CHAPTER - 1

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM : A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Modern Age is the age when people have organised themselves and their relations through the political instrument of state. States may be either 'nation-state' or 'multi-national'. As a result of conquest, colonization and immigration no state can today claim to be a pure 'nation-state'. Minorities - ethnic, linguistic, religious are in other words, realities which confront every modern state. The ever increasing expansion of the activities of the state has meant that apart from being the protector the state today is also the provider for its citizens. Consequently, in the case of the state structure being retained in the hands of a particular ethnic group, the dominant - subordinate group tussle manifests itself in ethnic terms and may involve more than competition for resources. It may be for the subordinate a fight for sheer survival as a distinct group. The rising tide of nationalism and violent ethnic conflict which rocked the foundations of Soviet state and communist bloc countries following the communist debacle exposed yet another failure of, these systems. The 'nation-
al question' had not been solved and ethnic identities were far from being replaced by 'friendship of peoples.'

An attempt to define and explain terms such as minority, ethnicity, ethnic group, nation and nationalism in itself reveal the complexity of the issue of ethnic minority. These terms are widely contested and there are as many definition and approaches as there are analysts. Some of the competing definitions and approaches are discussed in the following pages.

Minorities have been defined by contemporary sociologists as a group of people different from others in the same society by race, nationality, religion or language - who both think of themselves as a different group and are thought of by others as a different group with negative connotations. Further, they relatively lack in power and hence are subjected to certain exclusions discrimination and other differential treatment.

The term 'ethnic' derives from the Greek word 'ethnos' which means a 'nation'. At the heart of ethnicity is said to be the feeling of being special. Each individual shared perceptions of the distinctiveness of his ethnic group and a sense of common historical experience. Added to that sentiment is continuity through biological descent and the sharing of common social and cultural conditions. Ethnic groups
thus are essentially exclusive and ascriptive - membership in such groups being confined to those who shared inborn attributes.

Crawford Young has classified the various approaches utilized by authors to analyse ethnic conflicts into three categories - primordial, instrumentalist, constructivist.¹ Primordialists hold that as individuals are born and socialized into an ethnic community they imbibe from their earliest experiences an unique identity, collective memories, language, and custom of their people. These bonds tend to be perpetuated inter-generationally as distinctive people, tribes and nations. Instrumentalists, on the other hand, argue that ethnicity is not a historically given category at all but a highly adaptive and malleable phenomenon. Instrumentalists are skeptical about the integrity of ethnic identity and solidarity. They argue that ethnicity is primarily a practical resource that individuals and groups deploy opportunistically to promote their more fundamental security or economic interests and they may be discarded when alternative affiliations promise a better return.

Thus, according to instrumentalists, ethnicity is fabricated

ideology and elites construct and deconstruct for opportunistic reason or a set of myths calculated to mobilise support for the economic or political goals of ambitious minorities.

Constructivists also understand ethnicity in terms of ongoing social processes of construction and deconstruction but rather than focus on elite goals and machinations they hold that ethnic identity is the product of shared experience of discrimination, subjugation and exclusion. In contrast to the primordialist both the later approaches see ethnic boundaries as permeable and relatively fluid.

While one may agree that ethnicity is malleable and adaptable it does not tell us the entire story. Immigrant ethnic groups who have taken a conscious decision of moving out of traditional homes may be open to the idea of recasting themselves in cultural mould of the majority but ethnic minorities who continue to reside in their traditional homelands far from depict such readiness. In case of Hungarians who are the focus of this present study ethnic identity is reinforced by language. How permeable and fluid can boundaries of such groups be? The complexity of ethnic reality is such that is difficult to point one unified explanation for all cases.
The problem of ethnic minority in East Europe is widely held to persist today because of the different way in which nation and nationalism developed in the region. As with the term ethnicity, a plethora of definitions and theories are associated with nationalism and nation. The lack of a consensus in the meaning of nationalism is well reflected by the definition proffered in Louis L. Snyder's Encyclopedia of Nationalism:

Nationalism is a condition of mind, feeling or sentiment of a group of people living in a well-defined geographical area, speaking a common language, possessing a literature in which the aspirations of the nation have been expressed, and, in some cases, having a common religion. There are, of course, exceptions to every part of this definition.²

The academic study of nationalism in the twentieth century really began in the wake of the First World War. The pioneering works of American historians Carlton J. H. Hayes and Hans Kohn provided the foundation for subsequent study of the phenomenon. For Kohn 'nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness which since the French Revolution has become more and more common

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Both Kohn and Hayes saw the 'age of Nationalism' as a modern development which, however, was the exaggerated reflection of two age-old phenomena - nationalism and patriotism. Elie Kedourie was another major contributor to the study of nationalism. He defined nationalism as

a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state and for the right organisation of a society of states. Briefly, the doctrine holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, the nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government.

Hayes, Kohn, Kedourie were all critical of nationalism. Hayes wrote 'nationalism signifies a more or less purposeful effort to revive primitive tribalism on an enlarged and more artificial scale.' Maintaining this critical not Kedourie

stated, 'the attempts to refashion so much of the world on national lines has not led to greater peace and stability. On the contrary, it has created new conflicts, exacerbated tensions, and brought catastrophe to numberless people innocent of all politics.\textsuperscript{6}

Historians Peter Alter and E.J. Hobsbaum have also made significant contributions to discourses on nationalism. Given the present trend of global economic and social integration both doubt the salience of nationalism. Hobsbaum seriously doubts the strength of the nationalism and its continuance as a significant force in world affairs. Alter takes a more cautious view and believes that nationalism and nation-state will exist side-by-side with the forces of global integration: 'The choice for the present and immediate future cannot be a crude alternative between either unconditional affirmation of the nation-state in its traditional form and function, or swift replacement of it by supranational institutions.'\textsuperscript{7}

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\textsuperscript{6} Kedourie, n.4, p. 138.

Ernest Gellner\textsuperscript{8} has developed a compelling theory of modernisation to explain the emergence of nationalism. Benedict Anderson\textsuperscript{9} holds that the principal material precondition for nationalism was 'print capitalism' i.e. commercial printing on a widespread scale. For Anthony D. Smith foundation of nationalism lay in ethnicity. Smith see the relationship between early ethnicism and later nationalism, one of 'continuity but not identity.'\textsuperscript{10}

Differences over definition, roots or role of nationalism spills over to whether nationalism is single or plural. Hayes and Kohn saw nationalism as plural while Gellner and Hobsbaum tend toward a unitary understanding of the phenomenon. Alter and Smith talk of varieties of nationalism. Alter developed a typology of nationalisms - liberal, reformist risorgimento nationalism and integral nationalism. The former is grounded in nineteenth century liberalism, the latter in the narrow, exclusivist right wing European politics of the late nineteenth century. For Smith Nationalism is most fruitfully conceptualized as a single category


containing sub-varieties, genus and species, a diversity within a unity. At one end of the spectrum he places 'ethnic' nationalism based on a cultural group at the other end 'territorial nationalism' founded on the 'skeletal framework of the territorial state.' Between these two categories he places 'mixed' nationalism, one which contains elements of both. 11

Another recent contributor James G. 12 Kellas has distinguished three types of nationalism: 'ethnic', 'social' and 'official'. Ethnic nationalism he says centres around a common descent or common ethnicity which gives it an exclusive quality. Social nationalism is one based on a shared national culture, but not a common descent and official nationalism is determined neither by ethnic nor cultural factors but by citizenship.

Kohn as mentioned earlier saw nationalism as plural. He drew a sharp distinction between the characteristics of nationalism in the west and in the east. These two types of nationalism are said to have developed from radically different political and socio-economic origins.


Nationalism in the west made its debut in the period democratization heralded by the French Revolution. Dynastic rule and its ideological basis in the divine right of kings were overthrown and the mantle of political legitimacy passed to the people the people were invested with the status of 'the nation', a term previously used only in reference to such socially dominant groups as the aristocracy and the clergy. In more contemporary terms, Kohn's contrasting type of nationalism would be referred to by scholars as 'political', 'social' or 'territorial' nationalism in Western Europe versus 'ethnic' nationalism in Eastern Europe.

'Nationalism' Gellner suggests, 'invents nations'. What is nation? The term nation is derived from the Latin word 'ratio' which referred to a social collectivity based on birth or race. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a nation as 'an extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history as to form a distinct race or people usually organised as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory.' According to Kellas 'a nation is a group of people who feel themselves to be a community bound together

by ties of history culture and common ancestry'. As in the case of nationalism, nation can also be in the plural. Kellas' - 'ethnic', 'social' and 'official' nationalisms are paralleled by the existence of the 'ethnic nation', 'social nation' and the 'official nation'. Similarly, differences in nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe find their counterparts in defining the 'nation'. In the western part of the continent the 'political', 'social' or 'territorial' nation predominates, while in the east it is the 'ethnic' or 'cultural' nation that holds sway.

There is again considerable difference of opinion as to how nations came into existence. Gellner, for instance, sees the nation as the product of nationalism. Smith in contrast sees the premodern ethnicities as precursor of nations.

Marxism had claimed to have settled the national question. However, today one cannot but argue that nationalism and nation states have outlived Marx. We now shift our focus on the Marxist formulation on these question and try to identify its shortcomings.

The Marxist Understanding of Nation and Nationalism and Rights

Nationalism group loyalty and identity have aroused fierce passion, for which men are prepared to die.' Referring to the scant attention given to the concepts the nation-state and nationalism in Marxist theory Tom Bottomore has observed that

Marxists have contributed little in the way of analysis or research into these phenomena and have indeed tended to ignore or dismiss them as being of minor significance."15 We have to recognise that there is no Marxist theory of the nation and despite the passionate debates that have taken place within the workers movement it would be far too evasive to say that 'Marxism has underestimated the reality of the nation.16

Others like Ephriam Nimmi17 and Ronaldo Munck on the contrary argue that even if there is no single literature that directly present their theory in an explicit way, Marx

and Engels had a coherent view of the national question.

John Schwarzmantel rightly observes that class conflict and the idea of internationalism were basic elements of socialist thought. And given the existence of a world dominated by nation-states the question was how class conflict would develop and lead towards socialist internationalism. 'For urgent practical reasons as well as for reasons of theoretical interest socialists had to work out responses to the existence and increasing power of the nation-state', says Schwarzmantel.¹⁸

For Marx and Engels neither a common language and traditions nor geographical and historical homogeneity for them constituted a nation. A certain level of economic and social development was an essential prerequisite.¹⁹ They also favoured large units which they felt could only be viable economically. Thus for them Germany was revolutionary and progressive compared to the Scandinavian nations because of its higher level of capitalist development. Engels says

By the same right under which France took over Flanders Lorraine and Alsacse ... by the

¹⁹. J.A. Petrus in ibid., p.70.
same right Germany takes over Schleswig, it is the right of civilisation against barbarism of progress against stability.\textsuperscript{20}

Marx and Engels appreciated the necessity of strong nation states with the overthrow of absolutism. But not all people were entitled in their opinion to the right of a nation. They distinguished between 'historic' and 'non-historic' nations. Germany, Poland, Hungary and Italy feel in the category of 'great historic nations'. They had gained this right through their previous struggles for unity and independence. Others smaller less dynamic nationalities were 'deemed' non-historic. The Southern Slavs - the Czechs, Slovak, Serbs and Croats were according to Engels, 'peoples which have never had a history of their own. ... (who) are not viable and will never be able to achieve any kind of independence.'\textsuperscript{21} There was in other words for them no absolute, right to self determination.

According to Munck and I. Cummings this mistaken analysis had dire political consequences on the revolutions of 1848. Unresolved 'national questions' contributed to the defeat of democratic revolutions of 1848, says Munck.

\textsuperscript{20} Ronaldo Munck, \textit{n.15}, p.11.
\textsuperscript{21} ibid., p. 12.
Changing ground realities led Marx and Engels to revise their attitudes on various aspects of the 'nationality problem'. During the 1860s in their analysis of Irish question a notable change can be discerned. The Irish turn is clearly indicated by Marx in a letter to Engels in 1867 "Previously I thought Ireland's separation from England impossible. Now I think it inevitable although after separation there may come federation."\(^{22}\)

Some analysts as Jose Arico argue that Ireland represents "a real turning point in Marxist thought which opens up a new perspective in the analysis of a difficult problem of the relations between class struggle and national struggle, that real punctum dolens (sore point) in the whole history of the socialist movement."\(^{23}\)

Their attitude towards nationalism appear definitely more sympathetic when Engels says that for the workers of a dominant nation to call on those of dominated nation 'to sink their differences' in a spirit of proletarian internationalism is a smokescreen for continued domination. Or when Engels writes to Kautsky in 1882.


\(^{23}\) J. Arico, Quoted in ibid., p. 19.
I therefore hold the view that two nations' in Europe have not only the right between the duty to be nationalistic before they become internationalistic, the Irish and Poles. They are most internationalistic when they are genuinely nationalistic."\(^{24}\)

Though Marx and Engels decisively modified their earlier stance they continued to support national movements within the overarching requirements of socialist revolution. Thus Marx writes to his daughter Laura in 1870 that in the support of the Irish struggle he 'not only acted upon by feelings of humanity. There is something besides.'\(^{25}\) Marx believed that the English aristocracy maintained its social domination at home through its domination of the Irish nation.

to accelerate the social revolution in Europe, you must push on the catastrophe of official England. To do so, you must attack her in Ireland. That's her weakest point. Ireland lost, the British empire is gone and the class war in England till now so negligible and chronic, will assume acute forms.\(^{26}\)


\(^{25}\) ibid., p.290. Quoted in ibid., p. 18.

\(^{26}\) ibid., p. 190. Quoted in ibid.
One is inclined, therefore to agree with Georges Haupt

Though the Irish problem leads to a definition of the principled position on the relation between dominant and oppressed nations and allows the national movement to be assigned new functions the refusal to generalize to integrate the national dynamic without reservations within the theory of revolution remains manifest. 27

Commentators like James Guillaume and Bertrand Russell rejected what they considered to be Marx's internationalist facade and described him as nationalist and racist. 28 Between the overall internationalist thrust of Marxian ideology and its acceptance of the ground reality of nation-states there is undeniably a constant tension, which at times appear to reach a breaking point. But 'nationalist', understood as worshiper of nation-state as the ultimate political form is an inappropriate appreciation of Marx's formal ideology. Marx and Engels were not postulating a theory of nationalist revolution. The source of revolutionary identity was unquestionably the class. They acknowl-

27. Georges Haupt. Quoted in ibid.

edged nation-state in so far as it is 'functional' for the development of the capitalist system. The national context is important in so far class struggle is fought in the arena of nation-state. Marx in the critique of the German nationalist Friedrich List writes:

The nationality of the worker is neither French nor English, no German, it is labour, wage slavery, self-huckstering. His government is neither French, nor English, nor German it is capital. His native air is neither French, nor German, nor English, it is factory air. 29

For Marx and Engels the socialist revolution is a social not a national problem.

The emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries. 30

It is clearly assumed that workers in different capitalist nations have more in common with each other than with their respective national bourgeoisie and should be able to discard traditional national feeling.

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30. Marx, First International and After Quoted in ibid.
Michael Lowy has argued that while this understanding has a large part of truth, it ignores the cultural specificities of each nation which capitalism does not abolish and also the economic differences between the proletarians of different nations which result from 'the uneven and combined development of the world capitalist system.'\textsuperscript{31}

In Marxist scheme of proletarian internationalism there is no doubt a blatant insensitivity towards cultural specificities or identities. In 1849 Marx writes:

There is no country in Europe which does not contain in one corner one or made subject to the nation which later became the carrier of historical development. these remains of nations.. this ethnic trash always becomes and remains until its complete extermination or denationalization, the most fanatic carrier of counterrevolution, since its entire existence is nothing more than a protest against a great historical revolution.\textsuperscript{32}

Critics hold that Marx and Engels may have perhaps disposed the problem of nationalism too easily. Comprehending the nation-state primarily as an economic unit they neglected the way in which during the nation-states existence a 'superstructure' of patriotic feelings and national loyalty developed which affected all classes. The utility

\textsuperscript{31} Michael Lowy Quoted in ibid., p.63.

\textsuperscript{32} Marx, Quoted in Peter Zwick, n.28, p.24.
of the nation-state for economic development strengthens its legitimacy and desirability. Precisely because the nation-state expedites and encourages economic and social progress nationalism spreads and intensifies. The working class cannot remain immune to it. John Schwartzmantel argues that 'starting from the fruitful Marxist perspective on the nation conclusions can be drawn which suggest the longevity and permanence rather than the transitory nature of the nation-state.'

Jules Townshened argues as a result of their inability to understand the psychological causes of nationalism, Marx and Engels held a highly optimistic view that nationalism would disappear. Overstress on economic factors did not allow them to understand ethnic identity as a powerful supra class phenomenon. Ethnic underpinning of nationalism resulted in group or community feeling to often transcend those of class.

The absence of a psychological dimension and the flexibility of their position led to lively debates among the

33. John Schwartzmantel, n. 18 , p. 69.


35. As seen in Marx's view of Ireland and Poland and their revaluation of the uniilnear evolution towards progress in relation to Russia in 1860s.
followers.

The national question within the Austro-Hungarian empire in the late nineteenth century was one of the many problems to which the followers addressed themselves. The empire contained before 1914 fifteen different nationalities, most of whom felt oppressed by the German and Magyar minorities. The leaders of the all Austrian SPD, founded in 1889, realized that sermons on proletarian solidarity solved nothing. But to acquiesce totally to national aspirations would obscure the fundamental conflict between capital and labour, divide workers against each other and hinder the proletarian struggle.

At the famous all Austrian SPD Congress at Brunn36 in 1899, the party called for the transformation of the Hapsburg empire into a democratic, multinational state, divided into autonomous self-administered regions, which were to deal with internal questions such as language and schools. Boundaries were to be drawn up on a linguistic and cultural basis and minority rights protected by law.37

The continuing link between autonomy and territoriality could be a source of friction between the nationalities

36. Now Brno in the Czech republic
wanting their own nation states with clear boundaries.

To tackle this problem Otto Bauer\(^{38}\) expounded the idea of what is known as 'national-cultural autonomy' where autonomy is based on the principle of personality.

(a) Otto Bauer

Bauer's The National Question and Social Democracy (1907) is considered the most important work on the national question produced by the Austro-Marxists.\(^{39}\)

To achieve the twin objective of preserving the multinational Austro-Hungarian state and making concessions to nationalist sentiments Bauer defined the nation underplaying the territorial principle. Thus for him the nation is the totality of men bound together through a common destiny into a community of character.\(^{40}\) In other words all the various nationalities of the state could administer their own cultural affairs regardless of territory. This divorce of nationality and territoriality, would argued Bauer, ward off demands of separation.

\(^{38}\) Also Karl Renner.

\(^{39}\) Jules Townshend chap 3; Munck pp. chap 2; Schwartzmantel; Nimmi Chap 6 and 7.

The growing competition between German and Czech workers revealed for Bauer a clear connection between national and class differences. Bauer concluded that capitalism did not produce an anational class proletariat but the contrary - a nationally class 'conscious proletariat. While Bauer too believed in the international unity of the proletariat his was a more realistic appraisal of the intermeshing of class and national struggles. Bauer writes:

We can only defeat bourgeois nationalism... when we discover the national substance of the international class struggle... we must defeat nationalism on its own ground.41

For Bauer, socialism meant not the complete destruction of the nation but its complete realization as a cultural community. He called for workers and peasants who had been culturally excluded to be given the right to participate in a national culture: 'We must start from the fact that only socialism will give the whole people a share in the national culture'.42

Departing from the orthodox Marxist position that world socialism would eliminate national differences, Bauer

41. Quoted in Munck, n.15,p.41.
held that it would lead to 'flowering of national diversity. A socialist society will distinguish whole peoples from each other by the diversity of national education and civilisation in the same way as at present only the educated classes of the different nations are distinguished.\(^43\)

Interestingly Bauer sharply separated politics from culture: 'Each nation should govern itself and be free to meet its own cultural needs from its resources: the state should confine itself to watching over those interests that are common to all its nations and are neutral as between them.

Bauer's work has been hailed by later commentators as an attempt to fill in theoretical gaps left by Marx and Engels. While working within the framework of historical materialism, his work shows a remarkable lack of economic reductionism so typical of second International Marxism.\(^44\)

At last the relative autonomy of the national question was being recognized within Marxist discourse.\(^45\)

(b) Stalin's critique

Stalin was a prolific writer on nationalism. In one of

\(^{43}\) ibid., p.38.

\(^{44}\) Karl Kautsky.

\(^{45}\) Munck, n.15, p.40.
his early works How Does Social Democracy understand the National Question (1904), he made the interesting point

in different epochs the national question serves distinct interests and adopts different nuances according to the class that poses it and the moment at which it is posed.46

On the basis of the work and because Lenin wanted a member of Russian minority to write a riposte to the Austro Marxists, Lenin entrusted the task of writing a pamphlet on national question to Stalin. Stalins, Marxism and the National Question', is considered to be a definitive Marxist treatise on the question.47

Stalin defined the nation as 'a historically constituted stable community of people, formed on the bias of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in common culture.48 Unlike Bauer common territory and economic life were for him essential ingredients of nationhood. He therefore questioned, the Jewish

46. ibid., p.77.

47. After the failure of 1905 revolution in Russia, the principle of national - cultural autonomy gained ground among Caucasian social democrats and Jewish political parties, most notably the Bund. Lenin wanted to avoid the decentralizing federalist implications of Bauer inspired proposals on Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Stalin's pamphlet fully reflected Lenin's concerns.

right to nationhood. 'Can it be seriously maintained that petrified religious rites and fading psychological relics affect the 'destiny' of these Jews more powerfully than the living social, economic, and cultural environment that surrounds them?  

Stalin agreed that national oppression had to be opposed. However, he argued the answer lay not in national cultural autonomy which heightened national differences and encouraged split in worker's movement. The best remedy to combat nationalism was application of the principle of national self determination, democracy and regional autonomy.

Though much evidence has been cited in scholarly works that Stalin's essay was in large parts a hand work of Lenin, he disagreed with Stalin in practice over the National question in 1917. As Ronaldo Munck comments in Lenin's work there are many contradictions, and the principle of national self determination is by no means a fully satisfactory one. With Stalin, contradictions disappear... and his approach to questions of national oppression is far from sensitive.

49. J. Stalin.
50. Julius Townshend.
51. Munck, n.15, p.79.
Stalin's definition of the nation was used as a checklist to assess whether a people met the criteria to become a nation. It never seemed to occur to him that a community might decide for itself to be a nation.

(c) Lenin's contribution to the question of nationalism

Lenin's domicile within multinational Austria-Hungary made him aware of internecine nationalist struggle within the socialist movement.\(^{52}\) He stressed the importance of Marx and Engels interpretation of the Irish question

The policy of Marx and Engles on the Irish question serves as a splendid example of the attitude the proletariat of the oppressor nation should adopt towards national movements, an example which has lost none of its practical importance.\(^{53}\)

Lenin concluded that

In so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation fights the oppressor, we are always, in every case and more strongly than anyone else, in favour, for we are the staunchest and the most consistent enemies of oppression... in so far as the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism we stand against.\(^{54}\)

\(^{52}\) Lennist theory of self determination was fully elaborated after Lenin moved to Polish Cracow in 1912.

\(^{53}\) Lenin. Quoted in Munck, p. 73.

\(^{54}\) ibid., pp. 73-74.
With Lenin, Marx's formulation of historic and non-historic nations is replaced by the concept of 'oppressed' and 'oppressor' nations. Based on this division Lenin talks of the right of nation to self determination in the age of imperialism.

Lenin conceived of nationalism in purely negative terms as the response of a people to past and present oppression and prejudices, real or imagined. The best way to dissipate grass root demands for independence was to proffer it. He argued that the right to self determination was like a divorce law, which allowed separation but did not promote it.

The Russian Revolution of February 1917 and October 1917 provided opportunity for the Socialist movement for practical application of their formulations.

The February revolution had led to the disintegration of Russian empire and burgeoning of national movements in many of the border areas. While the provisional government

55. Lenin says 'the focal point in the Social Democratic [national] programme must be the division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the essence of imperialism... ibid. p. 74.

acted to preserve a degree of state unity, the Bolsheviks encouraged separatist movements as a means of undermining the regime. The Bolsheviks also encouraged the development of national units in the army. Gradually organs of self rule were developed by the national minorities. Seizing power in October 1917 Bolsheviks faced the practical consequences of having encouraged the right of national self determination. As a result Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia declared 'independence' and Siberian republic and North Caucasus considered themselves autonomous units. The Bolsheviks who taunted the Provisional Government now were equally handicapped by the economic intrepidity of Russian nationalities. Apart from the economic problem, at the political level too the very basis of 'self-determination' was questioned. The assumption that without coercion free union would result was all but sheltered.

By 1920 the failure of the world revolution to take off was too apparent to be denied. The failure of the Polish proletariat to rise when the Red Army reached the gates of Warsaw was a bitter blow. The new Soviet Government had to reconcile to its task of building a coherent and stable territorial unit and check the tendency towards national

57. Munck, n.15, p. 79-80.
dispersal.

The traumatic experience of 1917-20 forced a revision of Bolshevik doctrine on nationalism. Lenin in 1913 had argued that 'Marxists will never, under any circumstances, advocate either the federal principle or decentralisation. 58

In 1918 Lenin's resolution for the third congress of Soviets read 'The Soviet Russian Republic is established on the basis of free union of free nations as a federation of soviet national republics.' 59

Lenin and Stalin fell further apart from each other after Stalin's handling of the Ukrainian and Georgian af-

58. Bauer was criticized for advocating federalism that would jeopardise proletarian unity.

59. In Munck, n.15, p. 81. Russian Marxists he felt had to support the right of nations to self determination in order to create a situation of trust between the Russian proletariat and that of the oppressed.
Writing in December 1922, the ailing Lenin devoted considerable attention to the national question and arrived at a more realistic appraisal of ground realities. He realized that the national question was simply being suppressed rather than resolved and stressed the need to protect minorities. It was better by far to give too much rather than too little. Lenin argued that

'in one way or another by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russian for the lack of trust for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the 'dominant' nation subjected them in the

60. The Ukrainian Central Rada (Soviet) shared power with Bolshevik-dominated City Soviets after the collapse of the old regime. The Ukrainian nationalists wanted to preserve national culture, folklore and language. Initially the Bolsheviks accepted self-determination for Ukraine willingly. Later when the Rada began to cooperate with the counterrevolutionary activities of the Don Cossacks the Bolsheviks decided to move in. But this step was not supported by Lenin because he felt that the nationalists inspite of their political weakness expressed genuine popular interest. Reliance on military power only exposed the weakness of Bolsheviks and alienated the local population. In the case of Georgia, too, Lenin and the local Bolsheviks were extremely reluctant to use force. But in 1921, Soviet divisions moved in. In 1922, the Georgian affair reached its peak. Ordzhonikidze moved to set up a Transcaucasian Federation with Georgia Armenia and Azerbaijan. The entire central committee of the Georgian communist party resigned in protest. Lenin was forced into an investigation of Stalin's handling of the Georgian question. Lenin felt Stalin was being too impatient in centralizing the new state, Stalin accused him of national liberalism.

61. Lenin's Testament or Letter to the Congress.
The central themes of Marxist discourse on economic development class division and proletarian internationalism constantly faced the challenge of loyalties based on community and nationality. After socialism made inroads in East Central Europe under the aegis of Soviet Union nationalism, an anathema to the socialist doctrine, was heavily relied upon to impart legitimacy to the new regimes. So much so that some commentators observed that to maintain itself any communist regime must become national.

Given the preoccupation of Marx and his followers with class division and proletarian revolution - nations, culture, people were judged by their contribution to the cause of revolution. Class division and economic exploitation are no doubt as important today as judged by them but divisions along gender race, ethnic or national lines have their own dynamic. The ethnic minority question in East Europe has been far from satisfactorily settle. Much of the majority-minority tension centres around the question of rights.

In the Marxist theory the essence of an individual is that of a social being whose needs are fulfilled only in communist society. The Communist goal is reached through

prolitarian revolution who after resting power from the bourgeoisie establishes the dictatorship of prolitarian. At this stage, the state still exist and the revolutionary party uses its vanguard position to bring about the desired transformation. It is at this point that Marxist concept of rights emerge. They are not individual rights but legal rights granted by the state and directed towards speedy transformation to communist society. Once the process of transformation has taken place the need for rights disappear, since each individual is in a free and spontaneous relationship with all other individuals. Within Marxist theory thus, rights are simply tools or instruments to achieve a particular end.63

(ii) Liberal Concept of Rights

Liberal individualism is no better an exponent of minority culture. It shared the view of the left that progress required assimilation of smaller cultures. Thus J.S. Mill says

Experience proves it is possible for one nationality to merge and be absorbed in another and when it was an originally inferior and more backward portion of the human race the absorption is greatly to its advantage. Nobody can suppose that it is not more

beneficial to a Briton or a Basque or French Navarre to be brought into the current of the ideas and feelings of a highly cultivated land - to be a member of French nationality admitted on equal terms to all privileges of French citizenship ... than to sulk on his own rocks, the half savage relic of past times, revolving his own little mental orbit without participation or interest in the general movement of the world. 64

Liberals like the Marxists believed that the great nations with their highly centralized political and economic structures were the carriers of historical development. The smaller nationalities were backward and stagnant and could only participate in modernity by abandoning their national character and assimilating to a great nation. This sort of view was very widespread in nineteenth century Europe. As Hobsbaum comments it is sheer anachronism to criticise Mill or Marx for holding it since it was shared by virtually all theorists in the nineteenth century, on both right and left. It provide justification for assimilating minorities on the Europe and colonizing people overseas.

Mill and Marx it would be incorrect to say were indifferent to cultural identities or group loyalties. They did not reject all group identities between the individual and

the state, rather they privileged a particular sort of group - the 'great nation'.

But unlike Marxism, liberalism is at the same time a fierce protector of the individual. It is perhaps this varied appreciation of the individual which led some liberal thinkers to fear majoritarian underpinnings of democratic rule. Mill for instance shows an acute awareness of the risks of majoritarian democracy. James Madison shared the same fear of unadulterated majority rule.

In early twentieth century the English political theorist J.N. Figgs looked at liberal democracy and asserted that freedom required pluralist foundation in small groups which could thrive apart from the 'all-devouring leviathan of the whole.'

Many social theorists at the turn of the century regarded society as composed essentially of groups not of separate individuals; for instance Herbert Spencer and sir Henry Maine, though both theorists failed to convert these ideas into a group theory of rights.

The idea of group personality the belief that group life is genuine became a central notion of the English

political pluralists of the early twentieth century. Harold Laski insisted at one point that a group possesses personality with a character of its own. G.D.H. Cole was also concerned with collective personality and even went so far as to use the term 'group soul.' However, the groups Laski and Cole had in mind were trade unions, clubs, churches, families not a racial ethnic or linguistic groups. French sociologist Emil Durkheim on the other hand seems to have overemphasized the group as a source of independent will and action. He warned of the risks of a collectivist political regime that failed to give due attention to group loyalties.

Liberal theory dominant in the West for nearly three centuries regards the individual as the main unit of social value and predicts that progress will inevitably break down artificial barriers based on parochialascriptive allegiance. This orientation towards minority cultures was gradually abandoned by the second half of 20th century. A loosely knit group of academics identified as pluralists began observing, analyzing writing about ethnic phenomenon about empirical expressions of cultural social and structural pluralism.
One of the pioneers in the study of the rights of ethnic groups is Vernon Van Dyke. Van argues that the neglect of minority culture is not a new phenomenon but has deep roots in Western political tradition. Most questions of minority rights remain unanswered in the liberal tradition. The right to free speech does not tell us what an appropriate language policy is; the right to vote does not tell us how political boundaries should be drawn or how power could be distributed between levels of government; the right to mobility does not tell us what an appropriate immigration and naturalization policy is. These questions have been left to the usual process of majoritarian decision making within each state.

Van argues that the flaw in the liberal tradition is its individualism, which cannot accord any status to groups between the individual and the state. For liberalism the fundamental issue for political theory is the proper relation between the individual and the state. This relentless individualism of traditional liberalism makes it incapable of comprehending some of the inherently collective features

of political life. Because liberalism ignores the group basis of political life Van Dyke argues it is blind to the injustices suffered by minority cultures. This can only be rectified he holds by supplementing liberalism with a theory of collective rights.

In rethinking the issue of minority rights the first task is to come to a clear understanding of the nature of groups and the value of belonging to such groups says, Will Kymlicka.

Some analysts hold that membership in a pervasive culture is crucial to peoples well being. Cultural membership has a high social profile in the sense that it affects how others perceive and respond to us which in turn shapes our self identity. Self identity depends both on accomplishment and belonging, more fundamentally on the later. If a culture is not generally respected then it effects the dignity and self respect of its members.

A diametrically opposite view is held by Jeremy Waldron. The human mobility, the development of supranation-

67. As formation of the state itself or the drawing of the political boundaries.


al institutions and communication system have resulted in an intermingling of culture making it impossible to detect where one culture begins and another ends. In the modern world people live in a kaleidoscope of cultures moving freely amongst the products of innumerable cultural traditions. Thus Inuit art, Chinese food, German folklore and Judeo-Christian religion may all be part of an individual's life. Waldron's, 'cosmopolitan alternative' believes that people can pick and choose cultural fragments that come from a variety of ethno-cultural sources, without feeling any sense of membership in or dependence on a particular culture. The only way to preserve the 'authenticity' or integrity of a particular culture would be to live in complete isolation.

The 'cosmopolitan alternative' begs a question. Defenders of minority rights are rarely seeking to preserve their 'authentic culture, if it means living in the same way as their ancestors did centuries ago. What they want is to preserve their existence as a culturally distinct group, to exercise a choice in adaptation and transformation of their culture.

It is by and large today accepted that cultural identities should be tolerated and accommodated in a free and democratic society. But what does this accommodation en-
tail? Nathan Glazer and Michael Walzer distinguish two broad forms or models for accommodating ethno-cultural diversity.

(a) Non-discrimination principle

Many post war liberals hold that religious tolerance based on separation of church and state provides a model for dealing with ethno-cultural differences. This means that ethnic identity like religion is something which people should be free to express in their private life, but which is not the concern of the state. The members of ethnic and national groups are protected against discrimination and prejudice and they are free to try to maintain their ethnic heritage or identity consistent with the rights of others. But their efforts are purely private. The state as Nathan Glazer puts it, responds with 'benign neglect'.

This separation of state and ethnicity precludes only legal or government recognition of ethnic groups or any use of ethnic criteria in the distribution of rights, resources and duties.

(b) Group Rights Model

The second model by contrast involves public measures aimed at protecting and promoting an ethnocultural identity.

70. ibid.
Affirmative action is needed to remedy years of discrimination. Critics hold that this exacerbates the very problem it was intended to solve by making people more conscious of group differences and more resentful of other groups.

According to Walzer, United States is the clearest example of a neutral state. But what Walzer calls the 'neutral state' can be seen in effect as a system of 'group rights' that supports majority's language, history, culture and calendar.

Conversely, what Glazer calls the 'group rights' model, can be seen in effect as a more 'robust form of non-discrimination.' When Spanish speakers in the USA or francophones in Canada or Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia and Serbia seek language rights do they ask for special rights or the same rights as the majority culture.

Glazer argues that the choice between non-discrimination and group rights is really a choice between forming a common national culture or accepting the permanent existence of two or more national cultures within a single state. Walzer argues the key reason why the non-discrimination model has worked in USA despite its inherently integrative dynamic is that the ethnic minorities are immigrant groups. Immigrants have made a painful choice to leave their original culture and know that the success of their decision will
depend on integrating into the mainstream of their new society.\textsuperscript{71}

This is different Walzer argues from 'old world' pluralism where minority cultures are territorially concentrated settled on their historic homelands. These groups find themselves in a minority position not because they have uprooted themselves from their homeland but because their homeland has been incorporated within the boundaries of a large state. This incorporation is involuntary, a result of conquest, colonization or ceding of territory from one imperial power to another.

There is thus a profound difference between the sort of diversity created by voluntary immigration of individuals and families, and the sort of diversity created by involuntarily incorporating entire cultures which resist all integrative attempts.

CONCLUSION

What emerges from the above discussion is that ethnicity and ethnic divisions have the potential of generating intense conflict in society. Such conflicts are more likely

\textsuperscript{71} Walzer notes that there are minority groups in the New World which are not immigrant groups but indigenous population, the Quibecogs in Canada, Puerto Ricans in USA. These are the groups which have fiercely resisted integration, bearing his hypothesis.
in societies where 'nation' is defined in ethnic terms, as for instance in East Europe. These conflicts may be said to be basically centring around 'rights' - rights that the minority demands and rights that the majority denies. Though often ethnic minorities are discriminated and persecuted precisely because they belong to a particular group, neither Marxism nor liberalism have developed a pronounced concept of group rights.