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Socialism, Nationalism, and the Case of Quebec

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I shall be concerned, most essentially, to make four distinct clusters of points. (1) Self-definition is essential for the flourishing of human beings. It involves having a sense of cultural membership and the group identity that goes with it (national identity being the form it takes in conditions of modernity) (Gellner 1983). It is something the importance of which Marxism has standardly been blind, but nonetheless it is something which—or so I shall argue—in reality is not in conflict with Marxism. (2) While often nationalism, with its accompanying sense of national identity, is barbarous and, if not barbarous, at least xenophobic and atavistic, liberal nationalism suffers from none of these ills. Moreover, liberal nationalism has both clear conceptual articulations (on the theoretical side) and (on the practical side) some stable exemplifications in the life of some nations. It is not merely a theoretician's dream. I shall further argue that under certain circumstances, this is a form of nationalism to be welcomed by socialists as well as liberals who are not socialists. (3) Socialist nationalism is a form of liberal nationalism, but I shall argue it has distinctive features which, though involving liberal nationalism, carry nationalism in certain respects beyond liberal nationalism. (4) Quebec nationalism is a paradigmatic form of liberal nationalism that should be welcomed by progressive forces, including socialist forces, though it certainly should not be thought of as a panacea for all Quebec's ills. Moreover (or so I shall conjecture), there is, given the cultural climate of Que-

bec, a fighting chance that the nationalist project of Quebec could take a socialist form in a reasonable span of time (though certainly not right away) after sovereignty. I shall as well argue that Quebec sovereignty would be a good thing, though certainly not an inevitable thing clearly on the historical agenda.

1

I shall reverse the above order and start by talking about Quebec nationalism (4). In order properly to do so I shall begin by saying something sociological about Quebec. Over 80 percent of the Quebec population is francophone. Outside the Island of Montreal it is to a very considerable extent unilingual French-speaking. Moreover, French is the official language of Quebec. However, on the Island of Montreal there is a not inconsiderable amount of *de facto* bilingualism. Indeed, among allophones (people whose mother tongue is neither French nor English), a considerable number are trilingual. All that notwithstanding, there remain (though not quite so forcefully as in earlier times) the two solitudes, as an old Quebec-Canada cliché has it. The francophone community and the nonfrancophone community (anglophones and allophones) remain politically divided and, to a considerable extent, culturally apart. Allophones, though generally functional in French, are still for the most part, though not invariably in all parts of Quebec, overwhelming oriented toward the English-speaking community. And though the anglophones (particularly those under thirty) also are frequently functional in French, they are, and hardly surprisingly, oriented toward English-speaking Canada and its political and cultural institutions or sometimes (as are some allophones as well) toward English-speaking North America more generally. (The United States is where it is at.)

These divisions are territorially based. The east of Montreal is for the most part francophone and traditionally working class (but now with a lot of unemployed on welfare) with a few allophone enclaves, while the west of Montreal is for the most part anglophone and allophone and generally less impoverished. The voting patterns in the last referendum (in 1995) clearly reflected this territorial patterning. The west of the Island of Montreal voted overwhelmingly “no” while the francophone regions in the east voted heavily “yes.”

The distinct identities of nonfrancophone Quebecers and English-speaking Canadians, on the one hand, and francophone Quebecers, on the other, run so deep that their very conceptions of nationality are significantly different (Kymlicka 1998b). Francophone Quebecers, both sovereigntist and sometimes federalist as well (particularly among the provincial party elites), think of Canada as consisting of two founding nations: one principally francophone and the other principally anglophone, both with their distinct national identities and cultural attunements. Where they are more progressive, and thus keep in mind the First Nations, they think of Canada as consisting of three founding nations: Quebec, English-speaking Canada, and the Aboriginal peoples—the latter being the real First Nations of North America, the rest being settler nations.

Most anglophone Canadians, including many (perhaps most) anglophone Quebecers, have a very different conception of a nation and most particularly of what they take to be their nation than do most francophone Quebecers. They do not think of themselves as members of a distinct, English-speaking Canadian nation. And they have no sense of a distinct, English-speaking Canadian identity or of a distinct, English-speaking nation (Kymlicka 1998b). (One quip has it that an English-speaking Canadian is an American without guns and with health care.) They think there is no such English-speaking Canadian nation and they reject the very notion of two or three founding nations and any substantive conception of Quebec as a unique society with distinct powers asymmetrical to those of the other provinces of Canada, marking Quebec off as a distinct political entity. The provinces, on the English-speaking Canadian conception of things, are all equal and none of them is a nation. There is, on the anglophone conception, no more such thing as the Quebec nation than there is the Saskatchewan nation or the British Columbian nation or even the English-speaking nation. (That is why asymmetrical federalism, Will Kymlicka's hopes to the contrary notwithstanding, will not play in English-speaking Canada.) The anglophone conception of nation is one of a pan-Canadian nation with no nations (First Nations or a Quebec nation or an English-speaking nation) within a larger, univocally and allegedly purely political (purely civic) Canadian nation from sea to shining sea, a single nation with a strong federal authority with the different provinces and the different linguistic, ethnic, and cultural groups all being a part of the unified federal state of the pan-Canadian nation which they see as the same nation, and the *sole* nation, for all the different individuals resident (resident aliens aside) in the territory of Canada (including Quebec). There is, as they see it, only the pan-Canadian, allegedly purely political nation that is the Canadian nation. The notion of distinct peoples constituting different nations is utterly foreign to them and, for them, the very distinction, stressed by francophone Quebecers, between state and nation is blurred.

This yields two very different conceptions for Quebecers and Canadians of who they are. It is very difficult to see how people with these very different conceptions could be harmoniously or fruitfully unified into a single-nation-state or perhaps even a multi-nation-state that was more than a *modus vivendi*, particularly when the effect, whatever the intentions of the players, strongly favors the hegemony of the English-speaking political society and weakens francophone culture.

To think, as some do, of Quebecers—whether francophone, anglophone, or allophone—as bilingual or trilingual peoples who, *because* of their mastery of two or three different languages (while still living in the same territory), are individuals who because of this harbor in their breasts different and often conflicting identities simply flies in the face of the sociological and sociopsychological realities of Quebec. That is not gainsaid by the fact, as polls show, that 65 percent of present-day Quebecers feel themselves to be both Quebecers and Canadians. Those that have such dual identities are not conflicted (if they are conflicted at all) *because* they are bilingual or trilingual. They have dual and sometimes conflicting identities and loyalties

because of the historical and political realities of Quebec society. A not inconsiderable number of unilingual French-speaking people in the mainly unilingual French-speaking parts of Quebec feel themselves so conflicted without it at all being a conflicting pull within them of two languages. There may be a few people so conflicted (conflicted, that is, because of their very bilinguality) but, if they exist at all, they are very rare. The bulk of the population of Quebec, whether bilingual or not, fits the description of nationality I gave above and they, for the most part, divide in their sense of nationality along the lines of which language is their dominant language (Kymlicka 1998a; McRoberts 1998). Language is a marker (in most cases) of how they conceptualize things, but it is not the causal power driving distinct conceptualizations of nationality or generating a conflicting identity. Neither is bilinguality or trilinguality a source of conflictual identity. Most sovereigntist intellectuals, for example, are thoroughly bilingual without being (at least most of them) at all conflicted in their identities.

The above is a thumbnail sketch of some central sociological and political realities in Quebec and Canada. I now turn to a normative critique mingled with a continued sociological description. To say—rejecting out of hand such a normative turn—that this is to engage in moralizing is (a) to fail to realize that a value-free sociology is impossible; (b) to fail to realize that there can be normative descriptions (e.g., “Alienation runs deep in capitalist societies”) and that such descriptions, as Isaiah Berlin (1960) has well argued, are often essential to gain a clear conception of our social situation; (c) to fail to realize that there is such a thing as normative and moral argument that makes, without simply effusing emotively, a moral or political point argumentatively; and (d) to fail to realize that that need not be to be moralizing. To think that it must be is a naïve pseudorealism (Nielsen 1989). It is to be held captive, paradoxically enough, to an end-of-ideology ideology.

That blanket charge of moralizing set aside, I return to the main line of my argument. The repeated denial on the part of English-speaking Canada and, since the Trudeau era, by the federal government, of the two founding nations conception has for a long time fueled Quebec nationalist projects. This was accelerated by the Trudeau project of nation-building through asserting a pan-Canadian identity as over against a two founding nations conception. It was significantly different from Lester Pearson’s (his liberal predecessor) conception of Quebec as *a nation within a nation*. With the Trudeau project, whatever Trudeau’s intentions, francophone Quebecers were in effect treated like another ethnic group. And while officially there is a federal bilingual policy, its effect (New Brunswick aside) was to reinforce the hegemony of English in provinces other than Quebec (Franco-Ontarians, for example, are melting away like the spring snow) and, as the de facto though of course not the de jure lingua franca across Canada, it also strengthened the use of English at the expense of French in Quebec. (This was, and still is, particularly acute on the Island of Montreal.)

Seeing their language and culture increasingly threatened, francophone Quebecers understandably responded with sovereigntist and nationalist projects. But

it is important to see that in the mainstream of Quebec political thought and activist orientation this was, and still is, a liberal nationalist project. Access to the Quebec nation is open. It is not at all rooted in blood and soil (in who your ancestors were) but in cultural attunement and a readiness to live in Quebec as Quebecers obeying (at least for the most part) its laws. Quebec society is a liberal society enriched by a plurality of ethnic groups and a distinct national minority (the anglophones). This diversity gives the society a dynamic vibrancy and there is generally little hostility between the different groups except on such occasions as referendum night (1995), after the results of the referendum came in, and then only among some people, as high as the passions understandably were on both sides. Generally, unless things get demagogically stirred up, as sometimes they do, there is a mutual acceptance of and often a pride and pleasure in this very diversity: the hybrid vigor of Quebec, and particularly of Montreal, society. There is also a willingness on the part of the vast majority of Quebecers to accept the results of majority decisions. This remains so even with a full realization of the deep significance of the issues for their lives.

All that notwithstanding, it should be said, however, that there is a fear on the part of some anglophones, some allophones, and perhaps a few francophones as well that a sovereign Quebec would reverse this tolerant, pluralistic orientation or at least weaken it. But this is an unfounded fear. The contemporary francophone population (a very few loose cannons aside) is committed to liberal values; the Parti Québécois is firmly committed to a liberal state policy with the protection of the historic rights of the anglophone minority as a fixed part of it. It would (now, if you will, to moralize a bit) be immoral, imprudent, and indeed irrational to depart from that path. Only loss all the way around could come from it. Indeed, it would be self-defeating for Quebec, and the political elites know that very well.

To see something of the content of this liberal Quebec policy, note that education in English for the English-speaking minority is guaranteed from primary schools through university. (Two of Montreal's four universities are English-speaking, something which is out of proportion to the size of the English-speaking population.) There are, as well, English-speaking hospitals and other social services in English and there is the right to use English in the Quebec National Assembly. The preservation of these rights is a firm commitment of the sovereigntist government and it has the support of the overwhelming majority of the Quebec people. The nationalism of Quebec is in both theory and practice an unequivocally liberal nationalism.

This, of course, is not to say it is a *socialist* nationalism. It plainly is not. But whatever its socialist potential, it should be supported by socialists, for even in a capitalist society (something that is very likely to be around for the next little while), it could yield cultural protection for a people (if they continue, as they predictably will, to want it). That would continue to remain true in a socialist world.

That cultural protection is in itself a good thing, but it would also somewhat enhance the political empowerment of the Quebec people. In Canada they are hostage

to forces that are external to them and that can, and sometimes do, foist on them policies and indeed even a federal constitution that they as a nation—as a people—do not want and did not willingly accept and that does not answer to their interests. With sovereignty they could to a greater extent, in some not unimportant domains, control their own lives. This is a modest advance in political empowerment and, since they are not violating the rights of the minorities in their society, it would be a modest democratic advance as well. I say “modest” for they will still be governed by capitalist parties with elites of capitalist choosing and they still will be buffeted, as are all nation-states, by the effects of capitalist economic globalization. Still, it would be a modest advance and that is to be welcomed.

Would a sovereign Quebec further change toward socialism? Whether it would or not, it would not impede it, and it would, independently of that, be a bonus for the Quebec people for the reasons given above. But it might further socialist aims. Greater political empowerment of a people is something which is usually favorable to socialism. Popular mythology to the contrary notwithstanding, the more democracy we have, particularly if it is accompanied by rising levels of education, the better our chances for socialism. Moreover, the orientation of the sovereigntist government in Quebec has been *somewhat* more social democratic than governments in English-speaking Canada and the United States and this is even more so among Quebec’s intellectuals. A socialist option is seriously considered by many Quebec intellectuals and meetings have taken place—and not just among a few disaffected people forced into the margins of society—about the forming of a socialist sovereigntist party, *Rassemblement pour une alternative politique*, as an alternative to the Parti Québécois and, of course, to the Quebec federalist parties. Its organization is well on its way and its socialist and sovereigntist program is well articulated. A serious immediate tactical question for them was whether to field candidates in the last (1998) provincial election in Quebec. It was not unreasonable to believe (and this was well recognized by many socialists) that to do so at that time might very well divide sovereigntists in a critical provincial election as well as before an anticipated referendum with a result that would very likely be harmful to the sovereigntist cause. And this indeed was the decision made by the nascent socialist party. With one exception, where the leader of the Parti Québécois was “challenged” in his own safe riding, it did not field candidates in the last (1998) provincial election. But after a referendum, no matter what its outcome, such a socialist party will come onto Quebec political space fielding candidates and will present a serious alternative to the capitalist parties: the only real choices at present.

While such a party has had serious attention from the media (including extensive sympathetic coverage in *Le Devoir*, a Quebec equivalent of *The Manchester Guardian*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, or *Le Monde*, it is clear that in the next few years it cannot win an election, though it would likely win seats in the National Assembly and be a considerable force in Quebec political life. But if Quebec gains sovereignty in the next few years, it plainly will not be as a sovereign socialist state. That is wild, wishful thinking. But we socialists have learned the necessity of playing a long waiting

game. However, a sovereign Quebec will, right from the start, be a society with a somewhat more social democratic orientation than elsewhere in North America. It is also likely that there will be a serious, politically potent left in the position of effective critics, playing an active part in the political life of Quebec. This can reasonably be expected to have both a parliamentary and an extraparliamentary side, with both sides reinforcing each other. As a result of these factors, Quebec will be more progressive in ways similar to the ways Sweden, Italy, Germany, and France are more progressive societies and have a more progressive political climate than that of the United States or English-speaking Canada or even Britain (Blair, as a kind of Clinton clone, to the contrary notwithstanding). It is indeed at considerable distance from the deep structural transformation of society we socialists seek (something going far beyond social democracy) and it does not, of course, at all make socialism a reality, nor could it be a reality, in one state or one society alone. But it does increase the chances of Quebec becoming a link in a chain that might eventually bring about such a reality. It might, that is (though, of course, in a small way), be an effective part in the building of socialism. Even if there are no such causal effects, the lives of Quebecers with sovereignty would go a little better without tangible harm to English-speaking Canadians. (I shall return briefly to talk of Quebec in [5] after I have discussed the first three points mentioned in the introduction.)

2

I turn now to liberal nationalism. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels wrote famously, but mistakenly, as subsequent history has amply borne out, that “working men have no country” and that “national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literature there arises a world literature.” Commenting on these passages, G. A. Cohen, a contemporary analytical Marxian, remarks that here we have a statement of an expectation, which turned out to be a false prediction. It was the prediction “that the various national proletariats would rapidly transcend particularism in favour of international solidarity” (Cohen 1988, 145). This, quite plainly, has not come to be. That there is—to speak now normatively—so little of the cosmopolitan spirit of internationalism—of class solidarity—among the working class is something to be lamented, not celebrated. To be sustainable socialism needs working people to feel, and indeed actually to have, a bond of unity and solidarity that cuts across nations and cultures. Nationalism, many think, stands in the way of this. Nationalism is indeed, not a few believe, something to be despised, as should all particularisms. We should firmly set aside all particularisms and, being the critical beings that we socialists are, or at least aspire to be, we must struggle to make working-class international solidarity a reality.

Nationalism, conventional Marxist wisdom has it, is to be despised because it is at best a form of ethnocentrism, atavistic, backward looking, exclusionist, and very often, even worse, a form of authoritarianism—even sometimes something that either is, or not infrequently tends toward, a fascist authoritarianism. Where national-

ists have the opportunity, it is often expansionist as well. Expansionist aims aside, for paradigms of such nationalism think of Le Pen in France or some of the Ulster Unionists in Ireland or, as a cultural manifestation, the American behavior, from the American media to the fans, during the summer Olympics in Atlanta. That indeed was an expression of the spirit of *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*. Such nationalisms, and the temper of mind that goes with them, are abhorrent to anyone with a civilized, cosmopolitan temper. One cannot hear Jean-Marie Le Pen or Pat Buchanan speak, or read their words, without feeling nauseated.

Nationalists, it is often said, give their highest loyalty—their overriding loyalty—to their nation. National interests should always override all other interests. Many of us were brought up on the slogan, “My country, right or wrong, but still my country.” The tolerant internationalism of the Bloomsbury group, for some of us who were so indoctrinated, came to seem, and rightly so, far more admirable. Nationalists, it is often said, in giving their highest loyalty to their nation, not infrequently also regard their country as the embodiment of wisdom and virtue in whose interests they are prepared to run roughshod over the interests of other countries and the rights of other people within their own country without any concern to avoid bloodshed or to respect international law, human rights, the maintenance of international cooperation by the honoring of bilateral or multilateral treaties, and the like (Barry 1987, 352–4). The “true nationalist,” it is also sometimes said, will rein himself in here only when, as a matter of sheer prudence, doing so answers to what he takes to be the interests of his country. “Reasons of state”—take, for him, pride of place over all other considerations. Not infrequently, such nationalists see the people of their nation as the chosen people as did the leaders and many of the ordinary people of all the Christian nation-states as they arose in Europe, as many Israelis regard Israel, and as most Islamists regard Islamic nation-states or at least certain Islamic nation-states—the right Islamic nation-states, of course. And even though the United States emerged out of the secularist ideology of the French Revolution, still, in a way that would make Tom Paine turn over in his grave, many Americans (sometimes even a little seriously) think of their country as God’s country, the very best place on earth, and the model for the rest of the world. Some feel this, oddly enough, even when they have little or nothing left of active religious belief. Surely, given all this, nationalism is indeed something to be despised.

If this is what it is to be a nationalist, then indeed nationalism is something to be rejected with contempt. It is difficult to see how any educated person with reasonably humane dispositions, anyone who would be a part of what John Rawls calls a reasonable pluralism, would not do so. Certainly I reject such a nationalism, firmly committed as I am to international working-class solidarity. And that solidarity aside, I also stand committed to a cosmopolitan outlook and to the universalism of internationalism. With those commitments, I am sometimes asked, how can I—or indeed can I—also consistently be, as I am, a Quebec nationalist, supporting the secession of Quebec from Canada and the establishment of a sovereign Quebec state? And Quebec aside, I take a similar stance (though now as a sympathetic observer from

afar) concerning Scottish, Welsh, and Irish nationalism as earlier in this century I would have supported Norwegian and Icelandic nationalism in their struggles to secede from Sweden and Denmark, respectively. How can I—where I, of course, am merely a placeholder for someone like me—consistently and coherently do this, given what I have just said about nationalism? I can, I respond, do this perfectly consistently and reasonably for *there are nationalisms and nationalisms*. Indeed, most nationalisms have at least some of the above xenophobic, exclusivist, and sometimes even authoritarian features, features that make these nationalisms so repulsive and sometimes so dangerous. But there are as well liberal nationalisms—the nationalisms that characteristically emerge, where nationalisms emerge at all, in liberal societies. By extension there can be, when socialist states struggle to come into being, socialist nationalisms. Liberal nationalisms—the nationalisms characteristic of these societies—characteristically are not, and have not been, xenophobic or exclusivist. And the same would be true of socialist nationalisms where the socialisms emerge from a liberal democratic and an egalitarian ethos—the ethos which could become that of the rich capitalist democracies, which at least arguably is the only place that socialist states can emerge from, without the aid of other, established socialist states that have emerged in that manner. These liberal and socialist nationalisms are tolerant nationalisms and, while being cultural (as well as political), they are not ethnic, do not place their interests and their conceptions of life before that of all others, do not at all think of themselves or their compatriots as a chosen people, the very notion being to them both anathema and incoherent (Tamir 1993). In saying they are “not ethnic” I mean they do not trace membership in a nation to descent but to cultural capacity and attunement.

Such a liberal nationalism goes in tandem with cosmopolitanism and internationalism and, for those liberal nationalists who are also socialists or communists, it goes as well with working-class solidarity. It is both cosmopolitan and internationalist and committed to the working class. Working-class solidarity aside, as something that comes only with socialism or communism, the nationalism of the countries I just mentioned exemplify or exemplified liberal nationalism in practice, the nationalism that there is now or that was in place when they were or are struggling to attain or sustain their national identity as a nation. We can see how this took place or is taking place with all these peoples. In 1905, for example, when Norwegians were struggling for their independence, there was a need for nationalism in Norway; now there is not. Indeed, nationalism now in Norway would be quite out of place, though this does not preclude love of country, taking pride in being Norwegian, and a commitment to the continued existence and integrity of their country with its distinctive culture. It does not preclude, that is, a sense of nationality and an acknowledgment of its importance. That pride turns into something else, which is very ethnocentric, when it turns into a claiming, or even to just feeling, that we (the “we” of some nation) are the best or that we should predominate over others, something which, as the Norwegian Olympic games made manifest, is not widespread among Norwegians, though love of country is.

A theoretical conceptualizing of a liberal nationalism, compatible with cosmopolitanism, has been given classical expression in the writings of Johann Gottfried Herder and has been perceptively elucidated by Isaiah Berlin. And we find rigorous contemporary analytical expressions of it in the work of Jocelyne Couture, Will Kymlicka, David Miller, Kai Nielsen, Michel Seymour, and Yael Tamir.

3

I turn now to socialist nationalism. Socialist nationalism, where acceptable, is also a liberal nationalism. Here I have in mind—to gesture at the way it is a liberal nationalism—the social liberalism characteristic of the work of T. H. Green, John Dewey, John Rawls, and Jürgen Habermas and not the individualistic liberalism of F. H. Hayek, Milton Friedman, David Gauthier, and Robert Nozick wedded, as these individualists are, to a neoliberal capitalist economic program. Socialist nationalism builds on social liberal nationalism, keeping its respect for pluralism, tolerance, openness, commitment to the solidarity of peoples, and social justice, while adding an emphasis on the importance of class and class struggle and stressing the importance of securing the material conditions necessary for achieving the egalitarian form of social justice characteristic of social liberalism. Most importantly, socialist liberal nationalism will go beyond something which is just a social liberal nationalism in recognizing and stressing that for a nationalism to achieve what liberal nationalism seeks—namely, the autonomy and flourishing of peoples—these peoples must each, though each in a way that preserves their distinctive cultural membership, gain a firm control over their lives, including their working lives. A necessary condition for them to have such control in complex societies is for there to be public ownership and control of the means of production and exchange. They also need to have what they have only in name now—namely, public control over the state. That, if done intelligently and resolutely, will realize democracy in our political institutions. But in addition a socialist nationalism, like any genuine socialism, will also extend democracy to the workplace.

Liberal nationalists (being social liberals) stress the importance of individuals coming to recognize that they are *a people* and the importance for them, as a people, of having control over their own lives. But that will not happen in class societies where a capitalist class is a dominating class controlling the lives of the great mass of people. To achieve the very flourishing and autonomy of peoples that liberal nationalism celebrates, it must be a socialist nationalism. In short, socialist nationalism differs from something which is *just* a liberal nationalism (even a social liberal nationalism) by being socialist. Besides, that is, developing a form of nationalism that is not ethnic, that is tolerant, well-disposed to pluralism, and open to others, including being open to the possibility of their becoming members of one's nation, socialist nationalism acknowledges the realities and importance of class and the crucial import of divisions in nations along class lines, and sees the necessity of attaining working-class hegemony with a public control of the means of production and exchange,

democracy in the workplace, and the attaining of political institutions answering to the interests of both the working class and the deeply impoverished, with all the incapacitation that goes with that, who have no prospects of work in our capitalist societies (what in traditional Marxist terms was called the lumpen proletariat, though without any of the pejorative terms associated with that notion).

The politics of socialism will be internationalist and cosmopolitan but, given what I shall argue is the importance of cultural membership to our self-definition, to our sense of who we are, socialists need to attend not only to our frequently unrecognized class identities but to other cultural identities as well—cultural identities usually formed around the language we speak and the distinctive attunements that go with it. Socialists seek as full a human emancipation as possible. That would entail not only class and gender emancipation but there being as well as full as possible a security of cultural membership—a membership which is rooted in considerable part in modern societies in our nationality.

Our cultural membership, of course, involves other things as well such as our religion or lack thereof, our political commitments or lack thereof, our class, our race, our profession, our sex, the particular associations to which we belong, our neighborhood, and the like. But these things are contained in our nation which, as a nation, is an *encompassing* culture (Kymlicka 1995a, 1995b). We need to realize that a nation is a group of people who recognize one another as being members of the same society who usually associate themselves with a homeland (actual or sought). With the people who are its members, there is an aspiration for some form of self-governance as a people. They see themselves as being part of the same society—as being members of the same nation, as being a distinctive people in virtue of certain things they share—namely, a common history and tradition, a public culture, typically with a common language and typically with an attachment to a geographical place. People who are members of the same nation see themselves as possessing such a public culture with distinctive traditions which differentiate them from their neighbors. However, they do not only see themselves just as a cultural community; they see themselves as a political community as well. For them to be a distinctive nation they must have at least most of these characteristics. And it cannot *all* be in their minds, though it must *also be in their minds* (Anderson 1991).

However, there is no claim that this encompassing culture and the sense of being a people, is, for most of the individual members of the nation, the most important thing in their lives. But it is the case that what other things they do and are (such as the class struggles in which they engage, the loves and affections that grip them, the friendships they form, the religious or antireligious or just nonreligious orientations they take, the form of family relationships that are theirs, and the political parties and social movements they join or fail to join) all require the background of this encompassing culture; it is something which is needed for them to even be able to engage in those other activities in the society in which they live. For these various social practices to even be intelligible they must be embedded in such an encompassing culture. Without that there would be no society at all but brute causal rela-

tions apart (relations which could obtain between a bunch of marbles), just a mingling (if it even could be called that) of a mass of unrelated people. Given its strategic, instrumental role and given that it is a central part of the self-definition of people, nations are vitally important to them. Without them there would be no coherence to their lives. They would indeed be rootless atoms and thus not even intelligible candidates for being human beings. It is not that there are people so crushed into “rootless atoms” by individualistic societies (the capitalist societies we all know and love), but that the very idea of a human being being such a “rootless atom” is incoherent.

4

Let us now turn to (1)—namely, to self-definition and to arguments concerning why such considerations are so important in thinking about social life. I will proceed at first indirectly. Granting that nationalism can be, and indeed sometimes is, liberal, why should socialists and other cosmopolitans care about nationalism, let alone be nationalists, liberal or otherwise? Why should we identify with something so local and so particularistic—so committed to a particular humanity? Should not humanity, across borders—indeed, in our ideal, knowing no borders—be the focus of our commitment (Nussbaum 1996a, 3–17)? Should we not see ourselves simply as citizens of the world? Should we not regard citizenship, taken literally, as merely a practical, pragmatic housekeeping matter with our deep commitments going to humanity at large (Nussbaum 1996a, 1996b)?

Marx thought that the answer should be yes, for he thought that with the attainment of a thoroughly proletarian class consciousness, women and men would relate to each other just as fellow human beings and, as Cohen explicates Marx, “on a world scale, not in addition to but instead of finding special fellowship in particular cultures” (Cohen 1988, 245). Cohen thinks—and I think rightly thinks—that Marx was profoundly mistaken in this. Here Marx was an uncritical child of the Enlightenment. He missed the insights of the Enlightenment-friendly correction of Enlightenment *rationalism* made by Herder and brought vividly to our attention by Isaiah Berlin (Berlin 1976, 1980, 1991). Cohen, roughly following Berlin, puts the essential point very clearly and succinctly. Marx had an anthropological understanding and stress which, with its near exclusive emphasis “on the creative side of human nature,” neglected “a whole domain of human need and aspiration, which is prominent in the philosophy of Hegel” and, in a more specific, culturally articulate way, in Herder. We might still agree with Marx, as Cohen does and as I do, that in our lives the most primordial interest and difficulty “was relating to the world, not to the self” (Cohen 1988, 137). It was unforgettably captured by Bertold Brecht in his “*Erst kommt das fressen dan die moral.*” But, Cohen avers, Marx went too far in a materialist direction and gave us a one-sided picture of what we human beings are like. He failed to take proper cognizance of the pervasiveness among human beings of the social manifestations of an interest in self-identification. Instead, “Marx focused on the relation-

ship of the subject to an object which is in no way a subject, and, as time went on, he came to neglect the subject's relationship to itself, and to that aspect of the subject's relationship to others which is a mediated (that is, indirect) form of relationship to itself" (Cohen 1988, 138). There are important human groupings (communities) whose lines of demarcation and whose affiliation are not primarily, or at least not exclusively, economic. Religious communities and nations are paradigm cases. They are as strong and durable as they are "because they offer satisfaction to the individual's need for self-identification" (138). They are key collectivities which enable those who adhere to them to "retain a sense of who they are" (138).

People who grow up in even reasonably stable societies typically do not need to seek to achieve, or to recover and bring to a somewhat explicit consciousness, such a sense of identity. They do not need to go looking for their roots. They standardly just come to have a reasonably determinate identity as a by-product of their very socialization. We, in the standard case, are not motivated by our need for identity, but are motivated by our identity. As Cohen puts it, "Québécois do not have a need for identity which drives them to become Québécois, their need for identity is readily satisfied. Québécois are motivated not to acquire an identity but to protect and celebrate the identity they are given" (139). He sums up as follows.

I claim, then, that there is a human need to which Marxist observation is commonly blind, one different from and as deep as the need to cultivate one's talents. It is the need to be able to say not what I can do but who I am, satisfaction of which has historically been found in identification with others in a shared culture based on nationality, or race, or religion, or some slice or amalgam thereof. The identifications take benign, harmless, and catastrophically malignant forms. They generate, or at least sustain, ethnic and other bonds whose strength Marxists systematically undervalue, because they neglect the need for self-identity satisfied by them. (140)

The point is that we, or at the very least most of us, have this need for a particular identity. It is not enough for us to think we are members of the biological species *Homo sapiens* or just to identify (more accurately, try to identify) with humanity at large for we need as well, whatever our universalistic commitments, to have a sense of who we are. To have this sense is to have some more particular identification, an identification that is historically and culturally rooted. We should, of course, be cosmopolitans, but *rooted* cosmopolitans—indeed the only kind of cosmopolitanism that is even reasonably possible (Appiah 1996; Barber 1996).

Our self-identifications can be, and often are, illusory and ideologically distorted; "many of the self-portrayals from which people draw satisfaction display a large measure of distortion and illusion" (Cohen 1988, 141). And both religion and nationalism may be among them. But that is not to gainsay the Herderian line that we cannot (extreme circumstances apart and then only for the particular context of the circumstances in question) just relate to our fellow human beings as human beings, as members of the same biological species (Geras 1995). If we are socialists and

cosmopolitans, we may try to do something like that but, if we are at all clear-headed, it will not be exactly that, for that is impossible. We will, and rightly, have the attitude that nothing human is alien to us and that we will take interest in and be in solidarity with the struggles of the various peoples around the world. It is not, if we are Québécois, only Montréal-Est that is important to us, but East Timor as well and in some circumstances more so. We will, in no fundamental sense, put our compatriots first. We must be like that—by definition, if you will, we must be like that—if we are to be socialists. But we will deceive ourselves, and deeply, if we think that we can set aside local attachments and just identify with humanity at large, for we cannot escape such local attachments. Even if we could, we should not, for without them our lives would be very impoverished. Moreover, we have no need (*per impossible* anyway) to escape such local attachments though we should, of course, struggle to escape ethnocentricity. But ethnocentricity is one thing; having local attachments is another. If we would be socialists, or more generally humanitarians, we need to align our local attachments with cosmopolitan ideals. We need coherently to mesh our local attachments—though this surely should not be, and in reality cannot be, to obliterate them—with universalistic commitments to a moral point of view that is committed to moral equality. That is, a moral point of view which takes it as settled that the life of everyone matters and matters equally, and where no Hobbesian sense of mutual advantage can override that but must instead work within its parameters. (This means that justice as impartiality is more fundamental than so-called justice as mutual advantage [Nielsen 1996, 207–28]). So deeply, in at least that sense, we must be egalitarians, if we would be socialists or humanitarians (Nielsen 1985). But to even be persons we must have our local attachments as well. Without them we will have no sense of who we are and we will be unable to have any attachments—including, of course, larger, more universalistic attachments. The thing to see is how we can consistently and reasonably be nationalists or some other form of particularist and cosmopolitan at the same time. How, for example, can nationalism and proletarian internationalism be in harmony? Or can they be in harmony? Do we not have a Kierkegaardian either/or here?

A nationalism that is a liberal nationalism, including a socialist nationalism building on a liberal nationalism, does not try to raise one's nation, one's race, one's culture over other nations, races, cultures, or peoples. It does not see the people with whom one shares local attachments as the (or even a) chosen people, but only sees one's distinctive way of life (one's comprehensive culture) as being especially precious to one and to most of one's compatriots and, as well, and not unnaturally, as something which one seeks to sustain and to see flourish without at all taking such a way of living to be superior to other ways of living. It is a conception in which one does not at all see the people of one's nation as superior to the people of other nations. Moreover, it is a nationalism in which one does not seek to see one's nation prevail over other nations. Between such a tolerant Herderian nationalism and socialist internationalism, or any other kind of cosmopolitanism, there is no conflict. Indeed, they fit together like hand and glove. One can be proud to be a Dane, a New Zealander, or

now (even with all their troubles) a South African (proud of what Nelson Mandela called their rainbow nation) or, when Salvador Allende was president, one could have been proud to be a Chilean, and be a committed socialist or communist internationalist at the same time.

5

However, we should also ask what should we do when the two loyalties come into conflict. During the Winter War when the Soviet Union invaded Finland, the Finnish communists fought loyally on the Finnish side. Many of us will say, "And rightly so, for they were fighting against Thermidor, not against Communism." But did they know that? I do not know, but I very much doubt it. But I do know they fought loyally for Finland against the Soviet invader. If the Soviet invaders had been genuine communists (say, representing the kind of society of which Rosa Luxemburg would have approved) and had been fighting to liberate Finland from capitalist oppression and particularly, if at that time, they were also fighting to protect Finland from a possible fascist takeover, then I would say the Finnish communists (if they had known this) should have refused to fight and, if they could have, they should have gone over to the Soviet side.

Consider now a less dramatic, but a historically present, example and with it I return to the subject of Quebec. I am sometimes asked if I would continue to support Quebec sovereignty if it would work against the interests of the Quebec and the Canadian working class. My answer is an unequivocal no. Under those circumstances I would cease to be a Quebec sovereigntist. The protection of the working class against capitalist exploitation and the long, tortured task of emancipating the working class, and with them eventually all others, is more important—is morally speaking still more central—than the preservation of cultural interests (in this case the preservation of the French language and francophone culture in Quebec) would rightly, if such a circumstance came to pass, be overridden. If Québécois after several generations ended up speaking English as their mother tongue and if, in most of their daily interactions in Quebec, they, as a matter of fact, could no longer routinely use French and from this it came to be the case, as it surely would, that they would have lost their distinctive culture, that would be a tragic thing that no thoughtful person of goodwill could welcome. Not to see that is to be blind to the importance of culture to the lives of people. To say this is not to moralize, but to advert to the fact pointed to and explained by Cohen (following Herder and Berlin) that self-definition and cultural membership are functionally important elements in human life. Of course such remarks have a normative, illocutionary force as well as having factual content. But this is just to recognize, as Marx well recognized, that there is no such thing as *Wertfrei* social science. It would, to return to the main line of my contention, be tragic for this to happen as it was a tragic thing that the Irish under compulsion from the British effectively lost Gaelic. But *if* that is the way forward—the only way forward—to gain a socialist Quebec and eventually a socialist North America, then so be it. In

spite of that deep loss (a loss that no morally sensitive person could fail to grieve over and deplore), it still would be the thing for us to do for, with it, there would be, even taking fully into consideration that loss, all things considered, less loss and more human flourishing all around. Sometimes, both politically and individually, we are faced with hard, tragic choices where anything we do will have sides that we cannot but deplore (Nielsen 1996, 229–89).

However, to think that in the Quebec/Canada situation any such choice would need to be made is mistaken. Indeed, more than that, to think that we are faced with such choices is a bit of the unrealism of romantic philosophers and some ideologues. To think, that is, that such a choice, under any reasonable scenario, could become a real choice is pure philosophical fantasy displaying the familiar philosophical penchant for concocted examples in a place where their use is not in place. We, with such a focus, have another instance of the not infrequent occurrence of philosophers, in their cogitations, floating free from the world.

Some intellectuals, however, aspiring to be a little more realistic, have resisted what I have said above and, turning to more realistic ground, have said, and correctly so, that Canada is very vulnerable to the United States, to its capitalism and to its cultural hegemony as well. Seventy-eight percent of capital ownership in Canada is in American hands, and the presence of American media and the like in Canada and Quebec is pervasive. But then it is added, I believe falsely, that the separation of Quebec and Canada would just exacerbate American dominance in both countries. But is this likely to be so? All states in the capitalist world order are very interdependent and becoming more so, and they are all under capitalist domination and control, indirect and disguised as it typically is. But most small states in the west of Europe do at least as well (or as badly) in this respect (and in others as well) as the large ones. Holland, Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden are no more and no less dominated by American capital, or any other capital, than are France, Italy, and Germany. Why two sovereign countries (if so they become)—Quebec and Canada—should be more or, for that matter, less dominated by American capital, the American government, or American culture, than a United Canada is not at all apparent. A sovereign Quebec might, just might, even be somewhat more resistant to the domination of American capital. I say this because Quebec has somewhat stronger and more militant unions than those of the rest of Canada. Moreover, and not independently, Quebec, as I remarked in (1), has a government and population with a somewhat more social democratic orientation and has, as well, an intelligentsia more Europe-oriented and a little more left-leaning than the intelligentsia of English-speaking Canada. On the cultural side, vis-à-vis the American cultural invasion, a sovereign Quebec would plainly be an advantage for Quebec. Its advantage would as well be enhanced somewhat by the natural barrier of the French language. But from none of this would English-speaking Canada be a loser. Quebec's departure would not, at least in that respect, weaken Canada.

Having speculated as I just have, I should add that I do not think that vis-à-vis the United States and its multifarious (some would say malefic) influences, a split between Quebec and Canada would, in one way or the other, make very much difference. How-

ever, I have allowed that it might make some difference, particularly taking into consideration that English-speaking Canada is drifting toward the right. (The attempt to unite the Reform and Conservative parties into a new united party of the right is a worrisome exemplification of this, particularly when it tilts to the more “right side” of the right.) Quebec might be a little better off in this respect outside rather than inside a United Canada. (With respect to the sustaining of its own distinctive culture and in terms of the people of Quebec having more democratic control over their own lives, Quebec would be much better off. But that was not what was at issue in the previous paragraph.) The crucial thing to see is that that split would not cause greater American dominance in either nation, though this is not to say that it is not already pervasive enough (from my point of view much too pervasive) in what is now a United Canada.

To spell that out a bit. Now the liberal party in Canada is pushed to the right by the Reform party and its conservative allies in Ontario where formerly, in the Trudeau years, the liberal party was pushed a little more to the left by the New Democratic party (a social democratic party). Quebec in Canada can do little to regain for Canada that somewhat more progressive orientation, but a sovereign Quebec—more social democratic in orientation than the rest of North America, working in accordance with something that is closer to a Nordic model—might itself come in time to serve as a model for English-speaking Canada and, for that matter (if they even notice us), the United States. This might, just might, eventually result in a New Democratic party government in English-speaking Canada and in somewhat more resistance to increased American imperialist penetration and control of the Canadian economy and, with that economic control, a not inconsiderable control of Canadian life. This is probably wishful thinking on my part, but it is a possible scenario.

However, the general and not so fanciful point remains that capitalist domination is everywhere in both small states and large. But where the small states are also reasonably rich capitalist states, and not banana republics, the domination is no greater in the small states than in the large ones and Quebec and Canada together, or separately, are such states. More generally, nationalist sovereigntist movements in the rich capitalist democracies would not, if successful, increase capitalist domination in them or inadvertently aid American hegemonic control. This would not happen in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Catalonia, Corsica, for the Basques or Faeroes. If anything, it might slightly weaken American capitalist domination and cultural penetration in some of these places. The Scots and the Welsh, for example, traditionally are more politically aware and more left-leaning than the English. The only exception I can think of to this is the nationalism in the north of Italy: something (to understate it) rather questionable in any case.

I have argued that liberal nationalism, including socialist nationalism, is perfectly compatible with cosmopolitanism and socialist internationalism: something we cannot abandon while remaining socialists. I have also argued that socialist nationalism, while remaining a species of liberal nationalism, is a species whose distinctiveness consists in being clearly and resolutely socialist. And I spelled out what that comes to and how it is perfectly compatible with liberalism. We socialists are socialists because we are struggling for the emancipation of the working class and, in doing so, for a more

general emancipation down the line. With the achieving, sustaining, and consolidating of that, there will be more human flourishing, more justice, and more of what Engels called just plain human decency in the world (Nielsen 1989). And there would be more human solidarity as well across borders, borders that in many ways would have come, with socialism as a worldwide reality, to have a lesser significance than they do now. Indeed, globalization in advance of socialism and as part of a brutally exploitative neoliberal agenda is also making it so. There are the manifest horrors of globalization, but it at least is having the good side effect of producing solidarity among the oppressed and sometimes across borders. We would with socialism come to see our fellow human beings (as people often do not now) as a very big “us” and not just as Irish, Ghanaians, Samoans, or whatever. But we have also seen, roughly following Herder, Berlin, and Cohen, how utterly central to us as human beings it is to have a sense of who we are, and how this requires local identifications and a sense of cultural membership (if they do not come to the same thing) as Dutch, as Catalonians, as Fijians, as Faeroes, and the like. It is not only that these local identities can go, perfectly compatibly, with cosmopolitan universalist humanist commitments, but that there could not be the latter without the former, more local identities, for without them we could not even be in any remotely full sense persons able to come to have such wider commitments. To have *only* a local identity is to be imprisoned, even if it is only a self-fettering, but not to have a local identity (if that is at all possible) is also to be without the possibility of being committed (because such a lack makes any kind of commitment at all psychologically impossible) to a wider community of aspiration—namely the human community, full stop, without negation or exclusion.

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Has the Dictatorship over Needs Ended in Eastern Europe?

László Andor

Among the state socialist countries, it was Hungary that distinguished herself after the 1960s by introducing comprehensive economic reforms. Those reforms, together with the so-called Prague Spring of Czechoslovakia, were typically interpreted as attempts to establish “socialism with a human face.” A major feature of that new face was the New Economic Mechanism, which abandoned the Stalinist bias for forced