, which was held on 27 April 1979. The results were: 10,901,753 in favour; and 12,007,102 against. In Corsica the vote was P: 55,879 in favour; and 47,351 against. This divergence from the national pattern was probably as much due to the rise of regional thinking in the island as to local Gaullism.¹²

In the wake of the referendum defeat and the consequent change of President from de Gaulle to Pompidou, the Government opted for a regional policy, which was at best gradualist, and which resulted in 1972 in a Law, which contained a much weaker form of regionalisation than de Gaulle's Draft Bill of 1969. In the intervening years Corsican regionalism had, however, moved on a further stage. When the ARC organised a 'Round Table' on the subject at Corte on 15 September 1968, the leading politicians, including the two principal clan leaders, Francois Giacobbi (Radical of the Left) and Dr Jean-paul de Rocca-Serra (Gaullist) felt obliged to attend. The *communiqué* issued at the conclusion of the deliberations read as follows:

“Believing that Corsica constitutes in itself a geographical entity, an economic unity and a territorial collectivity, and that, on the other hand, the fact that it is an island prevents it from benefiting from the influence of a metropolitan growth centre, the participants in the Round Table held in the Town Hall of Corte on 15 September 1968, unanimously recommend that

¹¹ Derek W. Urwin, in 'Perspectives on Conditions of Regional Protest and Recommendation' in S. Rokken/ D.W. Urwin (eds.), *The Politics of Territorial Identity*, (London, Delhi, Sage, 1982), pp.425-426.

¹² Ramsay, n.1, pp.47-54.

Corsica be constituted as a separate regional area and be given its own statute.”¹³

Autonomy calls

The period 1970-75 saw a swift build-up of tension in the Corsican situation, which climaxed in violence and widespread unrest in August 1975. At that time a gulf opened up between the basic thinking of the French administration on the one hand and that of the islanders - principally, of course, the autonomists, but also the population at large - on the other, as to the very nature of Corsican society and its future. To the earlier demands for a better economic deal, better transport links, a fair electoral system and special regional institutional structures there was added a new dimension, namely a rapidly growing fear that the Corsican identity itself was in danger of disappearing within a short space of time.

For a considerable time the authorities did not take this new factor sufficiently into account and indeed, in attempting to improve the island's economic position, their planning actually exacerbated Corsican fears, with the result that regionalist demands changed into demands for autonomy or 'Home Rule' (*autonomie*). A turning point was the publication of the *Schema d'Amenagement* (Planning Document) in August 1971, which mapped out the objectives to be pursued in the period up to 1985. The *Schema*, which was drawn up jointly, by the '*Mission Inter-Ministerielle*' and the '*Mission Regionale*', laid down five basic objectives to be put into effect by the Sixth National Plan- (1) In agricultural, to renew the traditional raising of livestock and to consolidate the modern sector of wine and citrus fruits production on the coastal plains. (2) To develop the tourist potential of the island and, as a first step, to triple the hotel capacity. (3) To study ways of creating the maximum number of complementary jobs necessary to reinforce the economy and to

¹³ Peter, Savigear, 'Corsica' in 'Michael Watson (ed.), *Contemporary Minority Nationalism*' (London, Routledge, 1990), pp.86-89.

provide a better employment balance. (4) To preserve the natural environment. (5) To link, as far as possible, the coastal areas with the interior.¹⁴

Another important incident was the publication of *Main basse sur une ile* ('Pillage of an island') in 1971. Many later activists and indeed independent observers were to refer back to *Main basse sur une ile* as a key work which stimulated a wide public fundamentally to reappraise the whole question of the Corsican identity and of the relationship between the island and France. The basic thesis of the book was that whereas for generations Corsicans had played a leading part in France's colonisation of other countries, in Africa, Asia and elsewhere - which helped make them feel more French than the French - they had closed their eyes to the fact that the French State had colonised their own island, by building up a link of dependency and at the same time exploiting Corsica's only major resource, namely her manpower. The authors put forward what they claimed was the basis 'for the struggle to achieve the total decolonisation of Corsica'. They identified five main areas of action- (1) To stop the process of land passing into 'outside' hands. To this end the authors proposed that the Corsica Region should have the right to buy back 'alienated' property. (2) To establish democratic organs of management and planning so that the Corsican Region could properly control and develop economic resources. Nationalised organisations and those non-democratic organizations such as SOMIVAC and SETCO should be devolved to the Region and placed under democratic control, as should the funds hitherto administered by central government or its appointed agencies. (3) To assure the commercial freedom of Corsica in its outside trading contacts. To this end the monopoly of shipping and air links should be abolished, a suitable revision of customs tariffs should be undertaken and a Commercial Office should be set up to revise the existing capitalist trading structures. (4) The struggle for the setting up of the University of Corsica should be pursued. The new University should be a democratic university, dealing with real practical problems, including those of colonialism,

¹⁴ Ramsay, n.1, pp.58-60.

profit and industrialisation. It should also be an important element in the struggle to avoid cultural decay. Above all, it should be an important political factor in the general struggle against colonialism, acting as an accelerator in the process of politically mobilising the Corsican people. (5) In order to achieve true de-colonisation, it would be necessary to move in the direction of a regional socialism, which was both collectivist and Corsican. In practical terms this would involve industrial de-colonisation by means of the build up of new industry in Corsica; the taking back into public ownership of large estates which would be re-distributed to those who worked the land (small and medium agriculture holdings would be left with their present owners); and the de-colonisation of tourism by the creation of a collective tourist industry in the region.¹⁵

The foregrounding of the cultural trope

As Corsican fears began to grow about the future of their cultural identity, new groups, who often had links with the political activists, were formed with the twin objectives of alerting Corsican opinion to the dangers facing the local culture and of fostering that culture in all its aspects, especially the language. One of the pioneering language groups was that of *Scola Corsa* (The Corsican School), which was founded in 1970 by Jean-Baptiste Stromboni with the aim of alerting public opinion to the dangers of allowing the native language to be submerged by French. The organisation launched a publicity campaign early in 1972 on the subject of the Deixonne law and when the two large-circulation local newspapers (which were local editions of the mainland *Nice-Matin* and *Le Provençal*) gave this campaign scant coverage the cause was, predictably, taken up by *Arritti* and also by *Kyrn*. Bi-lingual posters appeared throughout the island encouraging Corsicans to speak their native language as widely as possible and to demand Deixonne status for it from the French State. One feature of this reassertion of the Corsican identity was a

¹⁵ Ibid. pp.60-63.

renewed emphasis on specifically Corsican emblems and symbols. The ancient Corsican flag, which featured *La tete de Maure* ('The Moor's Head') was prominently displayed at cultural and political gatherings at the expense of the French Tricolour and the singing of *U Columbu* ('The Dove') and the old Corsican Hymn *Diu vio salve Regina* ('Hail to the Virgin;') became part of the public ritual at many events.¹⁶

Formation of the Native Corsican Liberation Front (*Fronte Paesanu Corsu di Liberazioni*)

Violence by stealth - in the form of bombings - increased in the autumn of 1973 and a new clandestine group calling itself the Front *Paesanu Corsu di Liberazioni* (the Native Corsican Liberation Front) published a manifest on 23 October entitled *Ultimatum to the French Government*. This demanded- (1) The expulsion of all *Colons* from the Eastern Plain. (2) A distribution amongst Corsican farmers of the lands attached to the penitentiary at Casabianda. (3) The replacement by Corsican personnel of all Civil Servants from continental France and the obligatory teaching of the Corsican language from nursery school onwards.¹⁷

By 1974 Corsica had become a 'national problem' for the French Government. The growing challenge to the Government's authority presented by the bomb outrages perpetrated by the FPCL could not be ignored by the administration, especially since that underground organisation mounted a successful publicity coup by holding a press conference in the cathedral of Ajaccio on 8 January to put their policies, through the press, to the community at large. These policies amounted to a demand that the Corsican people be recognised as a nation 'according to the criteria of the United Nations'. The response from the Government to these two challenges was to show more vigour in attempting to remove genuine grievances and to fulfil legitimate local

¹⁶ Colin Williams, *National Separatism*, (Cardiff, University Press, 1981), pp.217-221.

¹⁷ Michel Labro, *The Corsican Question*, (Paris, Entente, 1977), pp.139-144.

aspirations, while, on the other hand, dealing firmly with those who resorted to violence.

On the political front - which embraced economic, cultural and constitutional issues - the authorities faced some severe fundamental difficulties. The first was that by any objective standards, the economic problems of the island were of the deep-seated nature and unlikely to be improved perceptibly by any short-term measures. Second, and this increasingly emerged as the hub of the matter, given the unitary character of the French State and the decision taken at national level in the early nineteen-seventies as to the limits to be placed on devolution, the Government had already drawn a *nec plus ultra* line well short of the constitutional and institutional expectations of even the more conservative Corsican elements.¹⁸

The 1974 Presidential election

During the presidential election campaign the three principal candidates, Giscard d'Estaing (Union pour la Democratie Francaise), Chaban Delmas (Union des Democratres pour la Ve Republique - i.e. Gaullist) and Mitterand (Parti Socialiste) visited the island to seek support. Significantly, all three devoted the bulk of their speeches to the Corsican situation rather than to national issues. Giscard d'Estaing's key words were 'regionalism' and 'insularity' and he envisaged 'a greater degree of *decentralisation* of the economic and democratic life of our country' to ensure, *inter alia*, that Corsica was developed not *against* the Corsicans - a reference to the criticism levelled at the *Schema d'Amenagement* - but *with* them, and in many instances *by* them. But although he touched on the economic and social problems of the day - agriculture, employment, the tax regime, tourism and the creation of a university, he remained vague about any constitutional or institutional change. He went on to say that 'responsibility' presupposed that Corsicans would

¹⁸ Ibid, pp.151-153.

themselves be able to determine their future and decide on their own destiny, but he, too, refrained from offering any specific institutional proposals. Francois Mitterrand did not have detailed proposals either, but the tone of his statements appeared to go further than those of his opponents towards recognising what was undoubtedly the kernel of the Corsican political problem: he spoke of 'the right to be different' and of the need to preserve 'your cultural identity'. He placed these within his national policy of regionalism saying that he had no wish to see differences being artificially developed but that in regions, which, for historical or geographical reasons, wished to preserve their differences these should be respected.

The new President, after his victory, gave an interview to *Kyrn* and the text of the questions and answers were published in the magazine's issue in June 1974. Two questions and the answers given by Giscard d'Estaing were particularly significant in the context of the political climate in Corsica at that time. The first one was: "Do you think that those who claim for Corsica the status of internal autonomy within the framework of the French nation, in order to allow Corsica to protect its cultural identity and the special nature of its economy should be treated as separatists?" Giscard's reply was: "Clearly the answer must be 'No'. In general, I am in favour of decentralising decisions, since to me that is an essential element of liberty and the only means of encouraging individual initiatives. It seems to me in that sense important that Corsica's future should be fashioned *with* the Corsicans. As to the real separatists, they should have the courage to say precisely what they are, and courage is not a virtue, which has been rare in Corsica."

Demands for *de jure* recognition of the Corsican people

It was precisely to counter the above-mentioned philosophy of the state that the ARC produced their policy document, *Autonomia*, in July 1974.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ramsay, n. 1, pp.80-83.

Echoing *Main basse sur une ile*, *Autonomia* described the background to the Corsican problem in terms of French colonialism. The document depicted the French State historically as forcing Corsica and its people into a position of dependence, with the run-down of its traditional industries and agricultural economy. The post-war efforts at development in the agricultural and tourist fields were also seen as being deliberately carried out *against* Corsican interests. In the cultural sphere France was depicted as pursuing a policy of repression, particularly as regards the Corsican language, in an effort to reduce the distinctive Corsican culture to the level of the *folklorique*. The conclusion drawn by the document is that the ultimate goal of the French authorities was to pursue their current policies, backed up by the colonial apparatus of the CRS, Gendarmes Mobiles, and 'colonial judges', to eliminate the Corsican people and allow the further capitalist exploitation of the island.

As for remedies, *Autonomia* took as its starting point the need for France to give *de jure* recognition of the existence of the Corsican people. *Autonomia* set out the range of functions and powers to be devolved to Corsica under the terms of internal autonomy. These proposals did provide for the French Government to be represented by a *Delegue*, but otherwise, with the exception of Foreign Affairs and National Defence, the whole range of Government powers in the economic, social and cultural spheres would pass to local control. As to the institutional structure envisaged by *Autonomia*, the authors proposed a Legislative Assembly elected on the basis of universal suffrage and proportional representation. This would be complemented by an Economic Social and Cultural Council, not very different from the existing CODEC, and largely consultative in nature. It proposes that Corsica should become bilingual in every aspect of life. For example its own radio and television station would broadcast in French and Corsican on a fifty/fifty basis. The creation of a University of Corsica was a corner stone of the ARC cultural policies.

On the subject of economic development it is not surprising, given the ARC's implacable opposition to the policies pursued by the French

Government since 1957, that *Autonomia* proposes a complete re-think of existing policies. It is here that the document contains a basic contradiction. On the one hand it acknowledges that even after internal autonomy had been granted, Corsica would still be basically tied to whatever form of economy was prevailing at any given time in France: 'It would be inconceivable to have an autonomous Corsica with a Marxist economy within a liberal France, or vice versa.' On the other hand the document proposes what it calls 'a fundamental revolution' in the social, cultural *and* economic system. The basis of the ARC policies would be 'to direct Corsica towards community forms of development'.²⁰

The crisis in Aleria

The lack of sensitivity of the French government led to an increase in tension and some sort of 'explosion' was inevitable. The government's best chance of holding the line was the 'Libert Bou Mission' and the drawing up of a Charter, which would catch the imagination of the population and convince them that their problems were understood by Paris and that there would be sustained action to solve them. It must be said that whatever chance the Bou policy had was seriously reduced, not so much by Government decisions as by bad public relations.

The first drafts of the Charter were ready in the month of June and were submitted to the Regional Council and the Economic and Social Committee. Its aim was 'to set out the consensus opinion in the island as to how best the requirements of the present might be reconciles with the fundamental values of the past'. There were three main sections in the Charter- (1) Ways of achieve a more balanced economy. (2) The human aspects of development (training, the environment, the need to preserve Corsican culture). (3) A schedule of eleven specific capital projects, which the authors considered to be essential in the

²⁰ Ibid, pp.84-87.

short term. The ARC had declined Bou's invitation to take part in the preparatory working parties on the Charter and they denounced the eventual document as being 'in direct line from the *Schema*'. Yet there were many aspects of the Charter, in terms of diagnosis, general objectives and even detailed proposals, which were reminiscent of *Autonomia*.

The remedies prescribed in the three spheres of agriculture, tourism and industry were also in some respects close to the ARC proposals. Limits should be placed on mass tourism, and instead a *toursime des villages* should be introduced to ensure a better harmony between the industry and local life and to enable more Corsicans to participate in its development. Ways of improving professional training and the financial structures of the sector were set out and the establishment of a Regional Committee for Tourism was suggested. As regards agriculture, the theme of the Government was that over-specialisation in wine production would have to be redressed, firstly by measures to shift the emphasis of production from quantity to quality and, secondly, by a developing other aspects of agriculture, such as citrus fruit production and sheep rearing. As for industrialisation, the Charter did little beyond list the characteristics of the ideal industries to be sited in Corsica - non-pollutant, integrated with the local surroundings and using local materials, processing agricultural products and export-based in nature - and expressed the view that financial inducements should be provided to attract outside investors.

On 11 July the Inter-ministerial Committee considered the Charter and the following day it was presented to the Government. There then occurred what in retrospect must be seen as an act of insensitivity on the part of the Government. Instead of endorsing the document as such and indicating how it was to be implemented, the Government simply 'took note' of it and, significantly, changed its title from the 'Charter' to 'Programme'.²¹ This led immediately to the Aleria crisis, which had its immediate sources in the

²¹ Labro, n.17, pp.177-189.

exposure of a wine scandal by the leaders of ARC. In some ways it was the sequel to the scandal of 1974 when the number of *pieds noirs* had been prosecuted. Several of the same group were involved in 1975 but this time the offences were essentially financially in nature. The key figure was M. Henri Depeille, who had been repatriated from Algeria in the early nineteen-sixties. He owned a vineyard of just under 200 hectares near Aleria and also traded as a wholesale wine merchant. He was thus, in the eyes of the autonomists, the archetypal *colon*.

The plan was put into action on the morning of 21 August with the peaceful occupation of the property. The Depeille family were allowed to unharmed. The administration looked upon the occupation of the Depeille property as a serious act and a challenge to the authority of the State. Later, at the resultant trial in 1976, officials were to explain that to the Prefect and the Minister of the Interior the great risk appeared to be that of allowing Simeoni, if he got away with the Aleria occupation, to escalate his activities in the future. Thus the publicity exercise had become a serious confrontation between the autonomists and the State.²² Ten members of the ARC group were charged with serious offences and on 27 August the Cabinet announced the dissolution of the ARC. This announcement sparked off trouble in Bastia that afternoon; serious rioting went on into the night, looting broke out and another CRS man was killed. In all nineteen people were injured and the city was in a state of siege until the following day.

On 28 August there was another sign of Government firmness - the criminal cases relating to Aleria were referred to the Cour de Surete de l'Etat - the State Security Court.

²² Ibid, pp.190-191.

Anti-autonomist violence

There were hopes by the turn of the year (1975-76) that the Aleria period and its aftermath might be followed by one of reflection and stability. At first it seemed that even the autonomists were concerned to lower the general temperature, but during 1976 the extreme elements in the anti-Government camp moved even beyond the 'democratic nationalism' which some autonomists had come to adopt in 1975 and launched what they called 'the final phase', namely that of armed struggle, in the battle against French colonialism. Despite a quiet beginning to the year, there were eventually some 300-bomb outrages between January and December, though no lives were lost. The level of violence showed how volatile the situation remained and the gradual emergence of groups prepared to use counter terrorism methods against autonomists raised the danger of the community at large being split and drawn into violent conflict.²³

Establishment of the Association of Corsican Patriots

On the political front, however, there did appear for some time to be a reduction in temperature, for when the leading members of the banned ARC formed themselves into a new movement, calling itself the *Associu di I Patarioti Corsi* (APC) the opening statements seemed calculated to pull back from the extreme positions towards which the ARC had rapidly been moving the previous year. The 'constituent assembly' of the new movement was held in Aleria on 1 February and attracted some 3,000 people. The demands contained - the Corsicanisation of public sector employment; more job opportunities for young people; better training facilities and the setting up of the university; the development of the Corsican language and; culture; the repossession of lands which had been given to 'colonial exploiters' - remained the same, as did the prime constitutional demand for internal autonomy. There

²³ Smith, n.1, pp.123-127.

were appeals for Corsican unity in the struggle to preserve the local identity and for Corsicans to pursue their political goals by peaceful means. Nothing much had changed between the ARC of August 1975 and the APC of February 1975 except the *tone*. This was, however, an important factor in a potentially explosive situation. The APC played no part in elections and their activities were concentrated almost exclusively on the campaign for the release of the 'Aleria prisoners'. In March it was announced that the trial would begin in Paris in mid-May.

Formation of the Corsican Nationalist Liberation Front (FLNC)

As the trial date approached there was a build-up of tension and a general fear of what might happen, should the accused receive stiff sentences. These fears were considerably heightened by a dramatic outbreak of bombing on the night of 4 May, with no fewer than twenty-one separate incidents, in Ajaccio, Bastia, Sartene, Porto Vecchio and other towns. The targets were public buildings, the property of *pieds noirs* and estate agents' offices. A bilingual pamphlet was issued on behalf of the new movement, the Front de Liberation Nationale Corse, which claimed responsibility for the attacks. The document stated that a decisive stage (that of armed struggle) had now been reached in the fight of liberty and that the FLNC were prepared to spearhead it. They put forward a six-point manifesto, demanding- (1) The recognition of the 'National Rights' of the Corsican people. (2) The removal of all instruments of colonialism - the army, the French administration and *colons*. (3) Setting up of a popular democratic government which would express the will and needs of all Corsican patriots. (4) The confiscation of colonial estates and property of tourist industry trusts. (5) The carrying out of an agrarian reform, to fulfil the aspirations of farmers, workers and intellectuals, and to rid the country of all forms of exploitation. (6) The right to self-determination for the Corsican people. (It was envisaged that after a transitional period of three years, during

which the administration would be divided between the 'nationalist forces' and the 'forces of occupation', the new Corsican Government would take over).²⁴

The verdicts were given on the afternoon of 22 June. Simeoni and his fellow accused were found not guilty on charges of murder, attempted murder and the taking of hostages, but the three leaders, Simeoni, Pierre Sicurani and Pierre Susini were found guilty of a breach of Article 314 of the Penal Code (the so-called *loi anti-casseur* or anti-wreckers law) by having indirectly caused the death of the two gendarmes; the rest were found guilty of complicity. The Court handed down the sentences which had been demanded by the *avocat general*, namely: Edmond Simeoni: five years imprisonment, two of them suspended; Pierre Susini and Pierre Sicurani: two years suspended sentence; Jean-Louis Andreani, Jean-Jacques Paoli, Jacques Fieschi, Alain Peraldi and Augustin Tirrolini, one year's suspended sentence; and Marcel Lorenzoni, sentenced (*in absentia*) to a four years' suspended prison sentence. There were immediately demonstrations in Paris by ARC supporters and in Ajaccio and Bastia, but these passed off peacefully.²⁵

On 13 November the affair took an ugly, but significant, turn. The Palm Beach Hotel at Calvi, which was owned by Pinelli, was the target for a major explosion, which destroyed the entire front of the building; almost simultaneously an aircraft belonging to the Aero Club de la Balagne, of which Pinelli was Chairman, was destroyed at the Santa Catalina Airport, while later the same night an incendiary device caused a resinous fire in the annex to the Palm Beach Hotel. This was by no means the first terrorist action carried out against those identified with autonomist or separatist causes, but it was certainly one of the most drastic and was claimed, by means of message passed to the *Agence France Presse* in Paris, by a group calling itself *l'Action Corse Francaise*.

²⁴ Ramsay, n.1, pp.118-119.

²⁵ Ibid, pp.121-122.

Formation of the Corsican People's Front (*Fronte di u Populu Corsu*)

This pressure forced autonomist movements of leftist tendencies, who made a determined effort in the early months of 1977 to unite. On 18 April it was announced that a new *Fronte di u Populu Corsu* had been formed. This was made up of the former *Partitu di u Populu Corsu per L'Autonomia* (PPCA); the *Consulta di Studenti Corsi* (CSC) (the union of Corsican students); the *Partitu Corsu per u Socialismu* (the Corsican Socialist Party - not to be confused with the French Socialist Party); some elements of the Anti-Repression Committee, led by Antoine Murati; some elements of the *Aunone di I Travagliadori Corsi Esilati* (Union of Exiled Corsican Workers), led by Jean Pierre Arrighi; and by some Communists who were dissatisfied with the Party's centralist and 'French nationalistic' outlook. All these groups had originally come together under an umbrella organisation called *Cumitati per a Salvezza di a Nazione* (Committee for the Salvation of the Nation). The *Cumitati* then formed itself into the *Fronte* on the basis of a *Chartre* or manifesto. This manifesto owed much to the policies of the former PPCA and, in particular, to the thinking of Dominique Alfonsi. It proclaimed the character of the *Fronte* as being 'nationalist and socialist' and repeated the PPCA line that the anti-colonial struggle and the class struggle largely overlapped in Corsica. The nationalism of the new *Fronte* was, however, even more assertive than before: the *Chartre* demanded 'the emancipation of the Corsican people' and proclaimed a commitment to achieve a recognition of 'the national rights of the Corsican people', stating specifically that this demand went far beyond a claim for the safeguarding of the cultural identity 'by means of an administrative regionalisation of a special stature'.²⁶ The *Fronte* was obviously moving closer to the position of the FLNC and Simeoni was faced with the problem of meeting this challenge.

²⁶ F. Pomponi, *History of Corsica* (Paris, Hachette, 1979), pp.141-145.

APC becomes Union of the Corsican People (*Unione di u Populu Corsu*) (UPC)

On 28 April APC announced their decision to restructure the Association on the lines of a political party. The number of its militants, or active party workers, was to be limited to 1500 and the Executive Council was to be replaced by a Political Bureau. To underline the fact that this metamorphosis was taking place the party was given a new name, the *Unione di u Populu Corsu*, and its first Congress was set for August in Furiani, on the outskirts of Bastia.²⁷ The new party, however, still did not commit itself to joining any electoral contests.

The comparative calm of the early months of 1977 appeared to justify the optimism and indeed there began to emerge a general feeling that perhaps after all peaceful change which could bring solutions was possible. Of those who looked to the French Left to bring a fundamental change in the situation also had increasing reason for hope during 1977. The 'direct action' extremists, of course, were not of this view and on both sides of the spectrum they began to step up their operations after the lull of the early months of the year. During April a number of attacks on targets associated with autonomists were claimed by a new group calling itself FRANZIA (Front d'Action Nouvelle Contre l'Independance et l'Autonomisme). FRANZIA (which means France in Corsican) seemed to be a more serious organisation, judging by the magnitude of its operations. It sent several Corsican journalists a tract, which proclaimed in slogan-like terms the movement's attachment to France and its opposition to the FLNC and all *independantistes*:

“Corsica is France. One Law, One Nation, One Parliament. The only possible negotiation is war. France will not leave Corsica any more than it will leave Brittany or Alsace. Therefore

²⁷ Ibid. pp.150-152.

anyone issuing communiqués emanating from the FLNC and all declarations by individuals openly advocating independence, whether the channel is the local press or not, will be exposing themselves to severe reprisals.²⁸

The FLNC replied with a daring raid on a military installation at Fort-Lacroix, near Bastia on 24 May, and at the beginning of June the waiting room at Bastia railway station was destroyed in a bomb blast attributed to the FLNC. On the night of 14 July they mounted a co-ordinated series of attacks, involving no fewer than twenty-seven targets, and on the eve of UPC's Congress at Furiani, the Front carried out its most costly raid, blowing up vital equipment at the television relay station at Serra di Pigno. The FLNC, by the sheer extent of the havoc, which it proved itself capable of creating, thus imposed itself upon the community as an important factor in the overall political situation, despite the fact that the police estimated the total membership of the organisation at that time at no more than two to three hundred.

Security drive against the FLNC

In the latter half of August 1977 there were signs that the Government and the local political establishment were becoming uneasy on account of the sharply rising trend in terrorist activity and the increasing extremism of some of the political views being expressed. On 19 August President Giscard d'Estaing called the two Prefects from Corsica to Paris for consultations and afterwards announced his intention to visit Corsica 'at an appropriate time'. The arrest of twenty-seven FLNC suspects at the end of May, some of them caught red-handed in the act of moving arms and explosives was viewed as the first real breakthrough against the *dynamiteros* and was particularly welcome to the police since it was made just one week before the visit of the President. The police had stumbled on an arms cache during the investigation of an

²⁸ Ramsay, n.1, pp.140-141.

ordinary burglary in the village of Cardo and their first arrests led to other suspects being picked up not only in Corsica, but in Nice, Paris and Lyons - twenty-seven in all. Some 300 people were questioned and sixty were detained for periods ranging from a few days to a few weeks for more intensive interrogation. But when the make-up of the alleged hard-core FLNC suspects was examined there were many uncomfortable aspects from the administration's point of view. For the group, mostly in their late twenties and early thirties, were neither the 'red revolutionaries' nor racketeers they had often been made out to be in popular rumour, but were rather a cross-section of the Corsican population - wine growers, teachers, shop-keepers, small businessmen, commercial travellers, builders and tradesmen.²⁹

Their previous political affiliations, in so far as they were known to have any also ranged right across the spectrum, from ex-ERC to the traditional Right. So the veil that had been lifted revealed an organisation so widespread in its geographical, political and family connections that any hopes which might have been cherished that it could be snuffed out in one or two operations were plainly groundless. The FLNC had become increasingly efficient in the military sense of the word, having mounted a spectacular attack on the NATO base at Solenara in the southeast on 14 January, during which they destroyed sophisticated radar equipment, as well as having carried out many minor bomb attacks. These continued after the June swoop and by the end of July the FLNC could claim eighty attacks over the previous two months. On the pro-French extreme FLNC's tactics were imitated by FRANZIA. The movement claimed responsibility for most of the attacks on autonomists. They claimed to have an island-wide following and that the election results of March had shown the silent majority to be with them in opposing autonomy. They threatened that if the Government did not deal with FLNC, they would themselves punish the separatists, who were, they claimed, known to them. The two clandestine extremes therefore posed a continuing background problem of violence, and

²⁹ Pomponi, n.26, pp.167-170.

the danger existed that the community might become seriously polarised on 'ethnic' lines or that more 'political' action might find its outlet through these ready-made terrorist activities if no other channels appeared to be open.

Presidential visit by Giscard d'Estaing, June 1978

President Giscard d'Estaing from 7 to 9 June provided the occasion for major policy pronouncements by the Government. His general message was that national solidarity would ensure that the policy of *favouring* the island's economic and social development would be continued; that Corsica's regional 'specificity' would be catered for - but in the same way as other regional differences within France. M. Joel Le Theule's (Transport Minister) visit was focused on the island's transport links and on the problems of providing adequate services at reasonable cost to reduce the handicap of insularity. He was able to point to the Government's financial commitment to territorial continuity, which had reached 253 million Francs per annum, and to improved timetables on Air France and Air Inter services which for the first time made possible working day trips to the continent from all the island's main centres. M. Jacques Barrot (Minister for Craft Workers) placed a fresh emphasis on the development of local craftsmanship and small units of production, as opposed to larger-scale industrial factory development as the best way forward in the drive to create more jobs in the island. The financial inducements available to the incoming industry was principally a Regional Development Premium of 25,000 francs per job up to 25% of the total fixed assets costs of the project concerned, plus some fiscal depreciation allowances and training grants) did not compare favourably with those being offered elsewhere in Europe, for example, in the Irish Republic.³⁰

The visit of M. Beullac, the Minister of Education, on 23 and 24 November 1978, was significant not so much because of what he had come to

³⁰ Ramsay, n.1, pp.151-155.

say as for the fact that the Corsican language lobby, with *Scola Corsa* in the vanguard, were able to mount greater demonstrations that had been seen in the island before, to protest against what they saw as the Government's wilful neglect of the language - an issue which in the late nineteen-seventies increasingly assumed political and not merely educational or cultural importance. Attention has already been drawn to the renewed interest in Corsican culture and the growing demands among many sections of the population, but principally the autonomists, that the local language be fostered, not least by the teaching of Corsican in schools. The basic facts of the language's cultivation under the policy of the Ministry of Education are that since the application of the Deixonne Law to Corsican in 1974 primary school children may, with the permission of their parents and the agreement of the teacher, receive one hour's tuition per week. In the secondary schools children may receive two hours tuition within the normal timetable and at senior level a further three hours, outside the normal school timetable. Clearly the supply was falling far short of the demand - and this situation was aggravated by the total lack of teacher training in the subject. But despite the essentially token nature of the French authorities' promotion of the Corsican language in the education field, interest in the island's language and cultural heritage continued to grow.

The *riacquistu*, or 'repossession' of the Corsican heritage, has several aspects, many of them interlocking, ranging from a renewed interest in the grammar and syntax of the language itself, to language teaching, popular songs in the traditional genres (such as the *paghjelli*, a type of narrative sung poem) the literature of the past and a new literary expression of contemporary Corsican life, to a philosophical interest in the language as a vehicle of the collective race memory and to the development of theories regarding the poetical use of language as instruments of colonisation or, conversely, ethnic defence. *Scola Corsa* was always in the forefront of campaigns to encourage the use of Corsican in everyday communication, starting with the home and school. It started its own 'total immersion' nursery school in *Loreto di Casinca*

and its successor body, *Caltura di Lingua Corsa*, opened a similar project, with the co-operation of the Municipal Council of Aleria in the spring of 1978 and planned to develop the idea throughout the island, as other Municipal Councils expressed an interest in the scheme.³¹

The powerful impact made by the Government in 1978 had made the notion of a constitutional break with the French State less palatable in terms of general popularity. Secondly, there was a need to differentiate them from the FLNC, whose violent actions continued to capture the headlines and whose fundamental policy was anti-French. It should, however, be recorded that in both wings of the autonomist movement there were not insignificant factions who despaired of progress within the French Republic and who believed that Corsican autonomy would ultimately have to be found in independence.

The UPC's 'Plan for Corsica'

The UPC meanwhile had been taking stock of their fortunes, which had perceptibly declined in 1978, with much smaller attendances at their summer activities and many desertions from the ranks of their militants. Like the FPC their leadership decided that there was a need to 'take their case to the people' in new and direct ways. One medium would be a series of documents '*Quaterni di L'Unione*' ('Quarterly documents of the Union') setting out the UPC's policy on issues of major concern to the people of Corsica. The first of these was published in March 1979, entitled *A Plan for Corsica (Project pour la Corse)*. As in the case of the FPC documents, there was no major innovatory element in this *Plan*; it was, rather, a restatement of known UPC policies. In the first chapter, 'Corsican people and nation - who is Corsican?' The document insisted on the ethnic distinctiveness of the Corsicans but opened the door to other inhabitants of the island, provided that they played no part in the 'alienation' of the Corsican people. The UPC congratulated itself that the

³¹ Ibid. pp.156-158.

concept of a separate Corsican ethnic group, so long denied, had been implicitly accepted by the French authorities, who nonetheless were content to see its very existence threatened. Chapter two, entitled 'Corsica is drifting', outlined the problems facing the island's people - the colonialism of the French State, which had made Corsica a dependent territory and had reduced the element of native Corsicans in the population from 80% in 1958 to a little more than 50% twenty years later. Chapter three, 'Remedies being applied to overcome our difficulties', recognised the massive support being given by the French State to Corsica, but claimed that these measures were tending only to undermine still further the liberty of the Corsican people by enslaving them economically. In the final chapter, 'The spirit of our struggle', the *Plan* denounced all forms of xenophobia and deplored conflicts between Corsicans, which had 'throughout history marked the end of our national hopes'. But it recalled that violence had been consistently used by the French State against the Corsican people. This allegation was used to justify the UPC's continuing ambiguity, matching that of the FPC, *vis-à-vis*, the FLNC: 'We do not withhold our solidarity from those who having chosen a different path to ours, are paying with their liberty for their love of Corsica.'³²

FLNC attempt to fill the political vacuum

The apparent lack of interest at the level of locally elected politicians in the Corsican question in the early part of 1979 has probably two widely differing causes. On the one hand, the Government had made it clear that there was no immediate prospect of further constitutional change and had embarked on a programme of exceptional measures for Corsica's benefit - the local politicians were therefore waiting to see how things would develop. On the other hand, the pressure of change had passed from the purely political scene with a pronounced upsurge in violence from the FLNC and from their counterparts, FRANCIA, at the turn of the year.

³² Ibid, pp.168-172.

In 1979, the signs were that the FLNC were more likely, for the time being at least, to concentrate on material targets to draw attention to their claims for Corsican independence and to highlight their demand that the status of 'political prisoner' be granted to their members arrested in mid 1978 and in December of that year. One of the most spectacular attacks of 1978 had been mounted, on 27 September, against the new Broadcasting House under construction near Ajaccio. This drew attention to the question of the use of Corsican in the proposed extended television programmes in the island and put back the introduction of a separate service (as opposed to a subsidiary service from Marseille) for at least a year. In 1979 the preferred targets were those connected with the police or the administration of justice (in order to highlight the 'political prisoners' issue) and banks, which symbolised 'French colonial exploitation'. There were, however, many attacks on the commercial and, less commonly, domestic property of individual citizens, some of which might well have been totally unconnected with political considerations. On 10 March no fewer than thirty-two banks throughout the island were badly damaged in explosions. Three banks were attacked in Paris on 10 April. On 25 April the Ajaccio premises of the SNCM (the semi-state shipping company responsible for the main passenger and freight links with the mainland) were extensively damaged and the same night the Law Courts in the centre of Paris were also damaged by a time-bomb which caused damage estimated at three million Francs. This attack marked the beginning of a new phase of FLNC activity aimed at bringing the Corsican question, which had tended to drop out of the national and international headlines after the immediate post-Aleria period, back to the forefront of public interest.³³

Paris was again the scene of FLNC attacks on 6 May, when twenty banks were damaged by explosives; more banks in the capital were attacked on 30 May, and on 17 June there was another heavy night of terrorist activity in

³³ P. Savigear, *Corsica: Politics and Violence*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.247-249.

both Corsica and Paris, involving twenty-five major explosions, the most serious of which was at Police Headquarters in the capital. These attacks certainly achieved the objective of reviving the news media's interests in Corsica and the reports, which appeared in the national press tended to draw parallels with other 'liberation' struggles, such as that of the PLO, the Basque ETA group and the IRA. FLNC supporters became increasingly active in all forms of protest which could be classified as 'Corsican versus French', notably in the school strikes and demonstrations held on 5 and 6 April to protest against the announcement that the university would not open until October 1981 and against what was claimed to be the inadequate status given to Corsican language, culture and history in the educational system.

It was symptomatic of the ethnic group awareness, which had been engendered over the previous decade that even those, such as the level autonomists, who were in many ways rivals of the FLNC for popular support, could not resist being drawn into voicing solidarity for the 'patriots'.³⁴ The FLNC stepped up their activities during 1980, both in military and propaganda terms. In May, 1980 following the passing of heavy sentences by the State Security Court on a group of their members for their part in terrorist attacks in July 1978, there was not only a bomb blast in the Law Court in Paris, but a machine gun attack on 14 May on four gendarmes mounting guard outside the Iranian Embassy, which seriously wounded two of them. At the trial the FLNC member's defence lawyer had argued, on the basis of the United Nations Declaration of 14 December 1960 calling for the granting of independence to colonial peoples.

The 1982 special statute allocation

The once indivisible French Republic permitted a special constitutional status for the Corsican region in 1982, apparently in larger measure a response

³⁴ Savigear, n.13, pp.90-91.

to nationalist demands for an identity. This moment of achievement has been followed by the most intense questioning of the nature of Corsican nationalism since the 1930's. A degree of obscurity about the nationalist movements had existed before 1982. The demands of separatists and nationalists merged with those of regionalists seeking some element of self-government, and with those expressing the frustrations of economic decline and social changes. The creation of a devolved executive and an elected regional assembly gave a new importance to the distinctions between nationalists and regionalists, autonomists and separatists. The special statute for Corsica provided for the election, by proportional representation, of 61 deputies for the two departments. A regional executive was elected from and by these deputies and its powers defined by the legislation introduced by the Socialist government in Paris. Thus a regional government of Corsica was to be constitutionally responsible for matters such as the regional budget and local borrowing, and taxation, economic planning and development, including tourism, the environment, housing, education and culture, internal communications and a number of related matters. There is a new regional, tier of administration. Committees of the regional assembly were created to debate and scrutinise these competence, which had been made over by the central government in Paris. This was a radical change, the first of its kind since the revolution of 1789, and brought to an end one era of regional discontent and nationalist agitation. All Corsican nationalists and regionalists were brought face to face with new realities.³⁵

The first of these new factors was the fact of the concession of a major part of the constitutional amendment of the regionalists and autonomist in the reform of 1982. A measure of autonomy had been granted and all groups could participate in the regional elections with some hope of success under the proportional system. The first elections were held in August 1982. This forced upon the supporters and advocates of constitutional change the decision

³⁵ Ibid, pp.92-93.

whether these new institutions were indeed what they had sought and whether they were adequate. However, the wording of the constitutional innovations of 1982 invited further consideration. The Statute recognised the peculiar nature of Corsica. Article 2 referred to the '*specificities de corse region*' and required the new executive to concern itself with respect for and protection of this identity. This was particularly eluded in the provision for regional responsibility in cultural matters and for employment and professional planning and career structure in the economy. Corsicans now had to find answers to the questions, what was their cultural identity and what exactly did the employment of Corsicans mean? Who in fact were Corsicans? Such issues touched on a fundamental change that was brought about by the 1982 reforms. Where there had been regionalists and autonomists before 1982, there were increasingly only nationalists. By early 1987, the talk was of the 'nationalists family', but new tensions were already appearing in this muddled, many-faceted movement, which through recent decades had been active in demanding political change.

Another reason to the change of context that followed the institutional innovation of 1982 was the need to face a further precise question: how strong was support for nationalism on the island? Until 1982 this question was fudged. Thousands might have attended rallies, but none of this was more than an *ad hoc* reaction high-points of regional feeling, and there was no true measure of support. The elections, which had been fought by autonomists before 1982, had never brought them any significant support. But they could be dismissed as corrupt, controlled by established interests, which has long dominated the politics and institution on the island. Under the new system of proportional representation, with much credit for bringing the constitutional change going to the autonomist, the question of support for the nationalist, and thus extent of rejection of established interests, became precise and important. However, in

the respect the nationalist impulse has had to come to terms with another new factor-their electoral support has not been impressive.³⁶

Nationalist problems after 1982

There have been six separate elections since 1982 and under the special statute – three regional elections for the assembly, in 1982, 1984 and 1986, cantonal elections in 1985, and legislative elections in 1986 and 1988 across these several consultations the nationalists and autonomists have seen their support decline in a consistent manner. The high point was 1982, when they obtained 12.6% of the vote in those regional elections. The drop has been steady since that elections, with only 7% votes obtained in the legislative elections in 1986. Overall there was a drop of 40% in the nationalist vote.

A number of particular explanations can be offered for this dilemma facing Corsican nationalism. The most obvious but underestimated in importance has been the issue of leadership. For many years the autonomist/nationalist movement had been led by Edmund Simeoni, the spearhead of the first stirrings of contemporary activism in the 1960s. He dominated the ARC and its successor the present UPC. He played a vital role in the direct action. His arrest in 1973, the trial and imprisonment in 1975 increased his stature as a forceful leader. He remained the leader of the autonomists' agitation till the reconciliation, which preceded the reforms in 1982. He was elected among the first regional deputies of the first regional assembly. He however, fell ill in 1984 and more or less withdrew from political activity. Though his brother Max Simeom took over, he did not have the charisma of Edmund and no dynamic new leader appeared. Also the shaky alliance between the autonomists and the nationalists had strained. The element of electoral indigestion after five elections in as many years has produced an abstention rate that is growing. Through a general increase in abstentions is

³⁶ G. Ford, *Fascist Europe: The Rise of Racism and Xenophobia*, (London, Pluto Press, 1992), pp.169-173.

expected to favour the nationalists, this has not occurred in reality, their share of the vote remained at 8.5%. This suggests that the new institutions have not enhanced the Corsican voting practices. The rampant electoral malpractice's has also reduced the electoral enthusiasm. It should also be noted that the balance of votes in the assembly and the deputies for the National Assembly continue to reflect traditional clan interests the regional balance of power in the late 1980's favoured the right wing coalition parties headed by the local RPR (Gaullists). Thus it can be seen that constitutional reforms have not transformed the electoral balance.³⁷ Some support for the regional movements has also been withered by the concessions to Corsican demands made during the last decade. There is no doubt that internal communication has been improved by the spending of large sums on roads. Although not adequate and still bedevilled by administrative and costing problems, the sea and air links with France have also improved, and there are extensive plans for detailed improvements into the next decade, the university has been re-established at Corte (after closure in 1770) and students are in residence, taking courses, despite a number of disruptions following political and other agitation. A variety of economic development programmes have been started, particularly in irrigation and crop diversification. Support, however meagre, has been given to small rural industries and crafts, although there are disagreement about the economic value and social significance of such support. In these ways many Corsicans and islands residents are encouraged to believe that real changes on the part of government in Paris. It has therefore become an important matter for nationalists to explain a clear view on future development and the significance to reform. This has not been presented in a united and decisive manner.

A further divisive issue for the nationalists and autonomists has been the persistence of violence. In searching for an explanation of the recent decline in support for the nationalists of the UPC/Cuncolta Nazzziunalista, the joint party list, the impact of some eighty-bomb attacks during the night of 21st March

³⁷ Savigear, n. 13, pp.92-93.

1987, before the elections in Haute-Corse the following day cannot be discounted. There had been an increase in bomb and other violent attacks in the department associated with the nationalist, and these aroused fears of worse to come (although these did include the Bastia tax office). The continuing deterioration in the control of violence worked against the electoral prospects of nationalists. The high level and the varied forms of terrorism have had two effects. The first has been to place the nationalists in an ambiguous position. On the one hand they have formally condemned the bombings, the increase in gangsters, the occasional assassinations and racial attacks (both of these have remained rare). On the other hand there has never been any doubt that there has long been an element among the nationalists which favoured violence. This has been acknowledged. It has led to the prohibition of armed organisations like the FLNC, the Front for the National Liberation of Corsica, and of sympathetic political groups like the MCA. The UPC has tried to distance itself from violence, rejecting the argument that only violence can force change and urging economic and other reform as a means of ending a violence arising from social discontent. But there has been overlap in membership between the various groups, and the present nationalist movement has not firmly clarified its view. This dilemma has been made more acute for the nationalist movement because of the merging of politically motivated violence and crime with no political motive. There has been a substantial increase in the latter, with major gangs and rackets. There has, therefore, been no question of violence declining after the 1982 reforms, and this has further called into question the value of regional constitutional change.³⁸

The last two decades have seen a continuing see-saw between the French State and the Corsican leaders. The new demands have taken a colour wherein you find the lack of the state's control over its regional resources being attacked. Anti-globalisation/Americanisation sentiments have been mixed with the sentiment of more returns from the French state. The element of violence

³⁸ Ibid, pp.92-93.

still remains strong. The most recent being the June 1998 attacks on the French departments and the recent calls for support for the Bretons attacks on McDonald's³⁹ (April 2000). That this regular occurrence ensues is a reminder of the fact that the root problems are yet to be amicably solved.

³⁹ Time Europe, Vol. 155, No. 17, www.timeeurope.org.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The construction of a politically strong French kingdom required a welding of the diverse ethnic communities into a unified nation - that is, the gradual imposition of a common language, culture, and ideology emanating from Paris and its growing bourgeoisie. The emergence of minority nationalism - especially in Brittany and Corsica - has to be seen in the backdrop of the crisis caused by the two world wars. As France rebuilt its war shattered economy, the country became increasingly aware of its lack of economic modernization implied a quest for global markets, and they also implied a gradual displacement of the old, humanistic elite that has been oriented towards French literacy culture by a 'technicist' elite that increasingly used the 'horrible dictum'- English. This served to undermine the prestige of French and to enhance the relative standing to Breton, Corsican and other peripheral '*dialects*'

The establishment of the EEC with its unilateral and supranational transaction; put in question the old assumption that the 'nation state' was the most logical or most efficient unit and evoked the possibility of a restructuring of the Western Europe's geographic space along ethno-cultural lines. Moreover, the greater permeability of boundaries led to increasing trans territorial contacts between related ethnic communities - the Celts of Brittany, Ireland and Wales being one example - enlarged their fields of action. It was no longer possible to deny that French society was multi-ethnic.

Concurrent with this emerging social reality there was a re-examination of the hallowed historical thesis that the 'integration' of the Britons and Corsicans, and others, into France though territorial acquisition implied for them a move from a politically and economically backward to an advanced position. But the lack of sympathies to the subtleties of the ethnic demand led to the increasing feeling that integration into the French hexagon had brought

about the removal of control over the economic resources and the resultant impoverishment of the ethnic masses.

The difference in the trajectory that the minority sentiments in Brittany and Corsica is an interesting study - both in similarity and contrast. At the outset we see that both these areas were made part of the French *during the* imperial times. Both these areas have been incorporated at the 'elite' level. Brittany by both marriage alliance and the act of union by the Duke of Brittany and the Corsica, courtesy their antipathy to the callous Genoese rule, and, more importantly, the aura and faith in Napoleon. The first inkling of tension arose during the first decades of the twentieth century when you had the French state forced to pursue a programme of virulent nationalism to rebuild a country raved by the dictates of war.

The rise of regionalism in Brittany and Corsica can be viewed as a result of the disintegration of traditional society as a result of the penetration of French monopoly. The essential point is that in France there co-existed two kinds of society, each characterised by a different mode of life style, culture and production. In the ethnic regions of Brittany and Corsica there existed the more archaic kind. The societal relations were characterised by social doctrines different from that of mainstream France. In Brittany it was the feudal autocracy and in Corsica it was based on the solidarity of the clan system. In each of these societies the local elites played an intermediary role between what was basically an apolitical society and the central power. It was when the central power threatened the prerogatives of the local elites that one sees a sprouting of the regionalist demands. It is an attempt by the elites to resist this (as in Corsica) or to ensure that it is to their advantage (as in Corsica).

It would be too naïve to assume that regional sentiments, manifest in minority mobilisation on nationalist lines, take place only due to a disintegration of the archaic societies: In the French context, we see that the politics of the fifth republic has also heightened the tensions. The notion of

'functional regionalism' wherein it was sought to end the hindrance of the local 'elites' in the programme of invigorating France' was a political move in which a massive restructuring was attempted. In fact the programme retained the jargon of 'incorporating the periphery' but in reality it was a co-option of 'willing' citizens from these areas. In other words the governmental initiatives at regionalisation was an administrative decentralisation that would have involved the devolution of real power to these regions.

Narrowing down to the way in which this discordant discontent has manifest itself in the two areas under focus, it can be seen that the underlying reason is predominantly economic. Most Bretons want a better economic deal and a fuller say in their own affairs. The ebb and tile of the movement is interesting. The tightening and relaxation of the centralisation programme of the state has had corresponding impacts on the calls for more power. The terror of the Vichy regime was countered by a direct link with the Fascist ideology - The *Breizh Atao* (Brittany Forever) movement with its ideals of complete break-up from France evoking the principle of racial exclusivism. The economic crisis of the post 1945 era saw the secessionist sentiment still holding say but, with the initiative on the part of the French government to more carefully accommodate the Breton demands, have seen a watering down of the ideal - its tryst with the French left, the clamour for more fiscal benefits and the need to more effectively reconfigure the regional administration. This shift, from militant demands to a more bid back yet vigilant voice that is ready to get itself accommodated within the French union in return for some special favours, has been all along dominated by only one consciousness - the need and initiative to preserve the ethnic culture and life style in the face of a perceived economic and political discrimination that is viewed as a destructive force. It is the Bretons' own fault, that they have not, despite their militant vigour, been able to successfully rally behind a constructive movement that would put pressure on Paris for more amiable pressure by peaceful means. The use of violence has been only symbolic in the case of Breton movement, sporadic

bomb attacks in Brittany on police and public buildings, on nuclear stations and state TV stations is only very indirectly connected to the economic disquiete and cultural renewal.

The trope of cultural preservation has been predominant in the Corsican movement too. What comes across as a continuing trope in Corsica is the resort to violence. The belief in the use of force has had its fair share of inconvenience -vis-à-vis the accommodative policies of the French state. The myriad junctures at which one has witnessed that breaking down of negotiations that would ideally have led to a more sympathetic give and take has put the Corsican movement on the back foot on more than one occasion. Another interesting issue is the way in which the very same tool of 'violence' has been used by the disheartened natives to prove a point to the 'leaders' of their movement caught between these meaningless cross-fires, the real issue has been relegated to the background. The Corsican movements sudden disappearance from the world stage to be diffused into sporadic attempt by competing clandestine groups, in the second half of the 1990s has threatened to make the movement defunct, to subdue it to linger on as a folkloric phenomenon that lacks sufficient support from the population they allege to represent. The movement has already run the risk of having been denoted as a 'terrorist' movement to be encountered and not to be patiently heard. It has to be realised that the upholding of the ethnic card, both in Corsica and Brittany has no longer any direct claims to secession. The people have realized and, to a great extent, accepted that total independence in this modern age would not make good economic sense for the regions that are rural and relatively poor.

The recent violent eruptions in Brittany (referred to in chapter III) makes one realize that the issue of minority nationalism is an inconclusive one. The shifting trends in the French national scenario and the slightly larger European scenario has its ramifications both on the centre-state relation and also the hopes, fears and aspirations of these peripheral regions. The constant efforts at globalisation and more importantly, the envisioning of a fortress Europe has

direct implications for the fate of these regions. Globalisation may be viewed as the emergence of a world society in the widest sense of the term. As such the concept is too general to be of any analytical use. What is emerging is not so much an ideal, equal world society, but a number of disparate transnational phenomena in the form of organisations, networks and institutions. The region bound identities based on language and history which were once evoked to face the crisis caused by a domineering state can in fact be re-evoked to re-establish the sense of security. The rising influence of trans national regimes on the daily affairs of the people and the realization that even the supposedly 'protective' state is basing the grip on what governs the life of the country would in turn lead to a sense of panic created by the thought that the future of the region lies in the hands of powerful forces that lie beyond their horizon, and certainly beyond their control. This could tend to turn again to purportedly primordial categories. Unlike in the past, this second lease for 'minority nationalism' could turn out to be all the more complex. The ethnic community could make use of transnational links. This is particularly relevant in France - Brittany, Alsace, Basques and Flanders are ethnic identities that are spread across the boundaries of two states. The state structure could be befuddled in a situation where in these communities can always opt for a transnational regime of their own. The advances in communication networking can indeed make this option a reality [In fact in 1991, a number of ethnic communities did group up to form the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO).¹ The goal of the UNPO is to support indigenous peoples and ethnic groups in their quest for self-determination].

The European scenario is equally problematic when one considers the tug of war between France and the E.U. The overtly protectionist stance that France has taken within the E.P. can be a dual-edged sword for the state. The commitment that the French state has shown towards free market reforms has been, under Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, replaced by economic nationalism.

¹ Hoggart Keith, *Rural Europe: Identity and Change*, (London, Arnold, 1995), pp. 1-21.

The contention has been that the EU's increasing power has weakened the French states contrast over its economy, produced substantial changes in its business patterns and resulted in significant social change. In demonising the global forces and the E.U. in having led to social disruptions, France might sacrifice the positive effects of a more global economy. Such a mounting xenophobia could be dangerous for the future of the country and for the E.U.² What such tensions would create is a situation wherein the state would invoke the lack of 'their' contrast as the reason for their woes. Such an economic nationalism will have serious impact on the French economy. The defiance of E.U. law and free market principles can lead to sanctions that will lead to increased consumer prizes. Direct state interventionism would also deny the French access to more competition and even markets that could help the upliftment of the economy; this, in turn, could have a positive effect on the backward regions.

Caught between the ill effects of a fortress Europe and the fidgeting stance of the French state that could in many ways isolate France with in Europe, the minority regions will face the dilemma of having to decide which way to turn. It has been interesting to note that certain grievances of the Bretons and Corsicans in lies of the assertion from the European agenda has been backed by the French state, especially the allocation of the European Regional Development Fund 2. But the problem arises when there is no clarity as to how or who is to be approached with the persisting problems. The duality of the European organizational structure with its nascent confusion as to the balance between supra-intra nationalism can be a costly gap that would fail to address the present grievances of the minority 'peoples; of France. An apt example of this mounting social discontent was witnessed on May 12 on 1999 Corsica where 6000 students, protesting against poor conditions vandalised

² Costis Hadjimachchilis, 'Introduction' in David Sadler/ Costis Hadjimachchilis, (eds), *Europe at the Margins*, (New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1995), pp. 1-15.

cars and departmental stores.³ Also one witnesses an increase in the sporadic bombings in Brittany and Corsica.

The long saga of grievances have been persistent. It is not that the French state has not been alert to the problems at hand. The decentralisation efforts both political and economic, the efforts at cultural *revival for the ethnic* minorities, the reluctant get vital acceptance of linguistic freedom have all been inputs that have had far-reaching implications. Most of these ethnic minorities- Bretons, Corsicans et al, are as of now, comfortable to be both French and 'ethnic'. The persistence of dissent, with its manifold infestations ranging from cultural symbolism to violence is a reminder of a threat-perception - a perception of discrimination which, if fuelled, can again detonate a series of reactions which the French state has fought hard to redress and accommodate. The problem of minority nationalism slithers away from cliched paradigms. Be it a stigma or an assertion of rightful claims, this virulent spirit with its encompassing nature that touches the economic, political, administrative and cultural realms is a dormant violence ever ready to erupt in the face of a crisis (predominantly economic). In conclusion, the plight of the eternally aggrieved 'ethnic; native may be summed up in the words of the English poet Mathew Arnold:

Caught between two worlds, one dead;
the other powerless yet to be born.⁴

³ Peter Kloos, 'France's Conflicted Relationship with Globalisation', *Time Europe*, vol. 155, no.17, pp.17-23, www.timeeurope.org.

⁴ Matthew Arnold, "The Scholar Gypsy", *Collected Works*, (London, Penguin, 1977), p.68.

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