POPULATIONS IN TRANSITION

Keynote addresses on the occasion of the opening of the

POPULATION RESEARCH CENTRE

University of Groningen

22 November 1991
Senaatskamer
University of Groningen
Groningen

Groningen, June 1993

Population Research Centre
Faculty of Spatial Sciences
University of Groningen
Box 800
NL-9700 AV Groningen
Telephone: + 31 50 633 895
Telefax: + 31 50 633 901
Telex: 53410 rugro nl
E-mail (Internet): PRC@FRW.RUG.NL

Technical editor: Joan Vrind, ITYP, Voorburg
PREFACE

The Population Research Centre was established with two objectives in mind: (1) to foster basic and applied research on the determinants and consequences of population trends, and (2) to train students, teachers and professionals in population theories, methods of analysis and forecasting, and integration of demographic variables in sustainable development strategies.

A dominant new feature of the training and research programme is the micro-perspective. Human behaviour and human institutions play an important mediating role in the relation between population and development. To accentuate the focus, demography is defined as the study of life events, their sequence and timing, determinants and impact on the size and the composition of the population. Life events signify major transitions in people's lives and frequently imply the onset of new lifestyles. The occurrence and timing of events such as leaving the parental home, marriage, divorce, childbirth, migration, and labour force entry and exit are affected by life-course characteristics (biographic context) and the social, cultural, economic, and environmental context in which persons live. The context influences the options people have and, therefore, their ability to choose freely and responsibly the lifestyle and life course they want. The emphasis on process, context, and individual autonomy is a distinctive feature of the Groningen programme. In order to separate universal from context-specific factors affecting demographic processes and to reduce the cultural bias, the Centre cooperates with individuals and institutes around the world. This cooperation provides the basis for cross-cultural studies emphasizing the universal features of human nature and the global dimension of population issues. It also provides the
students with the global, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary perspective on population that is required in today's world.

The opening of the Population Research Centre on 22nd November 1991 was marked by addresses by two most influential scientists. They analyze significant contemporary processes of social change that are manifestations of the desire for self-determination, freedom of choice, not only for individuals but also for peoples.

Professor Stanislav Shatalin discusses social and demographic problems and freedom of choice issues faced during the transformation of the former Soviet Union to a market economy. Demographic indicators are useful indicators of the social status of the population and important signals of social change. He pleads for demographic research 'in order to define economic and social policies'. Professor Shatalin is a full member of the Academy of Sciences and Academician-Secretary of the Department of Economics of the Academy. He was the leader of a group of experts who developed the Program of Transition to the Market (Five Hundred Days Program), which was published in the Izvestia on 4th September 1990, entitled Person, freedom, market. Freedom of choice is a basic premise of the Five Hundred Days Program: Freedom of choice is a fundamental personal right that provides the basis for growth of every individual.

Professor Nathan Keyfitz discusses the main political trend of the 20th century, namely, the dissolution of empires held together by force, connected with the drive for freedom of peoples. He lists several advantages and drawbacks of the breakdown of nations into parts that are culturally more homogeneous. Professor Keyfitz predicts that any homogeneous areas of substantial size seem likely sooner or later to gain their independence. He suggests that ethnic identity and freedom may be part of a new personal identity and dignity. Professor Keyfitz, a member of the US National Academy of Sciences, is leader of the Population Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, Austria. He is Emeritus Andelot Professor of Sociology and Demography (Harvard University).

Since the opening in November 1991, the Population Research Centre has been implementing a training and research programme that emphasizes process, context, and individual autonomy, and adopts a global, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary perspective on population. Foreign guest lecturers provide part of the training in both the undergraduate and the graduate programmes. Students from other European countries, including Russia and Ukraine, and from developing countries participate in the graduate programme. The Centre has provided mid-career training in Groningen to professionals from Bangladesh and in Bombay (International Institute for Population Sciences) to participants from India and other Asian countries. Further courses are scheduled in Moscow (University of Moscow) and Kiev (National Institute for Strategic Studies).

During his presentation at the opening, professor Shatalin called upon the Population Research Centre to help researchers in the former USSR to develop methods for the analysis of demographic processes in a multi-ethnic, poly-confessional context. Funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), the Centre provides substantial institutional support to the Department of Demography, Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, Goskomstat of Russia in Moscow. In addition, it has set up joint research projects aimed at the estimation of migration and the development of demographic scenarios by ethnicity and territory of the former USSR, and is assisting in the publication of demographic statistics. A joint venture with the National Institute for Strategic Studies (NISS) in Kiev is expected to result
in demographic and labour force scenarios for the Ukraine. The project is part of the European Communities’ TACIS programme for technical assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia.

Three days after the opening of the Population Research Centre, an agreement between IIASA and the University of Groningen was signed to jointly develop a European Monitoring System (EMS) to foresee and monitor demographic changes in Europe. The EMS involves (i) the establishment of a computer-based demographic information system, (ii) the development of advanced methods and software for population projection and impact assessment and methods to estimate internationally comparable demographic parameters from available data (in particular with respect to migration), and (iii) a network of participating centres in Europe. The development of demographic scenarios is integrated in the EMS.

The Population Research Centre is becoming a centre for research into the demographic future of Europe: EUROSTAT called upon the Centre to assist in the preparation of long-term demographic scenarios for the countries of the European Communities; and the Secretariat of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) requested the assistance of the Centre in the preparation of demographic scenarios for the EFTA countries.

The specification of alternative demographic futures is probably the most difficult task of demographers and all those involved. It is certainly the most challenging. To predict the future, the past must be interpreted correctly and all the available knowledge should be used to assess readiness for change, the timing of change, and the level and direction of change. Demographic processes are very much part of the context in which they take place. In periods of transition, the past is not a reliable predictor of the future. The transition we are experiencing now is characterized by self-determination, by the freedom of choice, not only for individuals but also for peoples. A demographic scenario under conditions of perfect freedom of choice has not been developed yet. In demography, choice theory is not widely applied yet and the study of choice is lagging far behind other disciplines. Ideally, demographic scenarios are based on the life strategies of individual members of the population. Theoretical research at the Population Research Centre into demographic choice processes and its utilization to understand and predict life strategies in various cultural settings constitute some of the most exciting and intellectually rewarding activities.

At the opening of the Population Research Centre, professor Shatalin and professor Keyfitz address the major issues of our time. Their approach stresses the human factor and the ability to choose freely but responsibly. Their vision will guide the activities of the Population Research Centre for years to come.

Frans Willekens
Professor Stanislav Shatalin

Biodata

Stanislav Shatalin was born in 1934. Professor Shatalin is a full member of the Academy of Sciences and Academician-Secretary of the Department of Economics of the Academy. He is one of the leading specialists in macro-economic analysis, welfare economics and socioeconomic forecasting.

In the 1960s, Stanislav Shatalin made major contributions to the development of mathematical economics in the Soviet Union (input-output models of the Leontief type and optimal economic management). Since the mid-1970s, Professor Shatalin focused on the development of long-term scenarios of the Soviet economy. He developed arguments for a decisive redirection of Soviet economic strategy towards consumption, education, health care and culture. He developed new ideas for employment and income distribution policies, based on a more active use of market-type mechanisms to improve economic efficiency.

Professor Shatalin’s research received practical applications in the course of structural reforms in the USSR after 1985. He was the leader of the group of scientists, which developed the Program of Transition to the Market (Five Hundred Days Program). In 1990-1991, he was member of the Presidential Council. In addition to promoting the ideas on which the program is based, Statislav Shatalin is actively working on the improvement of the economic science in Russia, by attracting good scholars and a better organization of research.

Professor Shatalin is the author of more than 100 scientific publications, including four books. He actively promotes his views and ideas in Russian and foreign media. He is president of the Reforma Foundation.
THE HUMAN FACTOR IN THE TRANSITION OF THE
SOVIET UNION TO A MARKET ECONOMY

Address of Academician Stanislav S. Shatalin
at the opening of the Population Research Centre

Dear Colleagues,

I am happy to have this opportunity to address you on such an important day for the University of Groningen. I am grateful to the Administration of the University for the invitation. I would like also to thank particularly Frans Willekens for his goodwill and initiative in inviting me to attend the opening of the Population Research Centre. Since the name of my friend, Sergei Scherbov, has also been mentioned, I thank Sergei for helping me to come to Groningen. Frans Willekens has already circulated the 500-Day Program translated into Dutch. The Program was not adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. So, as the saying goes in Russia, speak well of the dead, or speak not at all. Since I have, on many occasions, said good things about the Program, I will not refer to it again. I am very sorry that Prof. Keyfitz, a distinguished scientist in the field of demography, and a wonderful person, is not able to take part in this historic event.¹

As you are aware, a good deal can be said about the human factor in the context of a transition to a market economy. The issue has many aspects. Therefore, I shall confine myself to some questions which, in my opinion, are directly related to the transition.

¹ Due to illness, professor Keyfitz could not attend the opening.
I must say that, unfortunately, for over 70 years, while pro-
claiming everybody's happiness as the ultimate goal, in reality
we turned every individual into a hostage of a totalitarian
imperial system. I am not going to tell you how and why this
happened. It is a separate issue. I am just stating the fact.
Although the Constitution of the USSR and other legal doc-
uments provided for every citizen to have the right of the freedom
of speech, conscience, etc., unfortunately, these human rights
were never put into practice. In fact, there were no democratic
institutions in the society. Society and individuals served the
state, not the other way around. The issue of human rights is a
very broad one and is very important for the transitional period
to a market economy, because only free people who enjoy these
rights can implement the transition. These rights involve, of
course, obligations and responsibilities. It is only now that for
us human rights are becoming not only a slogan, but a political
reality, and one cannot help but welcome this.

You may be aware that there were two main ways of distributing
income in the USSR. Paying salaries to the employees was one;
the provision of services free of charge or the subsidized social
services from the so-called Public Consumption Fund was the
other. These were the two main sources. There were others: for
example, income earned by selling agricultural products grown
on private land plots. The wages and salaries and the services
from the Public Consumption Fund made up more than 90% of
the income of the population. I have no time to expand on this
issue, but I must say that, unfortunately, there was a practice of
levelling the wages, which did not motivate people to work very
efficiently. Wage-levelling, verging on social parasitism, was,
unfortunately, one of the major negative features of our social
economic system. The egalitarian mentality is deeply ingrained
in our society and stands in the way of moving towards the
market economy. I have already said that the Public Con-
sumption Fund served to cover the cost of social benefits and
services formally provided to people free of charge or at reduced
rates. They included medical care and services in education,
culture, and housing. It is true that parallel with free medical
services, some services were provided on a commercial basis,
but they made up a very small part of the income and expendi-
tures of the population. The other day, I mentioned in my
address that a so-called residual principle of allocating resources
for social services, including housing, culture, education,
science, etc., was applied in my country. Unfortunately, at the
root of this principle was an artificial subdivision of our economy
into two sectors — the so-called productive sector and the non-
productive sector. According to the Marxist dogma, the Gross
National Product (GNP) and the National Income are allegedly
created only in the so-called productive sector, i.e. in industry,
agriculture, construction, etc. Science, culture, and education
were thought to contribute nothing to the national product. That
is why the non-productive sector of the economy has always been
neglected. It has been a kind of a stepdaughter of our social-
economic system. As a result, the salaries in the non-productive
sector were much lower than those in the productive sector. You
would not believe it, but some three years ago, the average
salaries of scientific researchers and teachers were nearly the
lowest in the economy. Only people working in cultural institu-
tions were paid less. The second important factor which testified
to the non-productive sector being secondary in importance was
the fact that for more than 20 years, at least until 1985, invest-
ment in the social sector decreased by 10%. It goes without
saying that the lower investment in this sector acted like a
boomerang on both the social and productive sectors. For invest-
ment in people may often be a decisive factor for raising the

---

2 A lecture at the Bel Air Hotel in The Hague for representatives of government and business. The lecture was organized by the Institute for International Relations (Clingendael), The Hague, and the Population Research Centre.
effectiveness of the economy, especially if it is viewed as a medium term or especially long-term development.

Now a word about the demographic processes. The low level of development of our economy had a negative effect on the health of the population in the USSR, with a very high infant mortality. Over the past 10-15 years the mortality rate of the population, and especially males of working age, i.e. between 25 to 40-45 years, has sharply increased. The USSR has fallen far behind the developed countries as far as the average life expectancy of the population is concerned. The average life expectancy for men is approximately 8-10 years less than that for women. Such a difference does not exist in any other country in the world. The proportion of the elderly among the population has grown.

The birth defects rate is very high in the country, with some regions being particularly affected. The fact that a large proportion of the population lives in the northern part of the USSR also contributes to this.

The next serious problem is that the territory of the Soviet Union has become the biggest ecological cemetery in the world. This affects the life of the people. The level of pollution in big cities such as Moscow, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk, Novokuznetsk, and Magnitogorsk has surpassed all acceptable levels. I was speaking about the population in general; but the demographic situation varies in different parts of the country. For example, there is a very high infant mortality in the Central Asian regions; there are differences in life expectancy among men and women in various parts of the country. In other words, the situation in the social sector, in the demographic, and other spheres of human life is very complex. Unfortunately, it continues to get worse.

The transition to the market economy which we have proclaimed, at least politically, contains many pitfalls. As you are aware, the labour market is one of the most important factors of the market economy. An appropriate labour force market requires an adequate housing market, which we do not have at the moment. Many of you may know that there is a residence permit system in our country, a kind of serfdom dating back to feudalism. A person must live in one specific location, so he will not be able to find an apartment in another place. Obviously, this creates enormous obstacles for the passage to a normal labour market.

Unemployment is the second sticky issue which, of course, worries everybody where a market economy is concerned. Many researchers produce various figures regarding the USSR’s future economic development. Many predict that millions will be unemployed but, I think, no serious calculations in this field have been made. Of course, unemployment will occur. In anticipation of this, special funds are being set up to solve the problem of unemployment, both structural and frictional.

Speaking of unemployment, I must emphasize that if we switch to a real, effective market economy, there will be real, visible unemployment. In fact, the hidden unemployment will become overt. According to the estimates of many of my colleagues, millions of people who are formally employed do not in fact have a job. In the past, managers of enterprises or directors of institutions did not need to worry about how many people were employed.

I chair the Economic Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences and supervise the work of more than ten institutes. If all the economists working at those institutes were evaluated using strict criteria no more than 10% would pass the test. Nevertheless, it made no difference for the directors of academic institutes how many staff members the institute had or how effi-
cient they worked. The situation was practically the same in the national economy. Low productivity was an inherent feature of the old ideological-oriented system. Today, before my address, I was interviewed by a correspondent of the University’s newspaper. I told him, and I am repeating it to you, that professors of political economy, and professors teaching scientific communism, philosophy, modern history, law, the history of the party, etc., are among the first to lose their jobs. And it is not their fault. But I think that unemployment in my country—where the social infrastructure, including the condition of roads, is not developed—will not reach a socially dangerous level, because many new jobs will be created in the services industry in its broad sense.

The next very important problem is how to provide security for the mostly socially unprotected levels of the population. We are preparing special mechanisms which will help the socially unprotected part of the population to adapt during the difficult period of transition to the market economy. Income indexation is one such mechanism. Meanwhile, the policy in general is that the indexation will not apply to those working in the commercial sector. There are no restrictions whatsoever regarding the income levels in this sector. The Russian Parliament has adopted a law regulating the income indexation of the population working only in the budget sector, and not in the market sector. Partial rationing through food coupons, which, of course, has nothing to do with market economy and which is a worse system than the one used in feudal times, is another way of protecting the interests of the disadvantaged sections of the population. I do not think, however, that we shall come to the rationing of all products.

Another element of the social protection mechanism is the estimation of the subsistence level for the population and the establishment of a salary that cannot fall below this subsistence level.

It is assumed that the state will establish control over the price of some commodities.

The inevitable reduction of the armed forces also poses extremely difficult problems. I must admit that middle-ranking officers, especially the low-ranks among them, have a very hard life indeed. A programme designed to help these people is being worked out. I hope you understand that if we do not manage to solve this problem, an extremely dangerous social and political situation may occur. The world community is not interested. Since the republics of the USSR have attained sovereignty, they are mainly responsible for providing the social protection of their population. Only a few strategic funds for social development will be retained by the Union, if it continues to exist. Speaking of the republics, I would like to draw your attention to the following: Frans Willekens and Sergei Scherbov are studying migration in the USSR. This problem is very unique. For example, the republics of Central Asia have a labour surplus. Yet, because of their most religious, and their traditional way of life, people who live there are not willing to move to other territories. I hope that the Population Research Centre created at this University will help us to study migration in different regions and republics methodologically. The analysis of different processes of the population’s behaviour in our multi-ethnic, poli-confessional country is of utmost importance to define economic and social policy.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the creation of political, economic, and social preconditions which will enable every individual to find his or her place in this world, and which will provide him or her the freedom of choice, based on his or her interest and responsibility, is one of the most important elements of his or her social security. For the people in my country have become used to the fact that the state will take care of them by providing food, housing, etc. Unless they realize that
democracy and choice involve responsibility, it will be very
difficult for us to move towards the market economy.

Finally, I would like to say that one of the most important
problems now is to convince people that the transition to a
market economy, an intelligent transition, is inevitable. Going
backwards is historical death, but going forwards towards market
economy, is a chance to create a civilized life. Practically
speaking, in every country the transition from one social system
to another was accomplished by the socially most active part of
the population. In my country, I believe such a body of active
people who are ready to play the role of the pivot of our social
economic development, has been formed.

Thank you for your kind attention.
Professor Nathan Keyfitz

Biodata

Nathan Keyfitz was born in 1913 in Montreal, Canada. Professor Keyfitz is a member of the US National Academy of Sciences and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Nathan Keyfitz started his professional career as a statistician, later Senior Research Statistician, at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in Ottawa. In 1963, he became Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago, in 1968 Professor of Demography at the University of California at Berkeley, and in 1972 Andelot Professor of Sociology and Demography at Harvard University, where he remained until he was forced to retire in 1983 at the age of 70. Since 1984, he is the leader of the Population Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, Austria.

Professor Keyfitz is the author of numerous publications, including eight books. His publications cover population theory, mathematical demography, historical demography, mortality, urbanization, forecasting, social security (pensions), poverty, population and environment interaction, and democracy.

Professor Keyfitz lectured and was a consultant in many countries, including Indonesia, Germany, Italy, India, China, Japan and Russia. He is fluent in French, Spanish, German, Indonesian and Italian.
ON THE FISSION OF EMPIRES

Address of professor Nathan Keyfitz, at the opening of the Population Research Centre

Abstract

The trend of the 20th century from its beginning has been towards smaller political units. The Austro-Hungarian, German, British, French, and most recently the Russian, Empires have all been dissolved into their constituent nationalities. Ethnic homogeneity is a fiction, but it is one that has had enormous influence, from before the time when President Woodrow Wilson gave it an impetus on the occasion of World War I, and as the 20th century comes to a close it has by no means exhausted its influence. According to all the evidence the process of fission has not come to an end, perhaps never will. The Indian Dominion of the British Empire broke up into three portions soon after the British left, and each of these three is under pressure to break up further. Frantic efforts to form national communities of people who can understand one another will continue, and they will give a very different direction to history from that of the past 200 years, when it has been the liberal Enlightenment that told us what was forward looking and what was reactionary. Demographers as well as the rest of the world will have to take into account, and live with, the resulting instability in geographical boundaries of the political units in which our work is framed.
Statistics started as data, above all data on the state, whether quantitative or not. The state provided its etymology, still employs a large fraction of the world's statisticians and constitutes the subject of more data collections than any other variable. Like so much else that pertains to the modern state, its statistical system emerged with the French Revolution. One of the early acts of the Constituent Assembly was to see to the publication of a statistical account of the resources of France, prepared by the chemist Lavoisier. In 1791, the Assembly ordered a census, which was duly taken in that year. François de Nauchâtel, in a circular dated the 15th of Fructidor, 1799, described the census as the measure of the strength, the source of the wealth, the political thermometer of the power of states.

Nations and demographic data

Of the various applications of statistics it is demography that deals most nearly exclusively with national materials. The largest part of its data consists in censuses and vital registrations, along

with what is to be had on movement across national boundaries, and collecting these is essentially an activity of national governments. Only as subnational areas—provinces, states, departments, municipalities—are defined by those governments for administrative convenience do data for them become available.

It is no accident that the quantitative study of population arose simultaneously with the development of data from which it could derive its empirical content, and that the emergence of both data and theory coincided with the strengthening of the national state early in the 19th century. The large number of new nations created after World War II—like the smaller number created after World War I—celebrated their creation by counting their inhabitants.

This celebratory or ceremonial aspect of the census is not often referred to by demographers—I have found not one reference to it in our literature—but it is a theme of a broad-ranging statistician, William Kruskal. For him,

*The decennial census is a national ceremony and a symbol of the relation between citizen and government... It provides a sense of social cohesion, and a kind of non-religious communion; we enter the census apparatus as*

(...continued)

8 England and Wales in 1801, of Upper and Lower Canada in 1851.

9 Very soon after the creation of the United Nations, its Economic and Social Council set up a Population Commission, whose main single task was to help the new nations make plans for Censuses and other data collections. Other activities in the field of population, especially the promotion of family planning, proved controversial, but censuses to measure population were wanted alike by those countries concerned with limits and those anxious to grow.
individual identities with a handful of characteristics; then later we receive from the census a group snapshot of ourselves at the ceremony date.\textsuperscript{10}

Again, such a national ceremony serves an important social function, it provides

cultural glue, a sign of coherence and stability in a world seen by many as increasingly chaotic and drifting away from commonly-held values.\textsuperscript{11}

Kruskal does not apply his observations to the new nations, but to this onlooker the ceremonial aspect seemed even more central to them than to the industrial countries.

Because the network of national boundaries that covers the land area of the planet is the basis of virtually all study of population growth and decline, as well as of movement, even small alterations in the pattern of sovereign units makes great inconvenience for the users of data, and for none more than demographic analysts. Long after other observers have forgotten previous arrangements of the network demographers must still keep them in mind in presenting historical series. That applies even to small adjustments of boundaries, and in a major way to such changes as occurred at the end of the 1980s in the former USSR.


\textsuperscript{11} The Census as a National Ceremony, Ibid., pp. 177-180.

The largest single set of changes in the network came with the ending of World War II, when most of the world's remaining empires disappeared, a continuance of the process of self-determination that could be seen as starting with the loosing of the United States from Britain and the formation of national states elsewhere in the Americas from the disassembly of Spanish and Portuguese empires, then taking a jump about 1920, and an even larger jump about 1950. One has to conclude from the unidirectionality of this process that self-determination of peoples, the breakup of empires, constitutes a long-term trend to reduction in the size of sovereign political units.

Table 1 shows the increasing membership of the United Nations, now numbering 175. Most of the additions after 1945 are new states, though a few memberships had been held up by lengthy negotiations among the permanent members of the Security Council.

Table 1. Date of accession to the United Nations in five-year time intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the decade of the 1980s in which there were only 4 accessions we have already had 18 in the 1990s. Most countries of appreciable size, with the notable exception of Switzerland, are members of the United Nations.

The most spectacular recent formation of new states was on the breakup of the USSR about 1990. This seems to have been quite a separate matter from the collapse of Communism, the latter being due to the incapacity of Communism to produce the expected material goods, the former due to the general tendency of our times that I call fission. Communism and the Russian Empire had their origins in different ways, and their ending need not have been simultaneous. The Empire had not been created by Lenin, but simply captured from his Czarist predecessors. The mismanagement of the economy inseparable from Leninism made the termination of the USSR inevitable, but it by no means determined the breakup into a dozen sovereign units. That has to be considered a separate matter, resulting from the same forces that broke up other Empires, and that could well have applied in our times whether the Empire was ruled about 1990 by a Czar, a Lenin, or the most liberal of governments.

At the time of its founding and for a decade or two beyond the United Nations helped greatly to break up those large units, and give ethnically homogeneous groups their own nation states. Once they were established a continuation of this parenting included in aiding the new states in census taking, setting up needed conventions on the definition of demographic entities, as well as standards for enumeration and compilation, all with the objective of comparability between countries and over time.

On any reasonable projection of recent trends, the process of decolonization, that went so smoothly with the freeing of Ceylon from British rule, will continue in the same path and free the Tamils from the Singhalese. If we are to believe in continuity of the historical process sovereignty will go down to small homogeneous groups, though this further stage of decolonization will take time. Is it likely that what we have seen in the USSR can be prevented in Ceylon, Iraq, Yugoslavia, Tibet, and elsewhere? The groups can be large or small, united by language or religion, the only requirement seemingly being that the individuals making them up are in some way differentiated.

All this is not something that I preach or recommend; it is the visible movement of history through this century. The breakup of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires in 1919; of the British, Dutch, and French Empires in 1945-62; the USSR in 1991; what more evidence of a trend can anyone want?

Yet the greatest statesmen, not to mention their subjects, have failed to identify this trend, even when it was on them. Churchill said in a much cited expression that he did not become Her Majesty’s Prime Minister to preside over the breakup of the British Empire, yet almost before the echo of that remark had died away the British Empire did break up. We have seen in the Press of the last few months how Gorbachev, also a great statesman, resisted the breakup of the USSR, and how inexorably it is going ahead just the same. Nor were earlier statesmen better forecasters. We have sententious phrases from Joseph Chamberlain: The day of small nations has long passed away. The day of Empires has come. More understanding was shown by the fictional Martin J. Dooley, who recalled, on hearing the Southern states had left the Union: ‘Let them go, ... There’s plenty left,’ I said. And earlier to the same effect by William Pitt.

---

12 Speech in Birmingham, May 12, 1904.
14 *I rejoice that America has resisted.* Speech in the House of Commons, January 14, 1766, or later, *If I were an American,* (continued...)
In large heterogeneous empires, or in the modern world without empires at all, national governments would lose their importance. As a contemporary writer puts the common expectation, or as Lenin expressed it, the state would wither away...

national cultures would cease to be sources of enmity and war to become, like varieties of ethnic cuisine, innocent relics of human diversity, and traditional allegiances would be dissolved by the benign acids of trade, education, and scientific enquiry into a universal human community.\(^15\)

The Enlightenment minimized the importance of language and religion along with what it saw as superstition in general, and at the extreme talked of substituting for all the historically evolved languages, with their irrational constrictions and needless variety of vocabulary, one rational mode of speech for all mankind. Esperanto was once the wave of the future; now it is merely quaint.

Today’s watchwords are all in the opposite direction, that used to be called reactionary: autonomy and national sovereignty for every separate tribe. Some of them even have a flavour of racism. It is too late for the process to be completed throughout the globe within this century and it will surely carry over well into the 21st century. But sweeping the whole of humanity is the irresistible sentiment that rule over alien peoples is bad, that all peoples have a right to be free of alien domination. "Tribalism is the strongest force in the world today."\(^16\)

Writers have argued that the universalism of the several world religions, especially of Islam and Roman Catholicism, followed by that of the Enlightenment, and then by Marxism-Leninism, all in their different ways gave a direction to history. We are particularly influenced by the Enlightenment that for 200 years provided well-meaning people with a clear guide on how to orient themselves: always towards a future of rationality, universalism, liberalism, the installation of humane capitalism, and always towards the erasing of distinctions of race and religion. These watchwords seemed to describe the shining goal to which history was moving. The directional aspect has been built into the languages of Western Europe: people who would move towards the liberal goal were advanced or at least progressive, while those who resisted were backward or reactionary. It has certainly been a stock in trade of oratory.\(^17\) Now long before that goal of liberalism has been attained it has become like a compass at the North Pole — no longer capable of telling direction.\(^18\)

\(^14\) (continued)

\(\text{as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms — never — never — never. You cannot conquer America.}^*\) Speech, November 18, 1777.


\(^17\) For instance, the summing up of John F. Kennedy, "...he made people look beyond nation and race to the future of humanity." Arthur M. Schlesinger (1965) A Thousand Days; Chapter 37.

\(^18\) We have in a recent best seller, Francis Fukuyama’s The end of History and the Last Man, an announcement of the final triumph of liberalism, an announcement that surely is premature. The thesis is that the ending of Communism, its theory as well as the state organizations that tried to practice it, leaves nothing but liberal Capitalism. The downfall of one enemy is a matter for congratulation, but we have nothing to reassure us in regard to other enemies. Equally unrealistic is Richard O’Brien’s The End of Geography (1992) that disregards all the fighting that is going on around (continued...)
To infer from the death of Leninism, the evil empire, that only good things can happen from now on, is the logical fallacy of supposing that there are only two possibilities in history. This view is an inheritance from the recently ended Cold War, a simplification of the landscape convenient when problems had to be explained to hundreds of millions of people. It was all very well for both sides to argue during the time of the Cold War that Capitalism and Communism were the alternatives. As in any war, the opposed propagandas each offer their side bliss if only victory can be won over the opponent of the moment. And as in any war, after victory new formations and oppositions emerge, and bliss is still far away.

It is easy enough for intellectuals in the East as in the West to argue that liberal capitalism has now no real competitor. It is true that no other system comes close to providing equivalent satisfactions, economic, political, and moral. But to go from that to the supposition that it will everywhere triumph is blind optimism.\(^{19}\) Alternatives are around that are much easier to explain to those hundreds of millions of people who until so recently were targets of the Cold War propagandists. One of these, the one that this article is exploring, is the doctrine that one can only be happy in an exclusive community, surrounded by one’s own people.

---

18 (...continued)
the world — and for what prize? The Serbs, the Atzenese of North Sumatra, the Russians of Moldavia, all want geography, geographical exclusiveness. It would be safer to argue the opposite of O’Brien’s title: that geography today has an importance never before seen.

19 As Ken Jowitt argues in New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction, 1991, Berkeley: The University of California Press. The image of the title is the extinction of the dinosaurs, in this case the Communist dinosaurs.

For reasons not at all understood, the loss of the state’s economic meaning as production is internationalized seems to go along with an increase in the cultural importance of the state. Yet for the state or the community to dominate culture is a wholly illiberal arrangement. Unfortunately we see that people want to live in that kind of surrounding, intimate rather than cosmopolitan, centred either on language or on religious observance; they want to make the political boundary coincide with the cultural boundary.

How far was universalism an extension of the political interest of the multicultural empires? If it was, then does intolerance come to be the interest of the monocultural state? There is indeed a danger of that, and yet one sees a number of homogeneous states — Sweden and the Netherlands are instances — that are models of humane civility and peace, within and without, with no external enemies or unusual internal violence.

In the light of recent events, and following from this drive to homogeneity, we have come to see that under their solid exterior many states possess a precarious unity. A year ago the news carried a dispatch from the BBC Afghanistan expert, in the wake of the Willy Brandt initiative of a Conference between the Najibullah government and the Mujahaddin insurgents. He said that arranging peace then, three years after the Soviet departure, was crucial. For elements in the government were forming strong links with their co-tribalists in the opposition, and the alternative to peace could well be a breakup of Afghanistan into tribal mini-states. In that event, he asked, what would happen to Pakistan, that from the beginning has been an artificial creation, and if it breaks up what about India.
Ethnicity a political fiction

It has been pointed out a thousand times that ethnicity in the sense of common ancestry is nowhere to be found in the modern world. The English are a mix of Celts and Danes along with Romans, and after 1066 A.D. their upper classes had a strong admixture of Norman French, which is largely Scandinavian. France includes among its most ancient lines of descent Vikings, Germans, Celts, Basques and many others. If English and French, living on the periphery of Europe, are that mixed, think of Serbs, Bosnians, Lithuanians, Poles, located on routes that criss-cross one another, and over which traders, fighters and simple migrants have been passed in a never ending stream, many settling down, many just leaving their progeny on the way as they moved on to somewhere else.

That no informed person can believe that Serbs have a distinct and non-overlapping ancestry from Bosnians in no way inhibits the use of the terms for political and military mobilization. Around the fiction of ethnicity history is increasingly revolving, and that is the subject of this article.

Voluntary unions

The fissioning process would be even more regrettable if it were not accompanied by another process — voluntary unions of sovereign states for trade, monetary, and diplomatic purposes. The prime example is the European Economic Community, on the whole regarded as successful, now about to deal with several applications for membership, and whose example is inspiring others on other continents. The succession states of the former USSR are trying hard to create something parallel to the EEC among themselves, ideally ultimately to join the EEC. Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and other countries seek entrance into the EEC, that is not sure how many newcomers it ought to try to digest. If Slovenia separates it will want to establish close relations with Austria. Romanian-speaking Moldavia wants to be politically and economically close to Romania, though it seems unlikely to give up its sovereignty.

A century and a quarter ago the United States fought a bitter war to hold itself together. Times have changed since then. Canada will not do anything of the kind, nor, it seems, will the USSR, nor Czechoslovakia, nor Belgium. Serbia, the Sudan and other African states, Ceylon, India and Burma in Asia, all show a lower level of civility, fighting to defend their national integrity, a claim that with the passage of time comes to ring more hollow the more it is discredited by the irrational violence and crime perpetrated in its name.

Fissioning increases armaments?

A worrying question is whether the process of fission will lead to more purchase of arms and more wars than the preceding unions. It is to be admitted that the Soviet regime was able to suppress not only insurrection against itself — presumably the
chief purpose of its police and military—but it could incidentally suppress everything else that was not perfectly safe and orderly—human rights, public protests, etc. All these things broke out with the slackening of control by force.

It is also true that armaments and wars resulted when the pax britannica ended in South Asia. India and Pakistan have more arms than would be expected if they had remained united, and with those arms they have so far fought three wars. Yet the Pakistanis within a formally united India might be throwing bombs at the rate the Irish, the Kurds, and the Bosnians are doing. Exchanging internal wars for external ones does not guarantee a diminution of bloodshed, but neither will it necessarily bring an increase.

Having 500 or 1000 nations rather than 175 might well be feared as increasing dissension and war, but that is far from necessary. We do have the case of Armenia and Azerbaijan, both admitted to the UN on March 2, 1992, coming close to full scale war, but on the whole the main threats to peace today are within existing nations: Slovenes and Croats versus Serbs, Sikhs versus India, Basques versus Spain, Karens versus Myanmar. Small homogeneous nations would know that they cannot be economically independent, and that getting along with their neighbours and the world community, in politics and trade, was the key to their survival and prosperity. We cannot hope that war will be eliminated, but we have no indication that it will be more frequent, or more destructive among small nations than among large nations.

An external war at least removes one unfairness of an internal war: it removes the legal asymmetry between the combatants, and offers equal access to arms. Victory would more likely fall to the side that had the greatest popular backing, though it is still tragic that this method has to be used to ascertain who has backing. At least the one-sided slaughter of Kurds by the Iraqi armies’ tanks and planes would be no more; instead any fighting would be between parties having equal legal status and the same right to arm themselves. Just let no one hope that the fissioning process here described would change the old Adam within man. The ideal is to control the distribution of arms so that no one has any; if this is impossible then the next best is to equip both sides rather than have one side simply butcher the other.21

On the bright side we should think of the possibility that the new states will avoid protection, have essentially open boundaries to transit, and stock minimum armaments. The smaller states of Europe—Switzerland, the Netherlands—are no less prosperous, their citizens no less happy so far as anyone knows, than the big ones, and their peaceful example might spread.

**How small the state?**

No lower limit can be set for the size of states. Andorra with a 1985 population estimated at 40,000 is formally subject to the President of France, but in fact is an independent country governed by an elected council and syndic. Liechtenstein (1985 population 28,000) is independent and governed by a parliament elected by universal suffrage; it does have close association with Switzerland, but the association is not enforced by the constitution of either country, and certainly not by military force. Greenland (population 54,000) is nominally a Danish possession, but it has complete autonomy, with its own laws and administration, to the point that in 1982 it was free to withdraw from the Common Market.

---

21 Ruth Leger Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures*, issued annually, gives an idea of how much better off—in dollar terms—countries would be without those arms purchases, even if we do not take into account the actual destruction they cause.
One expects that in small independent states economic relations with the rest of the world would be close. Perkins and Syrquin measure this with the ratio of the sum of imports plus exports to the Gross Domestic Product; they find a correlation of minus 0.387 with population. One surmises that political relations with the rest of the world would also be close. The small states would naturally form associations, perhaps with their neighbours, perhaps with distant countries, that would serve such purposes as defence. A number of small states could band together for purposes of diplomatic representation, or else they could hire representation from some larger country, as Greenland and Liechtenstein now do from Denmark and Switzerland respectively. In the ideal case the small state would be culturally homogeneous, that would facilitate internal coordination, it would associate voluntarily with other states for many economic and political purposes. Besides being culturally homogeneous the new states being formed would be socially liberal and humane. Whether such a collection of attributes will prove mutually compatible remains to be seen.

That is the bright side. On the other hand the states that had arrived at a condition of cultural homogeneity may make that homogeneity a standard for their internal functioning. If they have fought a war of independence to get out of a multicultural empire, they could go on to deal severely with heterogeneous elements within. At its worst that translates into a revival and stimulation of racism. I have referred to the possibility that just as the multicultural empire has a genuine political interest (not always realized) in encouraging tolerance, so the homogeneous state could well define its interest as intolerance of aliens within as well as outside its borders.

Whether smallness and the consequent homogeneity are an economic advantage is unclear. We do know that there is practically no correlation between population and per capita income. On the other hand per capita income is positively correlated with density, to the amount of 0.240. Wildly different interpretations of such correlations are possible.

The study of this question by Perkins and Syrquin (1989), following a tradition established by Simon Kuznets, is too thorough and scholarly to pronounce on the question that really needs answering: Is smallness a handicap to economic advance? One can say that with economically permeable boundaries, or at least free movement of goods, most of the disadvantage of small markets is removed, and the same specialization can take place as in a large country. What cannot take place is the kind of planning possible for a large country, so whether one regards governmental action as likely to improve things or to harm them will determine whether one sees smallness combined with free trade as disadvantageous. Japan’s planning in confronting competitive markets has been strikingly successful, and so has Holland’s with one fifth of its population; Indian planning is a very different case.

The sacred national territory: truck or trade is treason yet everything moveable contained in the territory is for sale

One feature of the national spirit that has been absolutely constant: its identification with the national territory in recent


23 Perkins and Syrquin show a correlation among 97 countries of -0.026. (Ibid., p. 1696)

decades. No government could think of giving away or selling a square meter of the national territory. Trading pieces of land with other countries is repugnant, even where there would be a common advantage to the two parties. Even renting land for foreign bases is suspect, as one sees in countries as far separated as the Philippines, Spain and Turkey. Referred to as an incomprehensible act of an earlier regime in which the sense of nationalhood had not yet matured is the Russian Czar’s sale of Alaska to the United States in 1867 for $7,200,000. The national soil has now become sacred, to be handed down intact to all the following generations; it is not subject to negotiation, to truck or trade, for any purpose whatever, economic or political.

An outsider therefore finds it strange that there is no such national identification with what lies on, over, or under the soil. Countries among the most nationalistic still regard as perfectly normal selling oil, copper, and other subsoil wealth; running down the soil itself by producing more peanuts than the world needs—as in Senegal—and so lowering the water table and helping the spread of the desert; selling the forests in the form of plywood or furniture, or cutting them down to make pasture for beef cattle that will only last a few years as in Brazil’s Amazon.

The spirit of nationalism takes on changing forms. During a relatively short period it has moved from having more people, to having a healthy and prosperous population no longer in rapid increase; from the state conducting all investment and regarding multinational corporations as the enemy, to states competing intensely for private foreign capital. Can we now hope that on the geographical and ecological front there will be a move from exclusive concentration on the national territory, disregarding its natural wealth, to identification with the national territory and its ecological content, to ensuring not only that the territory will be there for the descendants to take over, but its natural wealth as well?

I would emphasize further the paradox of carelessness on ecological matters along with nationalism on territorial ones. Development goes forward with many sacrifices in effort and abstention, the return on which cannot be reaped before the time of children and grandchildren. Yet to accomplish the economic side by sacrificing the ecological will not leave the means for a prosperous existence to later generations. Selling off those forests to serve developmental purposes makes little sense if the supposedly wealthy descendants will inherit only a barren wilderness. The labour and the abstention of the present generation will be worthwhile if along with a prospering economy the (grand)children of those now alive can have a territory as naturally rich as the one that exists today. The sheer logic of sustainable development seems overwhelming but in fact it is far from imposing itself.

Such is the case for the nation identifying not only with its national territory but with the content of that territory, for choosing a route of development that will preserve the ecosphere in which its economy has to sit. And that requires conservation on the one side and population control on the other.

Education and nationalism

In the early instances it was not natives who declared independence, but the early settlers from Europe or their children. Americans did not take the initiative in the American Revolution. The revolutionaries were above all those Englishmen and Spaniards who had settled in the New World and come to identify with it, who developed economic interests distinct from the interests of the metropolis.

Contrast in at least one respect, later revolutionary movements were animated principally by indigenous intellectuals of the colonies, often graduates of metropolitan universities. The colo-
nial authorities bred and educated the men and women who in the end unseated them. Discrimination against natives, felt even by the best educated, was resented in India and elsewhere. During the 1870s and 1880s many Indian organizations appeared as an expression of resentment against British discriminatory laws, and a number combined in 1885 as the Indian National Congress.

From the beginning the Congress spoke for an influential section of the new professional classes created by British rule—college teachers, lawyers, journalists, doctors—as well as for the students who were beginning to crowd into the colleges.25

What makes this important is that in the new nations education went much further than in the old empires. In both cases the education followed from the needs of the rulers for skilled manpower, and the new nations needed far more to satisfy their burgeoning industrial and commercial needs. In the Soviet Union as in 19th century India the fissioning process was speeded by the spread of education.

The British Empire was the largest of the political units, and it started to break up even before it was fully created. The United States separated in 1775; Canada obtained sovereignty for all practical purposes in 1867; Australia in 1905. The breakup was made easier and quicker by a large number of voters in the mother country who were indifferent or hostile to empire-building, partly out of idealism of the kind to which William Pitt gave expression, and partly out of the more practical objections to empire voiced by Josiah Tucker26 and Adam Smith.27

Yet in one respect at least the resistance to Empire of the 19th century in the Americas was motivated in the identical way as resistance to Empire in the 20th century. It was characterized by unwillingness to submit to taxation for the benefit of the mother country. The last thing colonials wanted was to remain a mere source of raw materials, and least of all when through a combination of taxes and tariffs the mother country secured the raw materials from them very cheaply.

A continuing process

Once established governments of the New Nations in all centuries do their best to impose cultural homogeneity. The educational system, especially at the primary level, has been the means of imprinting national symbols on the young, and in some considerable degree it is effective. Yet it is not completely effective; if it were the fissioning process would come to a stop. For many the culture of the home dominates, and notwithstanding what the teacher says the young regard the imposed culture of the school as alien and oppressive. The same mechanism that had broken up the European-held empires has been operative against the new states. Minorities become restless, sometimes led by an intellectual elite that felt it was not getting its share of the benefits of decolonization.

The process of fissioning is suggested by the selection of partly historical, partly hypothetical examples given in Table 2.

At each stage the configuration of states looked stable, the integrity of each apparently guaranteed by its constitution and protected by its armed forces; that stability is proving to be only a passing phase.

26 Josiah Tucker (1763) Tract Against Going to War for the Sake of Trade.
27 Adam Smith (1776) Wealth of Nations.
The outstanding example is the British Empire, from which India split off, and immediately divided into India and Pakistan. Not many years afterwards Pakistan divided into East Bengal (renamed Bangladesh) and the western part, that retained the name Pakistan. India is now unstable, with restless Kashmiris and an unhappy Sikh community; these seem determined to have independence and meanwhile are retained by force. More distant is independence for Assam, Kerala, and other states, where one can imagine the force of nationalism growing irresistibly.

One of the paradoxes is that the new nations are far more insistent on holding their minorities than the original empires were. The British were almost gracious about letting Ceylon go; the Singhalese are not acting at all gracious towards the Tamils' similar claim to independence. Some of the bitterest fighting in decades has occurred recently to suppress regional minorities in Iraq and now in Yugoslavia, both of them countries that secured independence in recent decades and without much bloodshed.

The movement towards making the political lines coincide with ethnic lines has been so durable and so widespread that one cannot see it stopping at the halfway stage now reached.

**Areas of mixed population are the obstacle**

All this is straightforward where the population in a given area is homogeneous and rebels against a ruler of different race and culture and living in a non-overlapping area. The existing heterogeneous states containing homogeneous divisions have not entirely renounced the use of force to resist defection, and there will often be struggle and bloodshed, but as the Marxists used to say, none can escape the movement of history, a phrase that now well describes their own demise. Any homogeneous areas of substantial size seem likely sooner or later to gain their independence.

| Table 2. Hypothetical scheme of political units: Actual and possible fission |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| The British Empire          | British India          | India                  |
|                            |                        | Kashmir                |
|                            |                        | Punjab                 |
|                            |                        | Assam                  |
|                            |                        | Kerala                 |
|                            |                        | Pakistan               |
|                            |                        | Pakistan               |
|                            |                        | Bangladesh             |
|                            | Ceylon                 | Sri Lanka              |
|                            |                        | Elam                   |
|                            | Burma                  | Myanmar                |
|                            |                        | Karenland              |
|                            | Russia                 | Tatarstan              |
|                            |                        | Yakutia                |
|                            | Azerbaijan             | Nagorno-Karabakh       |
|                            | Moldavia               | Dnestor                |
|                            | Georgia                | East Georgia           |
|                            |                        | West Georgia           |
| The French Empire           | France                 | Vietnam                |
|                            | Vietnam                | North Vietnam          |
|                            |                        | South Vietnam          |
| The Austro-Hungarian Empire | Yugoslavia             | Slovenia               |
|                            |                        | Croatia                |
|                            |                        | Serbia                 |
|                            | Czechoslovakia         | Bohemia                |
|                            |                        | Slovakia               |
|                            | Hungary                |                        |
But intermingled peoples complicate matters. The Slovenes seem to be getting their freedom relatively easily; the Croatians, having Serbs living among them, face a more difficult time, the Bosnians a seemingly impossible one. The objection to Lithuanian independence from the USSR was raised by and on behalf of the Russians living within its borders. It was Russian policy under Stalin that put them there, but how they got there does not affect the problem as it stands today.

Is there any way of solving the problem of a new state in part of which Croats and Serbs live side by side? On the one hand, for the Croats the boundaries as earlier defined are sacred; the Serbs on the other hand fight to save those cousins within the boundaries of Croatia from the fate of having to live under Croatian rule. A shift of the boundary to an intermediate position and some voluntary exchange of populations would seem the logical answer; neither side would have all it wanted, but it would have as much as it could get without depriving the other side. But this is not being promoted by either. Neither cares that a suitable intermediate boundary with free exchange in the housing market would allow individuals on both sides to realize a fair value for their houses and to buy suitable houses on the side they wanted to join. The matter is easier yet if they rent rather than own their houses. More difficult is exchange of jobs, but with goodwill even that could be arranged. It is the height of irrationality to fight over the territory and destroy both sets of houses rather than exchange them, but that is just what tends to occur.

The difficulty that intermingled populations present for fission is no mere hypothesis of mine but was well known and much applied by Joseph Stalin and other dictators from the Roman Emperors onward. It was policy to establish Roman soldiers on the Danube, and in our time Russians in Moldavia, the Ukraine, Lithuania and elsewhere.

**Tribute to nations: why world government is the last thing we need**

It has been said that the division of the world is especially perilous with the powerful arms now in possession of national states. Under World Government there would be no more international wars, for one thing, and the planet could be rationally developed as a unit, for the benefit of its inhabitants. The peak of the one world sentiment, under World Federalism or some other name, came after World War II, and as a reaction to the horrors of that war. An analogous sentiment had appeared after World War I, and resulted in the founding of the League of Nations. There are good reasons why less is now heard of world government.

That bloodshed would be eliminated by eliminating the division of the planet into sovereign nations is simply incorrect. We have seen enough inter-ethnic battling in recent years to be about as afraid of militant ethnics, or militant fundamentalists, as of militant nations. With one world, moreover, we would have only one chance of establishing democracy and civility. If the government of the one world, whether by deception or by force, fell under the rule of a Genghis Khan, or a Stalin or a Hitler, there would be no sanctuary in which civilization could hold out and from which it could fight back.

There is a better chance of preserving the ecological health of the planet with varying political systems, especially if we take account of undecided electorates and uncertain scientific knowledge, all in the face of some universal threats to our environment. Since no one knows for sure what is to be done a multiplicity of sovereign nations can experiment with different systems of conservation, of ways of handling the energy problem, of waste disposal. France can go all out for the nuclear option, Austria can ban nuclear power and go for Russian gas and
Middle Eastern oil. Europe can tax gasoline heavily, the US lightly. Time will show which works better. Independent experiments, stimulated by international competition followed by the spontaneous diffusion of effective methods evolved in one part or another of the world are possible only because of the independence of sovereign nations.

We have here an analogue to the advantages that markets bring within countries through the multiplicity of independent decision units. Individual initiative, the lowering of price to cost, unrestrained experimentation, with the assurance, at least in principle, that the best will prevail, is what we find in the regime of nations as in the regime of markets within nations. The peaceful commercial competition of nations will bring its greatest benefits if the nations are small and numerous and intercommunicating freely.

A person from Mars might think that the best way to administer the economy is a single authority, with power exercised on behalf of the people, who would run industry in such a way as to be economically productive and ecologically benign. Yet from closer to Earth that looks like the worst possible way. Industries seeking profit, and a government as far as possible independent of them, better serve both the economy and the ecology. Today’s (January 23, 1992) news cites Mr. Yeltsin’s environment expert on the outrageous doings of the planned USSR: a nuclear-powered icebreaker abandoned in shallow water in the Arctic Ocean; up to 20% of oil production lost into the landscape through burst pipes.

Inequality of resources

Nature has dispensed its abundance unequally among countries. Is it not unfair that Canada should have plenty of water, and the US Southwest little, and much of what the latter does have a one time supply that is rapidly running down? It is unfair that so much of the world’s oil is in the Middle East, far beyond any possible need there, when all countries could have made good use of a reasonable supply. Should not countries that are rich in resources divide?

They should not. The US Southwest would indeed be better off for a while with a continental water plan. Running channels south to put the Canadian lakes at the disposal of the United States would indeed make economic sense for the short run. It would be Pareto optimal, in that the US would gain without Canada for the moment suffering. But the longer run effect would be to replace a local drought by a continental drought. There is an ultimate limit set by water to the agriculture and settlement possible on the continent, and to defer facing that limit is a doubtful advantage. Concentrating the drought in a few places forces earlier recognition of the limit. Even though it may not appear in our short run interest, we should count ourselves fortunate that Nature and History arranged matters this way.

The ethical-economic dilemma of inequality

I have referred to the similarity of the argument favouring small sovereign nations to that favouring the market organization of production within nations. Both carry on the movement towards decentralized decision making that has been much spoken of in recent years. The people on the ground know conditions; the smaller the unit the more the decision-maker within it can identify with the inhabitants and act in their interest as well as in the search for profit.

The multiplicity of units will allow many different policies to be tried out in the political as well as the economic sphere. Does
proportional representation work better than single member constituencies? Is social security responsible for some of the decline in savings, and how much? What effect does minimum wage legislation have on unemployment? Freedom of national units to choose such options and to invent new ones is bound to increase knowledge and so to permit the selection of good policies, and so the more units the better.

The natural human inclination, at least professed if not always practised, is for an LDC government to concentrate aid on the least advanced of its provinces. It is similarly more humane of rich countries to concentrate their aid on the poorest of the LDCs, again not always done. Yet the confused mix of would-be humane policies pursued over nearly fifty years of development activity has left few monuments to the vision of such philanthropy.

Think of a country whose income per capita is growing at a rate of 3% per year, starting with an average of $200 per capita. At the end of 100 years its per capita income will have somewhat exceeded $4,000 (first column of Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Joined</th>
<th>Separated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>1011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>1434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>1633</td>
<td>2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>2205</td>
<td>2949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>2976</td>
<td>4256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>4017</td>
<td>6199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>5423</td>
<td>9048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Development in a hypothetical country with two provinces of equal population, of which one increases in average income at 2% per year, the other at 4% per year, when the two provinces are a) joined and income redistributed each year, and b) separated.

But suppose the country is heterogeneous, with two provinces of equal population, in one of which the income per capita grows at 2% per year, in the other of which it grows at 4%. Suppose also that the country splits, and each of the two successor countries goes its own way, with its own rate of increase. Then at the end of 100 years the average income of the two countries will be over $6,000 per capita (right-hand column of Table 3), more than 50% higher than if the two parts had remained together.

This mathematical phenomenon supposes that when the two provinces are joined, each year the greater increase of the faster growing is transferred to the slower growing.

When we come to consider the substance of the matter, what is likely to be actually going on, the conclusion is strengthened that progress will be faster when the countries have divided. To the arithmetic of Table 2 would be added the advantage of homogeneous culture within each, the mutual understanding among citizens that helps both political and economic action, not assumed in this purely arithmetical model.
Other considerations of a qualitative nature help further to reinforce the arithmetic. Some LDCs are ready for development, especially in the attitudes of the population and in their laws and regulations. We have seen this demonstrated many times in respect of population aid. Send contraceptives to a country that is wholly traditional and they will not be used. Send them to a country that is starting to modernize and they will be seized on. One can imagine aid better used by the Ukraine than by Georgia in the conditions prevailing at this writing; better used by Indonesia than by Burma.

Beyond this, countries not ready are likely to select a badly assorted set of culture traits. In the field of population they will select death control and neglect birth control, failing to recognize that as the only way they can derive a net long term advantage from death control.

None of the above arguments for smallness and for temporary inequality enter the purely arithmetical model that follows. It presents a strong case for unequal development even if aid is equally effectively used by all recipients.

**Sequencing aid for fastest development**

Some corresponding arithmetic applies to aid policy both within and among countries. One ideal of development is all regions of a country or of the world growing economically in parallel, preferably with the less advanced growing faster so that within a short period they will catch up with the more advanced. On ethical-humanitarian grounds this is the right way. Yet in few LDCs is this to be found; for most it is the already advanced regions that are growing the fastest.

Leaving aside humanitarian famine relief, that must always have top priority, there are economic arguments in favour of initially concentrating on the winner. Some of these appear as external economies; it is better to locate your factory near supplies and customers. Beyond that the concentration of aid on the fastest growing will ultimately make for a faster development of the least advanced region. We do not need to prove that concentrating aid in the more advanced regions will enable those advanced regions to develop faster; what is surprising is that under very general conditions, on any one of a variety of definitions, development will be attained fastest for each and every separate part of a country or of the world if aid is distributed in a sequential process, in which the less advanced regions wait their turn.

This is for a purely arithmetical reason, unrelated to economic externalities, linkages, or trickle-down. All of these would in the actual process be superimposed on the arithmetic. The present argument follows simply from the nature of exponential growth, on an extension (not presented here) of the arithmetic of Table 2.

The mechanism is general enough to take in regions of a country whose aid is provided by a national government, or to developing countries receiving aid from more developed countries. All it requires is that there be substantial differences in rates of growth between the parts, and preferably that once a country reaches the developed stage it becomes a donor in its turn.

In addition to such arithmetic smaller states that are culturally homogeneous will a) find it easier to choose their leaders democratically, and then it will be easier for the chosen rulers to govern them, b) with civil order easier to maintain, there will be lower costs of police, c) homogeneity means that in every factory and office people will talk the same language, and so will find it easier to communicate with one another and coordinate
their activities, d) people will be spared the useless arousal and endless discussion arising from the fact that there are two cultures, e) however great the sympathy the groups have for one another any coordination or negotiation between people alien to one another imposes formalism and inflexibility on the interaction; in economics terms the transaction cost becomes high. We can see this extreme drive to formalism demonstrated in any international organization, and especially in the United Nations and its organs; f) If the faster growing are allowed to rise freely then their example will constitute a model and provide aid for the slower growing. Direct technology transfer through sale and purchase, or gift, of equipment, indirect transfer through young people from the slower studying in the universities of the faster or serving apprenticeships in their factories, and many other means of transmitting both technical and organizational models can come into play.

The deeper causes of fission

Imputing cause to a universal process like the fissioning here described is not a rewarding line of research. Every writer has his or her own ideas, and all one can do is to add some further speculation.

There could be some connection with the fact that the nation is losing its position as the basic economic unit, with production more and more managed by large firms that spread over many countries. This globalization includes automobiles whose engines are made in one country, the chassis in another, and of which the assembly might be in a third. With increasingly free movement of parts, of finished goods, and of capital the national state tends to become irrelevant as an economic unit. And where it is heterogeneous it is less capable of becoming a social unit, a community, than are its parts.

It is easy to suggest other particular causes. One can say that the Roman Empire broke up because its birth rate fell and it had to depend more and more on aliens to fill its military and civilian posts, the Austro-Hungarian Empire broke up because of the incompetence of its rulers, just as the United States split off from Britain because of the incompetence of George III; the USSR broke up because of the sheer organizational inefficiency of Communism.

There is clearly some truth in such specific attributions, but beyond them a universal phenomenon ought to be attributable to a universal cause. If not then history is exhibiting some unparalleled coincidences. What general phenomenon is present in the world as a whole, that is the moving force in the direction here sketched?

One candidate is formal education. That is imposed on any community, large or small, that hopes to enter the modern world of production and trade. An empire mostly consisting of ignorant peasants will only be a subject of pity to its contemporaries, and they will only be objects of envy to it. Having a narrow cultural and economic elite, however brilliant it may be, cannot create a powerful state under contemporary conditions, even with extensive natural resources. To attain his objectives a Stalin is forced to promote the education that in the end proves the undoing of his empire. And certainly formal education has everywhere spread in our time. Few countries have not passed the point of 50% literacy. Is that what causes the breakup of empires?

The connection is not obvious. Widespread schooling is associated with the Enlightenment. One thing that is taught in schools, a hidden agenda that goes along with reading and writing, is a certain universalism. Reading gives access to the thought of alien peoples; the literate person can enter into the minds of cultures that his illiterate ancestors would never even have heard of. Most
education includes at least some instruction in one of the world languages, say English or French, or at least an imperial language, within the former USSR Russian, in China official Mandarin, in the Austro-Hungarian empire German and to a lesser extent French. The schooled person has access to the world of books, and on the whole books encourage tolerance and respect for others, virtues that are natural to the multi-cultural empires, whether Austrian, British, French or Russian. Books tell not only how to design, build and operate machines that are fundamental to industrial civilization, yet access to them goes along with access to other books that offer a wider vision.

If it makes little sense to attribute the rise of subnationalism to schooling as such, then what about schooling on a path that leads to resentment of arbitrary rule, to the wish for freedom? That is a possibility, even though many of the successor states are not conspicuous in the freedom they offer their citizens.

A better place to look could well be the role of intellectuals, often though not necessarily in occupations associated with the educational system, seeking to create places for themselves. When Canadian society was static and places in which intellectuals could earn a living were few, great value was set on translation of legal and many other kinds of documents from English into French. That made positions for translators and interpreters, and the autonomy of French culture was valued for the importance it gave to these particular kinds of intellectual activity. (Since that time French society has become dynamic enough that this way of creating livelihoods for people educated in French has no significant place.)

But intellectuals finding roles for themselves in broader spheres is everywhere important. Successor states set up tariff walls to protect their production against the competition of mass produced goods from outside, and by maintaining their own language create a market for books written by their own citizens that will say things readily available in one of the world languages. The intellectuals, partly, but only partly, out of their own economic interest, want a certain degree of separation from the world at large, a comfortable geographic subdivision of world culture within which competition will be less intense.

And intellectuals defined broadly, have also had a part in the fissioning process. When large states build up large bureaucracies, it is the size of these that makes so difficult their dismantling. Britain had as few as 10,000 personnel to manage India; the Netherlands had 10 times as many as this in the East Indies; France had even more in North Africa. Hence Britain could let India go easily; the Netherlands had a harder time leaving Indonesia; France almost came to disaster before cutting itself loose from Algeria in 1962. The millions of civil servants and military in India will not readily let any of its present constituents separate.

But even if the intellectuals would benefit from the breakup of empires why should their fellow-nationals go along with them? Perhaps it will be said that it is natural for people to want to live with others who speak their language and so there is no difficulty in accounting for the tendency here pointed out. I cannot find in any explanation to say something is natural when it is only a way of saying that it is present. We should be able to do better in explaining fissioning than simply to offer an equivalent statement, to explain something by a synonym is not helpful.

Unfortunately, this is as far as I can come in locating the cause of this widespread phenomenon of nationalism. But the fact that it cannot be accounted for any more convincingly than this is no sufficient reason for neglecting so universal a tendency.
Evaluation — is it good or bad?

If we will not secure agreement on the cause of the phenomenon, we will even less agree on evaluating it: is it good or bad, and for whom? Those who put the emphasis on economic progress will favour larger political units; those who want the comfort of living among people who resemble them in language and ways of thought will say that wealth matters less than these non-material advantages. In the Canadian debate those who wanted free trade with the United States had to admit that their way was less comfortable — people would lose jobs (but of course they would ultimately get other better jobs); competition would require them to work more intensively and be better adapted to the larger market.

Yet the contrast between the universalism that prevailed within the empires and the particularism of the successor states contains some elements that are more debatable. One cannot have ethnically homogeneous states without abandoning the virtues associated with tolerance. Both as a cause and as an effect of this monoculturalism one comes to be suspicious of fellow citizens who do not share that locally favoured culture. Just because of their skin colour, language, religion or other distinguishing mark one identifies them with various ills. They smell, or are naturally dishonest, or going further, they are responsible for the increase of crime. It is easy to find distinguishing marks.

And in a process that we know too well today, enmities are simply created. In a completely harmonious neighbourhood someone hurts another, perhaps by accident but it is not so interpreted; the other hits back; a feud is on and it intensifies up to the killing level. The harmony of cultures in 19th century Constantinople or mid-20th century Beirut has been commented on, as well as the way that harmony has been destroyed. Beyond a certain point it comes to look as though the only answer is to create two separate countries. In the extreme case we reach the ultimate horror of ethnic cleansing.

Thus we have to concede — what is terribly obvious — that all is not well in what is now occurring. The world is transforming itself, with a strong movement to small culturally homogeneous units, often characterised by intense intolerance, downright hatred of foreigners, especially of foreigners within the gates, and some relatively weak movement towards freer trade and even more feeble, towards international political community. The effort to separate appears to be no temporary aberration, but a part of the long term movement of history. Whether the intolerance of strangers is an enduring part of it, or whether it is a transitory phenomenon that will vanish once the empires have broken up, can at this stage only be a matter for speculation.

Whether Europe and the Community now forming in it is above all this is not yet clear. But its difficulties in going beyond the freeing of trade make plain how deep-seated are the forces of cultural nationalism. And the shift to the political right revealed in recent elections, clearly a response to what are regarded as over-generous immigration policies, reveals that even Europe is not as closely wedded to its Enlightenment as we had hoped.

Conclusion

The main political trend of the 20th century has been the dissolution of empires held together by force. The struggle to achieve this has been more important than the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, or wars between empires. At the present moment there are no major international wars, but there is plenty of internal struggle, including bloodshed, as Tamils, Kurds, Karens, Moi, Croatians, and innumerable other groups seek to throw off an alien yoke.
This tendency had its antecedents earlier, for instance in the struggle for independence of the United States and Canada. Unless the trend reverses the drive to shake off alien rulers seems likely to continue until subordinated peoples are free and democratic. The intensity of the struggle depends very much on the military capacity of the superordinate group, especially the political reliability of their armed forces, and on the degree to which they insist on holding on to power over alien peoples, a domination that now can be seen to bring no long term benefit to any of those involved.

The drive for the freedom of peoples necessarily goes along with a drive to voluntary associations among peoples. If these associations could not be attained the economic prospects would be dreary. Small culturally homogeneous nations will be politically manageable as a workable democracy; they need not understand the neighbours across their borders in order to trade and have a division of labour much finer than among nations today. Most advantageous would be universal free trade, so that the entire planet becomes one economy with no arbitrary constraints.

The fissioning process gives the appearance at any one moment of being single stage. As long as India sought to be free of Britain the divisions within India did not seem important, or if they did were thought to be simply created by the British masters' strategy of divide and rule. But immediately after India became sovereign those divisions came to be the centre of attention and struggle, and Pakistan and truncated India were promptly born. But the Pakistan that had wanted so badly to be free of the inheritors of British India did not so easily let East Bengal slip from its grasp, and only after several years of bitterness was an independent Bangladesh created. What further splits are ahead on the subcontinent cannot be forecast, but as of now Kashmiris and Sikhs are hard to rule from Delhi and the situation of both seems highly unstable.

Thus many of the states are far from their final breakdown, and the repressive activities of central governments slow down the process at the same time as they cement enmities and make the ultimate breakup more certain. The unreconciled Kurds are as willing to fight Iraqi domination now as they were twenty years ago; the efforts to suppress movements of independence often have the effect of strengthening them; the killings provide current proof of what was before only suspected — that the dominating power is a heartless tyranny. Any hope of taming the separatist movements lies in compromise and concession, and tyrants are not good at a kind of diplomacy that can do that.

The advantages and drawbacks of such breakdown of nations and empires have by no means been exhaustively categorized above. One item that is worth adding here concerns personal self-conception. I do not contend that it is the explicitly listed advantages of smallness that are animating separatists within nations. They may be seeking rather a new personal identity and dignity. People are asked Who are you?, and the answer is much more satisfactory if it can be I am a Kurd, a citizen of Kurdistan, when Kurdistan is an independent and proud country, than to say I am a Turk, but of Kurdish ancestry and speech. The latter statement seems to confess that the person is somehow a subject, perhaps not a slave, but yet not quite free.

Whether because of some notion of economic advantages of smallness (always supposing free movement of goods and capital), but much more likely for quite other reasons that no one has yet discerned or expressed, we have from before the begin-

---

28 A number of advantages are mentioned by Simon Kuznets, in the main reference to this subject by an economist that I have been able to find: Simon Kuznets (1960) Economic growth of small nations. In: Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations, p. 32, edited by E.A.G. Robinson. London: Macmillan.
ning of the 20th century been moving towards the breakup of heterogeneous political entities, and the process will not end at the present half-way point. The Burma Muslims will not rest until they are free of Myanmar, the Macedonians of Yugoslavia, the Kurds of Iraq and Iran and Turkey. I repeat that history being on their side will not spare them much agony and bloodshed as they fight the well-equipped armies of their alien rulers.

So where does the demographer come out on this evolution? Not entirely happily. Aside from witnessing the abandonment of the ideals of the Enlightenment that touches everyone, the demographer will have his and her own (smaller but still important to us) problems in reconciling data so as to permit comparison through time and over space. In a continuing process of fission the world will never have finally stable national boundaries and we demographers will never have definitive numbers comparable over time.